



SCOTTISH ASSEMBLY OF PARENTS & CARERS

Parental Involvement Survey – Findings Report

Published: Monday 27th January 2025

About the Assembly

An Assembly of parents and carers with a focus on education

The Scottish Assembly of Parents and Carers is a unique way of hearing the views and experiences of parents and carers.

Assembly members are a diverse group of parents and carers from all over Scotland, demographically representative of different backgrounds, cultures, families and more.

The Assembly came about after consideration of the best ways to hear the voices of difference parents and carers, reflecting the diversity of the Scottish population as much as possible. Assemblies and lived-experience panels are an established and exciting way to hear voices – in this case, to ensure that parental experiences and perspectives can be factored into Scottish education policy.

Assembly members will take part in surveys, meet to discuss issues of interest online, in focus groups or views, experiences and ideas can be shared via surveys too. The focus of the Scottish Assembly of Parents and Carers is always on the best outcomes for all of our children and young people.



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About This Survey

The Assembly members focussed on Scottish education and education reform as key topics. Members shared their views on the current education reforms via an online survey.

The survey addressed the Education (Scotland) Bill. This bill will replace the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) with a new qualifications body and establish an independent education inspectorate (His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education).

We have now reported the findings of part 1 of the survey to the Scottish Government.

We are pleased to report the findings of part 2 of the survey, which focussed on parental involvement in general.

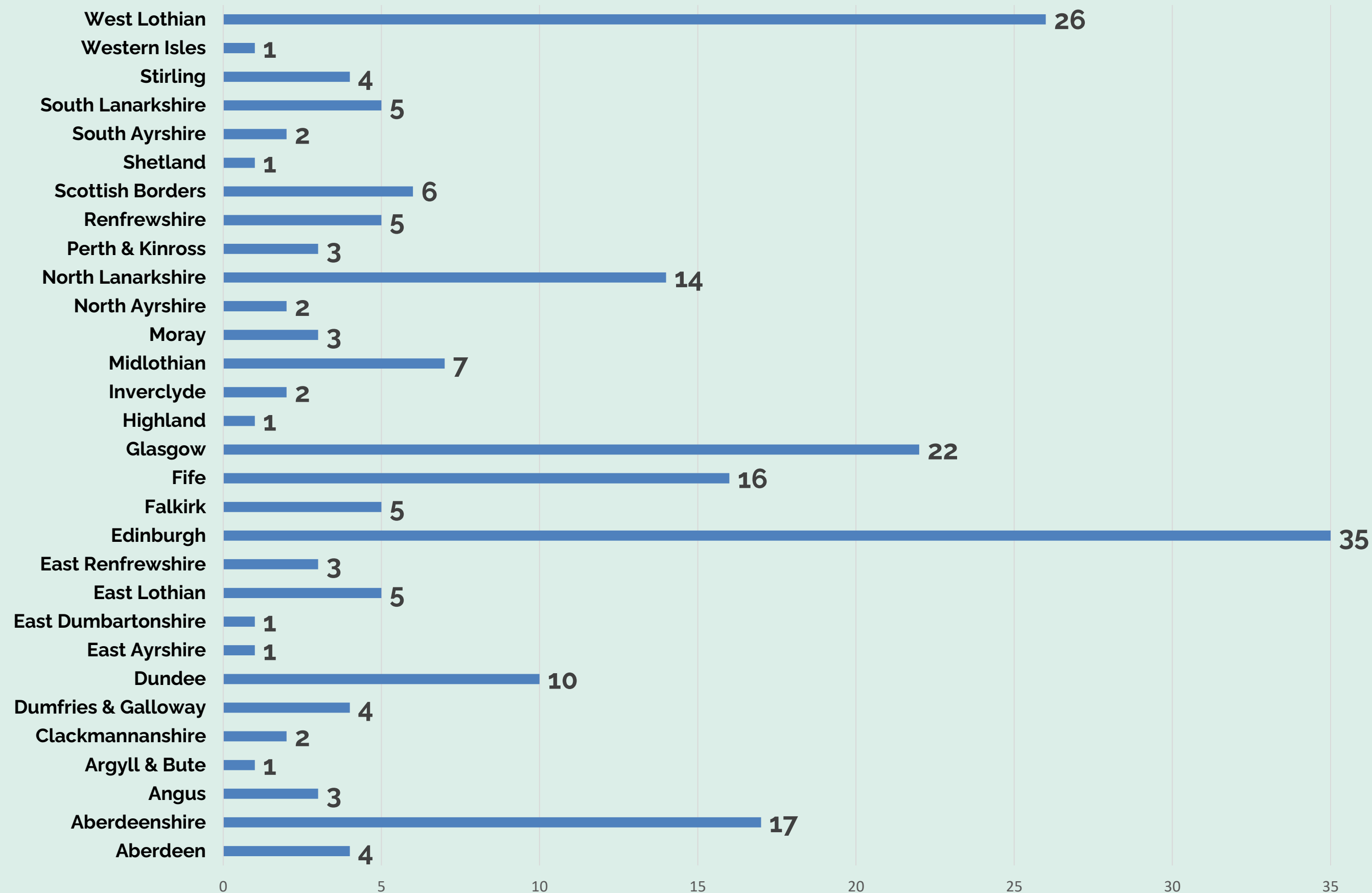
The survey ran from **30 October to 15 November 2024** with **211** Assembly Members responding.

Thank you to all the parents and carers who contributed!



Location of Respondents

Members responded from 30 local authorities. As shown, we had particularly high responses from Edinburgh, West Lothian and Glasgow areas.

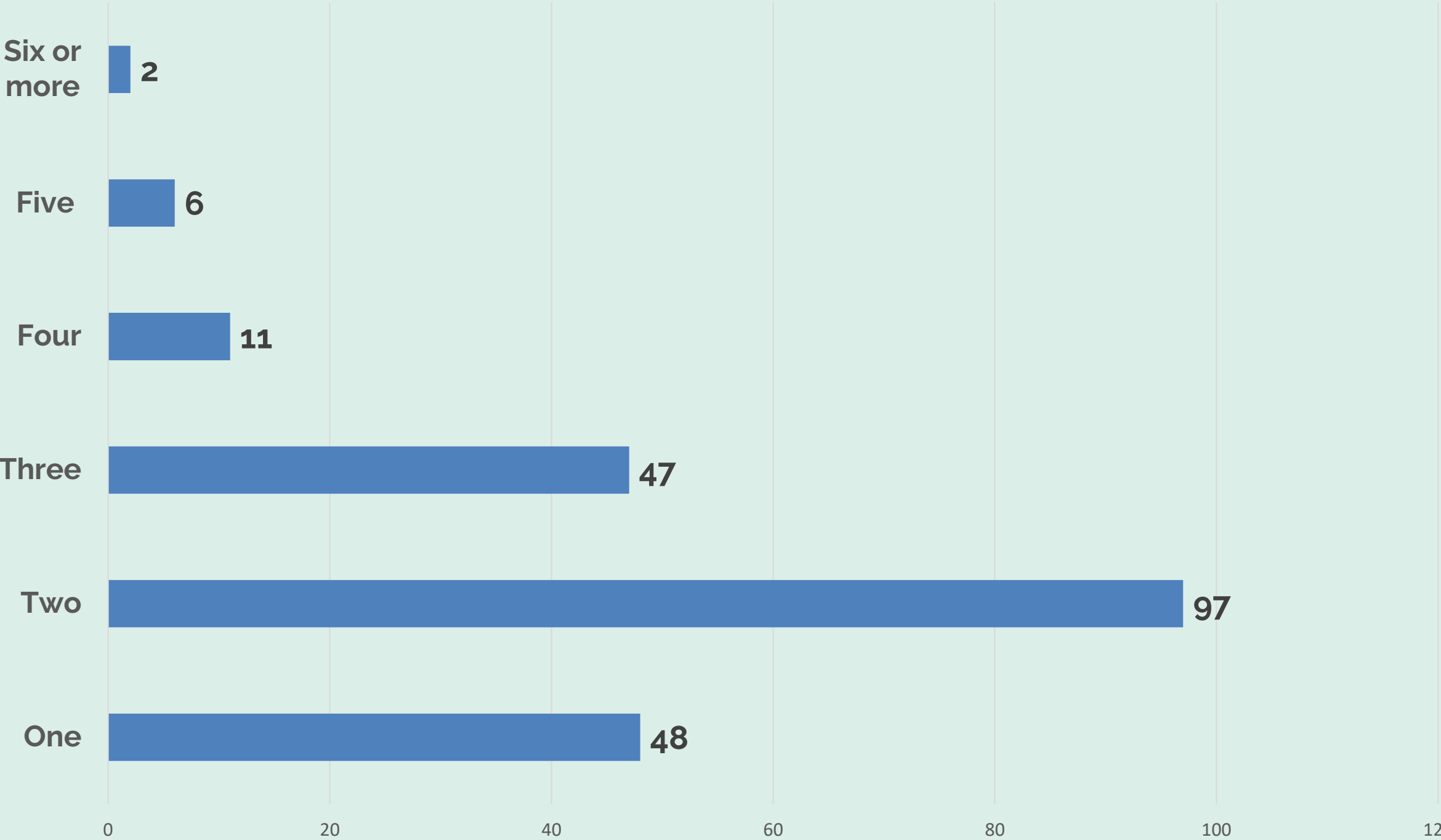


Children & Young People of Respondents

Assembly Members who have participated in this survey have at least 1 school aged child.



Number of Children of Members



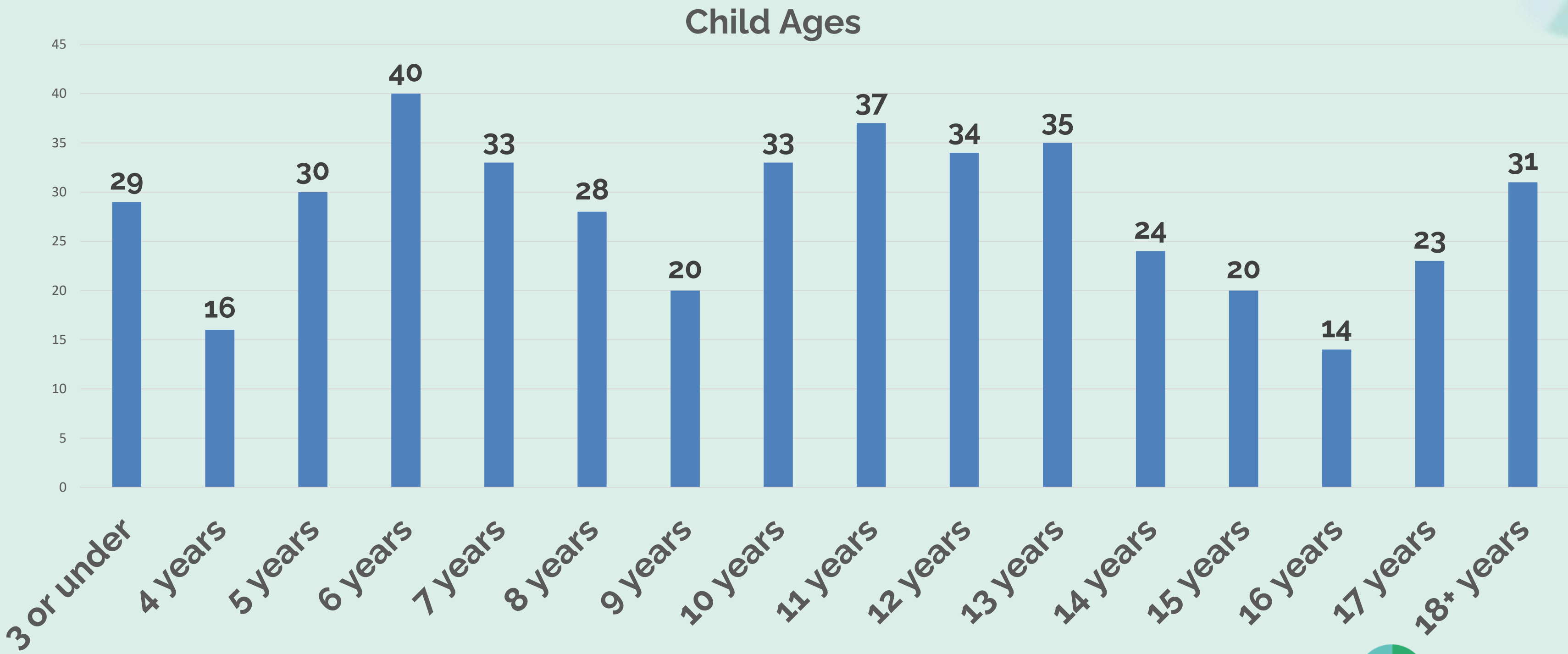
Parent Roles

- Biological Parent **201**
- Kinship Carer **9**
- Adoptive **6**
- Step- Parent **9**
- Foster Carer **3**
- Other **4**



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Children & Young People of Respondents



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Children & Young People of Respondents

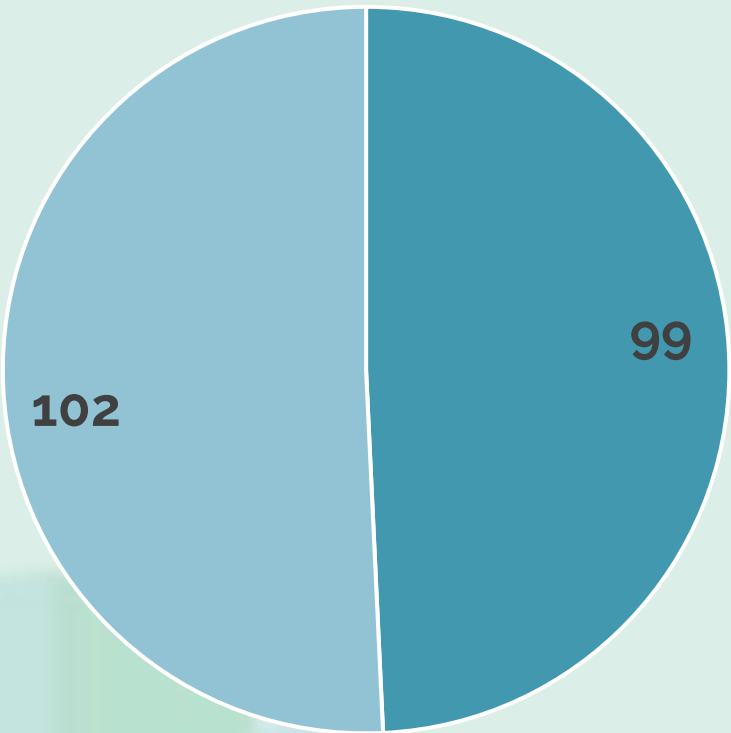
Children – English as additional language

Yes – all my children have English as an additional language **10**
No – all my children have English as their first language **198**
Some of my children have English as their first language, and some as an additional language **3**

Other Languages

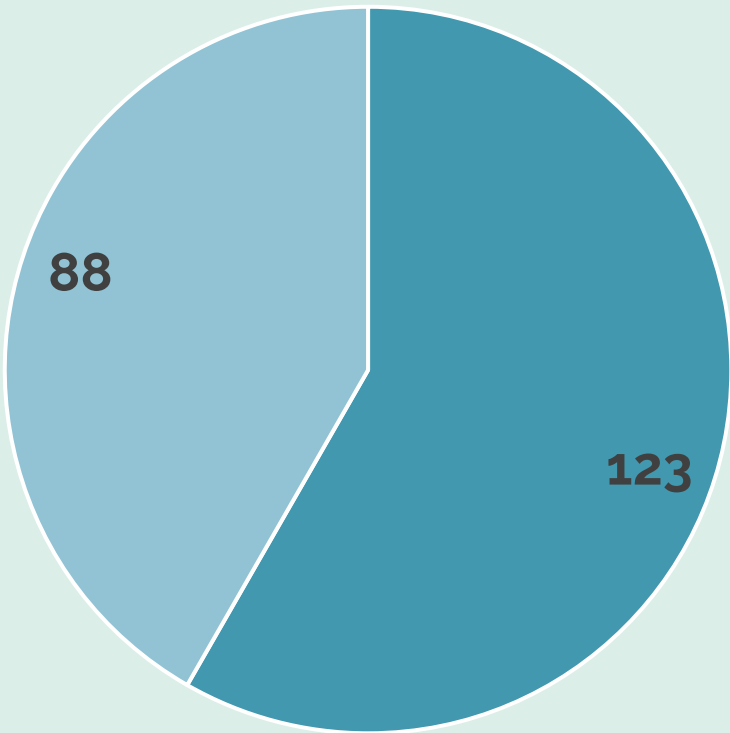
- | | |
|---------|-----------------------|
| Hindi | Portuguese |
| Finnish | German |
| Yoruba | British Sign Language |
| Ora | Japanese |
| Spanish | Urdu |
| Polish | |

Children with a Disability or Health Condition



■ Yes ■ No

Children receiving Additional Learning Support



■ Yes ■ No

Children Currently or Previously in Care

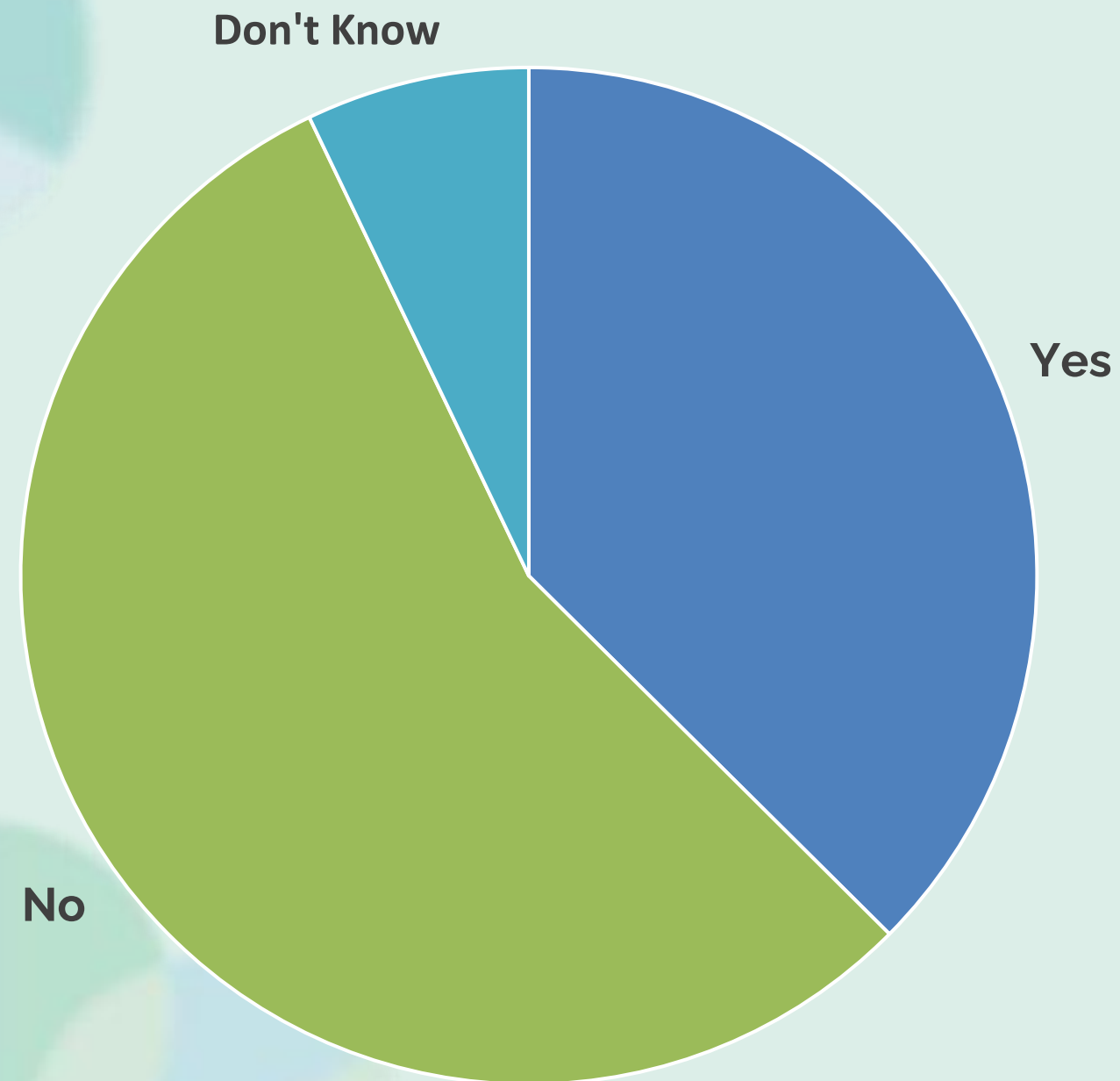
Yes **10**
No **201**



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Parental Involvement

Do you feel you have enough opportunities to be involved in your child's education?

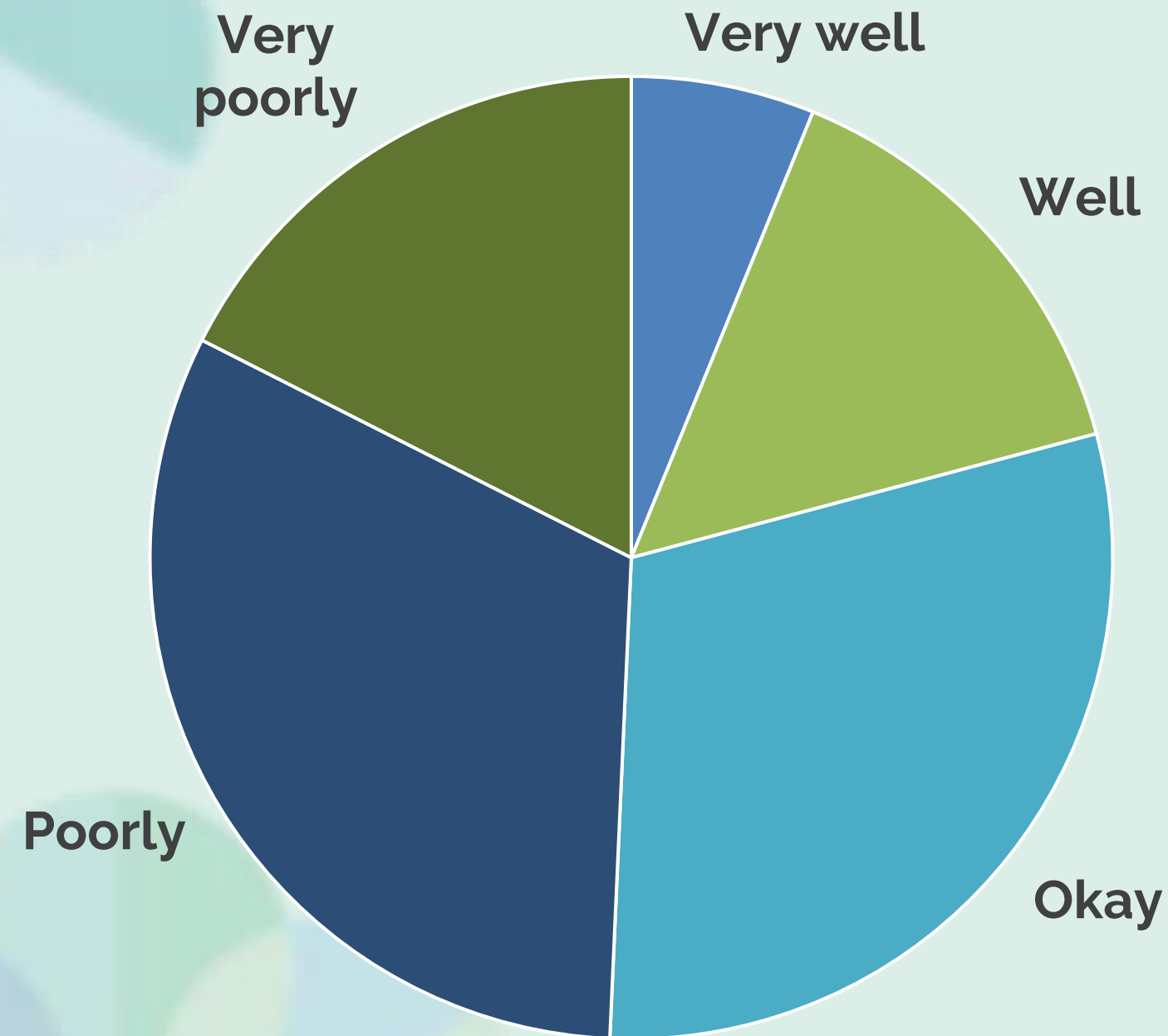


- **Yes – 37% (79)**
- **No – 55% (117)**
- **Don't know – 7% (15)**



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How well do you feel your local authority provides support to help you be more involved in your child's education?

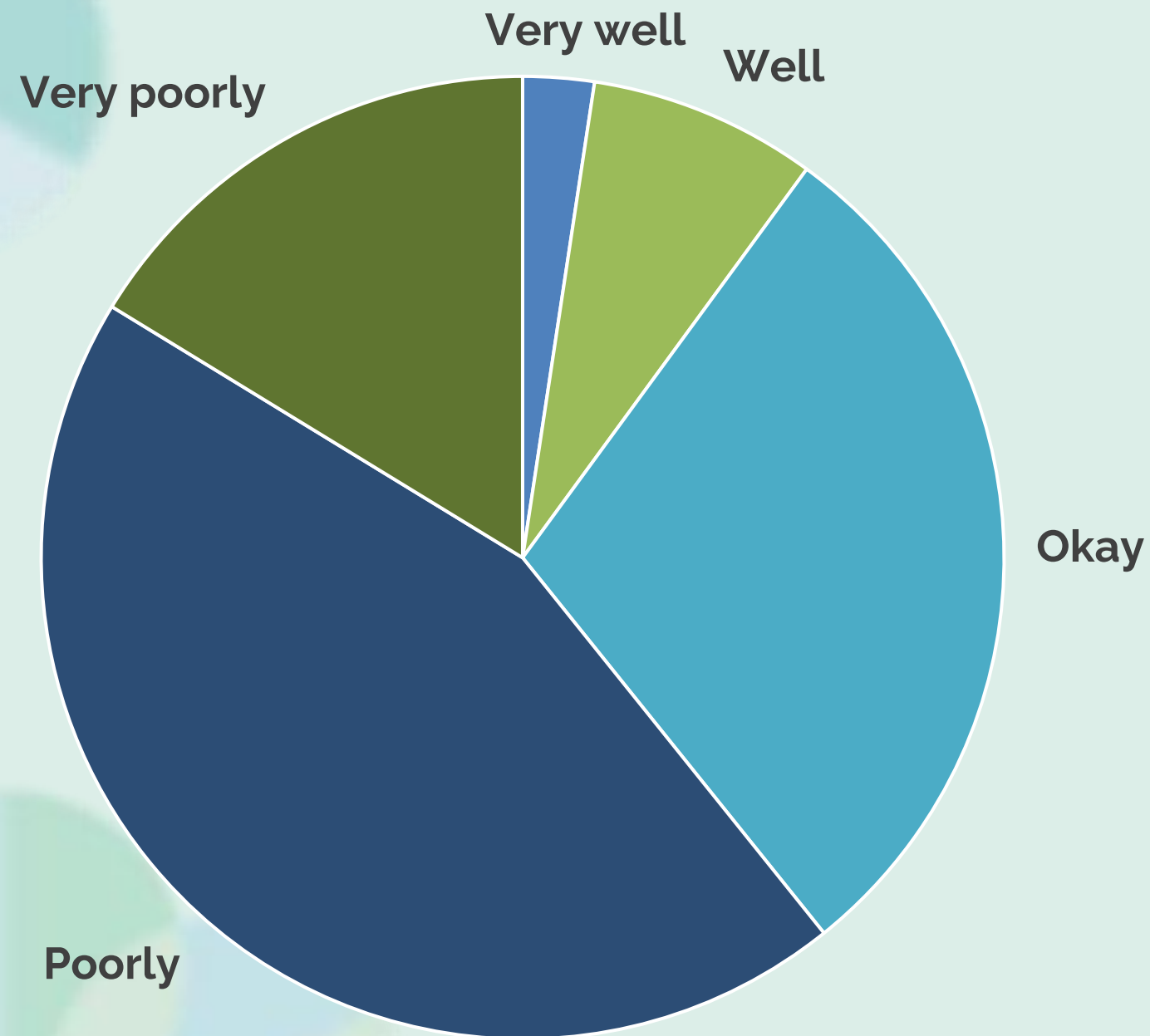


- **Very well – 6% (123)**
- **Well – 14% (31)**
- **Okay – 30% (63)**
- **Poorly – 32% (67)**
- **Very Poorly – 18% (37)**



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How well do you feel the Scottish Government provides support to help you be more involved in your child's education?



- **Very well – 2% (5)**
- **Well – 8% (16)**
- **Okay – 29% (61)**
- **Poorly – 44% (93)**
- **Very Poorly – 17% (35)**



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Are there any additional support or resources that would help you to feel more involved?



112 respondent's lefts comments on the following themes:

Communication **59**

Describing issues **16**

Resources **12**

Additional support for learning **11**

Support for parent councils **9**

Focus Groups **7**

Involvement in specific areas **4**

Opportunities to volunteer in school **3**

Teacher/school attitudes and understanding **2**

Meeting children's needs **2**

Involvement in education policy **2**



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Sample of parent suggestions:

"Specific forums for parents and carers of children with ASN. I feel awkward attending normal parent council meetings because my children struggle to attend mainstream because of their needs."

"SLT drop in evenings would be a good idea for parents who perhaps are too nervous to lift the phone and make an appointment."

"Parent focus groups. Parents involvement in how and where schools spend their budgets. Reviews on head teachers performance, visions in the community."

"As a working parent it is difficult to volunteer to spend time in my son's school. Often open days, opportunities to read, go on trips etc take place in the school day so there isn't time to get a long to these. Working as a teacher I can sometimes use my time out of class to go but that is a sacrifice as I then have less time to plan my work and classes. Building in allowance for parents to take some kind of pupil support day or volunteer opportunities that dont impact on the working parents place of work would allow for more to attend and be involved in their child's learning journey. Not only for teachers but for all parents. It could be as few as 6 hours to be used as and when needed but it would be a start."

"I think a barrier to parents and carers being involved is a lot of the information is in corporate jargon. It's difficult to understand what information is being provided and how that is relevant to your child. In order to make it more accessible we have to provide information in simple terms that parents and carers will understand and feel confident commenting on."

"Participate in Strategic Planning Committees: Schools may set up committees for strategic planning, covering infrastructure and resource management. Involving parents in these committees allows for a community-backed approach to prioritize projects that directly impact the learning environment."

"Flexible opportunities for participation especially for single parents/carers."

"A specific helpline with openness about the information parents need to make informed decisions for their child's best interests."

"More opportunity to influence policy - using coproduction approaches rather than being reactive."



Sample of parent suggestions:

"There needs to also be support for pupils that are highly able, as well as those that are struggling, so they don't disengage with things, you are just left feeling that you are a 'pushy' parent and being difficult."

"More funding for extracurricular activities- the active school program in Edinburgh has been restructured this year resulting in almost zero active school activities in our school."

"A greater focus on holistic wellbeing and development as there is such emphasis on literacy and numeracy when I am not trained to teach these things, but I know emotionally and socially I could support my children. Home and school link is not visible and feel very separate domains."

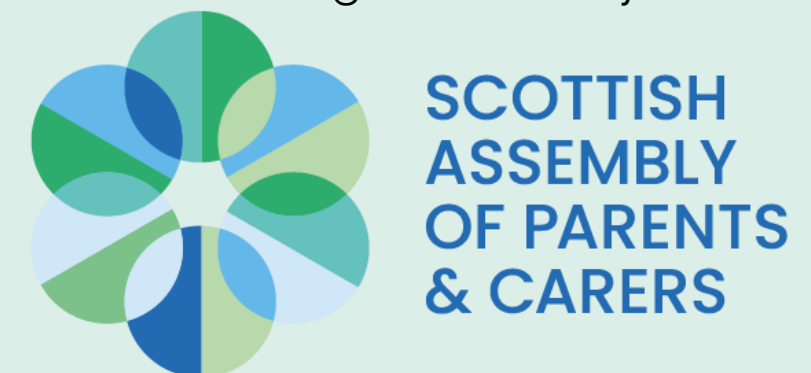
"A basic understanding of SEN provision would be nice, plus involving disabled parents in the planning/decision process."

"There requires to be parent councils that are solely for parents of children with additional support needs in mainstream, we are as isolated as our children and it's incredibly difficult to participate in mainstream parent activities, we literally have a different experience and don't feel part of the school body. Why would we be involved in parties, proms etc that our children are excluded from."

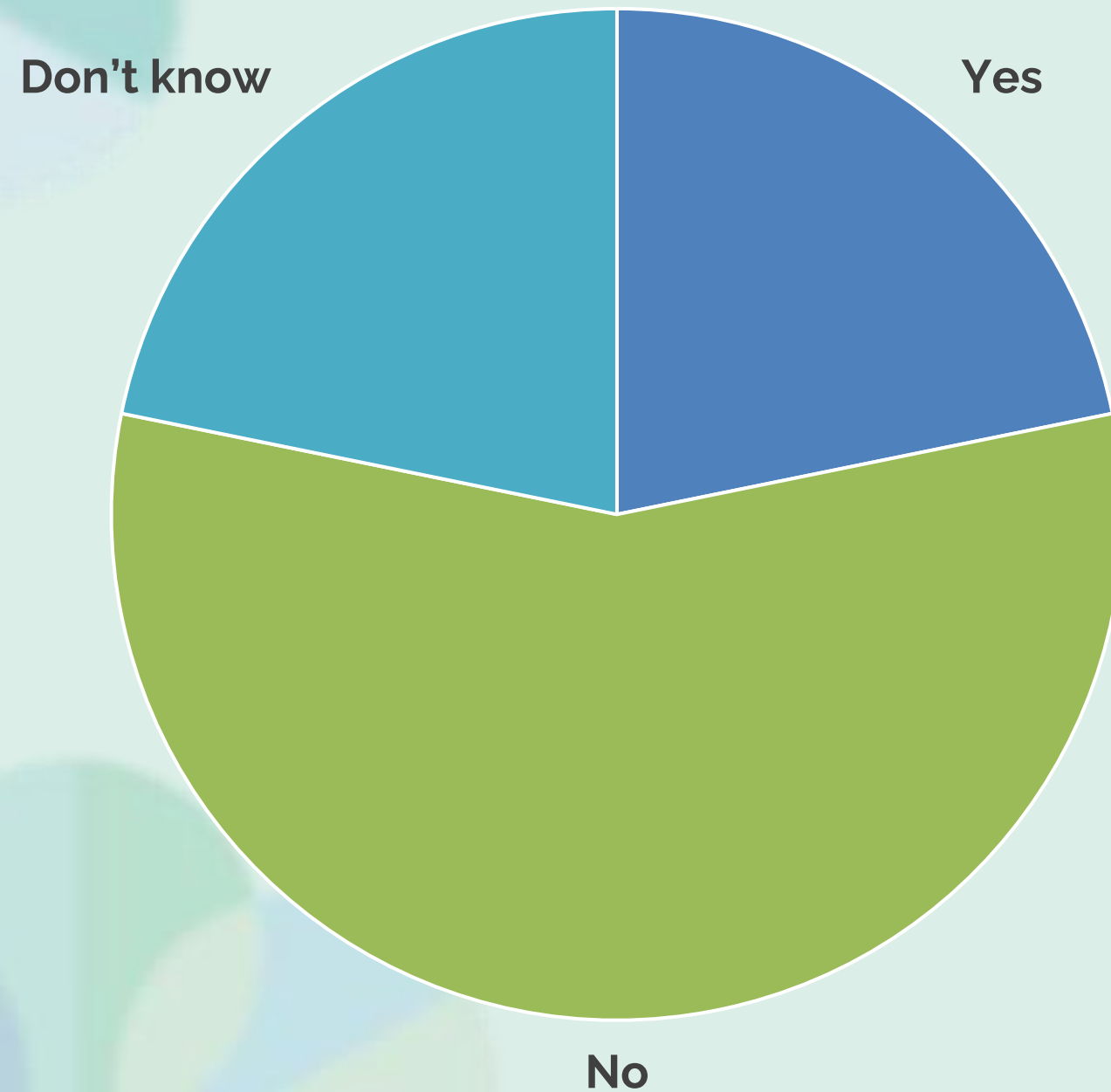
"More consultation with parents, 3 monthly check in surveys with parents to give back to schools and be reviewed by schools and outside body. More awareness to parents about the care inspectorate. Greater support for ASN parents who have children in mainstream, specialised governing bodies to support ASN children in mainstream greater collaboration with parents and children regarding learning and spending of educational budgets."

"The current parent council approach is underfunded and does not work well for pupils. In huge secondary school it can be left to a small group of 3 or 4 people to pass on huge amounts of information to 1300-1400 pupils parents. This is not achievable. More recently local authorities have thrust huge tasks onto Parent councils such as collecting views on the reduction of staffing, finding out if holiday need changed and so on. This is unfair and often takes place to reduce a workload within the council (or at least it feels that way!)"

"Teachers need more support to manage neurodiversity. This comes down to funding. I feel the government are removing the SQA and creating SQ as a way to delay addressing the need for more funding for education."



Have you noticed any changes or improvements in the efforts that local authorities and the Scottish Government do to involve parents and carers in their child's education over the years?



- **Yes– 22% (46)**
- **No – 56% (119)**
- **Don't know – 22% (46)**



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Describe any changes or improvements:

46 respondents left comments on the following themes:

Described issues with current approaches **13**

More Parent Council Involvement **12**

Positive overall **9**

Parent Groups/Networks **7**

Events in School **6**

Parent Council Involvement **4**

Sample of parent comments:

“Parent council, sharing the learning sessions and other school visits help me understand what my daughter is learning. These didn't exist when I was at school.”

“My 13 year old son's school created a group for parents who are from abroad so WE Can Ask any questions about the Scottish education system and how things work at school. It was amazingly helpful.”

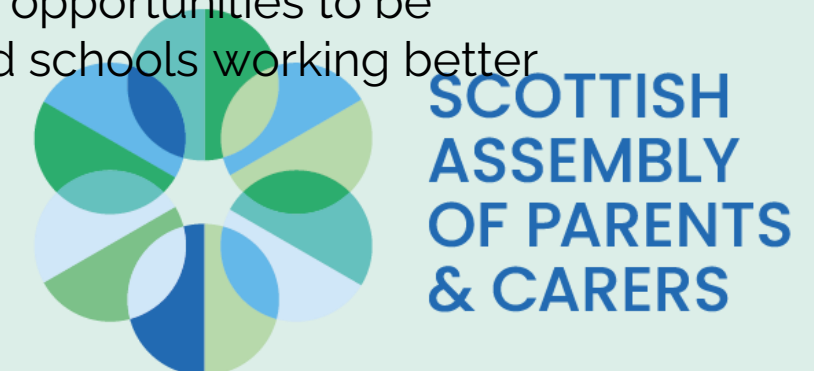
“Regular stay and play sessions, regular events held at the school to showcase how our children are educated and to ask for feedback. However I feel that it is always the same parents that attend these events. Mostly parents who are already actively involved in the school. I.e. parent council. So there is not a fair representation of all parents views.”

“Increased communication seeking thoughts and ideas via surveys, open evenings, parents showcasing their professions, involvement in themed events.”

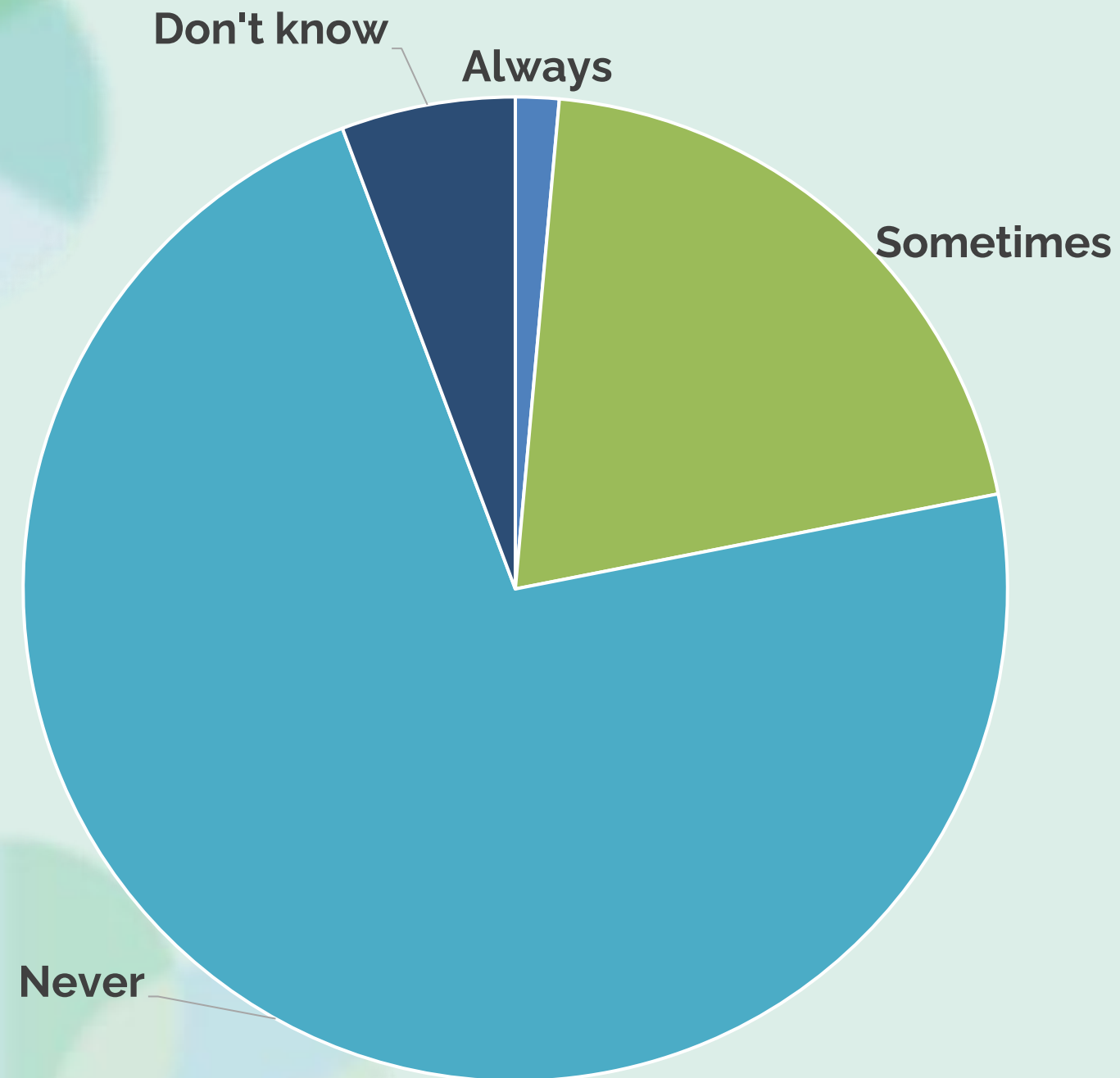
“Engagement at a school level has always been excellent but more recently local authorities are offering more and better quality opportunities to be involved level. I believe the Scottish Government has supported that change too but mostly it has come from local authorities and schools working better together.”

“Additional Support Needs Forum and invitation to participate in the ASN Transformation Program.”

“Rights of child becoming legislative.”



Do you feel that you have a voice in the decision-making processes at a local government level regarding your child's education?



- **Always – 2% (3)**
- **Sometimes – 20% (43)**
- **Never – 72% (152)**
- **Don't know – 6% (12)**



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Can you give us any examples of successful engagement with parents and carers you have experienced in your child's school setting?

146 respondents left comments on the following themes:

Events by School **55**
Communication **40**
Parent Council/Parent Groups **36**
NO – describing difficulties **22**
School Staff **22**
School Leadership **14**
Consultation **12**
Involvement in school **11**
Opportunities to volunteer with school **7**
Peer Support **4**
Parent led activities **2**



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Sample of parent comments:

"I have moved my adopted child in a new school after 3 years of battles with his previous school. His new head teacher is visionary , inclusive and understands and each child as individual . Our son is thriving now."

"I am a member of the school parent's council. I recently had concerns about some planned changes in the school's new building. The head teacher got in touch with me to discuss my concerns. I thought that was the right way to engage, especially since I was reassured by our conversation."

"For my daughter it has been her guidance teacher who helped with the bullies because that was having an effect on her schooling and day to day life. My son's school is early days but looking promising."

"The engagement is so short and rushed. That said, we adopted our son and when he first started at school the school were brilliant at integrating him and getting him settled. He joined at the end of P1 shortly after he came to us the school had a full plan for him and had several meetings with us during this time. This is unique to his school I feel as the other school we looked at were just like 'yeah he can join, there is space'. The school we chose to go to was far more about what's best for each child and each child being an individual rather than just a number."

"I have personally asked the teachers in my son's school to teach the children about neurodiversity. This was only possible due to approachable and proactive teaching staff. I think this is an example of something that should be discussed on a government level because parents shouldn't have to ask our teachers to ensure that these core subjects are taught. Parents should be able to feed this back to the government and local authority."

"Due to problems with RAAC concrete our S1s were unable to transition as planned to high school. School offered the chance for parents/carers to take part in focus groups once children were able to transition to the high school and have since changed their practice."

"P7 school trip - my son has additional support needs and the school are trying to help make adjustments for my son to attend and I have been involved in a few meetings with the school and the people from the outdoor centre."

"Shared start/ shared finish; consultation on delivery of parents night, consultation on the school improvement plan, parent council. volunteers for outdoor learning, volunteers for read-aloud sessions."

"A new positive behaviour policy was being formed at the primary school. Parents were asked for input throughout the process."



Sample of parent comments:

"We have ceilidhs, school fayres, disco's, fun runs, parent nights, and other activities throughout the school year. The involvement of activities fields through the children's learning at home and parents spending a lot of time involved within the community."

"So many.

- 1) SLT regularly out in playground at drop off, pick up time so that parents can approach for conversation if they want.
- 2) HT has run headteacher drop-in sessions before which are well publicised.
- 3) School has open mornings twice a year for parents to come into child's class and see how they learn.
- 4) school running in person parent teacher meetings again twice a year and SLT are present if anyone wants to talk to them.
- 5) School runs survey on parental feedback towards end of each year.
- 6) SLT makes the School Improvement Planning days open to members of the parent council and wider parent forum to come along and participate in evaluating progress of current SIP and what should go into next SIP.
- 7) Parent Council meetings are held in school and online once a month and are well publicised in advance with details of how parent forum can join as observers if desired."

"My two children attend different schools, one is at a Deaf provision and the other mainstream. Deaf provision has much more engagement, much more connection between school and home through opportunities for parents to go into school, notes in a folder in child's bag if new learning outcome is being taught etc. It works really well."

"I am fully involved in the planning processes for my children and can suggest targets or areas of focus for my child who has Down's Syndrome. My other children require less input but the school work very much in partnership with me about my daughter and is keen to develop a positive relationship with us as a family to help her get the best experience."

"Our primary school teachers have worked hard to improve communication by using clear simple explanations and explaining words and abbreviations used within Education settings, so government reports are more accessible. Also regular updates on Seesaw and open afternoons at school."

"Strong link between the school and parents with details of what is happening and any changes. Not so much at local authority level."

"I have met some parents in my children's school who later became family friends."



Thank You

We are very grateful to all the parents and carers who took part in this survey

Please contact us by email at info@parentcarerassembly.scot for more information about this survey



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