



# Northern Ireland School Omnibus Survey 2022

April 2023



## Table of Contents

List of figures	2
List of tables	4
Executive Summary.	6
1. Introduction.	12
2. Data Quality.	13
3. Primary Schools, Post-primary Schools and Special Schools.	14
3.1 Sustainable Schools.	14
3.2 Shared Education.	18
3.3. Play in Schools.	21
3.4 The Children’s Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015.	23
3.5 Middletown Centre for Autism.	26
3.6 Free School Meals.	28
3.7 Breakfast Provision.	31
3.8 Physical Education.	36
3.9 Remote Learning.	37
3.10 Relationships and Sexuality Education.	38
3.11 School Uniforms.	39
3.12 CPR in Schools.	44
4. Pre-school Settings.	45
4.1 Remote and Blended Learning.	45
4.2. Penultimate Pre-school Children.	50
4.3 Speech Language and Communication.	51
Appendix A. Representativeness of the Omnibus Responses.	58

## List of figures

Figure 1 How often schools discuss sustainability at Board of Governors' meetings. ....	15
Figure 2 Triggers or events that prompt the Board of Governors to discuss school's sustainability .....	15
Figure 3 Level of understanding of the purpose of Area Planning. ....	16
Figure 4 Number of classes involved in Shared Education partnerships in the 2021/22 academic year. ....	20
Figure 5 Time children have for free play opportunities (unstructured play time) during the school day. ....	22
Figure 6 Play opportunities available for children during break and lunchtimes (i.e., playful environment, play resources, etc.,). ....	23
Figure 7 Children's Authorities schools worked with to improve the wellbeing of pupils in the 2021/22 academic year. ....	24
Figure 8 The type of activities schools have co-operated with the Children's Authorities on in the 2021/22 academic year. ....	25
Figure 9 Services provided by the Middletown Centre for Autism that schools are aware of.....	26
Figure 10 Number of school staff that have accessed training with Middletown Centre for Autism in the 2021/22 academic year. ....	27
Figure 11 Consultees regarding schools' Relationships and Sexuality Education policies or programmes. ....	38
Figure 12 Availability of school uniforms.....	41
Figure 13 Availability of PE uniforms.....	42
Figure 14 Percentage of pre-school settings that used various online platforms to keep in contact with parents / guardians and provide remote learning opportunities during any periods when their setting was closed due to Covid 19. ....	45

Figure 15 Percentage of pre-school settings that plan to use various online platforms to keep in contact with children during any future periods of school closures. ....	46
Figure 16 Percentage of pre-school settings that plan to use various online platforms to provide remote learning during any future periods of school closures. ....	47
Figure 17 Percentage of pre-school settings that plan to use various online platforms to keep in contact with parents / guardians in any future periods of school closures. ....	48
Figure 18 Percentage of pre-school settings that plan to use various online platforms to keep in contact with Governors / Management Committees in any future periods of school closures. ....	49
Figure 19 Percentage of penultimate pre-school children that were educated in pre-school settings setting alongside pre-school peers in the 2021/22 academic year. ....	50
Figure 20 Percentage of pre-school settings with children speech and language delays or difficulties in the 2021/22 academic year. ....	52
Figure 21 Percentage of pre-school settings with children that have speech and language delays or difficulties and access to speech and language therapy support requested in the 2021/22 academic year. ....	53
Figure 22 Percentage of pre-school settings with children that have speech and language delays or difficulties that continued as they left pre-school settings to enter primary school in the 2021/22 academic year. ....	54
Figure 23 Percentage of pre-school settings with children that have speech and language delays or difficulties that continued as they entered primary school and access to outside support from a speech and language therapist in the 2021/22 academic year. ....	55

## List of tables

Table 1: Frequency of topics discussed at Board of Governors' meetings. ....	14
Table 2 Type of activities schools have partnered on in the 2021/22 academic year. ....	18
Table 3 Facilities schools used in Shared Education partnership(s) in the 2021/22 academic year. ....	19
Table 4 Reason for non-participation in Shared Education in the 2021/22 academic year. ....	21
Table 5 Actions to encourage parents to apply to the Education Authority for free school meals. ....	28
Table 6: How schools actively encourage pupils' uptake of free school meals. ....	29
Table 7 Barriers to pupils taking up their entitlement to free school meals. ....	30
Table 8 Actions taken to reduce the main barriers to pupils taking up their entitlement to free school meals. ....	30
Table 9 Percentage of pupils who eat breakfast in school. ....	32
Table 10 Sources of funding for breakfast provision. ....	32
Table 11 Who provides breakfasts in schools. ....	33
Table 12 Reasons why a pupil would eat breakfast at school. ....	34
Table 13 Benefits of eating a breakfast in school. ....	34
Table 14 Barriers to greater uptake of breakfast provision. ....	35
Table 15 Time spent per week on the delivery of curricular PE in primary schools. ....	36
Table 16 How curricular PE is delivered in primary schools. ....	37
Table 17 Approximate cost of each item of compulsory school uniform. ....	40
Table 18 Approximate cost of each item of compulsory PE uniform. ....	42

Table 19 Actions taken by schools to reduce school uniform costs in the 12 months prior to the survey. ....	43
Table 20 Main challenge associated with educating penultimate pre-school children in a class with their pre-school peers in the 2021/22 academic year. ....	51
Table 21 Sources of funding for SLT services / support. ....	56
Table 22 Staff professional development/training options to provide speech and language support or strategies for children. ....	57
Table 23 Omnibus respondent schools by school type compared to the Northern Ireland School Census 2022/23. ....	58
Table 24 Omnibus respondent schools by school management type compared to the Northern Ireland School Census 2022/23. ....	58
Table 25 Omnibus respondent schools by school location (Education Authority region) compared to the Northern Ireland School Census 2022/23. ....	59
Table 26 Pre-schools that responded to the Omnibus by location (Education Authority region) compared to all pre-schools 2022/23. ....	59

## **Executive Summary.**

### **Introduction.**

- The Omnibus was issued to all grant aided primary schools, post-primary schools, special schools (1025), and pre-school settings (693) on 26 October 2022 with a closing date for response of 23 November 2022.
- Responses were received from 220 schools and 250 pre-schools settings equating to response rates of 21.5% and 36.1% respectively.
- Caution should be interpreted when making inferences about the analysis for schools in 2022 due to the lower-than-normal response rate. The reader should also keep in mind that several questions asked the Principal or School leader to consider the academic year 2021/22. During 2021/22 there was disruption to normal teaching and school / pre-school activities due to the Covid-19 pandemic and this may have an impact on responses given

### **Primary school, Post-primary Schools and Special Schools.**

#### ***Sustainable Schools.***

- Almost all schools (93.5%) discuss sustainability at Board of Governors' meetings.
- Most schools (62.6%) have at least a good level of understanding of the purpose of Area Planning.
- Less than half of schools (43.7%) have a good or very good understanding of the how the Area Planning process operates.

#### ***Shared Education.***

- Over half of all schools (56.1%) have partnered in Shared Education with other school(s) in the 2021/22 academic year.
- Project(s) with pupils from other school(s) was the most common type of Shared Education activity, 26.8% of all activities.
- The most common reason for not participating in Shared Education in the 2021/22 academic year was being unable to identify partner school(s), 26.0% of all reasons.

### ***Play in Schools.***

- In 69.3% of schools, children have between 31 minutes and 60 minutes for free play opportunities (unstructured play time) during the school day.
- Running and active play is the most common play opportunity for pupils in schools, 30.7% of all activities.
- Over half of all schools (54.6%) do not have a play policy.

### ***Children's Services Co-Operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015.***

- Over three quarters of schools (78.5%) have worked directly in co-operation with Children's Authorities other than the Education Authority [EA][1], to improve the well-being of children and young people in the 2021/22 academic year.
- Schools in Northern Ireland reported having worked with all the Children's Authorities specified in the Act, however rates of engagement varied considerably.
- Three quarters of schools that worked with Children Authorities (75.0%) have worked with a Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) and 2.3% have worked with Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNi).
- Schools in Northern Ireland co-operated with Children's Authorities on a wide range of activities with pupils' health and Special Educational Needs the most common types of activities, 18.3% and 17.1% of all activities respectively.

### ***Middletown Centre for Autism.***

- There is a high level of awareness among schools of the Middletown Centre for Autism (MCA). Approximately three quarters of schools (73.1%) are aware of the services provided by the MCA.
- Training is the MCA service that schools are aware of most, 45% of all services that schools are aware of.

---

1 Schools were directed not to include the EA in their responses as the EA collaborates co-operatively with schools on an ongoing basis.



### ***Free School Meals.***

- Almost all schools (96.8%) actively encourage parents to apply to the EA for free school meals.
- Possible stigma that can be associated with receiving a free school meal is the most common barrier to pupils taking up their entitlement to free school meals, 37.3% of all barriers reported.
- The most common action schools undertook to reduce the barriers to pupils taking up their entitlement to free school meals relates to the social interaction of pupils i.e., allowing all pupils to eat together, 26.0% of all actions.

### ***Breakfast Provision.***

- Over half of all schools (54.1%) offer breakfast provision for pupils.
- Approximately one quarter (23.7%) of breakfast providers are school catering staff and 41.9% are non-catering school staff.
- Improved concentration is the most common benefit of eating a breakfast in school, 21.0% of all benefits.
- Financial barriers either for the school or the pupils' parents / guardians account for most of the barriers to greater uptake of breakfast provision, 53.1% of all barriers.

### ***Remote Learning.***

- Approximately nine out of every ten schools (86.1%) have a remote learning policy which provides guidance to parents / guardians and pupils on their school's approach to remote learning.
- Most schools (69.5%) have a named senior leader with overarching responsibility for remote learning.

### ***Relationships and Sexuality Education.***

- Almost all schools (91.3%) have a RSE policy, and 65.9% of these schools have reviewed their policy.
- Almost all schools (92.6%) have consulted with school governors / management group regarding their RSE policies or programmes.

- The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) provide a RSE Hub for the use of schools in Northern Ireland. Over half of all schools, 54.4% have not made use of the CCEA RSE Hub.

### ***School Uniforms.***

- Almost all schools (96.6%) have a compulsory school uniform policy.
- The most common way school uniforms are made available is for some items to be widely available and some only available from a limited number of suppliers, 45.3% of schools make their uniform available this way.
- Over half of all schools (58.3%) have a compulsory PE uniform.
- The most common way PE uniforms are made available is for items to be widely available from three or more suppliers, 34.6% of schools make their PE uniform available this way.
- Approximately six out of every ten schools (61.9%) with a compulsory school uniform have taken action in the last twelve months to reduce school uniform costs.

## **Primary Schools and Post-primary Schools.**

### ***Physical Education.***

- Between 60 and 119 minutes is the most common amount of time spent per week on the delivery of curricular PE in primary schools. In the Foundation stage 60.7% of schools deliver this amount of PE, in Key Stage 1 approximately two thirds of schools (66.7%) and in Key Stage 2 63.2% of schools deliver between 60 minutes and 119 minutes of PE per week. The number of responses from post-primary schools was too small i.e., less than 50 to allow analysis.
- Almost all schools (86.8%) have a whole school approach to promoting physical activity.

## Pre-school Settings.

### *Remote and Blended Learning.*

- Almost all pre-school settings (97.6%) used online platforms to keep in contact with parents / guardians and provide remote learning opportunities during any periods when their setting was closed due to the Covid 19 pandemic.
- Almost all pre-school settings, over 98%<sup>[2]</sup>, plan to use online platforms to keep in contact with children during any future periods of school closures.
- Almost all pre-school settings, over 98%<sup>[3]</sup>, plan to use online platforms to provide remote learning opportunities during any periods of school closures.
- All pre-school settings (100%) plan to use online platforms to keep in contact with parents / guardians in any future periods of school closures.
- Almost all pre-school settings, over 98%<sup>[4]</sup>, plan to use online platforms to keep in contact with Governors / Management Committees during any future periods of school closures.

### *Penultimate Pre-school Children<sup>[5]</sup>.*

- In over half of all pre-school settings (55.6%) no penultimate pre-school children were educated alongside their pre-school peers in the 2021/22 academic year.
- Over half of pre-school settings (52.0%) where penultimate pre-school children were educated alongside their pre-school peers in the 2021/22 academic year

---

<sup>2</sup> The actual percentage is not released as the percentage not planning to use an online platform is based on a small number of schools.

<sup>3</sup> The actual percentage is not released as the percentage not planning to use an online platform is based on a small number of schools.

<sup>4</sup> The actual percentage is not released as the percentage not planning to use an online platform is based on a small number of schools.

<sup>5</sup> The year before the child starts primary school is called the final pre-school year (when the child has turned three). The year before this is called the penultimate pre-school year (when the child has turned two).

stated that in their experience the main challenge with educating such pupils together was additional personal, social, and emotional needs.

### ***Speech Language and Communication.***

- Almost all pre-school settings (91.2%) have children with speech and language delays or difficulties in the 2021/22 academic year.
- Most pre-schools settings (63.6%) do not have access to specific speech and language therapy (SLT) services / support.
- In most pre-school settings (71.9%), staff have accessed professional development/training to provide speech and language support or strategies for the children in their setting.

## 1. Introduction.

The Omnibus Survey is a multi-purpose survey covering a variety of topics proposed by policy officials from the Department of Education (DE). Between 2013 and 2016 the Omnibus was conducted annually. Recognising the information gathering burden among schools the Omnibus was then moved to a two-yearly cycle commencing 2018. The 2020 cycle of the omnibus was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

For the first time in 2022 pre-school settings were included in the Omnibus and the results for pre-school settings are reported separately.

Previous Omnibus reports are available on the [DE website](#).

The remainder of this report is split into chapters covering data quality, analysis of the topics, and representativeness of the Omnibus responses. The topics included in the 2022 Omnibus are:

- Primary Schools, Post-primary Schools and Special Schools.
  - Sustainable Schools
  - Shared Education
  - Play in Schools
  - Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015
  - Middletown Centre for Autism
  - Free School Meals
  - Breakfast Provision
  - Physical Education (Primary and post-primary only)
  - Remote Learning
  - Relationships and Sexuality Education
  - School Uniforms
  - CPR in Schools (Post-primary schools only).
- Pre-school settings.
  - Remote and Blended Learning
  - Penultimate Aged Pre-School Children
  - Speech, Language and Communication.

## 2. Data Quality.

The Omnibus was issued to all grant aided primary schools, post-primary schools, special schools (1025), and pre-school settings (693) on 26 October 2022 with a closing date for response of 23 November 2022. The delivery mode was electronic using the SurveyMonkey software.

Participation was voluntary and school Principals and School Leaders were invited to take part and answer the questions on behalf of their school or pre-school setting.

Responses were received from 220 schools and 250 pre-schools settings equating to response rates of 21.5% and 36.1% respectively.

The period 26 October 2022 to 23 November 2022, coincided with industrial action by the Northern Ireland teaching unions known as Actions Short of Strike (ASOS). As part of ASOS union members were advised not to comply with some data collections undertaken by DE. As a result, the response rate for the 2022 Omnibus (21.5% primary, post-primary, and special schools) was below the rate in 2018 (39%).

Caution should be interpreted when making inferences about the analysis for schools in 2022 due to the lower-than-normal response rate. The reader should also keep in mind that several questions asked the Principal or School Leader to consider the academic year 2021/22. During 2021/22 there was disruption to normal teaching and school / pre-school activities due to the Covid-19 pandemic and this may have had an impact on responses given.

Not all schools and pre-school settings answered all their respective Omnibus questions. In the body of this report, where relevant, the number of schools or pre-school settings that answered a particular question is stated or may be calculated from the responses. Where appropriate tables and figures include the number of schools or pre-school settings that answered the question on which the table or figure was based i.e., the base number.

A minimum number of responses to any question was set at 50. Any questions with less than 50 responses are not included in the analysis contained in this report.

More information regarding the representativeness of the Omnibus school and pre-school responses is included in Appendix A.

### 3. Primary Schools, Post-primary Schools and Special Schools.

The analysis in this section relates to responses given by Principals of primary, post primary and special schools, unless otherwise stated. Principals responded on behalf of their school.

#### 3.1 Sustainable Schools.

The analysis in this chapter is aimed at gauging Principals' and Board of Governors' awareness of sustainability issues and the Area Planning process. The analysis will inform the DE's evidence base in relation to the [Sustainable Schools Policy](#) (SSP) and the Area Planning Process.

**Table 1: Frequency of topics discussed at Board of Governors' meetings.**

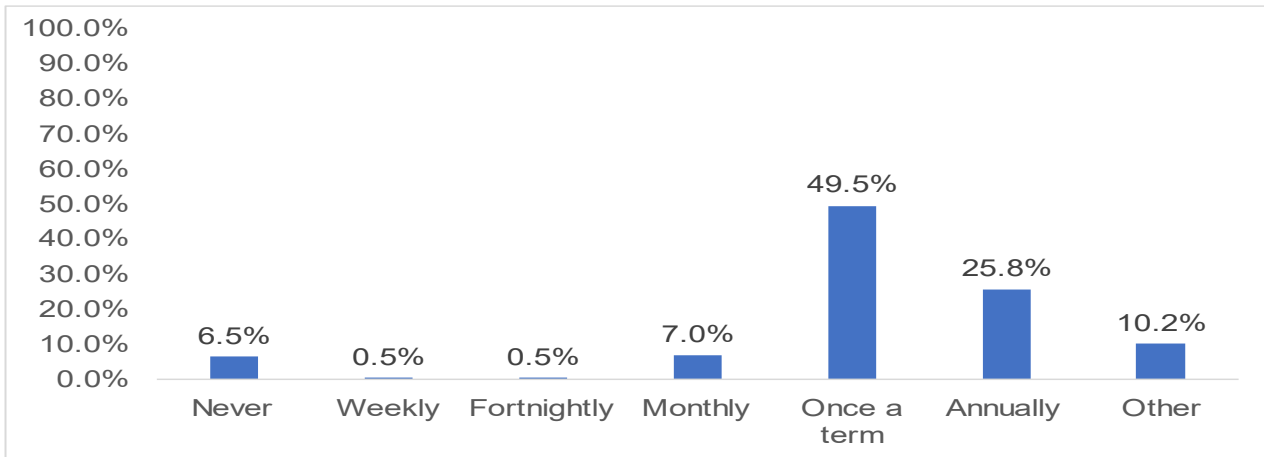
All the topics listed in Table 1, except for their school's accessibility, are discussed at least once a year by schools at Board of Governors' meetings.

Topic discussed	Often (a few times a year)	Seldom (once a year)	Never	Base
Quality of education in your school	96.8%	3.2%	0.0%	185
Financial sustainability	96.8%	3.2%	0.0%	186
School links to the community	90.8%	9.2%	0.0%	184
Accessibility of the school	54.3%	42.4%	3.3%	184
Enrolment numbers in the school	87.1%	12.9%	0.0%	186
Leadership and management in the school	93.5%	6.5%	0.0%	185

Both the quality of education and financial sustainability are discussed often by 96.8% of schools at Board of Governors' meetings. Leadership and management are discussed often by 93.5% of schools, school links to the community are discussed often by 90.8% of schools, enrolment numbers are discussed often by 87.1% of schools and accessibility of their school is discussed often by 54.3% of schools at Board of Governors' meetings.

**Figure 1 How often schools discuss sustainability at Board of Governors' meetings.**

Almost all schools discuss sustainability at Board of Governors' meetings.

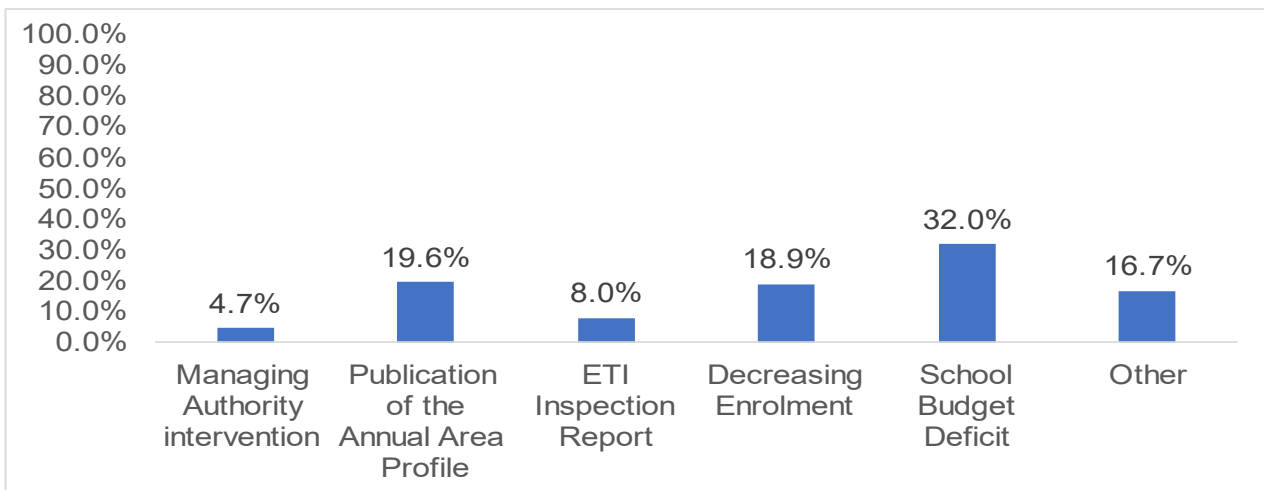


Base all schools (186).

Approximately half of schools (49.5%) discuss sustainability once a term at Board of Governors' meetings, 25.8% discuss sustainability annually, 7% monthly, and 6.5% never discuss sustainability at Board of Governors' meetings.

**Figure 2 Triggers or events that prompt the Board of Governors to discuss school's sustainability**

A wide range of triggers or events prompt discussion of a school's sustainability by the Board of Governors, with school budget deficit being the most common trigger or event.



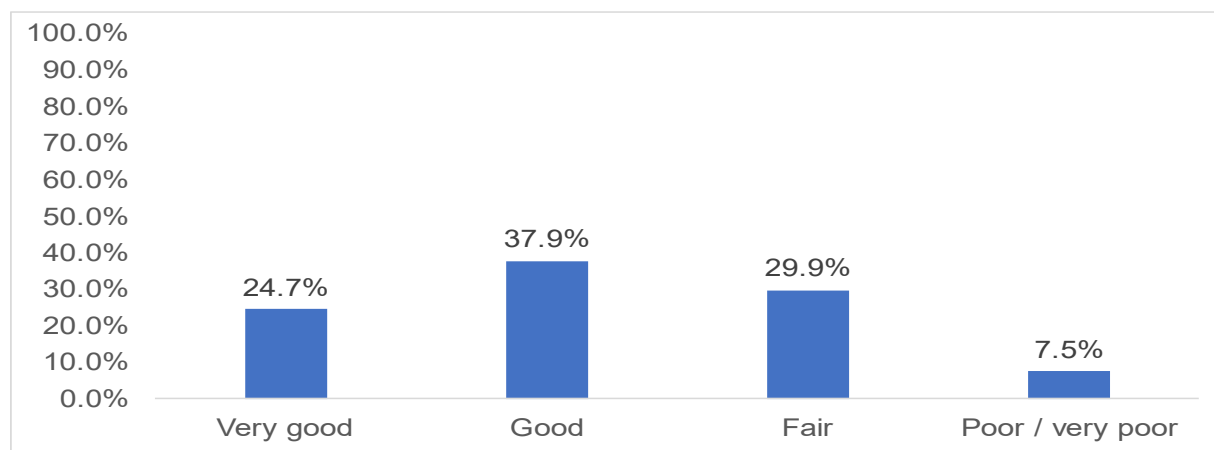
Base all triggers or events (275). Note: schools may state multiple triggers.



Thirty-two per cent of triggers or events relate to school budget deficits, 19.6% relate to the publication of an Annual Area Profile, 18.9% relate to decreasing enrolment, 16.7% relate to other issues, 8.0% relate to an Education Training Inspectorate Report, 4.7% relate to a Managing Authority intervention.

**Figure 3 Level of understanding of the purpose of Area Planning.**

Most schools have at least a good level of understanding of the purpose of Area Planning.

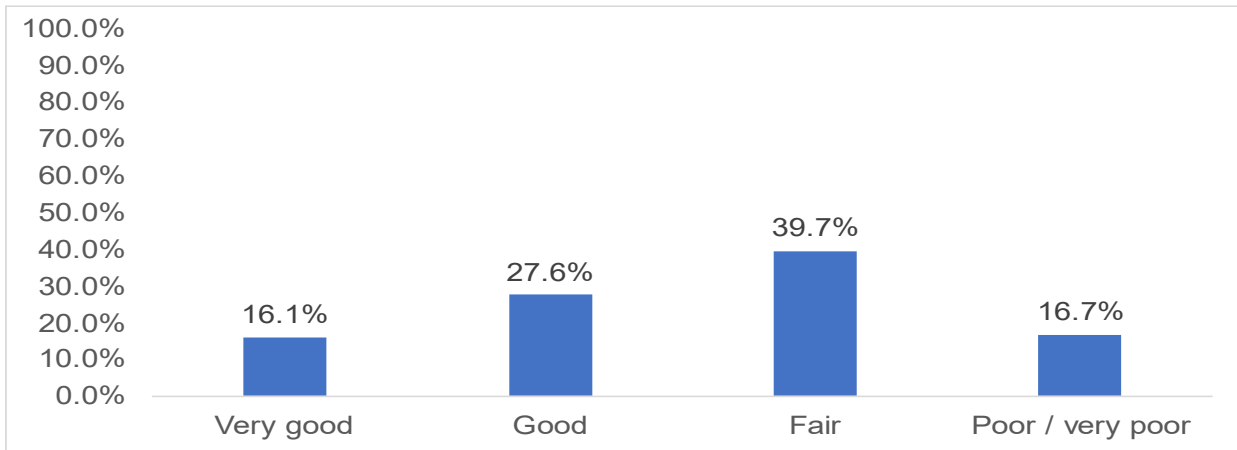


*Base all schools (174). Note: The categories of poor and very poor have been combined due to small numbers.*

Approximately four in ten schools (37.9%) have a good understanding of the purpose of Area Planning and one quarter (24.7%) have a very good understanding. Three in ten schools' (29.9%) understanding was fair and 7.5% of schools have a poor or very poor understanding of the purpose of Area Planning.

**Figure 4 Level of understanding of how the Area Planning process operates.**

Less than half of schools have a good or very good understanding of the how the Area Planning process operates.



*Base all schools (174). Note: the categories of poor and very poor have been combined due to small numbers.*

Four in ten schools (39.7%) have a fair understanding of the how the Area Planning process operates, 27.6% have a good understanding and 16.1% have a very good understanding. Less than one fifth of schools (16.7%) have a poor or very poor understanding of how the Area Planning process operates Shared Education.

### 3.2 Shared Education.

Shared Education means the education together of those of different religious belief, including reasonable numbers of both Protestant and Roman Catholic children or young persons and those who are experiencing socio-economic deprivation and those who are not, which is secured by the working together and co-operation of two or more relevant providers of Shared Education[6].

The analysis in this chapter relates to Shared Education in schools, between pupils from different community backgrounds.

Over half (56.1%) of all schools (97) have partnered in Shared Education with other school(s) in the 2021/22 academic year and 43.9% of schools (76) have not.

The 97 schools that have partnered in Shared Education with other school(s) were asked a further four questions regarding their participation in Shared Education in the 2021/22 academic year.

#### **Table 2 Type of activities schools have partnered on in the 2021/22 academic year.**

The 97 schools that partnered in Shared Education in the 2021/22 academic year participated in 265 activities. Specific activities for pupils were the most common type of Shared Education activity.

Type of shared education activity	Percentage of all activities
Project(s) with pupils from other school(s)	14.3%
Shared equipment (e.g. school minibus, computers)	8.7%
Shared classes with pupils from other schools (under Entitlement Framework)	26.8%
Shared teachers	4.5%
Extra-curricular activities	6.4%
Shared classes with pupils from other schools (other than under the Entitlement Framework)	15.5%
Development of Shared Policies	9.1%
Shared resources (e.g. teaching plans, materials)	7.5%
Other	7.2%

*Base all activities (265). Note: school may have participated in multiple activities.*

---

6 Source: [Shared Education | Department of Education \(education-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk)

Project(s) with pupils from other school(s) account for 26.8% of all Shared Education activities, 15.5% of activities involved shared resources and 14.3% of activities involved shared classes with pupils from other schools (under the [DE Entitlement Framework](#)).

Development of Shared Education policies account for 9.1% of all activities and shared classes with pupils from other schools (other than under the Entitlement Framework) account for 8.7% of all activities. Extra-curricular activities account for 7.5% of all Shared Education activities, other activities account for 7.2%, and shared equipment account for 6.4% of all activities. The least common activity was sharing teachers (4.5%).

**Table 3 Facilities schools used in Shared Education partnership(s) in the 2021/22 academic year.**

The most used facility by schools in Shared Education partnerships in the 2021/22 academic year were school classrooms.

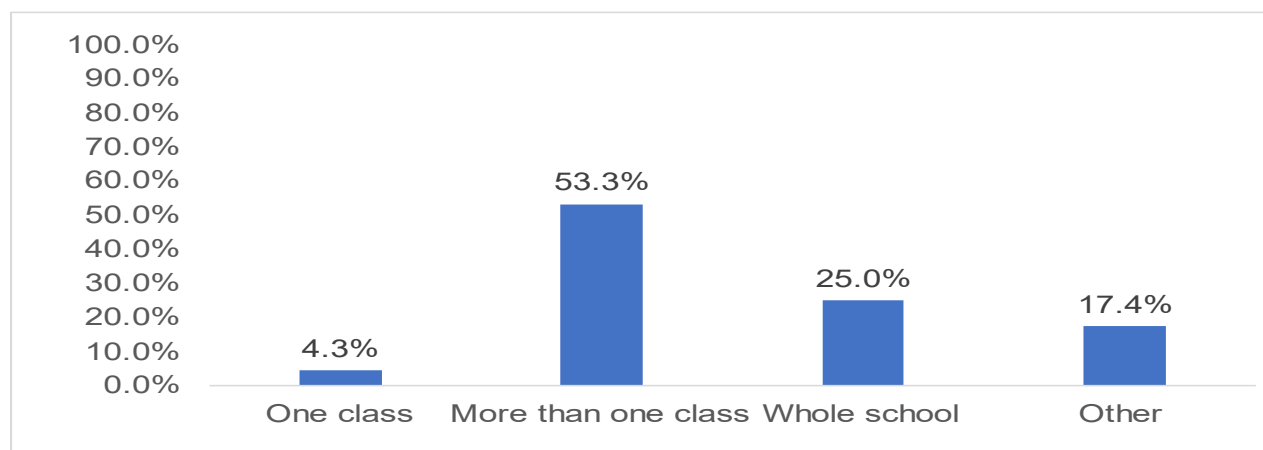
Type of Facility	Percentage of all facilities
Classrooms	34.8%
Science laboratories	2.6%
Music or drama facilities	7.0%
Assembly or other halls	28.7%
Sports grounds	20.0%
Other	7.0%

*Base all facilities (230). Note: schools may have used multiple facilities.*

School classrooms account for 34.8% of all facilities used by schools in Shared Education partnerships, assembly or other halls account for 28.7%, and sports grounds account for 20.0% of all facilities shared. Less commonly shared were music or drama facilities (7.0%) and science laboratories (2.6%). Other facilities account for 7.0% of all facilities used by schools in Shared Education partnerships.

**Figure 4 Number of classes involved in Shared Education partnerships in the 2021/22 academic year.**

Over half of schools involved more than one class in Shared Education partnership in the 2021/22 academic year.



*Base all schools undertaking Shared Education (97).*

In 53.3% of schools, participation in Shared Education involved more than one class. In one quarter of schools (25%) participation in Shared Education involved the whole school and in 4.3% of schools, participation in Shared Education involved one class. In 17.4% of schools the arrangement of pupils for Shared Education was not based on a class or whole school basis.

The 76 schools that did not participate in Shared Education in the 2021/22 academic year were asked the reason(s) for non-participation.

**Table 4 Reason for non-participation in Shared Education in the 2021/22 academic year.**

The most common reason for not participating in Shared Education in the 2021/22 academic year was being unable to identify partner school(s).

Reason	Percentage of all reasons
Lack of awareness of Shared Education	4.1%
Other priorities, excluding those related to Covid-19, preventing engagement in Shared Education	17.9%
Parental reluctance to engage in Shared Education	*
Lack of support from the local community to engage in Shared Education	0.0%
Board of Governors not supportive of Shared Education	*
Industrial Action preventing engagement in Shared Education	4.9%
Unable to identify partner school(s)	26.0%
Unsuccessful application to Shared Education funding programmes	4.9%
Covid-19	17.1%
Other	22.0%

*Base all reasons (123). \* Indicates a percentage based on a small number that has been suppressed for confidentiality. Note: a school may state multiple reasons.*

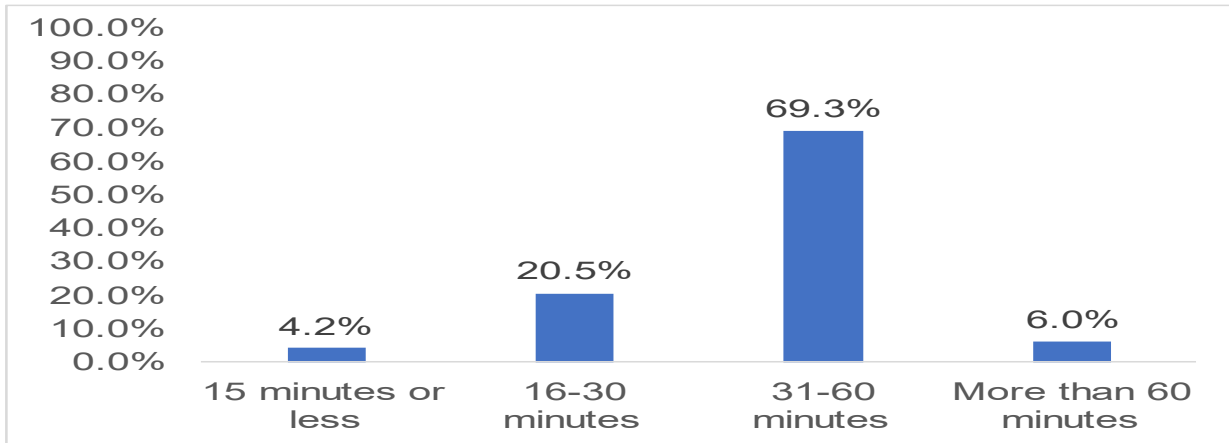
Approximately one quarter of reasons (26.0%) why schools did not participate in Shared Education relate to being unable to identify partner school(s). Other reasons account for over one fifth of all reasons (22.0%). Other priorities, excluding those relate to Covid-19 account for 17.9% of all reasons, and Covid-19 account for 17.1% of all reasons.

### ***3.3. Play in Schools.***

Play and leisure is one of the eight areas of well-being set out in the [Children and Young People's Strategy](#), and research shows that participation in play and leisure makes a positive contribution to the mental, emotional, social, and physical wellbeing of children and young people.

**Figure 5 Time children have for free play opportunities (unstructured play time) during the school day.**

In almost all schools, children have more than 15 minutes of free play opportunities (unstructured play time) during the school day.

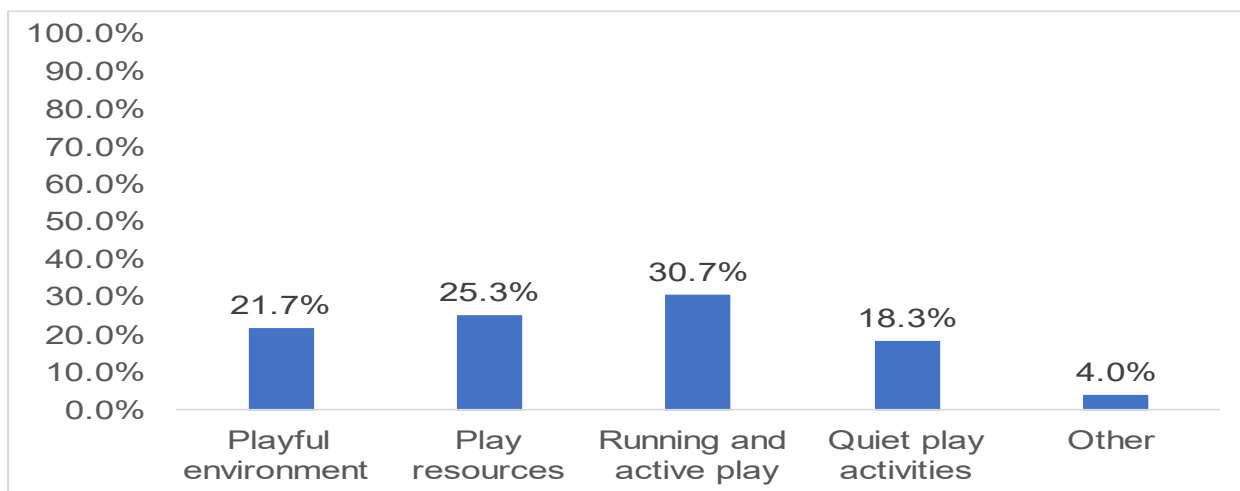


*Base all schools (166). Note: the categories 61-120 minutes and more than 120 minutes combined due to small numbers.*

In 69.3% of schools, children have between 31 minutes and 60 minutes for free play opportunities (unstructured play time) during the school day and in approximately one fifth of schools (20.5%) children have between 16 minutes and 30 minutes. In a further 6.0% of schools, children have more than 60 minutes and in 4.2% of schools, children have 15 minutes or less for free play opportunities (unstructured play time) during the school day.

**Figure 6 Play opportunities available for children during break and lunchtimes (i.e., playful environment, play resources, etc.).**

Running and active play are the most common play opportunity for pupils in schools.



*Base all opportunities (475). Note: a school may state multiple opportunities.*

Running and active play account for 30.7% of all opportunities pupils have for play during break and lunchtimes. One quarter of all play opportunities (25.3%) relate to play resources, 21.7% relate to playful environments, 18.3% relate to quiet play activities and 4.0% relate to other opportunities.

Over half (54.6%) of all schools (89) do not have a play policy and 45.4% (74) do have a play policy.

### **3.4 The Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015.**

The [Children's Services Co-operation Act](#) (the Act) aims to improve co-operation between certain public sector organisations known as 'Children's Authorities' and between these Children's Authorities and other children's service providers, in order to improve the well-being of children and young people. Schools are one of the most important children's service providers.

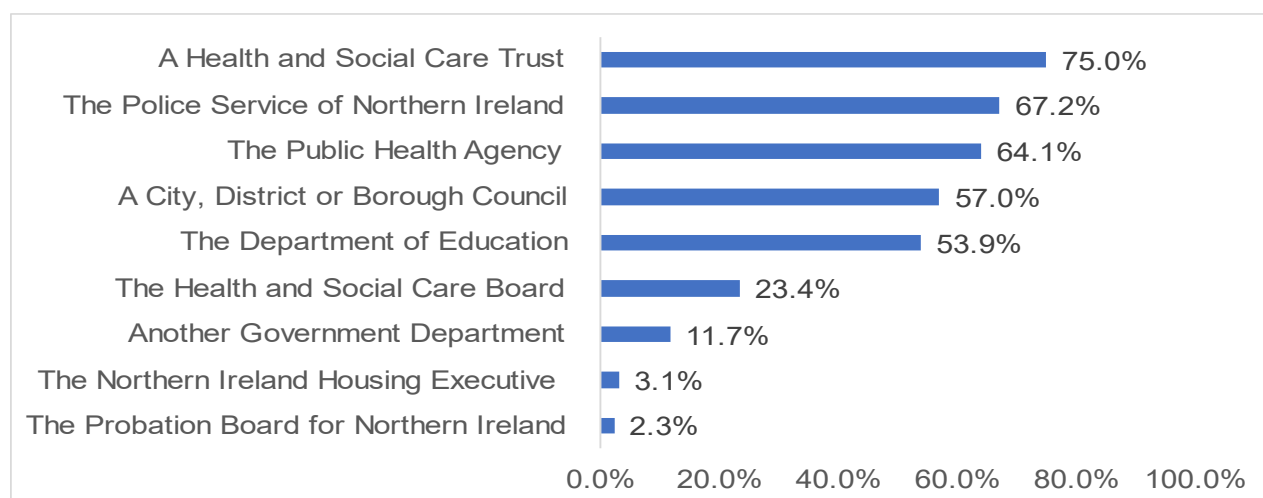


Over three quarters (78.5%) of all schools (128), have worked directly in co-operation with Children’s Authorities other than the EA[7], to improve the well-being of children and young people in the 2021/22 academic year, and 21.5% (35) have not.

The 128 schools that have worked directly in co-operation with Children’s Authorities other than the EA, were asked further questions regarding which Children’s Authorities they have worked with, the activities schools co-operated on with Children’s Authorities, and if resources have been shared.

**Figure 7 Children’s Authorities schools worked with to improve the wellbeing of pupils in the 2021/22 academic year.**

Schools in Northern Ireland reported having worked with all the Children’s Authorities specified in the Act, however rates of engagement varied considerably.



*Base all schools (128) that have worked directly in co-operation with Children’s Authorities other than the EA. Note: schools may have worked multiple Children’s Authorities other than the EA.*

Three quarters of schools (75.0%) have worked with a Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT), 67.2% have worked with the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), 64.1% have worked with the Public Health Agency (PHA), 57.0% have worked with a City District or Borough Council and 53.9% have worked with DE. Almost one quarter of schools (23.4%) have worked with the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB), 11.7% with

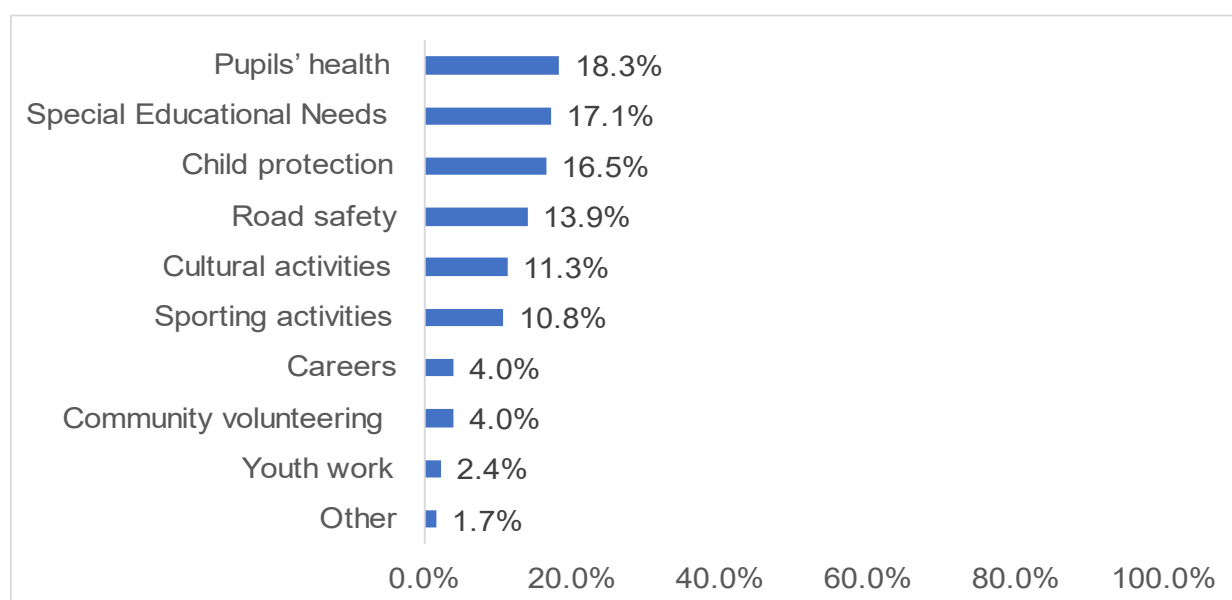
---

7 Schools were directed not to include the EA in their responses as the EA collaborates co-operatively with schools on an ongoing basis.

a Government Department other than DE, 3.1% have worked with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) and 2.3% have worked with Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI).

**Figure 8 The type of activities schools have co-operated with the Children’s Authorities on in the 2021/22 academic year.**

Schools in Northern Ireland co-operated with Children’s Authorities on a wide range of activities with pupils’ health and Special Educational Needs the most common types of activities.



*Base all activities (595). Note: schools may have co-operated on multiple activities.*

The most common types of activities schools co-operated with Children’s Authorities on were pupils’ health (18.3%) and Special Educational Needs (17.1%). Child protection activities account for 16.5% of all activities and road safety a further 13.9%.

Cultural activities account for 11.3% and sporting activities account for 10.8% of all activities. Careers account for a further 4.0% and community volunteering also account for 4% of activities schools co-operated with Children’s Authorities on.

Activities related to youth work were less common, accounting for 2.4% of all activities. Other activities account for 1.7% of all activities, schools have co-operated with the Children’s Authorities on.

Almost three in ten (28.5%) schools (35) who have worked in co-operation with Children’s Authorities shared their school’s resources and 71.5% of schools (88) have not. The number of schools (35) sharing resources is too small to allow further analysis. Five schools eligible to answer this question did not.

### **3.5 Middletown Centre for Autism.**

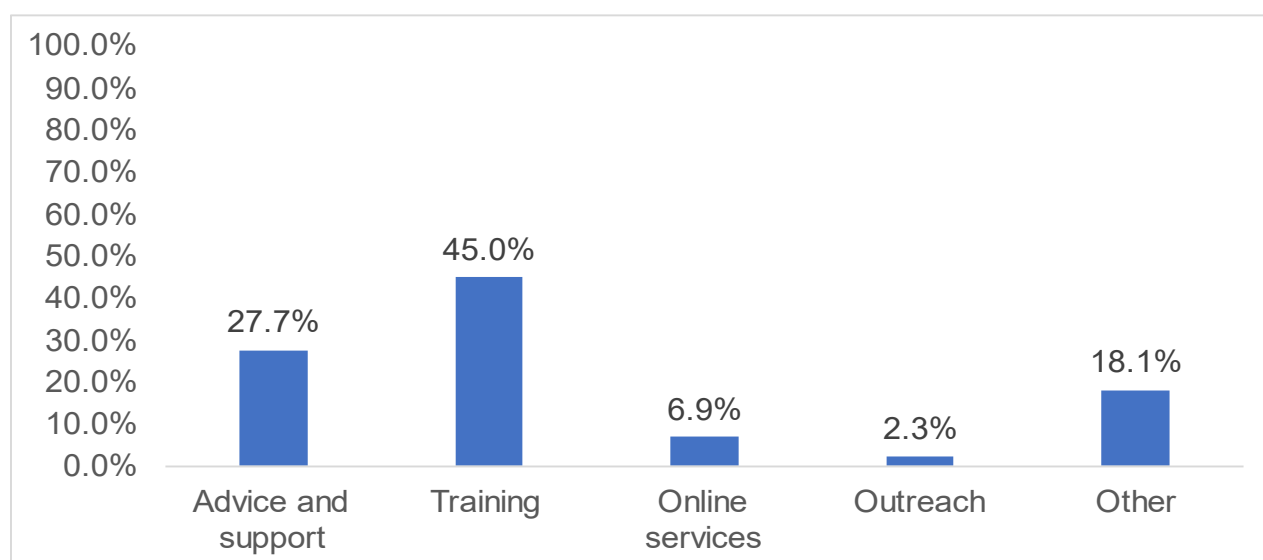
[Middletown Centre for Autism](#) (MCA) was established in 2007 by DE and the Department of Education and Skills, Ireland, to support the promotion of excellence throughout Northern Ireland and Ireland in the education of children and young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

There is a high level of awareness among schools of the MCA. Approximately three quarters (73.1%) of schools (117) are aware of the services provided by the MCA and approximately one quarter (26.9%) of schools (43) are not.

The 117 schools that are aware of the services provided by the MCA were asked what services they were aware of.

**Figure 9 Services provided by the Middletown Centre for Autism that schools are aware of.**

Almost half of schools that were aware of the services provided by the MCA were aware of training services. Both these services can relate to pupils, parents and school staff.

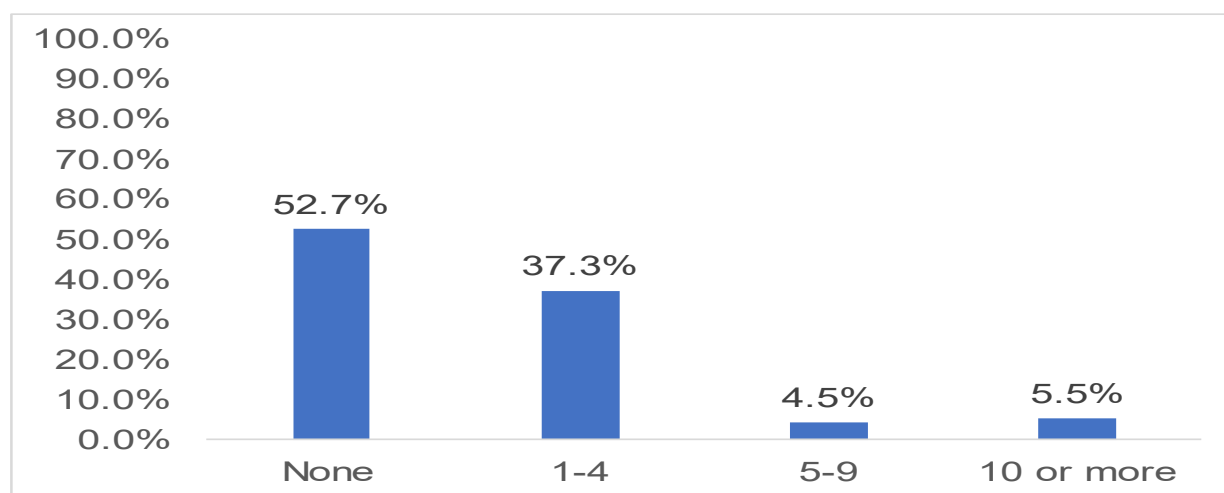


*Base all services (260). Note: schools may have been aware of multiple services.*

Training services account for 45.0% of all services schools are aware of. Advice and support services account for a further 27.7%, online services account for 6.9% and other services 18.1% of all services schools are aware of.

**Figure 10 Number of school staff that have accessed training with Middletown Centre for Autism in the 2021/22 academic year.**

In over half of schools that are aware of the services provided by the MCA, no school staff have undertaken training with the MCA in the 2021/22 academic year.



*Base all schools (117) who were aware of MCA. Note: schools may be aware of multiple sources.*

Among schools that are aware of the services provided by MCA, 52.7% have no staff that have accessed training with the MCA in the 2021/22 academic year. A further 37.3% have between one and four staff that accessed training, 4.5% of schools have between five and nine staff and 5.5% of schools have 10 or more staff that accessed training.

Among schools that are aware of the services provided by MCA the majority (84.8%) have not made any requests for pupils to the Learning & Support Assessment service provided by MCA and 15.2% of schools have made one or more such requests in the 2021/22 academic year.

The MCA's "whole school referral" service will assist school staff in the promotion of collaborative working practices between parents, schools, education and health professionals, pupils and the MCA was of interest to most schools. Approximately eighty

per cent (80.5%) of all schools (124) expressed an interest in the “whole school referral” service offered by the MCA, 15.6% (24) did not know and 3.9% (6) were not interested.

### **3.6 Free School Meals.**

Free school meals are provided to ensure pupils of non-working and low-income families have access to a nutritionally balanced meal, suitable as the main meal of the day, when at school. It is important that eligible families apply to the EA for free school meals and if awarded entitlement that pupils’ avail of their free school meal.

Almost all (96.8%) schools (151) actively encourage parents to apply to the EA for free school meals, and 3.2% (5) do not.

The 151 schools that actively encourage parents to apply to the EA for free school meals were asked what action(s) they take.

#### **Table 5 Actions to encourage parents to apply to the Education Authority for free school meals.**

The schools that actively encourage parents to apply to the EA for free school meals undertake multiple actions to do so.

Action	Percentage of all actions
Letter to parents informing them of the criteria and the application process	21.7%
Circulation of application forms to parents	8.8%
Offering parents support to complete application form	14.0%
Speaking to parents at parent evenings, induction days and school open days	16.5%
Advertising in the school newsletter or school website	21.1%
General advertising/promotion of free school meals	13.6%
Other	4.3%

*Base all actions (558). Note: schools may have undertaken multiple actions.*

Approximately one fifth (21.7%) of all actions to encourage parents to apply to the EA for free school meals involve schools sending letters to parents informing them of the criteria and the application process, a further fifth (21.1%) involve advertising in the school newsletter or on the school’s website and 16.5% involve speaking to parents at parent evenings, induction days and school open days.

Fourteen per cent of actions offer parents support to complete application forms and 13.6% provide general advertising/promotion of free school meals. Less than one in ten

actions (8.8%) involve the circulation of application forms to parents. Other actions account for 4.3% of all actions.

Approximately nine out of every ten (89.1%) schools (139) actively encourage pupils entitled to a free school meal to take a one, however 10.9% (17) do not.

The 139 schools that actively encourage pupils' uptake of free school meals were asked how they do so.

**Table 6: How schools actively encourage pupils' uptake of free school meals.**

Monitoring the uptake of free school meals is the method used most often by schools to encourage pupils' uptake of free school meals.

Method to encourage uptake of free school meals	Percentage of all methods
Monitoring the uptake of free school meals	37.0%
Direct contact with parents or pupils not availing of their free school meal entitlement	29.7%
By using discrete processes and payment systems thereby reducing possible stigma	30.8%
Other	2.5%

*Base all methods (276). Note: schools may have used multiple methods.*

Monitoring the uptake of free school meals accounts for 37.0% of all methods used by schools to actively encourage pupils' uptake of free school meals, using discrete processes and payment systems thereby reducing possible stigma accounts for a further 30.8%. Direct contact with parents or pupils not availing of free school meal entitlement accounts for 29.7% of all methods and 2.5% relate to other methods.

Schools, irrespective of whether they provide free school meals, were asked what they considered to be the barriers to pupils taking up their entitlement to free school meals.

**Table 7 Barriers to pupils taking up their entitlement to free school meals.**

Possible stigma that can be associated with receiving a free school meal is the most common barrier to pupils taking up their entitlement to free school meals.

Barrier to uptake of free school meals	Percentage of all barriers
Possible stigma that can be associated with receiving a free school meal	37.3%
Lunchtime management – queuing time, length of lunchbreak	5.7%
Competing lunchtime activities	3.8%
Not able to have lunch with friends who do not take school meals	15.8%
Other	37.3%

*Base all barriers (209). Note: schools may have stated multiple barriers.*

Possible stigma accounts for 37.3% of all barriers to pupils taking up their entitlement to free school meals, 15.8% relate to pupils being unable to have lunch with friends who do not take school meals. Competing lunchtime activities accounts for 3.8% of all barriers.

Of the 78 responses classified as other, 54% relate to pupils not liking the meals on offer and 17.9% are associated with difficulties parents / guardians encounter accessing the system and when accessed the process was slow for parents/ guardians.

Over three quarters (78.2%) of schools (122) have taken action to reduce barriers to pupils taking up their entitlement to free school meals and 21.8% (34) have not.

**Table 8 Actions taken to reduce the main barriers to pupils taking up their entitlement to free school meals.**

The most common action schools undertook to reduce the barriers to pupils taking up their entitlement to free school meals relates to the social interaction of pupils i.e., allowing all pupils to eat together.

Action to reduce barriers to pupils taking up free school meals	Percentage of all actions
Improved administration system for school meals	21.8%
Improved lunchtime management for example by shortening queuing time for meals	14.6%
Lengthened lunchbreak to allow for lunchtime activities	6.8%
Allowed all pupils to eat together	26.0%
Actions to reduce the possible stigma that can be associated with receiving a free school meal	20.5%
Other	10.4%

*Base all actions (308). Note: schools may have undertaken multiple actions.*

Over one quarter (26%) of actions to reduce barriers to pupils taking up their entitlement to free school meals allowed all pupils to eat together. Approximately one fifth (21.8%) of actions were taken to improve the administration system for school meals and 20.5% were actions to reduce the possible stigma that can be associated with receiving a free school meal. Actions to improve lunchtime management for example by shortening queuing time for meals account for 14.6% of all actions. Less common were actions relating to lengthening the lunchbreak to allow for lunchtime activities (6.8%). Other actions account for 10.4% of all actions.

### ***3.7 Breakfast Provision.***

Eating a healthy breakfast is important for a healthy balanced diet. The provision of breakfast and Breakfast Clubs help to prepare children for learning by improving levels of concentration and can make a positive contribution to wider school objectives on issues such as attendance and punctuality. They can make an important contribution to both education and health policies when effectively implemented.

Over half (54.1%) of all schools (85) offer breakfast provision for pupils, and 45.9% (72) do not.

The 85 schools that offer breakfast provision for pupils were asked further questions relate to how often they provide breakfasts, sources of funding for breakfast provision, and who provides breakfasts in their schools.

Almost all schools (95% or more)<sup>8</sup> that offer breakfasts provide breakfast every day.

---

<sup>8</sup> The actual percentage is not released as the percentage who provide breakfast in less than every day is based on a small number of schools.



**Table 9 Percentage of pupils who eat breakfast in school.**

In most of the schools that offer breakfast no more than one fifth of their pupils eat breakfast.

Percentage of pupils who eat breakfast in school	Percentage of schools
1-10%	45.9%
11-20%	32.9%
21-30%	10.6%
31-100%	10.6%

*Base all schools (85) schools that offer breakfast provision for pupils. Note: categories combined due to small numbers.*

In 45.9% of schools that offer breakfast between one per cent and 10% of pupils eat breakfast in school. In a further third (32.9%) of such schools between 11% and 20% of pupils eat breakfast in school. In approximately one in ten schools (10.6%) that offer breakfast between 21% and 30% of pupils eat breakfast in school and in the same percentage of schools between 31% and 100% of pupils eat breakfast in school.

**Table 10 Sources of funding for breakfast provision.**

Schools may source funding for breakfast from multiple sources, and most schools that offer breakfast self-fund this provision either fully or partially.

Funding source	Percentage of schools that offer breakfast	Base
Self-funding	68.2%	85
School budget	14.1%	85
DE's Extended Schools	36.5%	85
Other government funding	0.0%	85
Charity	9.4%	85
Other	12.9%	85

*Note: 1. schools may use multiple funding sources.*

Self-funding, either full or partial, is a source of funding breakfast provision among 68.2% of schools that offer breakfasts. DE's [Extended Schools Programme](#) is a source of funding for 36.5% of schools, 14.1% of schools use their school budget, 9.4% use a charity and no school uses other government funding as a source to fund breakfast provision.

Of the schools that offer breakfast 55.3% (47) offer free breakfasts to any pupils, and 44.7% (38) do not.

Schools may provide subsidised breakfasts to any pupils and 32.9% of schools (28) that offer breakfast do so, and 67.1% of schools (57) do not. As the number of schools that provide subsidised breakfast is small (28) the question on the cost of subsidised breakfast is not reported.

Schools may charge the full cost of breakfast provision for any pupils, and 49.4% of schools (42) do so and 50.6% of schools (43) do not. As the number of schools that charge the full cost for some pupils is small (42) the question on the cost of breakfasts is not reported.

**Table 11 Who provides breakfasts in schools.**

School staff, catering and non-catering, account for most breakfast providers.

Breakfast provider	Percentage of all providers
Education Authority catering staff	20.4%
School catering staff	23.7%
Contract catering	*
Parents / guardians or other volunteers	5.4%
Charity	*
Private company / sponsor	5.4%
Other	41.9%

*Base all providers (93). \* Indicates a small number that has been suppressed for confidentiality. Note: 1. schools may use multiple providers. 2. schools may have multiple providers.*

Approximately one quarter (23.7%) of breakfast providers are school catering staff and one fifth (20.4%) are EA catering staff. Parents / guardians are the source for 5.4% of breakfast provision. Further analysis of the other category, 41.9% of all responses found all relate to school staff that are not catering staff.

All schools, regardless of whether they offered breakfasts, were asked questions regarding why pupils would eat a breakfast at school. Specifically, what the benefits of pupils eating breakfast at school are, who benefits more pupils entitled to free school meals or those not entitled to free school meals, and barriers to greater uptake of school breakfasts.

**Table 12 Reasons why a pupil would eat breakfast at school.**

The working pattern of pupils' parents / guardians is the most common reason for a pupil to eat breakfast at school.

Reason why a pupil would eat breakfast at school	Percentage of all reasons
It is the only way the pupil will get access to a meal in the morning	26.0%
Lack of money	14.0%
Parent/guardian goes to work early and needs to leave pupil at school beforehand	42.9%
So as the pupil can socialise	14.0%
Other	3.2%

*Base all reasons (308). Note: schools may have stated multiple reasons.*

A parent/guardian that goes to work early and needs to leave their child(ren) at school beforehand accounts for 42.9% of all reasons why a pupil eats breakfast at school. Approximately one quarter (26.0%) of all reasons relate to a school breakfast being the only way the pupil will get access to a meal in the morning, and a further 14% of reasons relate to a lack of money. Fourteen per cent of reasons also relate to the fact that breakfast at school provides an opportunity for pupils to socialise.

**Table 13 Benefits of eating a breakfast in school.**

Improved concentration is the most common benefit of eating a breakfast in school.

Benefiit of eating breakfast in school	Percentage of all benefits
Improved concentration	21.0%
Improved ability to learn/academic performance	17.0%
Better behaviour	12.3%
Improved attendance	16.8%
Improved social skills	14.6%
Greater participation or engagement in class/learning activities	15.7%
Other	2.6%

*Base all benefits (529). Note: schools may have stated multiple benefits.*

One fifth (21.0%) of all benefits relate to improved concentration among pupils, 17.0% relate to improved ability to learn / academic performance and a further 16.8% relate to improved attendance. Greater participation or engagement in class/learning activities account for 15.7% of all benefits, improved social skills account for 14.6% of all benefits, and better behaviour accounts for 12.3%. Other benefits account for 2.6% of all benefits.

Among all schools (151), 69.5% do not know who would benefit more from eating breakfast in school, pupils entitled to free school meals or those not entitled to free school meals. The same percentage of schools (15.2%) believe pupils entitled to free school meals benefit more than other pupils as believe they would not.

Among all schools (158) one quarter (25.3%) believe that there are no barriers to greater uptake of breakfast provision and all pupils who want breakfast receive breakfast.

Approximately three-quarters of schools (74.7%) believe barriers exist to greater uptake of breakfast provision. These 118 schools were asked about the barriers they believe exist.

**Table 14 Barriers to greater uptake of breakfast provision.**

Financial barriers either for the school or the pupils' parents / guardians account for most of the barriers to greater uptake of breakfast provision.

Barrier to uptake of breakfast provision	Percentage of all barriers
Lack of funding	19.3%
Cost of provision	17.2%
Lack of available catering staff	12.8%
Lack of staff / volunteers to supervise	12.8%
Lack of time as pupils arrive at school close to the start of	10.8%
Restrictions on the items that can be provided	5.1%
Pupils/parents have limited money to spend – if it is spent	16.6%
Other	5.4%

*Base all barriers (296). Note: schools may have stated multiple barriers.*

Approximately one-fifth of barriers (19.3%) to greater uptake of breakfast provision relate to a lack of funding, and a further 17.2% relate to the cost of provision.

Pupils/parents having limited money to spend, account for 16.6% of barriers to greater uptake. The same percentage of barriers (12.8%) relate to a lack of available catering staff and a lack of staff / volunteers to supervise breakfasts. Less common, accounting for 5.1% of barriers, are restrictions on the items that can be provided. Other barriers account for 5.4% of all barriers.

### **3.8 Physical Education.**

Physical Education (PE) is part of the statutory curriculum for every pupil aged 4-16 from Foundation Stage to Key Stage 4. DE is currently considering its priorities in relation to the future delivery of PE, particularly in primary schools, to address rising levels of childhood obesity and Type 2 diabetes.

Both primary schools and post-primary schools were asked on average how much time is spent per week on the delivery of curricular PE for each relevant Key Stage. The numbers of responses from post-primaries are too small for analysis by each Key Stage and education post 16 years old (39 schools, 34 schools and 35 schools respectively).

#### **Table 15 Time spent per week on the delivery of curricular PE in primary schools.**

Between 60 and 119 minutes is the most common amount of time spent per week on the delivery of curricular PE in primary schools.

Time spent per week	Foundation Stage	Key Stage 1	Key stage 2
0-59 minutes	25.0%	17.5%	13.2%
60-119 minutes	60.7%	66.7%	63.2%
120 minutes or more	14.3%	15.8%	23.7%
Base	112	114	114

Note: The Foundation Stage is Years 1 and 2; Key Stage 1 is Years 3 and 4 and Key Stage 2 is Years 5 to 7.

In the Foundation stage, 60.7% of schools deliver between 60 minutes and 119 minutes of PE per week, one-quarter (25%) deliver less than 60 minutes and 14.3% deliver 120 minutes or more.

In Key Stage 1, approximately two thirds of schools (66.7%) deliver between 60 minutes and 119 minutes of PE per week, 17.5% of schools deliver less than 60 minutes and 15.8% deliver 120 minutes or more.

In Key Stage 2, 63.2% of schools deliver between 60 minutes and 119 minutes of PE per week, approximately one-quarter (23.7%) deliver 120 minutes or more and 13.2% deliver less than 60 minutes.

**Table 16 How curricular PE is delivered in primary schools.**

In primary schools curricular PE is most often delivered by a combination of school teaching staff and an external provider.

Curricular PE is delivered by	Foundation stage	Key Stage 1	Key stage 2
External provider.	7.4%	5.6%	4.7%
School teaching staff	38.0%	31.8%	19.6%
A combination of school teaching staff and an external provider.	54.6%	62.6%	75.7%
Base	108	107	107

In Key Stage 2, over three quarters of primary schools (75.7%) deliver PE by a combination of school teaching staff and an external provider, 19.6% deliver PE by school teaching staff only and 4.6% by an external provider only.

In Key Stage 1, 62.6% of primary schools deliver PE by a combination of school teaching staff and an external provider, 31.8%% deliver PE by school teaching staff only and 5.6% by an external provider.

In the Foundation Stage, 54.6% of primary schools deliver PE by a combination of school teaching staff and an external provider, 38.0%% deliver PE by school teaching staff only and 7.4% by an external provider only.

Both primary schools and post-primary schools were asked if they have whole school approach to promoting physical activity. Almost all (86.6%) schools (131) have a whole school approach to promoting physical activity and 13.2% of schools (20) do not.

### ***3.9 Remote Learning.***

Approximately nine out of every ten (86.1%) schools (130) have a remote learning policy which provides guidance to parents / guardians and pupils on their school's approach to remote learning. The remaining 13.9% of schools (21) do not.

Most (69.5%) schools (105) have a named senior leader with overarching responsibility for remote learning and 30.5% (46) do not.

Schools were asked if since March 2020 they have provided any 'live lessons' as part of their remote learning provision and 64.9% (98) have done so while 35.1% (53) have not.

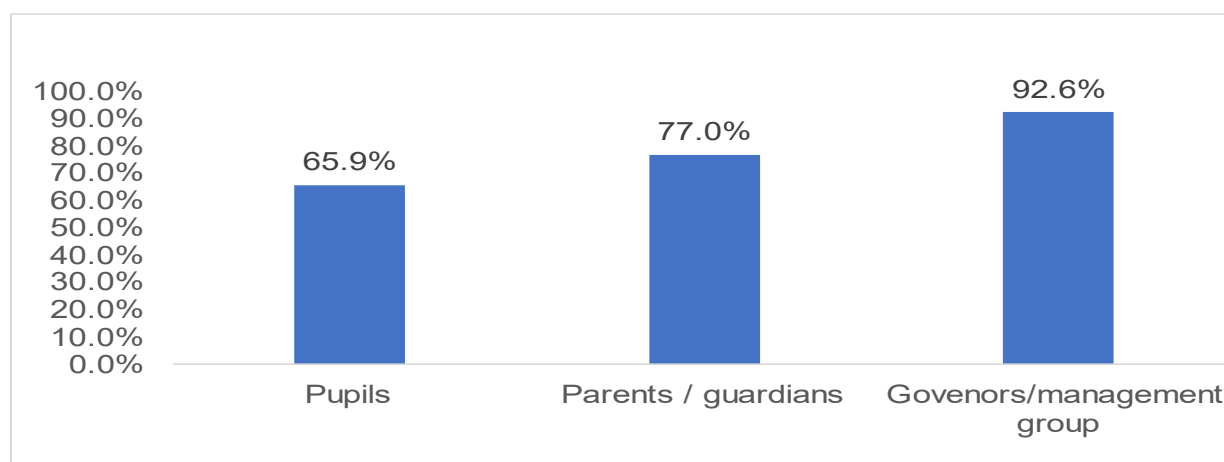
### 3.10 Relationships and Sexuality Education.

The statutory curriculum for Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) at primary level, and the Personal Development strand of Learning for Life and Work at post-primary level, includes prescribed content for each Key Stage in the area of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE). DE also requires all grant-aided schools to develop their own policy on how they will address RSE within the curriculum.

Almost all (91.3%) schools (137) have a RSE policy, and 8.7% (13) do not have a RSE policy. Of the 137 schools with a RSE policy, 65.9% (89) have reviewed their policy and 34.1% (46)[9] have not.

**Figure 11 Consultees regarding schools' Relationships and Sexuality Education policies or programmes.**

Almost all schools have consulted with school governors / management group regarding their RSE policies or programmes.



*Base pupils 135 schools; parents / guardians 135 schools; and governors / management group 136 schools.*

Over ninety per cent (92.6%) of schools have consulted with governors / management group and over three quarters of schools (77.0%) have consulted with parents / guardians. Approximately two thirds of schools (65.9%) have consulted with pupils.

---

9 Note two schools eligible to answer this question did not.

The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) provide a RSE Hub for the use of schools in Northern Ireland. Over half of all schools, 54.4% (80) have not made use of the CCEA RSE Hub and 45.6% (67) have.

Most of the 67 schools that have used the CCEA RSE Hub found the materials to be quite useful (59.1%) and 19.7% found the materials to be very useful.

Questions for post-primaries schools related to RSE teaching and learning content are not reported on as less than 50 schools answered each question.

### ***3.11 School Uniforms.***

The wearing of a school uniform is not governed by legislation but falls to schools to determine. The day-to-day management of schools, including school uniform policy, is a matter for school Principals, subject to any directions that might be given by the Board of Governors.

Almost all (96.6%) schools (143) have a compulsory school uniform policy and 3.4% (five schools) do not.

Of the schools that have a compulsory school uniform policy the majority, 58.0% (83) have undertaken a review(s) of their policy and 42% (60) have not<sup>[10]</sup>.

Of the schools that have undertaken a review(s) 90.4% (75) have consulted with other stakeholders as part of the review(s) and 9.6% (8) have not.

Of the 75 schools who have consulted with other stakeholders 86.7% have consulted with current parents / guardians (including Parent Teacher Associations etc.,) and 81.3% have consulted with current pupils (including school councils etc.).

Schools with a compulsory school uniform were asked to indicate the approximate cost of each item of clothing.

---

10 Five schools eligible to answer this question did not.



**Table 17 Approximate cost of each item of compulsory school uniform.**

A school blazer is the most expensive item of compulsory school uniform.

Uniform item	£1-£10	£11-£20	£21-£30	£31-£40	£41-£50	£51-£75	£76-£100	over £100	Base
Blazer	11.5%	*	*	*	19.2%	46.2%	11.5%	0.0%	52
Blouse / shirt	81.9%	#	*	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	94
Cardigan / jumper	29.4%	50.0%	#	*	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	102
Skirt / trousers	46.0%	31.7%	#	*	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	126
Socks / tights	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	104
Sweatshirt	24.5%	59.6%	11.7%	2.1%	2.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	94
Tie	95.3%	4.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	85
Shoes / footwear	13.5%	29.2%	32.6%	15.7%	5.6%	2.2%	1.1%	0.0%	89
School coat	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	less than 50
Polo shirt	71.4%	25.3%	3.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	91

*\* Indicates a percentage based on a small that has been suppressed and # indicates another percentage that has been counter-suppressed, for confidentiality.*

Approximately half of schools with a compulsory blazer (46.2%) estimated the cost to be between £51 and £75. Most schools with a compulsory blouse or shirt (81.9%) estimated the to be between £1 and £10. Half of all schools with a compulsory cardigan (50%) estimated the cost to be between £11 and £20.

Approximately half of schools with compulsory skirt or trousers (46.0%) estimated the cost be between £1 and £10. All schools with compulsory socks or tights (100.0%) estimated the cost to be between £1 and £10. Six out of ten schools with a compulsory sweatshirt (59.6%) estimated the cost to be between £11 and £20. Almost all schools with a compulsory tie (95.3%) estimated the cost be between £1 and £10.

Approximately one third of schools with compulsory shoes or other footwear (32.6%) estimated the cost to be between £21 and £30. Seven out of ten schools with a compulsory polo shirt (71.4%) estimated the cost to be between £1 and £10.

The 143 schools with a compulsory school uniform, excluding PE clothing, were asked about where items of their school uniform could be purchased.

## Figure 12 Availability of school uniforms.

The most common way school uniforms are made available is for some items to be widely available and some only available from a limited number of suppliers.



*Base all schools with a compulsory school uniform (143).*

In 45.3% of schools with a compulsory school uniform policy, some items are widely available and some are only available from a limited number of suppliers. In a further third of schools (33.8%) their compulsory school uniform is widely available from three or more suppliers, in 6.5% available from two suppliers and in 14.4% available from only one supplier.

Over half of all schools, 58.3% (81) have a compulsory PE uniform and 41.7% (58) do not.

The 81 schools that have a compulsory PE uniform were asked about the cost of each item of their PE uniform. Only gym shorts or skirt and PE blouse or shirt had more than 50 responses and are included in Table 18.

**Table 18 Approximate cost of each item of compulsory PE uniform.**

No school with a compulsory PE uniform estimated the cost of gym shorts / skirts or a PE blouse / shirt to be more than £30.

PE uniform item	£1-£10	£11-£20	£21-£30	£31-£40	£41-£50	£51-£75	£76-£100	over £100	Base
Gym shorts / skirts	59.3%	24.1%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	54
PE Blouse / shirt	47.1%	31.4%	21.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	70

Approximately six out of ten schools (59.3%) with compulsory gym shorts or skirts estimated the cost to be between £1 and £10, in one quarter of schools (24.1%) the cost was estimated to be between £11 and £20 and in 16.7% the cost was estimated to be between £21 and £30.

Approximately half of schools (47.1%) with a compulsory PE blouse or shirt estimated the cost to be between £1 and £10, in 31.4% the cost was estimated to be between £11 and £20 and in 21.4% the cost was estimated to be between £21 and £30.

The 81 schools with a compulsory PE uniform were asked about where items of their PE uniform could be purchased.

**Figure 13 Availability of PE uniforms.**

The most common way PE uniforms are made available is for items to be widely available from three or more suppliers.



*Base all schools with a compulsory PE uniform (81).*

In 34.6% of schools with a compulsory PE uniform, items are widely available from three or more suppliers, in 29.6% some items are widely available and some are only available from a limited number of suppliers, and in 9.9% items are available from two suppliers. In approximately one quarter of schools (25.9%) items of PE uniform are available only from one supplier.

Approximately six out of every ten schools with a compulsory school uniform (61.9%) have taken action in the last twelve months to reduce school uniform costs. These 86 schools were asked what action(s) they have taken.

**Table 19 Actions taken by schools to reduce school uniform costs in the 12 months prior to the survey.**

The most common action taken by schools to reduce the cost of school uniforms in the 12 months prior to the survey was to make second hand items available.

Action to reduce cost of school uniform	Percentage of all actions
Made the uniform available in a wider number of shops	9.2%
Incorporated items that are readily available “off the peg” from a number of retail outlets	20.3%
Reduced the number of compulsory items	19.4%
Changed supplier or supplier type	5.1%
Negotiated with supplier to reduce or hold costs	9.2%
Made second hand items available	36.9%

*Base all actions (217). Note schools may have taken more than one action.*

More than one third (36.9%) of all actions taken by schools were to make second hand items available, a further fifth of all actions (20.3%) were to incorporate items that are readily available “off the peg” from a number of retail outlets and a fifth (19.4%) reduced the number of compulsory items. The same percentage of actions (9.2%) made the uniform available in a wider number of shops and relate to schools negotiating with suppliers to reduce or hold costs. Five per cent of actions involved schools changing supplier or supplier type.

### ***3.12 CPR in Schools.***

All questions in this section were answered by less than 50 post-primary schools and no analysis is reported.

## 4. Pre-school Settings.

The analysis in this section relates to responses given by Principals / School Leaders on behalf of their pre-school settings.

### 4.1 Remote and Blended Learning.

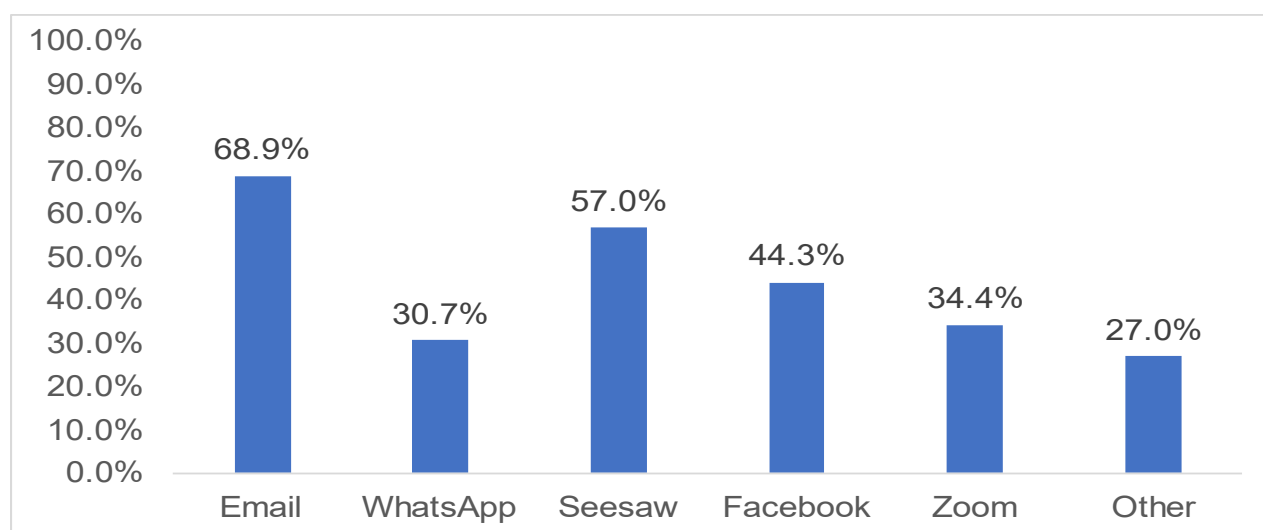
Pre-school settings were asked if they used online platforms to keep in contact with parents / guardians and provide remote learning opportunities during any periods when their setting was closed due to Covid 19.

Almost all (97.6%) pre-school settings (244) used online platforms to keep in contact with parents / guardians and provide remote learning opportunities during any periods when their setting was closed due to Covid 19, and 2.4% (6) have not.

The 244 pre-school settings that used an online platform were asked what platforms they used.

**Figure 14 Percentage of pre-school settings that used various online platforms to keep in contact with parents / guardians and provide remote learning opportunities during any periods when their setting was closed due to Covid 19.**

Among pre-school settings that used online platforms to keep in contact with parents / guardians and provide remote learning opportunities during any periods when their setting was closed due to Covid 19, most used email and over half used Seesaw.



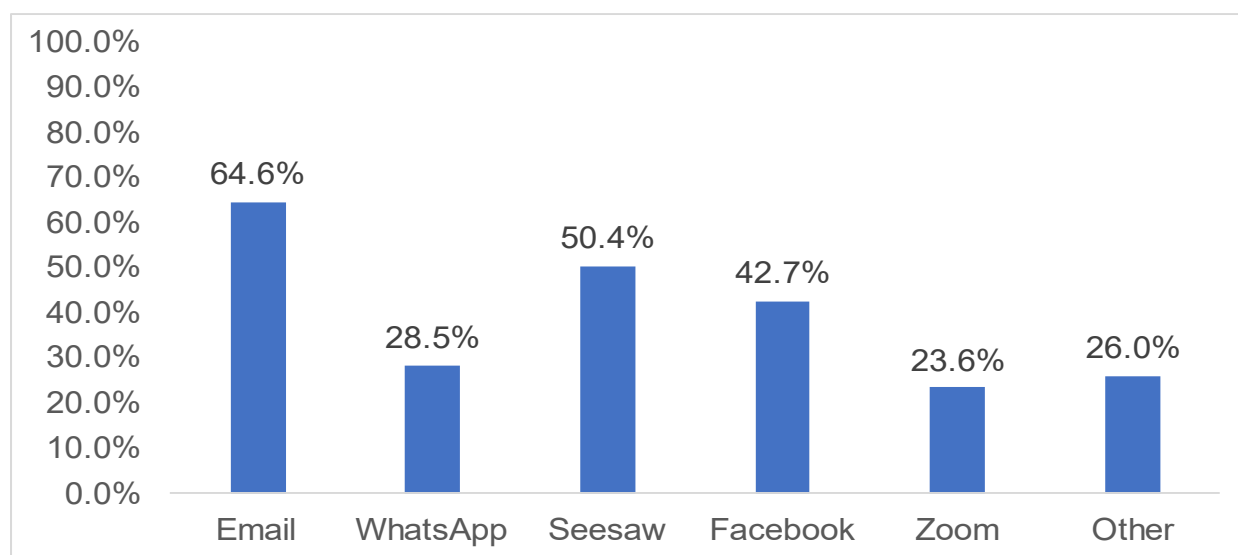
*Base pre-school settings that used online platforms (237). Note: pre-school settings may have used one or more than one online platform.*

Most pre-school settings (68.9%) used email to keep in contact with parents / guardians and provide remote learning opportunities during any periods when their setting was closed due to Covid 19, and over half (57.0%) used Seesaw. Less than half (44.3%) of pre-school settings used Facebook, approximately one third (34.4%) used Zoom and over one quarter (27.0%) used other platforms.

All pre-school settings (250) were asked about their future plans to use online platforms to regularly to keep in contact with children during any periods of school closures. Almost all pre-school settings, over 98%<sup>[11]</sup>, plan to use online platforms to keep in contact with children during any future periods of school closures.

**Figure 15 Percentage of pre-school settings that plan to use various online platforms to keep in contact with children during any future periods of school closures.**

Among pre-schools settings that plan to use online platforms to keep in contact with children during any future periods of school closures, most plan to use email and half plan to use Seesaw.



*Base, not released as to do so would be disclosive. Note: pre-school settings may plan to use one or more than one online platform.*

Most pre-school settings (64.6%) plan to use email to keep in contact with children during any future periods of school closures, and over half (57.0%) plan to use Seesaw. Less

---

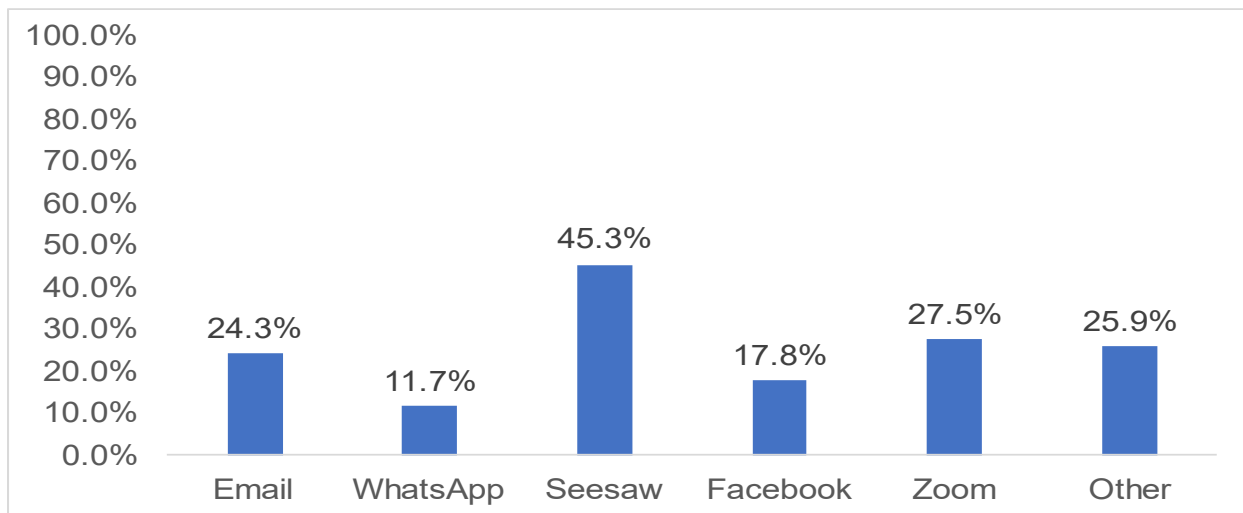
<sup>11</sup> The actual percentage is not released as the percentage not planning to use an online platform is based on a small number of schools.

than half (42.7%) of pre-school settings plan to use Facebook, approximately one quarter (23.6%) plan to use Zoom and approximately one quarter (26.0%) plan to use other platforms to keep in contact with children during any future periods of school closures.

All pre-school settings (250) were asked about their future plans to use online platforms to provide remote learning opportunities during any periods of school closures. Almost all pre-school settings, over 98%<sup>[12]</sup>, plan to use online platforms to provide remote learning opportunities during any periods of school closures.

**Figure 16 Percentage of pre-school settings that plan to use various online platforms to provide remote learning during any future periods of school closures.**

Among pre-school settings that plan to use online platform(s) to provide remote learning during any future periods of school closures, less than half plan to use Seesaw.



*Base, not released as to do so would be disclosive. Note: pre-school settings may plan to use one or more than one online platform.*

Less than half (45.3%) of pre-school settings that plan to use online platforms to provide remote learning during any future periods of school closures, plan to use Seesaw. More than one quarter plan to use Zoom (27.5%), approximately one quarter (25.9%) plan to use other platforms, and a similar proportion (24.3%) plan to use email to provide remote learning during any future periods of school closures.

---

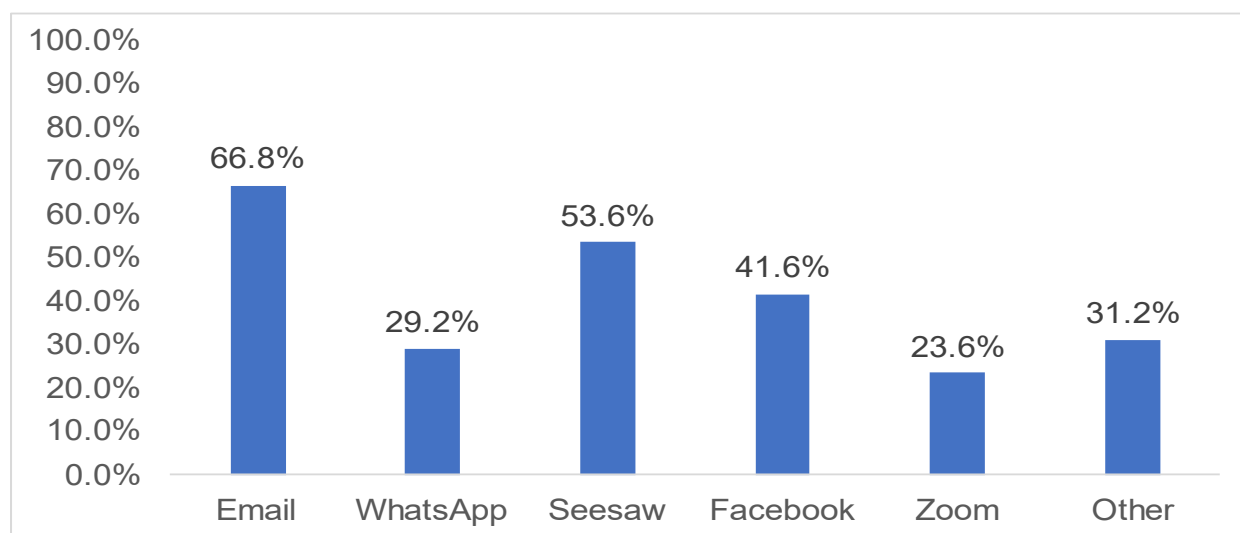
<sup>12</sup> The actual percentage is not released as the percentage not planning to use an online platform is based on a small number of schools.



All pre-school settings (250) were asked about their future plans to use online platforms to keep in contact with parents / guardians and all (100%) plan to use online platforms to keep in contact with parents / guardians.

**Figure 17 Percentage of pre-school settings that plan to use various online platforms to keep in contact with parents / guardians in any future periods of school closures.**

Most pre-school settings plan to use email to keep in contact with parents / guardians during any future periods of school closures, and over half plan to use Seesaw.



Base all pre-school settings (250). Note: pre-school settings may plan to use one or more than one online platform.

Most pre-school settings (66.8%) plan to use email to keep in contact with parents / guardians during any future periods of school closures, over half (53.6%) plan to use Seesaw and less than half (41.6%) plan to use Facebook. Similar percentages of pre-schools settings plan to use other platforms (31.2%) and plan to use WhatsApp (29.2%). Less than one quarter (23.6%) of pre-school settings plan to use Zoom to keep in contact with parents / guardians during any future periods of school closures.

All pre-school settings (250) were asked about their future plans to use online platforms to regularly to keep in contact with Governors / Management Committees during any periods of school closures. Almost all pre-school settings, over 98%<sup>13</sup>, plan to use online

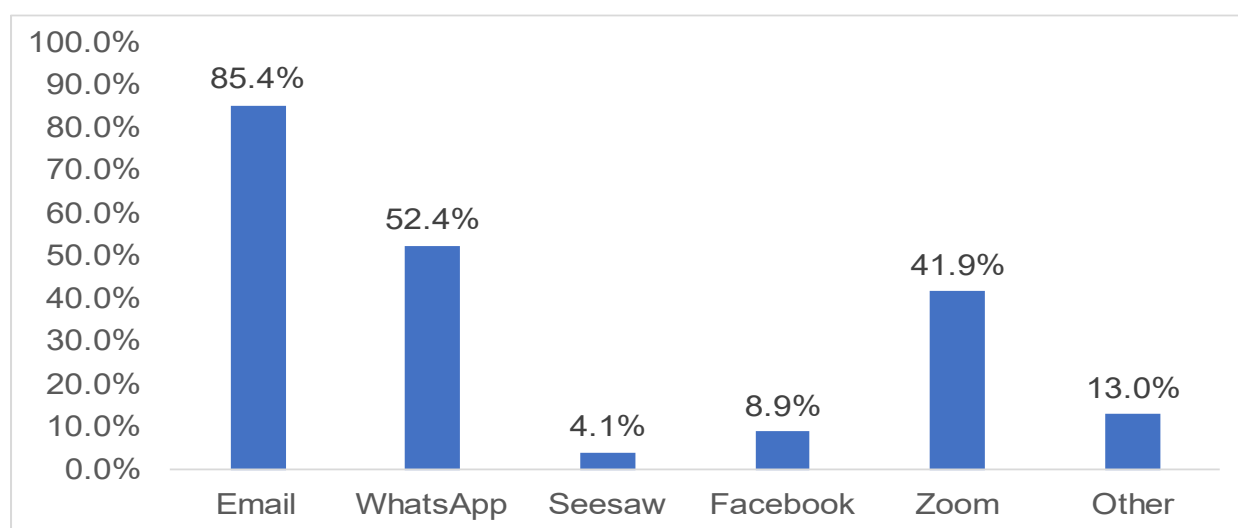
---

<sup>13</sup> The actual percentage is not released as the percentage not planning to use an online platform is based on a small number of schools.

platforms to keep in contact with Governors / Management Committees during any future periods of school closures.

**Figure 18 Percentage of pre-school settings that plan to use various online platforms to keep in contact with Governors / Management Committees in any future periods of school closures.**

Most pre-school settings plan to use email to keep in contact with Governors / Management Committees during any future periods of school closures, and over half plan to use Seesaw.



*Base, not released as to do so would be disclosive.*

Most pre-school settings (85.4%) plan to use email to keep in contact with Governors / Management Committees during any future periods of school closures, over half (52.4%) plan to use Seesaw and less than half (41.9%) plan to use Zoom. Thirteen per cent plan to use other online platforms, 8.9% plan to use Facebook and 4.1% of pre-school settings plan to use Seesaw to keep in contact with Governors / Management Committees during any future periods of school closures.

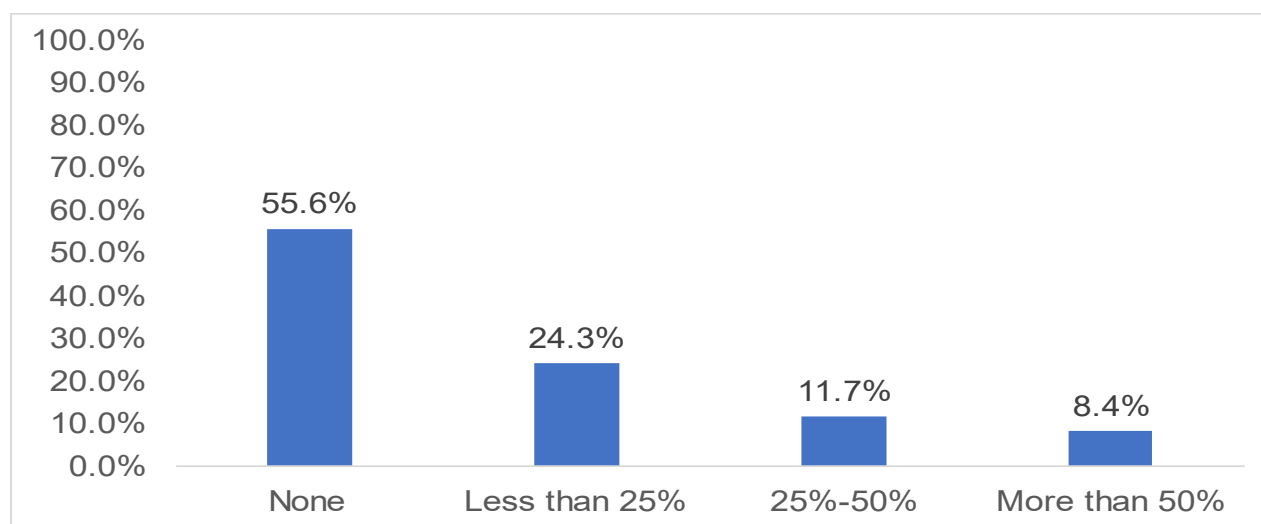
#### 4.2. Penultimate Pre-school Children.

The year before the child starts primary school is called the final pre-school year (when the child has turned three). The year before this is called the penultimate pre-school year (when the child has turned two).

All pre-school settings (239) were asked to estimate the percentage of penultimate pre-school children that were educated in their setting alongside pre-school peers in the 2021/22 academic year.

**Figure 19 Percentage of penultimate pre-school children that were educated in pre-school settings alongside pre-school peers in the 2021/22 academic year.**

In over half of all pre-school settings no penultimate pre-school children were educated alongside their pre-school peers in the 2021/22 academic year.



*Base all pre-school settings (239).*

In over half (55.6%) of all pre-school settings no penultimate pre-school children were educated alongside their pre-school peers and in one quarter (24.3%) less than 25% of penultimate pre-school children were educated alongside their pre-school peers. In over one in ten pre-school settings (11.7%) between 25% and 50% of penultimate pre-school children were educated alongside their pre-school peers, and in less than one in ten settings (8.4%) more than 50% of penultimate pre-school children were educated alongside their pre-school peers.

The 106 pre-school settings where penultimate pre-school children were educated alongside their pre-school peers in the 2021/22 academic year were asked what in their

experience was the main challenge associated with educating penultimate pre-school children in a class with their pre-school peers.

**Table 20 Main challenge associated with educating penultimate pre-school children in a class with their pre-school peers in the 2021/22 academic year.**

Over half of pre-school settings where penultimate pre-school children were educated alongside their pre-school peers in the 2021/22 academic year stated that in their experience the main challenge with educating such pupils together was additional personal, social, and emotional needs.

Main challenge	Percentage of settings
Additional personal, social and emotional needs (including toileting and independence).	52.0%
Additional Special Educational Needs	11.8%
Additional staff required.	13.7%
Difficulty applying curricular guidance for penultimate aged children.	8.8%
Other	13.7%

*Base all pre-school settings where penultimate pre-school children were educated alongside their pre-school peers (106).*

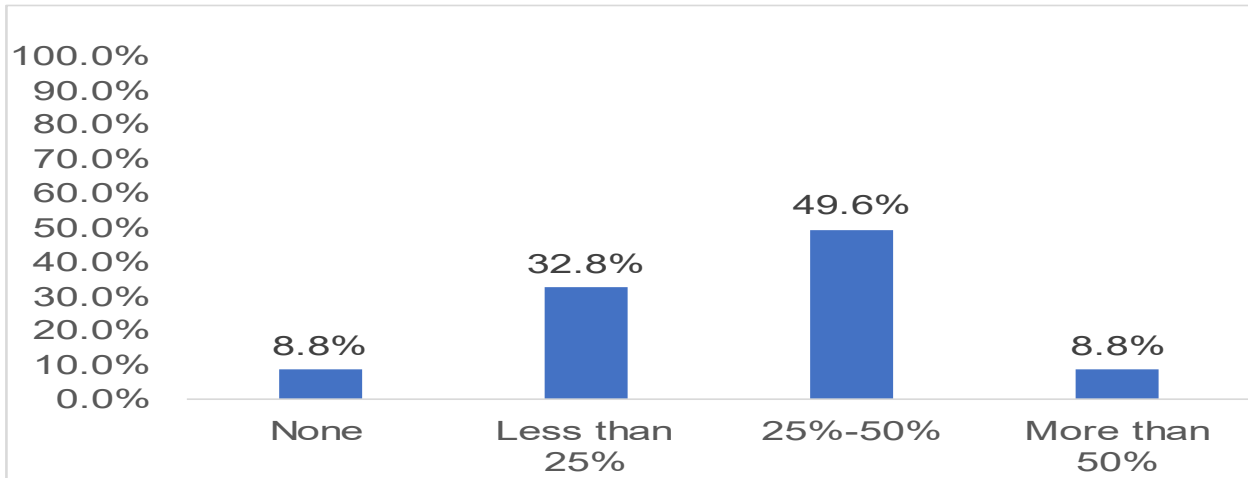
Additional personal, social, and emotional needs was the main challenge in educating penultimate pre-school children alongside their pre-school peers, stated by 52.0% of pre-school settings. Additional staff was stated by 13.7% of pre-school settings and additional Special Educational Needs (SEN) was stated by 11.8% of pre-school settings. Difficulty applying curricular guidance for penultimate children was the main challenge stated by 8.8% of pre-school settings, in educating penultimate pre-school children alongside their pre-school peers in the 2021/22 academic year.

#### **4.3 Speech Language and Communication.**

All pre-school settings (250) were asked to estimate the percentage of children in their settings that have speech and language delays or difficulties in the 2021/22 academic year.

**Figure 20 Percentage of pre-school settings with children speech and language delays or difficulties in the 2021/22 academic year.**

Almost all pre-school settings have children with speech and language delays or difficulties in the 2021/22 academic year.



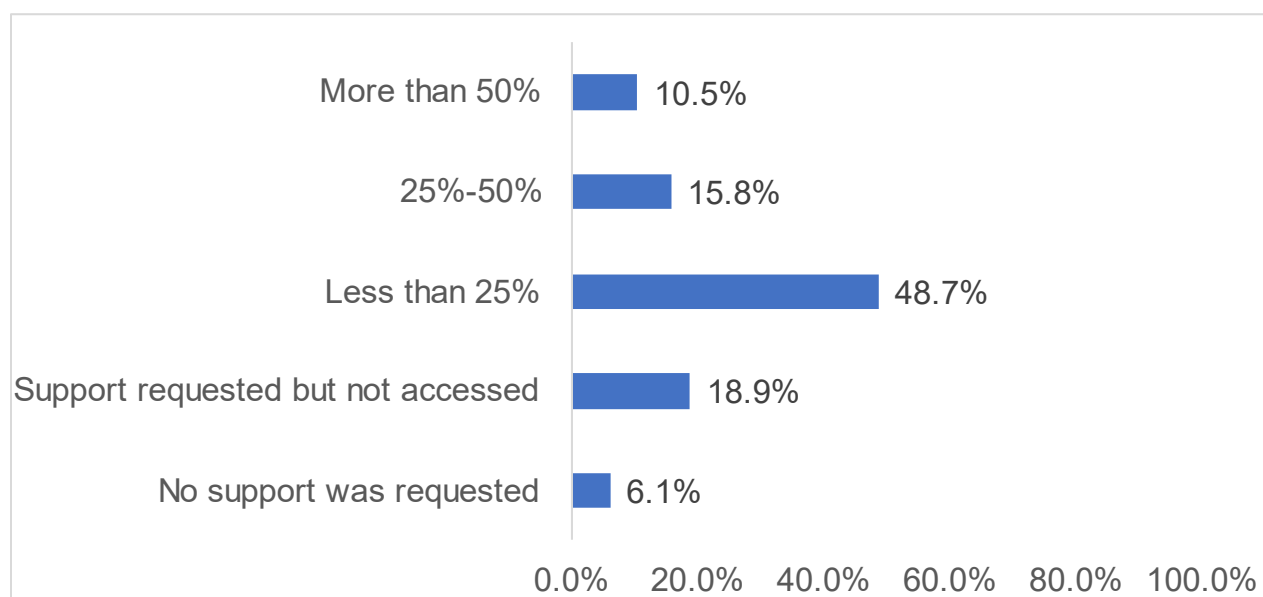
*Base all pre-school settings (250).*

In 49.6% of all pre-school settings between 25% and 50% of children have speech and language delays or difficulties, and in 32.9% less than 25% of children have speech and language delays or difficulties. In 8.8% of pre-school settings more than 50% of children have speech and language delays or difficulties, and in 8.8% of pre-school settings no children have speech and language delays or difficulties.

The 228 pre-school settings with children that have speech and language delays or difficulties were asked to state the percentage of these children that were able to access speech and language therapy support requested.

**Figure 21 Percentage of pre-school settings with children that have speech and language delays or difficulties and access to speech and language therapy support requested in the 2021/22 academic year.**

In less than half of pre-school settings with children that have speech and language delays or difficulties, less than 25% of these children were able to access the support they requested in the 2021/22 academic year.



*Base pre-school settings with children that have speech and language delays or difficulties (228).*

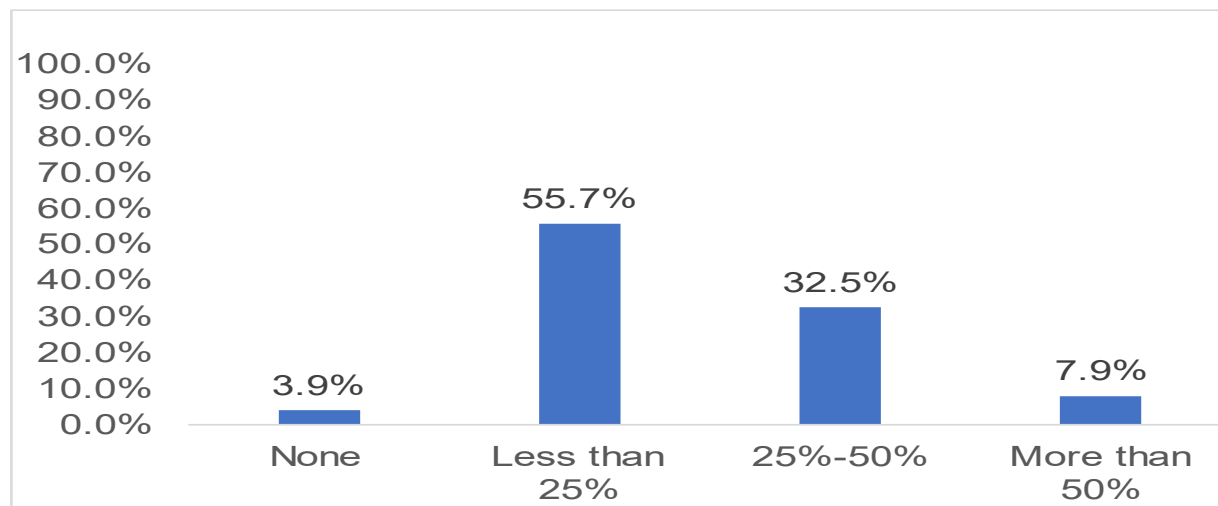
In 48.7% of pre-school settings with children that have speech and language delays or difficulties, less than 25% of these children were able to access the support they requested. In a further 15.8% between 25% and 50% of these children were able to access support, and in 10.5% more than 50% of these children were able to access support.

In 18.9% of pre-school settings with children that have speech and language delays or difficulties support was requested but not accessed, and in 6.1% no support was requested.

The 228 pre-school settings with children that have speech and language delays or difficulties were asked to state the percentage of these children that continued to have delays or difficulties as they left pre-school settings to enter primary school.

**Figure 22 Percentage of pre-school settings with children that have speech and language delays or difficulties that continued as they left pre-school settings to enter primary school in the 2021/22 academic year.**

In almost all pre-school settings with children that have speech and language delays or difficulties, some of these children continued to have delays or difficulties as they left pre-school settings to enter primary school in the 2021/22 academic year.



*Base pre-school settings with children that have speech and language delays or difficulties (228).*

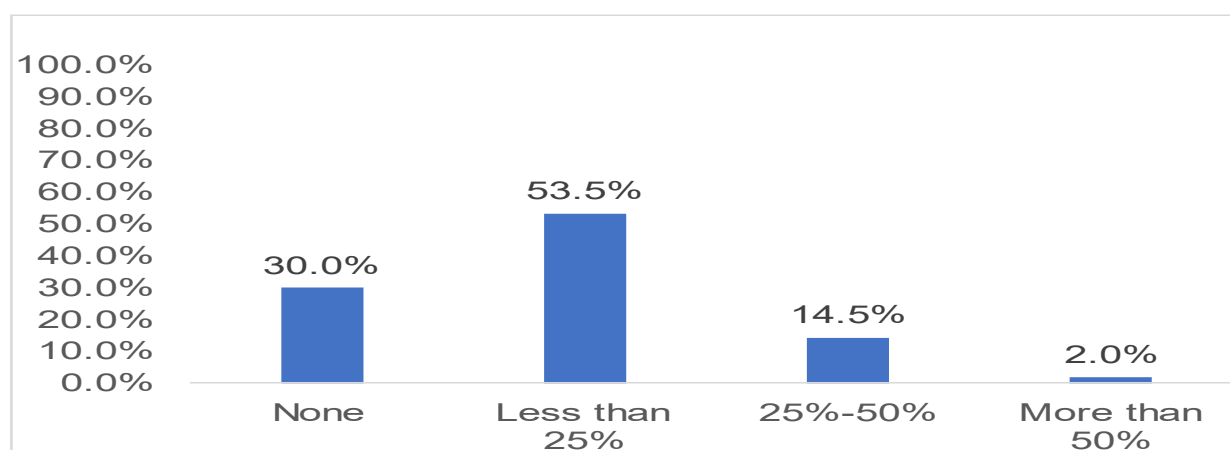
In 55.7% of pre-school settings with children that have speech and language delays or difficulties, less than 25% of these children continued to have delays or difficulties as they entered primary school. In a further 32.5%, between 25% and 50% have delays or difficulties that continued as they entered primary school.

In 7.9% of pre-school settings with children that have speech and language delays or difficulties, more than 50% of these children have delays or difficulties that continued as they entered primary school. In a further 3.9%, none of these children have delays or difficulties that continued as they entered primary school.

The 228 pre-school settings with children that have speech and language delays or difficulties whose delays or difficulties continued as they entered primary school were asked, what percentage of these children have not yet accessed outside support from a speech and language therapist.

**Figure 23 Percentage of pre-school settings with children that have speech and language delays or difficulties that continued as they entered primary school and access to outside support from a speech and language therapist in the 2021/22 academic year.**

In seven out of ten pre-school settings with children whose speech and language delays or difficulties continued as they entered primary, some of these children have not accessed outside support from a speech and language therapist in the 2021/22 academic year.



*Base pre-school settings with children that have speech and language delays or difficulties that continued as they entered primary school (228). Note 19 pre-schools eligible to answer did not.*

In 53.5% of pre-school settings with children that have speech and language delays or difficulties that continued as they entered primary school, less than 25% of these children have not yet accessed outside support from a speech and language therapist. In a further 30%, none of these children have not accessed outside support from a speech and language therapist.

In 14.5% of pre-school settings with children that have speech and language delays or difficulties that continued as they entered primary school, between 25% and 50% of these children have not accessed outside support from a speech and language therapist. In the remaining 2%, more than 50% of these children have not accessed outside support from a speech and language therapist.

All pre-school settings (225) were asked if their setting have access to specific speech and language therapy (SLT) services / support. Most pre-schools settings (63.6%) do not



have access to SLT services / support, 30.7% do have access, and 5.8% did not know if they have access or not.

The 69 pre-school settings with access to SLT services / support were asked how this is funded.

**Table 21 Sources of funding for SLT services / support.**

The most common funding source for SLT services / support is the DE Extended Schools Programme.

Source of funding	Percentage of all funding sources
Sure Start SLT funding	7.9%
Extended Schools funding used to buy in SLT support	35.5%
Self-funded SLT support	10.5%
Other	46.1%

*Base all sources of funding (76). Note: pre-school settings may source funding from multiple sources.*

Other sources of funding account for 46.1% of all sources of funding for SLT services / support. The DE Extended Schools Programme accounts for 35.5% of all funding sources, self-funding accounts for 10.5% of all sources of funding and Sure Start accounts for 7.9%.

All pre-school settings (224) were asked if staff in their setting have accessed professional development/training to provide speech and language support or strategies for the children in their setting. In most pre-school settings (71.9%), staff have accessed such professional development/training, and in 25.9% staff have not done so. The remaining 2.2% of pre-school settings did not know if staff have accessed such professional development/training.

The 161 pre-school settings in which staff have accessed professional development/training to provide speech and language support or strategies for the children in their setting were asked which professional development/training option they have accessed.

**Table 22 Staff professional development/training options to provide speech and language support or strategies for children.**

Makaton and Wellcom account for more than half of all professional development/training options to provide speech and language support or strategies for children in pre-school settings accessed by staff.

Professional development/training option	Percentage of all options
Wellcom	25.6%
Comet	4.7%
Hanen	12.5%
Makaton	28.4%
Elklan	16.9%
Other	11.9%

*Base all options (320). Note: staff may access multiple options.*

Makaton account for 28.4% of all professional development/training options staff accessed, and Wellcom account for 25.6%. Elklan account for 16.9% of all options, and Comet account for 4.7%. Other options account for 11.9% of all options accessed.

## Appendix A. Representativeness of the Omnibus Responses.

This section of the report compares the schools that responded to the Omnibus by school type, management type and location with all schools in the 2022/23 Northern Ireland School Census. And then compares the pre-schools that responded to the Omnibus by and location.

**Table 23 Omnibus respondent schools by school type compared to the Northern Ireland School Census 2022/23.**

Respondent schools are an under-representation of primary schools in Northern Ireland and an over-representation of post-primary schools.

School type	Omnibus 2022	School Census 2022/23	Difference 2022
Primary	72.3%	77.5%	-5.2%
Post-primary	23.6%	18.7%	4.9%
special	4.1%	3.8%	0.3%

Primary schools account for 72.3% of respondent schools, and 23.6% are post-primary schools, compared with 77.5% and 18.7% respectively in the School Census 2022/23. Special schools account for 4.1% of respondent schools compared with 3.8% in the School Census 2022/23.

**Table 24 Omnibus respondent schools by school management type compared to the Northern Ireland School Census 2022/23.**

Voluntary schools are over-represented in the Omnibus compared with the School Census 2022/23.

Management type	Omnibus 2022	School Census 2022/23	Difference 2022
Controlled	42.5%	44.4%	-1.9%
Voluntary	10.3%	6.0%	4.3%
Catholic Maintained	38.8%	40.1%	-1.3%
Other	8.4%	9.6%	-1.1%

*Note: 1. Due to small numbers of schools that responded to the Omnibus the management types Controlled Integrated, Grant Maintained Integrated, and Other Maintained have been combined into the other category. 2. 16 schools could not be attributed to a management type.*

Controlled schools account for 42.5% of respondents, Catholic maintained account for 38.8%, voluntary schools account for 10.3% and schools of other management types account for 8.4%. Comparable percentages from the School Census 2022/23 are 44.4%, 40.1%, 6.0% and 9.6% respectively.

**Table 25 Omnibus respondent schools by school location (Education Authority region) compared to the Northern Ireland School Census 2022/23.**

Schools located in the South Eastern region are under-represented in the Omnibus compared with the School Census 2022/23 and schools in the Southern region are over-represented.

EA region	Omnibus 2022	School Census 2022/23	Difference 2022
Belfast	11.2%	12.1%	-0.9%
Western	21.5%	19.7%	1.8%
North Eastern	23.8%	23.9%	-0.1%
South Eastern	14.0%	18.4%	-4.4%
Southern	29.4%	25.9%	3.6%

Note: 16 schools could not be attributed to an EA region.

Schools located in the Southern region account for 29.4% of respondent schools, the North Eastern region account for 23.8%, the Western region account for 21.5%, the South Eastern region account for 14.0% and Belfast account for 11.2% of respondent schools. Comparable percentages from the School Census 2022/23 are 25.9%, 23.9%, 19.7%, and 18.4% respectively.

**Table 26 Pre-schools that responded to the Omnibus by location (Education Authority region) compared to all pre-schools 2022/23.**

Pre-school settings that responded to the Omnibus are representative of all pre-school settings in relation to their location i.e., EA region.

EA region	Omnibus 2022	All pre-schools 2022/23	Difference 2022
Belfast	12.8%	13.0%	-0.2%
Western	18.5%	18.9%	-0.4%
North Eastern	21.8%	21.7%	0.1%
South Eastern	22.7%	21.5%	1.2%
Southern	24.2%	24.9%	-0.7%

Note: 39 pre-school settings could not be attributed to an EA region.