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Research into the implementation of the National Reading and Numeracy Tests

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BMG Research

Views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The National Reading and Numeracy Tests (NRNTs) were implemented in May 2013 to support the ongoing assessment of progress against the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) to ensure that clear, precise expectations are in place for the improvement of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum.

This report presents the findings of research undertaken by BMG Research on behalf of the Welsh Government into the implementation of the National Reading and Numeracy Tests (NRNTs). The research aims to:

- Examine how the NRNTs have been introduced and implemented in practice.
- Investigate the effect that the NRNTs are planned to have in support of teaching and learning.

Method

A mixed-method approach was utilised to meet the research aims and objectives and included:

- A review of relevant documentation relating to the NRNTs.
- A telephone survey of 550 schools.
- In-depth interviews with key stakeholders (including 8 NRNT leads in schools, 8 Test Supporters, 7 Regional Consortia Test Monitoring Officers, and representatives from NfER and Accumina).

Key findings

How the NRNTs were introduced and implemented in practice

- Almost all respondents (97 per cent) had made use of the test administration handbook. Usage of other support was high (50 per cent or higher for each element, including 88% using sample materials on NRNTs, 87% using NRNT access and disapplication arrangements guidance, and

87% using the national data collection and reporting arrangements technical completion notes); however, non-local resources were less widely used including regional consortia (42 per cent), Test Supporters (25 per cent), and national contacts (16 per cent).

- More than half (56 per cent) of the representatives from the schools surveyed had attended an LNF/National Support Programme conference; however, in-depth interviews found these were not highly valued as attendees found the conferences to be too large with insufficient time to gain a deeper understanding or ask questions.
- Test Supporters reported they were most likely to be contacted by a school once the NRNT lead had reviewed the guidance materials from the Welsh Government and had specific questions or wanted assurances their interpretation of the guidance was correct. Most frequently Test Supporters reported that schools mainly contacted them with queries about the disapplication process.
- Three-fifths of respondents (59 per cent) considered the guidance and manuals provided by the Welsh Government to be very relevant, while just over two-fifths (44 per cent) considered them to be very effective. Respondents from English language medium schools were more likely than those from Welsh language medium schools to consider these as very relevant (63 per cent, compared to 52 per cent)
- Nearly two-fifths of respondents (38 per cent) considered the sample test materials to be very relevant, while around a quarter (24 per cent) considered them to be very effective. Most of the remainder considered the sample materials quite relevant (57 per cent) or quite effective (64 per cent).
- Half (50 per cent) of respondents considered the messages and guidance received to have been very relevant to what they needed to know (50 per cent) and very easy to follow in practice (49 per cent). They were least likely to have considered the messages and guidance very timely (20 per cent). Respondents in secondary schools were significantly more likely than those in primary schools to have considered messages and guidance

from the Welsh Government to be clear and coherent (51 per cent, compared to 35 per cent).

- The majority of respondents (95 per cent) felt their school was able to fully comply with the guidance issued by the Welsh Government in the Test Administration handbook; however, respondents in special schools were less likely than average to have felt their school were able to fully comply (39 per cent).
- The most common approach to communicating the NRNTs to parents was by letter (79 per cent) although this was significantly more likely to be reported by respondents in secondary schools than in primary schools (90 per cent, compared to 78 per cent). When prompted, 64 per cent of all schools reported that they would have liked to have received more information or materials from the Welsh Government to provide to parents. Tests were mainly communicated to pupils via class teachers (82 per cent).
- 81 per cent of schools administered the NRNTs to whole classes. Where NRNTs were not administered to whole classes, they were administered to groups made up of whole year groups or smaller groups based on age.
- Tests were most likely to be administered in the classroom (59 per cent), followed by a combination of classrooms and larger rooms (22 per cent).
- The majority of primary schools (83 per cent) had delivered the tests in shorter ‘chunks’ which was found to be useful as this approach corresponded with their standard teaching practices.
- In the majority of cases tests were administered by qualified teachers employed at the school on a regular basis (91 per cent). However, secondary schools were significantly more likely than primary schools to use ‘other staff’ working at the school on a regular basis (34 per cent, compared to 14 per cent).
- More than a fifth of respondents (22 per cent) reported that their school had used modified NRNTs; the majority (87 per cent) did so to accommodate pupils with special needs and physical disabilities (such as impairments of hearing or vision). However, less than half of schools (47 per cent) used all of the modified tests they ordered.

- Two in five respondents (40 per cent) reported that their school made use of the disapplication arrangements for the NRNTs and of these half (51 per cent) did so for the benefit of pupils with special needs/learning difficulties. However, disapplication arrangements were seen as the main source of confusion and concern in implementing the tests amongst all those interviewed in-depth, in particular two questions commonly arose: 1.Who could/should be disapplied, and 2. What would be the impact of disapplication on amalgamated scores?
- It was noted that some disapplied learners would have been able to take part in tests if translations into a wider variety of language were made available or if schools could select the tests undertaken based on a child's ability as opposed to age, particularly in special schools.
- More than a fifth of respondents' schools had made use of extended response questions; however, awareness of these were low in the interviews.
- The average length of time invested in the testing process by schools (including administrative preparation and implementation but not including preparation of learners) was estimated to have been 23 hours; this was higher in secondary schools (29 hours) and lowest in special schools (20 hours), with respondents in primary schools estimating an average of 22 hours. This time was mainly invested by the senior management team.
- The majority of respondents (91 per cent) were satisfied with how the NRNTs were implemented and administered at their school. More than half of all respondents (53 per cent) were very satisfied in this respect.
- One-fifth (21 per cent) reported having experienced no challenges in implementing the NRNTs. The main challenge cited by respondents to the survey was a lack of staff resource/time (26 per cent) which was particularly the case in secondary schools compared with primary (35 per cent, compared to 25 per cent). Those interviewed in-depth tended to cite understanding and interpreting disapplication arrangements as the main challenge.
- Although the majority (88 per cent) of respondents' schools used 'qualified teachers working at the school on a regular basis' to mark the NRNTs, this

proportion was significantly higher amongst respondents working in primary schools than those in secondary schools (93 per cent, compared to 55 per cent).

- The average time taken to mark 30 National Reading Test papers was just under three hours. This is at least one hour longer than the 90–120 minutes estimated in the Test Administration Handbook. The average time taken to mark 30 National Numeracy Test papers was shorter at two hours and 29 minutes this is also longer than estimated duration of 30-45 minutes.
- When marking the tests the most frequent challenge was that of finding staff resources and time to do it (31 per cent of all respondents); however, 93 per cent of respondents reporting that they were quite/very satisfied with how the marking of the NRNTs was undertaken at their school.
- Data entry was most likely to be undertaken by 'staff, other than teachers, working at the school on a regular basis' (School MIS: 63 per cent, NfER portal: 63 per cent). On average, just under five hours (4.7) were spent entering NRNT results onto the school MIS and 4.4 hours for the NfER portal.

How schools are using and plan to use the NRNT results

- 93 per cent of schools have sent the individual test scores to pupils' parents. Schools believed it was important that parents received the NRNT results at the same time as the school report so these could be interpreted and discussed in the report or at parents' evenings. Schools believe the scores were received too late in the term in 2013 to enable them to do this.
- 86 per cent of schools have used individual test scores to inform teaching plans; 85 per cent to inform pupil targets, to identify pupil weaknesses and plan interventions; and 82 per cent to provide more targeted support to learners.
- Special schools were less likely to have used pupils' scores; in-depth interviews suggest that this may be because more learners are disapplied in special schools meaning they have less data to utilise.

- NRNT leads interviewed in-depth plan to use the individual scores more extensively to measure individual pupil's progress when comparator data becomes available following future tests.
- Schools were most likely to use amalgamated scores to inform teaching plans (86 per cent) and to inform curriculum development (86 per cent).
- Respondents in primary schools were significantly more likely than those in secondary schools to say their school intends to use the data to identify areas for staff development (78 per cent, compared to 64 per cent) and to monitor staff performance (61 per cent, compared to 30 per cent).
- Schools and Regional Consortia Test Monitoring Officers (RTMOs) interviewed in depth preferred the use of the standardised scores as opposed to the age scores as they believed these allowed fairer comparisons which were less open to interpretation.
- Respondents were most likely to specify getting information/results earlier (19 per cent) when asked how the results could be made more 'usable' for them.

Conclusions and recommendations

The extent to which the administration of the NRNTs was implemented as envisaged in Welsh Government guidance.

The vast majority of schools that took part in the survey reported that they were fully compliant with the Welsh Government guidance; where schools were not fully compliant this was related to schools trying to meet the needs of children with specific requirements (such as those with special educational needs). All respondents had used some type of information from the Welsh Government to support the implementation of the tests. Schools interviewed in depth tended to view the handbook as the core source of information and generally found they could find the answers to any questions in this.

- **Recommendation: Continue to provide a range of up-to-date materials for schools to use on implementing the NRNTs, making it clear who they can approach for any further information needed.**

The views of stakeholders involved in the administration of the NRNTs on the process of administering the tests and the arrangements and guidance supporting this.

The vast majority of research participants were happy with the guidance that supported the NRNT administration process. Respondents were slightly less satisfied with the sample test materials. Findings from in-depth interviews suggest that schools would have liked a wider range of sample materials to use as practice papers to help their pupils better prepare for the tests.

Research participants were happy with the messages emerging from the Welsh Government. The main concern was the timeliness of information. Most would have preferred to receive information relating to the tests earlier in the year to help them prepare.

- **Recommendation: The Welsh Government should work with schools to introduce support and guidance earlier in the school year to ensure teachers and pupils are best able to prepare for the NRNTs.**

The patterns and rationale for use of modified tests, special access arrangements and disapplication of learners.

The main challenge schools faced when implementing the tests was the issue of disapplication and specifically who can/should be disapplied and the impact this has on school's results. Disapplication arrangements were primarily used for learners in other specialist circumstances, such as new pupils, pupils who were ill (though this is an incorrect use of disapplication) and those whose first language was not English or Welsh.

- **Recommendation: The Welsh Government should consider (1) how more rigour, consistency, and clarity can be brought to eligibility for disapplication and (2) consider how disapplications can be dealt with when reporting test results so they do not arouse schools' fears that true achievements and performance may be obscured.**
- **Recommendation: The Welsh Government may wish to consider, in the light of its objectives for the testing programme as a whole, the**

views of some schools, particularly special schools, that pupils should be able to sit tests appropriate to their ability levels as recognised by their schools rather than strictly according to their age.

A fifth of respondents had used the modified NRNTs and this tended to be where the school has learners with visual impairments or special educational needs. Nearly half of those schools who had ordered modified tests had not used all of these. It was suggested in some of the in-depth interviews that this was likely to be a 'teething' problem in the first year to ensure preparedness that would not be an issue in the future.

How the NRNT results were processed and disseminated.

The majority of schools surveyed reported that they had used qualified teachers working at the school on a regular basis to mark the NRNTs. Where schools had used their own teaching staff to mark the tests they reported this was beneficial as it helped them to better understand the tests and how individual pupils were performing. However, in some instances schools would have preferred tests to be marked and moderated externally to ensure consistency of the interpretation of the mark scheme.

The vast majority of schools surveyed had sent the tests scores to parents. However, schools were concerned about the timing of the release of the test results. Most of those interviewed in depth would have preferred to receive these earlier so they could be incorporated into end-of-year reports and parent's evenings.

- **Recommendation: The Welsh Government should consider how the consistency and speed of marking may be improved in order to remove any concerns regarding how schools are interpreting the mark scheme and ensure results are available earlier in the summer term.**

How the NRNTs are planned to be used within schools for teaching, assessment, curriculum planning and monitoring.

The majority of the work undertaken by schools following the receipt of the test results has been focussed on the individual test scores through sending parents the test results, identifying specific learner weaknesses and planning interventions, and providing more targeted support to learners.

It was noted by several schools and RTMOs interviewed that progress on the wider curriculum development and school performance monitoring plans were still in their relatively early stages. They believed more could be achieved in these areas when they had comparative longitudinal data from future test results.

- **Recommendation: The Welsh Government should ensure the consistency of the types of data collected and ensure comparability between years to enable schools and pupils to gain the maximum benefit from the NRNTs.**
- **Recommendation: The Welsh Government and regional consortia should identify opportunities to create data comparison tools to enable schools to best utilise the test results.**
- **Recommendation: The Welsh Government should consider developing materials to better ensure parents can correctly interpret the results as they apply to their child.**

1 Introduction to the research

1.1 This report presents the findings of research undertaken by BMG Research on behalf of the Welsh Government into the implementation of the National Reading and Numeracy Tests (NRNTs).

Background

1.2 The School Improvement Action Plan[1] provides a twenty-point plan for school improvement to address concerns raised over literacy and numeracy amongst Welsh school-leavers.

1.3 To support this, the Welsh Government has introduced a National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) to ensure that clear, precise expectations are in place for the improvement of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. Underpinning the LNF is the principle that ongoing assessment is a core element of good teaching practice. This ongoing assessment is supported by the National Reading and Numeracy Tests (NRNTs) which were implemented in May 2013. The NRNTs were developed by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) in partnership with Acumina and are for all learners in Years 2 to 9 across all maintained schools in Wales.

1.4 The tests aim to generate summative, highly reliable, comparable data which will enable schools and local authorities to measure learner progress and focus attention on improving performance. They also include formative elements to generate data from which teachers can gain an accurate understanding of a learner's progress in terms of their skills, in relation to the LNF and can be used as one element in a diagnostic tool when planning for learner development. The tests also make it possible to get an understanding of achievement compared with the national picture.

1.5 A range of guidance and support has been provided for schools by the Welsh Government and NfER since the introduction of the NRNTs. This includes the 'Test Administration Handbook' which includes: information on the manner and method of test administration (for example test duration, suggested test

[1] http://learning.wales.gov.uk/news/sitenews/improvingschools/?lang=en

location and storage of test materials); guidance on access and disapplication arrangements to assist schools where some learners may face challenges in accessing the tests; and further information on the Learning Wales and Welsh Government websites. In addition to this, assistance from 'Test Supporters' (usually former Headteachers) was offered. Test Supporters are individuals whom schools could approach to ask further questions or for further clarification. Local authorities and regional consortia also have a role in monitoring schools' progress in NRNTs and in providing appropriate support and challenge.

Research aims and objectives

1.6 The Welsh Government commissioned this research into the implementation of the NRNTs to inform the ongoing support provided to the education sector on literacy and numeracy, to inform future arrangements for the NRNTs, to inform future guidance and support provided for the administration of the NRNT's, and to ensure that they are supporting practice within schools. The research aims to:

- Examine how the NRNTs have been introduced and implemented in practice.
- Investigate the effect that the NRNTs are planned to have in support of teaching and learning.

1.7 Specifically the research explores:

- The extent to which the administration of the NRNTs was implemented as envisaged in Welsh Government guidance.
- The views of stakeholders involved in the administration of the NRNTs on the process of administering the tests and the arrangements and guidance supporting this.
- The patterns and rationale for use of modified tests[2], special access arrangements, and disapplication of learners.
- How the NRNT results were processed and disseminated.

[2] Modified tests were available to support learners with visual impairment or learners who normally use large print or braille as part of their normal classroom practice.

- How the NRNTs are planned to be used within schools for teaching, assessment, curriculum planning and monitoring.

1.8 The research also provides recommendations as to how the Welsh Government, regional consortia, local authorities and schools can improve upon the implementation of the NRNTs in future years, and provides case studies exploring good practice in administering the NRNTs and the challenges faced by schools in doing so.

1.9 It should be noted that this research focuses on the process and implementation of NRNTs and on plans for using the results. It does not evaluate the content and purpose of the tests. A separate evaluation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Programme (NLNP) has been commissioned by the Welsh Government which will examine how the NLNP is being implemented in practice, as well as what impact the NLNP is having on teaching practice and educational standards.

Methodology

1.10 In order to meet the research aims and objectives it was agreed that a mixed-method approach would be the most appropriate approach, including:

- A review of relevant documentation relating to the NRNTs.
- A telephone survey of schools.
- Qualitative research, including in-depth interviews with key stakeholders.

Document review

1.11 Following an initial inception meeting between BMG and the Welsh Government it was agreed that key documents relating to the NRNTs would be reviewed to inform the development of survey questions and qualitative research topic guides. Materials reviewed included:

- Welsh Government test readiness progress reports
- NRNT Test Administration Handbook
- Individual Pupil Report examples
- National Support Programme Questions and Answers
- NRNT access and disapplication arrangements guidance
- Welsh Government Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Quantitative survey

Survey respondent profile

1.12 The sampling frame for this survey comprised the member of staff in each school who had responsibility for implementing the NRNTs in all primary, secondary, and special schools in Wales. 1,617 unique school contacts were received from the Welsh Government.

1.13 Using this contact data, a proportionate sample approach was designed based upon school phase, type, region, language medium, and size (see Appendix 1 for a break down of number of interviews achieved) with the aim of achieving 550 interviews.

1.14 Overall, responses (from the individuals responsible for implementing the NRNTs) were provided at an individual school level by 550 schools. This represents a response rate of 34 per cent of all schools in Wales.

1.15 In order to address minor variations against specific targets the achieved data was subsequently weighted by phase, region and language medium. The school population information as originally provided by the Welsh Government was used as the basis for the weighting scheme as this represented the most reliable estimate of underlying school characteristics available. Weighted data is used throughout this report to ensure the data is representative of the population as a whole. The un-weighted and weighted sample profiles are presented in Appendix 2. Where bases are small (e.g. for special schools) this is flagged on charts and tables and these findings should be treated with caution.

Fieldwork process

1.16 The survey questionnaire (provided in Appendix 3) was designed to capture how schools went about implementing the NRNTs and the extent to which they were able to access support and follow Welsh Government guidelines; and explored how schools have used and plan to use the test results. The survey was designed by BMG Research, agreed by the project group in the Welsh Government and delivered via the use of Computer Assisted Telephone

Interviews (CATI) using Confirmit software. The survey was conducted between 22nd October and 13th December 2013.

1.17 The survey was made available in both Welsh and English language versions with respondents able to choose in which language they took part. 72 per cent of the interviews completed were undertaken in English and 28 per cent were completed in Welsh.

1.18 Survey interviews were designed to take no more than 15-20 minutes to complete. Potential respondents were called on a range of days and times on up to 10 occasions before being recorded as non-response.

Presentation of survey data in the report

1.19 Individual question bases are provided on the graphs and charts in this report. Cross-tabulations were undertaken, based on key variables such as school phase, type, region, language medium, and size. Independent t-tests[3] were conducted at the 95 per cent confidence level[4] to identify where differences between groups were statistically significant.

1.20 Most data used in this report are rounded to the nearest whole percentage. For this reason, on occasion, tables or charts may not add up exactly to 100 per cent.

Qualitative research

1.21 To support the quantitative survey and to add further insights, a number of qualitative interviews were also undertaken with representatives of various stakeholder groups involved in the implementation of the NRNTs. These comprised:

- School NRNT leads (8 telephone interviews), including:
  - x4 primary schools, x3 secondary schools, x1special school.
  - x2 South West and Mid, x2 South East, x2 Central South, x2 North Wales.

[3] A T-test is a statistical test performed to determine if groups of data are significantly different from each other

[4] Confidence levels are used to indicate the reliability of an estimate

- Test Supporters (8 telephone interviews).
- Regional Consortia Test Monitoring Officers (RTMOs) (7 telephone interviews).
- NfER NRNT leads (face-to-face group interview with 5 individuals).
- Accumina NRNT lead (1 telephone interview).

1.22 In each case, interviews lasted around half to three-quarters of an hour and were conducted using a semi-structured topic guide (agreed in advance with the Welsh Government and reproduced in Appendix 4). The guide ensured answers to specific common questions were gathered but also gave interviewees scope to make wider comments and observations. Thus, the topic guide allowed interviewees to explore their experiences relating to the NRNTs and discuss any current or future plans for using the test results. Interviews were audio-recorded (with respondent permission) to allow accurate recall at the analysis stage. Qualitative analysis was undertaken through the use of an analysis grid which was designed and populated based on both the topic guides and common themes emerging in the discussions themselves. The key points, supported by verbatim quotations were added into the grid for each theme and for each interview to build up a complete record of all the points and issues raised against each theme. Research material obtained from these interviews is used at various points in the report to illuminate statistical findings from the quantitative surveys.

1.23 Respondents were offered the option to take part in either Welsh or English. Three schools out of the eight that took part in this qualitative work, one Test Supporter, and one RMTO chose to undertake interviews in Welsh.

Report structure

1.24 Following this introduction the report is structured as follows: Chapter 2 explores how NRNTs were introduced and implemented by schools; Chapter 3 explores the effect that NRNTs are planned to have in support of teaching and learning; and, finally, Chapter 4 presents key findings and conclusions from the research.

2 How the NRNTs were introduced and implemented in practice

2.1 This section explores how the NRNTs were introduced and implemented in practice. This includes examining how they were communicated and prepared for, how they were administered, and how schools approached the marking and the process of entering the data onto NfER and Welsh Government portals.

Guidance and preparation

Sources of information about process and implementation of NRNTs

2.2 The findings in this section are derived chiefly from the survey of schools; respondents were asked about the materials and sources of information they had used to gain knowledge of the process of implementation of the tests prior to the introduction of the NRNTs.

2.3 Almost all respondents (97 per cent) mentioned that they had made use of the test administration handbook. This figure included all respondents working in secondary or special schools.

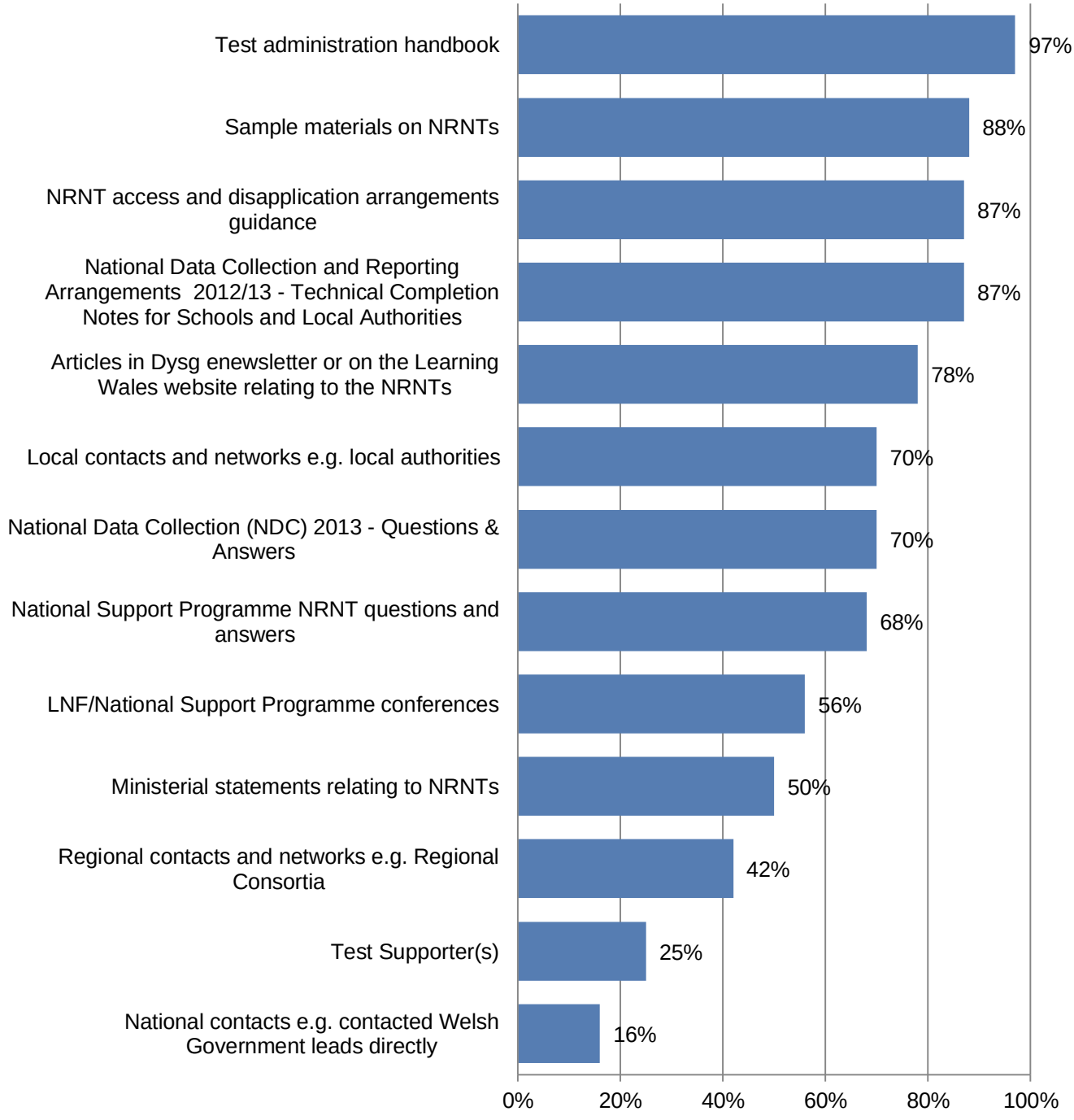
2.4 Other particularly important sources of information mentioned included sample materials on NRNTs (88 per cent), NRNT access and disapplication arrangements guidance (87 per cent), and 'National Data Collection and Reporting Arrangements 2012/13 – Technical Completion Notes for Schools and Local Authorities' (87 per cent).

2.5 By region, respondents in the South West and Mid Wales region were significantly more likely than those based elsewhere to cite local contacts and networks, such as local authorities, as sources of information that they had used (82 per cent, compared with an average[5] of 70 per cent).

2.6 Respondents in North Wales were significantly less likely than those based elsewhere to cite regional contacts and networks, such as regional consortia as sources of information (26 per cent, compared with an average of 42 per cent). Figure 2.1 summarises the materials/sources of information that respondents used.

[5] When referring to an average figure this indicates the overall national figure.

Figure 2.1 Materials/sources used to find out more about the process and implementation of the NRNTs, prompted, multiple response (all respondents)



Sample base = 550

2.7 Respondents from English language medium schools were significantly more likely than those from Welsh language medium schools to have mentioned:

- National Data Collection and Reporting Arrangements 2012/13 (93 per cent, compared to 74 per cent);
- NRNT access and disapplication arrangements guidance (91 per cent, compared to 80 per cent);
- sample materials on NRNTs (91 per cent, compared to 83 per cent);
- articles in Dysg newsletter or on the Learning Wales website relating to the NRNTs (82 per cent, compared to 68 per cent);
- National Data Collection (NDC) 2013 – Questions and Answers (77 per cent, compared to 57 per cent);
- LNF/National Support Programme conferences (60 per cent, compared to 47 per cent); and
- ministerial statements relating to NRNTs (53 per cent, compared to 40 per cent).

2.8 More than half (56 per cent) of the representatives of the schools surveyed had attended an LNF/National Support Programme conference. However, qualitative interviews with NfER, Test Supporters, and schools identified that, in some cases, attendees found the conferences to be not particularly useful due to the size of the event and the need to communicate in both English and Welsh, both of which factors meant there was little time to gain a deeper understanding or ask questions.

2.9 When interviewed, Test Supporters identified that they were allocated up to 30 schools to contact by NfER. Test Supporters then sent emails to each of their allocated schools to ensure they were aware that support was available. Schools could subsequently make contact with the Test Supporter if they required help in implementing the tests. Test Supporters reported that following their initial email they were subsequently contacted on average by around one-third of their schools, a proportion that is slightly higher than the 25 per cent of survey respondents who reported they had approached their Test Supporter. However, this can be seen as broadly consistent given that the qualitative research was not statistically representative.

2.10 Following a request for help from schools, Test Supporters communicated with schools using a combination of phone calls, emails, and visits, depending on the level of support requested. For example, two Test Supporters described

going into schools to meet with groups of staff to explain the entirety of the test process. However, more frequently Test Supporters described supporting schools by confirming their interpretations of the guidance provided or by giving advice on specific issues, most frequently, that of disapplication:

> ‘They needed more clarification generally. The impression I had was that [the Welsh Government] didn’t give them enough details about the process, about disapplication or how they provide the data.’ Test Supporter

> ‘I was allocated 30 odd schools. People replied to my initial letter to say I was there to help them. Between visits and phone calls I’d say a maximum of ten, maybe twelve schools asked for support.’ Test Supporter

> ‘The queries that came up were just really practical things, “Who marks the papers, what do we do with special needs children?” ‘ Test Supporter

2.11 Several RTMOs also reported providing support to schools ahead of test implementation, the majority of whom were simply responding to queries. However, two reported providing NRNT information during meetings including half termly cluster meetings and specific training events:

> ‘Schools were using this as an opportunity to share concerns about developments, aspects of the tests. It was just a sounding board, a chance to discuss issues as they were arising. Then to take them back to Welsh Government as well.’ RTMO

> ‘We had training sessions before the tests and guided teachers and schools into, ‘This is how you order your tests,’ but we just followed information we got from Learning Wales website, the Welsh Government website. Just directed them to the website where they had to order their packs, once we had the guidance on modified tests

we guided them through how they have access to modified tests.' RTMO

2.12 Schools and NfER also reported that NRNT leads had contacted NfER directly to ask specific questions about ordering papers and about how to prepare pupils for the tests.

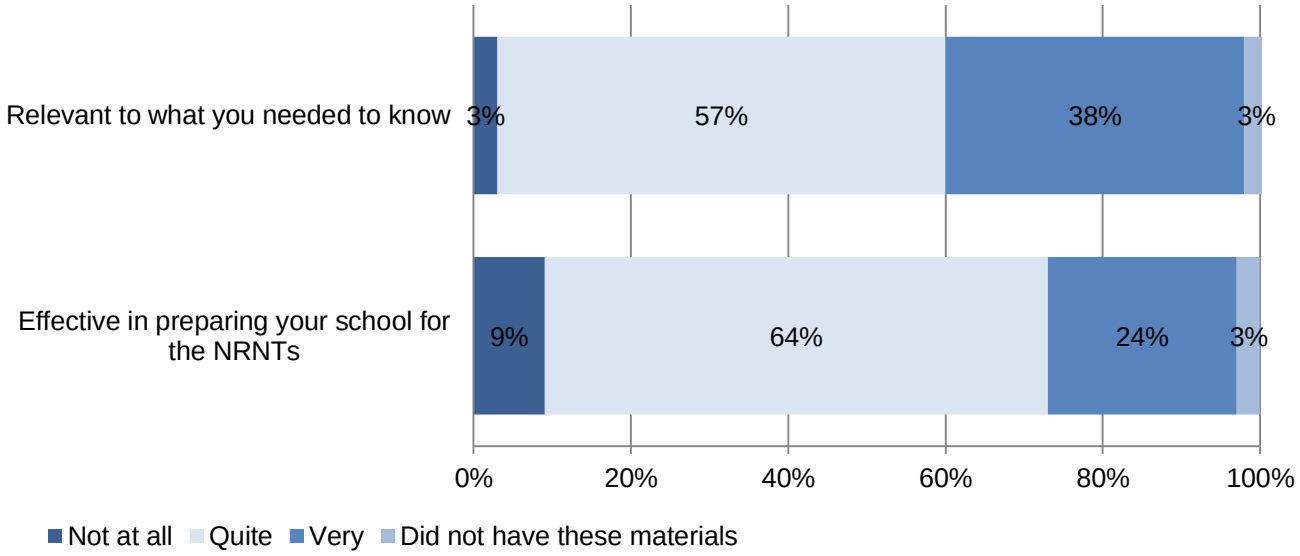
2.13 Some Test Supporters also noted that they believed schools benefitted from their own internal knowledge in cases where staff had previously been in post when other national tests such as SATs were conducted. As such they believed these schools were more confident in implementing the tests whilst those with a higher proportion of younger staff who did not have this knowledge or experience had more questions.

Review of sample test materials

2.14 All respondents were asked about the relevance of the sample test materials provided by the Welsh Government to address what they needed to know and to their effectiveness in preparing their school for the NRNTs. Nearly two-fifths of respondents (38 per cent) considered the sample test materials to be very relevant, while around a quarter (24 per cent) considered them to be very effective. Most of the remainder considered the sample test materials quite relevant (57 per cent) or quite effective (64 per cent). While only three per cent of respondents did not consider the sample test materials relevant at all, nine per cent did not consider them effective at all.

2.15 Overall, three per cent of respondents had not had these materials.

Figure 2.2 Ratings of sample test materials provided by the Welsh Government (all respondents)



Sample base = 550

2.16 There were no significant differences when considering the responses given by phase, region or language medium. However, a third of special schools (33 per cent) reported they had not had these materials.

2.17 During the in-depth interviews several schools reported that they would have liked more sample and practice materials so they could better prepare their pupils for the tests:

> 'I think most schools would say more sample materials because it is the first time any of us had seen that kind of test but now we have seen it once, it is quite straightforward.' NRNT Lead, Secondary, English medium

Review of guidance and materials provided by Welsh Government (including the Test Administration Handbook)

2.18 All respondents were asked about the relevance of the guidance and manuals provided by the Welsh Government to address what they needed to know about the tests and to their effectiveness in preparing their school for the

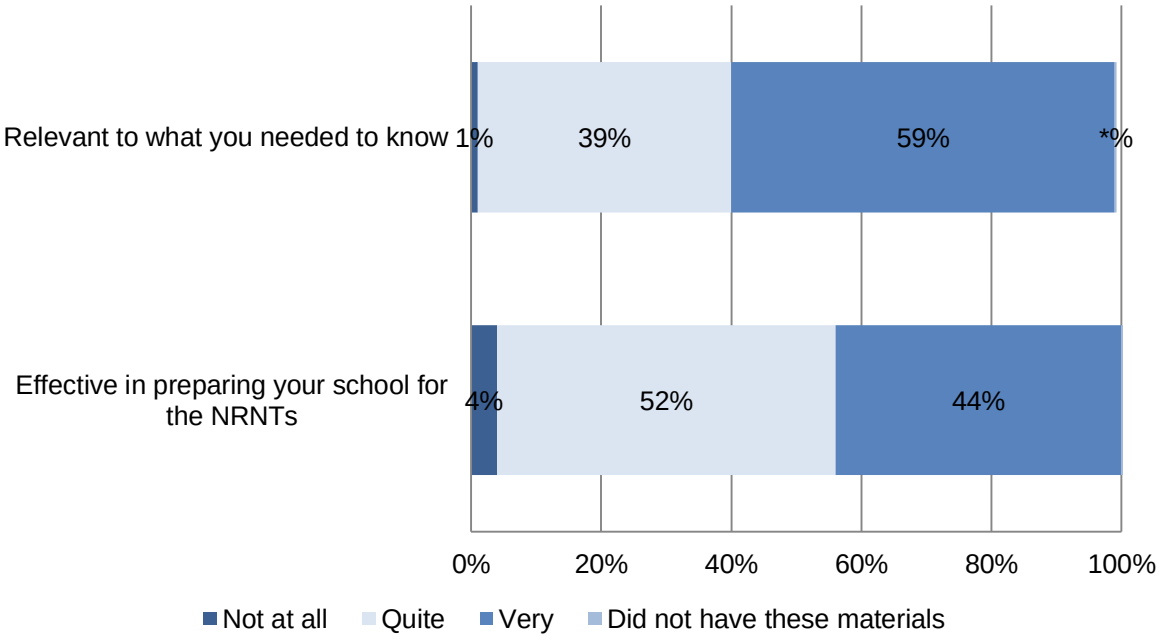
NRNTs. This guidance and manuals included the Test Administration Handbook.

2.19 Three-fifths of respondents (59 per cent) considered the guidance and manuals to be very relevant, while just over two-fifths (44 per cent) considered them to be very effective. Most of the remainder considered the guidance and manuals quite relevant (39 per cent) or quite effective (52 per cent). While only one per cent of respondents did not consider the guidance and manuals relevant at all, four per cent did not consider them effective at all.

2.20 Less than one per cent of respondents reported they had not had these materials.

Figure 2.3 Ratings of guidance and materials provided by the Welsh Government (all respondents)

* denotes less than 0.5 per cent



Sample base = 550

2.21 Respondents from English language medium schools were significantly more likely than those from Welsh language medium schools to consider the guidance and manuals to have been very relevant to what they needed to know (63 per cent, compared to 52 per cent). There were no significant differences in views regarding the guidance and manuals' effectiveness in preparing their schools for the NRNTs.

Review of messages and guidance from the Welsh Government

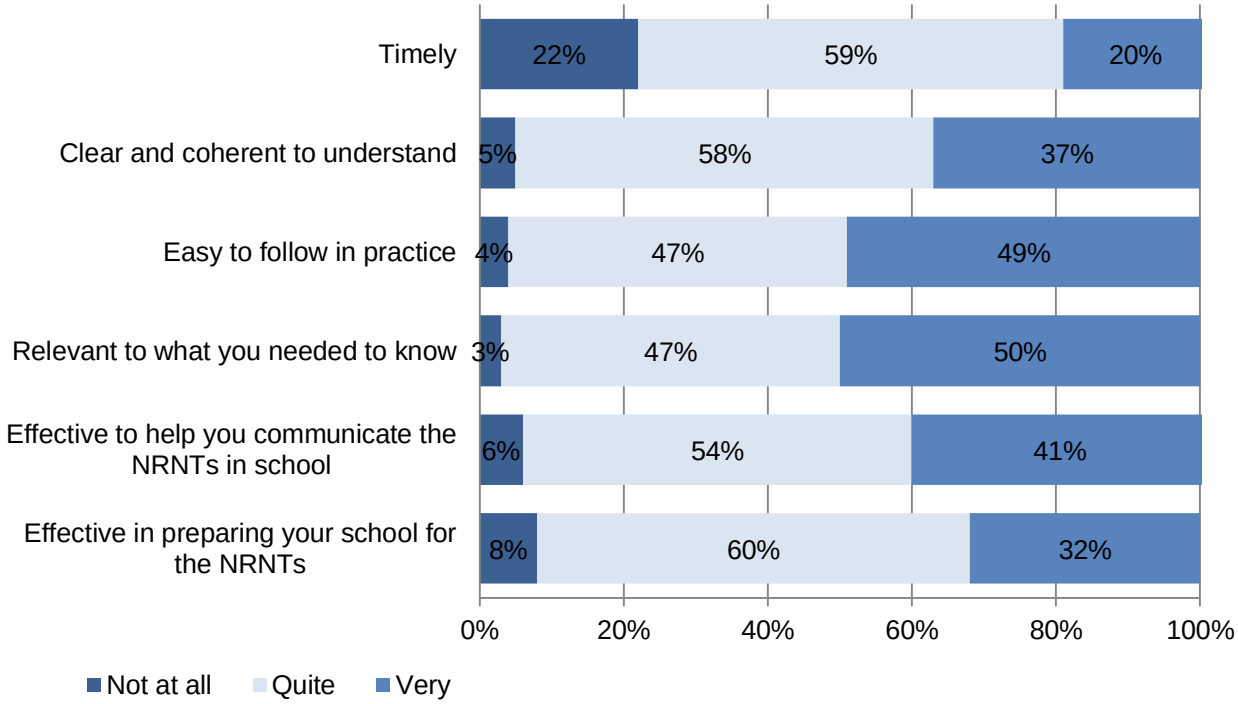
2.22 Respondents were asked about the messages and guidance they had received from the Welsh Government prior to the introduction of the NRNTs. They were asked to rate it on the basis of its timeliness, how clear and coherent it was, how easy it was to follow in practice, its relevance to what they needed to know, its effectiveness in helping them to communicate the NRNTs in school, and its effectiveness in preparing their school for the NRNTs.

2.23 As Figure 2.4 shows, half of respondents considered the messages and guidance received to have been very relevant to what they needed to know (50 per cent) and very easy to follow in practice (49 per cent). They were least likely to have considered the messages and guidance very timely (20 per cent).

2.24 When interviewed a few of the NRNT leads and RTMOs noted that it would have been beneficial to receive some of the material, particularly that on guidance for disapplication and its impacts and sample materials sooner.

> ‘The guidance needs to come out earlier and if we’re going to be expected to answer these queries for schools, I think we need to be briefed, if there’s going to be a national phone line, that needs to be set. I think they need to think about the type of questions people are going to be asking and how we’re going to answer that challenge.’ RTMO

Figure 2.4 Ratings of messages and guidance provided by the Welsh Government (all respondents)



Sample base = 550

2.25 Respondents in secondary schools were significantly more likely than those in primary schools to have considered messages and guidance from the Welsh Government to be clear and coherent (51 per cent, compared to 35 per cent). In some cases the school NRNT leads and Test Supporters suggested that secondary schools were more likely to understand messages and guidance on the NRNT process as they had more experience implementing tests and exams in general (such as GCSEs and A-Levels).

2.26 The interviews with schools indicated that generally the test administration handbook was a good source of information on how to administer the tests and they were broadly happy that it had provided sufficient information to guide them through the process:

> 'With the guidance information, I worked it out myself.' NRNT Lead, Primary, Welsh medium

> 'Everything was fine. It must've been clear enough because we went through the process.' NRNT Lead, Secondary, English Medium

2.27 However, the interviews also revealed some areas where schools would like further information from the Welsh Government, including on the disapplication process (specifically more information on who could be disapplied and the impact this has on schools' results), on how test results could be used, and on how they could best prepare pupils for the tests.

Implementation

Compliance with Welsh Government guidelines

2.28 The majority of respondents (95 per cent) felt their school was able to fully comply with the guidance issued by the Welsh Government in the Test Administration handbook. All the school NRNT leads interviewed reported that they had been able to comply with the guidance. However, in some instances they reported that ensuring compliance had caused some organisational difficulties, particularly in identifying an appropriate space for pupils to sit the tests, and, in two secondary schools, finding secure storage space of test papers when GCSE exam papers were being stored at the same time.

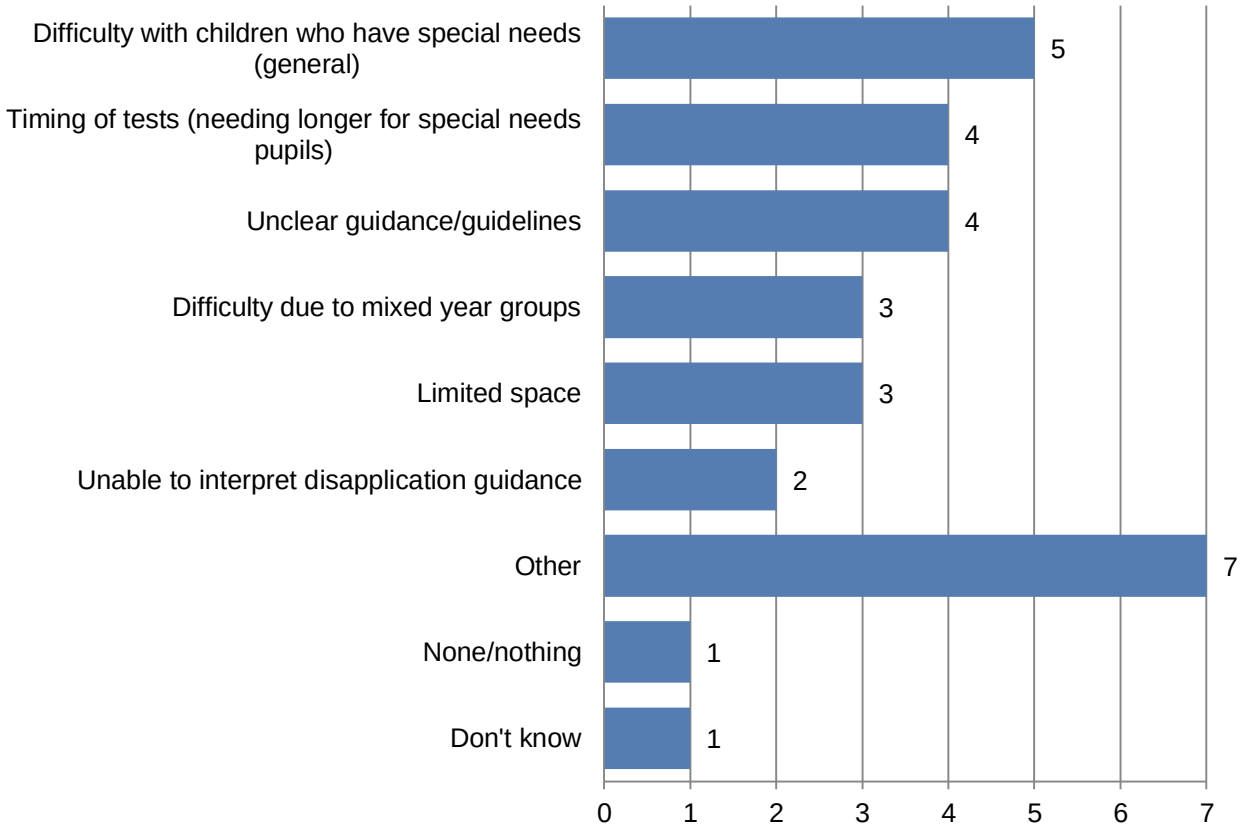
2.29 Respondents in special schools were less likely than average to have felt their school were able to fully comply (39 per cent) and more likely than average to have felt their school were able to just partially comply (42 per cent). Although because of the sample size this is not a significant difference.

2.30 Overall, only 26 respondents[6] felt their school was unable to comply with this Welsh Government guidance. This included 20 respondents from primary schools, 5 from special schools, and 1 from a secondary school. These respondents were asked about their difficulties. The reasons given for these responses are shown below.

[6] 27 weighted cases

Figure 2.5 Aspects of the guidance that schools were unable to comply with, unprompted, multiple response (where unable to comply)

Presenting responses as number of weighted cases



Sample base = 26

2.31 These findings are consistent with challenges identified in adhering to the guidance as reported by two of the RTMOs who were interviewed in depth.

> 'The guidelines were adhered to in every case, what I did find and there was a variety of response from the teachers involved regarding the suitability of the test for their specific pupils.' RTMO

> 'There was a little bit of uncertainty about what happens if you've got mixed year groups.' RTMO

Communicating the NRNTs

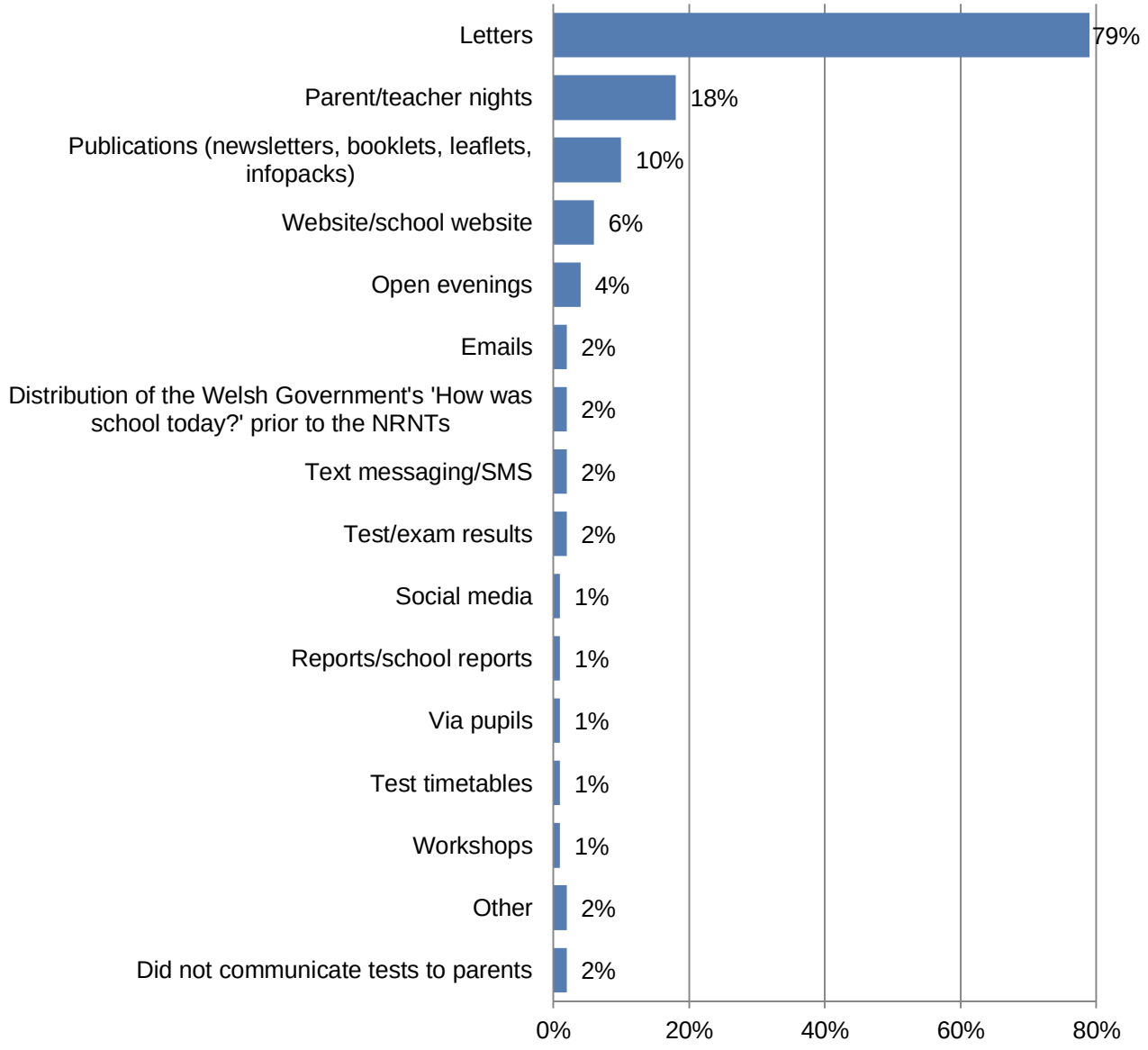
2.32 When asked how they had communicated information about the implementation of NRNTs to parents of pupils, overall by far the most common approach to communicating with parents was by letter (79 per cent) although significantly more likely to be reported by respondents in secondary schools than in primary schools (90 per cent, compared to 78 per cent).

2.33 The second most frequently reported approach to communicating this information was parent/teacher nights (18 per cent). Parent/teacher nights were significantly more likely to be cited by respondents in primary schools than by those in secondary schools (20 per cent, compared to six per cent).

2.34 One in ten respondents (10 per cent) communicated the information through school publications, such as newsletters, booklets, leaflets and info-packs; however, this was only reported by primary and special schools.

2.35 Figure 2.6 summarises the methods by which schools reported that information about the implementation of NRNTs was communicated to parents.

Figure 2.6 Ways in which information about the implementation of NRNTs were communicated to parents of pupils, unprompted, multiple response (all respondents)



Sample base = 550

2.36 When asked if they would have liked more information from the Welsh Government to provide to parents, 64 per cent of all schools reported that they would have. There were no significant differences by type of school, region or language medium to this response.

2.37 One school, when interviewed reported that they would have liked further information on how to interpret the test results from the Welsh Government to provide to parents although this was not explored in the survey.

Case study: Welsh Medium School, Primary, South East

The school's Acting Deputy Head oversaw the implementation and administration of the NRNTs after the school first found out about them through the Welsh Government in September 2012. This involved ensuring that:

> 'there was a routine and a practical understanding among the staff, who participated in a training phase prior to the implementation of the tests.'

To prepare, the Acting Deputy Head used the Test Administration Handbook and also accessed materials online, then subsequently organised the school's approach and procedures for the tests according to this guidance in order to be fully compliant.

The school sent a letter to parents to inform them about the NRNTs. The letter outlined when the tests would take place and why they were necessary; and explained the national nature of the tests. The Acting Deputy head was confident that this approach was effective as the school did not receive any requests for further information or complaints. However, they do believe that some more specific further information or materials from the Welsh Government to share with parents would have been useful:

> 'It would be helpful to have more information from the Welsh Government to pass on to parents to explain about the test criteria and to help them understand how the tests are relevant to their child.'

The school did not use any modified NRNTs as none of their learners needed them. However, they were aware of the guidance materials available to them if they chose to use these. Only one learner from the school was disapplied and they found the guidance to do this clear.

Tests were delivered within classroom settings and in 20 minute 'chunks' for Years 2 and 3 as suggested in the Welsh Government guidance. The school found this approach was particularly effective for Year 2 learners as due to their age their concentration span is not as long as others.

Tests were supervised by teachers within the school. The Acting Deputy Head believed this approach created the minimum disruption to staff and learners:

> 'This way means that test days do not cut across other classes who are not sitting the tests. In effect, teachers continue to work within their usual timetable.'

In the future, the Acting Deputy Head believes there is a role for the Regional Consortia to play in helping schools plan their curriculum to prepare for the tests:

> 'There is a consortium for South East Wales and they do have a role to play. When the tests were first introduced the consortium had only been established for 6 months. Perhaps the consortium could have been set up sooner so that things were not rushed - in order to try and change things sooner rather than later. We could then embed what we need to into the school curriculum as preparation in advance.'

A mixed approach to marking was used by the school, utilising both teaching and senior staff with supply teachers brought in to enable staff to undertake marking without additional pressure. The Acting Deputy Head believes this approach was time-effective and also thought the marking scheme was suitably clear. School administrative staff inputted the data onto the school MIS and NfER portal and no problems or difficulties were reported.

The results from the tests have been used by the school in a number of ways, including:

- Providing information for parents, using the Welsh Government handouts;
- using the scores to identify learners who have fallen behind and providing them with additional support through group sessions;
- identifying learners with high scores and developing more challenging activities for them;

- grouping children into sets based upon ability; and
- making comparisons both locally and nationally.

However, the Acting Deputy Head noted that the results arrived too late to be able to be followed up in that academic year and would like to see these made available sooner.

Over time, when year-on-year results are available the school would like to analyse a 'bank' of scores which can help monitor the individual pupil's and the school's progress. The Acting Deputy Head is positive that this will be of benefit to the school, learners, and parents alike:

> 'The fact that the tests are national means that the information given to parents will be more rigorous and will outline the needs of the child. This will help a lot, because it's consistent. It will get better and areas for improvement can be targeted - for example, if a notable number of children have misunderstood a particular question or have struggled with a specific type of text, we can work with that, because it will be more feasible to identify a way forward.'

The school believe their approach to implementing the tests was effective because they were able to accurately follow the guidance materials which they thought were clear to understand and pitched at the correct level. However, they believe the materials would be strengthened if they provided guidance on how to teach and prepare children for the tests.

2.38 When asked how they communicated information about the implementation of NRNTs to pupils in their school, respondents most frequently said that this was through class teachers (82 per cent). This was by far the most common approach but significantly more likely to be cited by respondents in primary schools than in secondary schools (86 per cent, compared to 67 per cent). This response increased to 94 per cent amongst respondents in Welsh language medium schools.

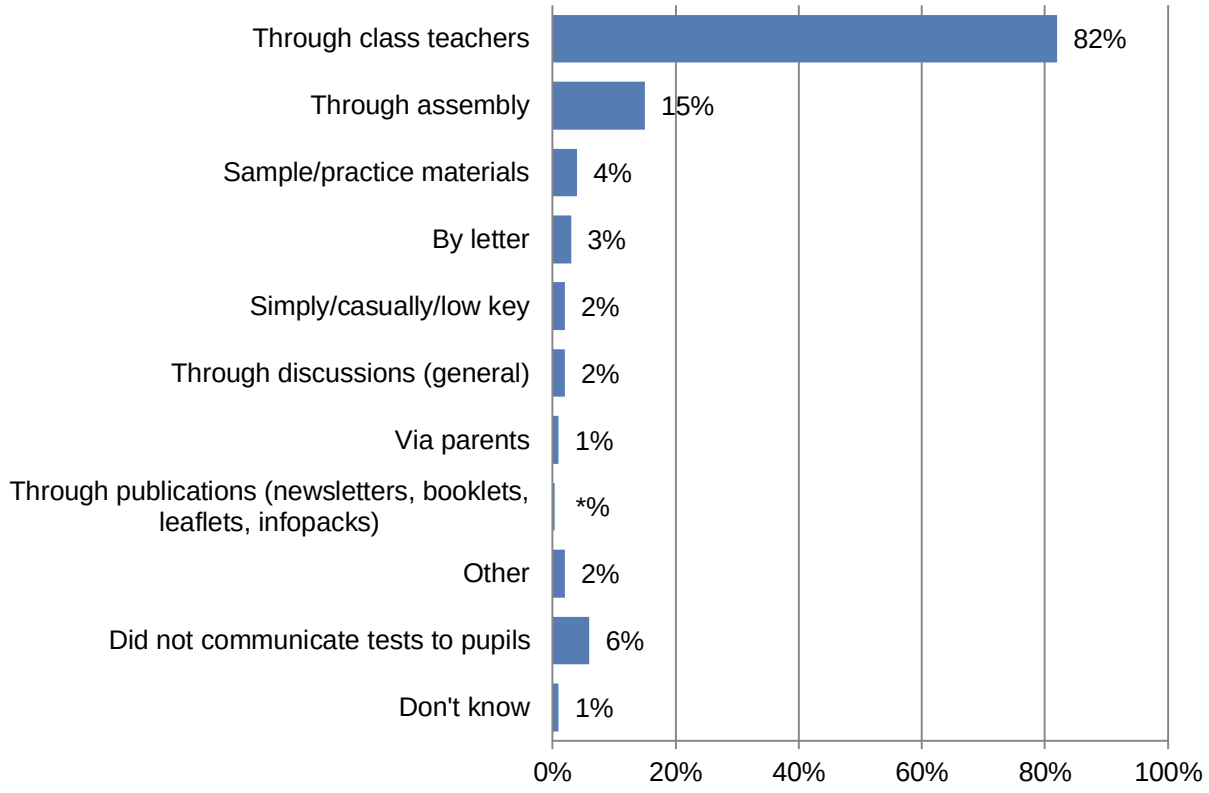
2.39 Respondents were next most likely to have communicated information to pupils in assembly (15 per cent). This mode of communication was significantly more likely to have been used by secondary schools than primary schools (52 per cent, compared with 10 per cent).

2.40 The use of letters to pupils was significantly more likely to be reported by respondents in secondary schools than by those in primary schools (11 per cent, compared to two per cent). However, the overall proportion using this medium to communicate with pupils on this subject was just three per cent overall.

2.41 School NRNT leads, RTMOs, and Test Supporters interviewed in depth reported that schools tried to ensure the tests were communicated in such a way as not to alarm pupils or cause them undue concern. This was particularly the case in primary schools.

2.42 Ways in which information about the implementation of NRNTs was communicated to pupils are summarised in Figure 2.7.

Figure 2.7 Ways in which information about the implementation of NRNTs were communicated pupils, unprompted, multiple response (all respondents)
* denotes less than 0.5 per cent



Sample base = 550

Administration approaches

2.43 Respondents were asked a series of questions about how NRNTs were administered in their schools.

2.44 In the majority of cases (81 per cent), NRNTs were administered to whole classes. It was slightly higher in primary than secondary schools (84 per cent, compared with 79 per cent) and higher within Welsh language (89 per cent) and bilingual (90 per cent) schools than in English medium schools (79 per cent). Although not a statistically significant difference due to a low base (12 unweighted and 14 weighted), it may be indicative that this proportion was considerably lower than average in special schools where just 16 perecent of schools reported that they administered the tests to whole classes.

2.45 Where NRNTs were not administered to whole classes, they were administered to groups made up of whole year groups or smaller groups based on age. This was particularly likely to be the case where schools included classes of mixed ages and where schools had very small class sizes. However, in one or two cases, large year groups were tested together, reflecting arrangements made for external exams. Younger children were sometimes tested in smaller groups, classes being split into small groups in order to provide greater levels of supervision.

2.46 In terms of *where* tests were administered, the classroom was the most frequently cited location (59 per cent). This was significantly more likely to have been the case in primary schools than in secondary schools (68 per cent, compared with six per cent). In this case secondary schools were significantly more likely to report having used a larger room to accommodate larger numbers of pupils, i.e. where whole year groups were tested together (76 per cent of secondary schools, compared to eight per cent of primary schools).

2.47 More than a fifth of respondents (22 per cent) reported that they had used a combination of classrooms and larger rooms, with this being more likely in primary schools than in secondary schools (23 per cent, compared to 15 per cent).

2.48 Depth interviews with school NRNT leads, RTMOs, and Test Supporters identified that as might be expected, where tests were administered tended to depend on the space available within the school and how the availability of space fit in with exisiting timetabling:

> ‘Since they were administering the test also outside of the classroom, there was a lack of space in some of the smaller secondary schools, regarding where the test could be administered.’ RTMO

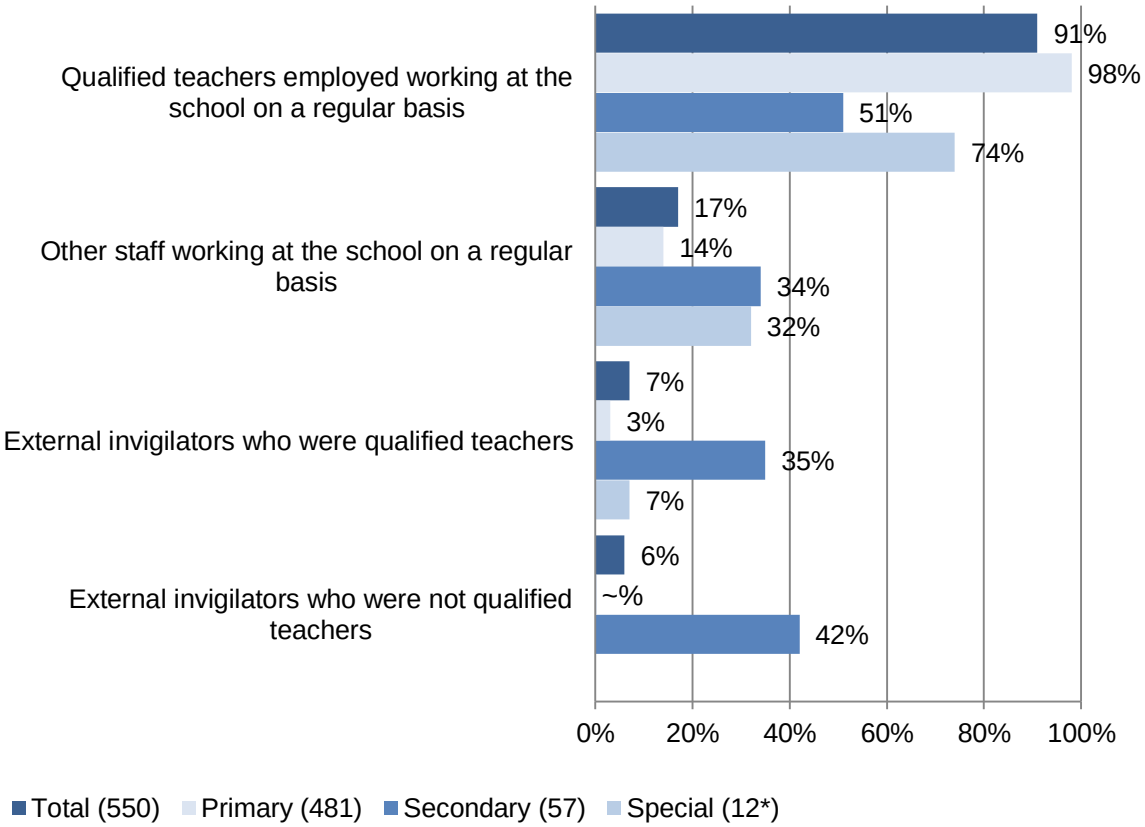
2.49 Survey respondents in primary and middle schools were asked if their school delivered the NRNTs for Years 2 or 3 in shorter ‘chunks’ which was a recommendation in the Welsh Government guidance provided to schools in the Test Administration Handbook. The majority (as exemplified in the case study described earlier) said they had done so (83 per cent). Test Supporters and primary school NRNT leads interviewed in depth also reported that they had used this option and had found it useful as it corresponded with their standard

teaching practices (to split lessons into short periods to achieve specific tasks) and was more appropriate for younger pupils who may have difficulty concentrating:

> ‘This was particularly effective for Year 2 children, they are so small that their concentration span isn't very long really’ NRNT lead, Primary, Welsh Medium

2.50 In the majority of cases, across all school types, tests were administered to pupils by qualified teachers employed at the school on a regular basis (91 per cent). However, this proportion was significantly higher in primary schools (98 per cent) than in secondary schools (51 per cent). Secondary schools were significantly more likely than primary schools to use; ‘other staff’ working at the school on a regular basis (34 per cent, compared to 14 per cent), external invigilators who were qualified teachers (35 per cent, compared to three per cent), or external invigilators who were not qualified teachers (42 per cent, compared to less than one per cent).

Figure 2.8 Staff who administered the tests to pupils, prompted, multiple response (all respondents) ~ denotes less than 0.5 per cent



Sample bases in parentheses *caution small sample base

Use of modified tests

2.51 More than a fifth of respondents (22 per cent) reported that their school had used modified NRNTs. This proportion almost doubled amongst respondents in secondary schools (43 per cent). It was 18 per cent in primary schools and 28 per cent in special schools.

2.52 The majority of respondents using modified NRNTs (87 per cent) did so in order to accommodate pupils with special needs and physical disabilities (such as impairments of hearing or vision), with a further seven per cent reporting that some pupils needed larger print paperwork as part of their of their normal classroom practice.

2.53 There were three main factors influencing respondents' choice of modified tests. These included using NRNT guidance and consulting staff who worked

with children with special needs and physical disabilities to identify requirements for modified tests (46 per cent), looking at the needs of certain children (20 per cent), and selecting on the basis of pupils having special needs or physical impairments (16 per cent).

2.54 Just under half of respondents who used modified NRNTs (47 per cent) used all of those they ordered, fewer (38 per cent) used some but not all, and just seven per cent did not use any of them. Depth interviews with Test Supporters and school NRNT leads suggest that in some cases schools ordered modified tests as they wanted the option to use these but then chose not to use them following receipt. There was a belief that this was because it was the first year of the tests and schools wanted to be prepared for a range of eventualities. In addition, some pupils were disapplied following modified tests being ordered.

2.55 Several stakeholders interviewed,(including NRNT leads, Test Supporters and RTMOs) identified that they would have wanted the tests translated into a wider range of languages so learners who had English as a second language (where Welsh was not their first language) could have taken part in a way that reflected their abilities more accurately.

> 'One of the issues that came up early on was, we wouldn't have the capacity. I think you could, for instance, for the maths test have a translator. That's fine if you've got someone who speaks each one of the 70 languages we've got in the area. In practical terms that's very difficult to administer. Our English Language service didn't have that capacity so we made that clear to schools from the beginning.' RTMO

Use of disapplication arrangements

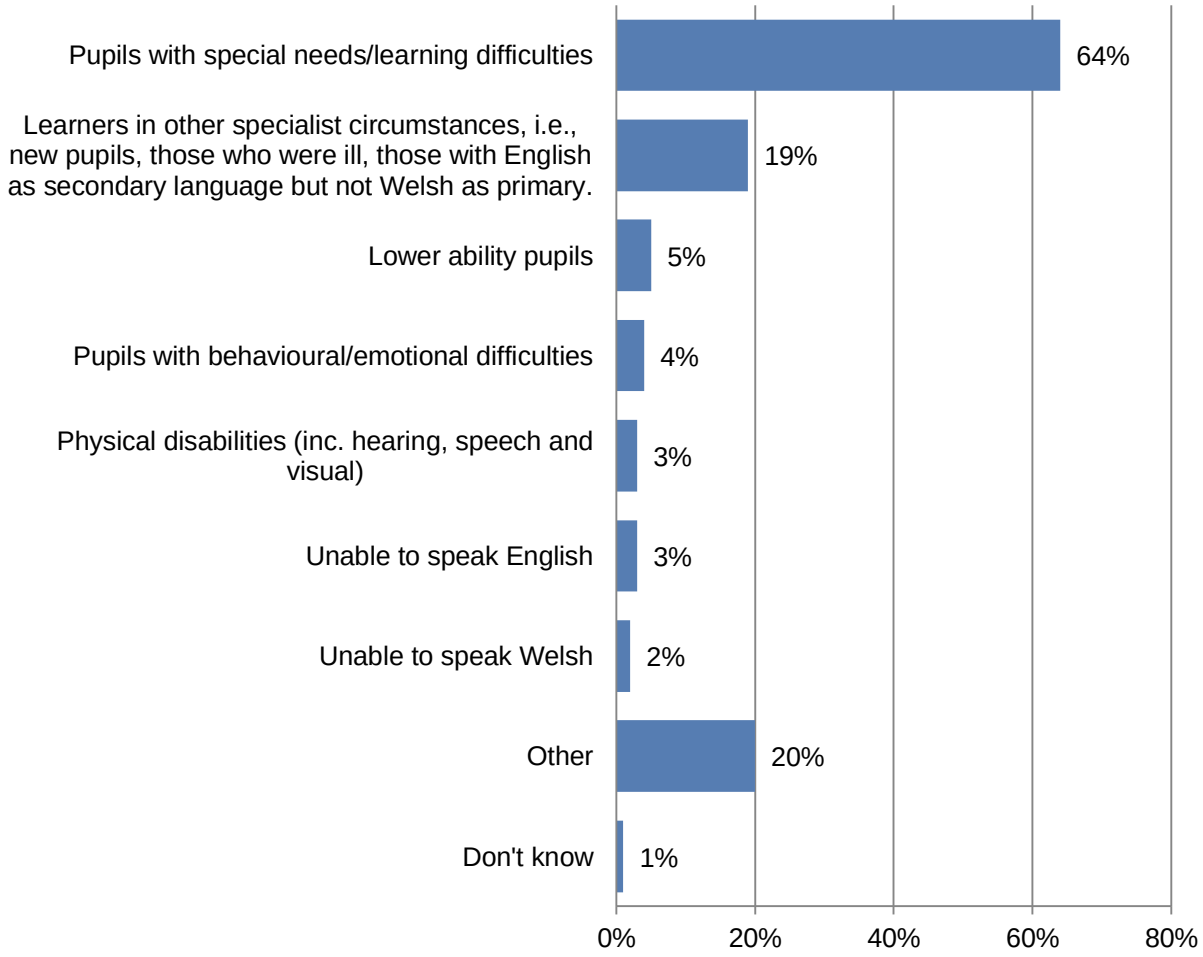
2.56 Overall, two in five respondents (40 per cent) reported that their school made use of the disapplication arrangements for the NRNTs. This varied little by school type, region or language medium. Although having only a small sample base, special schools appeared more likely than average to have used disapplication arrangements (49 per cent).

2.57 Half of schools making use of the disapplication arrangements (51 per cent) did so for the benefit of pupils with special needs/learning difficulties. This was in line with the higher-than-average use of these arrangements in special schools.

2.58 One in five respondents (19 per cent of those in schools which used disapplication) reported that their school made use of these arrangements for learners in other specialist circumstances, such as new pupils, pupils who were ill (although this was an incorrect use of disapplication), and those whose first language was not English or Welsh.[7] Figure 2.9 shows the reasons given for the use of disapplication arrangements.

2.59 It is noted that disapplication may not have been used as orginally envisaged by the Welsh Government in all instances due to the confusion in interpreting disapplication guidance materials which was reported by schools.

Figure 2.9 Instances in which disapplication arrangements were made use of – unprompted, multiple response (where made use of disapplication arrangements)



[7] Pupils who are ill should be marked as absent and not disapplied. Pupils new to the English or Welsh based education system (NEWBES) must sit the WNT unless there are specific reasons to disapply. However, their test results may be excluded from calculation of aggregate statistics.

Sample base = 222

2.60 Disapplication arrangements were seen as the main source of confusion and concern in implementing the tests amongst all those interviewed in-depth (including school staff, Test Supporters and RTMOs).

> 'They didn't understand quite how the disapplication worked, so I would explain more about that.' Test Supporter

> 'I think the issue we had most difficulty with was who could be disapplied. There wasn't enough clarity in the guidance. We tried to give the message that nearly all learners, regardless of additional learning needs or their linguistic skills should sit the test. I think there was ambiguity in the wording, in the message from Welsh Government, some schools did play one off against the other. In fairness to schools, for the best reasons, the concern they had was for the learners and their wellbeing. More learners in schools were disapplied than we would have anticipated.' RTMO

> "A number of the schools were unclear regarding their right to disapply pupils from the tests. That point in the regulation was vague as far as the actual teachers were concerned in some of the schools. I'm saying a good number, what I mean there is up to about half of the schools within the sample.' RTMO

2.61 The issues related to disapplication identified by stakeholders interviewed in depth are discussed below.

- *Who could be disapplied:*
  Schools were often uncertain as to who could be disapplied. Particular groups about which there were uncertainties incuded those with special educational needs, pupils with English as a second language (where Welsh was not their first language), pupils who were seen as potentially disruptive, and those who they felt would be unduly upset by the tests. In order to come to a conclusion on this issue schools referred to the Welsh Government guidance on dissapplication and contacted NfER and Test Supporters with queries. It was noted by schools and Test Supporters that a response was often not immediate as they believed the Welsh Government were not clear on this issue themselves.
- *The impact of disapplication on schools' amalgamated scores:*

Schools approached Test Supporters, NfER and RTMOs to identify the impact that disapplication would have on their amalgamated scores as they were concerned this would reflect badly upon them:

> 'They received information about getting the test scores back, in two forms, as a whole score and then another with the disapplied children out of the equation. By disapplying certain children, it would have an overall effect on their school number.' RTMO

> 'It seemed to me that they were more concerned about the reflection on the school with the results, overall, including perhaps special needs children, and those children who perhaps had difficulty reading in general, and the impact of the results on how people from the outside could see the school. I think that's the general idea they had, that it would reflect badly.' Test Supporter

2.62 Test Supporters reported that schools varied in how they chose to approach disapplication. Some chose to disapply all pupils who could be disapplied if they believed they would not benefit from sitting the tests, whilst others had all pupils sit the tests to ensure that everyone was treated in the same manner:

> 'There was a child there with a Welsh medium reading test and he'd only been there a short time, but the school still felt it was better for him to be included than not to be included. It would affect him more if he was put on his own, although they knew he wouldn't do well.' Test Supporter

> 'They tended not to do it, and certainly with the youngest children, if they couldn't cope they would just end the test and write on it too upset to continue.' Test Supporter

2.63 Several schools and Test Supporters believed disapplied pupils should not be included in school's aggregated scores (as they are currently) and/or the results of disapplied students should be should be noted separately. This would be in order to ensure that concern to protect the school's overall performance figures is not a consideration when making disapplication decisions and in order that output figures represent a fair reflection of the school's achievements and standard.

2.64 Two schools also commented that some learners who were disapplied may have been able to sit the tests if they had been allowed to sit those designed

for younger pupils. This was of particular concern to the NRNT lead in the special school (consulted in depth and whose views are described in more detail in the following case study). They believed that fewer of their pupils would have been disapplied and that the test results would have been of more use to them if their pupils could have sat tests appropriate to their aptitude as opposed to their age.

Case study: Special School, North Wales

Implementation of the NRNTs was led by the Headteacher. The school received information about the NRNTs in February/March 2013 which was perceived by the Head as later than they would have liked considering it was the first time tests were administered:

> 'It was a bit late. It was a brand new venture. If we had it earlier, we may have looked at them earlier and seen what implications it would have for our pupils.'

The Headteacher reported that they did not receive all the information they needed initially and found they were learning throughout the process:

> 'We did manage to do everything within the calendar but it became a bit tight. We were finding out things as they went along.'

The main issue faced by the school on implementing the tests was the issue of disapplication, and specifically who should be disapplied. The Headteacher knew a large proportion of their learners would be dissapplied as they were non-verbal and working below national curriculum level. However, other learners within the school may have been able to undertake the tests but not necessarily, those designed for their age group. The school would have liked the opportunity to offer these learners the NRNTs that were most appropriate to their ability as opposed to their age:

> 'The tests told me nothing. If I could have given them the tests for their ability, i.e. if I could give one of my Year 9s that is working at Level 1 the Year 2 test, then I could see the point in doing them.'

The Head was happy with the information they received regarding the actual process of disapplying learners and on the administration of the NRNTs. However, they would have liked more information to inform them how the data might be used to monitor pupil's progress:

> 'The information is there and it's clear to administrate the tests and make them consistent in the approach across all settings. It's just the relevance of the tests for special schools and the fact that we have to follow the same procedure as a mainstream school. That obviously doesn't allow the tests to give me any information on how my pupils are performing or the progress they're making.'

As a result of so few learners taking the tests, the school has not used the data from the results so far. However, they believe that if, in the future, learners were able to undertake the level of test the school deemed most appropriate, then the results could prove very useful for them.

Extended response questions

2.65 The Welsh Government procured additional, optional, extended response reading questions which schools could choose to administer to learners in addition to the formal tests. These tests were designed to assist schools in further exploring learners' skills in reading and schools can use the responses to these tests for formative purposes. There are no data reporting requirements associated with the optional tests.

2.66 When asked if their school made use of the extended response reading questions, more than a fifth of respondents said it had done so (22 per cent). This varies little by school type or region but is slightly higher in bilingual schools (31 per cent).

2.67 Schools' awareness and use of the supplementary tests was reported as being low by all types of stakeholders interviewed in depth. One Test Supporter reported that they believed more schools could have taken up this option as some learners were capable of this:

> 'The one primary school I went to, there were something like 28 children, and I reckon about twelve of them at least could have done an extended test, an extended booklet that was of a more difficult standard.' Test Supporter

Language considerations

2.68 In the majority of Welsh medium schools (94 per cent), respondents reported that some pupils sat the NRNTs in English and others sat them in Welsh.

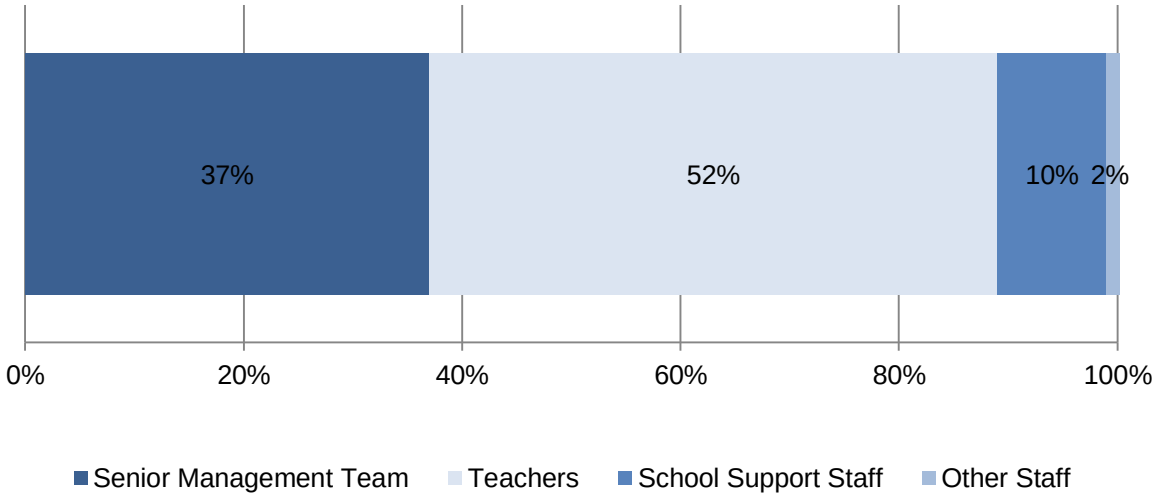
Time spent in testing process

2.69 Responses to the survey show that the average length of time invested in the testing process, including administrative preparation and implementation but not including preparation of learners, by staff was estimated to have been 23 hours.

2.70 The average number of hours was highest in secondary schools (29) and lowest in special schools (20), with respondents in primary schools estimating an average of 22 hours.

2.71 Figure 2.10 summarises how respondents estimated the total time invested in the testing process was shared between staff in different roles within the school. Teachers spent the largest amount of time (52 per cent of all hours spent), with just one in nine of the average hours spent (11 per cent in total) allocated to school support and other staff.

Figure 2.10 Proportion of total time invested in testing process by specified staff (all respondents, where provided an estimate)

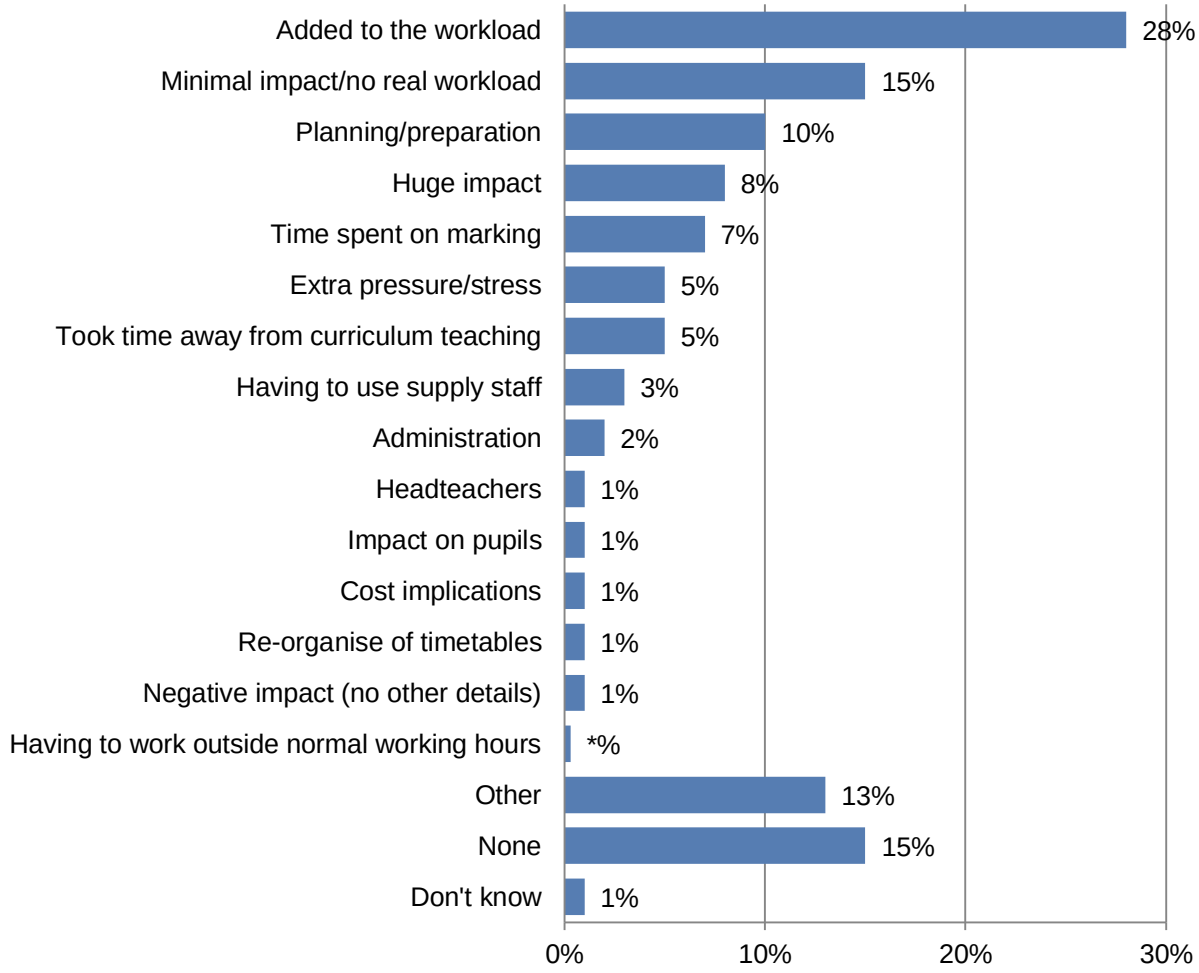


Sample base = 513

2.72 Within primary schools, teachers were estimated to have spent a significantly higher proportion of time involved in the testing process than was the case within secondary schools (56 per cent, compared to 31 per cent). Within secondary schools, 33 per cent of all time spent on the testing process was allocated to school support staff, compared to just six per cent in primary schools.

2.73 Around a quarter of all respondents (24 per cent) believed that the time spent on preparing and implementing the NRNTs had added to staff workloads. However, 30 per cent of respondents believed preparing and implementing the NRNTs had minimal or no impact on the workload of staff in the school.

Figure 2.11 Ways in which the time spent on preparing and implementing the NRNTs (not including preparation of learners) has impacted on the wider workload of staff in the school – unprompted, multiple response (All respondents) *denotes less than 0.5 per cent

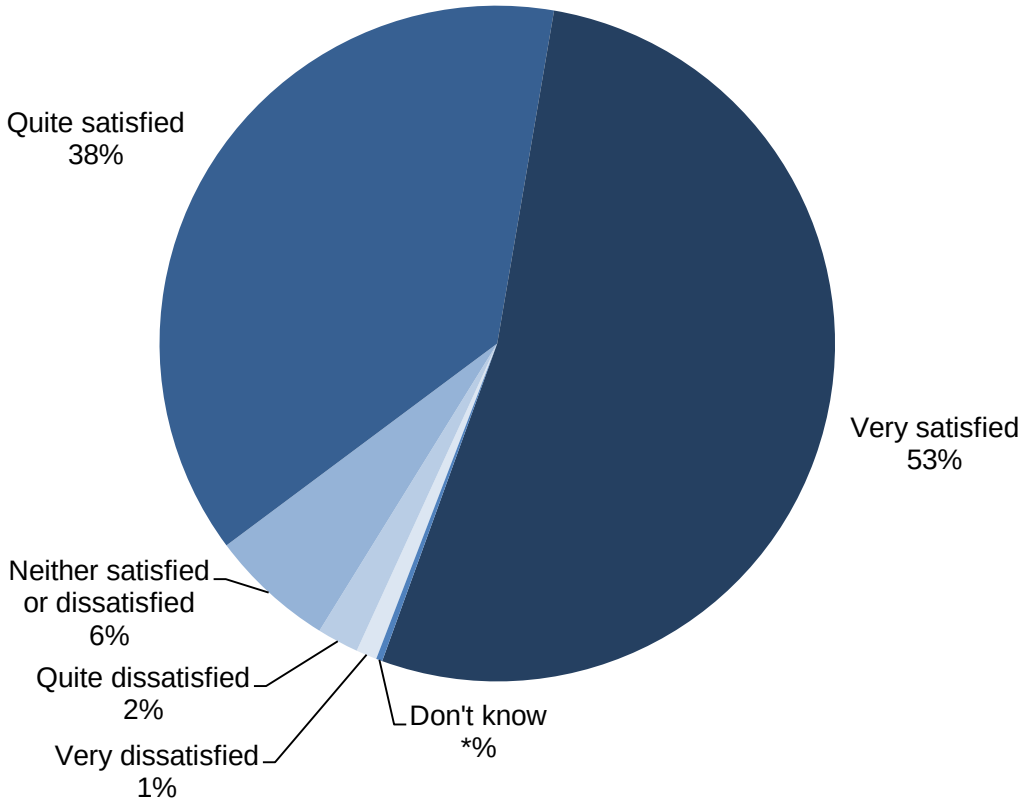


Sample base = 550

Satisfaction with implementation of NRNTs

2.74 The majority of respondents (91 per cent) were satisfied with how the NRNTs were implemented and administered at their school. More than half of all respondents (53 per cent) were very satisfied in this respect.

Figure 2.12 Satisfaction with how the NRNTs were implemented and administered at their school (All respondents) *denotes less than 0.5 per cent



Sample base = 550

2.75 Satisfaction levels were slightly higher in secondary schools than in primary schools (64 per cent of secondary schools were very satisfied compared to 51 per cent of primary, whilst 31 per cent of secondary schools were quite satisfied compared to 40 per cent of primary). There was a lower level of satisfaction within special schools (32 per cent quite satisfied; 37 per cent very satisfied).

2.76 School NRNT leads interviewed in depth were all very satisfied with how they had implemented the tests. This was mainly because they believed they had met all the Welsh Government's requirements in the timescales required.

Key challenges faced when implementing the NRNTs

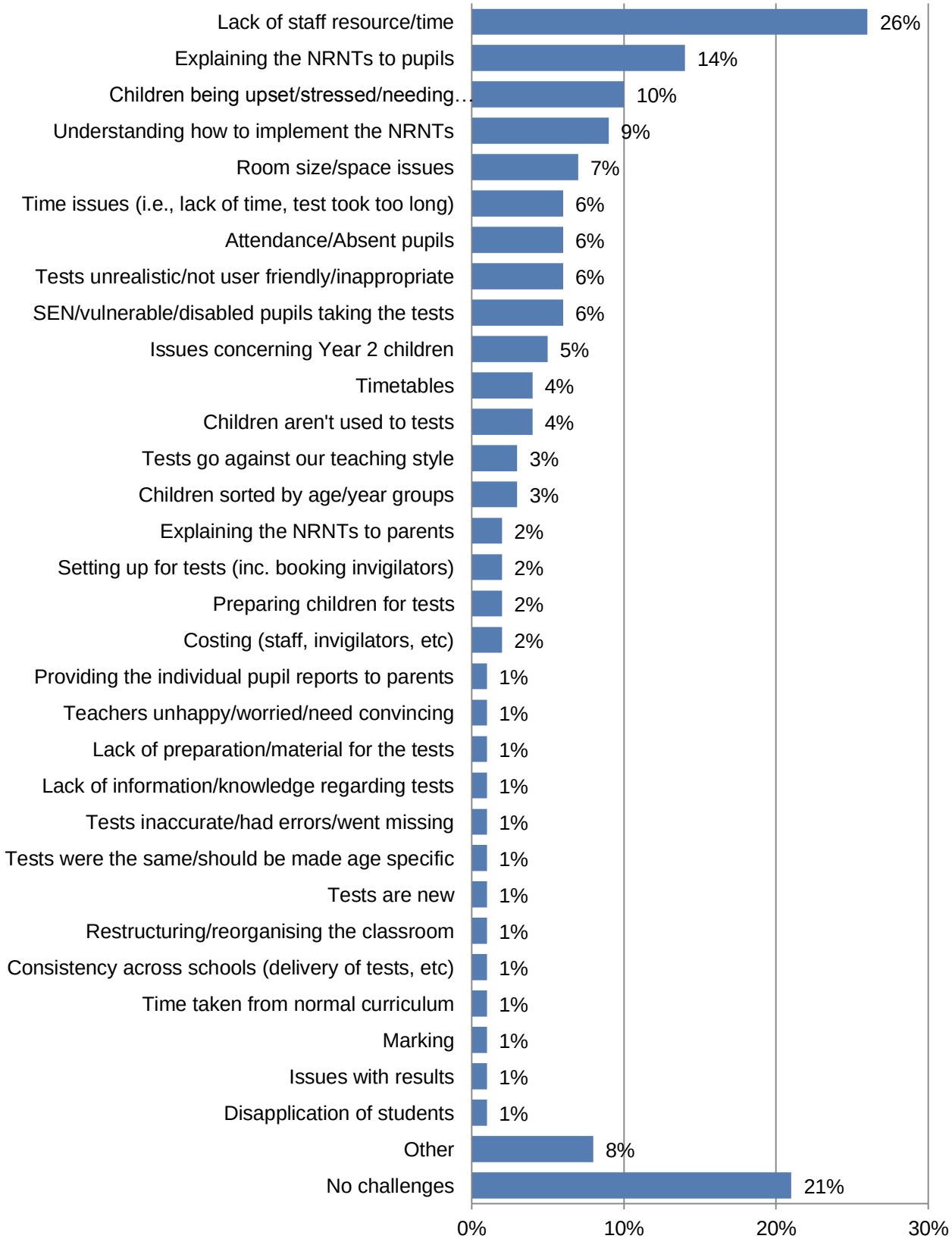
2.77 Respondents were asked what were the main challenges their school faced when implementing the tests. Four-fifths of respondents mentioned at least one challenge, with the most frequently mentioned challenges comprising lack of staff resource/time (26 per cent), explaining the NRNTs to pupils (14 per cent) and children being upset/stressed/needing reassurance (10 per cent).

2.78 However, the challenges which respondents said their school had faced were diverse and are summarised in chart 2.13. Other key issues were dealing with pupils' individual needs, the format of the tests, and the time involved.

2.79 Respondents interviewed in depth mainly identified the disapplication process and how to decide who to disapply as the key challenge when implementing the tests (for the reasons discussed previously).

2.80 The other key challenge identified (particularly for secondary schools) was that of clashes between the NRNTs and other tests and examinations (such as GCSEs). Secondary schools interviewed in depth would rather the NRNTs were conducted earlier in the school year to avoid clashes, although some schools suggested alternatively that the timing used was necessary to ensure pupils were sufficiently prepared for the tests.

Figure 2.13 Main challenges schools faced when implementing the tests – unprompted, multiple response (All respondents)



Sample base = 550

2.81 Looking at the findings in more detail, lack of staff resource/time was a more significant concern in secondary schools than in primary schools (35 per cent, compared to 25 per cent), while primary schools were more likely than secondary schools to mention children being upset/stressed/needing reassurance (11 per cent, compared to none in seconday schools). As might be expected, primary schools were also more likely than secondary to report that explaining the NRNTs to pupils had been a challenge (15 per cent, compared to 7 per cent in seconday schools). There were no differences of note in the likelihood of schools to report that they had faced no challenges when implementing the NRNTs.

2.82 Finally, Test Supporters and RTMOs interviewed in depth noted that the guidance material left some room for flexibility in interpretation of how the tests could be implemented and administered. They noted this had led to some confusion over exactly what needed to be done and some concern that some schools were taking advantage of this to ensure that their marks were higher and would prefer more clear 'rules' to prevent this from happening:

> 'Again, it might be down to practical things. I think it should be made clear, the timescale should be made very clear, and again, they have to understand that these conditions must prevail, exam conditions prevail, in order for the tests to be valid.' Test Supporter

> 'I think more structured. There was too much leeway for Head Teachers to interpret, and then as long as they had the rationale from that, apply and assess certain learners. That then gives inconsistencies.' RTMO

Marking, moderation and data entry

Approaches to marking

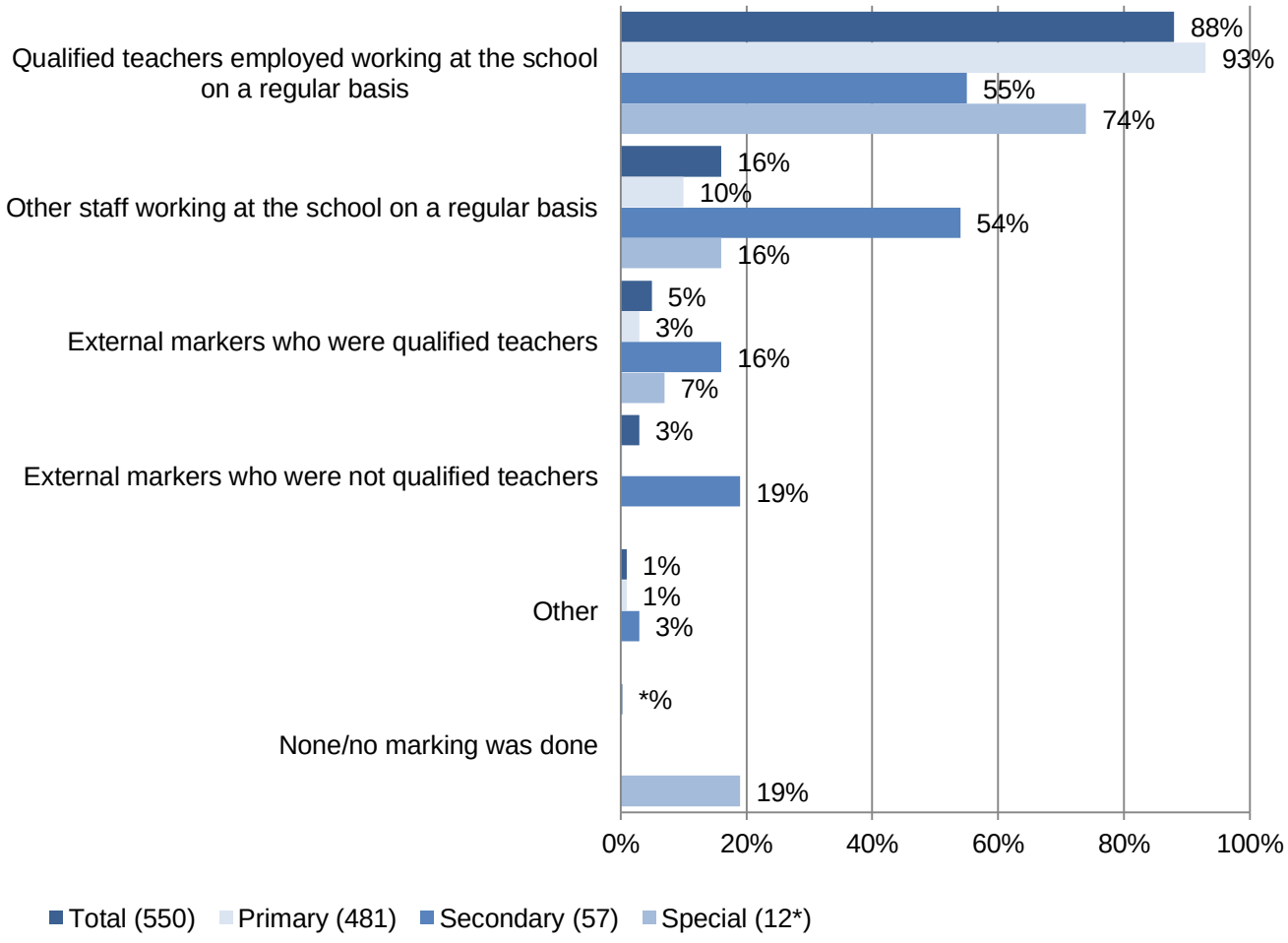
2.83 The majority of respondents (88 per cent) reported that their school had used 'qualified teachers working at the school on a regular basis' to mark the NRNTs. This proportion was significantly higher amongst respondents working in primary schools than those in secondary schools (93 per cent, compared to 55 per cent). In-depth interviews suggest this difference may be related to some instances in secondary schools where some schools were concerned

that union representatives would not allow teachers in their schools to mark the papers.

> 'We had to make sure that it was no impact on staff other than those who were in maybe senior roles, who could actually get involved, without maybe causing any concerns in terms of work issues with the unions.' NRNT Lead, Secondary, English medium

2.84 Correspondingly, secondary schools were more likely than primary schools to have used 'other staff working at the school on a regular basis' to mark the NRNTs (54 per cent, compared to 10 per cent). They were also more likely to have used external markers, who could have been qualified teachers (16 per cent) or who were not qualified teachers (19 per cent).

Figure 2.14 Staff used to mark NRNTs – prompted, multiple response (All respondents) *denotes less than 0.5%



Sample bases in parentheses

Case study: Welsh Medium School, Secondary, Central South

Implementation of the NRNTs was overseen by the 'Examinations Officer' (an Assistant Headteacher). The organisation of the tests fell to this individual as part of their day-to-day role within the school.

The Examinations Officer had first found out about the NRNTs via information sent by the Welsh Government in an email. When preparing for the tests they sought information from the Welsh Government materials including on the Welsh Government website. Support was also sought from NfER. This support was seen as helpful, particularly in enabling them to pass on information to different departments within the school to help them prepare for the tests and also to help them prepare learners. The Examinations Officer was satisfied with the information they accessed to prepare them for the tests, felt it was pitched at the correct level for their needs, that they were able to comply with the guidance, and did not believe there was any other information they needed.

Ahead of the tests, the school informed both parents and learners about the tests. Parents were sent a letter and further information was made available on the school website if they required it.

The school chose not to use modified NRNTs on this occasion, as none of their learners needed them. They found the information and guidance on the modified tests clear and easy to understand. However, the disapplication process was used by the school to disapply a small number of pupils and they found the guidance to do this clear.

The main challenge experienced by the schools on implementing the NRNTs was the timing, which clashed with GCSE and A-Level examinations. The Examinations Officer believes the NRNTs should take place ahead of these exams:

> ‘There was a period of about 3 weeks given and it was up to the school to decide when to implement each test within that. This wasn't easy, because GCSE and A Level exams were underway…. there needs to be an external and independently configured time-table for these tests, and this should allow the tests to be taken before the examinations season begins.’

The school used independent external staff who monitor examinations and procedures to administer the tests as they do not see the role of teachers as ‘examiners’. Subsequently administrative staff marked the papers and inputted the results to the database as teaching Unions would not allow their teacher members to do so. As a result there was little impact on the time of teaching staff. However, the Examination’s Officer believes that in the future there should be more consistency and external moderation in how tests are administered and marked to ensure all schools recognise their high level of importance:

> ‘Every test should be administered at the same time in every school - and constraints should be set by the Welsh Government. The tests should also be marked externally - as is the case with GCSEs and A Levels - if we are to take the results seriously.’

The school was disappointed that the test results were not available until the end of term with some elements not available until September. The Examinations Officer believes that these should be made available sooner.

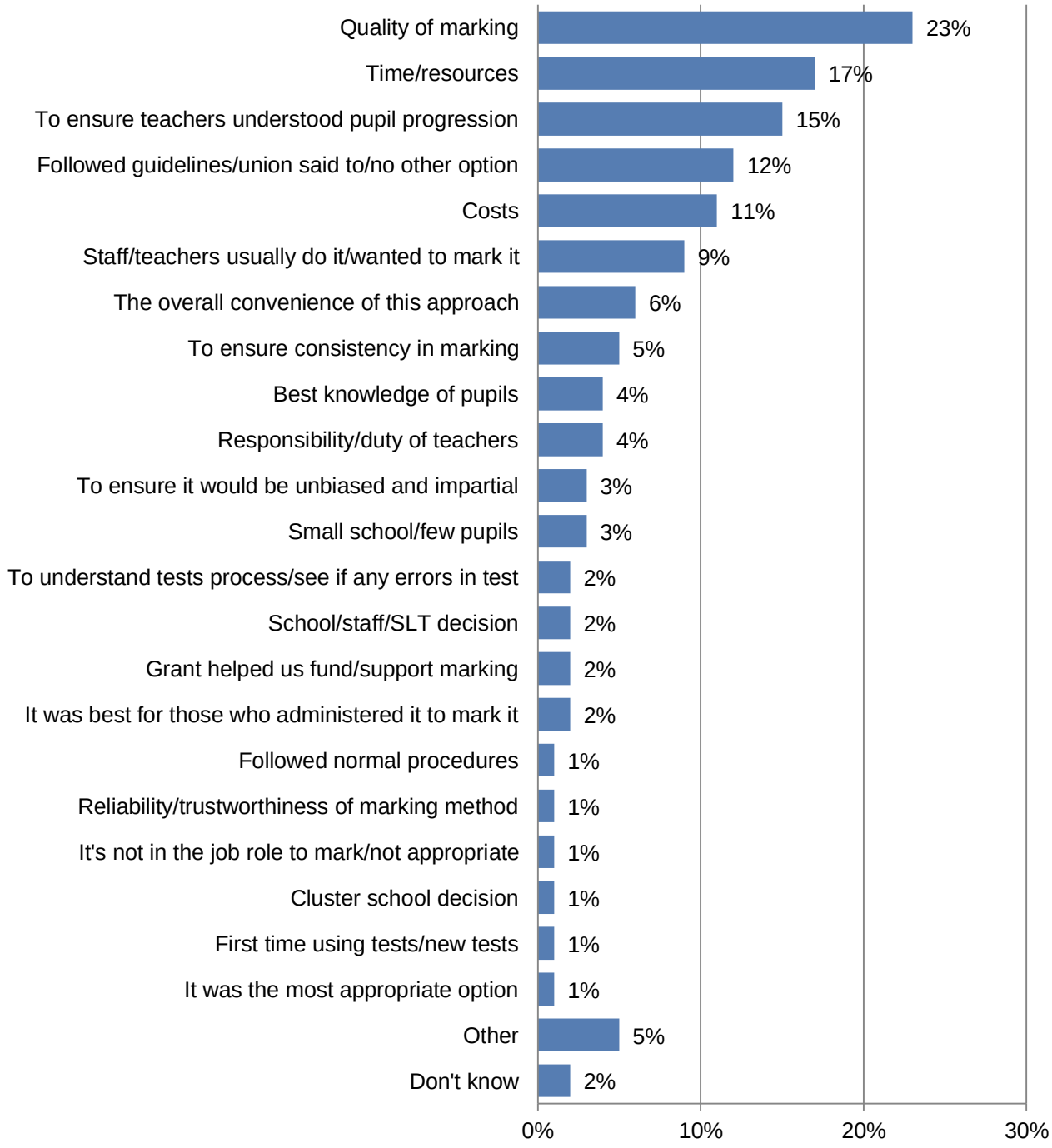
The school has already started to use the standardised data from the NRNTs in order to track the development of each class. The results have also been shared with parents using the report format and formula suggested by Welsh Government guidance. However, so far they have not received any feedback from parents on this. Further decisions on how to use the test results have not yet been made.

2.85 In terms of why schools chose to take a particular approach to marking (see Figure 2.15), the quality of marking was a key consideration (23 per cent of all respondents) with some schools wanting their own staff to undertake the marking so they could ensure quality. Time/resources (17 per cent) was the next most frequently mentioned consideration. The latter was a more significant consideration in secondary schools than in primary schools (36 per cent, compared with 14 per cent).

2.86 Secondary schools were also more likely to have taken the approach they did because they were 'told to do so/followed guidelines/union said to do so/no other option' (29 per cent, compared to the average of 12 per cent).

2.87 15 per cent of all respondents wanted their own staff to undertake marking of the tests so they would understand the test process and be able to closely monitor pupil's progression and development.

Figure 2.15 Reasons why schools chose to take the approach they did to marking – unprompted, multiple response (All respondents)



Sample base = 550

2.88 Respondents were asked to provide an estimate of how long it took to mark 30 National Reading Test papers and 30 procedural National Numeracy Test papers. Their responses are reported as an average, in hours and minutes.

2.89 Overall, the average time taken to mark 30 National Reading Test papers was just under three hours (two hours and 56 minutes). This is at least one hour longer than the 90–120 minutes estimated in the Test Administration Handbook.

2.90 The average time taken to mark 30 National Numeracy Test papers was shorter at two hours and 29 minutes. This is consistent with the Test Administration Handbook, which estimated that the Numeracy Tests would take less time to mark than the Reading Tests. However, it is still considerably longer than the 30-45 minutes estimated.

2.91 The time taken by secondary schools to mark 30 of both papers was reported as shorter than the time taken by primary schools:

National Reading Test papers:	primary schools – two hours, 54 minutes; secondary schools – two hours, 33 minutes; special schools* – six hours, 57 minutes.
National Numeracy Test papers:	primary schools – two hours, 30 minutes; secondary schools – two hours, three minutes; special schools* - four hours, 18 minutes.

**caution: small sample base*

2.92 Just over half of all respondents (54 per cent) reported challenges in marking the tests. By far the most frequent challenge was that of finding staff resources and time to do it (31 per cent of all respondents). One in nine respondents (11 per cent) reported that understanding how the marking process worked as a challenge.

2.93 Other issues spontaneously mentioned by respondents included:

- maintaining consistent and accurate marking (five per cent);
- coping with ambiguity of answers/tests (four per cent); and
- cost, errors/inaccuracies in the tests and marking sheets, clarity/readability of children's answers, allocation of marking, the layout/structure of the tests

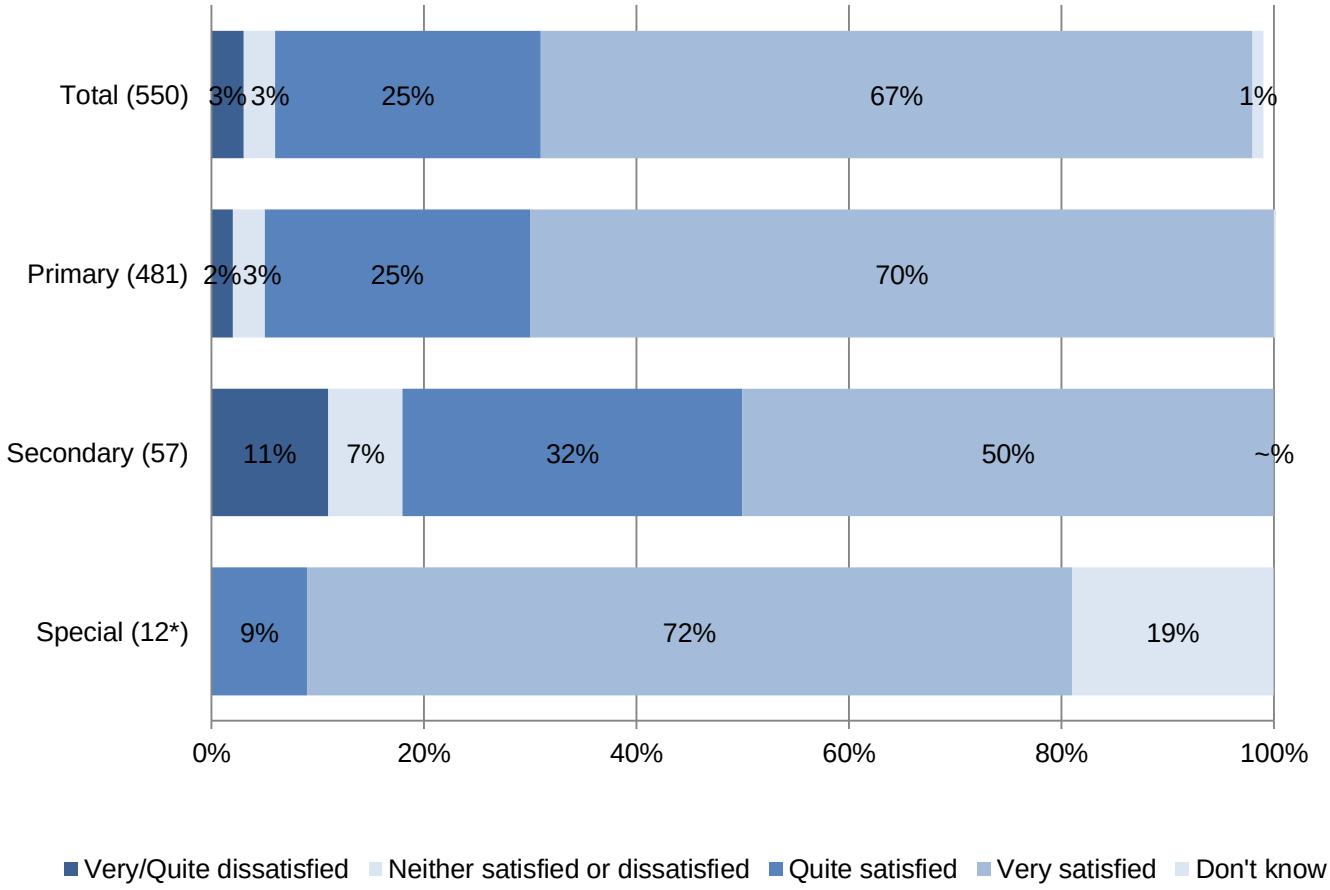
or marking process, fairness of the tests, and the strictness/difficulty of marking (each mentioned by one per cent of respondents).

2.94 None of these other issues stood out as being of major concern. Only a few respondents mentioned them in each case. The issue of most concern is, as above, the resources required to mark papers. This may not be surprising given, as reported above, that a set of 30 papers took nearly three hours, on average to mark and that few schools used external staff to mark papers.

2.95 The underlying view of marking of NRNTs was that it is a satisfactory process, with 93 per cent of respondents reporting that they were quite/very satisfied with how the marking of the NRNTs was undertaken at their school. This includes 67 per cent of respondents who were very satisfied.

2.96 The proportion of respondents who were very satisfied was higher in primary schools than in secondary schools (70 per cent, compared to 50 per cent). Respondents in secondary schools were significantly more likely than those in primary schools to be dissatisfied with marking (11 per cent, compared to two per cent). However, just three per cent of respondents overall were dissatisfied with marking.

Figure 2.16 Overall satisfaction with marking of NRNTs undertaken at schools (All respondents) ~ denotes less than 0.5% (very and quite dissatisfied are shown as merged on this table due to low bases who were dissatisfied although they were separate options in the survey)



Sample bases in parentheses *caution: low sample base

2.97 During in-depth interviews, several schools and Test Supporters noted that they would prefer marking and moderation to take place externally undertaken by a Welsh Government appointed exam board. This would ensure tests are marked and moderated consistently, would reduce the burden on schools to mark them, and would assign the tests the desired level of importance. There was also some concern that testing should not be biased:

> 'Some schools raised concerns the fact that it had been administered by the schools themselves and they had access to it beforehand, it could be open to abuse so that the kids would look better.' Test Supporter

Case study: English Medium School, Secondary, South East

Due to the large size of the school, the implementation of the NRNTs was overseen by several members of the Learning Support team, including the Director of Support (an Assistant Head Teacher). As the team had previously implemented similar tests (including a local equivalent and Alfiesoft numeracy tests), the organisation of the tests naturally fell to them.

The school was aware of the introduction of the NRNTs well in advance, both through their involvement in the implementation of local equivalents, and Welsh Government announcements. In preparation for the tests the school used the handbook, leaflets and sample materials supplied by the Welsh Government, which were felt to be comprehensive yet concise. They did recommend that more sample materials be provided. The school was also allocated a primary contact at NFER to offer any relevant support – this was felt to be beneficial in addressing issues experienced around funding, and uploading test scores.

To prevent unnecessary worry amongst learners, the school chose not to inform parents of the NRNTs, and simply informed learners that they would be undertaking an 'assessment'. For learners with visual impairments modified tests were used, whilst learners with special educational needs were not required to sit the test. In line with the school's standard policies, some learners undertook the test in isolated conditions to reduce anxiety, and others were offered additional time. The guidance on modification, disapplication, and special circumstances was considered clear and straightforward.

The school appointed an existing Teaching Assistant to manage the implementation of the tests on a day-to-day basis, to ensure this was done smoothly. This was deemed to be one of the key facilitators of the effective implementation of the tests as: 'If we didn't have someone like that it would be added headache to the exams officer'. The tests were monitored by independent invigilators. However, senior members of the Learning Support team also attended at the start of the tests to explain the examination process and practice questions to learners.

One of the main challenges experienced by the school was the logistics of implementing the tests within a short timescale during the exam timetable:

> 'Just the logistics of running it, getting the kids to it, physically them doing the test. Things like this bring a whole school to a standstill'.

As it was recommended that learners undertake the test simultaneously, these logistical issues meant that the tests had to be undertaken in the school hall, rather than in classrooms where they would feel more comfortable. The school is considering suspending the timetable in the future, to ensure that tests can be administered in a more comfortable setting.

Another significant challenge experienced was the marking of the tests. In response to union concerns, the school paid staff (both teaching and non-teaching with GCSE grade C or above in English and Maths) to mark test papers in their own time. Staff were paid for each paper marked, and payments were initially varied for literacy and numeracy papers in line with guidance on approximate marking length. Staff, however, found that numeracy papers took longer to mark, and therefore payments had to be increased. Due to the use of a financial incentive, the sheer volume of staff and the limited time for internal moderation, the school found there were considerable inconsistencies in the marking. They felt external marking and moderation would be beneficial in the future.

The school drew upon their large team of Learning Support Teaching Assistants to enter and upload results, which was deemed to be an efficient method of coping with the large volume of data. It was noted, however, that the data received in response to uploads was not provided in the most appropriate format, and as such the school converted these into more meaningful scores (such as reading ages). This process proved to be particularly time-

consuming:

> 'We just got the scores and then we had to use a manual to convert everything and I think that was a massive headache.'

The school were also disappointed that the test results were not always available at the end of the academic year, and that results for year six learners were not provided.

The school has also already started to use the converted scores, alongside other measures of ability, to identify any supportive interventions learners may require in the core subjects of English and Maths. They have also begun to use the results to measure learner ability and have shared scores with parents (some of whom expressed concerns). However, they are conscious that the current data only provides a 'snapshot':

> 'We haven't gone to town evaluating it. We have given it credence but we don't hold it solely as make or break of how kids are getting on in those two areas.'

Once regular annual data is obtained, the school plan to use this to benchmark themselves against other schools, measure learner progress and identify cohort trends, and to plan supportive interventions required.

Approaches to data entry

2.98 For the May 2013 testing round only raw scores from the literacy test were input into the school *school management information system* (MIS) then uploaded to the Data Exchange Wales Initiative (DEWi). Raw scores from the numeracy test were uploaded to the NFER School Portal via a downloadable data collection form. Two portals were used in 2012/13 as it was not possible to develop one overarching portal in the time available prior to data entry.

2.99 The results showed that data entry onto the MIS was more likely to have been carried out by 'staff, other than teachers, working at the school on a regular basis' (63 per cent of all respondents) than by 'qualified teachers employed working at the school on a regular basis' (46 per cent).

2.100 In line with other aspects of NRNTs processes, secondary schools were significantly more likely to use 'other staff' than primary schools (75 per cent, compared to 61 per cent). Primary schools were more than twice as likely as secondary schools to have used qualified teachers (51 per cent, compared with 20 per cent).

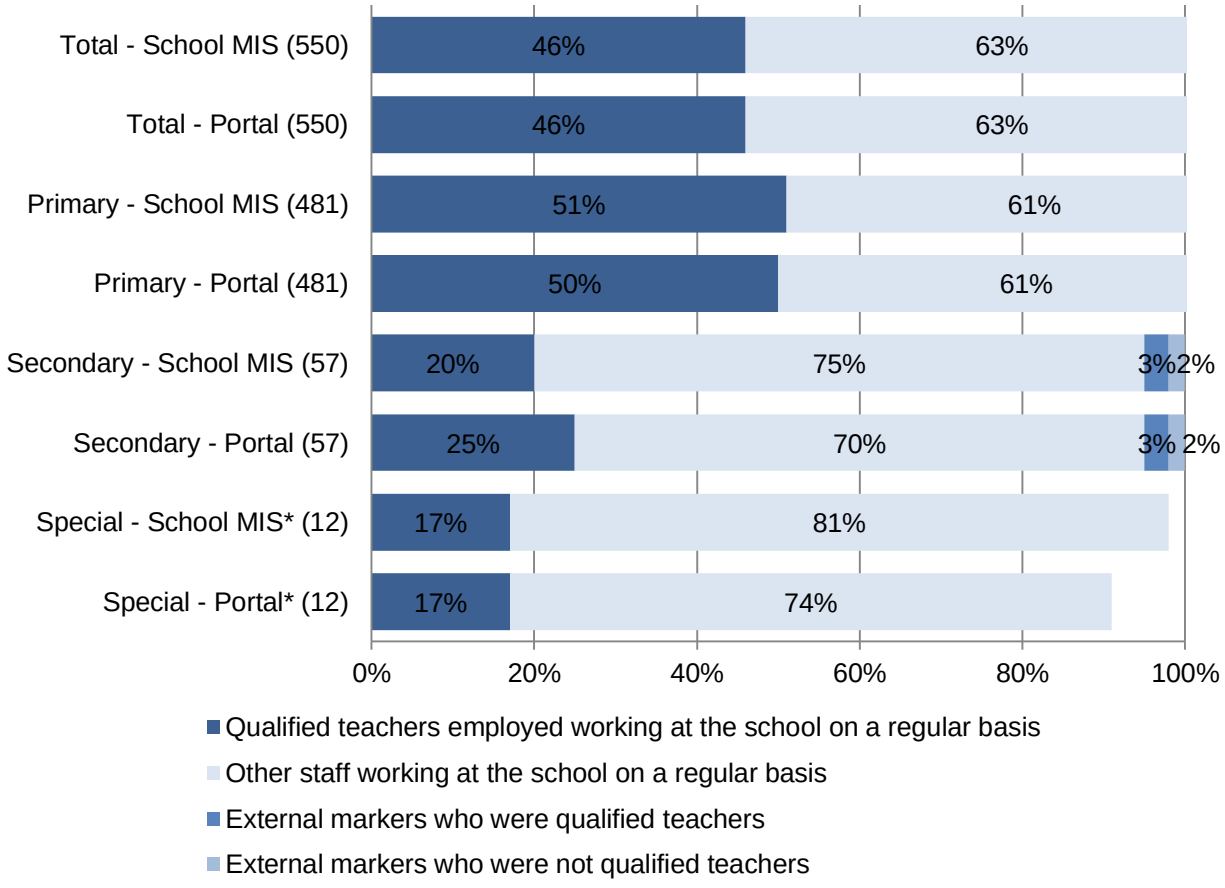
2.101 Secondary schools were more likely to use external markers to enter data than primary schools, but the proportion that did so is still very small (three per cent used external markers who were qualified staff; two per cent used external markers who were not qualified staff, compared to less than half a per cent in aggregate of primary schools).

2.102 There was a similar pattern with regard to entering NRNT results onto the NfER portal. Again, staff other than teachers working at the school were used by 63 per cent and qualified teachers by 46 per cent.

2.103 Although secondary schools were more likely to have used 'other staff' than primary schools for entering data onto the NfER portal, as they were with the school MIS, (70 per cent, compared to 61 per cent), the difference is not statistically significant in this case.

2.104 Again, primary schools were twice as likely as secondary schools to have used qualified teachers for data entry onto the NfER portal (50 per cent, compared with 25 per cent).

Figure 2.17 Staff used to enter the NRNT results, prompted, multiple response (All respondents) ~ denotes less than 0.5%



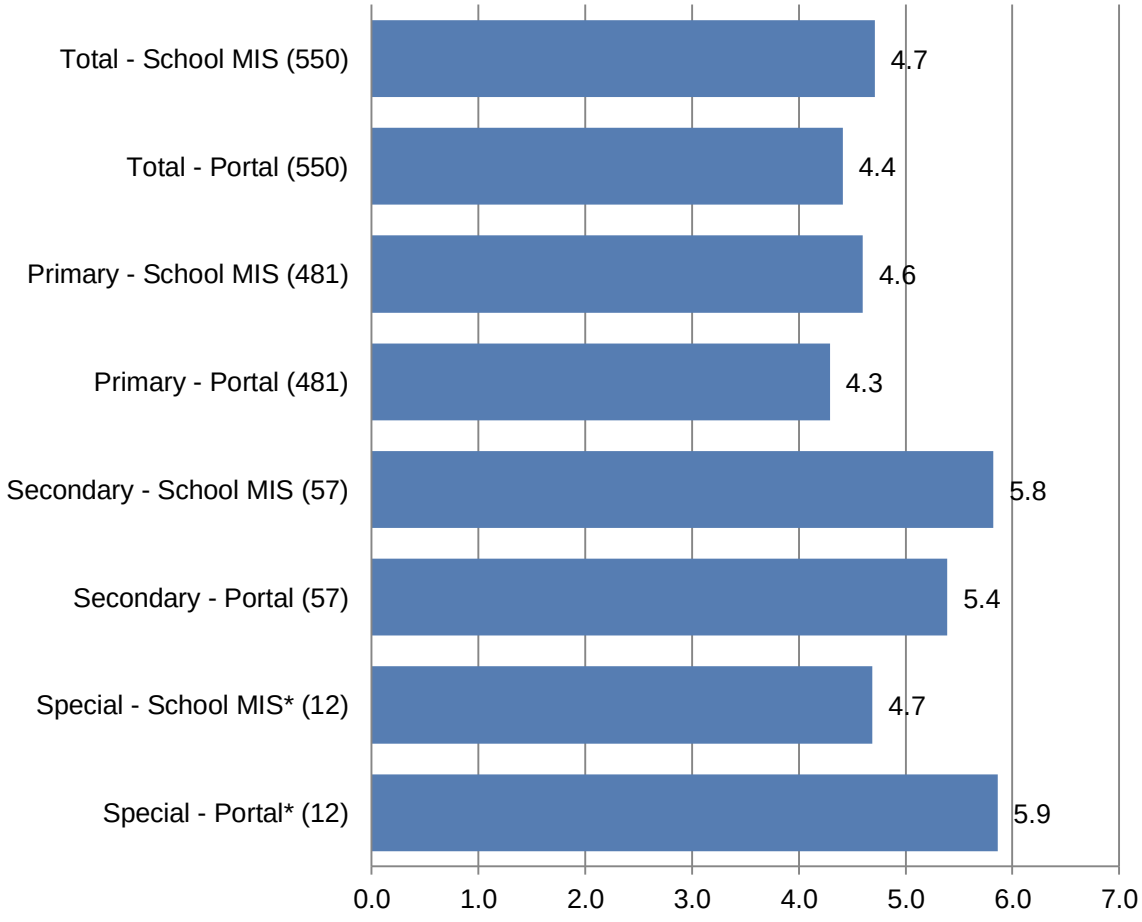
Sample bases in parentheses *caution: low sample base[8]

[8] 9% of special schools did not know who entered data into the school MIS, 16% of special schools did not know who entered data into the NfER portal.

2.105 On average, just under five hours (4.7) were spent entering NRNT results onto the school MIS by staff within each school. The average number of hours spent entering NRNT results onto the NfER school portal was slightly lower (4.4 hours).

2.106 In both cases, more time was spent by staff in secondary schools doing this than in primary schools, as Figure 2.18 shows.

Figure 2.18 Average number of hours spent entering NRNT results (All respondents, where provided a response)

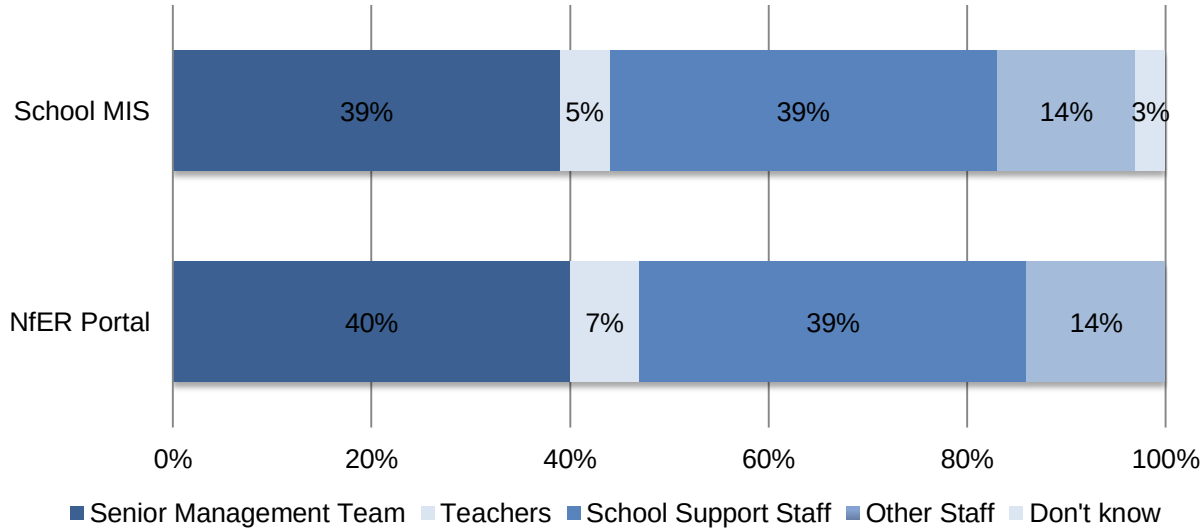


Maximum sample bases in parentheses *caution: low sample base

2.107 Overall, in terms of the share of staff time involved in data entry, it was most likely to be fairly equally allocated between the senior management team and support staff, with teachers allocated less than 10 per cent of the time involved (see Figure 2.19).

2.108 Within secondary schools, support staff spent a significantly higher share of the time spent entering results, compared with primary schools. Secondary schools estimated that 72 per cent of the total data entry time on the school MIS was spent by support staff compared with 34 per cent in primary schools. Similarly secondary schools estimated that 65 per cent of the total data entry time on the NfER portal was spent by support staff compared with 35 per cent in primary schools. The proportion of time spent on this task by senior management staff within secondary schools was correspondingly lower than in primary schools (16 per cent into school MIS, 23 per cent onto NfER portal for seconday schools; compared to 43 per cent for each in primary schools).

Figure 2.19 Share of time spent entering NRNT results (All respondents, where provided a response)



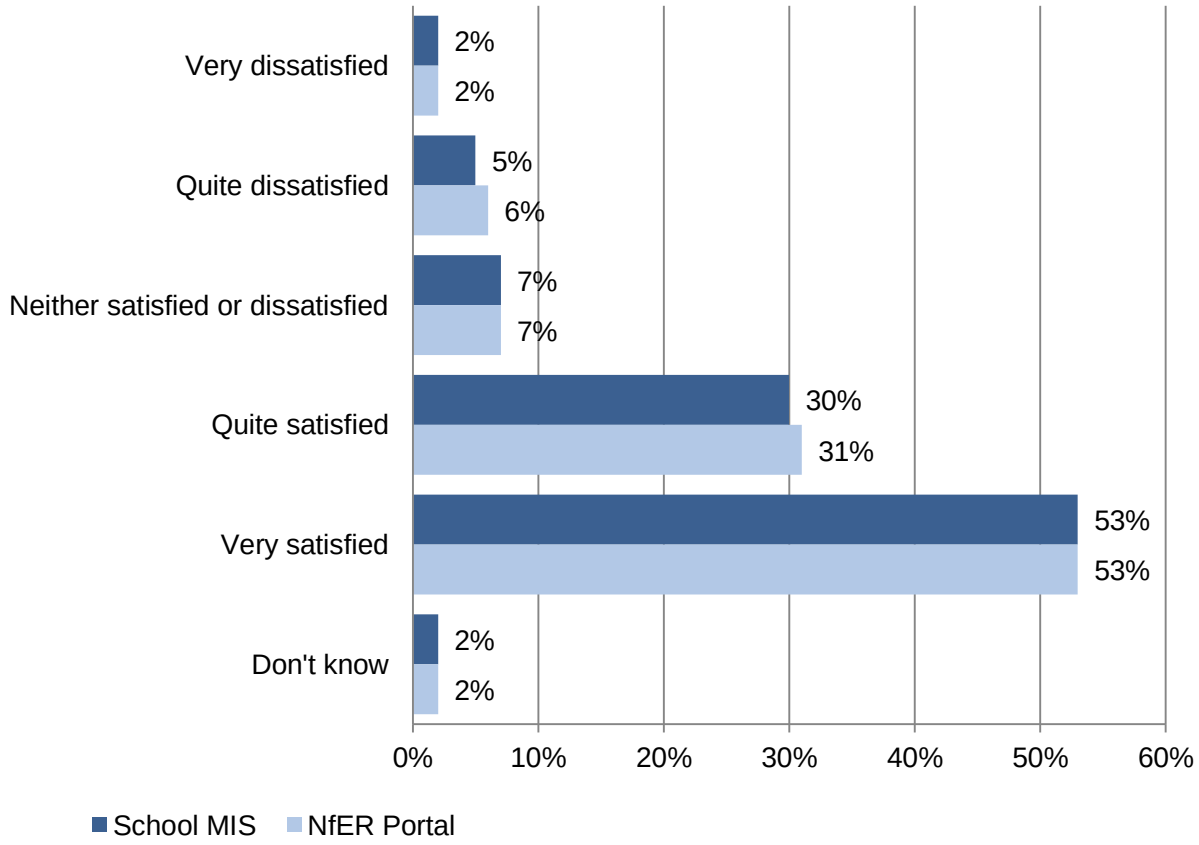
Sample base = 550

2.109 When asked how satisfied they were with how their schools entered results onto the different systems/portals, 84 per cent of respondents were quite/very satisfied with how data were entered onto the school MIS and 83 per cent were quite/very satisfied with how data were entered onto the NfER portal.

2.110 Just seven per cent of respondents were dissatisfied with entering results onto the school MIS and eight per cent were dissatisfied with entering results onto the NfER portal.

2.111 There were no significant differences in the degree of satisfaction by school type, region or language medium.

Figure 2.20 Satisfaction with entering data onto school MIS and NfER portal (All respondents)



Sample base = 550

2.112 When asked about the main challenges that their school faced when entering the results into different systems/portals, respondents were most likely to specify lack of staff resource and time (school MIS: 17 per cent; NfER portal: 18 per cent). A slightly lower proportion mentioned understanding how to use the system (school MIS: 14 per cent; NfER portal: 14 per cent).

2.113 Nearly half of all respondents did not perceive any challenges (school MIS: 48 per cent; NfER portal: 46 per cent).

3 How schools are using and plan to use the NRNT results

3.1 This chapter explores how schools have used the NRNT results to date and their plans for using the data in the future.

Use of NRNT results

Use of individual pupils' scores

3.2 Pupils' scores have been used in a variety of ways within schools; however, the highest proportion (93 per cent) have sent the scores to pupils' parents. The majority of respondents have used pupils' scores to inform teaching plans (86 per cent), to inform pupil targets, to identify pupil weaknesses and plan interventions (85 per cent), and to provide more targeted support to learners (82 per cent).

> 'We used the scores to identify children who may have fallen behind their peers and we arranged 'group' sessions to help these children to catch up. Children who came out with very high scores were given more challenging activities in order to push them forward. For children with similar scores, we were able to group these together for particular activities.' NRNT lead, Primary, Welsh medium

3.3 Three-fifths of respondents have shared them with other schools, such as children's new schools/secondary schools (60 per cent). This proportion is significantly higher in primary schools than in secondary schools (67 per cent, compared to 22 per cent).

3.4 Special schools were less likely to have used pupils' scores in any of the specified ways, in-depth interviews suggesting that this may be because more learners are disapplied in special schools meaning they have less data to utilise.

3.5 In-depth interviews with schools, RTMOs and Test Supporters reported that schools were sometimes unhappy with the timing of the results' release as they did not receive these until the end of term. As such, parents received the test results in isolation, usually after they had received their child's school report:

‘Schools had difficulty getting their reports out on time last year, because they were only arriving in school on the last week of term, and they have to pick them off themselves. Obviously by that time they had already sent their school reports out.’ RTMO

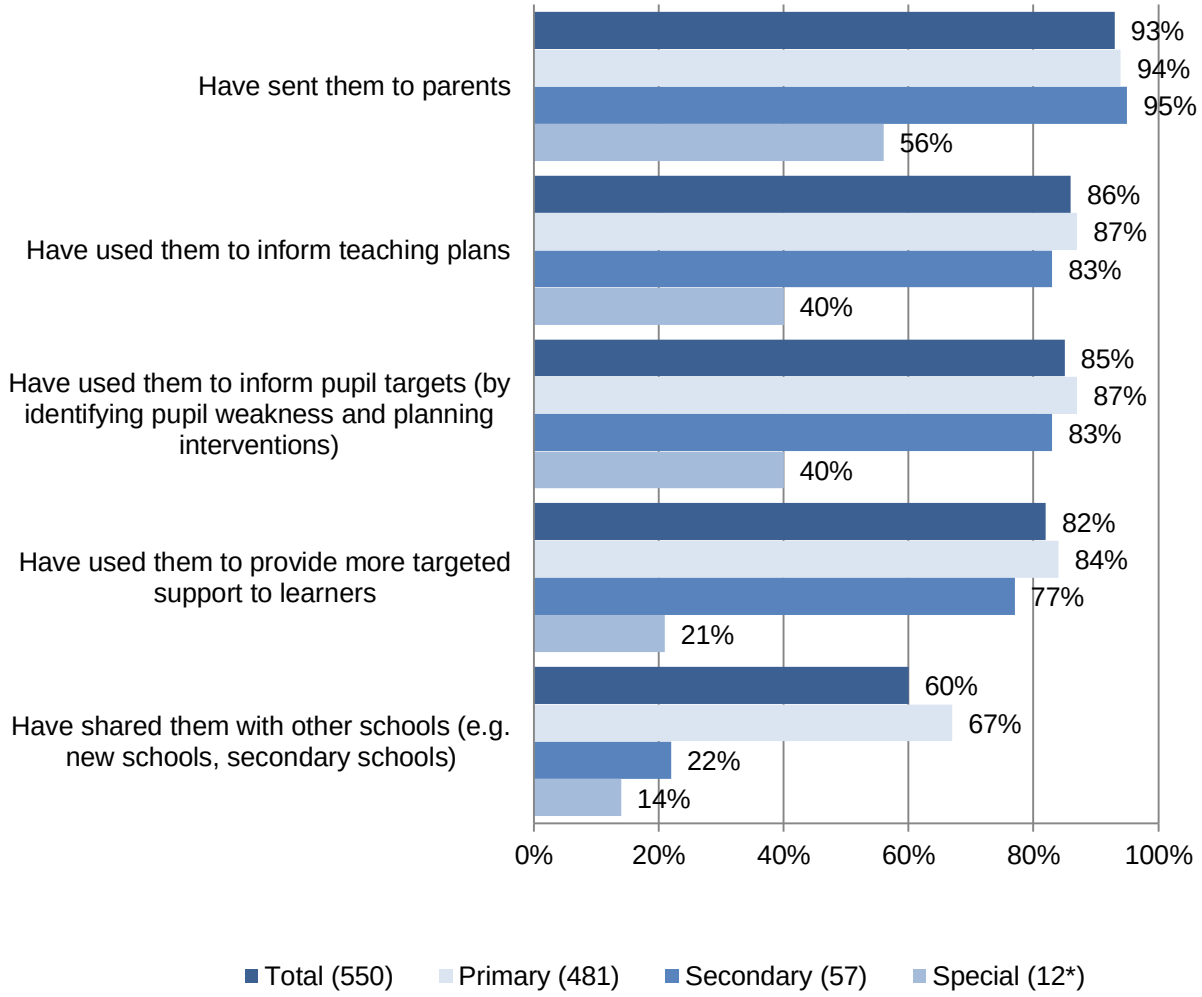
3.6 Schools believed it was important that parents received the NRNT results at the same time as the school report so these could be interpreted and discussed in the report or at parents’ evenings. There was a concern that without this additional interpretation parents could misinterpret the results:

‘The parents were sent reports of this and the first thing they’re going to do is come and say, “They were 124 last year, why are they now only 111?” ‘ NRNT lead, Primary, English Medium

‘We printed out the print-outs and attached a note from the school - all of which was distributed to parents. We inserted a sealed envelope including the results of the individual child. This has its advantages and disadvantages… it would be better to meet with the parents face-to-face.’ NRNT lead, Primary, Welsh medium

‘Parents want to know how their child did and how they compare to others, and that’s where you've got to be careful. A lot of schools have tied explaining their tests into meetings before pupil entry and summer parents’ meeting. The paper was also placed in the end of year report. We’re trying to tie in report-writing, but there is still some work to do there. The test scores have to be out and back to schools before the reports are finished, which they weren’t this year. It was tight.’ RTMO

Figure 3.1 How individual pupils' scores (including standardised and age equivalent scores) have been used by schools – prompted, multiple response (All respondents)



Sample bases in parentheses *caution: low sample base

3.7 In-depth interviews also identified that schools had plans to use the data more extensively in the future when they were able to utilise year-on-year comparisons to monitor a child's progress. Schools were particularly positive about this possibility and many saw this as the key benefit of the tests:

> 'Over time we'll be able to analyse a 'bank' of scores which we can use to help the school progress. At the moment, we don't have year-on-year results to look at. In the future, we'll be able to track pupils and monitor their development which means that parents will benefit from more in-depth feedback, especially in instances where a child may need extra support. We'll be able to justify a need for such resources because results are comparable. The fact that the tests are national

means that the information given to parents will be more rigorous and will outline the needs of the child. This will help a lot, because it's consistent. It will get better and areas for improvement can be targeted - for example, if a notable number of children have misunderstood a particular question or have struggled with a specific type of text, we can work with that, because it will be more feasible to identify a way forward.' NRNT lead, Primary, Welsh medium

Intended use of aggregate/school level data

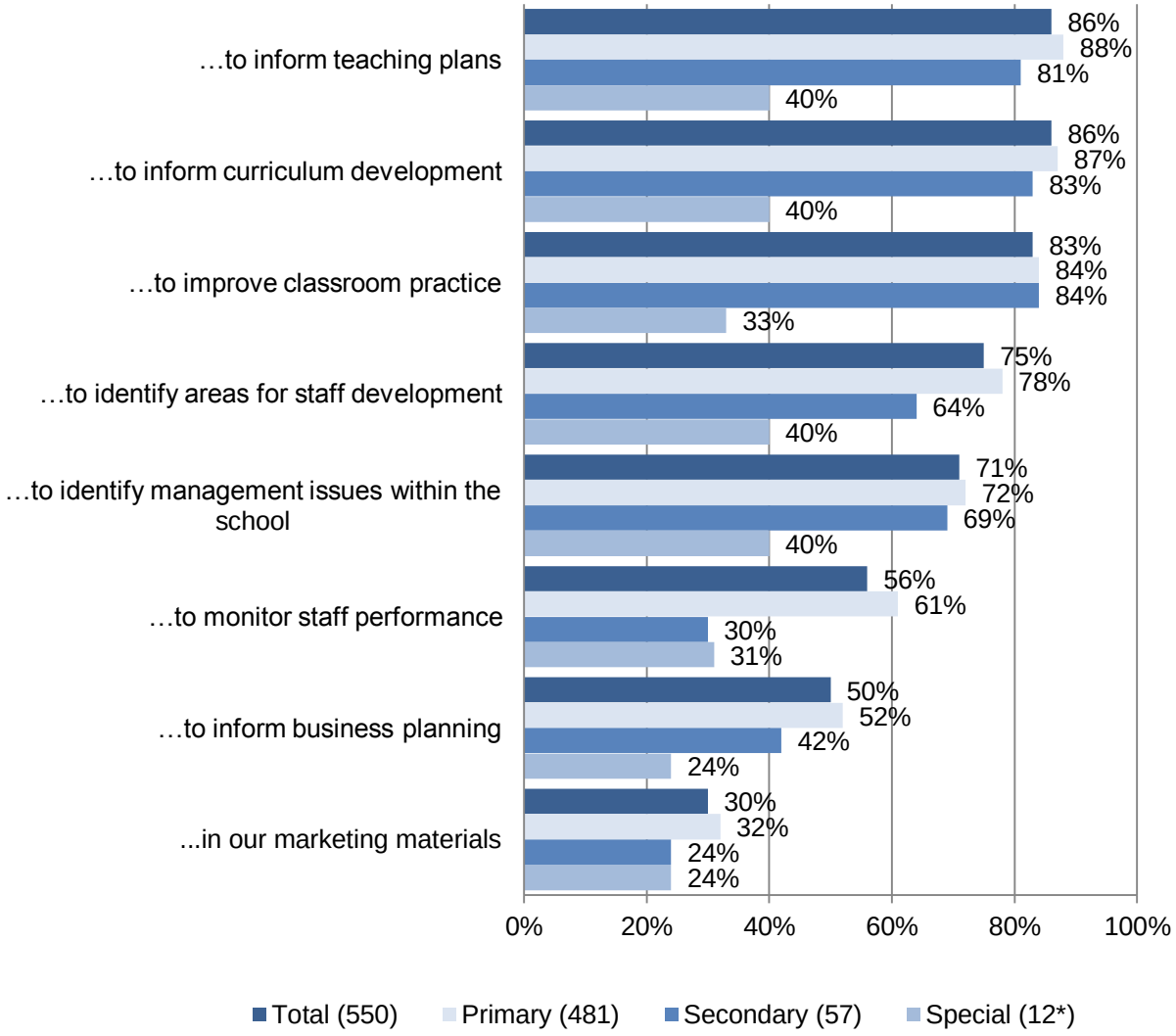
3.8 In terms of how respondents' schools intend to use aggregate/school level data in the future, they were most likely to specify using them to inform teaching plans (86 per cent) and to inform curriculum development (86 per cent). Slightly fewer respondents (83 per cent) reported that their schools will use them to improve classroom practice, to identify areas for staff improvement (75 per cent), and to identify management issues within the school (71 per cent).

3.9 Respondents in primary schools were significantly more likely than those in secondary schools to say their school intends to use the data to identify areas for staff development (78 per cent, compared to 64 per cent) and to monitor staff performance (61 per cent, compared to 30 per cent). This suggests that primary schools are much more likely to use them as a way of judging how well staff perform. In-depth interviews with schools and RTMOs identified that schools had focussed initial activity on using the data to help improve learner support. They were now also starting to use the data to look at staff performance but this was still in its early stages:

> 'The testing supported teacher assessment, and there was a feeling that if there is to be a consistency within the testing for the future, then perhaps it could link in more directly to support teacher assessment.' RTMO

Figure 3.2 How schools intend to use aggregate/school level data in the future – prompted, multiple response (All respondents)

Will use them…

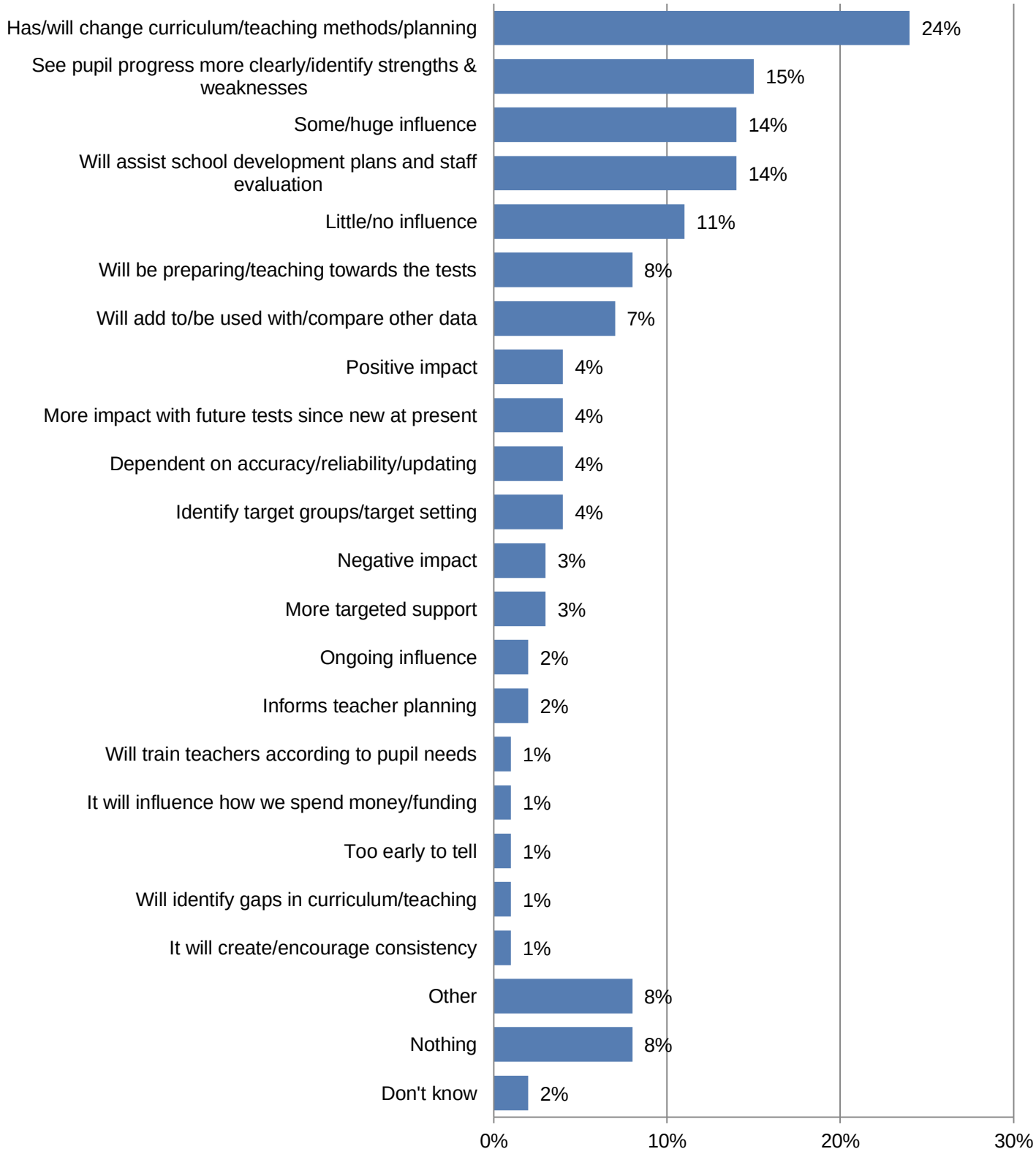


Sample bases in parentheses *caution: low sample base

3.10 When asked how they believe the 2013 NRNT results will influence curriculum planning, teaching practice, and staff development in future, respondents in the survey were most likely to say that it will 'change curriculum/teaching methods/planning' (24 per cent). In addition, results were considered likely to allow them to see 'pupil progress more clearly and to identify strengths and weaknesses' (in 15 per cent of cases), while also 'assisting school development plans/self evaluation/school standards/staff performance' (in 14 per cent of cases).

3.11 In line with other findings, primary schools were significantly more likely than secondary schools to feel the results will assist in school development plans and evaluate standards and performance (16 per cent, compared to five per cent in secondary schools).

Figure 3.3 How 2013 NRNT results will influence curriculum planning, teaching practice and staff development in the future – unprompted, multiple response (All respondents)



Sample base = 550

3.12 It was noted by RTMOs that work was ongoing in most schools and localities to best determine how the data could be used. Schools were receiving a range of support from their Regional Consortia to do this, including establishing databases enabling comparisons and engaging system leader support to identify areas for improvement.

Presenting test scores in school

3.13 Schools and RTMOs interviewed in depth reported that they preferred the use of the standardised scores as opposed to the age scores. This was because they believed these allowed fairer comparisons which were less open to interpretation:

> 'We've always promoted the use of the standardised scores rather than age equivalent scores, and then using those scores to look at deficiencies within the teaching, the things that aren't being taught, but then targeting the groups of learners for additional support.' RTMO

> 'The school's telling you, "Yes, your child's doing fine, he's reading as well as he should be." That's easier to explain, but when a parent sees ten point six and ten point two, it's not really telling the whole picture.' RTMO

Improving the data

3.14 When asked if there was anything that could be done to make the results more 'usable' for schools, respondents were most likely to specify getting information/results earlier (19 per cent). This proportion was highest in the Central South region (24 per cent) and North Wales (23 per cent) and lowest in the South West and Mid region (13 per cent).

3.15 This was by far the most frequently cited suggestion for improvement. Other suggestions included:

- improving the format of test/results (seven per cent);
- improved diagnostic/analysis tools (six per cent);
- more accurate, consistent, reliable, updated results (five per cent);
- improved standardisation (five per cent);
- having the same format for literacy/reading and numeracy (four per cent);
- make it less age-focused (three per cent); and

- more guidance/explanation on tests/results (three per cent).

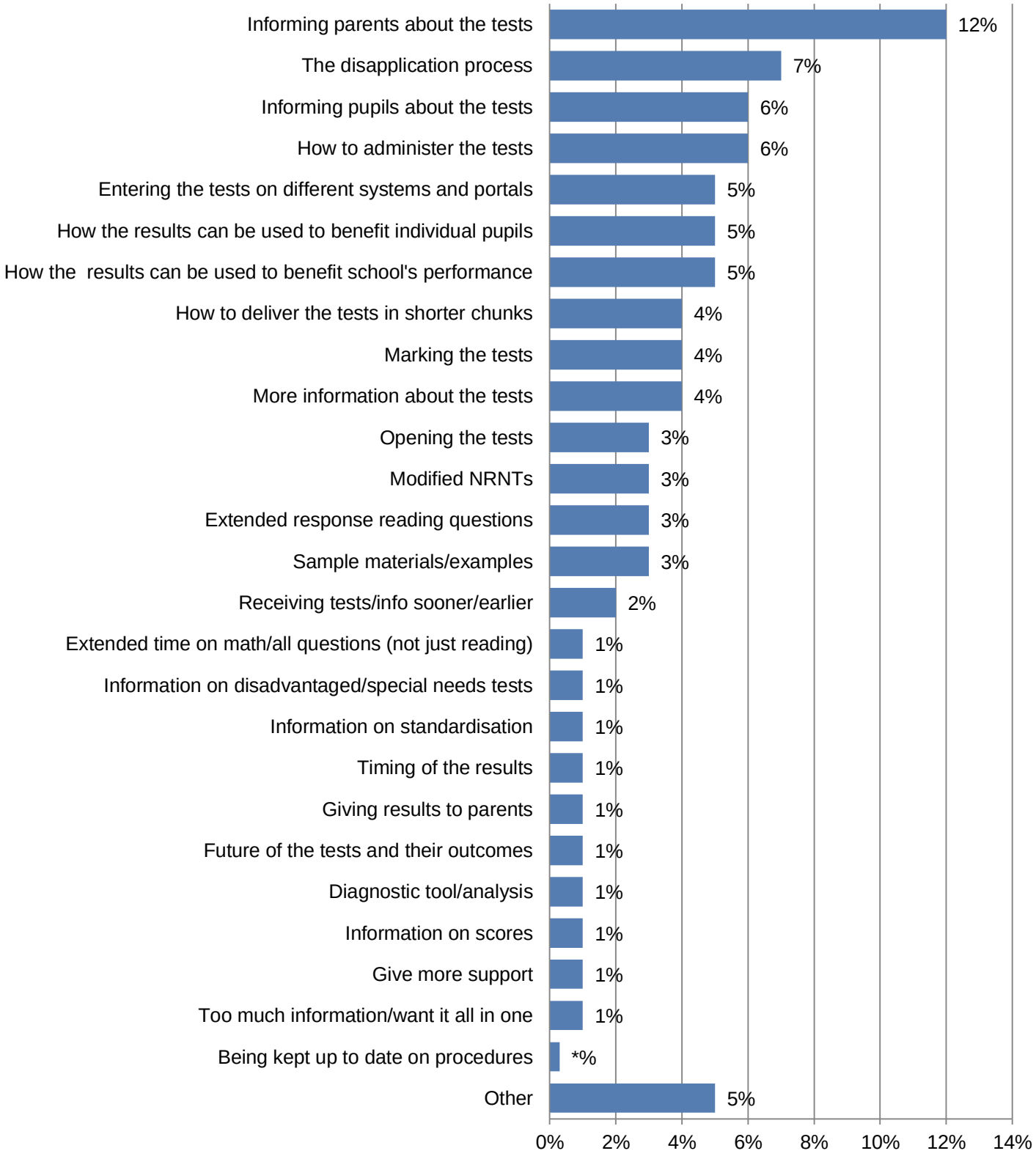
3.16 Other suggestions for improvement mentioned by just one or two per cent of respondents included:

- more help/accessibility for disadvantaged/special needs children;
- external marking;
- simpler /user friendly language;
- how absentee/disapplied students are scored;
- improve the scoring method;
- comparing/sharing results between schools;
- breaking down the data;
- less paperwork;
- link it to the national curriculum levels;
- make it more relevant to their style/pupils' usual learning style; and
- make the tests easier.

3.17 When asked openly what part of the NRNT process respondents would like more information about, the list is long and diverse, but no more than one in eight respondents focused on any one element of the process.

3.18 Their responses are summarised in Figure 3.4. It is notable that 12 per cent of respondents reported when unprompted that they would like more information to help inform parents about the tests compared with 64 per cent who had previously said they would like more information to inform parents when prompted.

Figure 3.4 Areas of the NRNT process that respondents would want to have more information about – unprompted, multiple response (All respondents)
*denotes less than 0.5%



Sample base = 550

Case study: English Medium School, Primary, Central South Wales

The implementation of the NRNTs within the school was overseen by the Headteacher, in conjunction with support from the Deputy Headteacher. They were first informed of the tests through attending a launch event. However, the level of information provided at this event was largely deemed to be insufficient. Importantly, the size of the launch and need to communicate in both English and Welsh, meant there was limited time to gain an understanding of the finer detail and ask questions. Additional information was sought from the website, and individual teaching staff also used the handbooks, fact sheets and sample materials provided. Although the sample materials were believed to be useful, it was felt that a greater number should be provided.

To ensure the tests were administered equally for all, the school chose not to make use of modified papers, the disapplication process or additional time. Although the school considered translating tests for those of whom English was a second language, their bilingual assistant was only able to translate tests for one of the twenty-eight languages spoken, and therefore it was felt this would be unfair. The Headteacher felt that the tests were unsuitable for such learners and recommended greater flexibility to enable them to take papers suited to their ability rather than their age:

> 'there ought to be more flexibility for pupils to be able to take lower papers if appropriate and either translate for all or don't translate at all.'

The school was keen not to place too much emphasis on the tests when informing parents, and therefore this was primarily done via the school newsletter. A presentation was also provided to the school governors (including parent governors), which provided an opportunity to ask questions.

One of the most significant challenges experienced by the school was the short timescale, which offered limited opportunity to prepare the school and learners for the tests. Due to the lack of preparation, sitting the tests was upsetting for some learners. To accommodate the tests, it was recommended that schools be informed of the timescales in advance. The school additionally faced challenges in terms of the practicalities of learners sitting the tests in a classroom setting. This was particularly true for year two, for whom tests were undertaken in staggered chunks, as there was limited space to for all children to undertake the tests at once. This staggered process took longer to administer (approximately one week), and meant that those who were not undertaking the test had to be supervised by a supply teacher in an available space (for example, the hall or playground):

> 'It was difficult to maintain a normal curriculum at the same time'.

The tests were marked by class teachers, to enable them to get an understanding of how their learners were progressing. The data entry process was then undertaken by administrative staff, with teaching staff and the Headteacher involved in reporting the data. The Head noted that the timing of the receipt of the standardised data proved challenging for the school, as it offered insufficient time for staff to accurately and effectively incorporate it into their standard school reports. It was therefore recommended that results be provided earlier, ideally by the end of June.

The school was generally dissatisfied with the standardised results data received. Importantly, it was felt that it presented little insight into the ability of learners, and therefore the Headteacher had to undertake the time consuming process of converting it into useable data:

> 'having done the test it was frustrating for teachers knowing what the score was, but having no idea how that school was within a wider context.'

The Headteacher also noted that results were not presented in the most suitable format. Although the presentation of the numeracy results was felt to be concise and easily

comparable, the literacy results were felt to be long-winded. Importantly, it was felt unnecessary to provide results in both English and Welsh. Due to their length, it was also recommended that literacy results be provided in separate files for each child.

In addition, the Headteacher also expressed concerns regarding the quality and accuracy of the data produced from the tests, particularly the literacy tests. In particular, it was felt that the results were weighted in favor of younger learners, and therefore the Head was concerned that over time the results may not demonstrate any improvements in ability.

A copy of the standardised results, and an accompanying covering letter from the school, was sent to all parents. As no feedback was received from parents, the Head expressed concerns that there may have been a lack of understanding, due to the format of the results:

> 'I would say not particularly child friendly in many ways. There was a lot of writing on there and it was very complicated for parents to look at'.

It was recommended that the Welsh Government assist in providing clearer reports for parents in the future. In light of their concerns about the quality of the data, it was also suggested that they provide clear explanations of any adjustments made to the standardisation in future rounds of the tests

> 'I think the Welsh government need to be really clear in explaining what has happened to parents and why any changes have been made, if any.'

Despite their concerns with the accuracy of the data (particularly the literacy data), the school has already started to use it in identifying the supportive interventions required for their learners. They did, however, state that it will be of greater use to them once several cohorts of data have been obtained. Although the school also plans to use the data for benchmarking purposes, they felt that the guidance provided was too general, and recommended that there be a greater number of bands than those suggested.

3.19 Various improvements identified through in-depth interviews have been discussed throughout this report. In the quantatiative survey, suggestions for doing things differently (regarding the processes of implementing, marking and data-entering the NRNTs in future) were specifically requested. Respondents were asked, in an open question, for their two highest priorities (although more than two could be given). Their suggestions included:

- timing of exams and results should be sooner/on time — six per cent
- different approach to marking (external marking) — five per cent
- more standardisation of processes — four per cent
- more funding for additional resources — four per cent
- uploading of data to one portal/system only — three per cent
- more child-friendly exams as children panic — three per cent
- review how data is inputted (including externally) — two per cent
- clearer guidelines on all aspects — two per cent
- longer time to administer tests/prepare children — one per cent
- concerns with regard to special needs children — one per cent

- more sample tests closer to actual tests — one per cent
- look at exam time limits — one per cent
- keep parents informed about tests — one per cent
- don't test year 2 — one per cent
- review implementation process — one per cent
- differentiate tests by children's ability — one per cent
- analysis/diagnostic tools to measure pupils performance — one per cent

3.20 However, 24 per cent of respondents could not think of anything to change. Several NRNT leads, RTMOs and Test Supporters interviewed in depth noted that many of the challenges faced in the first year of the tests were 'teething problems' and if the process for implementing the tests remained broadly the same in future years then schools would have the opportunity to get used to arrangements and build upon their previous experiences.

> 'Having a test administered for the first time causes issue. I don't think they'll be as difficult in the future'. RTMO

4 Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 This final section summarises key findings and draws conclusions in respect of how the NRNTs were implemented and the use of the results data from these. It does so under a series of headings based upon the key research questions.

The extent to which the administration of the NRNTs was implemented as envisaged in Welsh Government guidance.

4.2 The vast majority (95 per cent) of schools that took part in the survey reported that they had implemented the NRNTs as envisaged in the Welsh Government guidance and that their school was fully compliant in this. In instances where schools were not fully compliant this tended to be related to schools trying to best meet the needs of children who had specific requirements (such as those with special educational needs or English as a second language where Welsh was not their first language).

4.3 All respondents had used some type of information from the Welsh Government to support the implementation of the tests. However, the most frequently used source of support was the Test Administration Handbook (97 per cent reported using this). Schools interviewed in depth tended to view the handbook as the core source of information and generally found they could find the answers to any questions in this. However, some benefited from confirming their interpretations of the guidance by contacting Test Supporters, NfER, and the Welsh Government, which made them more confident in implementing the tests.

- **Recommendation: Continue to provide a range of up-to-date materials for schools to use on implementing the NRNTs, making it clear who they can approach for any further information needed.**

The views of stakeholders involved in the administration of the NRNTs on the process of administering the tests and the arrangements and guidance supporting this.

4.4 The vast majority of respondents were happy with the guidance that supported the NRNT administration process, only one per cent of respondents did not consider the guidance and manuals provided to be relevant at all to what they needed to know. Just four per cent did not consider them effective at all in preparing their school for the NRNTs.

4.5 Respondents were slightly less satisfied with the sample test materials, with three per cent of respondents not considering these relevant at all and nine per cent not considering them effective at all in preparing their school for the NRNTs. Findings from interviews suggest that schools would have liked a wider range of sample materials to use as practice papers to help their pupils better prepare for the tests.

4.6 Overall, research participants in both the survey and in depth interviews were happy with the messages emerging from the Welsh Government with most finding the support clear, easy to follow, relevant, and effective in helping them communicate and prepare for the NRNTs. The main concern amongst surveyed schools, RTMOs and Test Supporters interviewed in depth was the timeliness of information. Most would have preferred to receive information relating to the tests (and particularly clarification of the issue of disapplication) earlier in the year to help them prepare.

- **Recommendation: The Welsh Government should work with schools to introduce support and guidance earlier in the school year to ensure teachers and pupils are best able to prepare for the NRNTs.**

The patterns and rationale for use of modified tests, special access arrangements and disapplication of learners.

4.7 In-depth interviews and the survey of NRNTs leads identified that the main challenge schools faced when implementing the tests was the issue of disapplication and specifically who can be disapplied and the impact this has on school's results. Two in five (40 per cent) of the survey respondents

reported using disapplication arrangements. However, this number may mask schools who considered using disapplication arrangements but chose not to as they were concerned about the impact this would have on their aggregated scores. Disapplication arrangements were primarily used for learners in other specialist circumstances, such as new pupils, pupils who were ill and those whose first language was not English or Welsh. However, it was noted that some of these learners would have been able to take part in tests if translations into a wider variety of language were made available or if schools could select the tests undertaken based on a child's ability as opposed to age, particularly in special schools.

- **Recommendation: The Welsh Government should consider:**
  (1) how more rigour, consistency, and clarity can be brought to eligibility for disapplication and;
  (2) consider how disapplications can be dealt with in reporting of test results such that they do not arouse school fears that their, or other schools', true achievements and performance may be obscured.
- **Recommendation: The Welsh Government may wish to consider, in the light of its objectives for the testing programme as a whole, the views of some schools, particularly special schools, that pupils should be able to sit tests appropriate to their ability levels as recognised by their schools rather than strictly according to their age.**

4.8 A fifth of respondents had used the modified NRNTs and this tended to be where the school had learners with visual impairments or special educational needs. Nearly half (45 per cent) of those schools who had ordered modified tests had not used all of these, this may be due to schools 'over-ordering' tests to ensure they were prepared for the first year of testing but on receipt choosing not to use these. It was suggested in some of the in-depth interviews that this was likely to be a 'teething' problem in the first year that would not be an issue in the future.

How the NRNT results were processed and disseminated.

4.9 The majority of schools surveyed reported that they had used qualified teachers working at the school on a regular basis to mark the NRNTs. This proportion was significantly higher amongst respondents working in primary schools than those in secondary schools (93 per cent, compared to 55 per cent), likely due to the difficulties caused by unions not allowing secondary school teachers to mark the tests. In such cases, external markers were employed at an additional cost to the school. Where schools had used their own teaching staff to mark the tests they reported this was beneficial as it helped them to better understand the tests and how individual pupils were performing. However, in-depth interviews identified that in several instances schools would have preferred tests to be marked and moderated externally to ensure consistency of the interpretation of the mark scheme.

4.10 Marking the tests took survey respondents considerably longer than estimated in the Test Administration Handbook and schools estimated that marking 30 test papers took them approximately one hour longer than expected.

4.11 The vast majority (93 per cent) of schools surveyed had sent the tests scores to parents. However, schools were concerned about the timing of the release of the test results. Most of those interviewed in depth would have preferred to receive these earlier so they could be incorporated into end-of-year reports and parent's evenings rather than being sent in isolation which left room for misinterpretation.

- **Recommendation: The Welsh Government should consider how the consistency and speed of marking may be improved in order to remove any concerns regarding how schools are interpreting the mark scheme and ensure results are available earlier in the summer term.**

How the NRNTs are planned to be used within schools for teaching, assessment, curriculum planning and monitoring.

4.12 To date the majority of the work undertaken by schools following the receipt of the test results has been focussed on the individual test scores through sending parents the test results (93 per cent), identifying specific learner weaknesses and planning interventions (85 per cent), and providing more targeted support to learners (82 per cent). However 86 per cent of schools surveyed had used them to inform teaching plans for classes and 86 per cent intended to use the results to inform curriculum development.

4.13 Thus far, 75 per cent intended to use the tests results to monitor staff performance with 71 per cent planning to use them to identify management issues in the school

4.14 It was noted by several schools and RTMOs interviewed in depth that progress on the wider curriculum development and school performance monitoring plans were still in their relatively early stages. They believed more could be achieved in these areas when they had comparative longitudinal data from future test results. They believed that once this was available this would prove very useful to schools.

- **Recommendation: The Welsh Government should ensure the consistency of the types of data collected and ensure comparability between years to enable schools and pupils to gain the maximum benefit from the NRNTs.**
- **Recommendation: The Welsh Government and regional consortia should identify opportunities to create data comparison tools to enable schools to best utilise the test results.**
- **Recommendation: The Welsh Government should consider developing materials to better ensure parents can correctly interpret the results as they apply to their child.**

Appendix 1: Population and sample profile

Table 1: School phase

Phase	Actual number in population	Number completed
Primary	1358	481
Middle	4	0
Secondary	213	57
Special	42	12
Total	**1617**	**550**

Table 2: School type

Type	Actual number in population	Number completed
Community	1317	444
Foundation	12	2
Voluntary – aided	157	65
Voluntary – controlled	89	27
Special	42	12
Total	**1617**	**550**

Table 3: Region

Region	Actual number in population	Number completed
North Wales	442	138
South West and Mid	586	205
Central South	313	109
South East	276	98
Total	**1617**	**550**

Table 4: Language medium

Language medium	Actual number in population	Number completed
English Medium	1033	386
Welsh Medium	430	133
Bilingual	112	19
Not Recorded for special schools	42	12
Total	**1617**	**550**

Table 5: School size

School size	Actual number in population	Number completed
Fewer than 100 learners	374	131
101-200 learners	448	163
201-300 learners	334	117
301-400 learners	142	40
401-600 learners	144	54
601-800 learners	53	15
801-1,000 learners	44	11
1,001-1,400 learners	53	13
1,401-1,800 learners	20	5
1,801-2,000 learners	2	1
More than 2,000 learners	2	0
Not known	1	0
Total	**1616**	**550**

Appendix 2: Weighting

Table 6: Weighted and un-weighted bases of the school sample by region; NUMBERS

Region	Weighted base	Unweighted base
North Wales	150	138
South West and Mid	200	205
Central South	107	109
South East	94	98

Table 7: Weighted and un-weighted bases of the school sample by phase; NUMBERS

Region	Weighted base	Unweighted base
Primary	463	481
Secondary	73	57
Special school	14	12

Table 8: Weighted and un-weighted bases of the school sample by language medium; NUMBERS

Region	Weighted base	Unweighted base
English medium	357	386
Welsh medium	157	133
Bilingual medium	22	19
Special school	14	12

Appendix 3: Survey questionnaire

<u>DATABASE VARIABLES</u> (TO BE PREPOPULATED BASED ON WELSH GOVERNMENT DATABASE)

DB1a. Name of school

DB1b. School number

DB2. Postcode

DB3. School phase

Primary	1	**CONTINUE**
Middle	2	**CONTINUE**
Secondary	3	**CONTINUE**
Special	4	**CONTINUE**

DB4. School type

Community	1	**CONTINUE**
Foundation	2	**CONTINUE**
Voluntary – aided	3	**CONTINUE**
Voluntary – controlled	4	**CONTINUE**
Special	5	**CONTINUE**

DB5. Region (based on postcode in database)

North Wales	1	**CONTINUE**
South West and Mid	2	**CONTINUE**
Central South	3	**CONTINUE**
South East	4	**CONTINUE**

DB6. Local authority

Blaenau Gwent	1	**CONTINUE**
Bridgend	2	**CONTINUE**
Caerphilly	3	**CONTINUE**
Cardiff	4	**CONTINUE**
Carmarthenshire	5	**CONTINUE**
Ceredigion	6	**CONTINUE**
Conwy	7	**CONTINUE**
Denbighshire	8	**CONTINUE**
Flintshire	9	**CONTINUE**
Gwynedd	10	**CONTINUE**
Isle of Anglesey	11	**CONTINUE**
Merthyr Tydfil	12	**CONTINUE**
Monmouthshire	13	**CONTINUE**
Neath Port Talbot	14	**CONTINUE**
Newport	15	**CONTINUE**
Pembrokeshire	16	**CONTINUE**
Powys	17	**CONTINUE**
Rhondda Cynon Taf	18	**CONTINUE**
Swansea	19	**CONTINUE**
The Vale of Glamorgan	20	**CONTINUE**
Torfaen	21	**CONTINUE**
Wrexham	22	**CONTINUE**

DB7: Language medium used

Bilingual (Category 2A) – AB	1	**CONTINUE**
Bilingual (Category 2B) – BB	2	**CONTINUE**
Bilingual (Category 2C) – CB	3	**CONTINUE**
English Medium –EM	4	**CONTINUE**
English (with significant Welsh) – EW	5	**CONTINUE**
Welsh Medium – WM/DS/TR	6	**CONTINUE**

DB8: School size

Fewer than 100 learners	1	**CONTINUE**
101-200 learners	2	**CONTINUE**
201-300 learners	3	**CONTINUE**
301-400 learners	4	**CONTINUE**
401-600 learners	5	**CONTINUE**
601-800 learners	6	**CONTINUE**
801-1,000 learners	7	**CONTINUE**
1,001-1,400 learners	8	**CONTINUE**
1,401-1,800 learners	9	**CONTINUE**
1,801-2,000 learners	10	**CONTINUE**
More than 2,000 learners	11	**CONTINUE**

INTRODUCTION

Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is XXX and I'm calling from BMG, an independent research agency on behalf of the Welsh Government. May I speak with the individual who had responsibility for the National Reading and Numeracy Tests (NRNTs) in your school (this may be a Deputy Head or the Headteacher)?

WHEN SPEAKING TO THE CORRECT CONTACT

We are conducting research into the implementation of the National Reading and Numeracy Tests (NRNTs) on behalf of the Welsh Government. This is an important survey that will feed into future processes and decision-making regarding how the NRNTs are implemented and delivered.

The interview should only take around 15 to 20 minutes to complete and your answers will remain completely anonymous.

Are you happy to continue?

INTERVIEWER TO RECORD OUTCOME

Yes	1	**CONTINUE**
Definite Appointment	2	**MAKE DEFINITE APPOINTMENT**
Soft appointment	3	**MAKE SOFT CALL BACK**
Refusal	4	**THANK AND CLOSE**
WANTS REASSURANCES	5	**SEND EMAIL REASSURANCES**

REASSURANCES TO USE IF NECESSARY

The interview will take around 15-20 minutes to complete.
Please note that all data will be reported in summary form and your answers will remain anonymous.
If respondent wishes to confirm validity of survey or get more information about aims and objectives, they can call:

- MRS: Market Research Society on 0500 39 69 99
- BMG Research: Elizabeth Davies on 0121 333 6006
- ONLY IF ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY: David Roberts at the Welsh Government on 0300 062 5485

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Before we start can you please tell me your name and job title:
WRITE IN NAME AND JOB TITLE

GUIDANCE AND PREPARATION

To begin with I would like to ask you some questions about the guidance and training or support you received in preparation for the NRNTs.

ASK ALL, MC, READ OUT OPTIONS

1. Prior to the introduction of the NRNTs which of the following materials/sources did you use to find out more about the process and implementation of the tests?

LNF/National Support Programme conferences	1
Test administration handbook	2
National Support Programme NRNT questions and answers	3
Ministerial statements relating to NRNTs	4
NRNT access and disapplication arrangements guidance	5
Articles in Dysg enewsletter or on the Learning Wales website relating to the NRNTs	6
Local contacts and networks e.g. local authorities	7
Regional contacts and networks e.g. Regional Consortia	8
National contacts e.g. contacted Welsh Government leads directly	9
Test Supporter(s)	10
Sample materials on NRNTs	11
National Data Collection and Reporting Arrangements 2012/13 - Technical Completion Notes for Schools and Local Authorities	12
National Data Collection (NDC) 2013 - Questions & Answers	13
SR None of the above	14

2. THERE IS NO Q2
3. THERE IS NO Q3

ASK ALL, SC, READ OUT OPTIONS

4. Thinking about the sample test materials provided by the Welsh Government, to what extent did you find them …?

	Not at all	Quite	Very	Did not have these materials
Relevant to what you needed to know	1	2	3	4
Effective in preparing your school for the NRNTS	1	2	3	4

ASK ALL, SC, READ OUT OPTIONS

5. Thinking about the guidance and manuals (including the Test Administration Handbook) provided by the Welsh Government, to what extent did you find them …?

	Not at all	Quite	Very	Did not have these materials
Relevant to what you needed to know	1	2	3	4
Effective in preparing your school for the NRNTS	1	2	3	4

ASK ALL, SC, READ OUT OPTIONS

6. Overall, prior to the introduction of the NRNTs to what extent did you find the messages and guidance from the Welsh Government…?

	Not at all	Quite	Very
Timely	1	2	3
Clear and coherent to understand	1	2	3
Easy to follow in practice	1	2	3
Relevant to what you needed to know	1	2	3
Effective to help you communicate the NRNTs in school	1	2	3
Effective in preparing your school for the NRNTs	1	2	3

7. THERE IS NO Q7

IMPLEMENTATION

I would now like to ask you some questions about how your school has implemented the NRNTs.

ASK ALL, SR, READ OUT OPTIONS

8. To what extent was your school able to comply with the guidance issued by the Welsh Government in the Test Administration Handbook?

Fully	1
Partially	2
Not at all	3

ASK IF Q8=2, OR, CODE 99 IF DON'T KNOW

9. Which aspect(s) of the guidance were your school unable to comply with?

ASK ALL, MR, DO NOT READ OUT OPTIONS

10. How did you communicate information about the implementation of NRNTs to parents of pupils in your school?

Emails	1
Letters	2
Open evenings	3
Parent/teacher nights	4
Distribution of the Welsh Government's 'How was school today?' prior to the NRNTs	5
Other (please specify)	6
Did not communicate tests to parents	7
Don't know	8

ASK ALL, SR, DO NOT READ OUT OPTIONS

11. Would you have liked more information from the Welsh Government to pass onto parents?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

ASK ALL, MR, DO NOT READ OUT OPTIONS

12. How did you communicate information about the implementation of NRNTs to pupils in your school?

Through assembly	1
Through class teachers	2
Other (please specify)	3
Did not communicate tests to pupils	4
Don't know	5

ASK ALL, SR, DO NOT READ OUT OPTIONS

13. Were the NRNTs administered to whole classes?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

ASK IF Q13=2, OR, 99 IF DON'T KNOW

14. What alternative methods of test administration were used and why?

ASK ALL, SR, READ OUT OPTIONS

15. How were the tests administered in your school?

In the classroom	1
In a larger room to accommodate larger numbers of pupils e.g. a whole year group	2
A combination of classroom and larger rooms	3
Another way (please specify)	4

ASK IF DB3=1/2, SR, DO NOT READ OUT OPTIONS

16. Did your school deliver the NRNTs for Years 2 or 3 in shorter 'chunks'?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

ASK ALL, MR, READ OUT OPTIONS

17. Who administered the tests to the pupils? IF REQUIRED: BY ADMINISTER WE MEAN INVIGILATE

Qualified teachers employed working at the school on a regular basis	1
Other staff working at the school on a regular basis	2
External invigilators who were qualified teachers	3
External invigilators who were not qualified teachers	4
Other (please specify)	5
Don't know	6

ASK ALL, SR, DO NOT READ OUT OPTIONS

18. Did your school use any modified NRNTs?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

ASK IF Q18=1, OR, 99 IF DON'T KNOW

19. Why did your school use modified NRNTs?

ASK IF Q18=1, OR, 99 IF DON'T KNOW

20. How did you decide which modified tests to order?

ASK IF Q18=1, SR, READ OUT OPTIONS

21. Which of the following best describes your use of the modified NRNTs ordered?

We used all of them	1
We used some of them but not all	2
We did not use any of them	3
Don't know	4

ASK ALL, SR, DO NOT READ OUT OPTIONS

22. Did your school make use of the disapplication arrangements for the NRNTs?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

ASK IF Q22=1, OR, 99 IF DON'T KNOW

23. In what instances did your school make use of the disapplication arrangements for the NRNTs?

ASK ALL, SR, DO NOT READ OUT OPTIONS

24. Did your school make use of the extended response reading questions?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

ASK IF DB7=6, SR, DO NOT READ OUT OPTIONS

25. Did pupils in your school sit the NRNTs in both English and Welsh?

Yes	1
No	2
Don't know	3

ASK ALL, NR, CAN BE RECORDED IN HOURS OR STAFF DAYS, 99 IF DON'T KNOW

26. How much time was invested into the testing process (including administrative preparation and implementation but not including preparation of learners) by staff in your school?

ASK ALL, NR, TO BE RECORDED AS % TO ADD UP TO 100, 99 IF DON'T KNOW

27. What proportion of this time was invested by the following types of staff?

Senior Management Team e.g. Headteacher, Assistant Head, Deputy Head	__%
Teachers	__%
School support staff	__%
Other staff	__%

ASK ALL, OR, 99 IF DON'T KNOW

28. What impact did the time spent on preparing and implementing the NRNTs have on the wider workload of staff in the school?

ASK ALL, SR, READ OUT OPTIONS

29. Overall, how satisfied do you feel with how the NRNTs were implemented and administered at your school?

Very dissatisfied	1
Quite dissatisfied	2
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	3
Quite satisfied	4
Very satisfied	5
Don't know	6

ASK ALL, MR, DO NOT READ OUT OPTIONS

30. What, if any, were the main challenges your school faced when implementing the tests?

Lack of staff resource/time	1
Understanding how to implement the NRNTs	2
Explaining the NRNTs to pupils	3
Explaining the NRNTs to parents	4
Providing the individual pupil reports to parents	5
Other (please specify)	6
No challenges	7
Don't know	8

31. THERE IS NO Q31

MARKING

I would now like to ask you some questions about the process of marking the NRNTs.

ASK ALL, MR, READ OUT OPTIONS

32. Who was used to mark the NRNTs?

Qualified teachers employed working at the school on a regular basis	1
Other staff working at the school on a regular basis	2
External markers who were qualified teachers	3
External markers who were not qualified teachers	4
Other (please specify)	5

Don't know	6

ASK ALL, MR, DO NOT READ OUT OPTIONS

33. Why did you choose to take this approach to marking?

Costs	1
Time/resources	2
Quality of marking	3
Other (please specify)	4
Don't know	5

ASK ALL, NR, RECORD IN HOURS AND MINUTES, 99 IF DON'T KNOW

34. On average how long did it take to mark...?

30 National Reading Test papers	
30 procedural National Numeracy Test papers	

ASK ALL, MR, DO NOT READ OUT OPTIONS

35. What, if any, were the main challenges your school faced when marking the tests?

Lack of staff resource/time	1
Understanding how the marking process worked	2
Other (please specify)	3
No challenges	4
Don't know	5

ASK ALL, SR, READ OUT OPTIONS

36. Overall, how satisfied are you with how the marking of the NRNTs was undertaken at your school?

Very dissatisfied	1
Quite dissatisfied	2
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	3
Quite satisfied	4
Very satisfied	5
Don't know	6

37. THERE IS NO Q37

ASK ALL, MR, READ OUT OPTIONS

38. Who was used to enter the NRNT results onto the following portals/systems?

	School MIS	NfER portal
Qualified teachers employed working at the school on a regular basis	1	1
Other staff working at the school on a regular basis	2	2
External markers who were qualified teachers	3	3
External markers who were not qualified teachers	4	4
Other (please specify)	5	5
Don't know	6	6

ASK ALL, NR, CAN BE RECORDED IN HOURS OR STAFF DAYS, 99 IF DON'T KNOW

39. How much time was invested into entering the NRNT results onto the following portals/systems by staff in your school?

School MIS systems	
NfER's school portal	

ASK ALL, NR, TO BE RECORDED AS % TO ADD UP TO 100, 99 IF DON'T KNOW

40. What proportion of this time was invested by the following types of staff?

	School MIS	NfER portal
Senior Management Team e.g. Headteacher, Assistant Head, Deputy Head	__%	__%
Teachers	__%	__%
School support staff	__%	__%
Other staff	__%	__%

41. THERE IS NO Q41

42. THERE IS NO Q42

43. THERE IS NO Q43

ASK ALL, SR, READ OUT OPTIONS

44. Overall, how satisfied do you feel with how your school entered the results onto the different systems/portals?

	School MIS	NfER Portal
Very dissatisfied	1	1
Quite dissatisfied	2	2
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	3	3
Quite satisfied	4	4
Very satisfied	5	5
Don't know	6	6

ASK ALL, MR, DO NOT READ OUT OPTIONS

45. What, if any, were the main challenges your school faced when entering the results into the different systems/portals?

	School MIS	NfER Portal
Lack of staff resource/time	1	1
Understanding how to use the portals	2	2
IT issues	3	3
Other (please specify)	4	4
No challenges	5	5
Don't know	6	6

46. THERE IS NO Q46

USE OF TEST RESULTS

Finally, I would like to ask you some questions about how your school has used the results from the NRNTs

ASK ALL, MR, READ OUT OPTIONS

47. How have individual pupils' score (including standardised and age equivalent scores) been used by your school?

Have used them to inform teaching plans	1
Have used them to inform pupil targets (by identifying pupil weakness and planning interventions)	2
Have used them to provide more targeted support to learners	3
Have shared them with other schools (e.g. new schools, secondary schools)	4
Have sent them to parents	5
Other (please specify)	6
Don't know	7

ASK ALL, MR, READ OUT OPTIONS

48. How does your school intend to use aggregate/school level data in the future?

Will use them to inform teaching plans	1
Will use them in our marketing materials	2
Will use them to inform curriculum development	3
Will use them to improve classroom practice	4
Will use them to identify management issues within the school	5
Will use them to inform business planning	6
Will use them to monitor staff performance	7
Will use them to identify areas for staff development	8
Other (please specify)	9
Don't know	10

ASK ALL, OR, CODE 98 IF NOTHING, 99 IF DON'T KNOW

49. How do you think that the 2013 NRNT results will influence curriculum planning, teaching practice and staff development in the future?

ASK ALL, OR, CODE 98 IF NOTHING, 99 IF DON'T KNOW

50. Is there anything else that could be done to make the results more 'useable' for schools?

ASK ALL, MR, READ OUT IF NECESSARY (E.G. IF RESPONDENT DISCUSSES CONTENT RATHER THAN PROCESS)

51. Are there any areas of the NRNT process you would want to have had more information about? What are these?

Informing parents about the tests	1
Informing pupils about the tests	2
Opening the tests	3
How to administer the tests	4
How to deliver the tests in shorter chunks	5
Modified NRNTs	6
The disapplication process	7
Extended response reading questions	8
Marking the tests	9
Entering the tests on different systems and portals	10
How the test results can be used to benefit individual pupils	11
How the test results can be used to benefit the school's overall performance	12
Other (please specify)	13
SR None	98
SR Don't know	99

ASK ALL, OR, CODE 98 IF NOTHING, 99 IF DON'T KNOW

52. Is there anything you think could be done differently regarding the process of implementing, marking and data-entering the NRNTs in the future? What do you think are the 2 highest priorities?

ASK ALL, OR, CODE 98 IF NOTHING

53. Would you like to make any other comments?

ASK ALL, SR, DO NOT READ OUT OPTIONS

54. Would you be happy to be contacted by us for follow up interviews to gain more detailed understanding of some of these issues? If so, can we collect your email address/telephone number?

Yes	1
No	2

THANK AND CLOSE

Thank you. You have been talking to..... from BMG Research, working on behalf of the Welsh Government.

REPEAT ASSURANCES IF NECESSARY

Appendix 4: Qualitative topic guides

NRNT Leads

Researcher notes

The research aims to examine how the National Reading and Numeracy Tests (NRNTs) have been introduced and put into practice since their introduction in May 2013, and their intended effect on teaching and learning.

Interviewees are school literacy/numeracy or NRNT leads, it is likely they will be senior school staff including Headteachers, Deputy Headteachers, and Assistant Headteachers.

This interview will explore respondents' end to end experiences of implementing the NRNTs from the initial guidance and information provided through to the use and planned use of test results, and identify what barriers and enablers have affected their experiences.

This interview is to be undertaken in an open-ended way to allow the researcher to capture information key to the research objectives, whilst reflecting the experiences of the respondent and enabling flexibility to pursue lines of enquiry based on interviewee's responses. Not all interviewees will have the same level of detailed knowledge about the NRNTs so the interviewer should focus on different areas of this topic guide as appropriate.

Prior to depths all interviewers to familiarise themselves with relevant background materials including:

- The test administration handbook
- National Support Programme NRNT questions and answers
- NRNT access and disapplication arrangements guidance
- Welsh Government FAQs
- The data pack provided to schools
- Individual pupil report examples

Participant's survey responses will be made available to the interviewer to review ahead of appointments.

Introduction and background questions

Introduce self and BMG Research; inform the respondent that we have been commissioned by the Welsh Government to examine how the National Reading and Numeracy Tests (NRNTs) have been introduced and put into practice since their introduction in May 2013, and their intended effect on teaching and learning. Explain that we would like their views based on their experiences to inform the development of the final report and potentially a case study.

Interviewer should stress that all interviews are undertaken in accordance with the MRS code of conduct and as such everything they say will be anonymised and individuals will not be identified in final reporting. The discussion will last approx 30-45 minutes.

Seek to record the discussion, reassuring participant about confidentiality.

1. Before we begin can you please give me an overview of your role and, if relevant how this relates to the implementation of the NRNTs?

2. How did you first become aware of the NRNTs and how was it decided you would be the lead for NRNTs in the school?

Guidance and preparation

To begin with I would like to ask you some questions about the guidance and training or support you received in preparation for the NRNTs.

3. Prior to the introduction of the NRNTs which materials/sources did you use to find out more about the process and implementation of the tests and why did you choose to use these? *Interviewer to probe for each source/material used:*
    - At what point in the test preparation cycle did you access these?
    - How effective were these materials for you? Why was this?
    - In what ways did you find the materials/sources useful?
    - Was there any further information which it would have been useful to include and at what point in the test preparation cycle would you want to receive this?

4. How clear was the guidance around the modified NRNTs? Were there any areas you found difficult to interpret? IF YES: What were these and in what ways were they difficult to interpret? What other information would have been useful for you to receive?

5. How clear was the guidance around the disapplication of learners? Were there any areas you found difficult to interpret? IF YES: What were these and in what ways were they difficult to interpret? What other information would have been useful for you to receive?

6. Overall, to what extent do you think the materials available were pitched at an appropriate level to provide you with all of the information you needed to implement the NRNTs? Why is this?

7. IF NOT EXPLORED IN Q3: What role did regional consortia, local authorities and/or Test Supporters have in supporting your school to prepare for the tests?

8. What, if any, further support would have been valuable to your school when preparing to implement the NRNTs and who would you have wanted to provide this?

9. Did you find the overall messages provided by the Welsh Government and other sources clear, coherent, and joined-up? Why was this? *Interviewer to probe for specific positive and negative aspects.*

10. To what extent do you think the timescales for the implementation of the NRNTs within schools were feasible? Why is this? INTERVIEWER TO NOTE THE RESPONSE SHOULD BE RESTRICTED TO THE FEASIBILITY OF THE SCHOOL'S TIMETABLES FOR IMPLEMENTATION, NOT THE OVERALL INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE NRNTs

11. In what ways, if at all, did your views on the feasibility of the timescales for the NRNT's implementation change during the process? Why was this?

Implementation

I would now like to ask you some questions about how your school has implemented the NRNTs.

12. To what extent, if at all, did your school find it difficult/challenging to comply with the guidance issued by the Welsh Government in the Test Administration Handbook? Why was this and how

were difficulties overcome? *Interviewer to explore for specific aspects the school was unable to comply with and how they addressed this with alternatives.*

13. How was the implementation of NRNTs communicated to parents and pupils in your school? Why did you choose to take this approach and how effective did you find it?

14. What, if any, further support would you have wanted when communicating the implementation of the NRNTs to pupils and parents? Who would you want to provide this?

15. INTERVIEWER TO REFER TO SURVEY RESPONSES: If NRNTs were not administered to whole classes what alternative methods did you use and why did you choose this approach?

16. INTERVIEWER TO REFER TO SURVEY RESPONSES: Why did you choose to administer the tests in the way you did? To what extent are you happy with the approach taken and why is this?

17. INTERVIEWER TO REFER TO SURVEY RESPONSES, IF PRIMARY: Why did your school choose/choose not to administer the NRNTs to Year 2s and 3s in shorter chunks? How effective did you find this approach and why?

18. INTERVIEWER TO REFER TO SURVEY RESPONSES: Why did your school choose to administer the tests using the staff that it did? How effective did you find this approach and why?

19. INTERVIEWER TO REFER TO SURVEY RESPONSES, IF USED MODIFIED NRNTs: Why did you choose to use modified NRNTs and how effective did you find the process for ordering them? Why was this?

20. INTERVIEWER TO REFER TO SURVEY RESPONSES, IF USED MODIFIED NRNTs: Retrospectively would you still choose to use modified NRNTs? Why is this?

21. INTERVIEWER TO REFER TO SURVEY RESPONSES, IF USED DISAPPLICATION ARRANGEMENTS: Why did you choose to use the disapplication arrangements and how effective did you find the process for this? Why was this?

22. INTERVIEWER TO REFER TO SURVEY RESPONSES: Why did you choose/choose not to use the extended response reading questions? IF USED: In what instances did you use these and why?

23. INTERVIEWER TO REFER TO SURVEY RESPONSES: What, if any, alternative or additional arrangements were made for Year 4-9 pupils who were required to sit the NRNTs in both Welsh and English? What impact did this have?

24. What impact did the time spent on preparing and implementing the NRNTs have on the wider workload of staff in the school? How was this managed/addressed internally? *Interviewer to explore for both teachers, support staff, other staff, this should include impact of administrative preparation and implementation, but not including preparation of learners .INTERVIEWER TO NOTE, IMPACT OF TIME TAKEN ON LEARNER PREPARATION CAN BE CAPTURED IF VOLUNTEERED BY RESPONDENT*

25. Overall, what factors do you believe facilitated or conversely hindered the implementation of the tests?

Marking

I would now like to ask you some questions about the process of marking the NRNTs.

26. INTERVIEWER TO REFER TO SURVEY RESPONSES: Why did you choose the approach that you did to resourcing the marking of the NRNTs? How effective was this approach in terms of accuracy and efficiency and why?

27. How would you describe the approach you took to the marking? Would you describe any elements of your approach to marking as bespoke and could you describe these?

28. What, if any, were the main challenges your school faced when marking the tests and how were these addressed? Conversely were there any facilitators involved in the marking?

29. How were the tests moderated and how effective did you find this process? Why was this?

30. INTERVIEWER TO REFER TO SURVEY RESPONSES: Why did you choose the approach that you did to resourcing entering the NRNT results onto the school MIS system and NfER portal? How effective was this approach in terms of accuracy and efficiency and why? *Interviewer to probe for both the school MIS system and the NfER portal.*

31. What impact did the time spent on marking and data entering the NRNTs have on the wider workload of staff in the school? How was this managed/addressed internally? *Interviewer to explore for both teachers, support staff, other staff.*

32. What, if any, were the main challenges your school faced when entering the results into the different systems/portals and how were these addressed? Conversely were there any facilitators involved in data entry?

33. Have you received any feedback or observations on the first batch of results and any areas of concern or areas for improvement? What were these and who was this feedback from?

Use of test results

I would like to ask you some questions about how your school has used the results from the NRNTs

34. How have individual pupils' scores (including standardised and age equivalent scores) been used by your school or do you plan to use them in the future? *Interviewer to probe for each use to identify:*
    - How has this been done?
    - How effective and useful have you found this?
    - Are there any further areas you would like to develop/improve?

35. What, if any, different ways of presenting the findings have been used and why? How effective, clear and useful have these been?

36. How have the tests and their outcomes for learners been presented to parents, and how did they respond? *Interviewer to explore which methods of data presentation have been shared with parents.*

37. How does your school intend to use aggregate/school level data in the future? *Interviewer to*

explore both for formative purposes and any wider purposes.

- How will this be done?
- How will this be used to help your school's overall improvement and development?
- Are there other ways you would like to use the data which is not feasible at the moment? Why is this?

38. To what extent do you think the timing of the release of the NRNT scores is appropriate? Why is this?

39. IF NOT EXPLORED IN Q36: In what ways do you think the 2013 NRNT results might influence future approaches or changes to literacy and numeracy teaching and assessment, curriculum planning, pupil monitoring and targeting of support, identifying weaknesses in the curriculum, teaching practice and staff development?

40. How have the NRNT results been related to teacher assessment and assessment under the literacy and numeracy framework in order to come to a rounded judgement about learners' abilities?

41. To what extent have you found any noticeable relationships between NRNT results and other earlier approaches to assessing pupils' literacy and numeracy levels (including both testing and teacher assessments)? Why, if at all, do you think there are any differences?

42. Do you believe there is a role for regional consortia and local authorities in monitoring, challenging and supporting schools? In what ways might they do this?

Finally,

43. Overall what do you perceive to be the main challenges you have faced when implementing the NRNTs? How if at all have these been overcome? Conversely what, if any, have been the facilitators?

44. What do you think could be done in the future to improve the overall implementation, administration and use of the tests? *Interviewer to probe for the following stages and who would be responsible for changes e.g. Welsh Government, schools, regional consortia, NfER, Acumina etc:*
    - Initial guidance and preparation
    - Implementation and administration of the tests
    - Marking the tests
    - Using the test results

45. Would you like to make any further comments about any of the issues we have discussed today?

46. To confirm, would you be happy for us to use your experiences and views discussed today as a case study if required?

Researcher to ensure the interviewee has their contact details if they have any further information to send or have any queries about this research in the future.

Thank and close

Wider stakeholders

Researcher notes

The research aims to examine how the National Reading and Numeracy Tests (NRNTs) have been introduced and put into practice since their introduction in May 2013, and their intended effect on teaching and learning.

Interviewees are either Test Supporters, representatives from NfER and Acumina, or Regional Consortia Test Monitoring Officers.

This interview will explore respondents' experiences of supporting the NRNTs from the initial guidance and information provided through to the use and planned use of test results, and identify what barriers and enablers have affected their and school's experiences.

In each Regional Consortia, Test Monitoring Officers undertook a statutory monitoring role of the test administration on behalf of local authorities in their Regional Consortia area and they will be able to provide an external perspective, informed by their own monitoring. In addition, the roll-out of the NRNTs was supported by a network of Test Supporters (56 individuals) to liaise with individual schools to help schools in their preparation for administration of the tests.

This interview is to be undertaken in an open-ended way to allow the researcher to capture information key to the research objectives, whilst reflecting the experiences of the respondent and enabling flexibility to pursue lines of enquiry based on interviewee's responses. Not all interviewees will have the same level of detailed knowledge about the NRNTs so the interviewer should focus on different areas of this topic guide as appropriate.

Prior to depths all interviewers to familiarise themselves with relevant background materials including:

- The test administration handbook
- National Support Programme NRNT questions and answers
- NRNT access and disapplication arrangements guidance
- Welsh Government FAQs
- The data pack provided to schools
- Individual pupil report examples

Introduce self and BMG Research; inform the respondent that we have been commissioned by the Welsh Government to examine how the National Reading and Numeracy Tests (NRNTs) have been introduced and put into practice since their introduction in May 2013, and their intended effect on teaching and learning. Explain that we would like their views based on their experiences to inform the development of the final report and potentially a case study.

Interviewer should stress that all interviews are undertaken in accordance with the MRS code of conduct and as such everything they say will be anonymised and individuals will not be identified in final reporting. The discussion will last approx 30-45 minutes.

Seek to record the discussion, reassuring participant about confidentiality.

1. Before we begin can you please give me an overview of your role and, if relevant how this relates to the implementation of the NRNTs?

2. In what ways did you/your organisation support the implementation of the NRNTs?

3. What areas, if any, did you find were of particular concern for schools when preparing to implement the NRNTs? Why was this? *If not mentioned interviewer to specifically explore queries around the modified NRNTs and the disapplication of learners.*

4. What if any further support do you think could have been provided to schools whilst preparing to implement the NRNTs? Who do you think should provide this?

5. Did you find the overall messages provided by yourselves, the Welsh Government and other sources clear, coherent, and joined-up? Why was this? *Interviewer to probe for specific positive and negative aspects.*

6. To what extent do you think the timescales for the implementation of the NRNTs in schools were feasible? Why is this? INTERVIEWER TO NOTE THE RESPONSE SHOULD BE RESTRICTED TO THE FEASIBILITY OF THE SCHOOL'S TIMETABLES FOR IMPLEMENTATION, NOT THE OVERALL INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE NRNTs

7. In what ways, if at all, did your views on the feasibility of the timescales for the NRNT's implementation change during the process? Why was this?

8. To what extent did you find schools were able to comply with the guidance issued by the Welsh Government in the Test Administration Handbook? Why was this? *Interviewer to explore for specific aspects the school was unable to comply with and what. If any, support was provided to address this.*

9. To what extent did you find schools administered NRNTs to whole classes and why were different approaches chosen?

10. To what extent did schools take advantage of the following options and why do you think that is?
    - Option to administer the NRNTs to Year 2s and 3s in shorter chunks?
    - Option to use modified NRNTs
    - Option to use disapplication arrangements
    - Option to use extended response questions (Year 4 and up, reading tests only)

11. What types of approaches to marking and moderation were used by schools? Which were the most commonly used and which were the most effective? Why do you think this was?

12. How effective were school's approaches to entering data on to school MI systems and the NfER portal in terms of accuracy and efficiency and why do you think that is?

13. How have individual pupils' scores (including standardised and age equivalent scores) been used by schools? *How frequently and consistently have these uses been employed?*

14. What, if any, different ways of presenting the findings have been used and why? How effective, clear and useful have these been?

15. How have the tests and their outcomes for learners been presented to parents, and how did they respond? *Interviewer to explore which methods of data presentation have been shared with parents.*

16. How do schools intend to use aggregate/school level data in the future? *Interviewer to explore both for formative purposes and any wider purposes and how frequently and consistently these uses have been employed?*

17. To what extent do you think the timing of the release of the NRNT scores is appropriate? Why is this?

18. In what ways do you think the 2013 NRNT results might influence future approaches or changes to the following? *Interviewer to explore each:*
    - literacy and numeracy teaching and assessment
    - curriculum planning
    - pupil monitoring and targeting of support
    - identifying weaknesses in the curriculum
    - teaching practice and staff development

19. How have the NRNT results been related to teacher assessment and assessment under the literacy and numeracy framework in order to come to a rounded judgement about learners' abilities?

20. To what extent have you found any noticeable relationships between NRNT results and other earlier approaches to assessing pupils' literacy and numeracy levels (including both testing and teacher assessments)? Why, if at all, do you think there are any differences?

21. Do you believe there is an enhanced role for regional consortia and local authorities in monitoring, challenging and supporting schools? In what ways might they do this?

22. Overall what do you perceive to be the main challenges that have been faced when implementing the NRNTs? How if at all have these been overcome? Conversely what, if any, have been the facilitators?

23. What do you think could be done in the future to improve the overall implementation, administration and use of the tests? *Interviewer to probe for the following stages and who would be responsible for changes e.g. Welsh Government, schools, regional consortia, NfER, Acumina etc:*
    - Initial guidance and preparation
    - Implementation and administration of the tests
    - Marking the tests and entering the results onto different systems/portals
    - Using the test results

24. Would you like to make any further comments about any of the issues we have discussed today?

25. To confirm, would you be happy for us to use your experiences and views discussed today as a case study if required?

Researcher to ensure the interviewee has their contact details if they have any further information to send or have any queries about this research in the future.

Thank and close