NISRA
Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency

Northern Ireland School Omnibus Survey 2024

June 2025

Department of Education

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- The Omnibus was issued to all grant aided primary schools, post-primary schools and special schools (1,020), on 26 November 2024 with a closing date for responses of 17 December 2024.
- Responses were received from 344 schools equating to a response rate of 33.7%.

Shared Education.

- Over half (57.3%) of all schools partnered in Shared Education with other school(s) in the 2023/24 academic year and 42.7% of schools have not.
- The most common activity was Project(s) with pupils from other school(s), 24.9% of all Shared Education activities.
- The most common reason for not participating in Shared Education in the 2023/24 academic year was being unable to identify partner school(s), 33.3% of all reasons.

Middletown Centre for Autism.

- There is a high level of awareness among schools of the Middletown Centre for Autism (MCA). Over half of schools (58.4%%) are aware of the services provided by the MCA.
- The majority of schools (83.1%) were aware of training services and 38.2% were aware of support services. Around one fifth of schools (16.5%) were aware of resource services, 10% were aware of advice services and 4.8% were aware of assessment services.

Special Educational Needs

- Over one quarter of schools found accessing information on SEN very easy (2.9%) or easy (23.6%). Over one third of schools (34.6%) found accessing information on SEN neither easy nor difficult and 32.1% found access difficult and 6.8% found access very difficult.
- Approximately three quarters (72.4%) of schools had received SEN support from the EA in the 2023/24 academic year.

- Almost all (96.4%) of schools involved the child when conducting an annual review of a statement of SEN,
- Almost all (87.2%) schools reported that children with SEN were happy most of the time in school.
- All primary, post-primary and special schools were asked if they had accessed EA pupil support services in the 2023/24 academic year and 93.6% reported that they had.
- Primary and post-primary schools were asked about specialist provision class or classes (SPiM). The majority of schools (64.8%) reported that their schools did not have a SPiM class and 15.1% (50)[1] reported that their school did.
- Almost all schools with SPiMs (92.0%) reported that their SPiMs meet the needs of children in their school and 8% felt that they did not.

School Improvement Levers

- Four fifths of schools (80.2%) stated that they had accessed the EA's School Improvement Service
- One third of schools (33.2%) agreed with the statement the information available from the Department's website and annual guidance is clear, helpful and relatable.
- Literacy and numeracy were the two most common areas identified identified as priorities for improvement based on schools' processes of self-evaluation including data trends, 53.5% and 48.8% of schools respectively.
- External support is required by 71.3% of schools to address their priority areas and make improvement.
- Approximately half (49.1%) of schools that require external support required pedagogy support that is not readily available and 46.2% require pupil additional needs support.

Physical Education.

- In the Foundation stage, 50.5% of schools deliver between 60 minutes and 119 minutes of PE per week. In Key Stage 1, 58.8% of schools deliver between 60

1 This compares with 21% from the School Census 2024/25

minutes and 119 minutes of PE per week. In Key Stage 2, 59.4% 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.

- Over four fifths of schools (80.7%) have a whole school approach to promoting physical activity.

Addressing Bullying

- All schools were asked how aware principals and staff are of the duties the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act places on their school and almost all (97.7%) were at least somewhat aware of the duties the Act places on their school.
- Over half of schools (59.2%) recorded less than five bullying type behaviour incidents in the 2023/24 academic year and 30.8% recorded none. One in ten schools (10.0%) recorded five or more bullying type behaviour incidents in the 2023/24 academic year.
- In over half of schools (52.9%) the most frequently recorded method of bullying type behaviour incidents in the 2023/24 academic year was verbal or written.
- In over four fifths of schools (81.9%) the most frequently recorded motivation for bullying type behaviour incidents was peer relationship breakdown.

Children Looked After

- All primary and post-primary schools (244) were asked if any of their pupils were CLA. More than half (59.8%)[2] reported that their school had CLA and 40.2% reported they did not have CLA
- All schools with CLA were asked if Personal Education Plans (PEPs) were in place for CLA attending their school. Over half of all schools with CLA (53.4%) have PEPs in place for all CLA and 29.3% have PEPs in place for some but not all CLA attending their schools. The remaining 17.3% of schools with CLA do not have PEPs in place for any CLA attending their schools.

2 This compares with 66% from the School Census 2024/25

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.

Previous Omnibus reports are available on the DE website.

The remainder of this report is spilt into chapters covering data quality, analysis of the topics, and representativeness of the Omnibus responses. The topics included in the 2024 Omnibus are:

- Shared Education.
- Middletown Centre for Autism (MCA).
- Special Educational Needs (SEN).
- School Improvement Levers.
- Physical Education.
- Addressing bullying.
- Children looked After.
- Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
- Careers Education.

2. Data Quality.

The Omnibus was issued to all grant aided primary schools, post-primary schools, and special schools (1,020) on 26 November 2024 with a closing date for responses of 17 December 2024. The delivery mode was electronic using the SurveyMonkey software.

Participation was voluntary and school principals were invited to take part and answer the questions on behalf of their school.

Responses were received from 344 schools equating to a response rate of 33.7%.

Not all schools answered all the Omnibus questions. In the body of this report, where relevant, the number of schools that answered a particular question is stated or may be calculated from the responses. Where appropriate tables and figures include the number of schools 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 in this report.

More information regarding the representativeness of the Omnibus respondents 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.

3.1 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.

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

Over half (57.3%) of all schools (197) partnered in Shared Education with other school(s) in the 2023/24 academic year and 42.7% of schools (147) have not.

The 197 schools that partnered in Shared Education in the 2023/24 academic year participated in 470 activities. The most common activity was Project(s) with pupils from other school(s), 24.9% of all Shared Education activities

Table 1 Type of activities schools have partnered on in the 2023/24 academic year.

Type of shared education activity	Percentage of all activities
Project(s) with pupils from other school(s)	24.9%
Shared classes with pupils from other schools (under Entitlement Framework)	15.8%
Shared classes with pupils from other schools (other than under the Entitlement Framework)	14.1%
Shared resources (e.g. teaching plans, materials)	13.5%
Extra-curricular activities	12.1%
Development of Shared Policies	5.8%
Shared equipment (e.g. school minibus, computers)	3.7%
Shared teachers	3.1%
Other	6.9%

Base all activities (470). Note: school may have participated in multiple activities.

Shared classes with pupils from other schools (under the DE Entitlement Framework) account for 15.8% of activities and shared classes with pupils from other schools (other

than under the Entitlement Framework) account for 14.1%. Shared resources e.g., teaching plans, materials account for 13.5% of all activities and extra-curricular activities account for 12.1%. The remaining activities account for less than 6% in each instance.

School classrooms account for 31.2% of all facilities used by schools in Shared Education partnerships, assembly or other halls account for 28.8% and sports grounds account for 22.7% of all facilities used.

Table 2 Facilities schools used in Shared Education partnership(s) in the 2023/24 academic year.

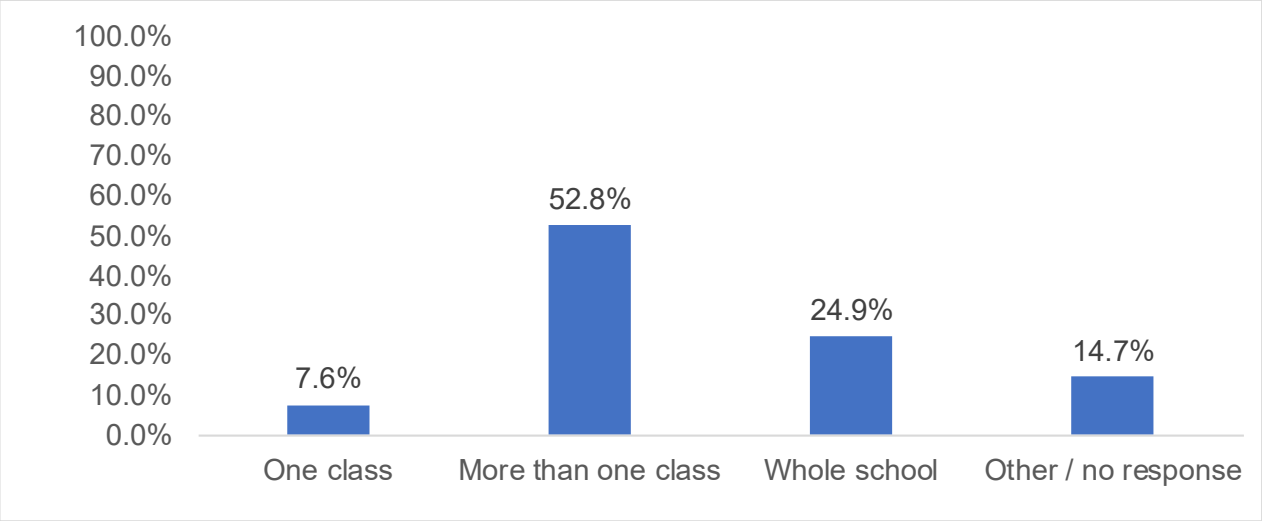
Facilities schools used in shared education	Percentage of all facilities used
Classrooms	31.2%
Assembly or other halls	28.8%
Sports grounds	22.7%
Music or drama facilities	7.4%
Science laboratories	1.2%
Other	8.7%

Base all facilities (497). Note: schools may have used multiple facilities.

Less commonly used were music or drama facilities (7.4%) and science laboratories (1.2%). Other facilities account for 8.7% of all facilities used by schools in Shared Education partnerships.

Over half of schools (52.8%) involved more than one class in Shared Education partnerships in the 2023/24 academic year. In approximately one quarter of schools (24.9%) participation in Shared Education involved the whole school and in 7.6% of schools involved one class. In 14.7% of schools the arrangement of pupils for Shared Education was not based on a class or whole school basis or the school did not respond.

Figure 1 Number of classes involved in Shared Education partnerships in the 2023/24 academic year.



Base all schools undertaking Shared Education (197).

The 147 schools that did not participate in Shared Education in the 2023/24 academic year were asked the reason(s) for non-participation.

Table 3 Reasons for non-particpation in Shared Education in the 2023/24 academic year.

Reason	Percentage of all reasons
Unable to identify partner school(s)	33.3%
Industrial Action preventing engagement in Shared Education	15.7%
Other priorities preventing engagement in Shared Education	14.2%
Lack of awareness of Shared Education	3.4%
Parental reluctance to engage in Shared Education	3.4%
Lack of support from the local community to engage in Shared Education	3.4%
Board of Governors not supportive of Shared Education	2.9%
Unsuccessful application to Shared Education funding programmes	2.5%
Other	21.1%

Base all reasons (204). Note: a school may state multiple reasons.

The most common reason for not participating in Shared Education in the 2023/24 academic year was being unable to identify partner school(s), 33.3% of all reasons. Industrial action preventing engagement in Shared Education accounts for 15.7% of all

reasons. Other priorities preventing engagement in Shared Education accounts for 14.2% of all reasons. With the exception of the other category (21.1%) all the remaining reasons account for less than 4% in each instance.

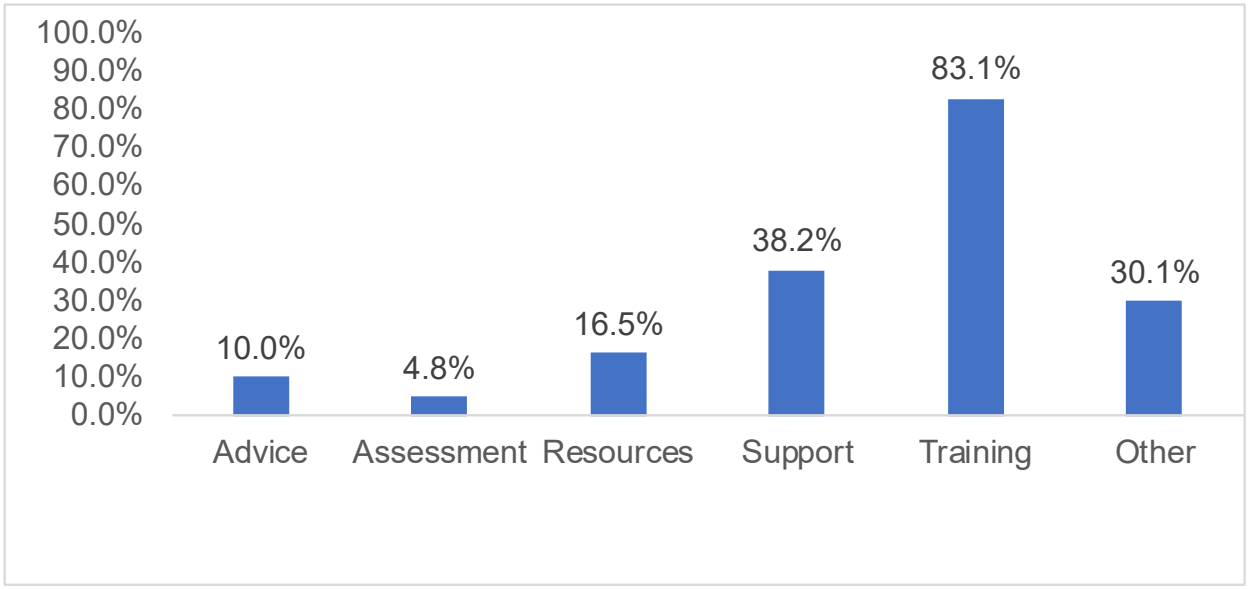
3.2 Middletown Centre for Autism.

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. Over one half of schools (58.4%) of schools (201) are aware of the services provided by the MCA and 41.6% of schools (143) are not.

The 201 schools that are aware of the services provided by the MCA were asked what services they were aware of.

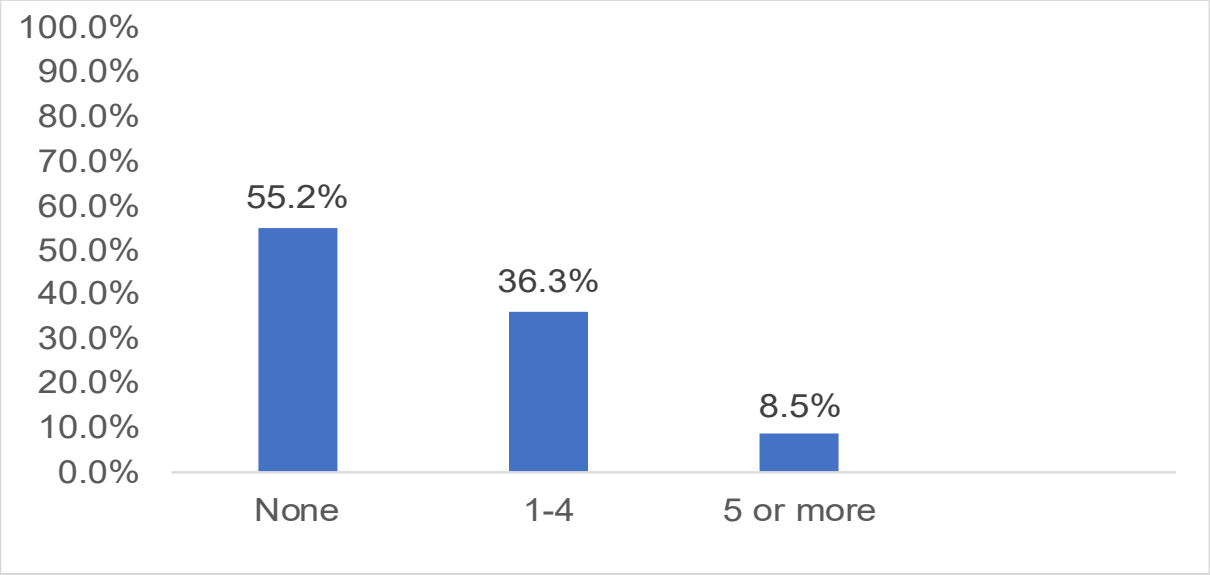
Figure 2 Services provided by the Middletown Centre for Autism that schools are aware of.



Base all schools that were aware of MCA (201).

The majority of schools (83.1%) were aware of training services and 38.2% were aware of support services. One sixth of schools (16.5%) were aware of resource services, 10% were aware of advice services and 4.8% were aware of assessment services.

Figure 3 Number of school staff that have accessed training with Middletown Centre for Autism in the 2023/24 academic year.



Base all schools who were aware of MCA (201). Note: schools may be aware of multiple sources.

Among schools that are aware of the services provided by MCA, 55.2% have no staff that accessed training with the MCA in the 2023/24 academic year. A further 36.3% have between one and four staff that accessed training and 8.5% of schools have five or more staff that accessed training.

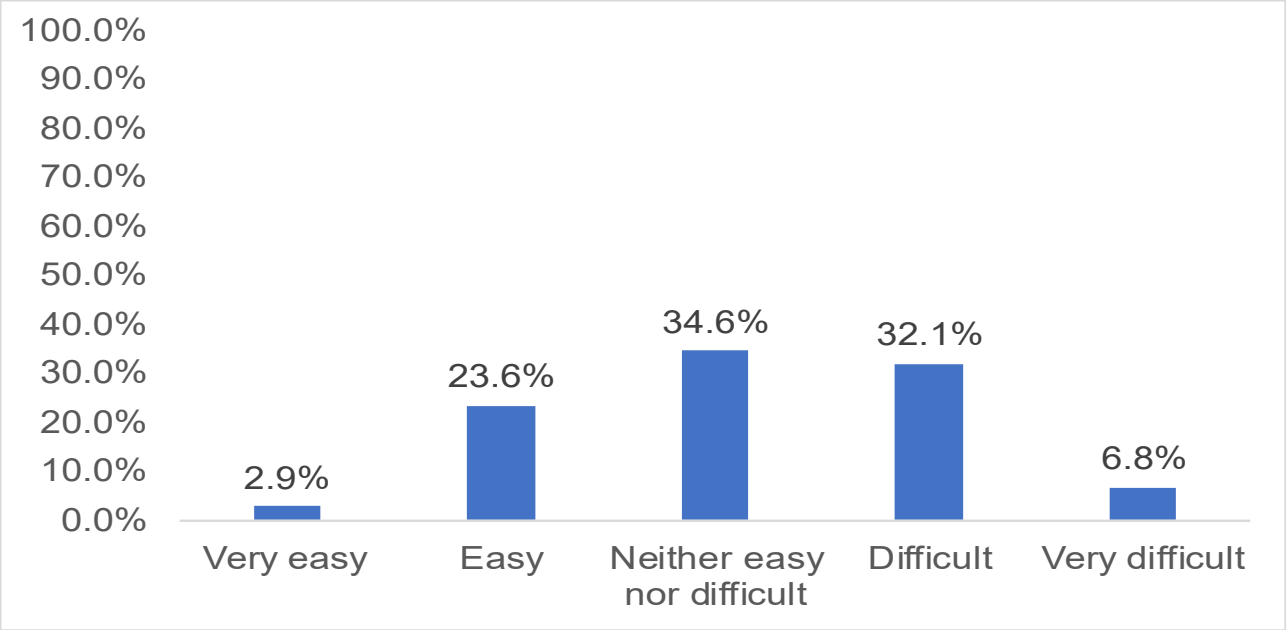
Amongst schools that are aware of the services provided by MCA the majority (87.6%) have not made any requests for pupils to be referred to the Learning & Support Assessment service provided by MCA and 12.4% of schools have made one or more such requests in the 2023/24 academic year.

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. Approximately nine out of every 10 schools (91.6%) expressed an interest in the "whole school referral" service, 4.6% already used the service and 3.8% were not interested.

3.3 Special Educational Needs (SEN).

Questions in this section relate to the experiences of schools around the current Special Educational Needs (SEN) system and responses will be used to inform the inform the SEN reform delivery plan.

Figure 4 Ease of access to information on SEN.



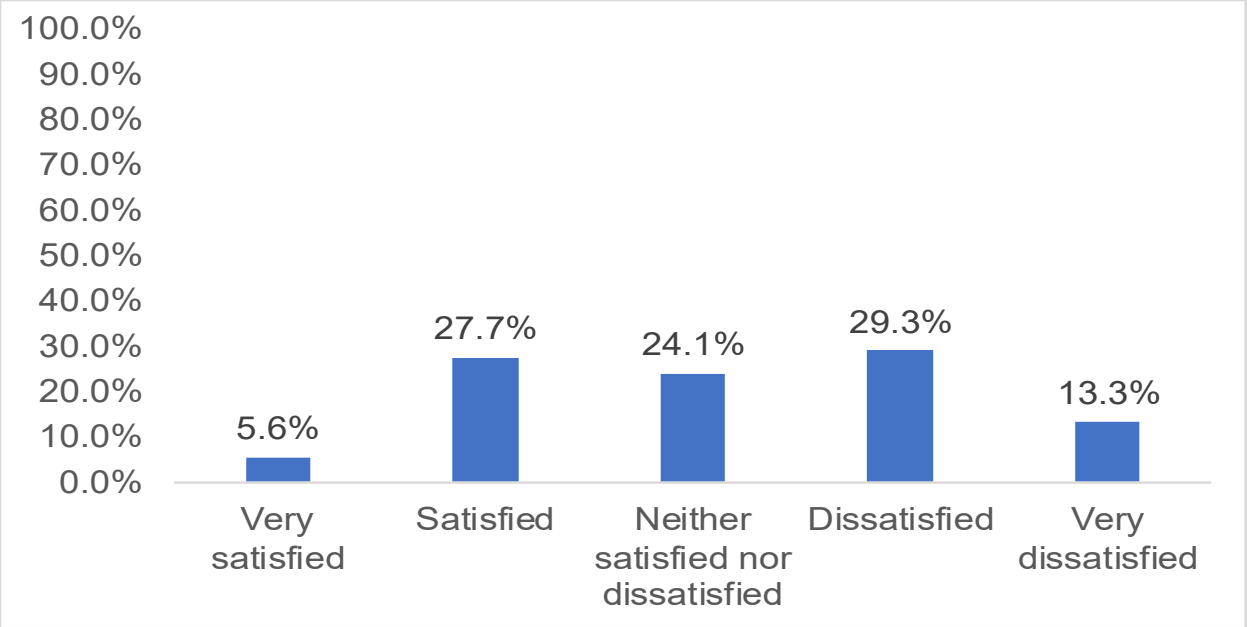
Base all schools (280)

Over one quarter of schools found accessing information on SEN very easy (2.9%) or easy (23.6%). Over on third of schools (34.6%) found accessing information on SEN neither easy nor difficult, 32.1% found access difficult and 6.8% found access very difficult.

Approximately three quarters (72.4%) of schools (249) had received SEN support from the EA in the 2023/24 academic year. The schools that had received SEN support were asked how satisfied or otherwise they were with the support.

One third of schools were very satisfied (5.6%) or satisfied (27.7%) with the support they received. Approximately one quarter (24.1%) of schools were neither satisfied no dissatisfied with the support received. Over forty percent of schools were either dissatisfied (29.3%) or very dissatisfied (13.3%) with the support they received from the EA in the 2023/24 academic year.

Figure 5 Satisfaction with support received from the EA in the 2023/24 academic year.



Base all schools who received EA support (249)

Schools were asked to give a score from 0 to 10, with 0 meaning not at all and 10 meaning completely, on the extent that having a statement of SEN leads to effectively meeting the needs of children. The mean score amongst the 278 schools that answered this question was 6.03.

Almost all (96.4%) of schools (266) involved the child when conducting an annual review of a statement of SEN, the remaining 3.6% of schools (10) did not involve the child. No single reason was quoted by five or more of the 10 schools that did not involve the child.

Table 4 Methods of involving children in their annual review of a statement of SEN.

Method	Yes	No not required	Not required but not available at the time of the annual review	Base
Via EA Connect	45.5%	48.2%	6.3%	222
Via engagement with child/SENCO advance of review being completed	91.0%	#	*	252
Child attends the annual review meeting	17.9%	79.5%	2.6%	229

**indicates a percentage based on a small number (less than five) that has been supressed and # indicates another percentage that has been counter-supressed, for confidentiality.*

Almost all schools (91.0%) that involved the child in their annual review of a statement of SEN did so Via engagement with child/SENCO in advance of review being completed. Schools could also indicate other method(s) however no single method was reported by five or more schools.

Schools were asked how often children with SEN were happy in school. No schools reported that children with SEN were rarely or never happy. Almost all (87.2%) schools (239) reported that children with SEN were happy most of the time in school, 9.1% (25) reported that that children with SEN were happy some of the time in school and 3.6% (10) reported that that children with SEN were happy all the time in school.

Primary and post-primary schools were asked about specialist provision class or classes (SPiM). The majority of schools (64.8%) reported that their schools did not have a SPiM class and 15.1% (50)[3] reported that their school did. Of the 50 schools with SPiM(s) approximately two thirds rated their experience in establishing a SPiM(s) as very positive (26.0%) or positive (40.0%).

The question “How would you rate the progress made by children in your SPiM(s) in the last academic year?” was answered by less than 50 schools and is not reported.

3 This compares with 21% from the School Census 2024/25

Almost all schools with SPiMs (92.0%) reported that their SPiMs meet the needs of children in their school and 8% felt that did not. The number of schools that stated a particular reason that they felt their SPiM(s) did not meet the needs of children in their school was too small to be reported for each reason given.

Schools with SPiMs were next asked about receipt of support from the EA in establishing their SPiMs. Approximately four fifths (81.6%) of schools had received EA support and 18.4% had not received EA support in establishing their SPiMs.

Table 5 How schools have you ensured that the children in SPiMs have been included in the wider schools.

Method	Percentage of schools with SPiMs
Opportunities for shared structured play and learning	80%
Shared spaces within school environment	82%
Children have opportunities to attend mainstream classes where appropriate	78%
Whole school lunch / break times	72%
Opportunities for reverse integration	76%
Participation in assemblies / school events / sports days	90%
Buddy scheme in school	28%
Access to after school activities	78%
Other	22%

Base all schools with SPiMs (50). Multiple responses allowed.

The most common way schools ensure children in SPiMs are included in the wider school is through participation in assemblies / school events / sports days, reported by 90% of schools with SPiMs. The least common method was through a buddy scheme, reported by 28% of schools with SPiMs.

All primary, post-primary and special schools (235) were asked if they had accessed EA pupil support services in the 2023/24 academic year and 93.6% reported that they had and 6.4% reported that they had not. Schools that accessed EA pupil support services were asked which services they had accessed and the extent accessing a specific service had a positive impact or otherwise on children in school.

Of the 220 schools that accessed EA pupil support services almost all (92.4%) accessed Literacy Service (LS) and 83.6% accessed Behavioural Support and Provisions Service

(BSPS). Approximately three quarters of schools (75.3%) accessed EA pupil support services accessed Autism Advisory and Intervention Service (AAIS) and over half (50.7%) accessed Language and Communication Service (LCS). Of only the primary and post-primary schools that accessed EA pupil support services 43.9% accessed SEN Inclusion Service (SENIS): Moderate Learning Difficulties. Approximately one quarter of schools (24.2%) that accessed EA pupil support services accessed SENIS Medical Service and approximately one fifth (19.8%) accessed SENIS Down Syndrome & Severe Learning Difficulties. The services specific to special schools only are not reported on as the number of special schools responding was too small.

Table 6 The extent to which accessing EA pupil support services have had a positive impact on children.

EA pupil service	To a very large extent	To a large extent	To some extent	To a little extent	To no extent	Base
Autism Advisory and Intervention Service (AAIS)	4.2%	15.2%	50.3%	21.8%	8.5%	165
Language and Communication Service (LCS)	7.4%	24.1%	42.6%	21.3%	4.6%	108
Sensory Service (SS)	*	28.6%	61.9%	*	*	63
Literacy Service (LS)	16.3%	37.9%	36.8%	8.9%	0.0%	190
Behavioural Support and Provisions Service (BSPS)	8.9%	15.1%	43.6%	20.1%	12.3%	179
SEN Inclusion Service (SENIS): Moderate Learning Difficulties	#	22.7%	47.7%	15.9%	*	88

SEN Inclusion Service (SENIS): Moderate Learning Difficulties primary and post primary schools only
Numbers of schools accessing SEN Inclusion Service (SENIS) Down Syndrome & Severe Learning Difficulties and Medical Service are too small for analysis
**indicates a percentage based on a small number (less than five) that has been supressed and # indicates another percentage that has been counter-supressed, for confidentiality.*

Almost all schools (91.1%) that accessed LS stated that the service had a positive impact on children at least to some extent as did approximately three quarters of schools (74.1%) that accessed LCS.

Primary and post-primary schools were asked about links to special schools. Of the 254 primary and post-primary schools that responded to this question 22.4% stated that their school had links to special school(s) and of these schools 73.2% were at least satisfied with the benefits for their school. Schools reported benefits to both children in mainstream schools and the special schools to which the mainstream school had links.

All schools were asked for their views on what makes a school inclusive and common themes were catering for pupils with differing learning needs, meeting the needs of all pupils regardless of socio-economic background and positive relationships between staff and pupils.

3.4 School Improvement Levers.

Questions in this section will help inform the ongoing development of and subsequent evaluation of the new school improvement policy and the effectiveness of its intended implementation.

All schools (258) were asked if they had accessed the EA's School Improvement Service, for example through your allocated School Improvement Professional (SIP). Four fifths of schools (80.2%) stated that they had accessed the EA's School Improvement Service and 19.8% had not. Schools that accessed the EA's School Improvement Service were asked the purpose for doing so.

Table 7 The purposes that schools reported for accessing the EA's School Improvement Service.

Pupose for accessing the EA's School Improvement Service	Percentage of schools that accessed the EA's School Improvement Service
Leadership and management	58.9%
Self-evaluation and use of data	21.3%
School development planning & target setting	70.5%
Academic performance	7.2%
Learning and teaching	20.8%
Preparation for, or follow-up to, inspection	8.2%
Signposting to another service	28.5%
Other	5.3%

Base all schools that accessed the EA's School Improvement Service (207). Multiple answered allowed.

The most common purpose for accessing the EA's School Improvement Service, reported by 70.5% of schools, was for school development planning and target setting and the least common purpose reported by 7.2% of schools was for academic performance.

Amongst schools that accessed the EA's School Improvement Service levels of satisfaction with the service were high. Forty percent of schools were very satisfied and 34.6% were satisfied with the service and 2.4% were dissatisfied and 2.4% were very dissatisfied with the service. The remaining one fifth of schools (20.5%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the EA's School Improvement Service.

Schools were asked about their confidence in the value of the School Development Planning (SDP) process by considering four statements and indicating how strongly they agreed or otherwise with each statement (Table 8).

Table 8 Schools' confidence in the value of the School Development Planning (SDP) process.

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Stronlgly agree	Base
The information available from the Department's website and annual guidance is clear, helpful and relatable to my school	7.1%	19.0%	40.7%	33.2%	0.0%	253
I feel empowered to create an SDP that is appropriate to the context of my school.	2.4%	9.5%	28.1%	52.2%	7.9%	253
My school community is involved in and bought into the SDP	*	*	8.7%	64.0%	24.5%	253
The SDP process is purposeful, reasonably streamlined and does not result in duplication of work	15.7%	21.3%	29.3%	31.3%	2.4%	249

**indicates a percentage based on a small number (less than five) that has been supressed*

One third of schools (33.2%) agreed with the statement that the information available from the Department's website and annual guidance is clear, helpful and relatable to my school, conversely 19.0% disagreed and 7.1% strongly disagreed with this statement. Schools that at least disagreed with this statement were asked why this was the case and the common theme in the reasons was that the information was overcomplicated and dated.

Over half of schools (52.2%) agreed with the statement I feel empowered to create an SDP that is appropriate to the context of my school and 7.9% strongly agreed compared to 9.5% of schools that disagreed and 2.4% that strongly disagreed. Schools that at least

disagreed with this statement were asked why this was the case and the common themes were around clarity of purpose and workload.

Approximately one quarter of schools (24.5%) strongly agreed with the statement that my school community is involved in and bought into the SDP and 64.0% agreed. The level of disagreement with this statement was low with 2.8% of schools at least disagreeing with this statement. The small number of schools that at least disagreed means analysis of their reasons is not possible.

Just under one third of schools (31.3%) at least agreed with the statement the SDP process is purposeful, reasonably streamlined and does not result in duplication of work, compared to 37% that at least disagreed with this statement. Schools that at least disagreed with this statement were asked why this was the case and the common themes were around the process being repetitive and not streamlined.

Schools were asked what areas have been identified as priorities for improvement based on their process of self-evaluation including data trends (Table 9).

Table 9 Areas identified as priorities for improvement based on schools' processes of self-evaluation including data trends.

Priority area for improvement	Percentage of all schools
Attendance	20.1%
Literacy	53.5%
Numeracy	48.8%
ICT	41.9%
Another specific subject	11.0%
Attainment gap - disadvantaged and non disadvant	6.1%
Attainment gap – boys and girls	5.8%
Pupil wellbeing	43.9%
Pupils with AEN	3.5%
Pupils with SEN	30.5%
Pupil behaviour	19.8%
Staff wellbeing	38.4%
Staff development	39.8%
Curricular offer	7.8%
Other	14.5%

Base all schools (344). Multiple answers allowed

Literacy and numeracy were the two most common areas identified by schools, 53.5% and 48.8% of schools respectively. Pupil wellbeing and ICT were areas identified by 43.9% and 41.9% of schools respectively. Staff development was identified by 39.8% of

schools and staff wellbeing was identified by 38.4% of schools. The least commonly identified area was pupils with AEN identified by 3.5% of schools and the attainment gap – boys and girls- identified by 5.8% of schools.

Of the 240 schools that answered the question regarding if external support is required to address their priority areas and make improvement most (71.3%) stated external support is required and 28.7% stated external support is not required. The schools that require external support were asked what external support external support they intend to utilise

Schools that require external support were asked what support they intend to utilise (Table 10).

Over half of schools (51.5%) that require external support intend to utilise peer support through ALCs, Primary clusters etc and 43.3% intend to utilise external support or learning programmes. Approximately four in ten schools (38.6%) intend to utilise the EA Literacy Service and over one third (36.3%) intend to utilise EA SIPP support.

Table 10 External support schools intend to utilise.

External support schools intend to utilise	Percentage of schools requiring external support
EA Education Welfare Service	31.0%
EA Literacy Service	38.6%
EA Intercultural Education Service	8.2%
EA TPL offer	22.2%
EA SIPP support	36.3%
Other ALB support	22.8%
Peer support through ALCs, Primary clusters etc.	51.5%
External coaching or mentoring	21.1%
External support or learning programmes	43.3%
Other	35.7%

Base schools that require external support (171)

The least common form of external support schools intend to utilise was the EA Intercultural Education Service, 8.2% of schools that require external support.

Schools that require external support were asked what external support required is not readily available (Table 11). Approximately half (49.1%) of schools that require external

support required pedagogy support that is not readily available and 46.2% require pupil additional needs support.

Over one fifth (21.6%) of schools that require external support require HR support / mediation that is not readily available and 24.6% require coaching and mentoring support that is not readily available.

Table 11 External support required that is not readily available.

External support required but is not readily available	Percentage of schools requiring external support
Pedagogy support	49.1%
Other staff development needs	34.5%
Pupil additional needs support	46.2%
Behavioural support	35.1%
Pupil wellbeing support	29.8%
Coaching and mentoring	24.6%
HR support / mediation	21.6%
Staff wellbeing support	40.4%
Other	10.5%

Base all schools requiring external support (171)

Of the 242 schools that answered the question “Would you find it helpful for the Department to suggest areas of focus for non-contact days (Baker Days or School Development Days) in annual guidance?” the majority (56.2%) would not find this helpful and 43.8% would find this helpful.

Of the 240 schools that indicated whether or not they had a parent forum 75.5% stated they had and 27.5% stated they did not have a parent forum. Of the schools with a parent forum 86.8% had a PTA, 11.5% had a parent led forum and 16.7% had some other type of parent forum, predominantly parent focus groups.

3.5 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 number of responses from post-primaries is too small for analysis by each Key Stage and education post 16 years old (36 schools, 33 schools and 25 schools respectively).

Table 12 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	37.9%	28.9%	19.8%
60-119 minutes	50.5%	58.8%	59.4%
120 minutes or more	11.6%	12.4%	20.8%
Base	190	194	192

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, 50.5% of schools deliver between 60 minutes and 119 minutes of PE per week, 37.9% deliver less than 60 minutes and 11.6% deliver 120 minutes or more.

In Key Stage 1, 58.8% of schools deliver between 60 minutes and 119 minutes of PE per week, 28.9%% of schools deliver less than 60 minutes and 12.4% deliver 120 minutes or more.

In Key Stage 2, 59.4% of schools deliver between 60 minutes and 119 minutes of PE per week, 20.8% deliver 120 minutes or more and 19.8% deliver less than 60 minutes.

Table 13 How curricular PE is delivered in primary schools.

Curricular PE is delivered by	Foundation stage	Key Stage 1	Key stage 2
External provider.	2.6%	8.7%	9.8%
School teaching staff	50.3%	44.1%	32.0%
A combination of school teaching staff and an external provider.	47.2%	47.2%	58.2%
Base	195	195	194

In the Foundation Stage, 50.3% of schools deliver PE by school teaching staff only, 47.2% by a combination of school teaching staff and an external provider and 2.6% of schools deliver PE by an external provider.

In Key Stage 1, 47.2% of primary schools deliver PE by a combination of school teaching staff and an external provider, 44.1% deliver PE by school teaching staff only and 8.7% by an external provider.

In Key Stage 2, 58.2% of schools deliver PE by a combination of school teaching staff and an external provider, 32.0% deliver PE by school teaching staff only and 9.8% by an external provider only.

Both primary schools and post-primary schools (228) were asked if they have whole school approach to promoting physical activity. Almost all (80.7%) schools have a whole school approach to promoting physical activity and 19.3% of schools do not.

3.6 Addressing bullying.

The Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016 (the Act) | Department of Education, which came into force in 2021, requires schools to record incidents or alleged incidents of bullying type behaviour, their motivation and their outcome. Each school's Board of Governors has responsibility to oversee the implementation of the Act in their school, to take responsibility for the development, implementation, monitoring and periodic review of the school's anti-bullying policies. The questions in this section will inform the Department's understanding regarding the impact of the Act and better support schools to effectively implement the Act's requirements.

All schools (220) were asked how aware principals and staff are of the duties the Act places on their school and almost all (97.7%) were at least somewhat aware of the duties the Act places on their school. A similar pattern was found for the awareness of schools Boards of Governors.

Approximately three quarters (73.6%) of all schools believed there has been an increase in awareness amongst school staff of bullying type behaviour since the Act came into force in 2021, 15.9% did not believe this and 10.5% did not know.

Schools were asked about their compliance with the five statutory duties the Act places on them. All schools (220) stated that they had implemented the legislative definition of bullying and have an anti-bullying policy with preventative measures updated at intervals of no more than four years.

Almost all schools (96.4%) had implemented the statutory duty that Governors must ensure the Anti-Bullying policy is properly implemented and preventative measures kept under review so that it is fit for purpose and 92.3% had implemented the statutory duty to engage with pupils, parents/carers and the school community when developing and reviewing the anti-bullying policy.

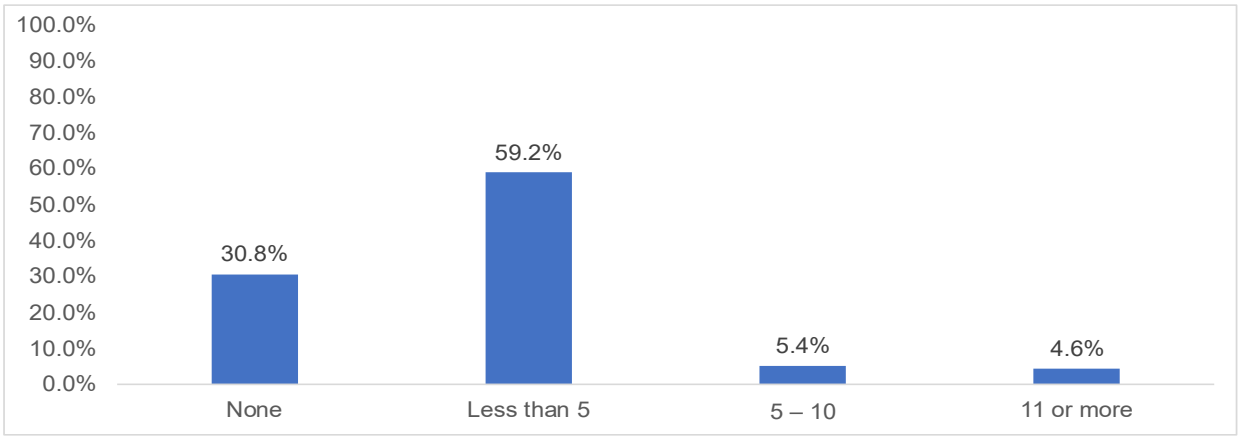
Almost all schools (96.8%) had implemented the statutory duty to record incidents of bullying and alleged bullying behaviours including the motivation, method and how each incident was addressed together with the outcomes.

All schools (238) were asked to what extent they agreed or otherwise with the statement "It was difficult or not possible to implement the statutory requirements of the Act." Over one quarter of schools (26.5%) disagreed and 9.2% strongly disagreed with this statement. Conversely 16.8% of schools agreed and 5.9% strongly agreed with this statement. The remaining 41.6% neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. Schools that agreed or strongly agreed with this statement were asked why this was the case and common themes include administrative burden and the efficacy of the legislative definition of bullying.

Over three quarters (77.9%) of schools stated that at least 50% of staff had received training in the Act and 22.0% of schools stated less than 50% of staff had received training in the Act. Levels of training amongst Boards of Governors were lower than for school staff with 46.1% of schools stating that at least 50% of their Governors had received training in the Act and 53.8% of schools stated less than 50% of Governors training in the Act.

All schools were asked how many bullying type behaviour incidents were recorded in the 2023/24 academic year.

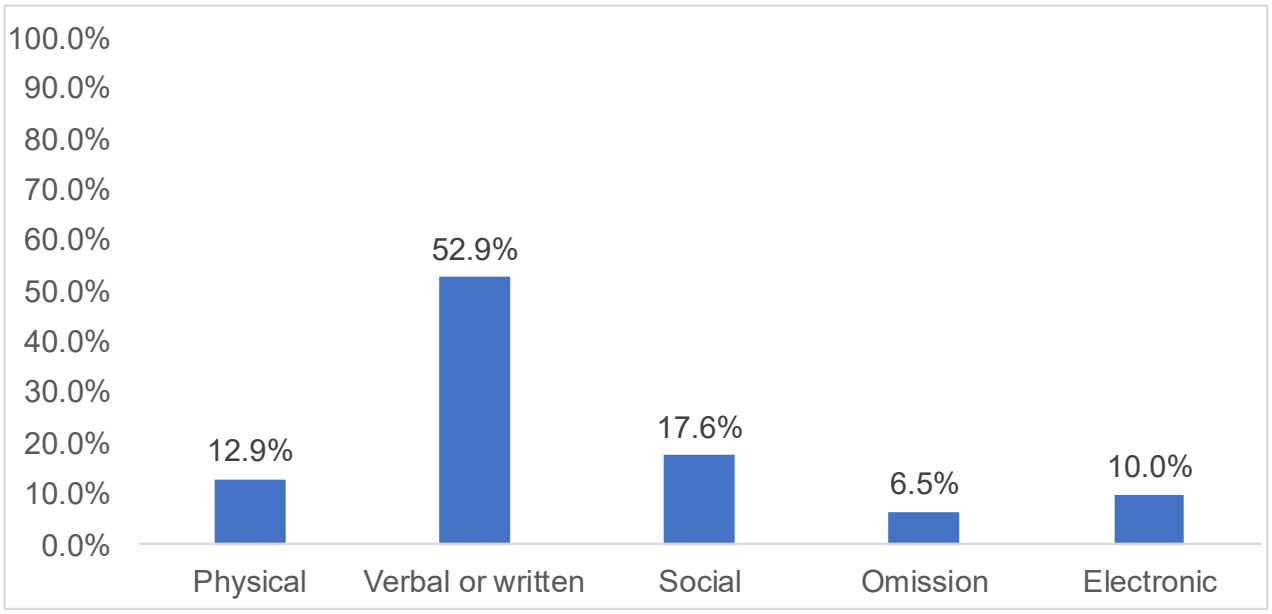
Figure 6 Bullying type behaviour incidents recorded in the 2023/24 academic year.



Base all schools (240)

Over half of schools (59.2%) recorded less than five bullying type behaviour incidents in the 2023/24 academic year and 30.8% recorded none. One in ten schools (10.0%) recorded five or more bullying type behaviour incidents in the 2023/24 academic year.

Figure 7 The most frequently recorded method of bullying type behaviour incidents in schools in the 2023/24 academic year.



Base all schools (170).

In over half of schools (52.9%) the most frequently recorded method of bullying type behaviour incidents in the 2023/24 academic year was verbal or written and in 17.6% the method was social. Physical method of bullying type behaviour incidents was the most frequently recroded method in 12.9% of schools and electroinc was the most frequently

recorded in 10.0% of schools. Ommission was the most frequently recorded method of bullying type behaviour incidents in 6.5% of schools.

Schools were asked what was the most frequently recorded motivation for bullying type behaviour incidents in the 2023/24 academic year. In over four fifths of schools (81.9%) the most frequently recorded motivation for bullying type behaviour incidents was peer relationship breakdown. Apperance was the most frequently recorded motivation in 5.4% of schools, and in 4.2% of schools the remaining motivations, SEN / disability, race / ethnicity and other were the most frequently recorded.

3.7 Children looked After.

Child(ren) Looked After (CLA) are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and there are a number of education policies and joint strategies with other Departments, such as Health and Economy, to work together to improve outcomes for these children, such as A Life Deserved - Caring for Children & Young People in Northern Ireland Strategy | Department of Education. The questions in this section will inform the Department's understanding if the policies and strategies are improving outcomes and how schools are supporting these.

The analysis in this section relates to primary and post-primary schools.

All primary and post-primary schools (244) were asked if any of their pupils were CLA. More than half (59.8%)[4] reported that their school had CLA and 40.2% reported they did not have CLA. The schools with CLA were asked if there was any transition process in place for CLA who transferred from another primary school or post-primary school. Of the 84 schools who responded over half (51.2%) reported there was a transition process in place and 22.6% reported there was not. In 26.2% of schools this question was not applicable.

The number of post-primary schools who responded to the question regarding the transition process in place for CLA who transferred from their primary school was too small to report (less than 50).

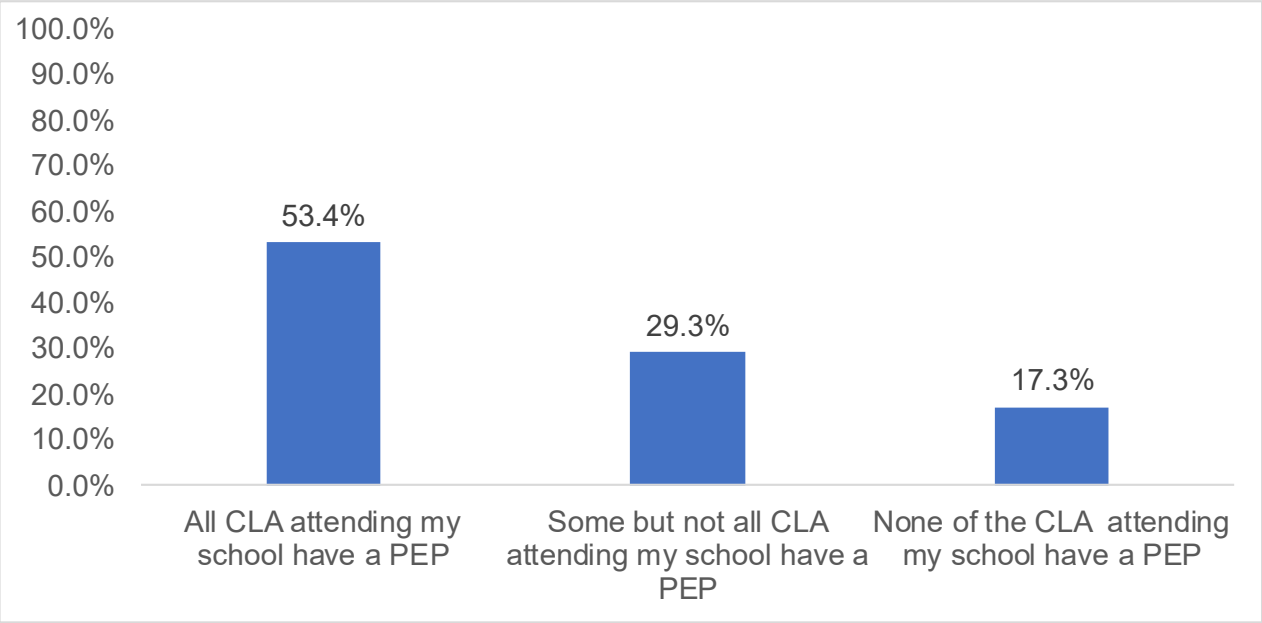
4 This compares with 66% from the School Census 2024/25

All schools with CLA were asked if Personal Education Plans (PEPs) were in place for CLA attending their school.

Over half of all schools with CLA (53.4%) have PEPs in place for all CLA and 29.3% have PEPs in place for some but not all CLA attending their schools. The remaining 17.3% of schools with CLA do not have PEPs for any CLA attending their schools[5].

Primary schools were asked to comment on the PEPs in place and the most common theme was the administrative burden in completing PEPs.

Figure 8 Personal Education Plans for Child(ren) Looked After.



Base all primary and post-primary schools with CLA (133)

Primary school PEPs in line with DE Circular 2023/03 or DE Circular 2011/24, post-primary school PEPs in line with DE Circular 2011/24.

Primary schools irrespective of whether or not CLA attend their school were asked if they aware of the role of the Primary Children Looked After Advisory Service (PCLAAS) in the EA. Of the 192 primary schools that responded 85.4% were aware and 14.6% were not aware of the role of the PCLAAS. And of the schools that were aware the majority

[5] Post-primary schools were asked if there were PEPs in place for all CLA in line with DE Circular 2011/24 whereas primary schools were asked if PEPs been put in place for all CLA with two subsequent questions if PEPs were in line with the revised guidance for primary age pupils as set out in DE Circular 2023/03 and if not were the PEPs in line with DE Circular 2011/24; all PEPs were in line with one or other circular. To allow analysis to include post-primary schools these questions have been combined.

(68.3%) had made between three and four contacts with PCLAAS in the 2023/24 academic year.

Primary schools (192), irrespective of whether or not CLA attend their school, were asked if staff have received training under The Attach Programme | Education Authority Northern Ireland or another form of relationship training and 38.5% of schools reported staff have received such training and 61.5% reported staff have not received such training. Of those schools whose staff have received training none were dissatisfied with the training received. Primary schools, irrespective of whether or not CLA attend their school, were also asked if trauma informed training been provided at their school. In 59.4% of primary schools trauma informed training been provided and in 40.6% it had not been provided. In those primary schools where if trauma informed training has been provided 34.8% were very satisfied and 58.9% were satisfied with the training.

Both primary and post-primary schools were asked about any further comments they might have about CLA support and processes including any interaction with social services. Overall comments were supportive of PEPs, while recognising the burden.

3.8 Cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

In March 2022, legislation came into effect stating that cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) must be included in the minimum statutory content in the school curriculum at Key Stage 3. These questions will provide the Department with additional information that will be important in assisting schools to deliver this requirement.

All post-primary schools (52) were asked if their school provides CPR training to schools. Over half (53.8%) of post-primary school provide CPR training and 46.2% do not.

The number of schools that provide CPR training is too small (less than 50) for further analysis.

3.9 Careers Education

All questions in this section were included in the special school questionnaire however none responded to the questions. Amongst post-primary schools no question was

answered by 50 or more post-primary schools and therefore no further analysis is possible.

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 2024/25 Northern Ireland School Census. And then compares the pre-schools that responded to the Omnibus by and location.

Table 14 Omnibus respondent schools by school type compared to the Northern Ireland School Census 2024/25.

School type	Omnibus	School Census	Difference
Primary	79.1%	77.4%	1.7%
Post-primary	17.4%	18.8%	-1.4%
special	3.5%	3.8%	-0.3%

The composition by school type of the Omnibus Survey is similar to the composition in the 2024/25 School Census.

Table 155 Omnibus respondent schools by school management type compared to the Northern Ireland School Census 2024/25.

Management type	Omnibus	School Census	Difference
Controlled	49.6%	44.4%	5.2%
Catholic Maintained	38.2%	40.1%	-1.9%
Other	12.2%	15.6%	-3.4%

Note management types grouped for confidentiality.

Controlled schools are overrepresented in the Omnibus compared to the School Census (5.2%) and both Catholic maintained schools and those of another management type are underrepresented, differences of 1.9% and 3.4% respectively.

Table 16 Omnibus respondent schools by school location (Education Authority region) compared to the Northern Ireland School Census 2024/25.

EA region	Omnibus	School Census	Difference
Belfast	10.5%	12.1%	-1.6%
Western	19.2%	19.7%	-0.5%
North Eastern	22.7%	23.9%	-1.2%
South Eastern	16.9%	18.4%	-1.5%
Southern	30.8%	25.9%	4.9%

Schools located in the Southern region are represented in the Omnibus compared to the School Census, a difference of 4.9%.