



Department of
Education
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**PUBLIC CONSULTATION REPORT
ACCOUNTING FOR CHILDREN WITH A STATEMENT
OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS: CHANGING
THE 'SUPERNUMERARY' STATUS**

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Consultation Report for Accounting for Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs: Changing the ‘Supernumerary’ Status

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Introduction

The consultation was to seek the views of stakeholders in relation to a proposed new approach to accounting for children with a statement of special educational needs (SEN) within schools’ approved enrolments.

Children with a statement of SEN, children admitted on appeal and children admitted by direction of the Exceptional Circumstances Body (ECB) are treated as supernumerary for the purpose of school admissions. Children with a statement of SEN are treated as supernumerary for the duration of their time at school while the other groups are supernumerary for the year of admission only.

Article 10 of the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1997 serves as the basis for children admitted by appeal or by the ECB to be treated as supernumerary. The article also references children admitted by direction of Article 42 of the 1996 Order and children subject to a school attendance order. The basis for treating these children as supernumerary for one year only is, therefore, set out in legislation.

The practice of treating children with a statement of SEN as supernumerary for the duration of their time at school is custom and practice and not a legal requirement.

Children with a statement of SEN are admitted as supernumerary to schools over and above approved admission numbers. Supernumerary children who obtain admission to mainstream schools do not reduce the number of available places or prevent other children from gaining admission if available places remain. In practical terms this means that some schools can have large numbers of children with a statement of SEN enrolled, resulting in actual numbers significantly above the schools’ approved enrolment numbers, while also having available places. Some schools are, therefore, facing challenges in safely educating their children within approved accommodation. Children who receive a statement of SEN during a school year can also become supernumerary, thus creating a vacancy for another child to be added to the class/year group. This is reported as having a particular impact in statutory pre-school settings.

The practice of treating children with a statement of SEN as supernumerary is becoming increasingly problematic. In past years it served as a simple way of ensuring children who had a statement of SEN were able to secure a place at a school which was appropriate to meet their needs, however the emergence of a growing sector of specialist provision classes which consist entirely of children and young people with statements of SEN, could see schools exceeding their approved enrolment numbers by a considerable margin, while simultaneously having available places.

Complete removal of the supernumerary process requires careful consideration. The system is not currently in a state of readiness to move forward with complete removal of the supernumerary status of children who have a statement of SEN and further work, and engagement is required to take this forward.

This consultation is based on the proposal that children who have a statement of SEN will no longer be classed as supernumerary after their first year of admission or if they are already placed in the school, with complete removal of supernumerary status potentially to take place in the future and be the subject of additional consultation at that time.

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The [consultation document](#) outlines the background of the policy and the proposed form it will take.

A list of all the consultation questions can be found at [Annex B](#). Depending on their responses there are up to five questions about the respondent, namely: in what capacity the respondent is replying; if they are a carer or parent of a child with a statement of SEN; to which sectoral, community or other body they belong; what type of school does their child(ren) attend; and in what type of education are they involved.

There are then six consultation questions and a further comments section. No personal details are collected and any questions with an open free text comment box states ‘*Please do not include any personal data in your response.’

A generic analysis of respondents’ comments indicate that some respondents may have misunderstood the proposal, interpreting it as a removal of a child’s statement rather than a change to the supernumerary status of the child. This is incorrect, the proposal will have no impact on the process for allocating statements nor will it impact on the placement of children who hold a statement.

Consultations on the Draft Proposals for Accounting for Children with a Statement of SEN: Changing the Supernumerary Status Policy

The consultation document and associated survey were launched on 2 May 2025. The consultation ran for eight weeks, finishing on 26 June 2025.

The Department of Education (the Department) attaches importance to its consideration of all the responses received and has taken care to fully understand and reflect the range of perspectives that respondents provided. The remainder of this document focuses on the responses to the consultation on ‘Accounting for Children with a Statement of SEN: Changing the Supernumerary Status’. This document is a summary of the findings and does not list all individual comments received.

The Department wishes to take this opportunity to thank all those who responded to the consultation for taking the time to express their views.

Consultation Methodology

The consultation was published on the Department’s internal and external websites. We wrote to educational stakeholders and the Boards of Governors (BoGs) of all grant-aided primary, post-primary, and special schools, inviting them to share their views. A list of stakeholders has been provided at [Annex A](#). We also asked schools to draw the consultation to the attention of their school community. The consultation documents were offered in different formats which were available on request.

The consultation consisted of the following documents:

1. Accounting for Children with a Statement of SEN: Changing the Supernumerary Status Consultation Document
2. Rural Needs Impact Assessment for Changing the Supernumerary Status
3. Data Protection Impact Assessment for Changing the Supernumerary Status
4. Equality and Human Rights Policy Screening for Changing the Supernumerary Status
5. Privacy Notice for Changing the Supernumerary Status

Summary of Public Consultation

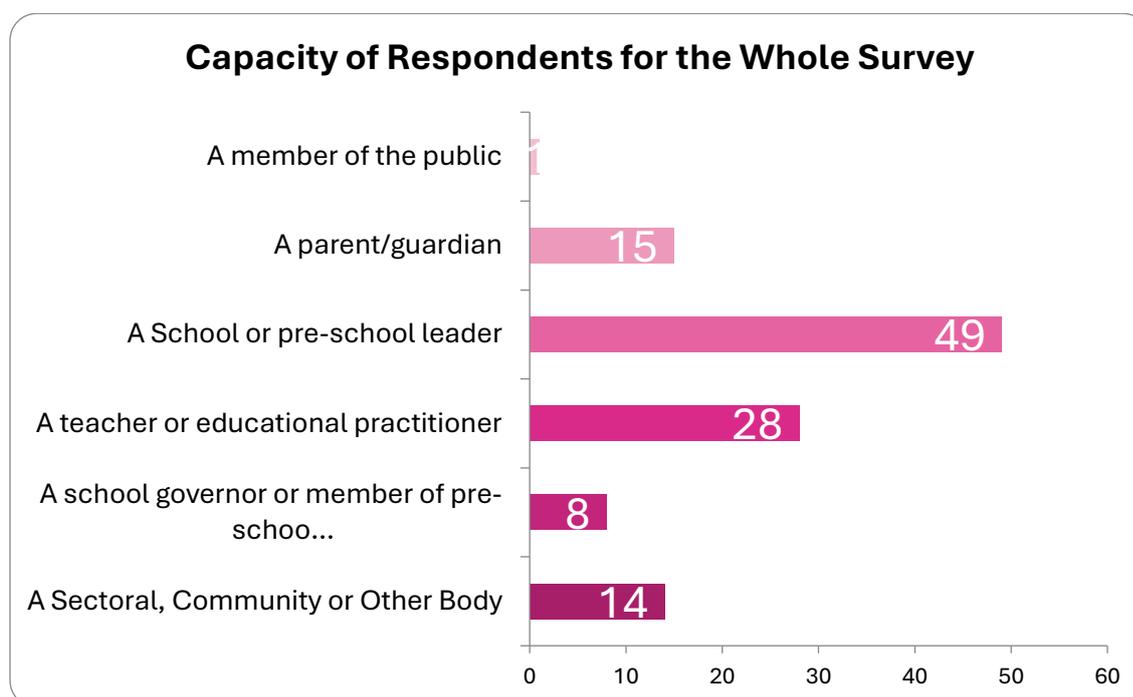
This section of the report focuses on the responses received to the public consultation. Respondents were encouraged to respond using the online portal (Citizen Space Hub). A small number of respondents replied by email. It is important to note the respondents were not compelled to answer each question, so the data provided relates only to questions that were answered.

There were 115 responses received to the consultation: 109 online via Citizen Space and six by email.

Breakdown by Respondent Type

Capacity in which responding

We received 115 responses to the consultation survey; the charts below show in which capacity the respondents replied. It should be noted that some respondents were involved in some way in more than one type of education.



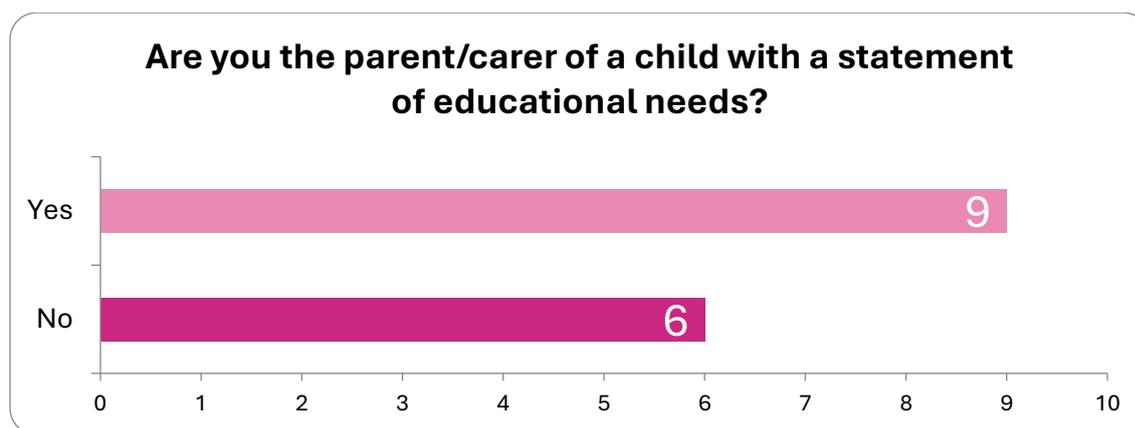
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Capacity of Respondents for the Whole Survey						
Option	Total	Pre-school	Primary school	Post-primary school	Special school	Not answered
A member of the public	1	0	0	0	0	1
A parent/guardian	15	4	9	8	2	0
A School or pre-school leader	49	1	29	19	0	0
A teacher or educational practitioner	28	1	15	11	1	0
A school governor or member of pre-school management committee	8	0	4	4	0	0
A Sectoral, Community or Other Body	14	0	0	0	0	14

*Six respondents selected more than one type of education, resulting in a total response count exceeding the number of individual responses.

Parents or Carers of Children with a Statement of Educational Needs

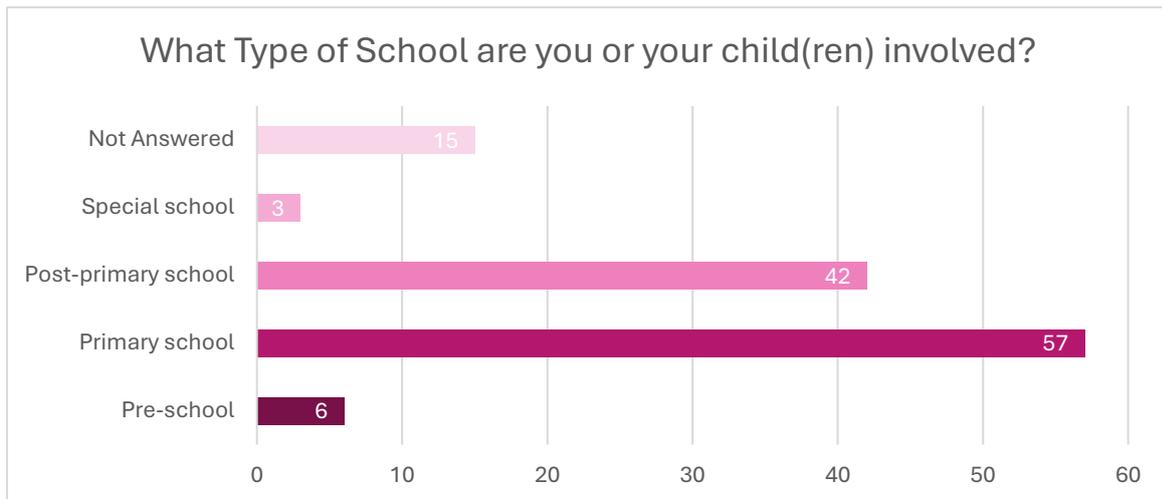
A total of 15 parents or guardians responded to the survey, with nine stating they were the parent or carer of a child with a statement of educational needs and six stating they were not.



Type of school the respondent or the respondent's child(ren) are involved

Of the 115 responses received from respondents directly involved in a particular type of education, six responses were from respondents involved in pre-school (or as a parent), 57 from respondents involved in primary school (or as a parent), 42 respondents involved in post-primary school (or as a parent), three responses were from those who they or their children are involved in special school and 15 respondents did not or were not required (screened out due to a previous answer) to answer the question.

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Six respondents selected more than one type of education, resulting in a total response count exceeding the number of individual responses.

Findings

As stated above, questions 1-5 refer to the identity of the individual or organisation and therefore specific questions regarding views on the proposal commenced at question six in the consultation document. The responses in relation to each question are covered in the subsequent pages.

Question 6

How strongly do you agree or otherwise with the following statement: The treatment of children who have a statement of SEN as supernumerary for their duration of their time at school needs to change.

- **Strongly agree**
- **Agree**
- **Neither agree nor disagree**
- **Disagree**
- **Strongly disagree**

Comments – If you have answered disagree or strongly disagree, please let us know why.

The charts below show that the majority of respondents strongly agree or agree that the treatment of children who have a statement of SEN as supernumerary for their duration of their time at school needs to change. However, parents and guardians were divided in their views, with eight agreeing or strongly agreeing and seven disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Comments from some respondents, including among parents and guardians who strongly disagreed or disagreed, suggest that some may have misunderstood the proposal, interpreting it as a removal of the statements themselves rather than a change to the supernumerary status.

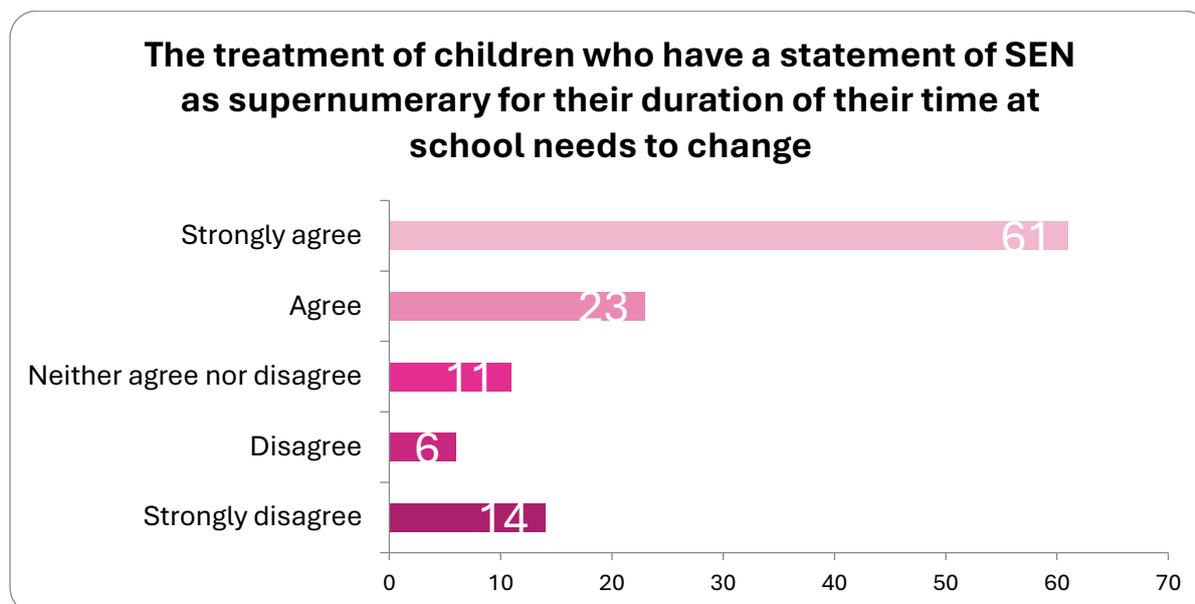
Type of Education - The treatment of children who have a statement of SEN as supernumerary for their duration of their time at school needs to change

Option	Total	Pre-school	Primary school	Post-primary school	Special school	Not Known
Strongly agree	61	4	26	25	2	6
Agree	23	0	10	6	0	8
Neither agree nor disagree	11	0	6	4	0	1
Disagree	6	2	5	3	1	0
Strongly disagree	14	0	10	4	0	0

Six respondents selected more than one type of education, resulting in a total response count exceeding the number of individual responses.

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Capacity of Respondent - The treatment of children who have a statement of SEN as supernumerary for their duration of their time at school needs to change							
Option	Total	A member of the public	A parent/guardian	A School or pre-school leader	A teacher or educational practitioner	A school governor or member of pre-school management committee	A Sectoral, Community or Other Body
Strongly agree	61	1	7	29	15	4	5
Agree	23	0	1	6	7	1	8
Neither agree nor disagree	11	0	0	8	2	0	1
Disagree	6	0	3	1	0	2	0
Strongly disagree	14	0	4	5	4	1	0
Not Answered	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



Where respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, they were asked to let us know why. There were 19 comments received. The most frequent comments included:

- Children with a statement of SEN should be treated as supernumerary throughout their duration of school, to protect their places, support and access to their preferred school setting that meets their needs.
- Any change in supernumerary status requires consideration of needs and resources, risk of disability discrimination in education or risk of children with a statement of SEN being placed in the wrong setting.
- Accepting supernumerary students can boost schools’ numbers to above sustainability threshold. If the supernumerary status changes there could be financial consequences, especially for smaller schools.

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- Children with a statement of SEN must have access to nearest available school, the proposed approach could make it harder for children with SEN to get enrolled.
- Risk if supernumerary status is removed that children with a statement of SEN will be included in the school's results statistics, due to possible poor grades, children with a statement of SEN may not be allowed to select their preferred subjects.
- Consider equitable placements and weighted funding. Costs of meeting more complex needs are higher, and removal of the supernumerary status could penalise schools.

Question 7

How strongly do you agree or otherwise with the following statement: The Department should treat children who have a statement of SEN as supernumerary for the year of admission to a new school only.

- **Strongly agree**
- **Agree**
- **Neither agree nor disagree**
- **Disagree**
- **Strongly disagree**

Comments – If you have answered disagree or strongly disagree, please let us know why.

As the charts below show, overall responses were mixed in relation to treating children as supernumerary for the year of admission to a new school only. Slightly more agreed or strongly agreed than disagreed or strongly disagreed. The most common response to the question for those who disagreed or strongly disagreed was that they felt children with a statement of SEN should never be supernumerary.

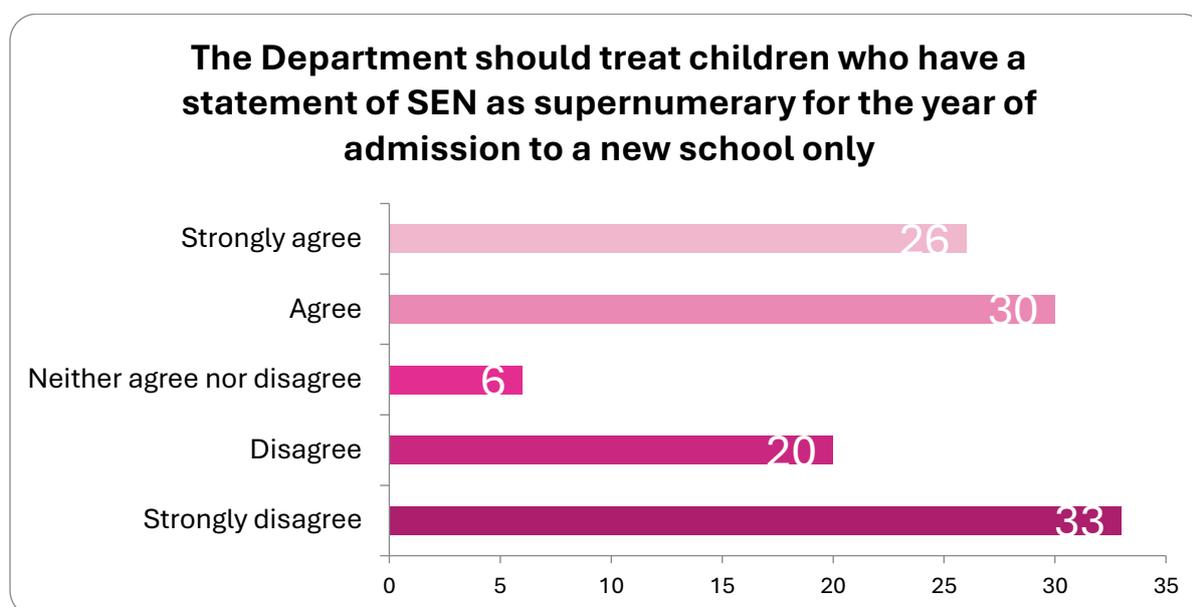
Type of Education - The Department should treat children who have a statement of SEN as supernumerary for the year of admission to a new school only

Option	Total	Pre-school	Primary school	Post-primary school	Special school	Not Known
Strongly agree	26	0	9	14	1	3
Agree	30	2	14	9	0	7
Neither agree nor disagree	6	0	2	3	0	1
Disagree	20	2	11	5	0	4
Strongly disagree	33	2	21	11	2	0

Six respondents selected more than one type of education, resulting in a total response count exceeding the number of individual responses.

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Capacity of Respondent - The Department should treat children who have a statement of SEN as supernumerary for the year of admission to a new school only							
Option	Total	A member of the public	A parent/guardian	A School or pre-school leader	A teacher or educational practitioner	A school governor or member of pre-school management committee	A Sectoral, Community or Other Body
Strongly agree	26	0	4	10	7	2	3
Agree	30	0	4	12	6	1	7
Neither agree nor disagree	6	1	0	5	0	0	0
Disagree	20	0	1	5	8	2	4
Strongly disagree	33	0	6	17	7	3	0
Not Answered	0	0	0	0	0	0	0



Where respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, they were asked to let us know why. There were 47 comments received. The most frequent comments included:

- Children with a statement of SEN should never be considered supernumerary.
- Places for children with a statement of SEN should be allocated prior to the competitive process.
- Removal of the supernumerary status would reduce overcrowding of classrooms and allow schools to forecast and plan for real numbers.
- Supernumerary status should remain to protect access to places. Removal of the supernumerary status could mean that children with a statement of SEN are included in the school’s results statistics, this could lead to being unable to choose preferred subjects due to risk of poor grades.

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- If the supernumerary status is changed to year of admission only, there could be a knock-on effect on admission and enrolment numbers in subsequent years. Nothing changes after the year of admission in relation to the pupils, they are still in the school. Concerns over admissions decrease the following year and it could distort enrolment numbers after Year 8.
- Children's needs and their need for a place should be considered at all times.
- Year 8 is the greatest issue and could mean financial inefficiencies, work needs done to remove the supernumerary status in Year 8.
- Mainstream children are disadvantaged by supernumerary status.
- Concern that inclusive schools with higher a number of children with a statement SEN will be penalised. The system should be flexible, and support should be provided based on need.
- Funding should be matched with the number of children with a statement of SEN. This approach does not account for the increase in support required for each child with a statement of SEN.

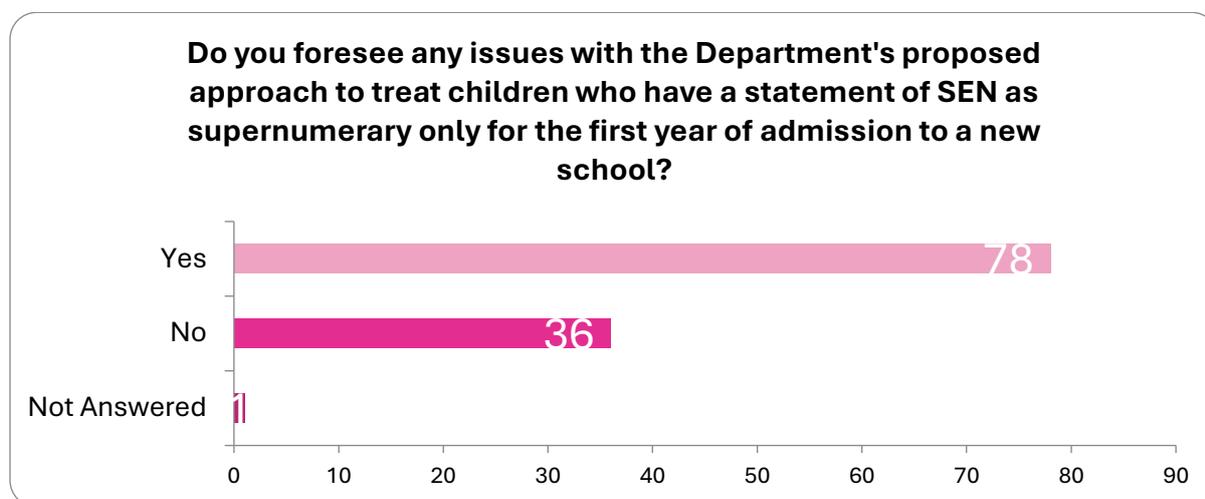
Question 8

Do you foresee any issues with the Department’s proposed approach to treat children who have a statement of SEN as supernumerary only for the first year of admission to a new school?

- Yes
- No

Comments – If you have answered yes, please advise what issues/challenges.

As the charts below show, in every category more respondents identified issues with the proposed approach to treat children who have a statement of SEN as supernumerary only for the year of admission to a new school, than those who did not.



Type of Education - Do you foresee any issues with the Department’s proposed approach to treat children who have a statement of SEN as supernumerary only for the first year of admission to a new school?

Option	Total	Pre-school	Primary school	Post-primary school	Special School	Not Known
Yes	78	5	43	24	2	11
No	36	1	14	18	1	3
Not Answered	1	0	0	0	0	1

Six respondents selected more than one type of education, resulting in a total response count exceeding the number of individual responses.

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Capacity of Respondent - Do you foresee any issues with the Department's proposed approach to treat children who have a statement of SEN as supernumerary only for the first year of admission to a new school?

Option	Total	A member of the public	A parent/guardian	A School or pre-school leader	A teacher or educational practitioner	A school governor or member of pre-school management committee	A Sectoral, Community or Other Body
Yes	78	1	10	34	18	5	10
No	36	0	5	15	10	3	3
Not Answered	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

Where respondents answered yes, they were asked to advise us of the issues or challenges. There were 74 comments received. The most frequent comments included:

- Concern over the effect the proposed approach would have on admission and enrolment numbers. If not counted as supernumerary it could put the class size over 30 children, classes will be oversubscribed throughout their school journey, class size is still affected after year one, schools will require enrolment numbers to be increased to accommodate the removal of supernumerary status.
- Children should never be supernumerary.
- Will create unstable class sizes each year, will not alleviate unsafe class numbers. If school is oversubscribed the children should remain supernumerary for their time in school.
- Could discriminate against children with a statement of SEN and negatively affect their chance of attending their preferred school. Schools may refuse to accept children with a statement of SEN after Year 8.
- Overcrowded schools may result in a reduction in the ability of staff to meet the needs of all children.
- There are not enough resources to cope with an increase of children with a statement of SEN. Schools may struggle to provide a suitable environment, and staff may not be able to effectively provide for all children.
- Concern that without strong inclusive cultures or appropriate SEN training schools may try to discourage children with a statement of SEN. Not all children will access their preferred school.
- Funding should match the needs of SEN.
- Concern over how children with a statement of SEN will be recorded after the first year and the effect the proposed approach could have on enrolment numbers.
- Schools need to know in advance of allocating spaces how many supernumerary children they are admitting to ensure they do not exceed their admission number. If there are no spaces within admission or enrolment numbers, children should be placed elsewhere. Enrolment numbers need to be accurately set with a robust process.
- Set a limit or cap on the number of children with a statement of SEN in a school.

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- Children with a statement of SEN will be included in the school's statistics, in some schools this could lead to being unable to choose preferred subjects due to risk of poor grades.
- If supernumerary status is removed SEAG would be required to gain entry to a grammar school, this could be difficult for some children with a statement of SEN.
- Ensure there is enough space in specialist provision classes or special schools.
- Pressure on staff to suitably adapt curriculum for children with a statement of SEN.
- Implement SEN first approach to admissions.

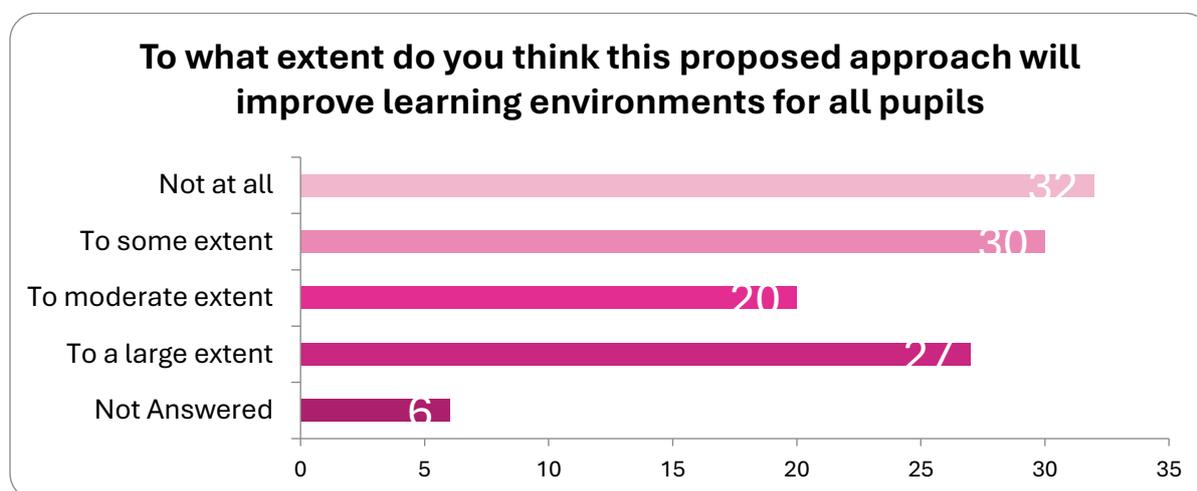
Question 9

To what extent (not at all, to some extent, to a moderate extent or to a large extent) do you think this proposed approach to the recording of children who have a statement of SEN will:

1. Improve learning environments for all pupils
2. Improve quality of education provision
3. Promote equality for all pupils with SEN
4. Support an inclusive education system
5. Support planning for special educational provision
6. Ensure schools are ‘right sized’

Improve learning environments for all pupils

Overall, more respondents believed the proposed approach will improve learning environments for all pupils to some, moderate, or large extent, compared to those who felt it will bring no improvement.



The following charts show a breakdown of the responses by type of education and the capacity of the respondent.

Type of Education - To what extent do you think this proposed approach will improve learning environments for all pupils

Option	Total	Pre-school	Primary school	Post-primary school	Special School	Not Known
Not at all	32	3	18	13	1	2
To some extent	30	2	17	6	1	5
To moderate extent	20	1	9	10	0	2
To a large extent	27	0	13	13	1	0
Not Answered	6	0	0	0	0	6

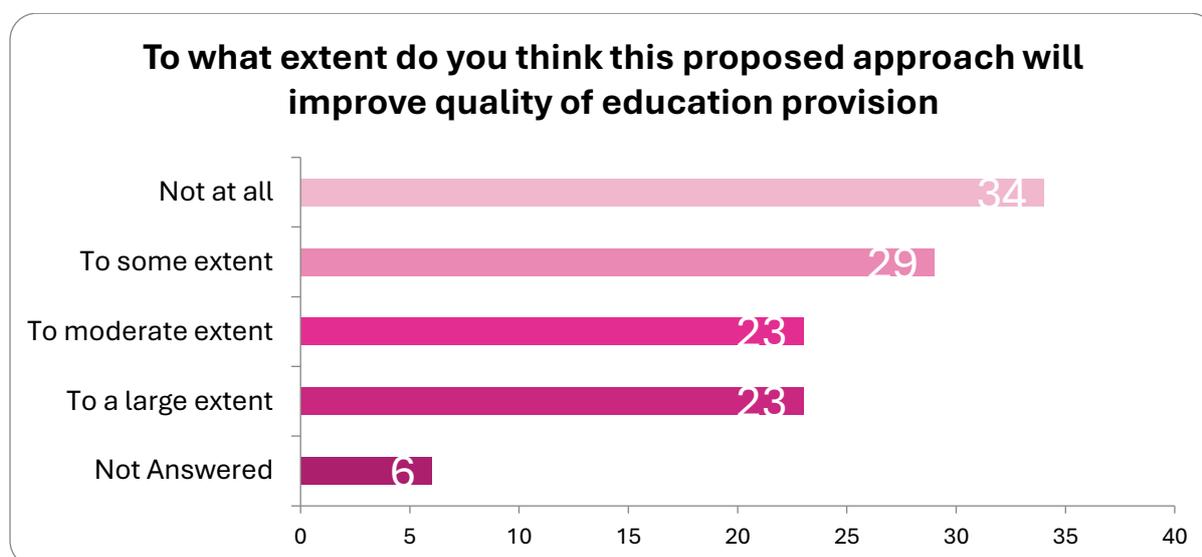
Six respondents selected more than one type of education, resulting in a total response count exceeding the number of individual responses.

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Capacity of Respondent - To what extent do you think this proposed approach will improve learning environments for all pupils							
Option	Total	A member of the public	A parent/guardian	A School or pre-school leader	A teacher or educational practitioner	A school governor or member of pre-school management committee	A Sectoral, Community or Other Body
Not at all	32	0	8	11	9	2	2
To some extent	30	1	2	14	7	2	4
To moderate extent	20	0	3	10	4	1	2
To a large extent	27	0	2	14	8	3	0
Not Answered	6	0	0	0	0	0	6

Improve quality of education provision

Overall, more respondents believed the proposed approach will improve quality of education provision to some, moderate, or a large extent, compared to those who felt it will bring no improvement.



The following charts show a breakdown of the responses by type of education and the capacity of the respondent.

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Type of Education - To what extent do you think this proposed approach will Improve quality of education provision

Option	Total	Pre-school	Primary school	Post-primary school	Special School	Not Known
Not at all	34	4	20	12	1	2
To some extent	29	1	14	8	1	6
To moderate extent	23	1	13	10	0	1
To a large extent	23	0	10	12	1	0
Not Answered	6	0	0	0	0	6

Six respondents selected more than one type of education, resulting in a total response count exceeding the number of individual responses.

Only parents or guardians had slightly more respondents that felt the proposed approach will not improve quality of education provision.

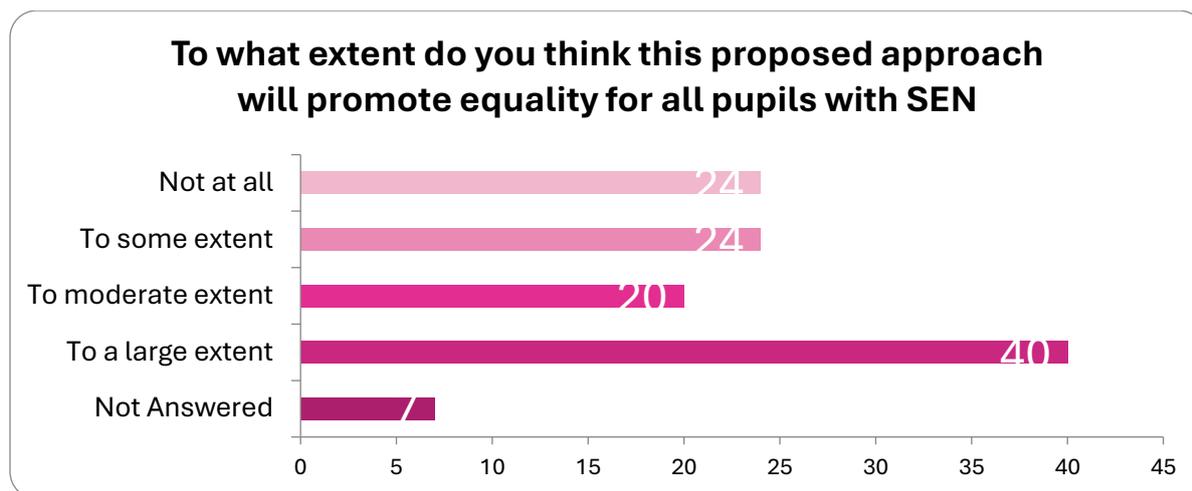
Capacity of Respondent - To what extent do you think this proposed approach will Improve quality of education provision

Option	Total	A member of the public	A parent/guardian	A School or pre-school leader	A teacher or educational practitioner	A school governor or member of pre-school management committee	A Sectoral, Community or Other Body
Not at all	34	0	9	12	9	2	2
To some extent	29	1	1	13	7	2	5
To moderate extent	23	0	3	12	5	2	1
To a large extent	23	0	2	12	7	2	0
Not Answered	6	0	0	0	0	0	6

Promote equality for all pupils with SEN

Overall, more respondents believed the proposed approach will promote equality for all pupils with SEN to some, a moderate, or a large extent, compared to those who felt it will bring no improvement.

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The following charts show a breakdown of the responses by type of education and the capacity of the respondent.

Type of Education - To what extent do you think this proposed approach will promote equality for all pupils with SEN

Option	Total	Pre-school	Primary school	Post-primary school	Special School	Not Known
Not at all	24	3	17	7	2	0
To some extent	24	1	10	10	0	3
To moderate extent	20	1	12	7	0	1
To a large extent	40	1	18	18	1	4
Not Answered	7	0	0	0	0	7

Six respondents selected more than one type of education, resulting in a total response count exceeding the number of individual responses.

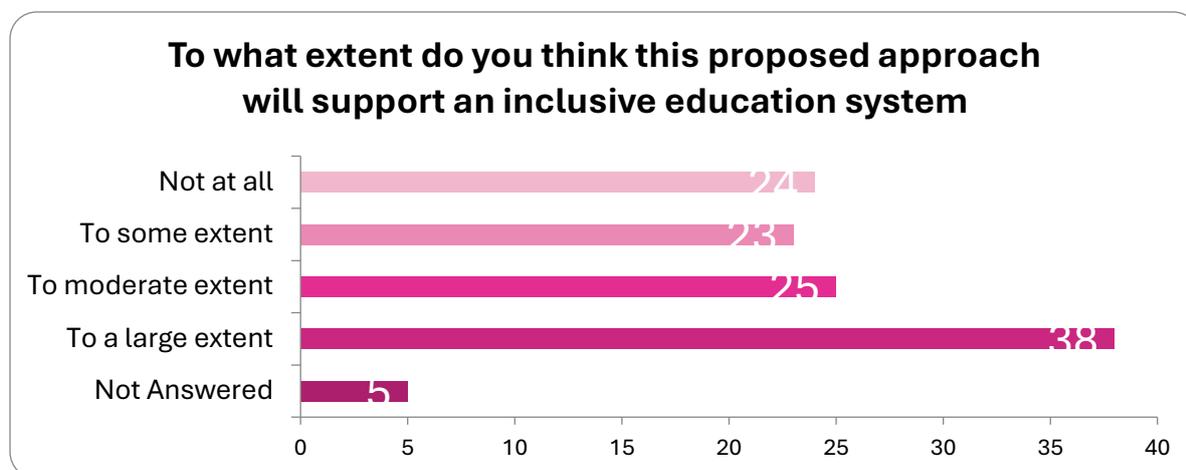
Capacity of Respondent - To what extent do you think this proposed approach will promote equality for all pupils with SEN

Option	Total	A member of the public	A parent/guardian	A School or pre-school leader	A teacher or educational practitioner	A school governor or member of pre-school management committee	A Sectoral, Community or Other Body
Not at all	24	0	7	9	7	1	0
To some extent	24	0	0	10	10	1	3
To moderate extent	20	0	1	11	3	4	1
To a large extent	40	1	7	19	8	2	3
Not Answered	7	0	0	0	0	0	7

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Support an inclusive education system

Overall, more respondents believed the proposed approach will support an inclusive education system to some, moderate, or a large extent, compared to those who felt it will bring no improvement.



The following charts show a breakdown of the responses by type of education and the capacity of the respondent.

Type of Education - To what extent do you think this proposed approach will support an inclusive education system						
Option	Total	Pre-school	Primary school	Post-primary school	Special School	Not Known
Not at all	24	3	16	6	1	3
To some extent	23	1	11	7	1	3
To moderate extent	25	2	12	11	0	2
To a large extent	38	0	18	18	1	2
Not Answered	5	0	0	0	0	5

Six respondents selected more than one type of education, resulting in a total response count exceeding the number of individual responses.

The chart below shows more respondents from each group feel the proposed approach will support an inclusive education system to some, moderate or a large extent than those who believe there will be no improvement.

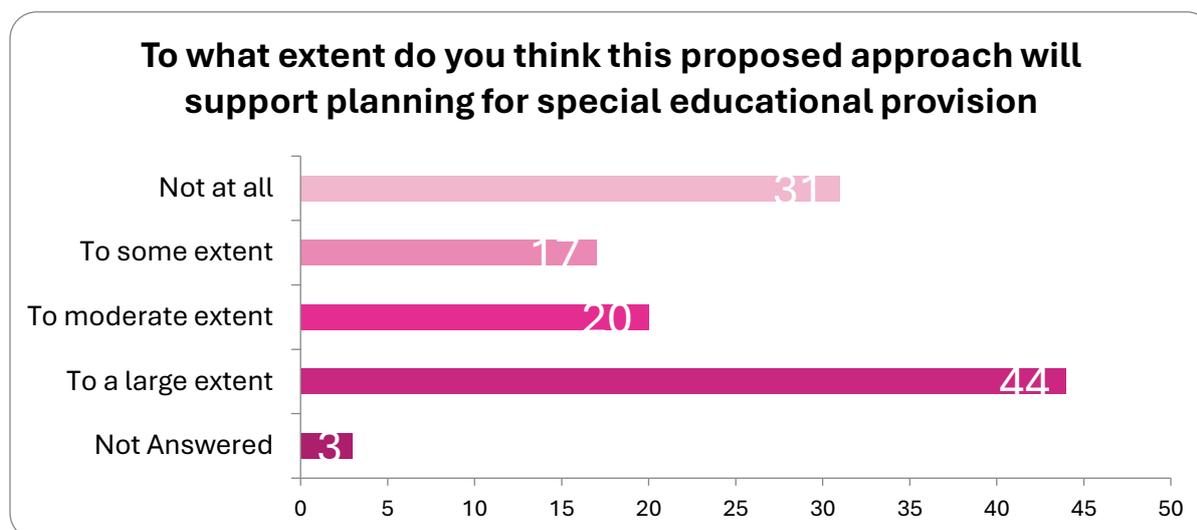
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Capacity of Respondent - To what extent do you think this proposed approach will support an inclusive education system

Option	Total	A member of the public	A parent/guardian	A School or pre-school leader	A teacher or educational practitioner	A school governor or member of pre-school management committee	A Sectoral, Community or Other Body
Not at all	24	0	7	7	6	1	3
To some extent	23	0	0	12	7	1	3
To moderate extent	25	0	3	10	6	4	2
To a large extent	38	1	5	20	9	2	1
Not Answered	5	0	0	0	0	0	5

Support planning for special educational provision

Overall, more respondents believed the proposed approach will support planning for special education provision to some, moderate, or a large extent, compared to those who felt it will bring no improvement.



The following charts show a breakdown of the responses by type of education and the capacity of the respondent.

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Type of Education - To what extent do you think this proposed approach will support planning for special educational provision

Option	Total	Pre-school	Primary school	Post-primary school	Special School	Not Known
Not at all	31	3	21	8	2	2
To some extent	17	1	9	4	0	3
To moderate extent	20	1	8	7	0	5
To a large extent	44	1	19	23	1	2
Not Answered	3	0	0	0	0	3

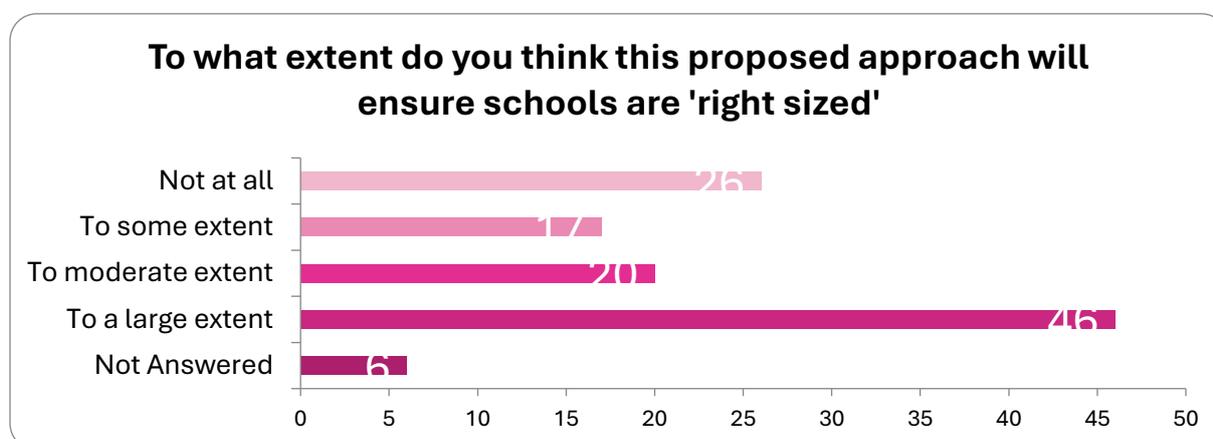
Six respondents selected more than one type of education, resulting in a total response count exceeding the number of individual responses.

Capacity of Respondent - To what extent do you think this proposed approach will support planning for special educational provision

Option	Total	A member of the public	A parent/guardian	A School or pre-school leader	A teacher or educational practitioner	A school governor or member of pre-school management committee	A Sectoral, Community or Other Body
Not at all	31	0	8	11	8	2	2
To some extent	17	0	0	8	6	0	3
To moderate extent	20	0	1	8	4	2	5
To a large extent	44	1	6	22	10	4	1
Not Answered	3	0	0	0	0	0	3

Ensure schools are ‘right sized’

Overall, more respondents believed the proposed approach will ensure schools are ‘right sized’ to some, a moderate, or a large extent, compared to those who felt it will bring no improvement.



Consultation Report for Accounting for Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs: Changing the ‘Supernumerary’ Status

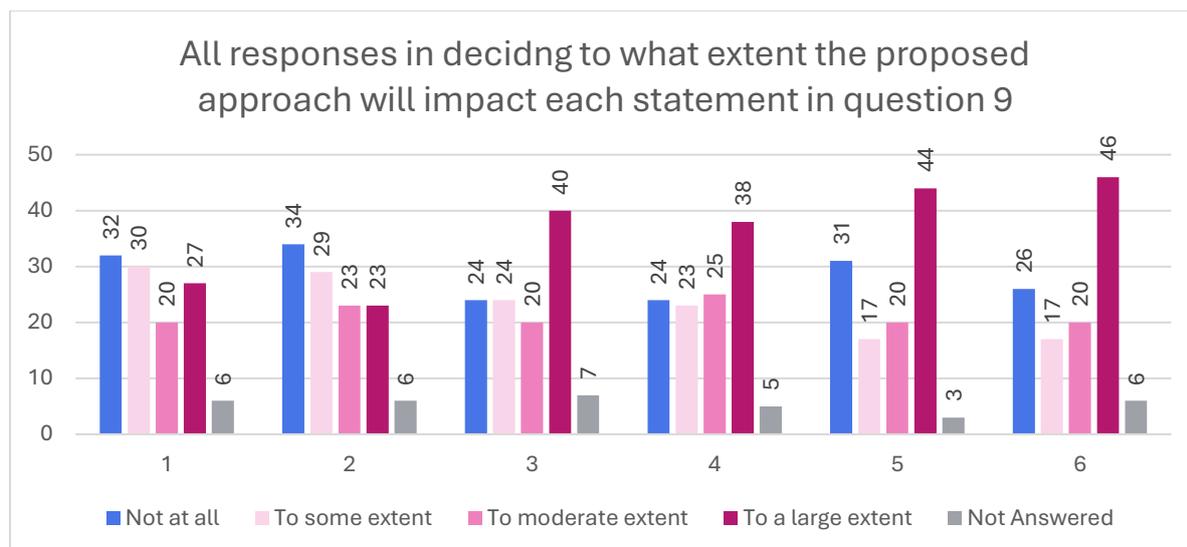
The following charts show a breakdown of the responses by type of education and the capacity of the respondent.

Type of Education - To what extent do you think this proposed approach will ensure schools are 'right sized'						
Option	Total	Pre-school	Primary school	Post-primary school	Special School	Not Known
Not at all	26	3	16	8	2	2
To some extent	17	1	9	5	0	2
To moderate extent	20	1	12	6	0	4
To a large extent	46	1	20	23	1	1
Not Answered	6	0	0	0	0	6

Six respondents selected more than one type of education, resulting in a total response count exceeding the number of individual responses.

Capacity of Respondent - To what extent do you think this proposed approach will ensure schools are 'right sized'							
Option	Total	A member of the public	A parent/guardian	A School or pre-school leader	A teacher or educational practitioner	A school governor or member of pre-school management committee	A Sectoral, Community or Other Body
Not at all	26	0	7	7	9	1	2
To some extent	17	0	1	11	2	1	2
To moderate extent	20	1	3	7	3	3	3
To a large extent	46	0	4	24	14	3	1
Not Answered	6	0	0	0	0	0	6

Consultation Report for Accounting for Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs: Changing the ‘Supernumerary’ Status



The question relating to the chart above had seven elements and asked - To what extent do you think this proposed approach to the recording of children who have a statement of SEN will:

- Element 1) Improve learning environments for all pupils,
- Element 2) Improve quality of education provision,
- Element 3) Promote equality for all pupils with SEN,
- Element 4) Support an inclusive education system,
- Element 5) Support planning for special educational provision,
- Element 6) Ensure schools are 'right-sized'.

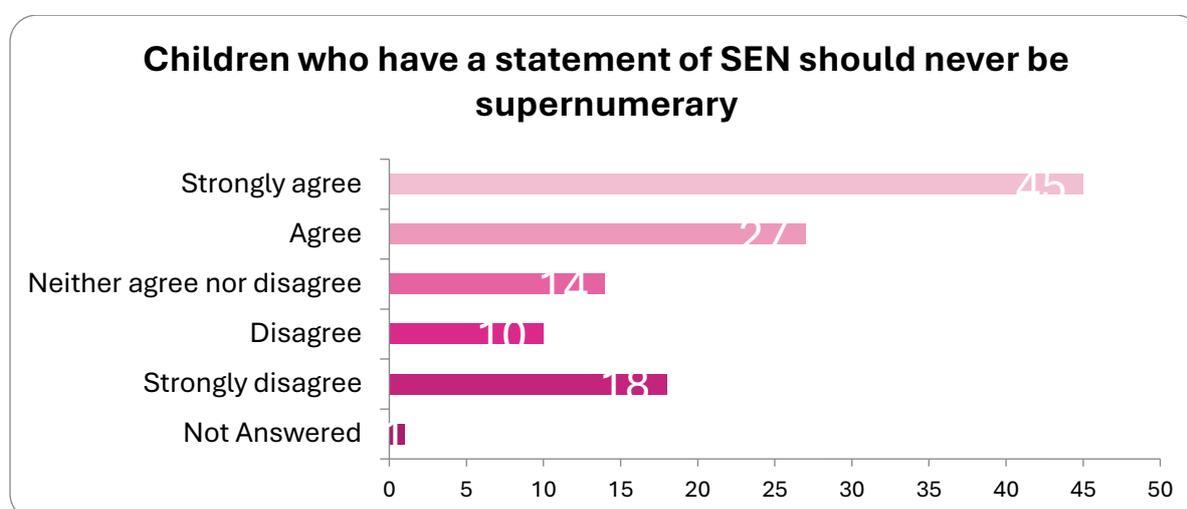
Question 10

How strongly do you agree or otherwise with the following statement: Children who have a statement of SEN should never be supernumerary.

- **Strongly agree**
- **Agree**
- **Neither agree nor disagree**
- **Disagree**
- **Strongly disagree**

Comments – If you have answered disagree or strongly disagree, please let us know why.

The subsequent charts outline that most respondents strongly agree or agree that children who have a statement of SEN should never be supernumerary.



As shown in the charts below, the majority of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that children with a statement of SEN should never be supernumerary, however those answering as parents or guardians had a higher proportion that disagreed or strongly disagreed than other categories.

Type of Education - Children who have a statement of SEN should never be supernumerary

Option	Total	Pre-school	Primary school	Post-primary school	Special School	Not Known
Strongly agree	45	4	24	15	1	2
Agree	27	0	10	11	0	7
Neither agree nor disagree	14	1	10	4	1	0
Disagree	10	0	1	5	1	3
Strongly disagree	18	1	12	7	0	2
Not Answered	1	0	0	0	0	1

Six respondents selected more than one type of education, resulting in a total response count exceeding the number of individual responses.

Consultation Report for Accounting for Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs: Changing the ‘Supernumerary’ Status

Capacity of Respondent - Children who have a statement of SEN should never be supernumerary							
Option	Total	A member of the public	A parent/guardian	A School or pre-school leader	A teacher or educational practitioner	A school governor or member of pre-school management committee	A Sectoral, Community or Other Body
Strongly agree	45	1	7	22	10	4	1
Agree	27	0	1	9	8	2	7
Neither agree nor disagree	14	0	1	8	4	1	0
Disagree	10	0	1	4	2	0	3
Strongly disagree	18	0	5	6	4	1	2
Not Answered	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

Where respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, they were asked to let us know why. There were 21 comments received. The most frequent comments included:

- Supernumerary status should be retained to ensure a child with a statement of SEN can access the appropriate placement in preferred setting. Without supernumerary status, schools would have to choose to exceed enrolment numbers or turn away pupils with complex needs. Removal of the supernumerary status would discourage inclusive practice.
- Supernumerary status can create challenges with accurate capacity at a school. A SEN first model is needed.
- The Department should work at pace to remove supernumerary status entirely.

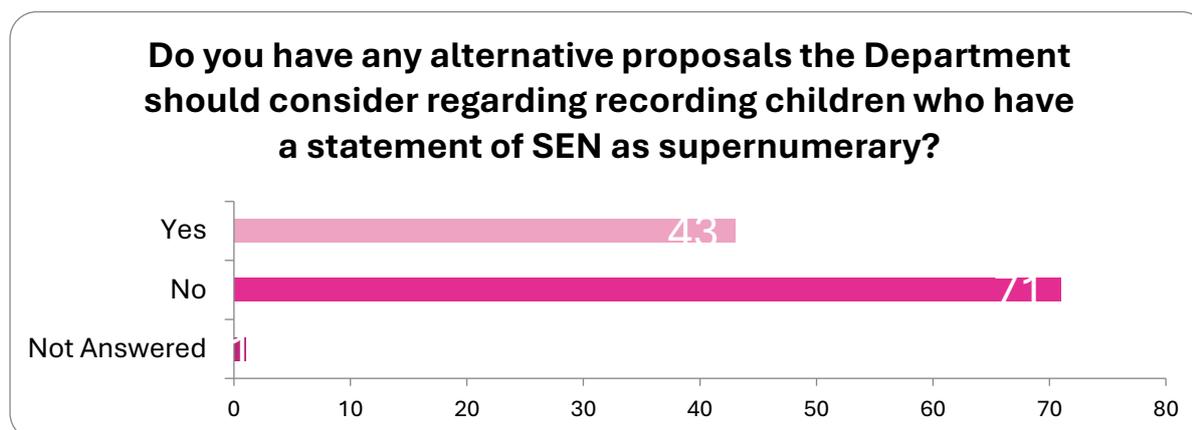
Question 11

Do you have any alternative proposals the Department should consider regarding recording children who have a statement of SEN as supernumerary?

- Yes
- No

Comments – If yes, provide details of alternative proposals

The charts below show that most respondents did not feel there are alternative proposals the Department should consider. However, sectoral and other bodies responded that there are alternative proposals that should be considered.



Type of Education - Do you have any alternative proposals the Department should consider regarding recording children who have a statement of SEN as supernumerary?

Option	Total	Pre-school	Primary school	Post-primary school	Special School	Not Known
Yes	43	3	17	14	1	12
No	71	3	40	28	2	2
Not Answered	1	0	0	0	0	1

Six respondents selected more than one type of education, resulting in a total response count exceeding the number of individual responses.

Capacity of Respondent - Do you have any alternative proposals the Department should consider regarding recording children who have a statement of SEN as supernumerary?

Option	Total	A member of the public	A parent/guardian	A School or pre-school leader	A teacher or educational practitioner	A school governor or member of pre-school management committee	A Sectoral, Community or Other Body
Yes	43	1	5	17	6	3	11
No	71	0	10	32	22	5	2
Not Answered	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

Consultation Report for Accounting for Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs: Changing the 'Supernumerary' Status

Where a respondent answered yes, they were encouraged to provide details. We received 43 comments. The most frequent comments included:

- Children with a statement of SEN should never be considered supernumerary.
- Consider a percentage of admissions to be allocated for children with a statement of SEN.
- Children should go to a school that meets their needs, has provision and capacity regardless of parental preference.
- Should remain supernumerary for their whole time in school.
- There should be flexibility in the proposed approach to allow supernumerary to be extended beyond the first year based on individual needs.
- Adopt a SEN first model.
- Problem with physical space vs available places, some schools have given up space to accommodate specialist provision classes. When right-sizing a school's accommodation this should be considered.
- Staff can already be providing support prior to the completion of statutory assessments.

Further Comments

Finally, there was a statement with the option to opt out of having your statements used verbatim in the report of the consultation with a free text box for comments. All free text boxes had a disclaimer asking respondents not to include any personal data in the response.

[Further comments were shared by 29 respondents, summarised below.](#)

Ten of the further comments were from respondents in support of the proposed Changing the Supernumerary Status policy, with three from respondents who were not in support of the proposed policy. Seven comments were neither in support or opposed to the proposed changes and nine comments were alternative proposals. Some of the information from the comments included:

Comments from respondents in support of the proposed policy:

- Schools' numbers should reflect the actual enrolment of children.
- A long awaited and important change that is needed.
- An inclusive approach, children with a statement of SEN should not be something outside of everyone else.
- Allow resources to be fairly distributed and employ staff on a permanent basis.
- For a more inclusive approach, a move towards no child being referred to as supernumerary should be considered.
- Clarity is required on SEN First approach, and how children with a statement of SEN needs would be met and monitored.

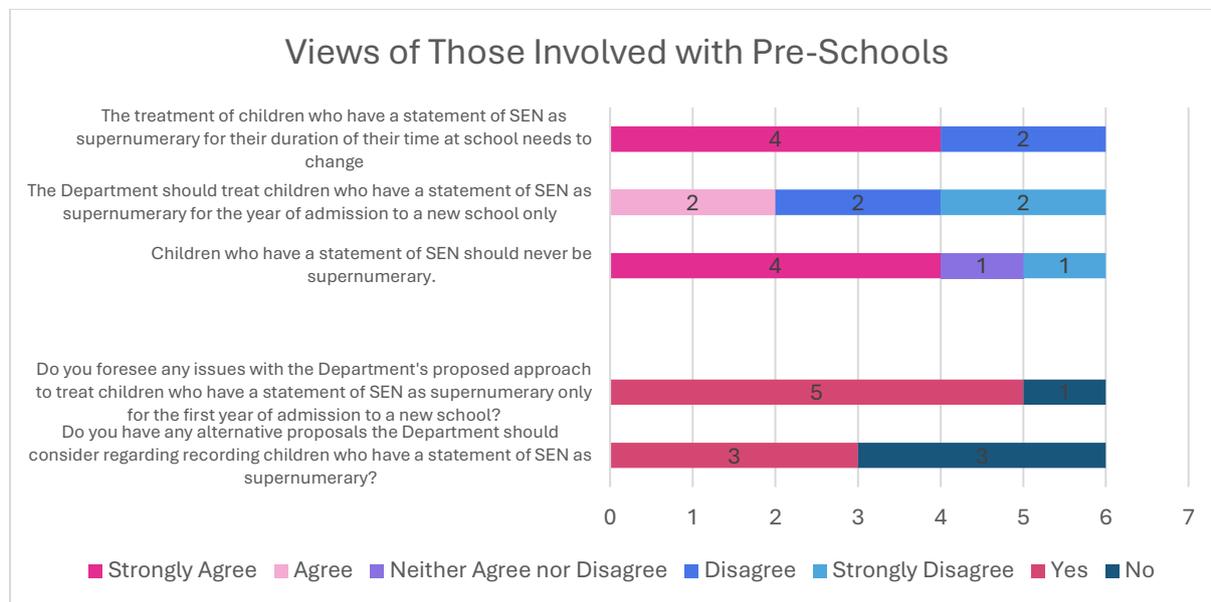
Comments from respondents not in support of the proposed policy:

- Retain supernumerary status.
- Examinations need to be reviewed to ensure they are appropriate for all children.

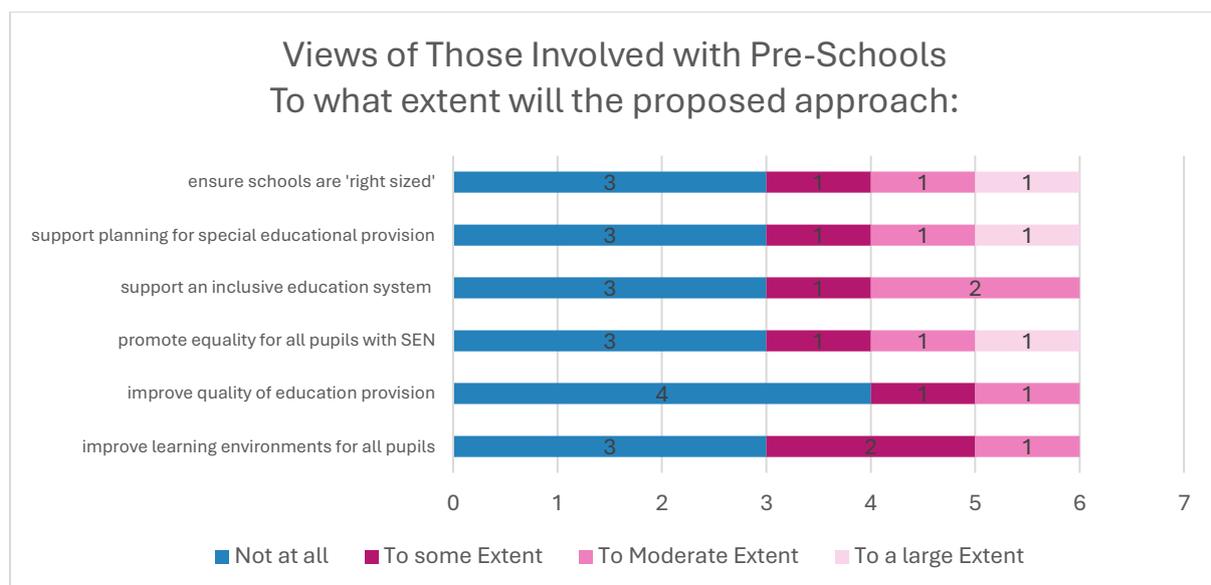
Views of Respondents

Views of those involved with Pre-Schools

Six respondents completed the survey stating that they or their child(ren) are involved in Pre-Schools.



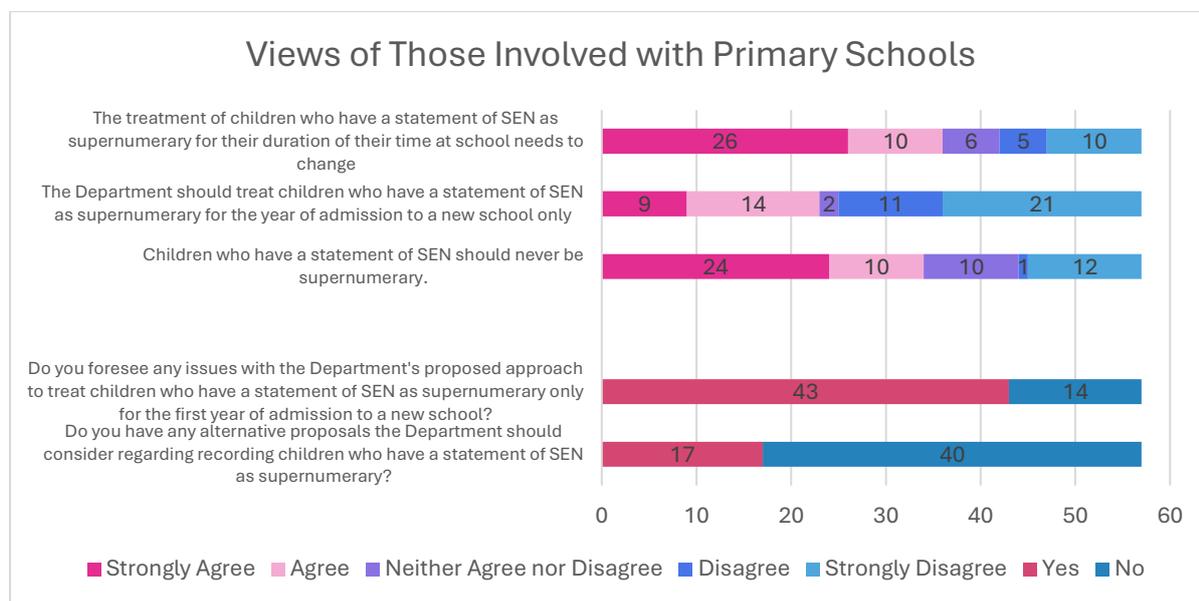
Those involved with pre-school had an almost even split between those who perceived the change would and those who perceived the change would not have an impact.



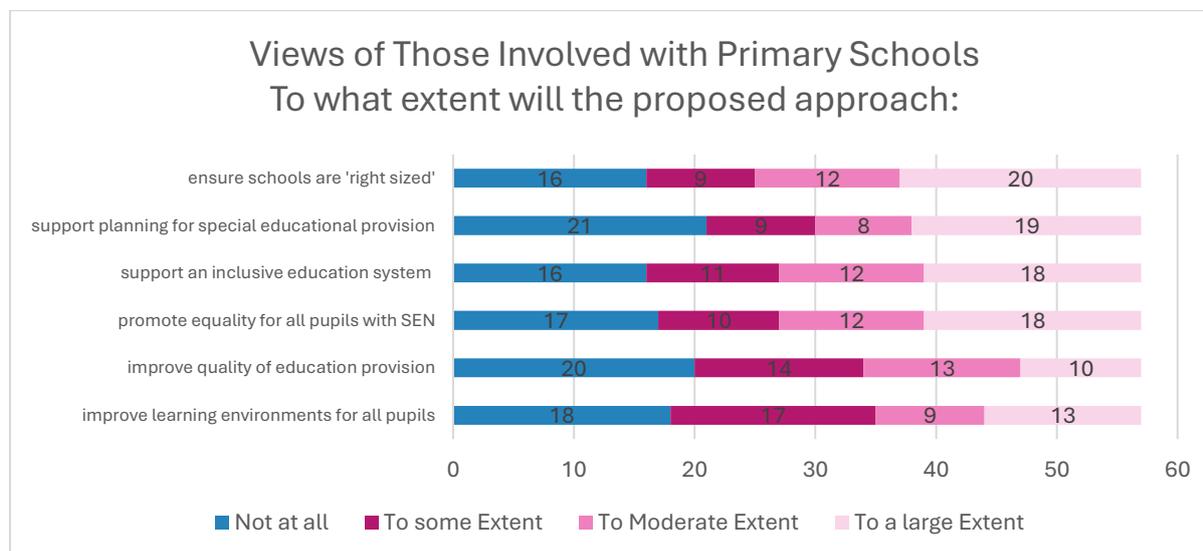
Consultation Report for Accounting for Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs: Changing the 'Supernumerary' Status

Views of those involved with Primary Schools

A total of 57 respondents replied to the survey that they or their child(ren) were involved in primary schools.



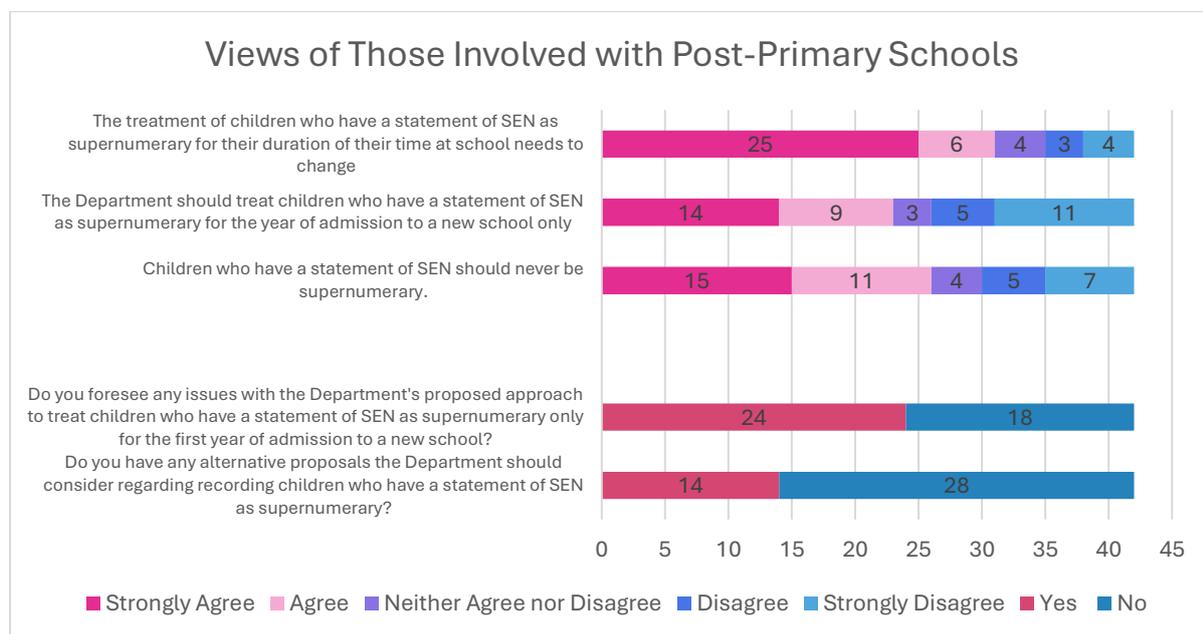
The majority of respondents agreed that the proposed approach would have some, moderate or a large impact.



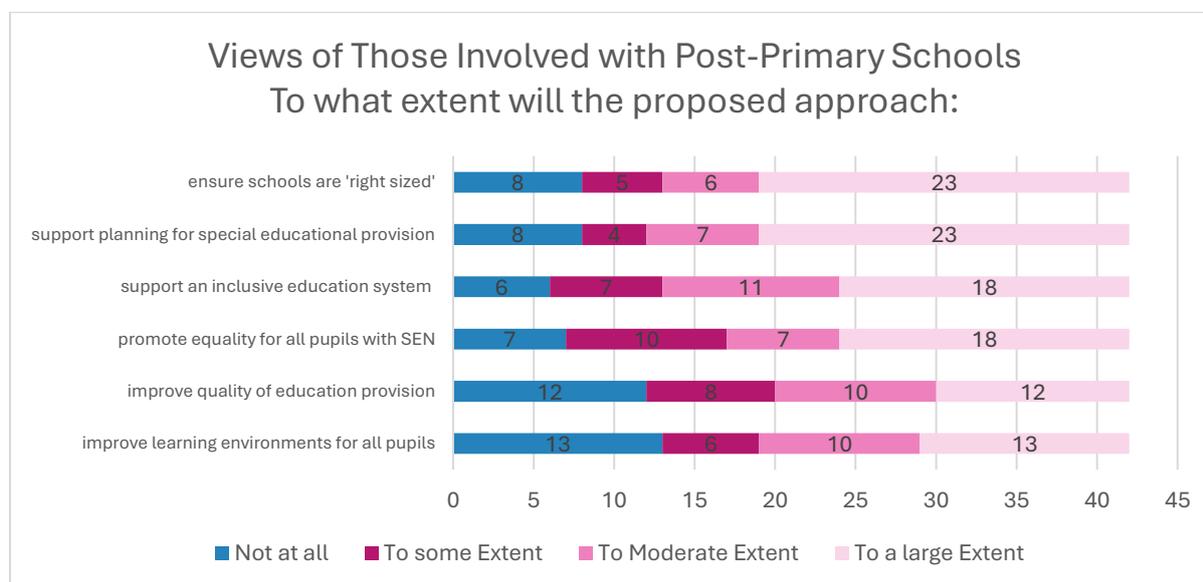
Consultation Report for Accounting for Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs: Changing the 'Supernumerary' Status

Views of those involved with Post-Primary Schools

A total of 42 respondents replied to the survey as they or their child(ren) were involved in post-primary schools.



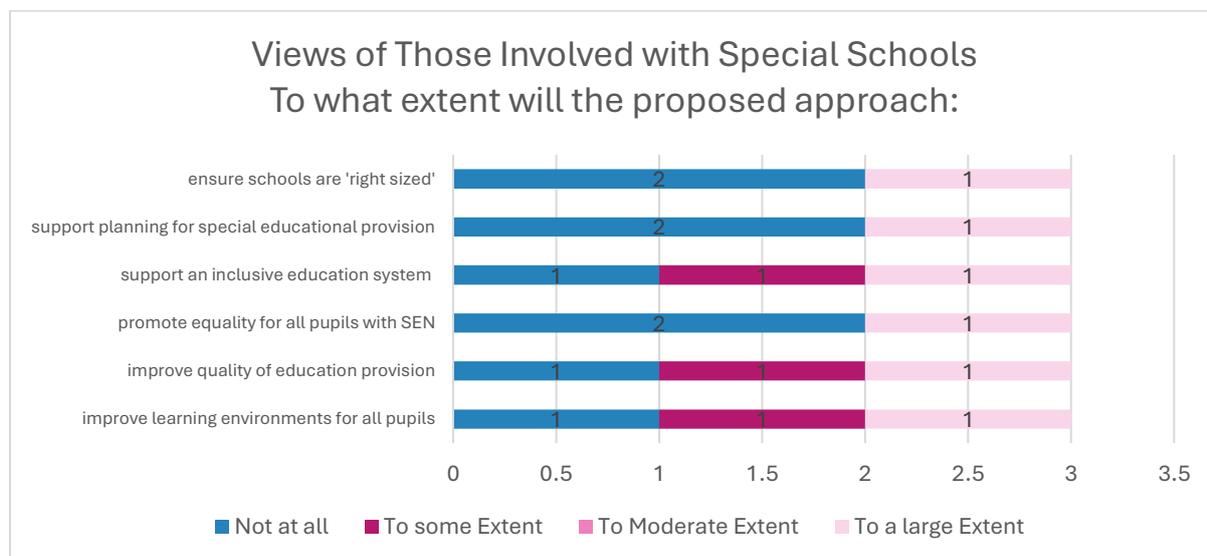
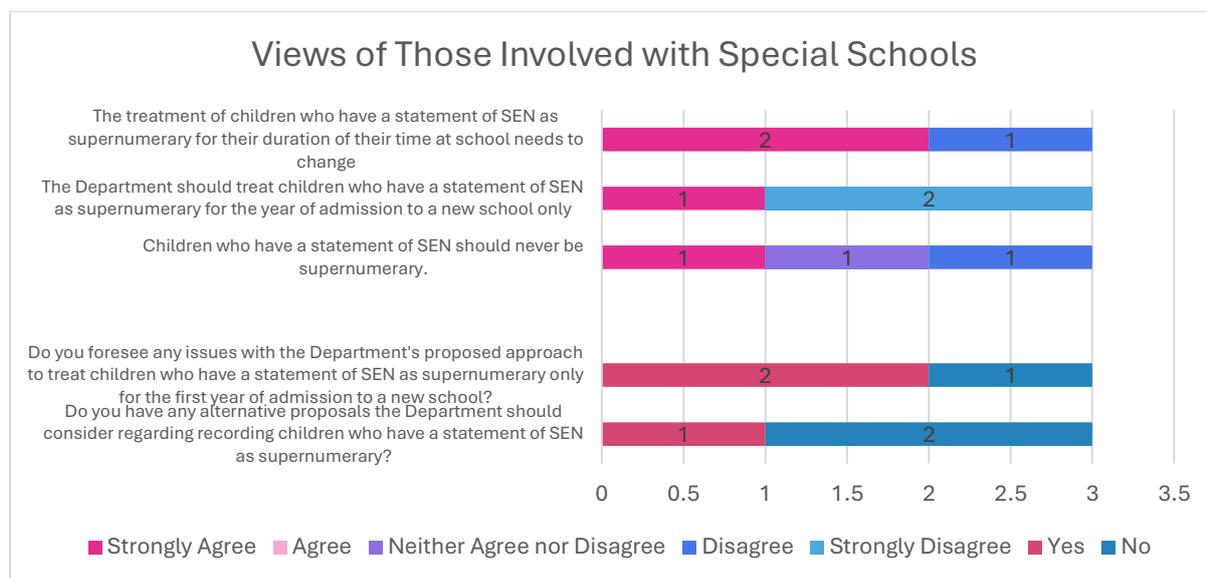
The majority of respondents agreed that the proposed approach would have some, moderate or a large impact.



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Views of those involved with Special Schools

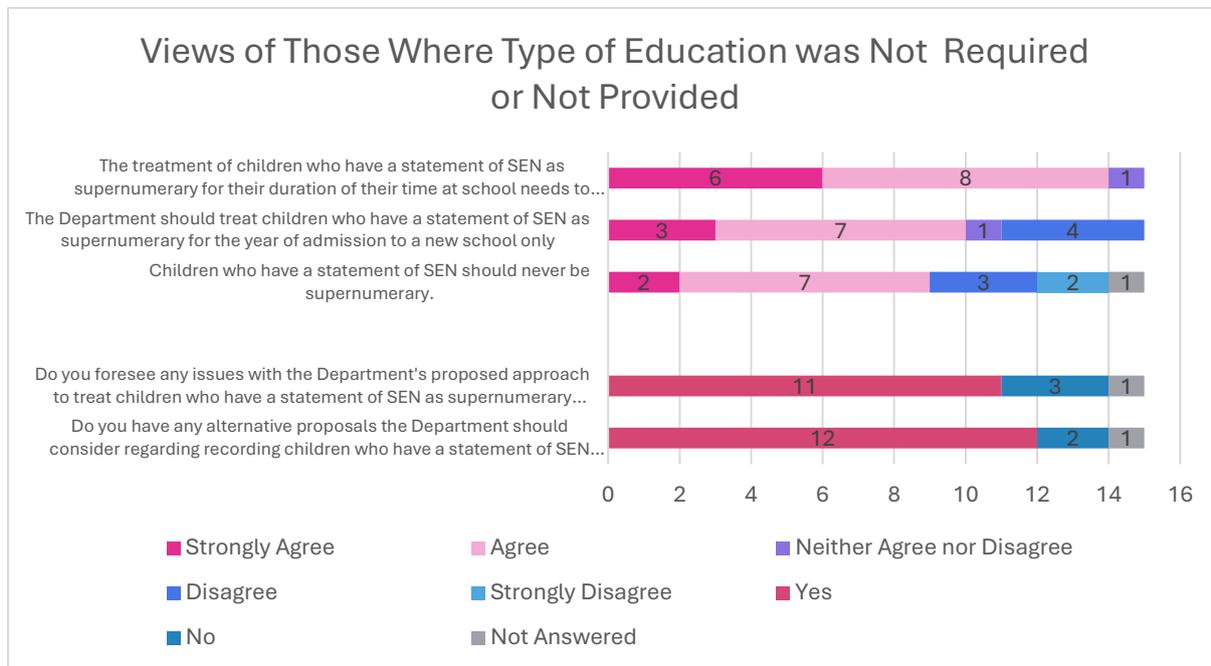
A total of three respondents replied to the survey as they or their child(ren) were involved in special schools.



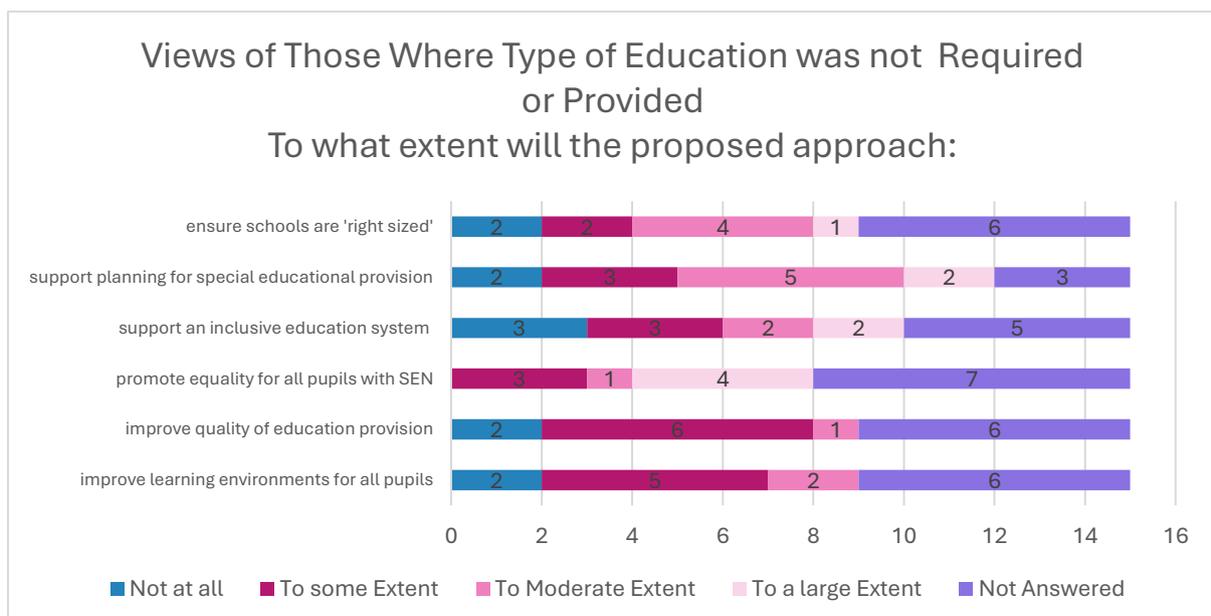
Consultation Report for Accounting for Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs: Changing the ‘Supernumerary’ Status

Views of those involved where no type of education was provided or was not required

A total of 15 respondents replied to the survey where no type of education was provided or was not required.



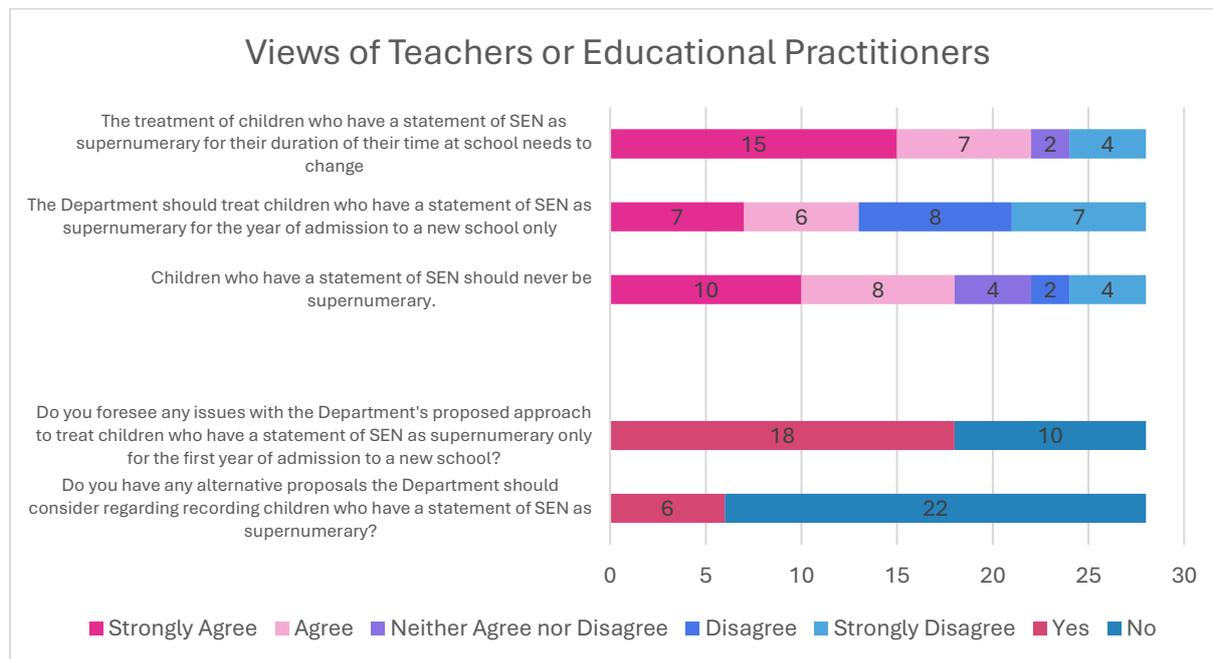
As shown in the chart below the majority of respondents agreed that the proposed approach would have some, moderate or a large impact.



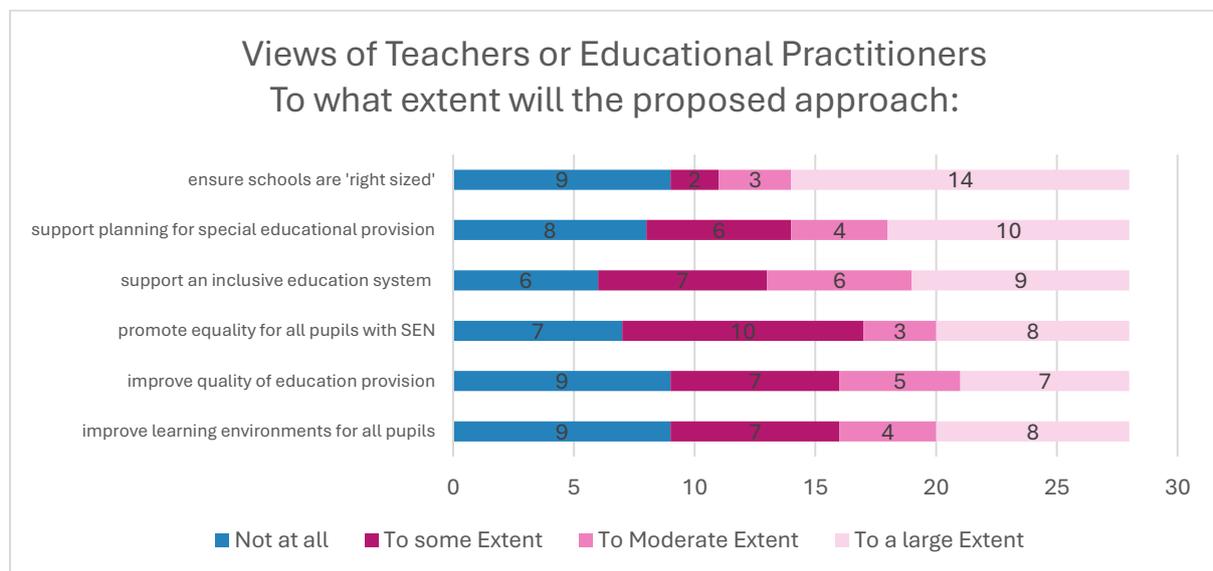
Consultation Report for Accounting for Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs: Changing the ‘Supernumerary’ Status

Views of Teachers or Educational Practitioners

A total of 28 respondents replied to the survey as teachers or educational practitioners.



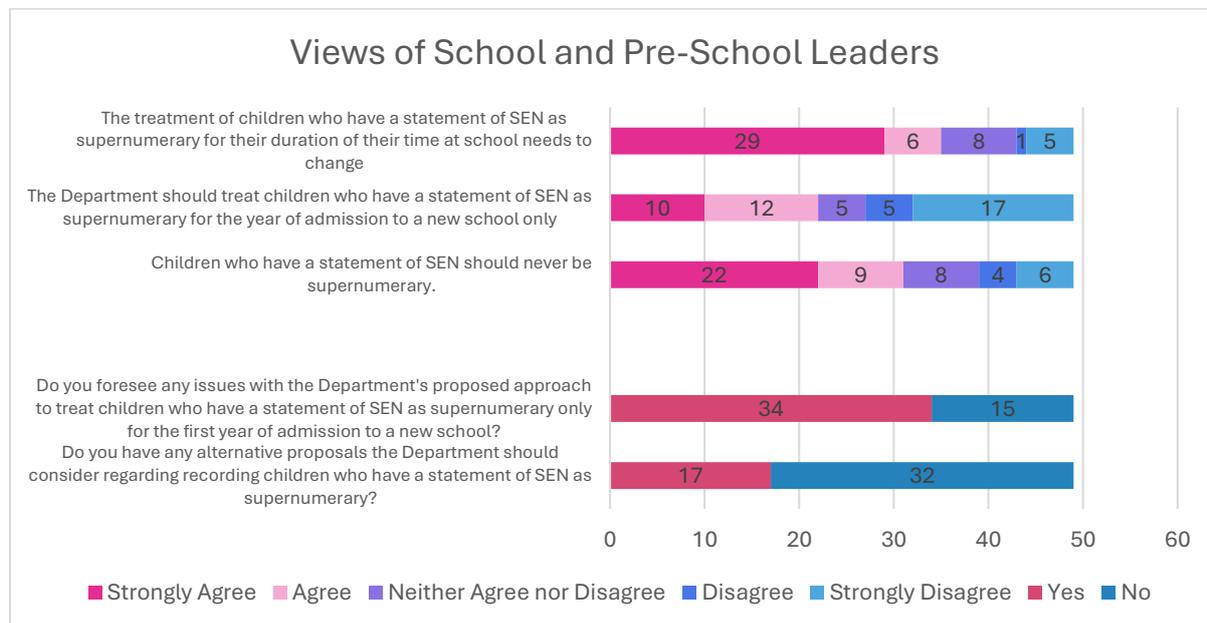
As shown in the chart below the majority of respondents agreed that the proposed approach would have some, moderate or a large impact.



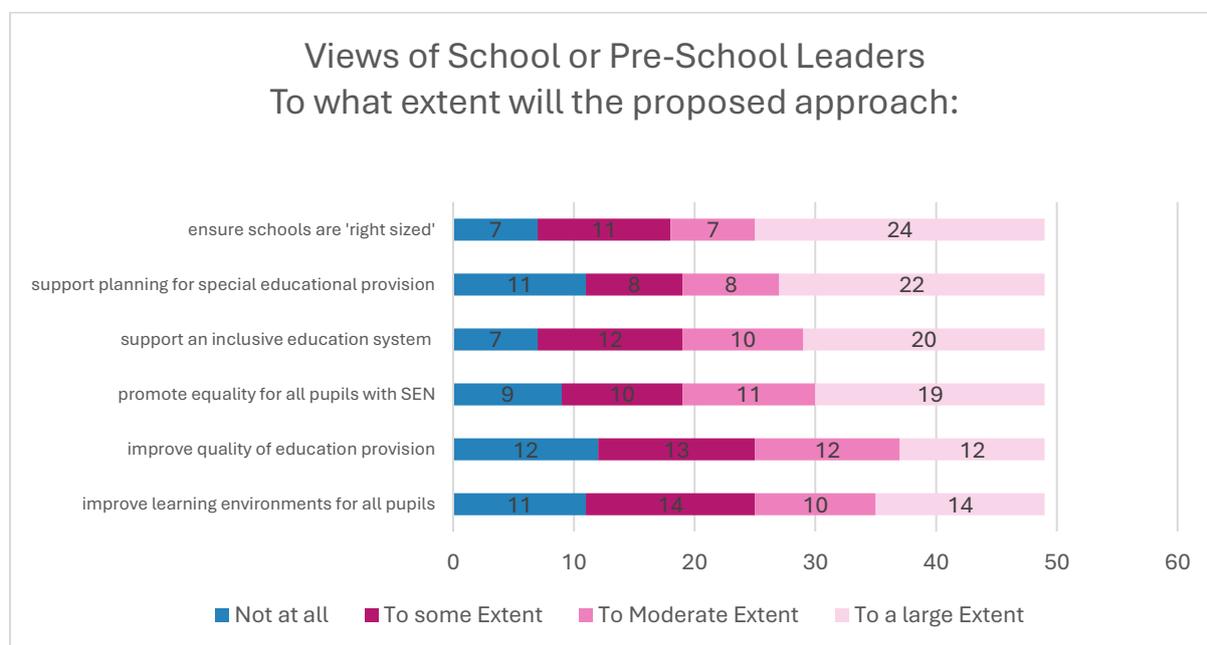
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Views of School or Pre-School Leaders

A total of 49 respondents completed the survey as school or pre-school leaders.



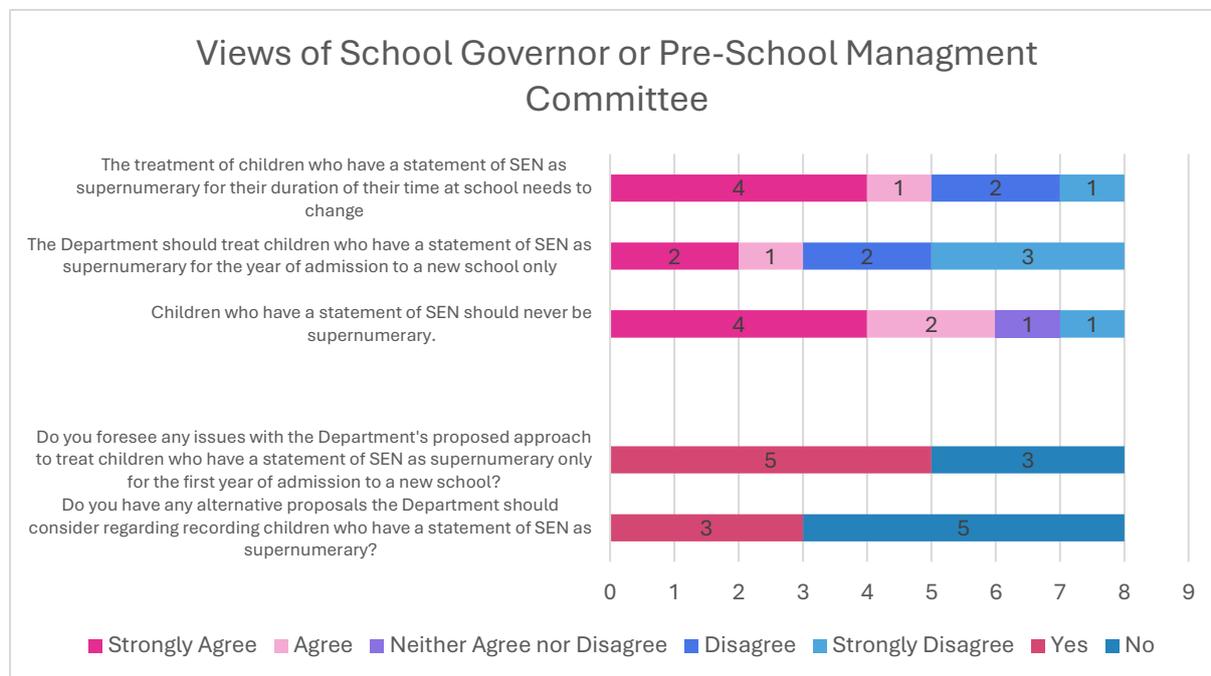
The majority of respondents agreed that the proposed approach would have some, moderate or a large impact.



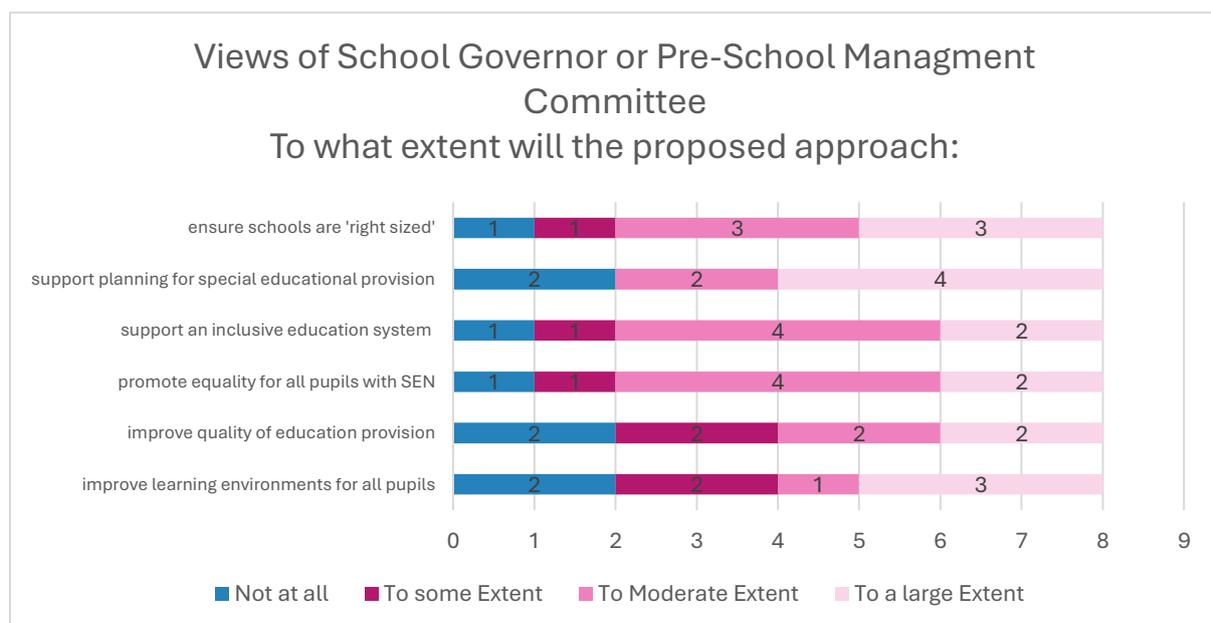
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Views of School Governors or a Member of a Pre-School Management Committee

A total of eight respondents completed the survey stating they were a school governor or a member of a pre-school management committee.



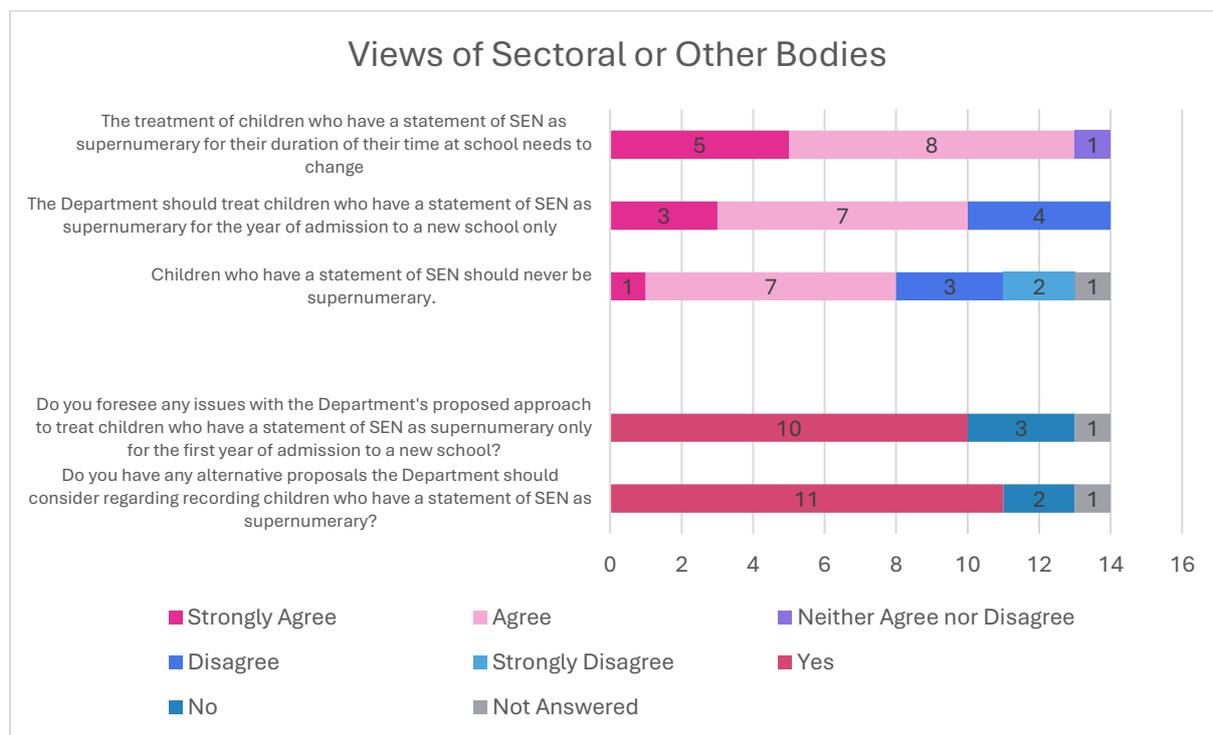
The majority of respondents agreed that the proposed approach would have some, moderate or a large impact.



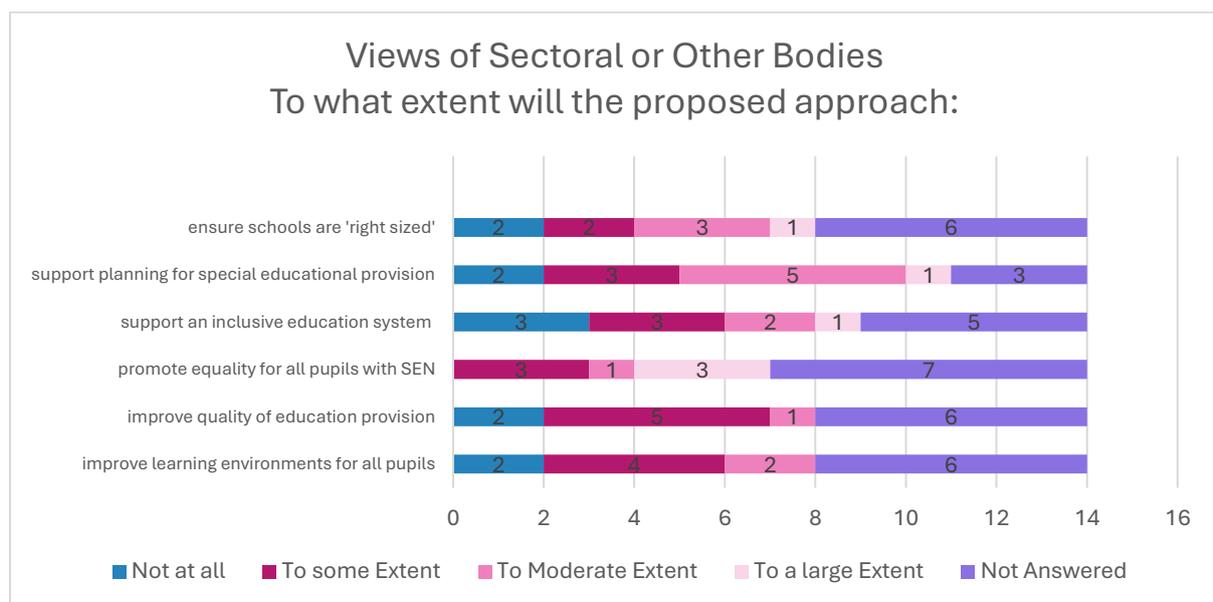
Consultation Report for Accounting for Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs: Changing the ‘Supernumerary’ Status

Views of Sectoral or Other Bodies

A total of 14 respondents completed the survey as a Sectoral or other Body.



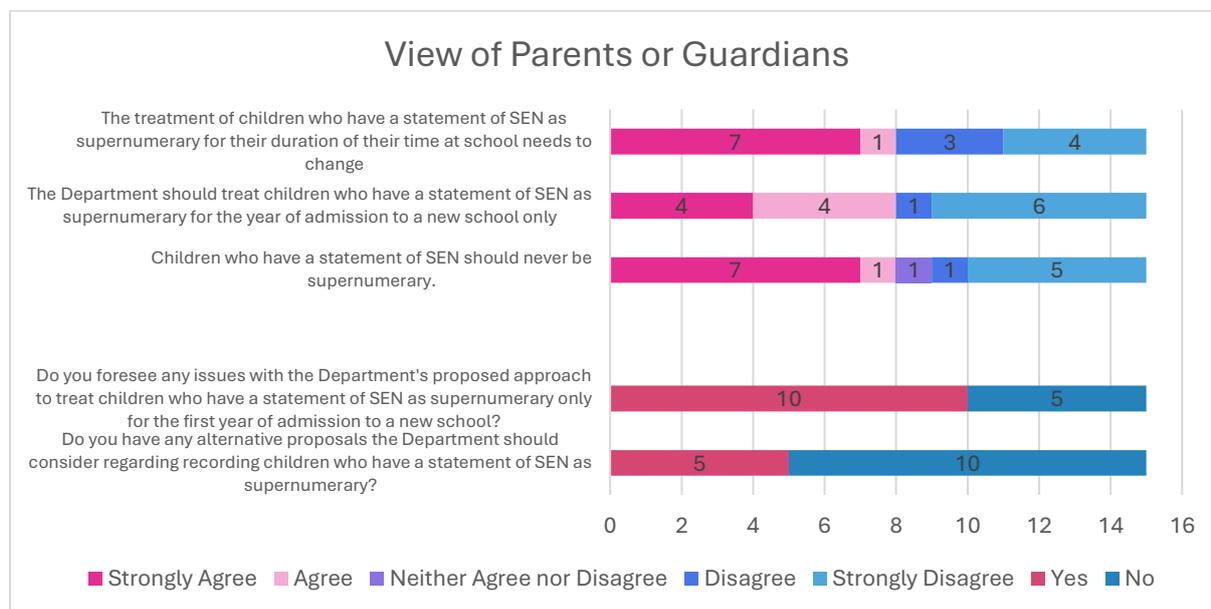
As shown in the chart below the majority of respondents agreed that the proposed approach would have some, moderate or a large impact.



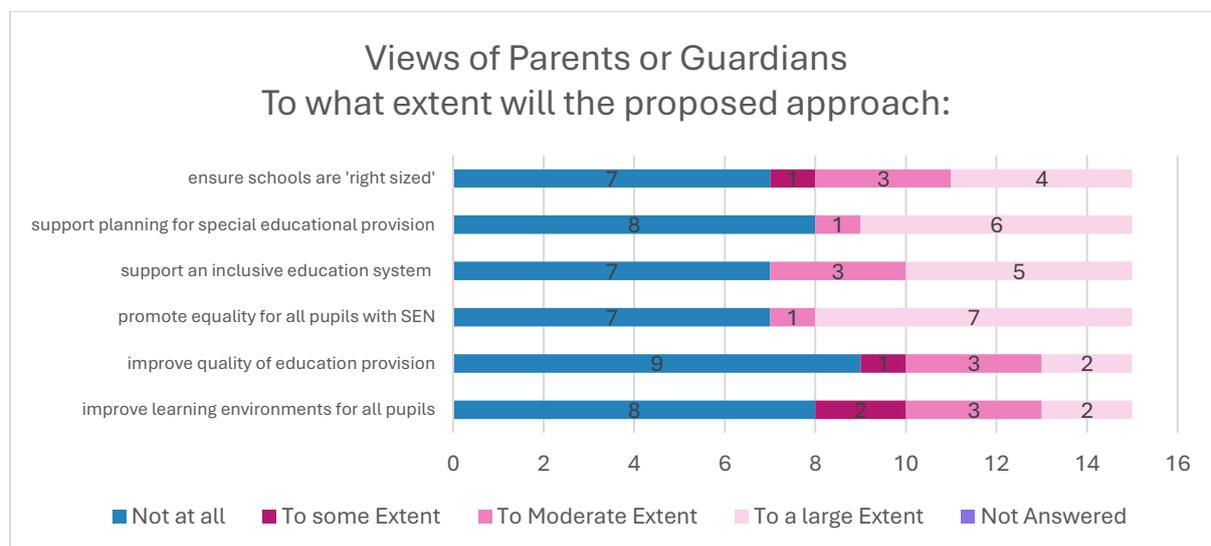
Consultation Report for Accounting for Children with a Statement of Special Educational Needs: Changing the ‘Supernumerary’ Status

Views of Parents or Guardians

A total of 15 respondents completed the survey as a parent or guardian.



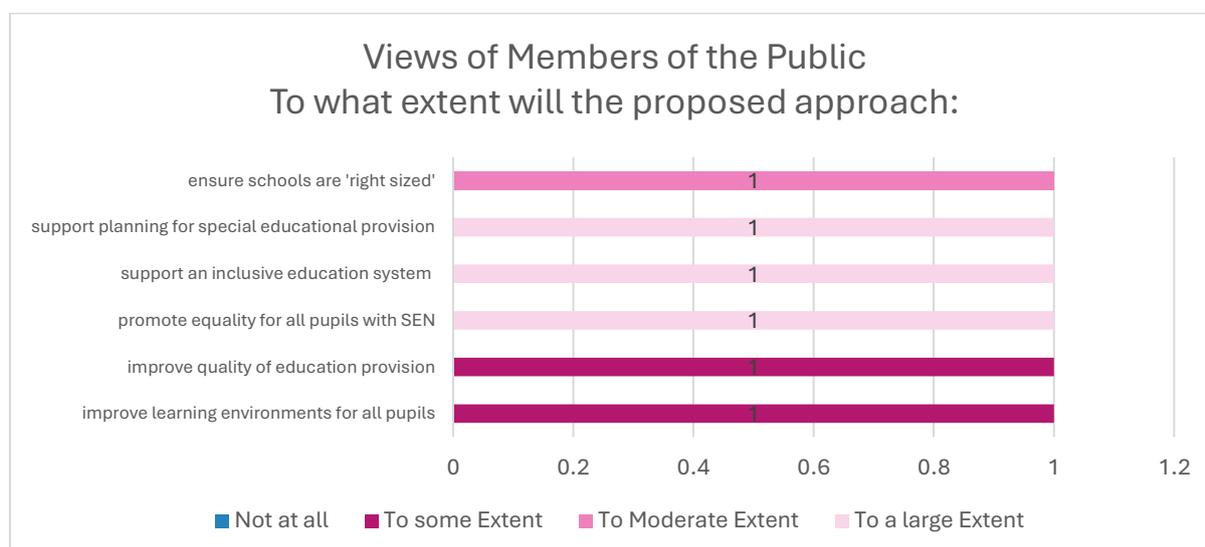
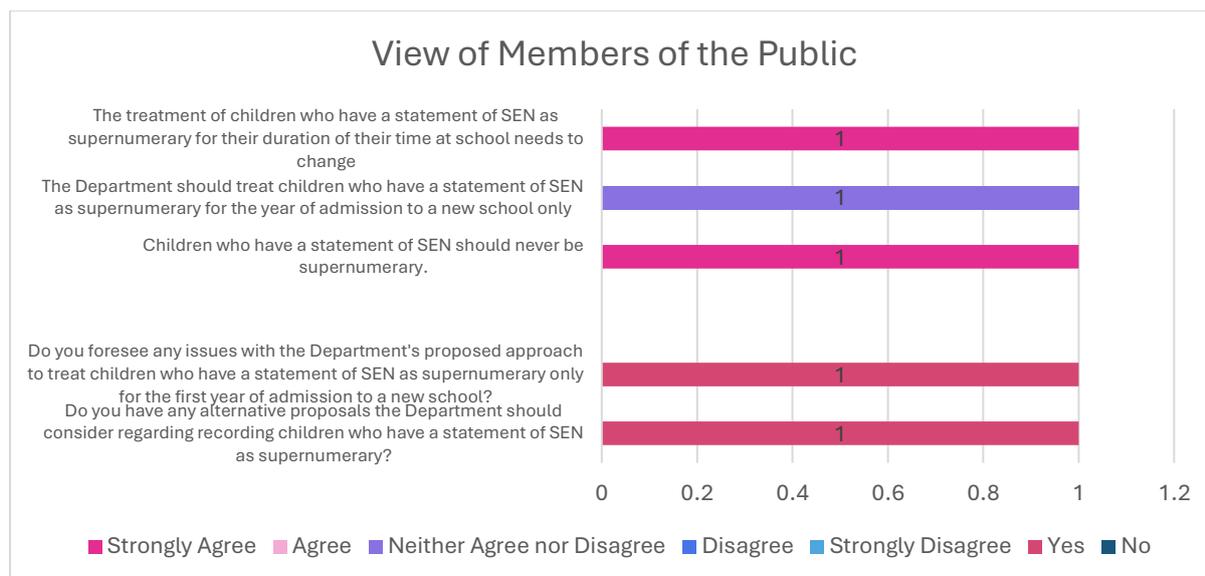
The views of parents or guardians were nearly equally split between those who felt the proposed approach would and those who felt the proposed approach would not have an impact on each element of the question.



Views of Member of the Public

Only one member of the public responded to the survey, their responses are shown in the table below.

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Equality Impact Assessments

Concerns were raised by one respondent regarding the Equality Screening Decision. In particular comments highlighted the potential for cumulative equality impacts across interconnected policy areas, including those affecting children with SEN and disability.

The Department has considered this carefully. The policy was subject to screening under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Based on the evidence available and the nature of the proposed changes, the Department concluded that an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) was not required.

While the Department recognises that wider policy developments may influence the context in which this proposal operates, the scope of this policy does not affect the child’s enrolment, statement or any support the child received. The Department will continue to monitor the

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implementation of this policy and ensure that equality considerations are addressed appropriately across all relevant policy areas.

Annex A

Stakeholders Invited to Share their Views

All Grant Aided Primary Schools	All Grant Aided Post-Primary Schools
All Grant Aided Special Schools	Altram
Caleb’s Cause NI	Catholic Schools’ Trustee Service
Council for the Curriculum, Examinations & Assessment	Council For Catholic Maintained Schools
Controlled Schools’ Support Council Northern Ireland	Children’s Law Centre
Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta	Department of Education Inspection Services
Education Authority	Governing Bodies Association Northern Ireland
Mencap	Middletown Autism Centre of Excellence
National Children’s Bureau	Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People
Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education	Playboard NI
Queens University	SEN Reform NI
Stranmillis College	Transferor Representatives’ Council
Ulster University	Department of the Economy
Department of Education	Department of Education Website

Annex B

Survey Questions

Question 1

Please tick the box that best describes you as a respondent: (Please tick one option only)

Please select only one item

- A member of the public
- A parent/guardian
- A pupil
- A School or pre-school leader
- A teacher or educational practitioner
- A school governor or member of pre-school management committee
- A Sectoral, Community or Other Body

Question 2

Are you the parent/carer of a child with a statement of educational needs?

Please select only one item

- Yes
- No

Question 3

Please specify which Sectoral, Community or Other Body.

*Please do not include any personal data in your response

Question 4

What type of school does your child(ren) attend? (Please tick all that apply)

Please select all that apply

- Pre-school
- Primary school

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- Post-primary school
- Special school

Question 5

What type of education are you involved in? (Please tick one option only)

Please select only one item

- Pre-school
- Primary school
- Post-primary school
- Special School

Question 6

How strongly do you agree or otherwise with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The treatment of children who have a statement of SEN as supernumerary for their duration of their time at school needs to change					
<i>Please select only one item</i>					

If you have answered disagree or strongly disagree please let us know why.

*Please do not include any personal data in your response

Question 7

The department’s proposed phased approach is to account for children who have a statement of SEN as supernumerary for the year of admission only, and only where a change of placement is

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necessary. This will inform the way forward in considering potentially moving to the position whereby children who have a statement of SEN may no longer be classed as supernumerary.

Treating children with a statement of SEN as supernumerary for the year of admission only would ensure that:

- approved admission numbers would stay constant and not vary year-on-year in response to the number of children with a statement of SEN, providing schools with confidence on the number of children without a statement of SEN to be admitted;
- Area Planning decisions would be informed by a more accurate assessment of need based on number of children in an area/school; and
- children with a statement of SEN would still be guaranteed access to the school on their statement;

How strongly do you agree or otherwise with the following statement:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
--	----------------	-------	----------------------------	----------	-------------------

The Department should treat children who have a statement of SEN as supernumerary for the year of admission to a new school only

Please select only one item

If you have answered disagree or strongly disagree please let us know why.

*Please do not include any personal data in your response

Question 8

Do you foresee any issues with the Department's proposed approach to treat children who have a statement of SEN as supernumerary only for the first year of admission to a new school?

Please select only one item

- Yes
- No

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If you have answered yes, please advise what issues/challenges.

*Please do not include any personal data in your response

Question 9

To what extent do you think this proposed approach to the recording of children who have a statement of SEN will:

	Not at all	To some extent	To moderate extent	To a large extent
Improve learning environments for all pupils <i>Please select only one item</i>				
Improve quality of education provision <i>Please select only one item</i>				
Promote equality for all pupils with SEN <i>Please select only one item</i>				
Support an inclusive education system <i>Please select only one item</i>				
Support planning for special educational provision <i>Please select only one item</i>				
Ensure schools are 'right sized' <i>Please select only one item</i>				

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Question 10

How strongly do you agree or otherwise with the following statement.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
----------------	-------	----------------------------	----------	-------------------

Children who have a statement of SEN should never be supernumerary.
Please select only one item

If you have answered disagree or strongly disagree, please let us know why.

*Please do not include any personal data in your response

Question 11

Do you have any alternative proposals the Department should consider regarding recording children who have a statement of SEN as supernumerary?

Please select only one item

- Yes
- No

If yes, please provide details of alternative proposals.

*Please do not include any personal data in your response

Further Comments

Thank you for completing the above survey. If you have any further comments and/or queries please use the comments box below.

*Please do not include any personal data in your response

I do not wish for my comment(s) to be repeated verbatim in any report of this consultation.