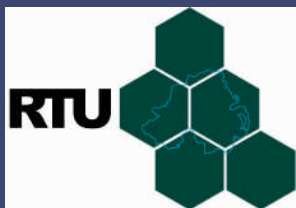


# Regional Training Unit (RTU)

School Leadership Survey - Northern Ireland  
Report of findings  
September 2007



# Outline

## Part A

- Introduction and Background
- Summary of findings

## Part B

- Methodology
- Responses to survey questions

## Part A

- Introduction and Background
- Summary of findings



# Introduction and Background

## Introduction and Background

- The Regional Training Unit (RTU) commissioned PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC) to undertake a survey of all school Principals in Northern Ireland in May 2007.
- The overall aim of the survey was to investigate existing and emerging characteristics of school leadership in Northern Ireland.
- PwC undertook a similar survey of Headteachers in England and Wales in 2007 as part of a comprehensive and independent review of school leadership - a copy of the Main Report is available at:  
<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR818A.pdf>.
- The survey was designed in collaboration with the RTU. The survey has been the subject of consultation across a range of stakeholders including the Department of Education (DE), the Employing Authorities and Teacher Unions represented on the Northern Ireland Teachers Council (NITC).



## Summary of findings

## Summary of findings – Roles and responsibilities

- Over three-fifths of Principals in secondary school spend no time at all teaching compared to under one-third in primary schools.
- In England and Wales 4% of Nursery Heads spend more than 20 hours per week in timetabled lessons compared to 91% in NI.
- The most time consuming task for all Headteachers in England and Wales is accountability (88%) compared to 57% of secondary Principals in NI.
- Setting the strategic vision was mentioned by 8% of Principals as taking up most of their time, however 30% of Headteachers stated that this should be their most important task.
- Seeing children achieve is the main source of satisfaction for school Principals (92%).
- 42% of all school Principals stated they had an external role with the vast majority (89%) stating that these external roles were very / quite beneficial to the school.

## Summary of findings – Staffing structures

- 73% of secondary schools have 5 or more members of staff on the Senior Leadership Team.
- In primary schools, the Principal is mostly responsible for the curriculum, PRSD, the school budget and extended services. Responsibility in secondary schools is more distributed e.g. the Vice Principal takes on greater responsibility for the curriculum on a day-to-day basis.
- 33% of Principals stated that leadership in their school is “very” or “totally” distributed. 66% of Nursery school Principals in NI regard leadership as “not at all” or “not very” distributed compared to 27% of Nursery Headteachers in England and Wales.
- All respondents, regardless of sector, status or gender, have identified similar gaps in expertise in the Senior Leadership Team. Change management was ranked highest with 19% of Principals stating this as the main gap in expertise in their school.
- The majority of Principals (54%) believed that there should be some change to the composition of their Senior Leadership Team in the next 5-10 years.

## Summary of findings – Pay and conditions

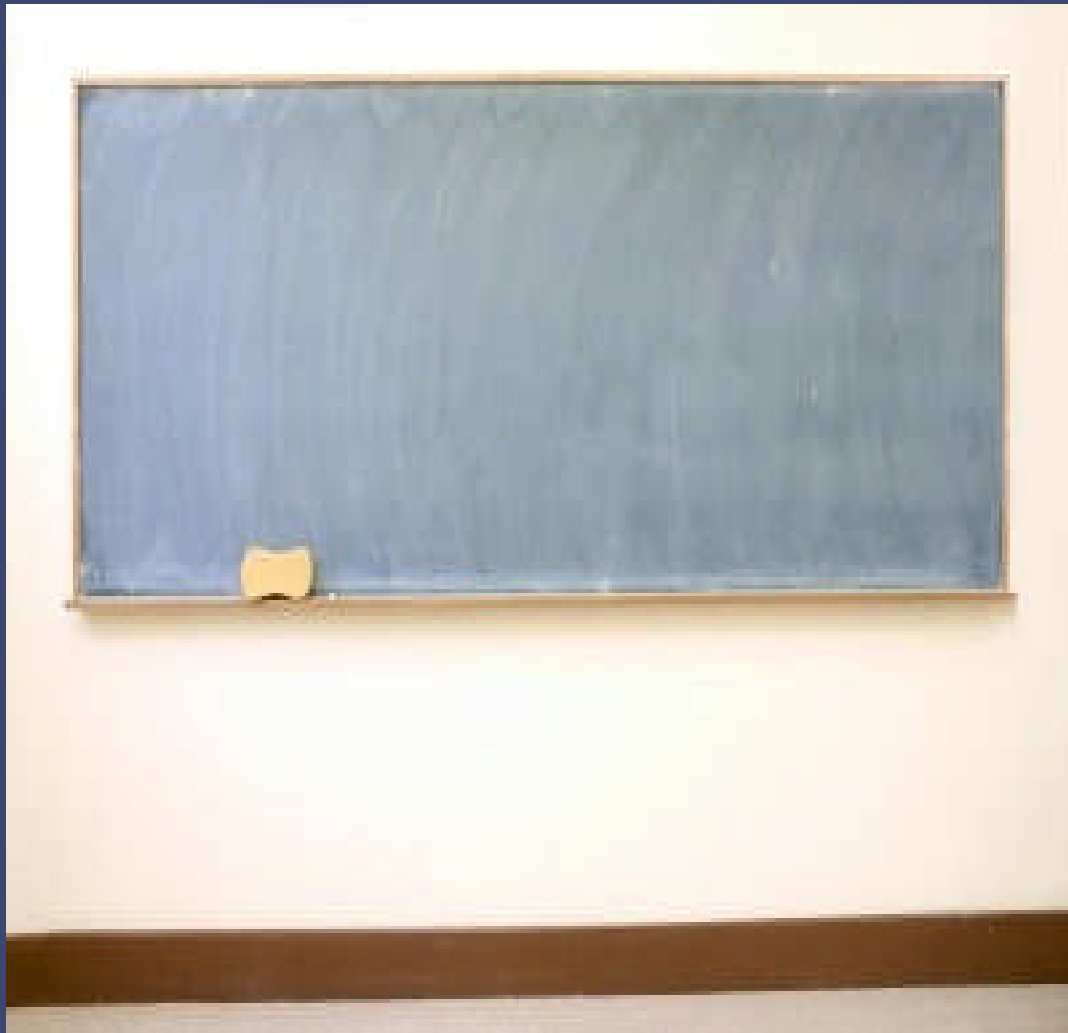
- 49% of male Principals earn more than £50,000 per annum compared to 25% of female Principals. Over one-half of secondary headteachers in England and Wales earn more than £70,000 per annum compared to 17% of secondary Headteachers in Northern Ireland.
- Over one-half of Principals (57%) stated that the current reward structures and other terms and conditions in their school as very inflexible / inflexible.
- Almost two-thirds (64%) of Principals surveyed believed their work-life balance was poor or very poor.
- The top three tasks/responsibilities that Principals would delegate, if possible, include management of support staff, finance and directing extended schools. Over one-third (34%) of Principals stated they could not delegate management of support staff because of a lack of skilled / trained staff.
- The majority of Principals (59%) felt quite / completely supported from their personal support network, whilst just over one-quarter (26%) felt quite / completely supported from their professional support network.

## Summary of findings – Extended service provision and collaboration

- 44% of primary Principals in Northern Ireland offer extended services, whilst 42% of secondary Principals stated the same. This compares to 74% of Headteachers in primary and 74% of Headteachers in secondary school in England and Wales.
- The majority of Principals (56%) stated that their school has loose informal collaborations with other schools. The biggest benefit for secondary schools of their collaboration with other schools was ensuring better entitlement for 14-19 year olds. For primary schools, the biggest benefit was more sports and arts activities.
- Schools also collaborated with other external agencies, the most frequently chosen was health and social care providers / professionals. Headteachers in secondary schools in England were much more likely to have collaborations with the Business Community (65%) in comparison to secondary Principals in Northern Ireland (41%).

## Part B

- Methodology
- Responses to survey questions



# Methodology

## Methodology

- A copy of the survey was posted to all school Principals (n=1,289) in Northern Ireland in early June 2007.
- A reminder letter (with a further copy of the survey) was sent out two weeks after the initial distribution of questionnaires which generated a large number of additional responses.
- Topics included in the questionnaire were as follows:
  - Roles and responsibilities;
  - Staffing structures;
  - Pay and conditions;
  - Extended service provision; and
  - Collaboration.

## Methodology (cont.)

- The table below indicates the number of questionnaires distributed to school Principals (by school type) against the number returned and the associated response rates.

School type	No. of surveys distributed	No. of surveys returned	Response rate
Nursery	98	53	54%
Primary	881	488	55%
Secondary	233	150	64%
Special	51	33	65%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,263*</b>	<b>725</b>	<b>57%</b>

\* Although 1,289 surveys were distributed, 36 school Principals contacted the research team citing a variety of reasons for not completing the questionnaire. For the purposes of calculating overall response rates, these have been excluded.

- We have analysed all questions using SPSS and have produced frequencies and counts for each question and have provided direct comparisons with similar questions from the Headteacher survey undertaken in England and Wales in 2007.
- Where interesting patterns/responses have emerged, we have undertaken more detailed exploratory analysis.

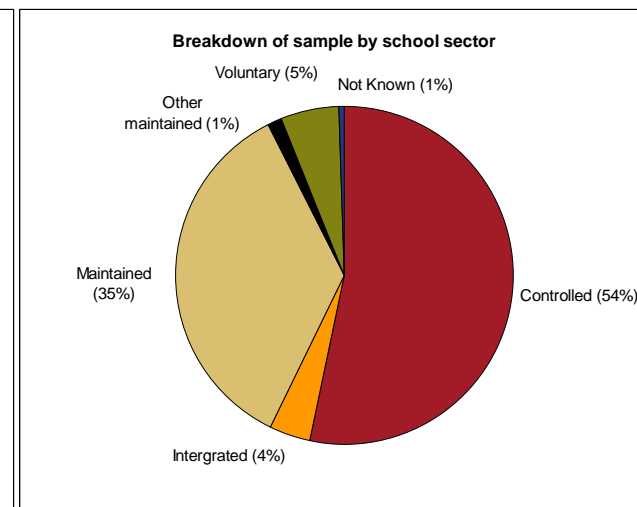
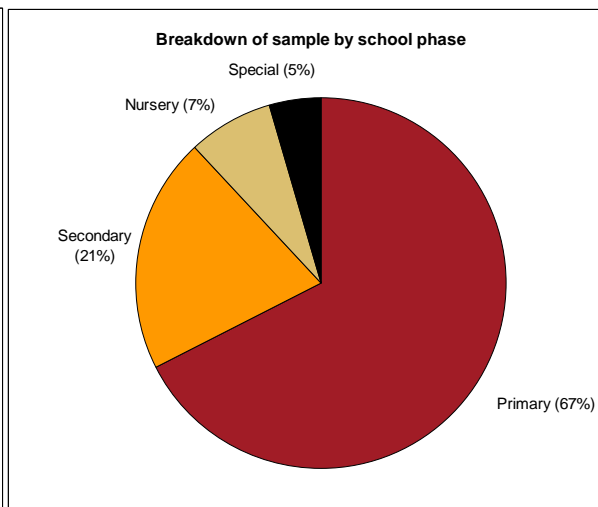
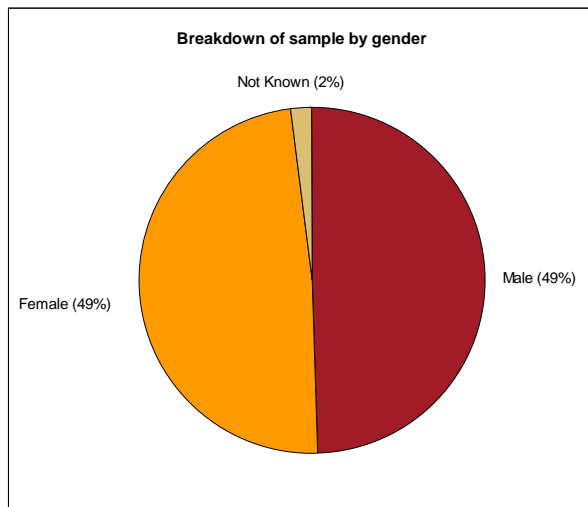
# Methodology (cont.)

## Profile

*By school phase:* the largest number of returns were from primary school Principals (488). A total of 150 returns were from secondary school Principals, followed by 53 from nursery and 33 from special schools.

*By gender:* There were a slightly larger number of returns from male Principals(358) in comparison to female (352).

*By school sector:* Over one-half of the returns were from Controlled schools (386), followed by Maintained (255); Voluntary (39); Integrated (29) and; Other Maintained (10).



## Methodology (cont.)

### Representativeness of the achieved sample

- The Table (right) provides a breakdown of the characteristics of the population of Principals in Northern Ireland alongside characteristics of the achieved sample.
- The achieved sample matches the population sample within +/- 5% for the majority of the characteristics provided.
- No weighting of the data was undertaken.

Profile of...	Population (%)	Achieved sample (%)
<b>School phase</b>		
Primary	70	67
Secondary	18	21
Nursery	8	7
Special	4	5
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	48	49
Female	49	49
Not known	3	2
<b>School sector</b>		
Controlled	48	53
Maintained	41	35
Integrated	4	4
Voluntary	4	5
Other Maintained	2	1
Not known	1	1

## Technical notes

1. Our analysis by school phase includes primary, secondary, special and nursery. Responses from grammar schools have been included under 'secondary'.
2. The total number of surveys distributed was 1,263. This figure excludes a total of 26 responses which, for various reasons (e.g. retirement of the school Principal), were returned incomplete.
3. A response from one of the schools did not correspond to one category of school phase or school sector. The frequencies and analysis by school phase and school sector, therefore, exclude this response.
4. Totals may not sum to exactly 100% in the Tables and Figures illustrated in this report, due to rounding.
5. The base provided in each of the Tables and/or Figures refers to the total number of responses to that particular question.
6. Based on the number of responses achieved (725), the confidence interval at 95% level is calculated to be +/-2.44%. This means if, in our sample of headteachers, for example, 57% felt that they had adequate opportunities for professional development, we can be 95% certain that the true percentage of headteachers who had adequate opportunities for professional development would lie between 54.56% and 59.44%. The confidence interval in this study is therefore narrow (less than +/-5%) suggesting that the results are reliable and robust.

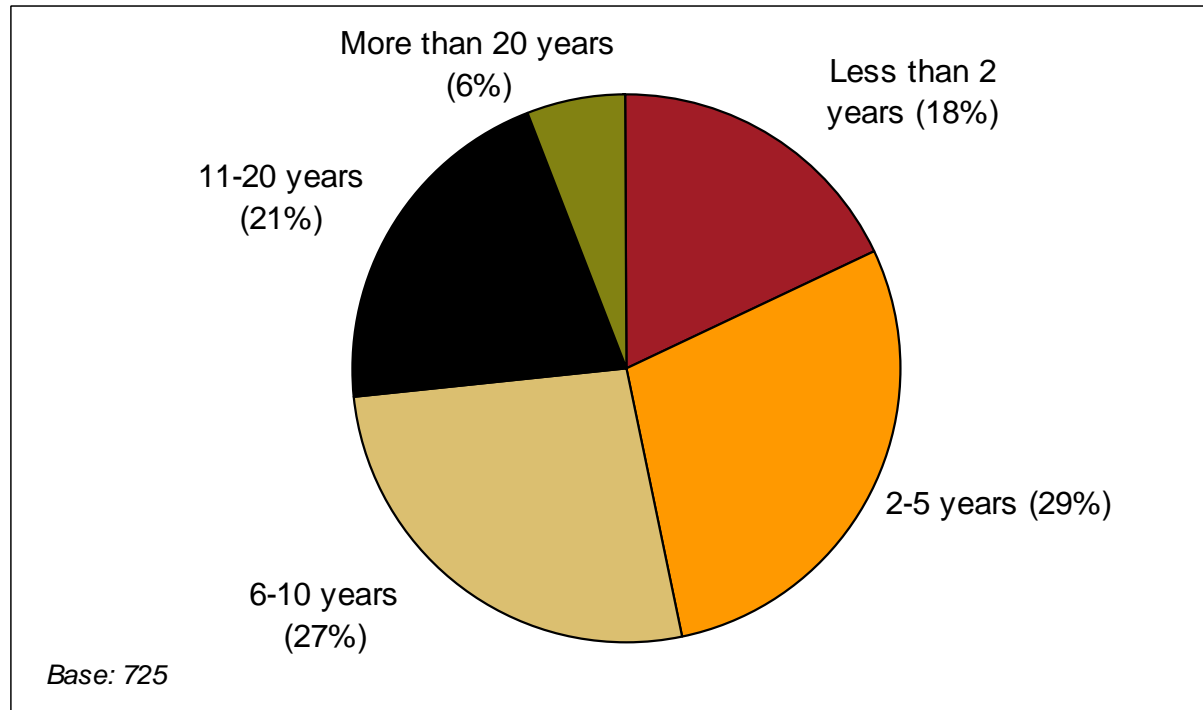


# Responses to survey questions

- a. Roles & Responsibilities
- b. Staffing Structures
- c. Pay & Conditions
- d. Extended Service Provision & Collaboration

## a. Roles and Responsibilities

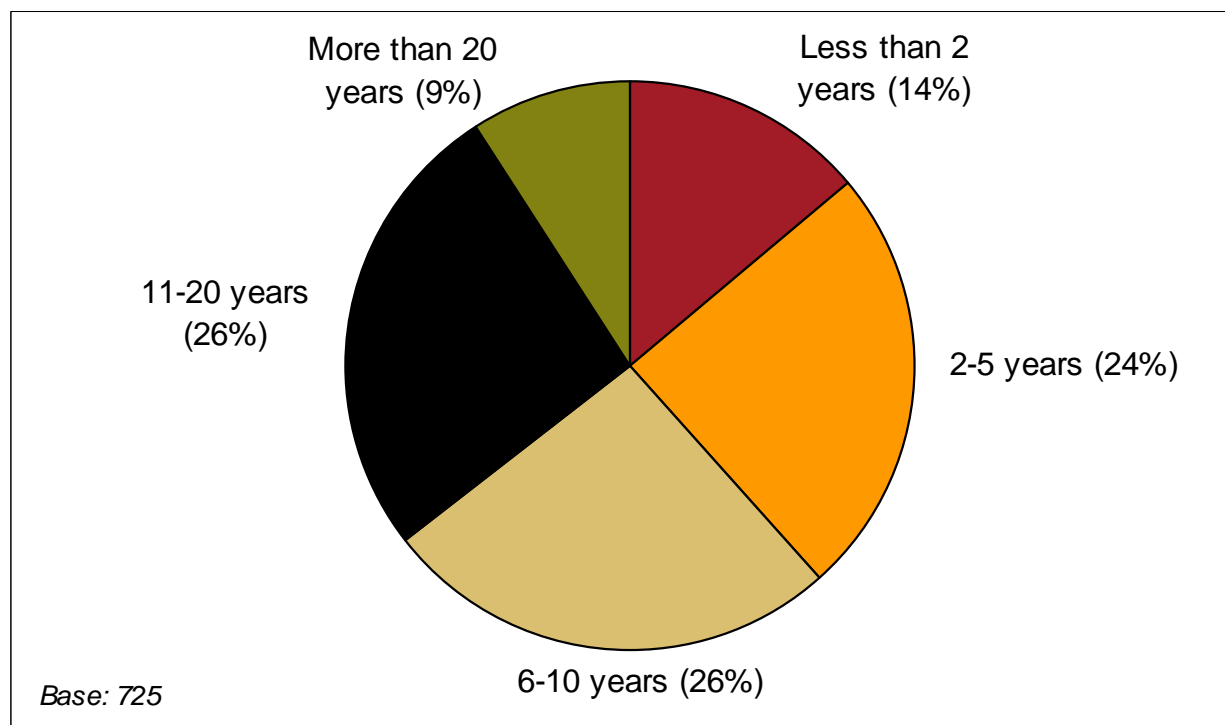
As of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2006, how many years have you been a Principal *in this school*?



•11% of respondents in Secondary schools have been Principal of the same school for over ten years, compared to an overall average of 27% for Special and 40% for Nursery schools.

•8% of respondents in Voluntary schools have been Principal of the same school for over ten years in comparison to 31% in Controlled schools.

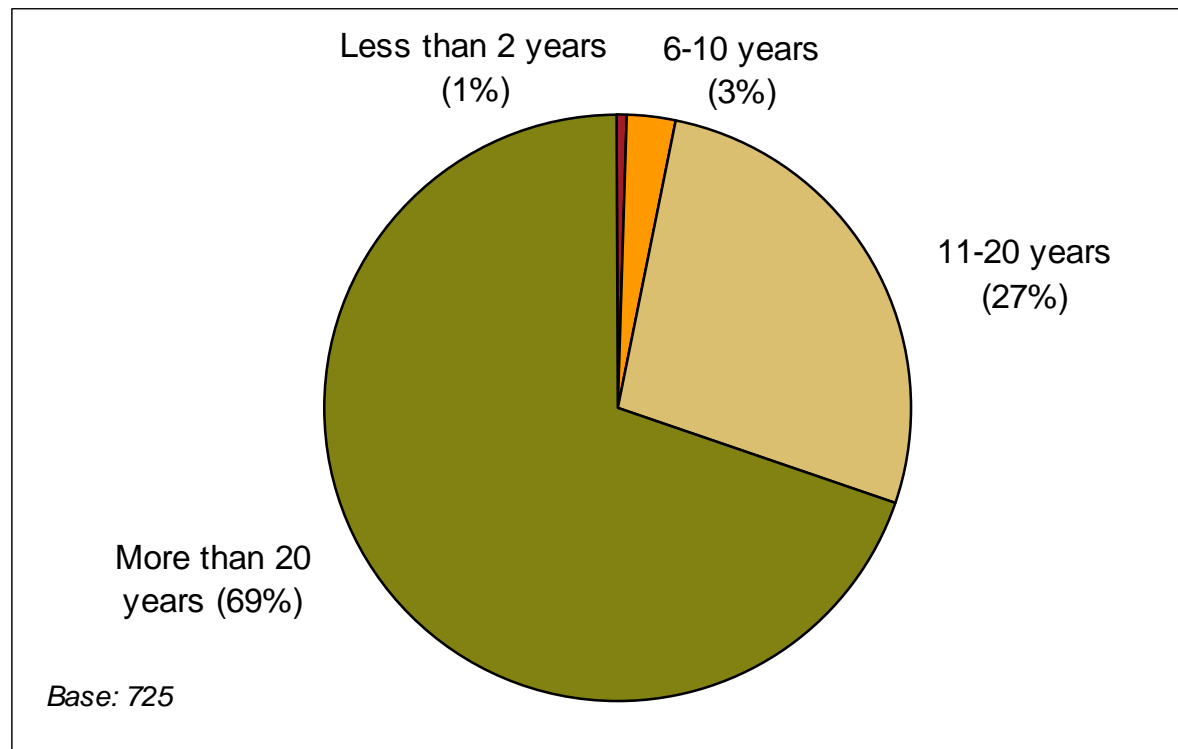
As of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2006, how many years have you been a Principal *in total*?



•Nursery schools have the most experienced Principals: 44% have been Principal for over ten years, compared to 16% of Secondary Principals.

•55% of Voluntary schools respondents have spent between six and ten years as a Principal, compared to an average of 26%.

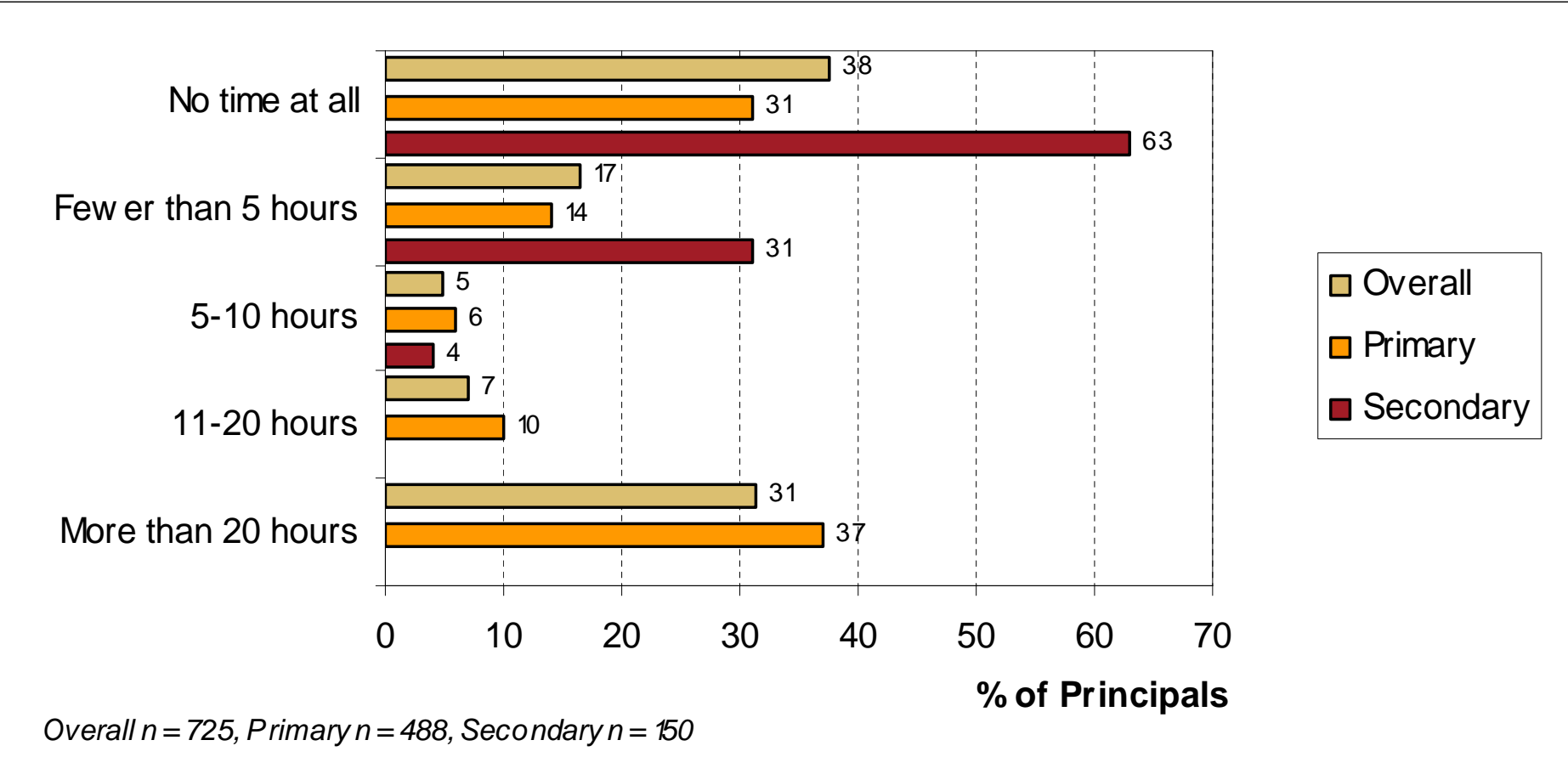
As of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2006, how many years in total have you *been teaching*?



•Although Secondary respondents have the least Principal experience compared with other sectors, they have the most teaching experience.

•69% of all respondents have been teaching for over 20 years; this figure increases to 89% for Secondary Principals.

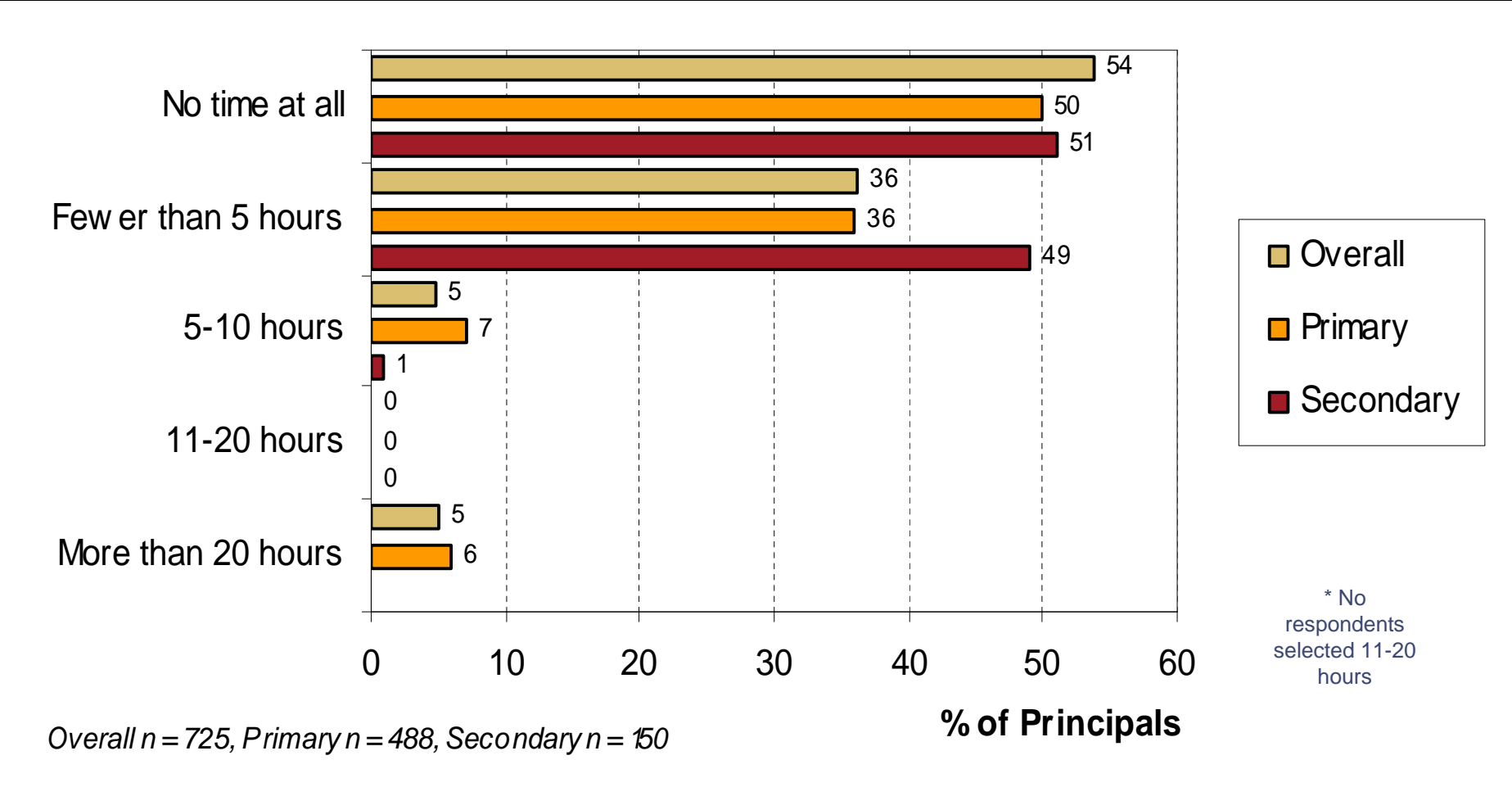
On average, how many hours, if any, do you spend teaching per week *in timetabled lessons*?



- 44% of female Principals teach more than 20 hours per week in timetabled lessons, compared to 19% of their male counterparts.

- In England and Wales, 4% of Nursery Heads spend more than 20 hours per week in timetabled lessons, compared to 91% in NI.

On average, how many hours, if any, do you spend teaching per week *covering lessons*?



On average, which five tasks take up most of your time as a Principal over the school year?

	Primary	Secondary	Overall
Responsibility for pupils wellbeing	58%	58%	56%
Leading teaching and learning	51%	51%	52%
Accountability	48%	57%	49%
Implementing new ideas/initiatives	43%	47%	42%
Curriculum implementation	42%	35%	40%
Monitoring and evaluation	33%	47%	39%
Management of teachers	33%	66%	39%
Teaching	47%	1%	38%
Finance	38%	27%	34%
School improvement planning	20%	35%	23%
SEN	20%	3%	19%
Management of support staff	17%	8%	16%
Liaising with my Employing Authority	17%	11%	16%
Directing extended services	16%	5%	13%
Strategic vision	4%	22%	8%
Staff recruitment and retention	4%	20%	8%
Timetabling	0%	3%	1%
<i>Overall n = 724, Primary n = 488, Secondary n = 150</i>			

- The most time-consuming task for all Headteachers in England and Wales is accountability; e.g.88% for Secondary Heads compared to 57% in NI.
- 17% of Nursery Heads in England and Wales spend a lot of time teaching, compared to 81% in NI.

In your opinion, which three tasks should be your most important activities as a Principal over the school year?

	Primary	Secondary	Overall
Leading teaching and learning	76%	77%	75%
Responsibility for pupils wellbeing	40%	29%	37%
Monitoring and evaluation	35%	41%	36%
Strategic vision	28%	41%	30%
Curriculum implementation	27%	9%	23%
School improvement planning	23%	29%	22%
Accountability	16%	31%	20%
Teaching	17%	0%	15%
Implementing new ideas/initiatives	14%	16%	15%
Management of teachers	10%	13%	10%
Finance	6%	4%	5%
SEN	2%	0%	3%
Other	2%	1%	3%
Staff recruitment and retention	0%	5%	1%
<i>Overall n = 724, Primary n = 488, Secondary n = 150</i>			

- 53% of Nursery school Principals regard teaching as an important activity, compared to 15% overall.

- Headteachers in England and Wales are more concerned about strategic vision than their NI counterparts; e.g.72% of Secondary Heads in England and Wales consider it as an important task, compared to 41% in NI.

Which three aspects of your role as school Principal give you the most satisfaction?

	Primary	Secondary	Overall
Seeing children achieve	92%	91%	92%
Developing staff	57%	70%	60%
Introducing new ideas	33%	25%	32%
Setting strategic vision	23%	35%	25%
Improving results	24%	30%	23%
Meeting school improvement targets	20%	22%	21%
Regular teaching commitment	23%	2%	19%
Working with individual pupils	11%	12%	12%
Involvement in extra curricular activities	9%	5%	7%
Happiness/contentment of children	2%	1%	3%
Helping other schools improve	2%	1%	2%
<i>Overall n = 724, Primary n = 488, Secondary n = 150</i>			

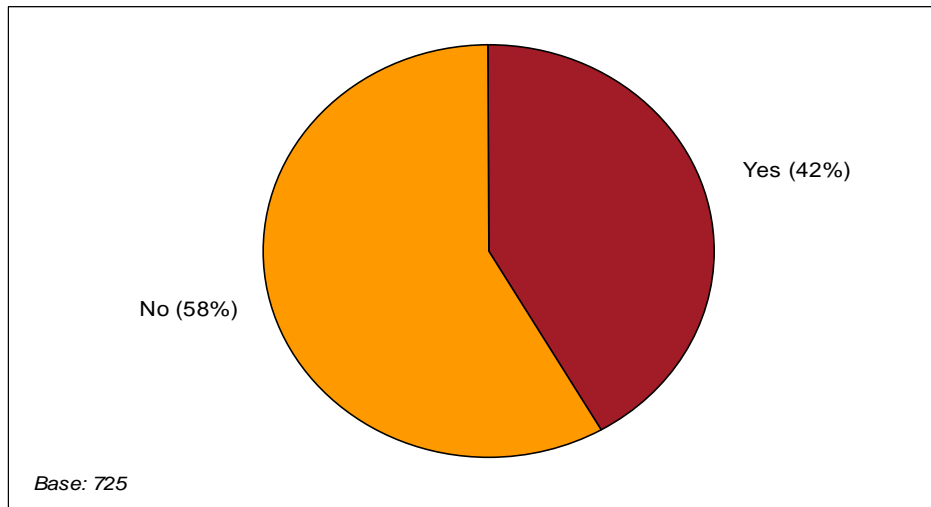
- Pupils' achievement is the main source of satisfaction for all respondents.
- Setting strategic vision provides greater satisfaction to Nursery Heads in England and Wales than to their NI equivalent; 41% and 13% respectively.

In the first term of the 2006/07 academic year, what was the biggest challenge you faced in improving your school?

	Primary	Secondary	Overall
Managing staff, parents and pupils	25%	23%	24%
Implementation of Revised Curriculum	20%	20%	19%
Managing Change	14%	24%	17%
Resourcing	11%	4%	9%
Extended Schools	8%	2%	8%
Other	5%	12%	7%
Strategic Direction	6%	8%	7%
School Finances	6%	4%	5%
School Inspection	3%	3%	3%
Bureaucracy	3%	1%	2%
<i>Overall n = 678, Primary n = 453, Secondary n = 142</i>			

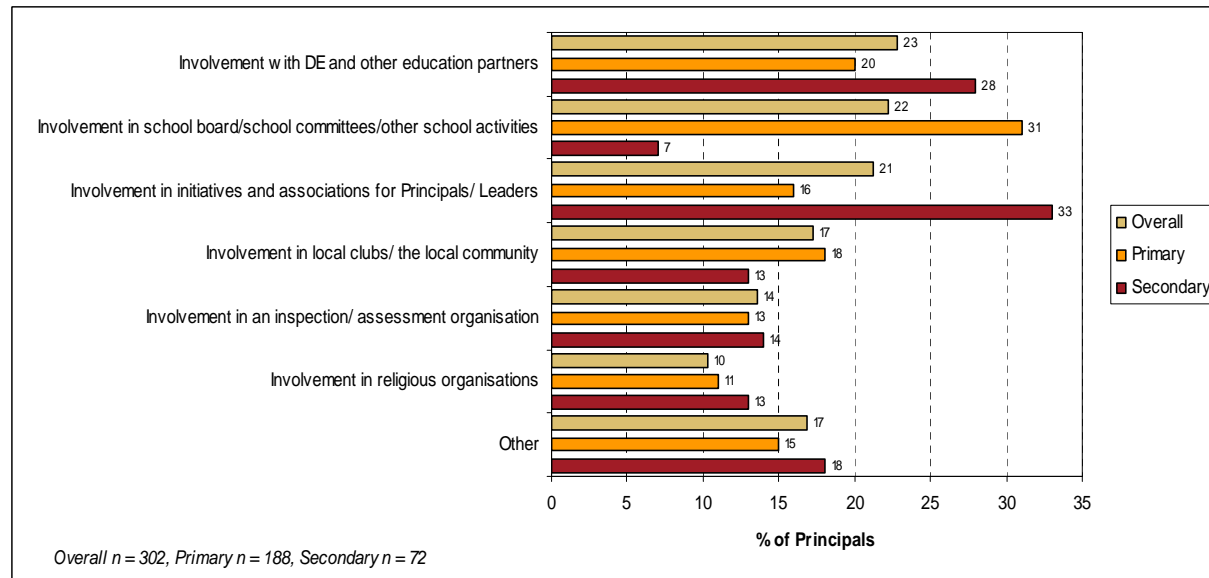
•38% of Integrated school Principals regard managing change as their biggest challenge.

## As a Principal do you currently have any external roles?



- 52% of Special school Principals have external roles.
- 62% of Voluntary school Principals have external roles.

## If yes, what are they?



•38% of Integrated respondents are involved in Principal initiatives and associations.

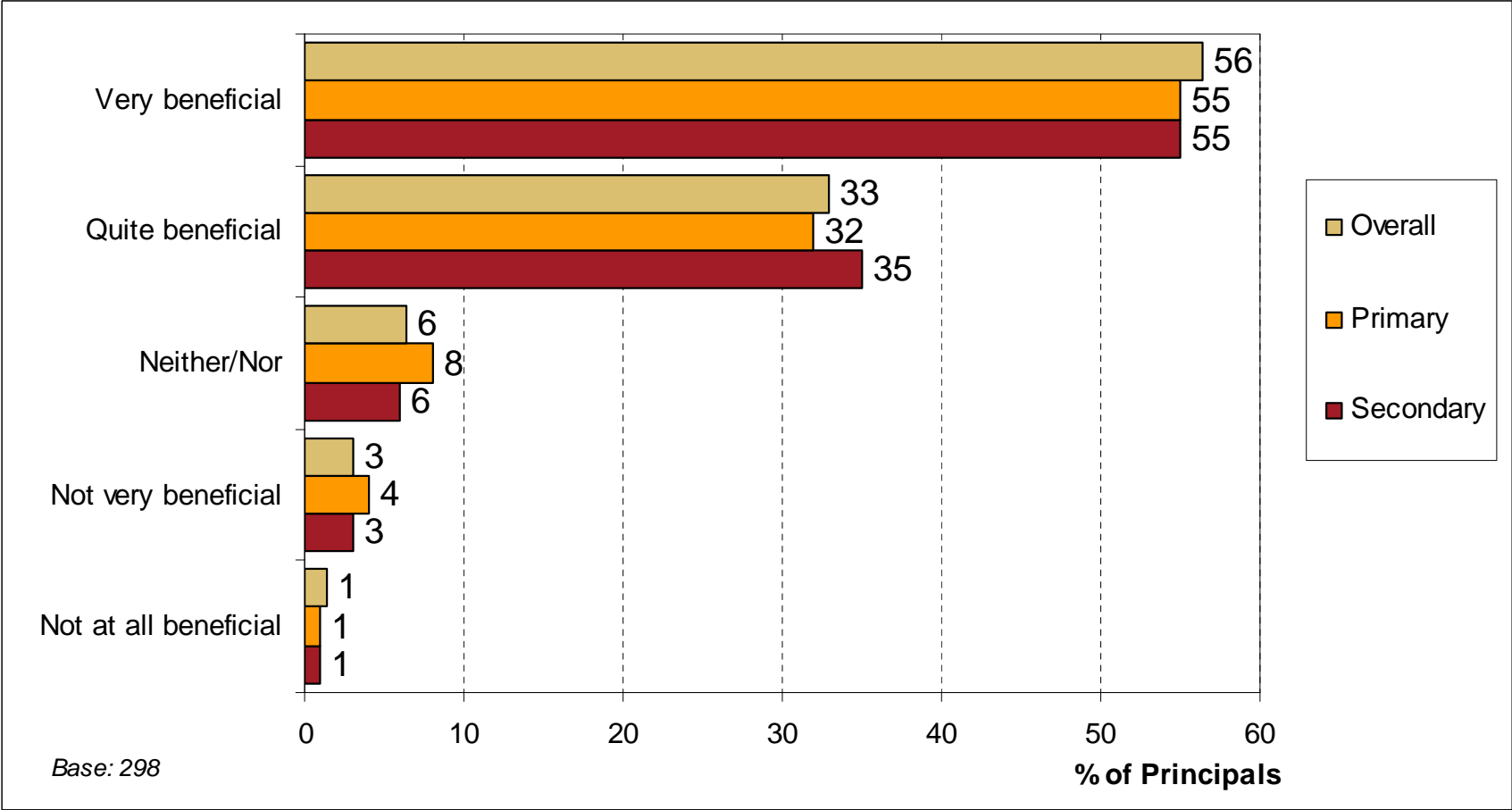
•25% of Maintained Principals have external roles in religious organisations.

### Others include:

•Union Representative: 9 respondents

•Early Years Team: 8 respondents

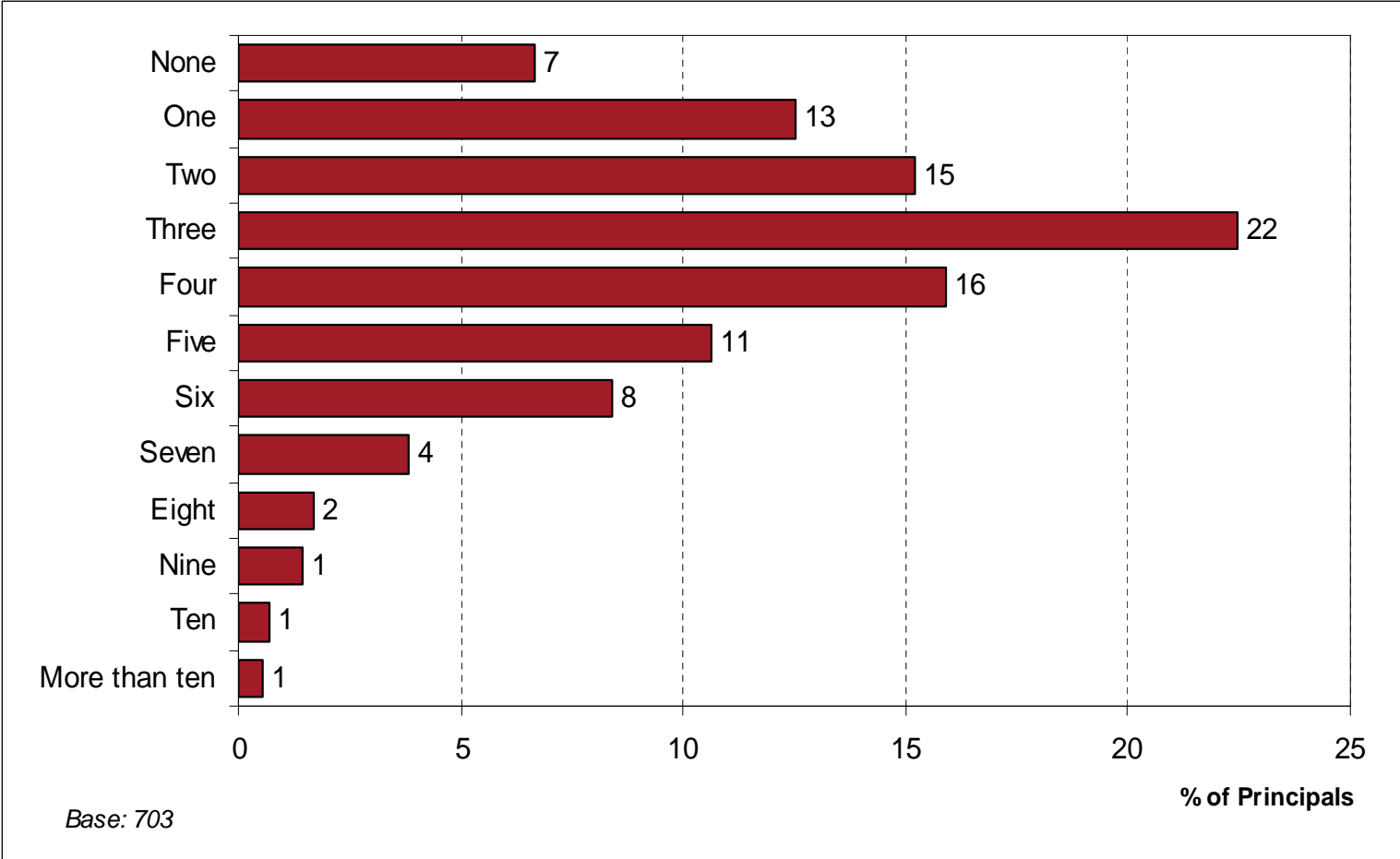
# How much do these external roles benefit your school?



- Nursery school Principals are the most positive about the benefits of external roles; 68% regard them as “very beneficial” for their school.
- 67% of female Principals regard external roles as “very beneficial”, compared to 48% of their male counterparts.

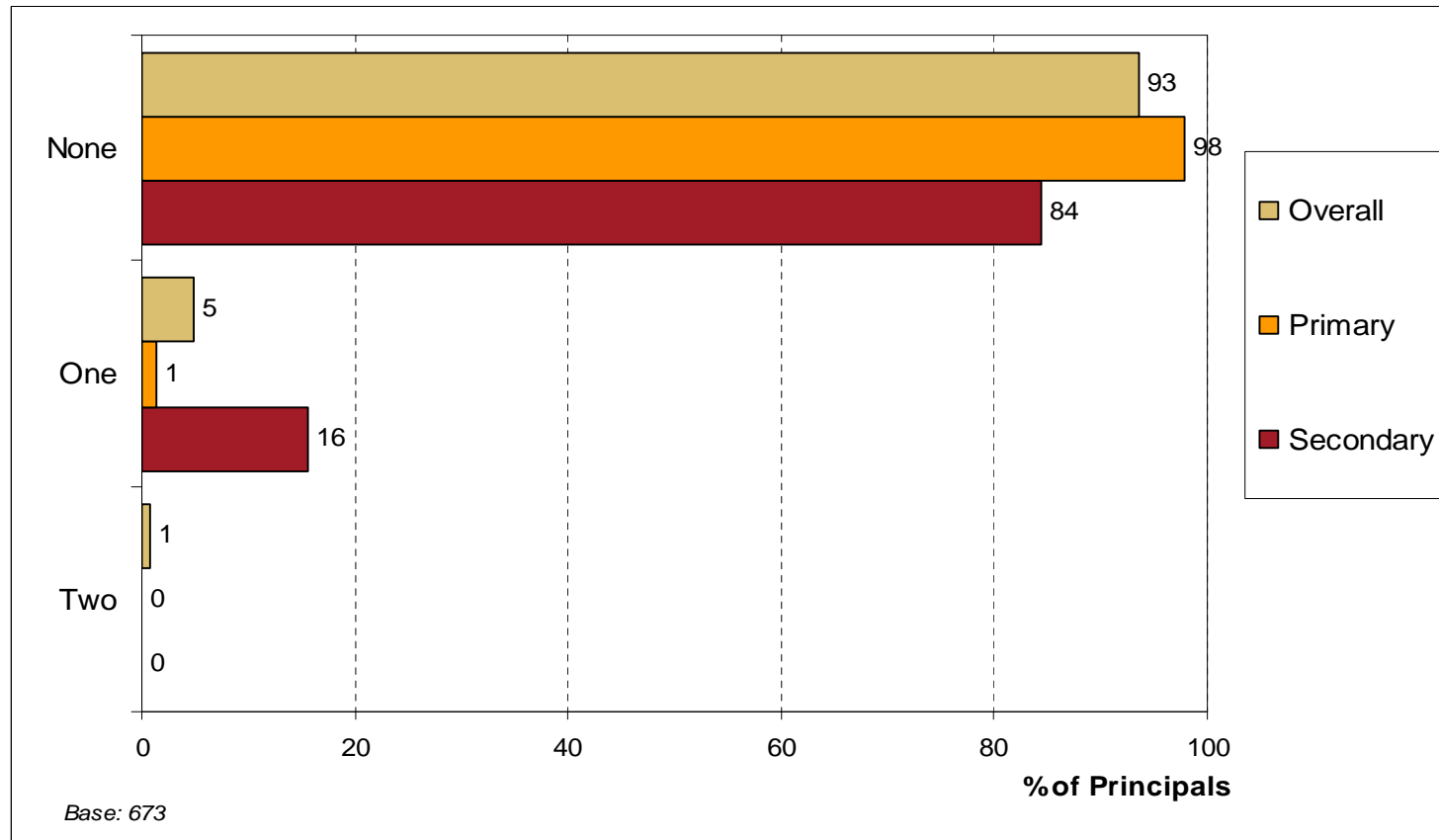
## b. Staffing Structures

# Including you, how many members of staff are on your senior leadership team?



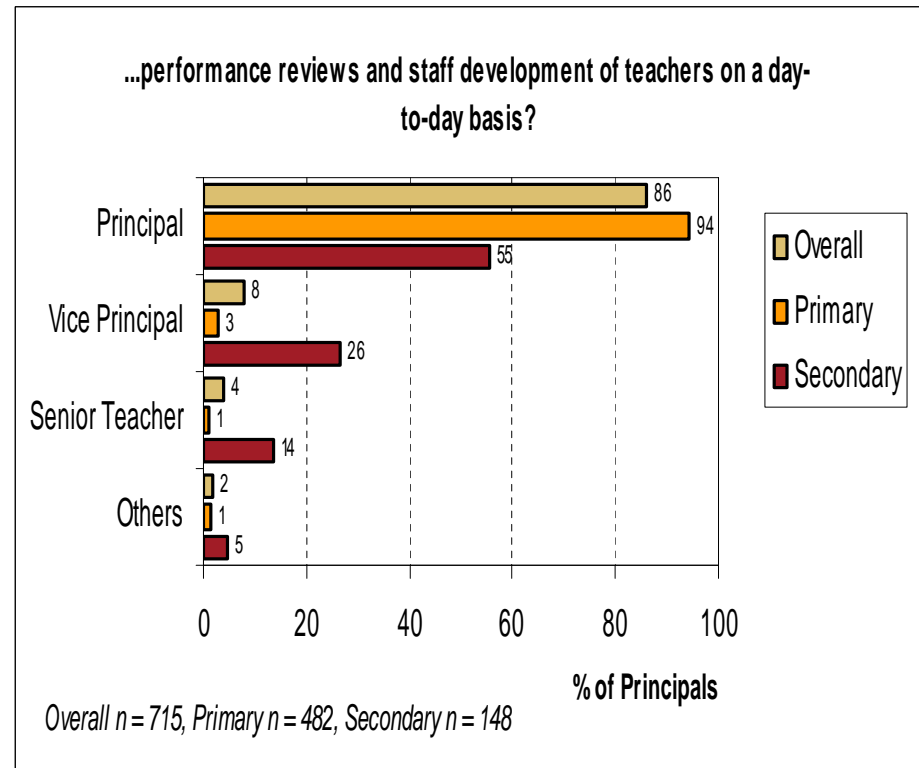
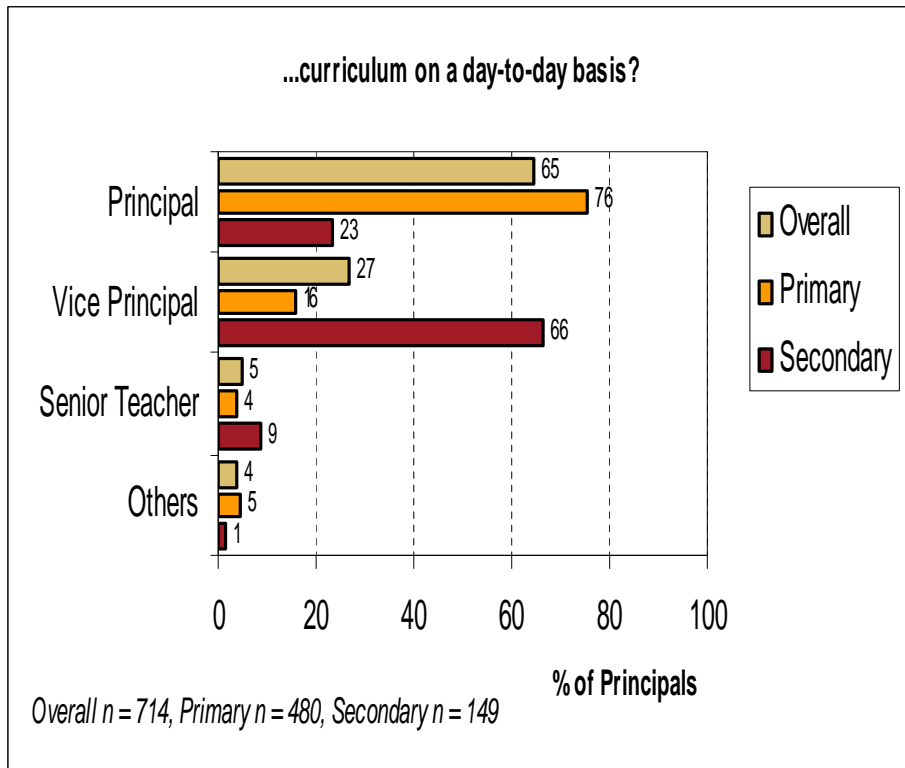
•73% of Secondary school Principals have 5 or more members of staff on their SLT, compared to an average of 28%.

## How many members of the senior leadership team do not have Qualified Teacher Status?

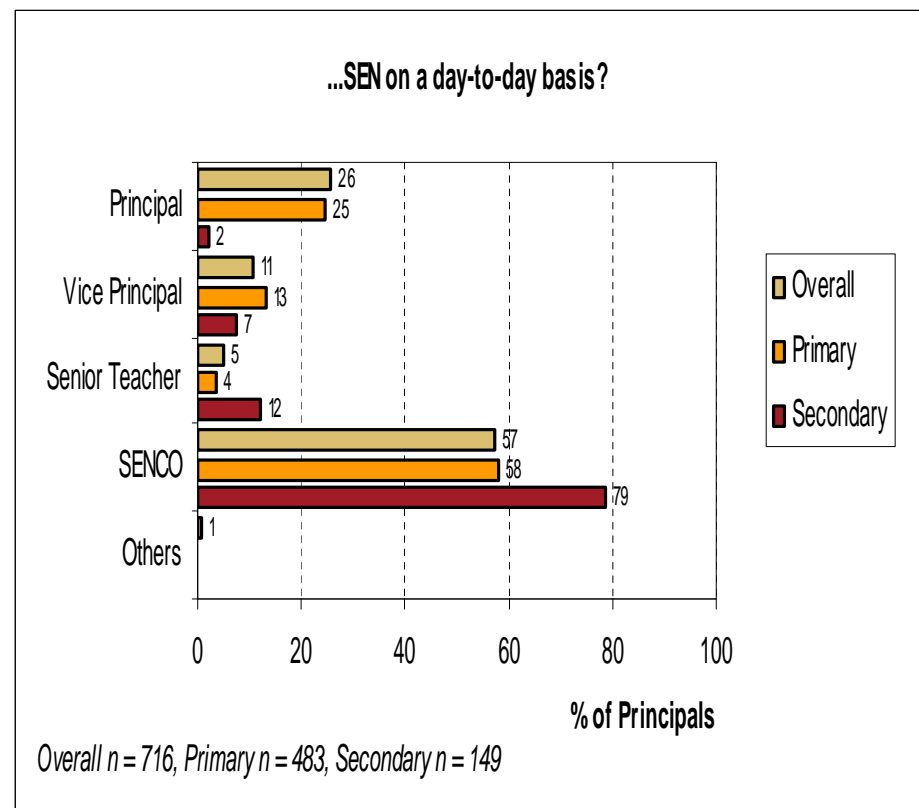
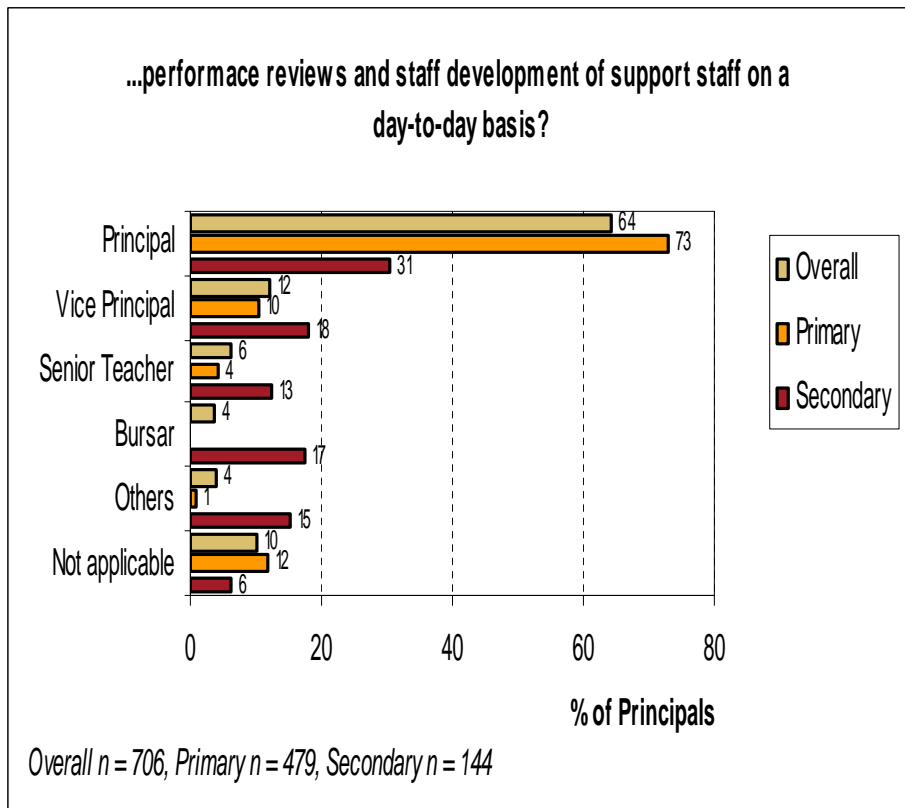


- 16% of Secondary school Principals have one member of the SLT who does not have Qualified Teacher Status.
- Integrated school Principals (27%) and Voluntary school Principals (26%) are the most likely to have at least one SLT member who does not have Qualified Teacher Status.

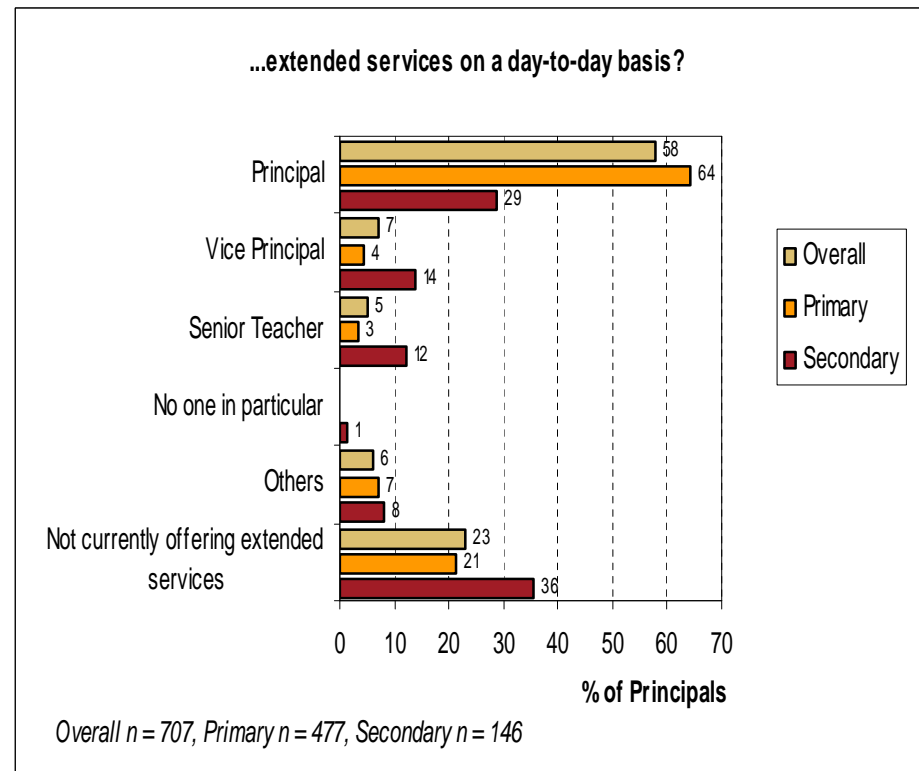
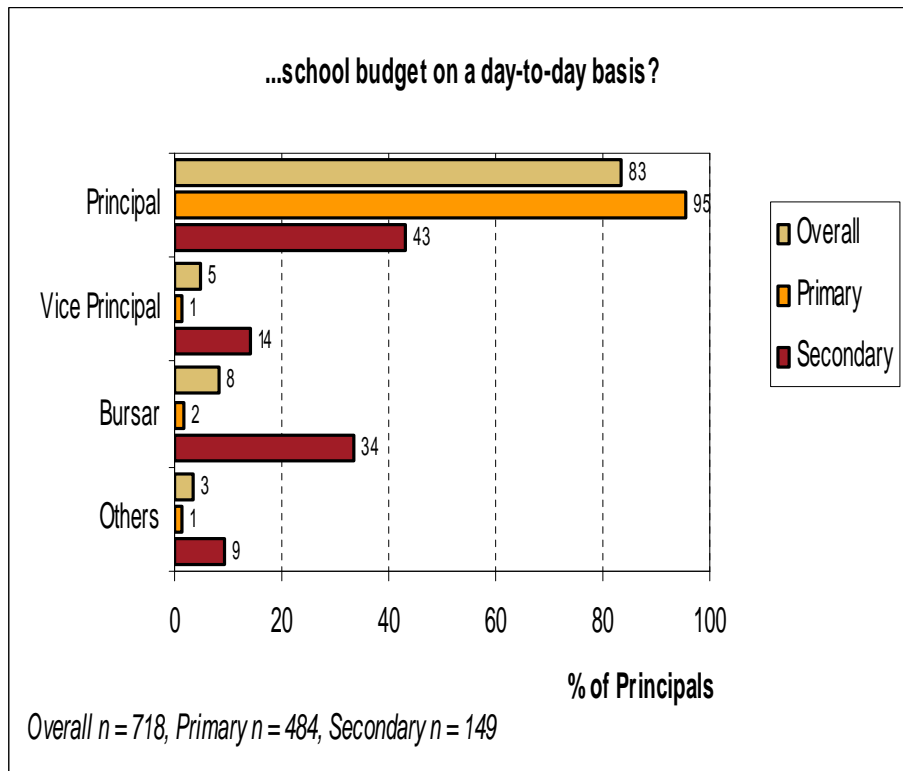
# What is the position of the person who mostly manages the ...



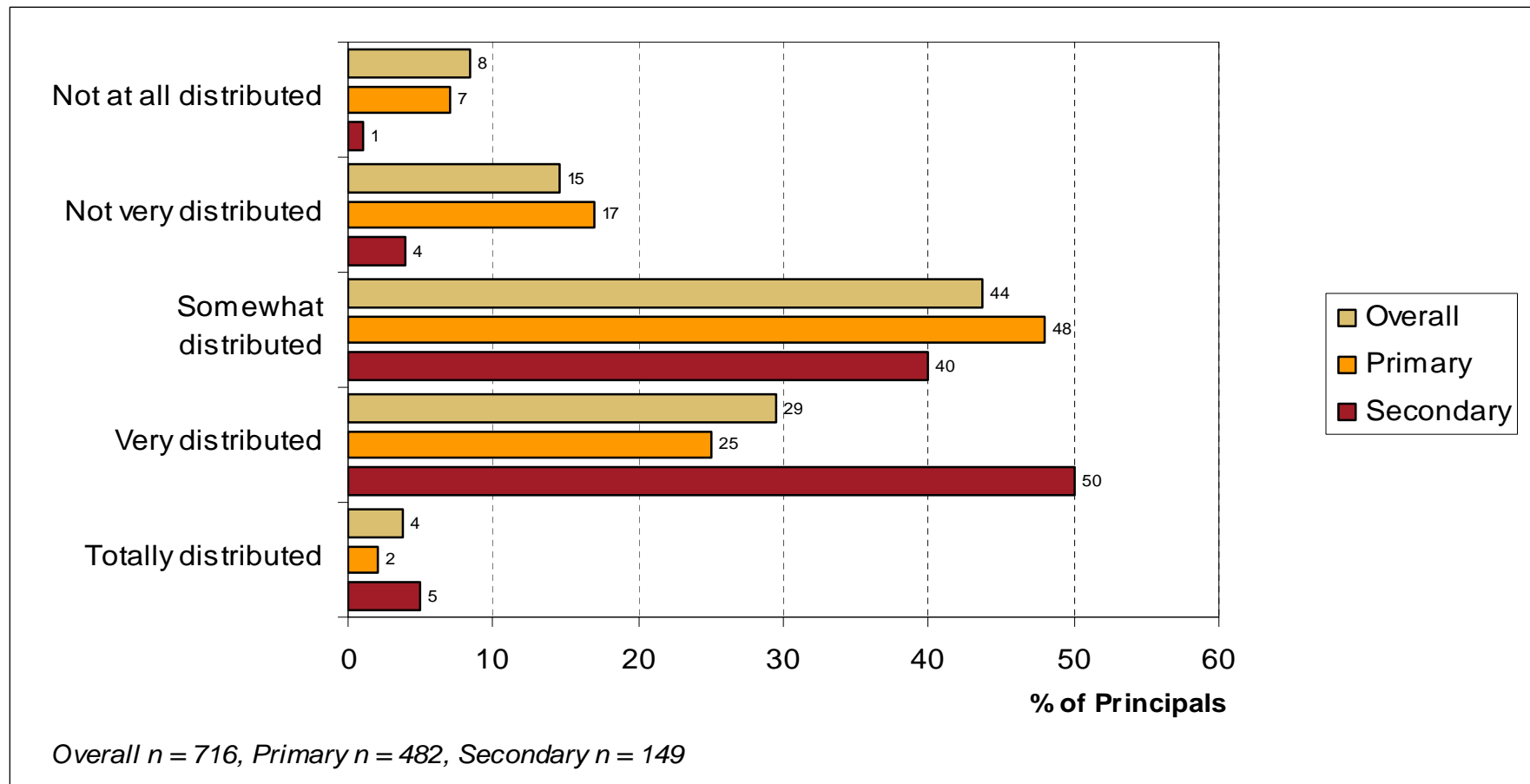
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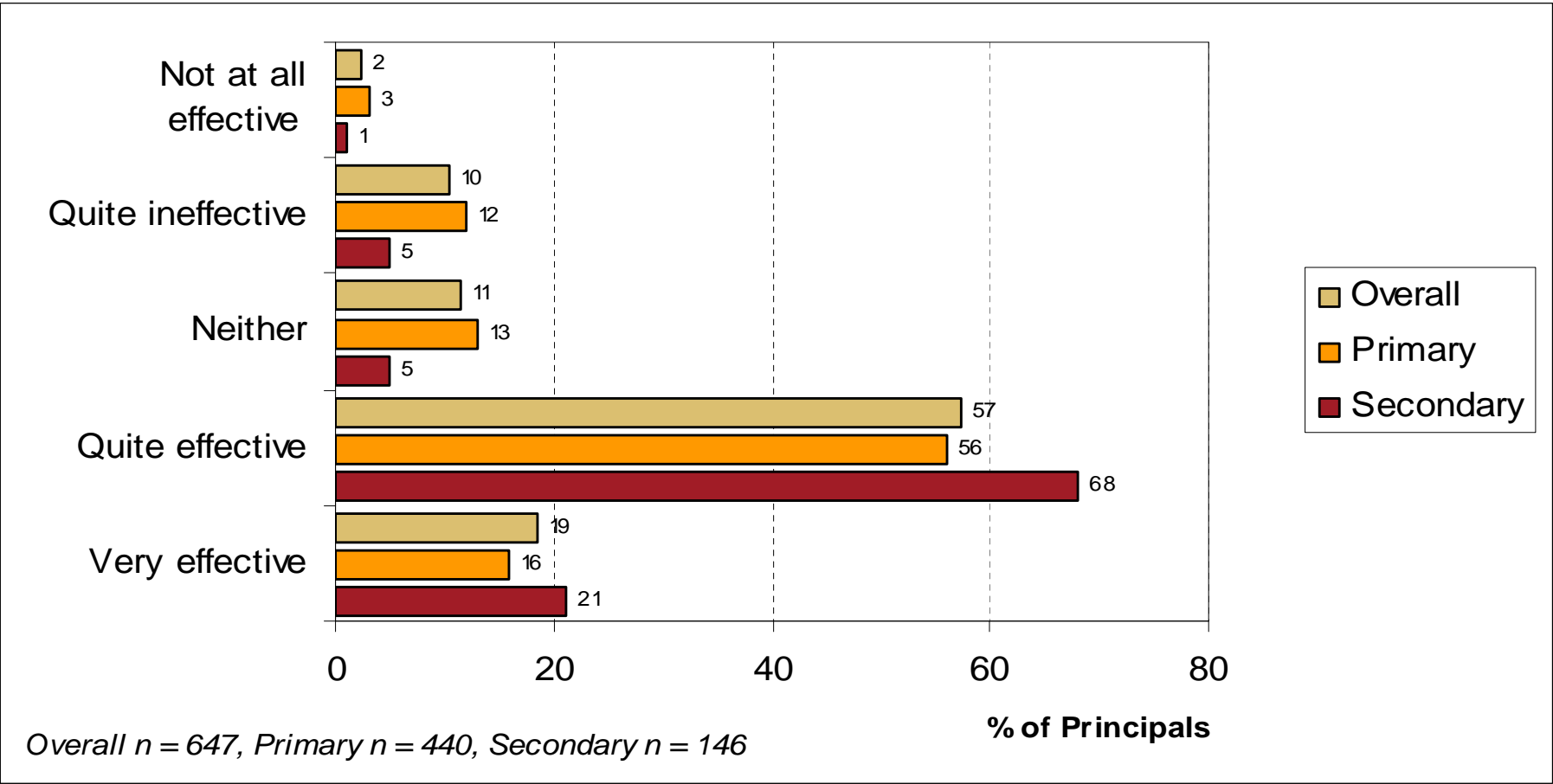
## To what extent is leadership distributed in your school?



•75% of Voluntary school Principals believe that leadership is “very” or “totally” distributed, compared to an average of 33%.

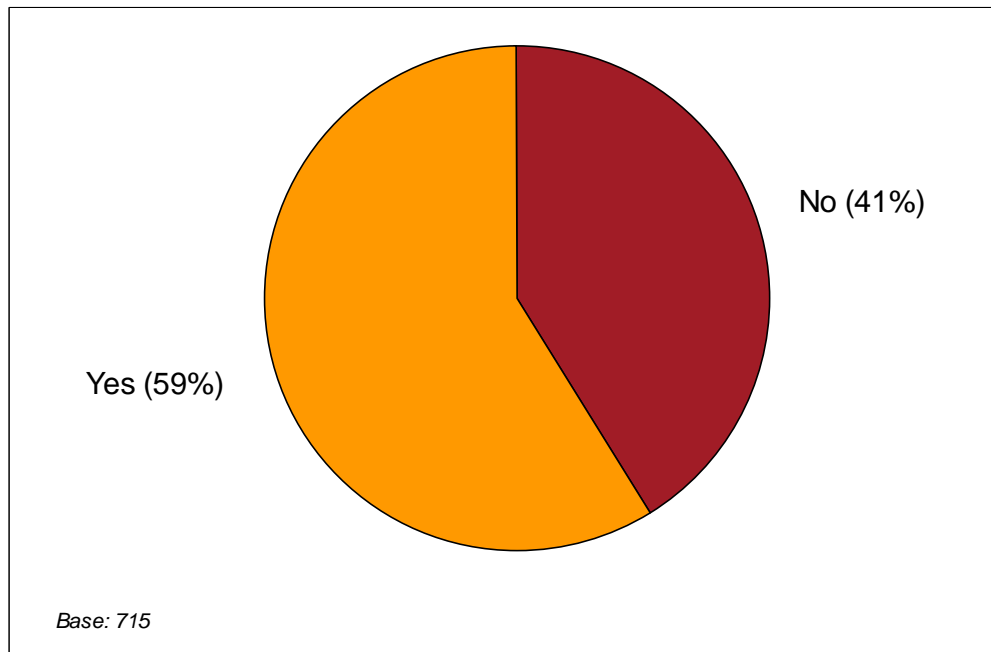
•66% of Nursery school Principals in NI regard leadership as “not at all” or “not very” distributed”, compared to 27% of Nursery Heads in England and Wales.

# How effective is distributed leadership in your school?



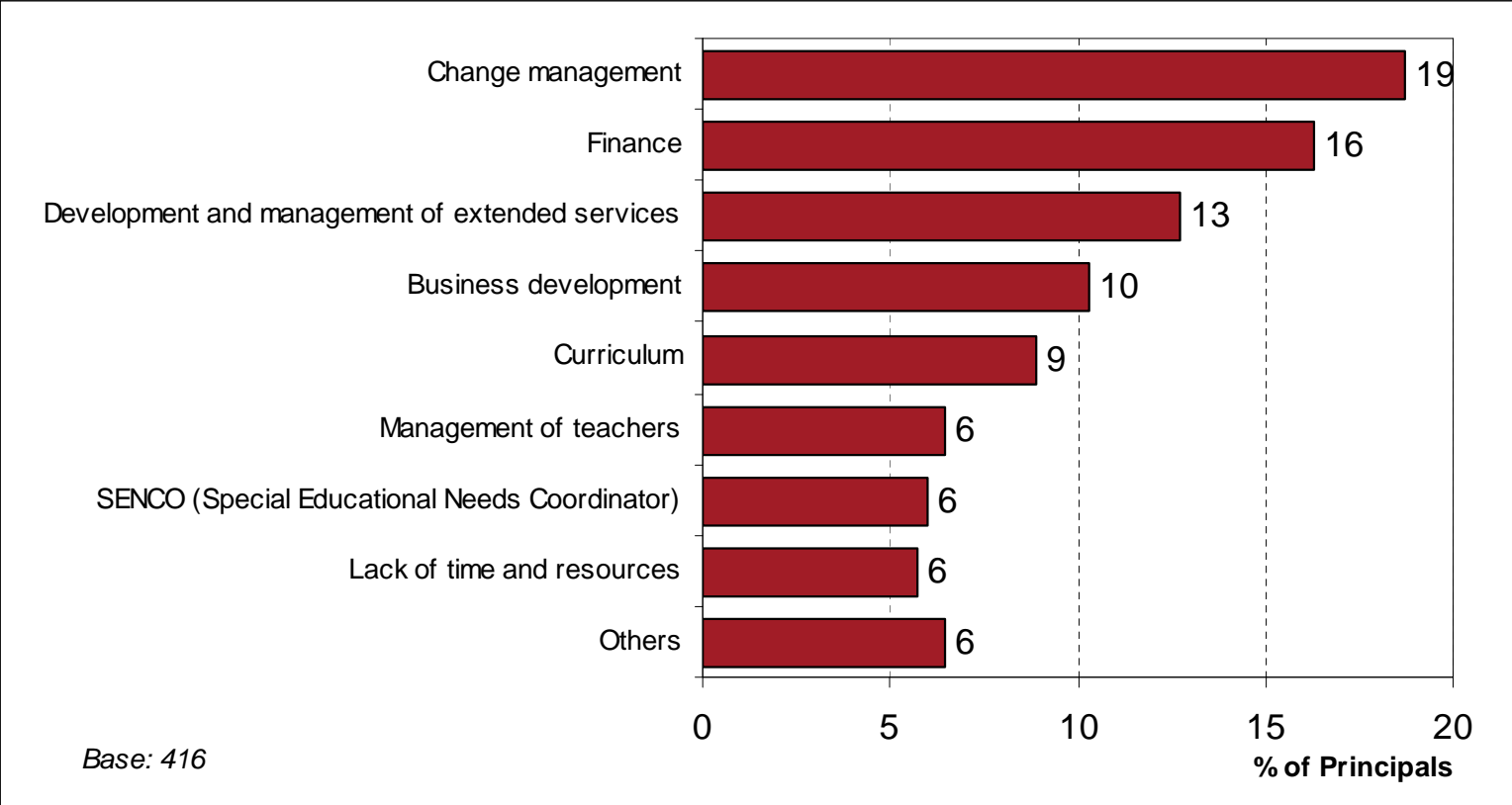
•98% of Voluntary school Principals consider distributed leadership in their schools as “effective” or “very effective”, compared to an overall average of 76%.

Have you identified any gaps in terms of expertise in your school leadership team?



•Voluntary Schools Principals are the most satisfied with the expertise of their SLT: 62% have identified no gaps.

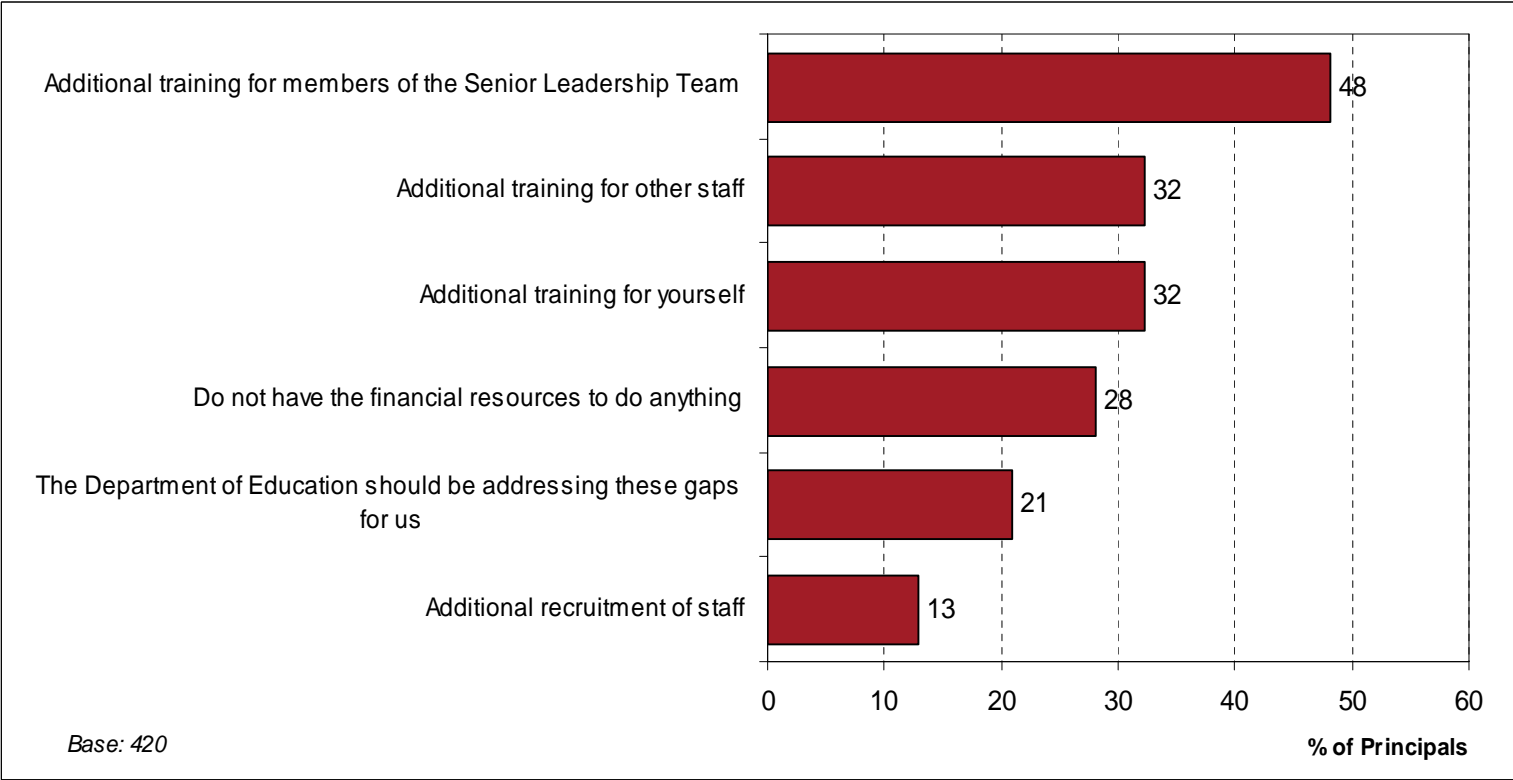
# What is the main gap that you have identified?



**Others include:**  
 Management of support staff: 5%  
 Communication skills: 4%

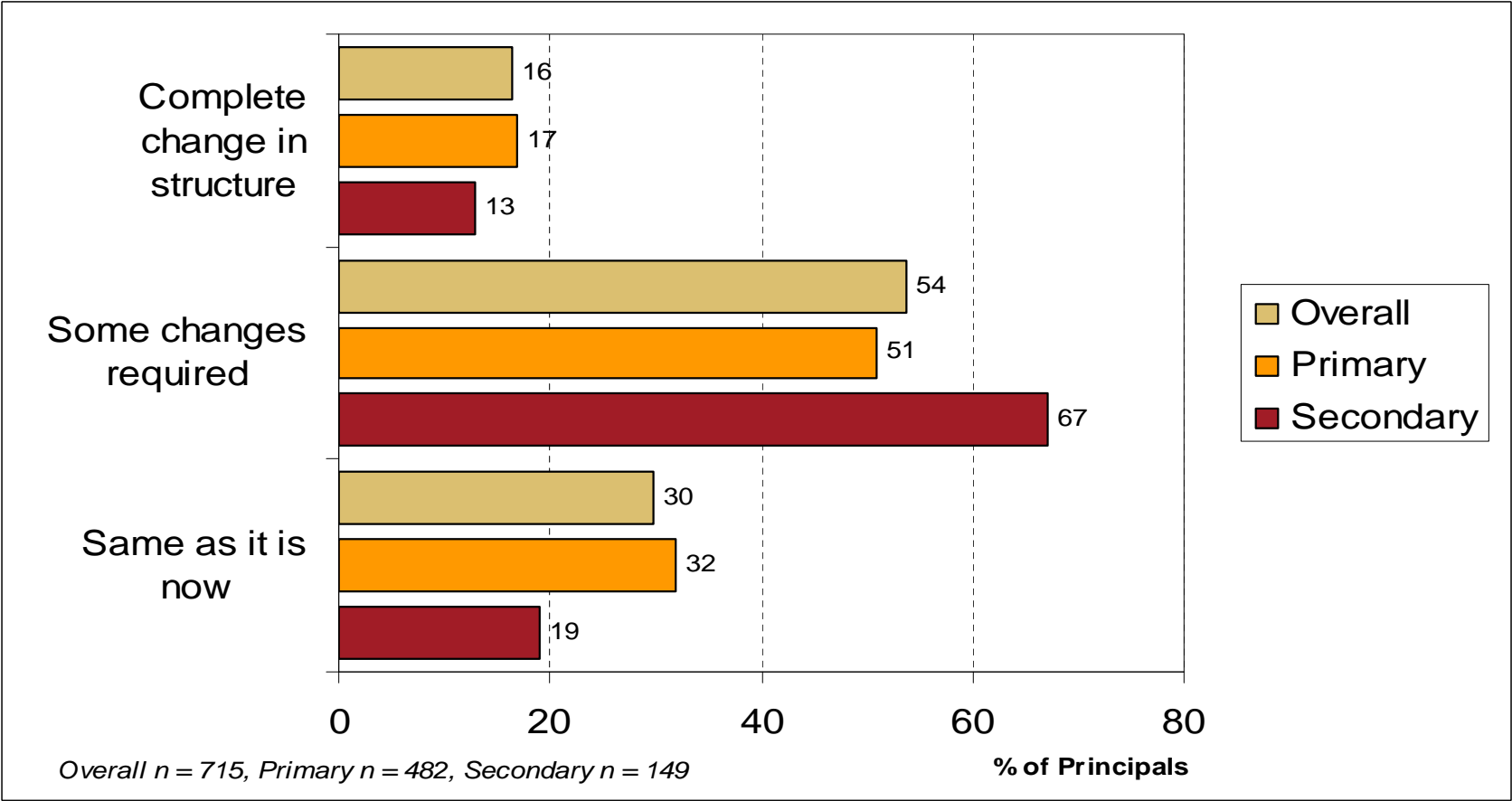
- All respondents, regardless of sector, status or gender, have identified similar gaps in expertise in the SLT.
- All respondents in England and Wales identify the development and management of extended services as the main gap; e.g. 32% of Secondary Heads compared to 16% of NI Secondary Principals.

# How will you address or how have you addressed this gap?



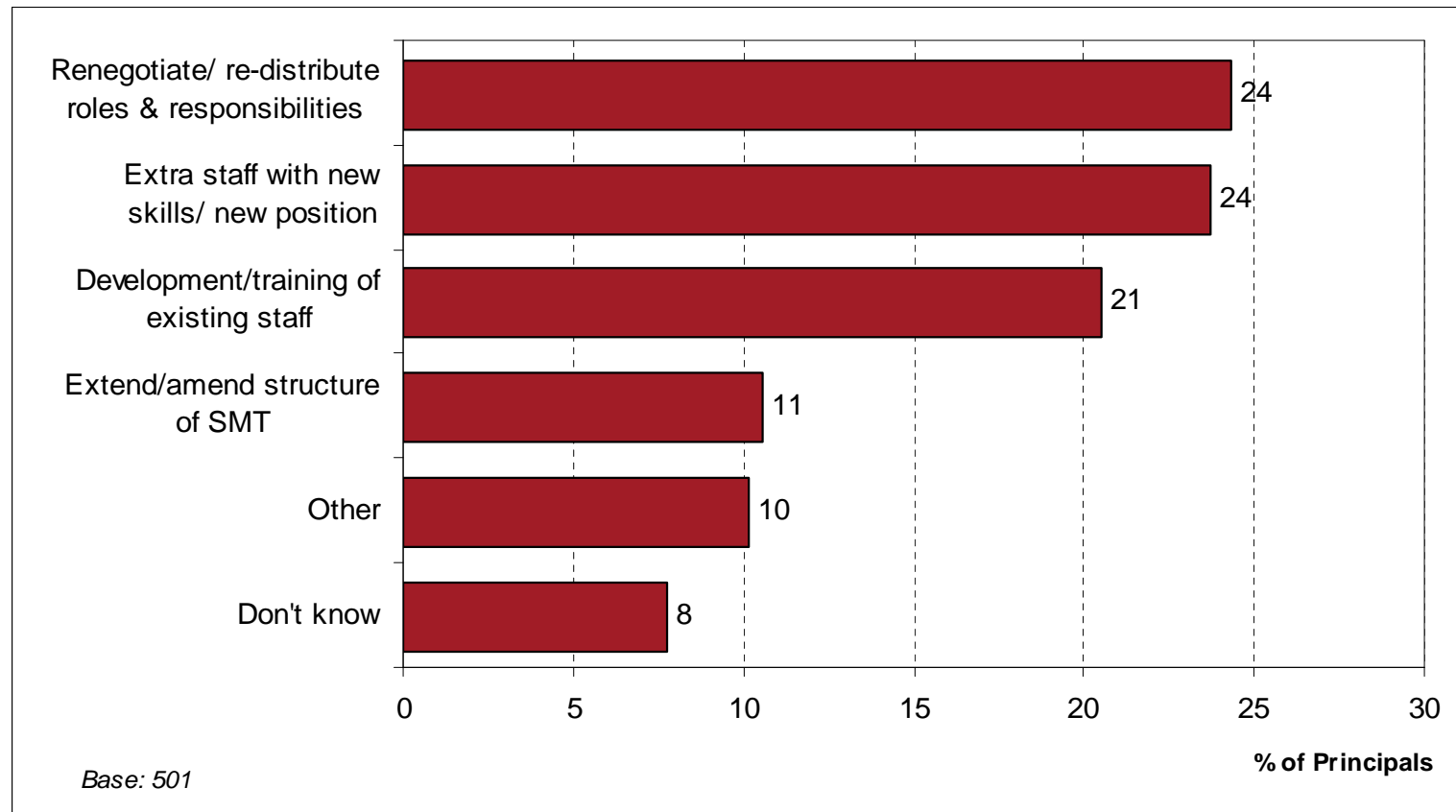
- 37% of female Principals intend to provide additional training for the SLT, compared to 59% of male Principals.
- 14% of Nursery Heads in England and Wales consider that the DfES should be addressing the gap, compared to 38% of NI Nursery Principals who identify this as a task for DE.

# In your opinion, what should the composition of your senior leadership team look like in 5 -10 years?



- Special school Principals are the most likely to advocate a complete change in structure of their SLT.

## What is the most important change you could make in terms of personnel or improving your teams skills to achieve this new composition?



### Other includes:

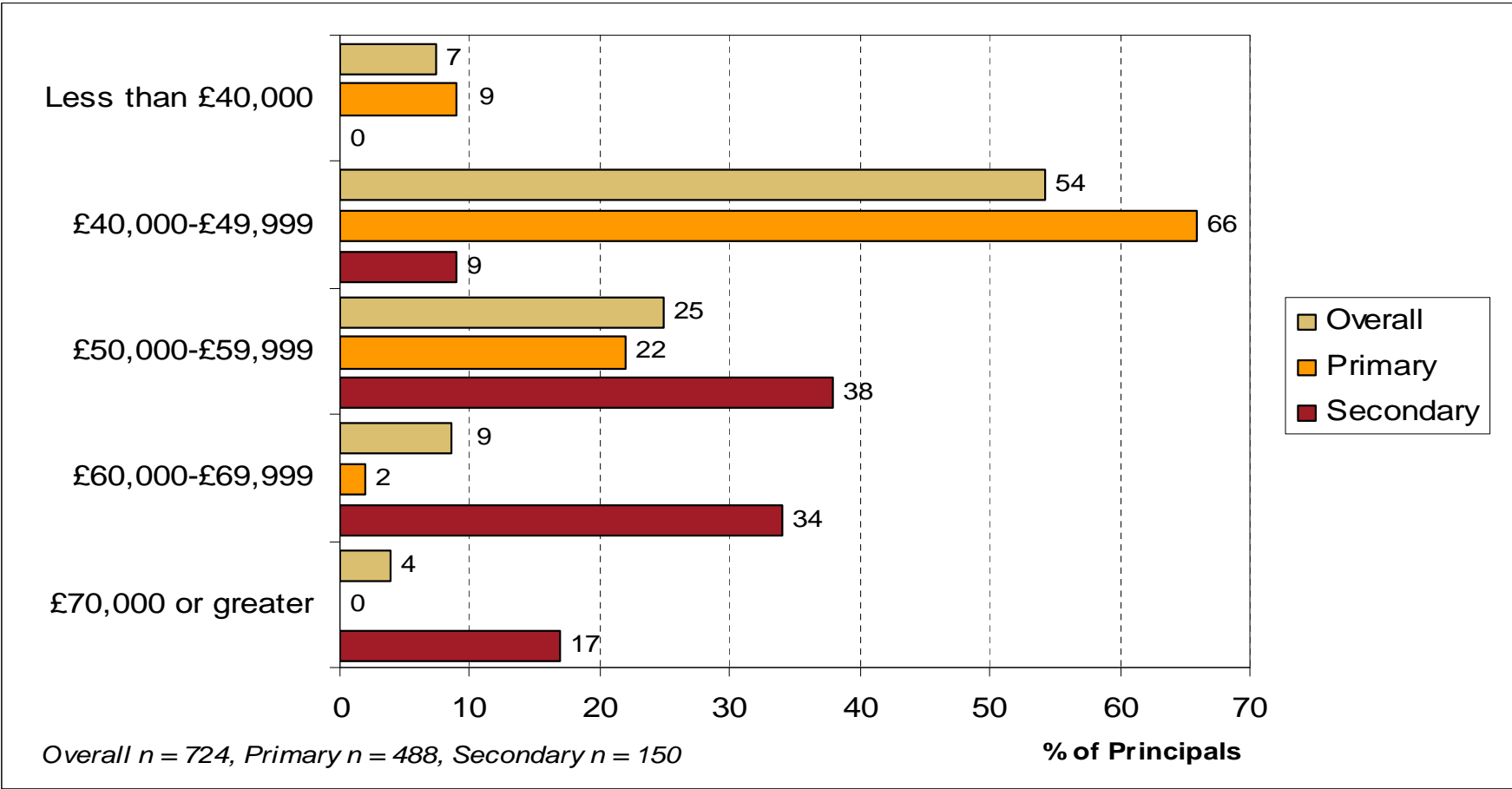
Become a non-teaching Principal: 16 respondents

More time for SLT on strategic issues: 9 respondents

- 43% of Special school Principals consider renegotiation and redistribution of responsibilities as the most important change.

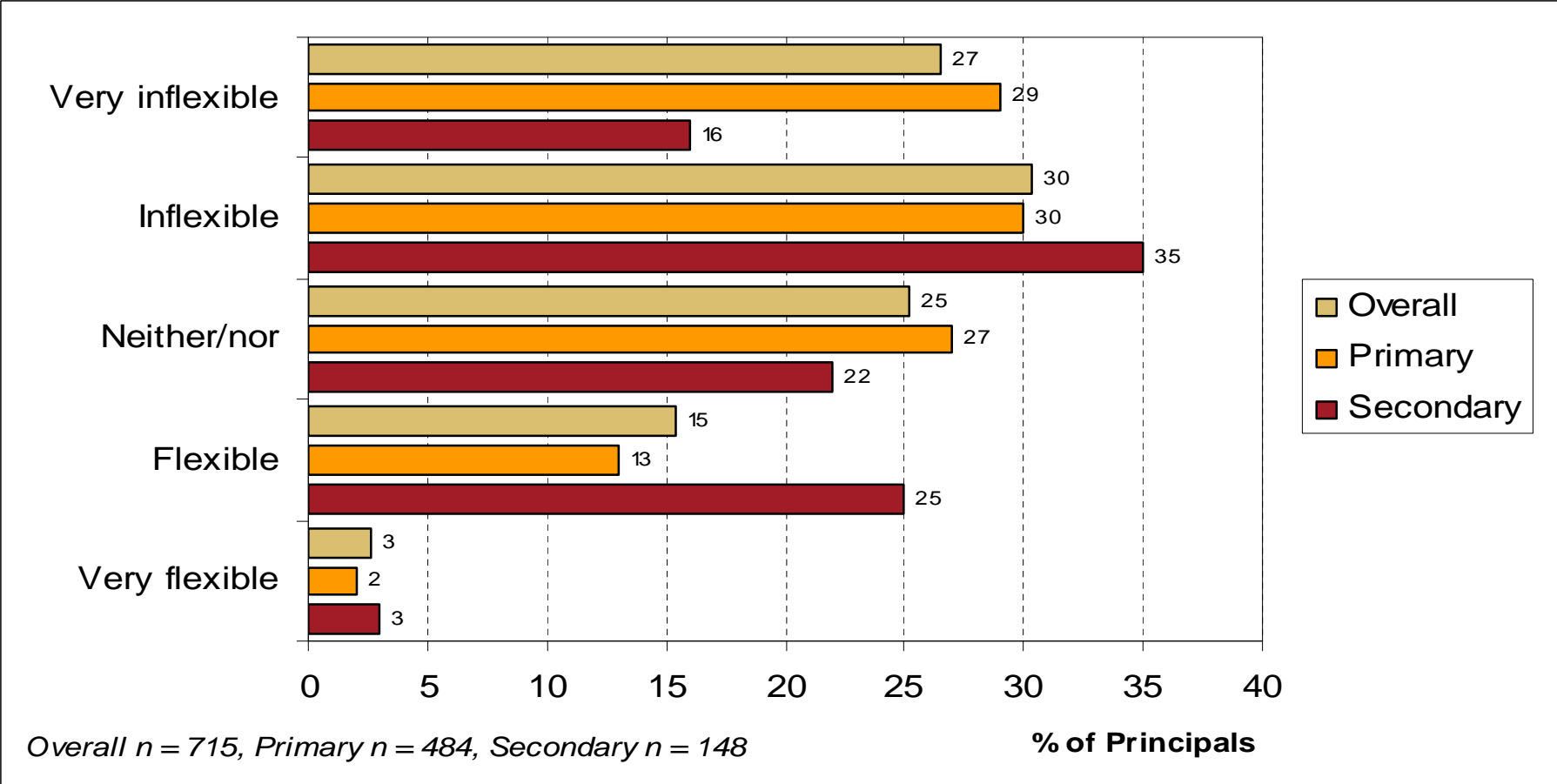
## c. Pay and Conditions

# Can you please indicate your current salary band?



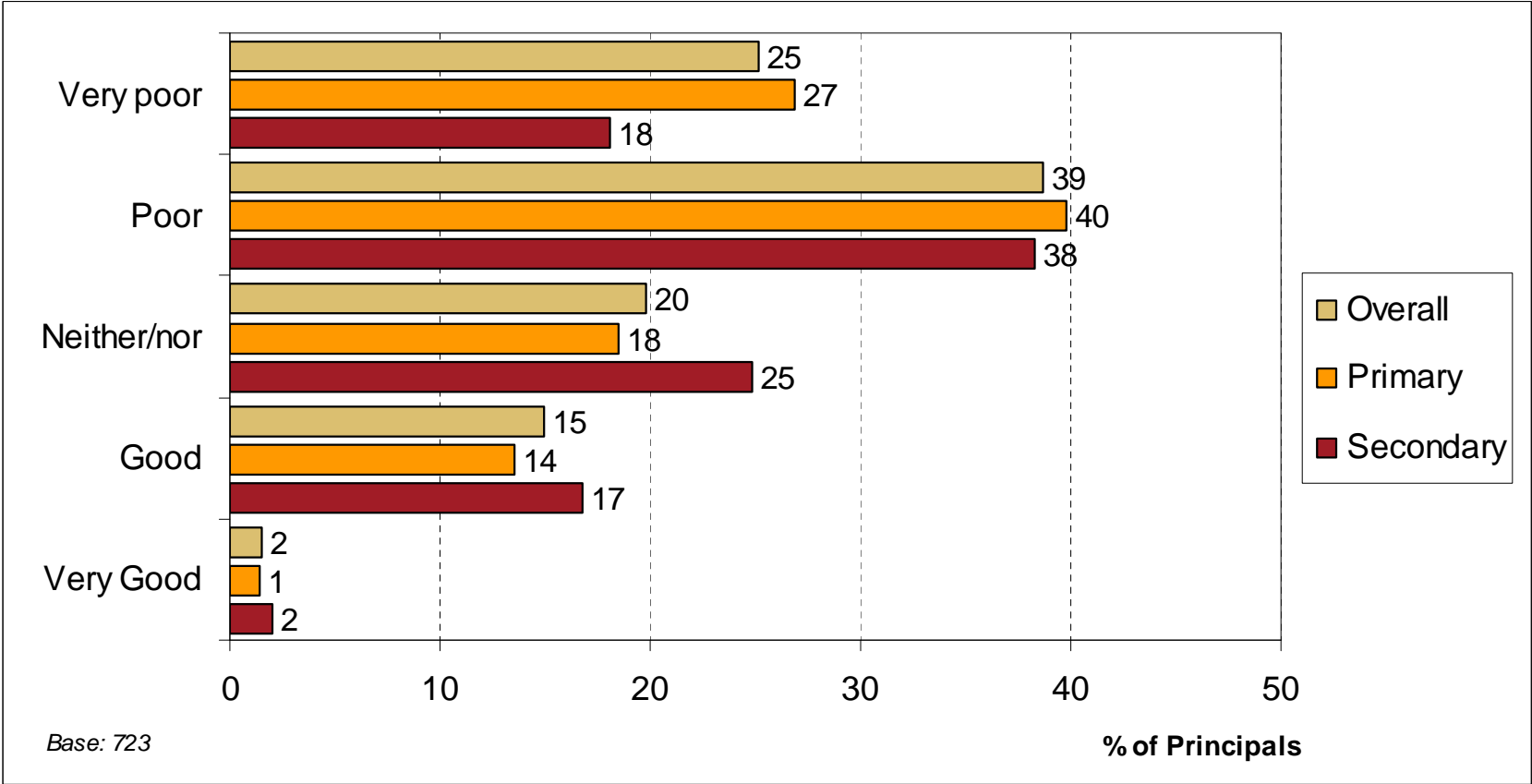
- 49% of male Principals earn more than £50,000 per annum, compared to 25% of female Principals.
- 51% of Secondary Heads in England and Wales earn more than £70,000 p.a. compared to 17% of NI Secondary Principals.

# How flexible, in practice, are the current reward structures and other terms and conditions in your school?



•59% of NI Primary Principals regard their reward structure as inflexible / very inflexible, as opposed to 40% of their counterparts in England and Wales.

# How would you describe your work-life balance?



•69% of Secondary Heads in England and Wales describe their work-life balance as (very) poor, compared with 56% of Secondary Principals in Northern Ireland.

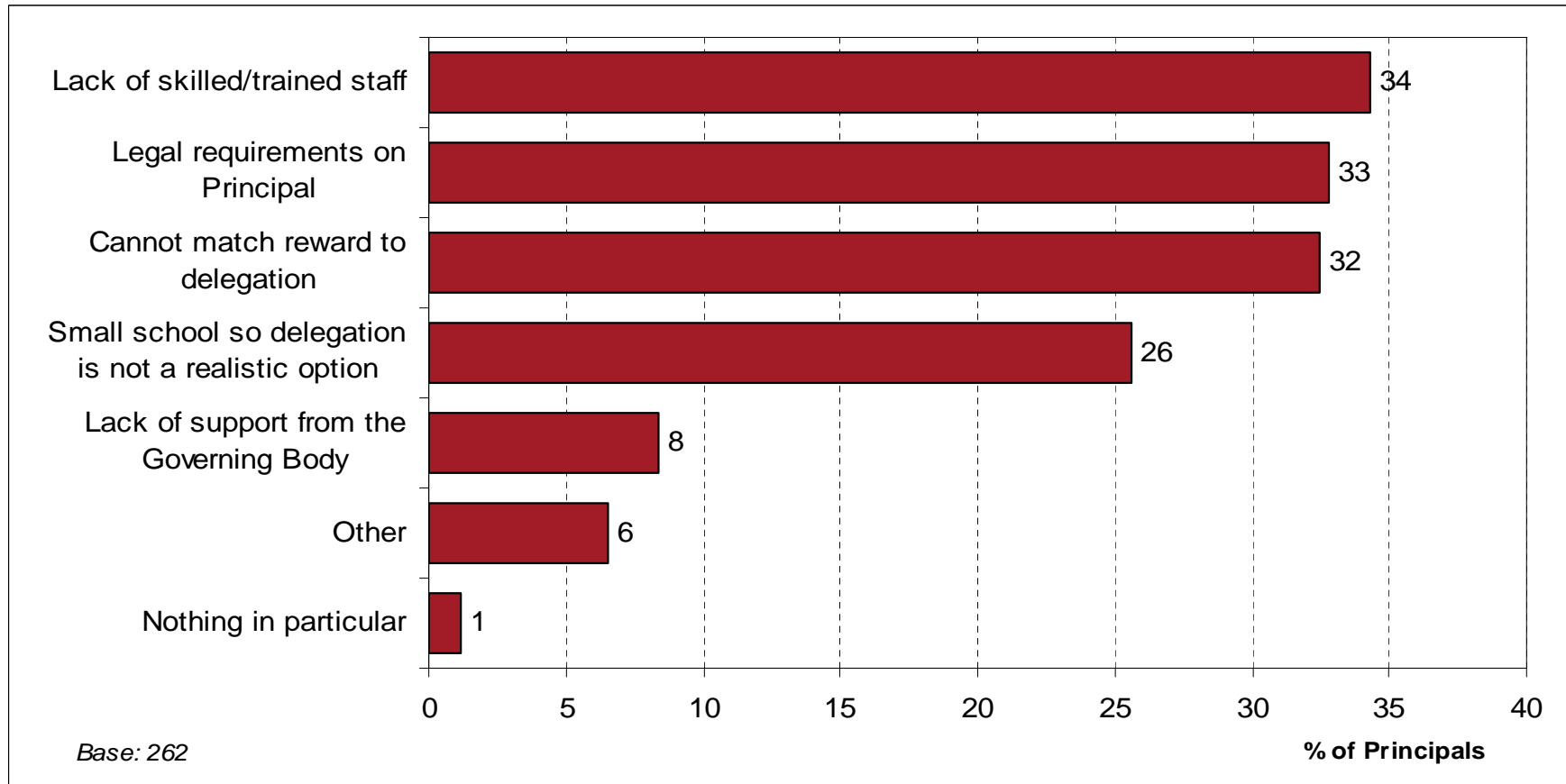
Thinking about the work you have undertaken in the last year, what responsibilities currently in your job description would you delegate if possible?

	Primary	Secondary	Overall
Management of support staff	38%	35%	36%
Finance	33%	36%	35%
Directing extended services	33%	29%	33%
Curriculum implementation	25%	28%	25%
SEN	26%	9%	24%
Monitoring and evaluation	23%	21%	21%
Teaching	23%	5%	19%
Implementing new ideas/initiatives	15%	14%	14%
Timetabling	11%	17%	12%
Leading teaching and learning	11%	11%	11%
Responsibility for pupils wellbeing	8%	10%	8%
Accountability	8%	7%	8%
Liaising with my Employing Authority	7%	7%	7%
Staff recruitment and retention	7%	3%	6%
School improvement planning	5%	9%	5%
Management of teachers	3%	6%	4%
Strategic vision	0%	1%	1%
<i>Overall n = 724, Primary n = 488, Secondary n = 150</i>			

- Nursery school Principals are the least enthusiastic about delegating the management of support staff.

## What are the barriers, if any, to delegating these responsibilities?

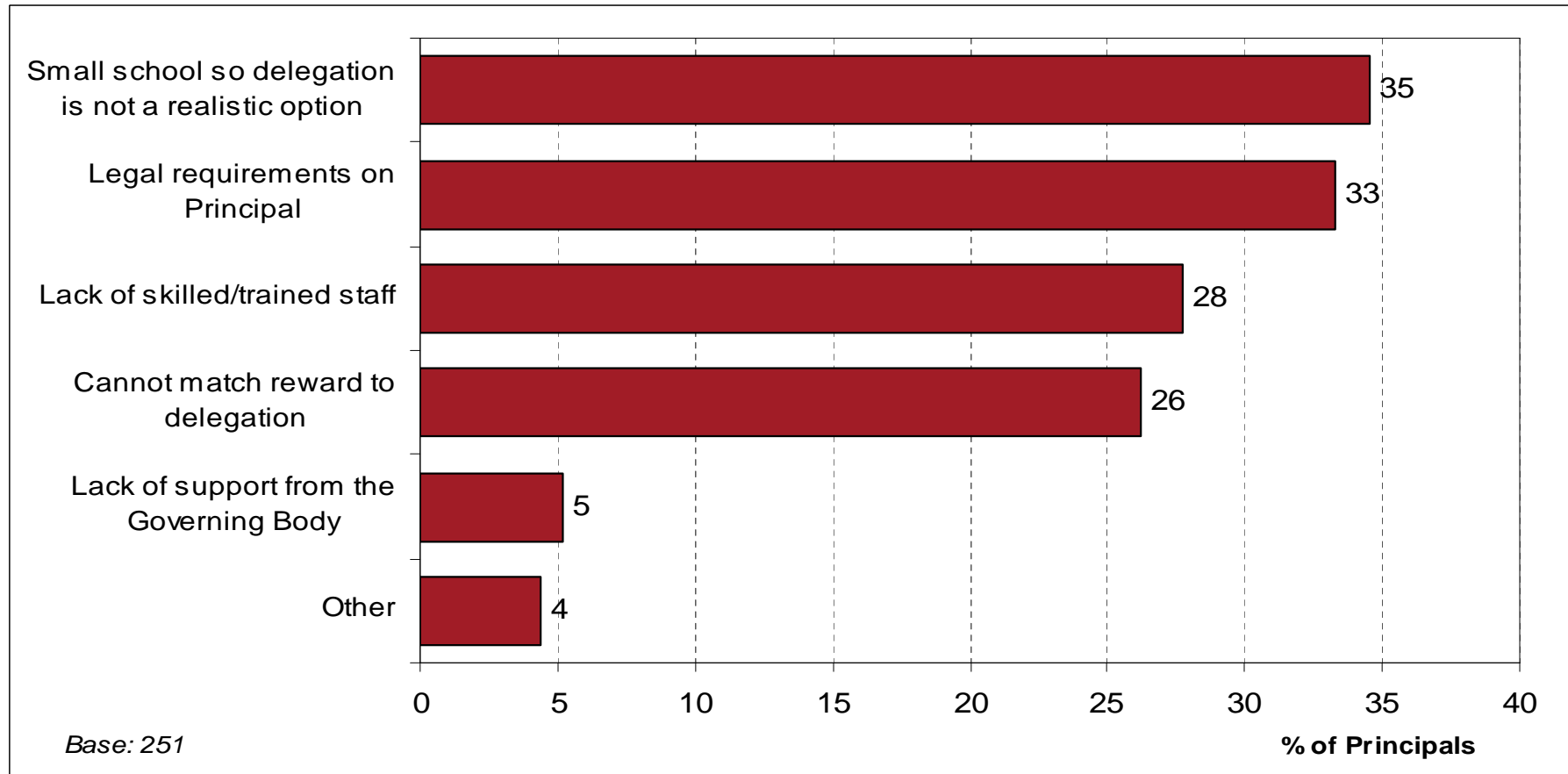
(All who would delegate management of support staff if possible)



- 46% of Secondary school Principals regard lack of skilled / trained staff as a barrier.

## What are the barriers, if any, to delegating these responsibilities?

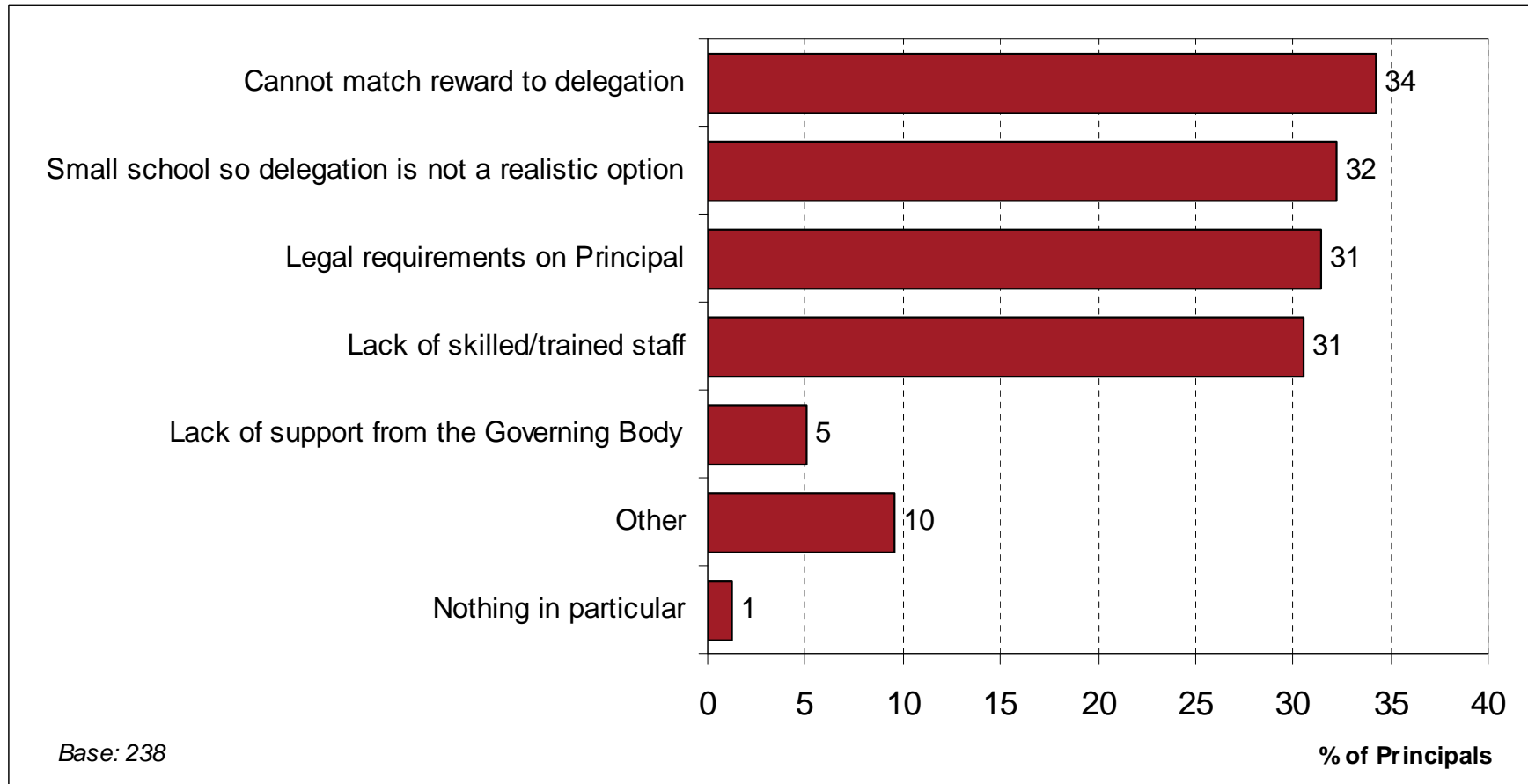
(All who would delegate finance if possible)



- 50% of Secondary school Principals identify the lack of skilled / trained staff as a barrier.
- 19% of Maintained school Principals identify the lack of skilled / trained staff as a barrier.

## What are the barriers, if any, to delegating these responsibilities?

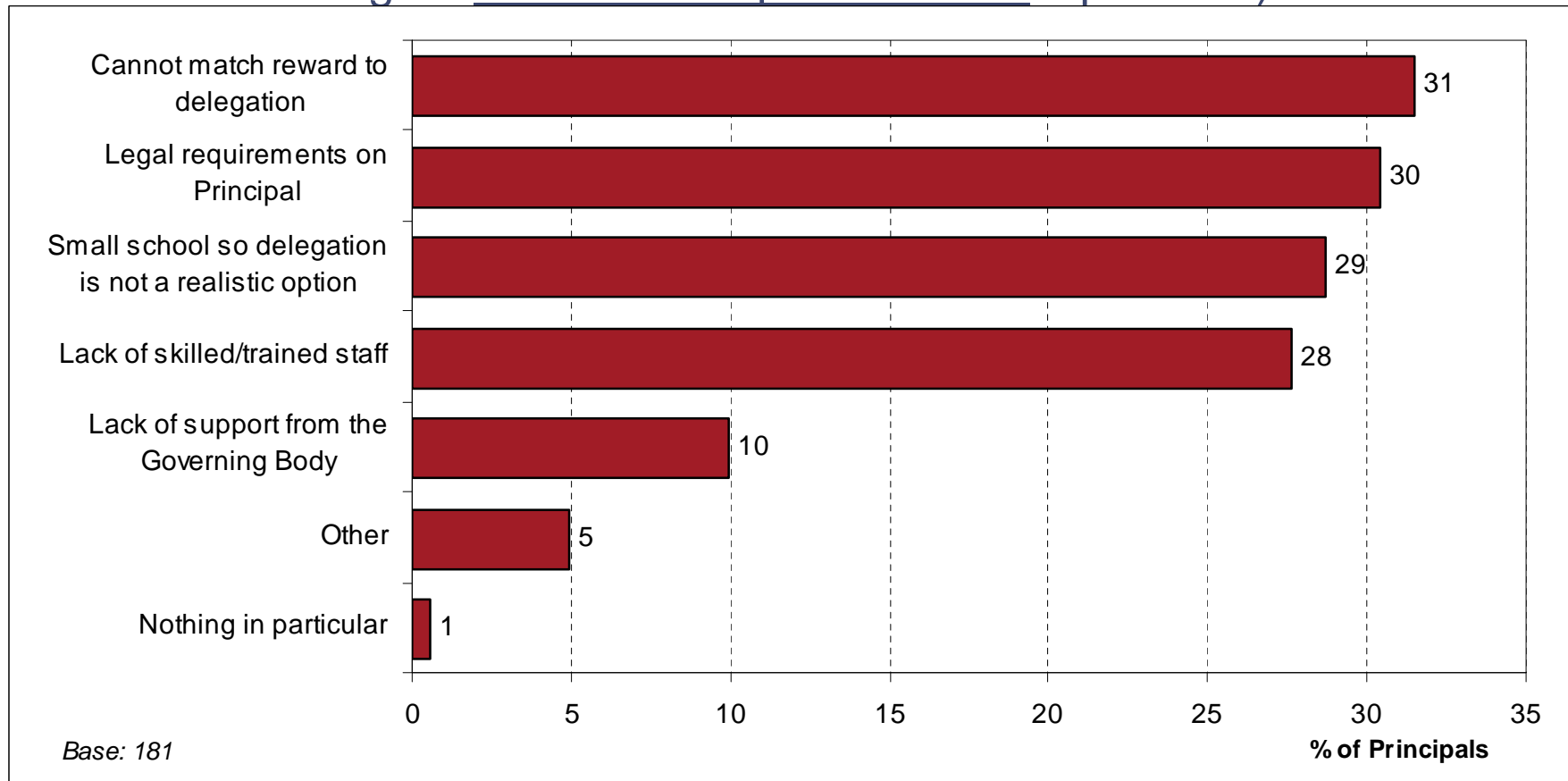
(All who would delegate directing extended services if possible)



- 42% of Secondary school Principals cite lack of skilled / trained staff as a barrier.

## What are the barriers, if any, to delegating these responsibilities?

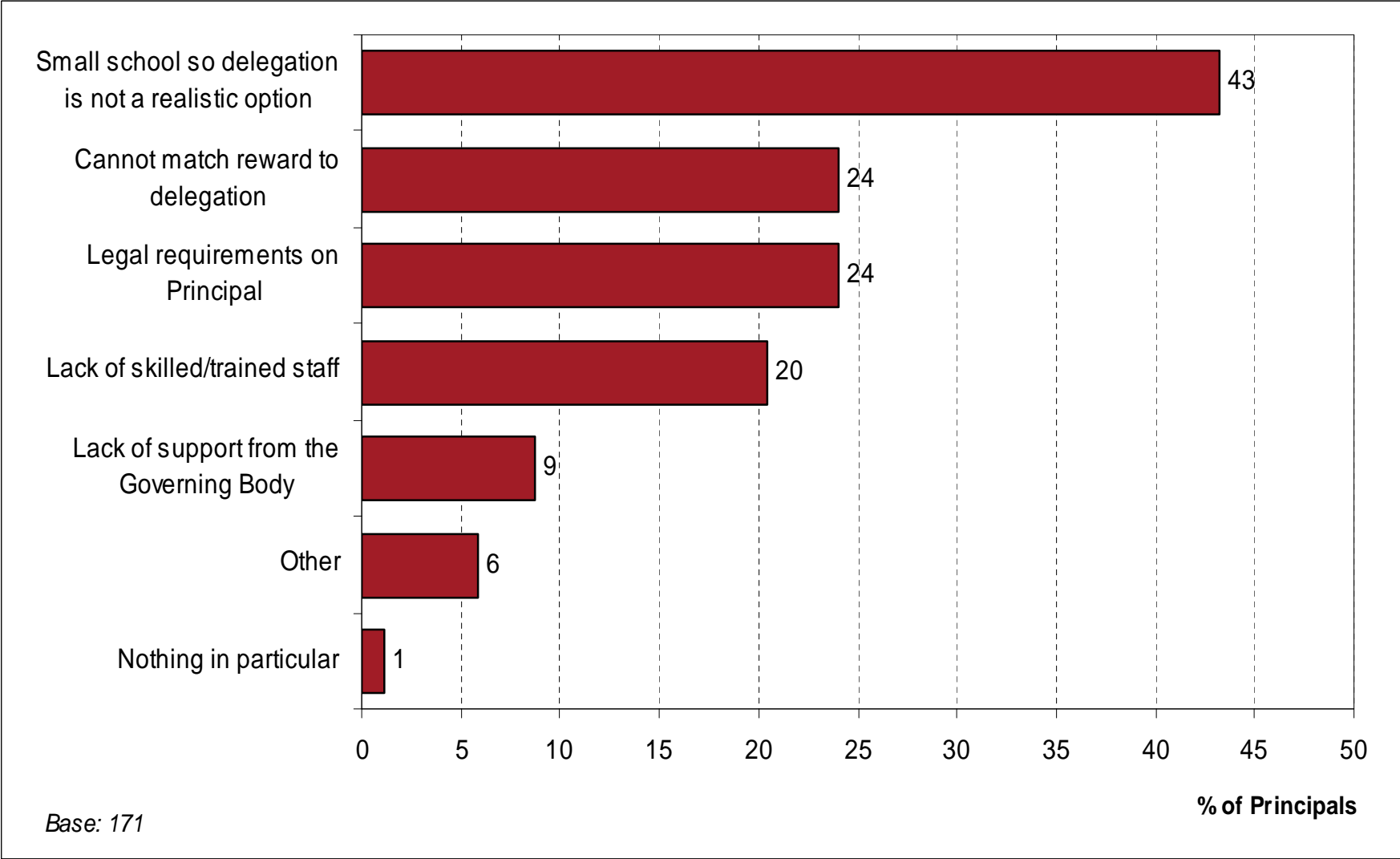
(All who would delegate curriculum implementation if possible)



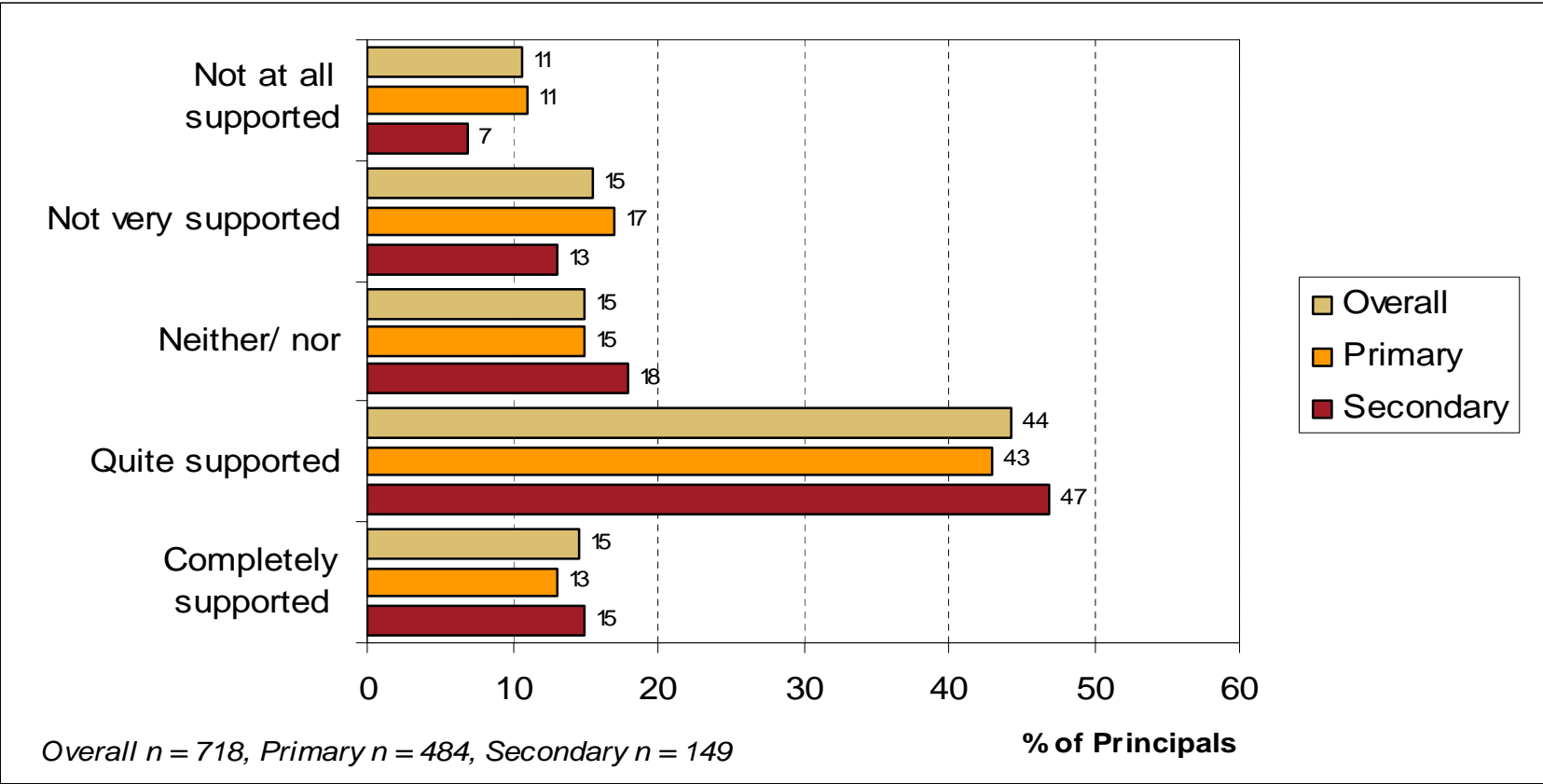
- 48% of Secondary school Principals regard the legal requirements on the Principal as a barrier.

# What are the barriers, if any, to delegating these responsibilities?

(All who would delegate SEN if possible)

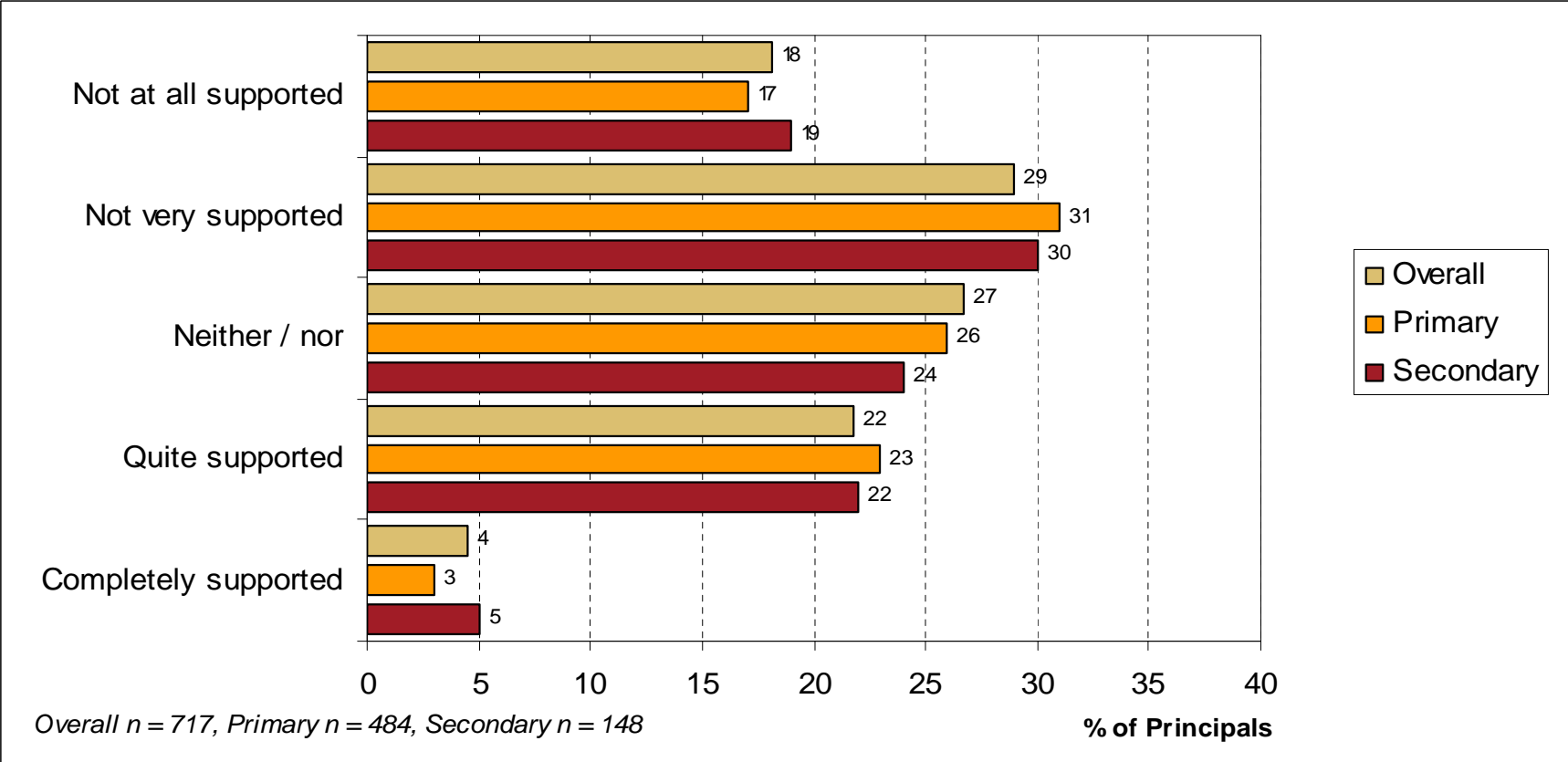


# How would you rate the level of support you receive from your *personal* support networks?



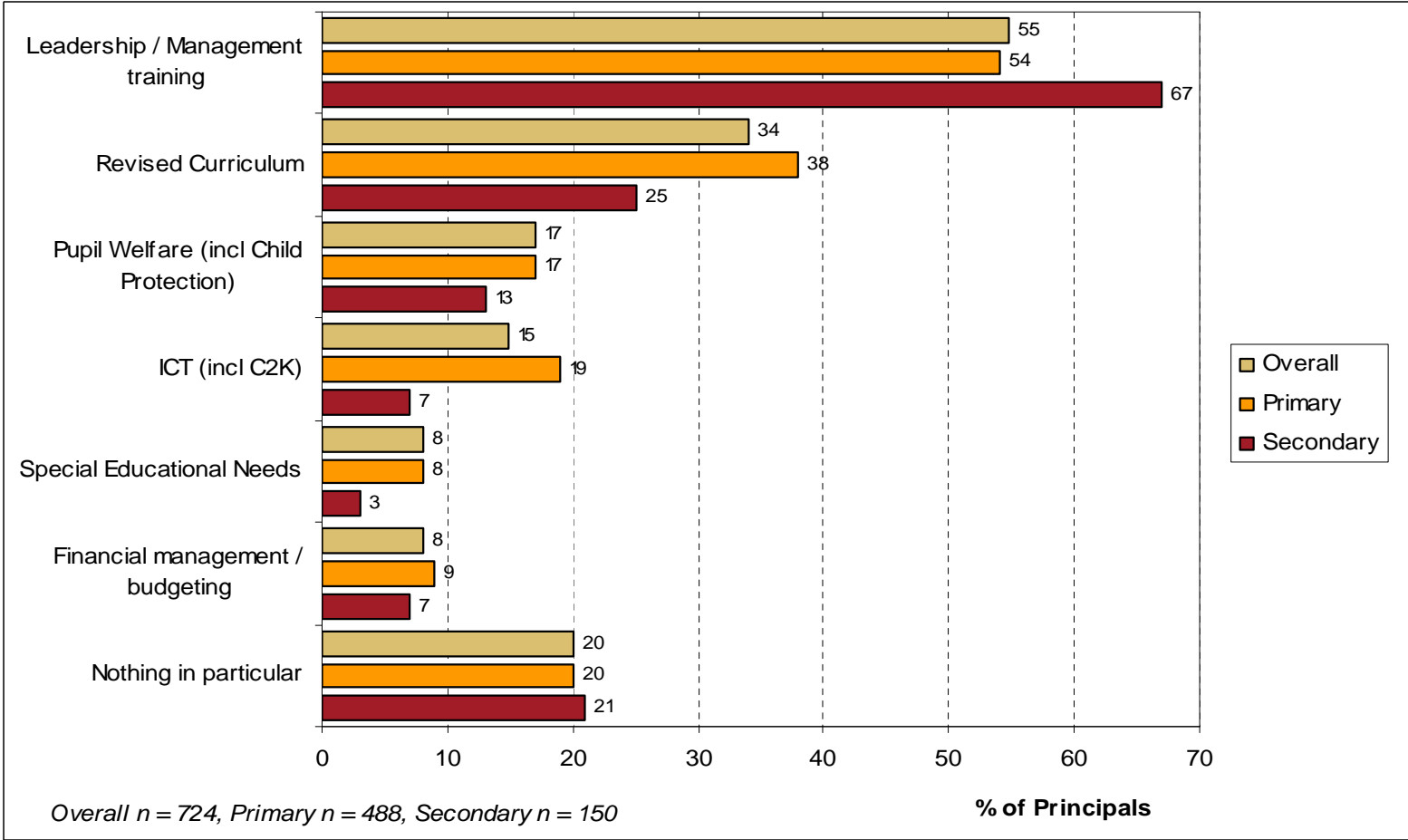
•68% of Primary Heads in England and Wales feel “quite” or “completely” supported by their personal networks; this compares to 56% of Primary Principals in NI.

# How would you rate the level of support you receive from your *professional* support network?



- Overall, respondents are less confident in professional support networks than personal support networks.
- 45% of Primary Heads in England and Wales feel “quite” or “completely” supported by their professional networks, as opposed to 26% of Primary Principals in NI.

# List the training you have received over the past three years



- 55% of Principals responded that they had received Leadership / Management training over the past 3 years.
- 20% of Principals stated ‘Nothing in particular’ to training they had received , therefore 80% have received some form of training.

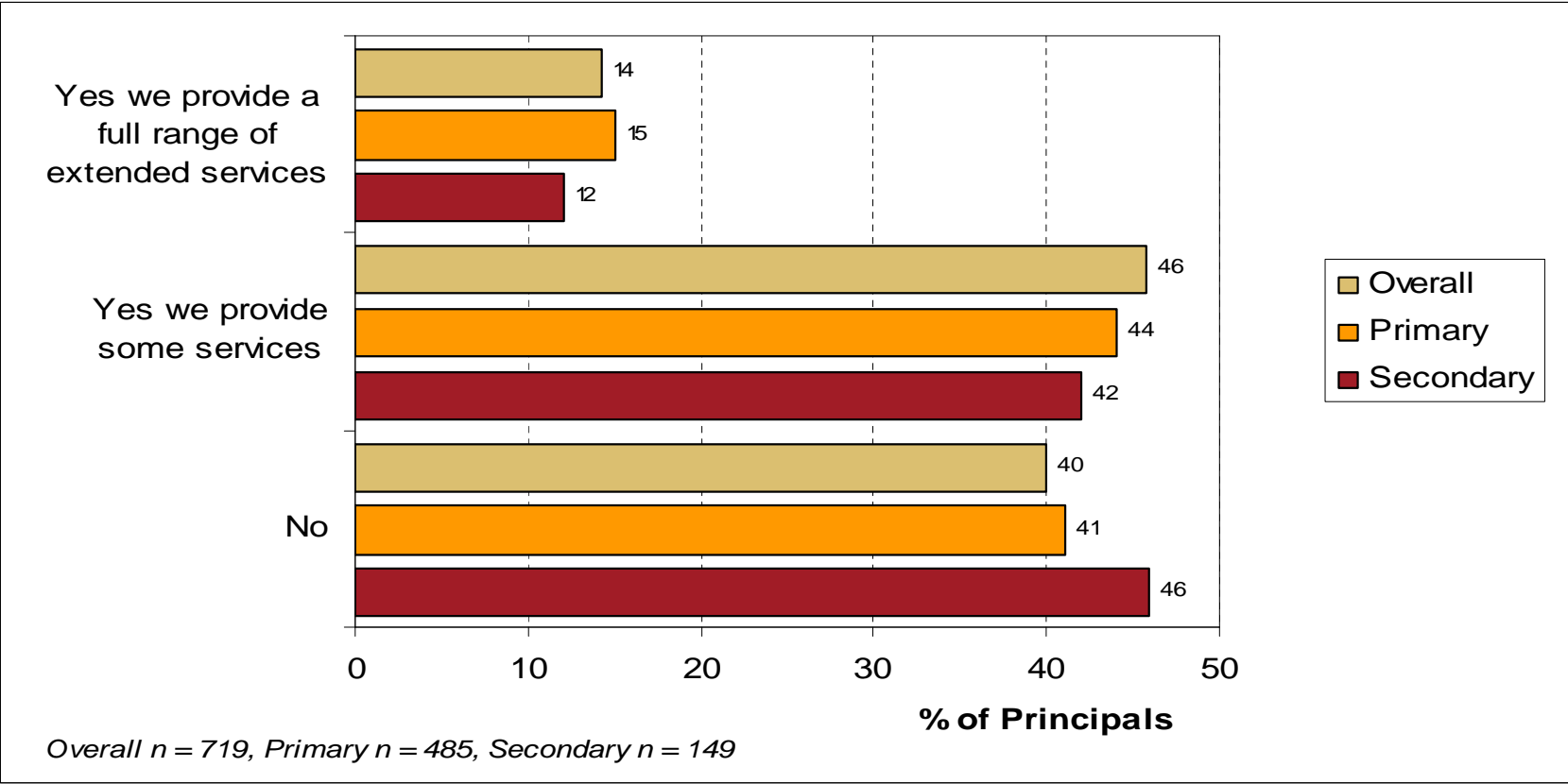
## Which one factor has the most influence on keeping you in your post?

	Primary	Secondary	Overall
Contact with pupils	21%	17%	21%
Personal challenge	19%	25%	19%
Success of the school	16%	19%	17%
Making a contribution to the community	13%	15%	13%
Relationship with colleagues	6%	5%	6%
Other	5%	6%	5%
Reward	5%	3%	5%
Reputation of the school	3%	4%	3%
Job satisfaction	3%	2%	3%
Content of work	2%	1%	2%
Nothing in particular	2%	3%	2%
Regular teaching commitment	2%	0%	2%
Location of the school	2%	1%	2%
Personal autonomy	1%	0%	1%
<i>Overall n = 720, Primary n = 486, Secondary n = 149</i>			

- 28% of Integrated school Principals remain in their post for the success of the school.
- 27% of Nursery Heads in England and Wales mention making a contribution to the community as a factor; this compares to 13% of NI Nursery Principals.

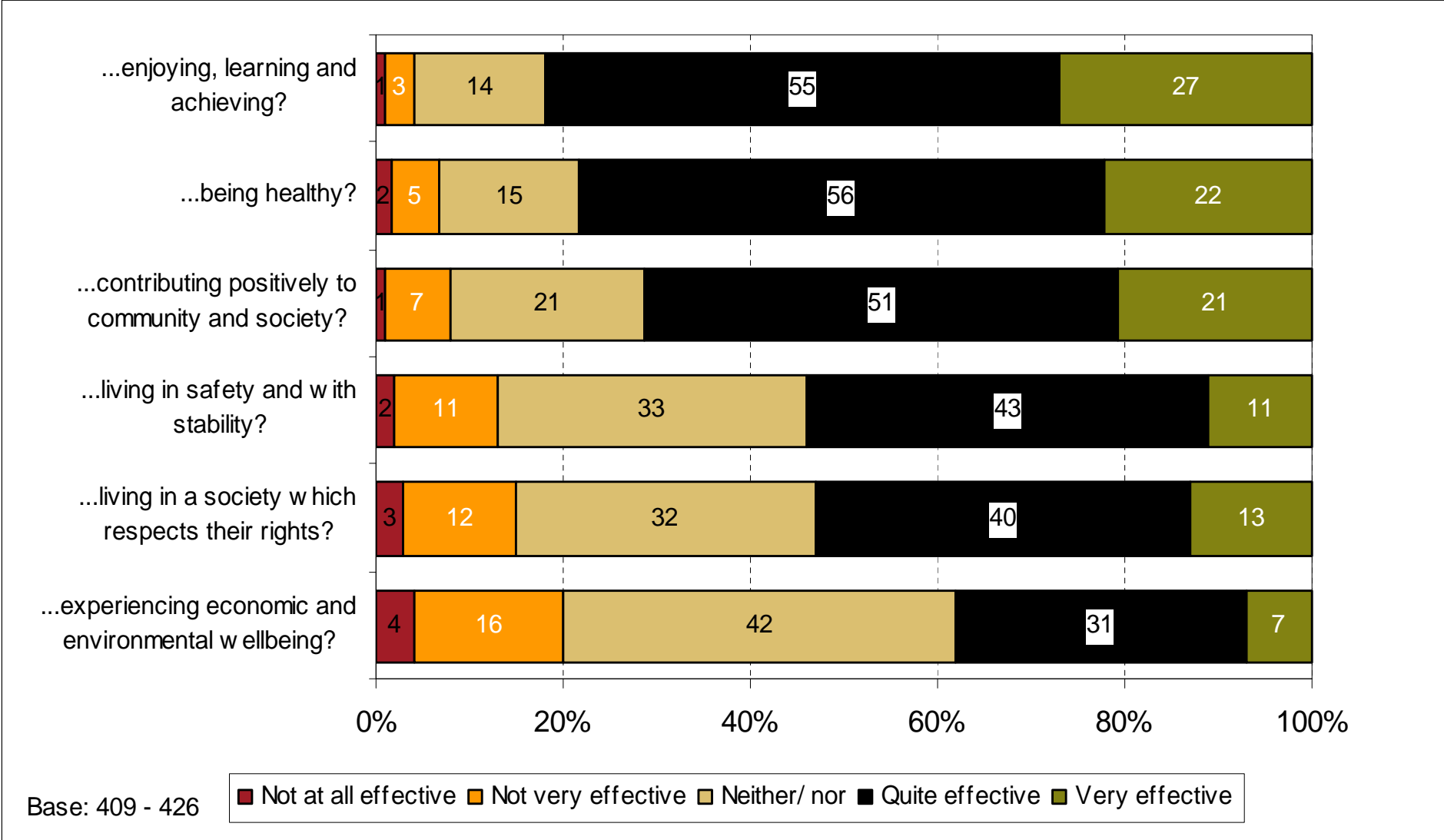
## d. Extended Service Provision and Collaboration

# Does your school offer extended services?

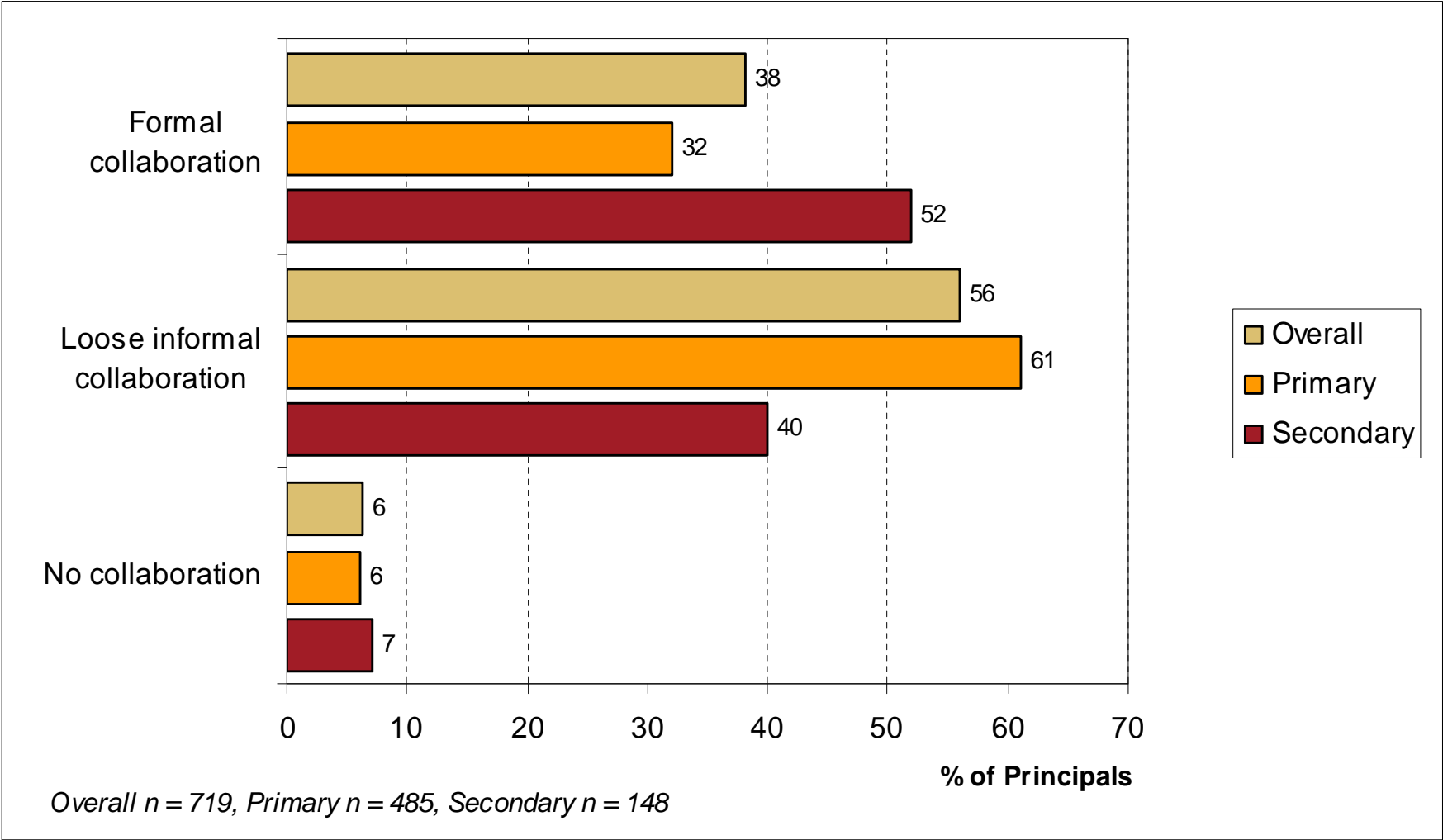


- 74% of Primary Heads in England and Wales offer “some” extended services, compared 44% of their NI counterparts.
- 74% of Secondary Heads in England and Wales offer “some” extended services, compared 42% of their NI counterparts.

# How effective do you think extended services will be in terms of pupils...



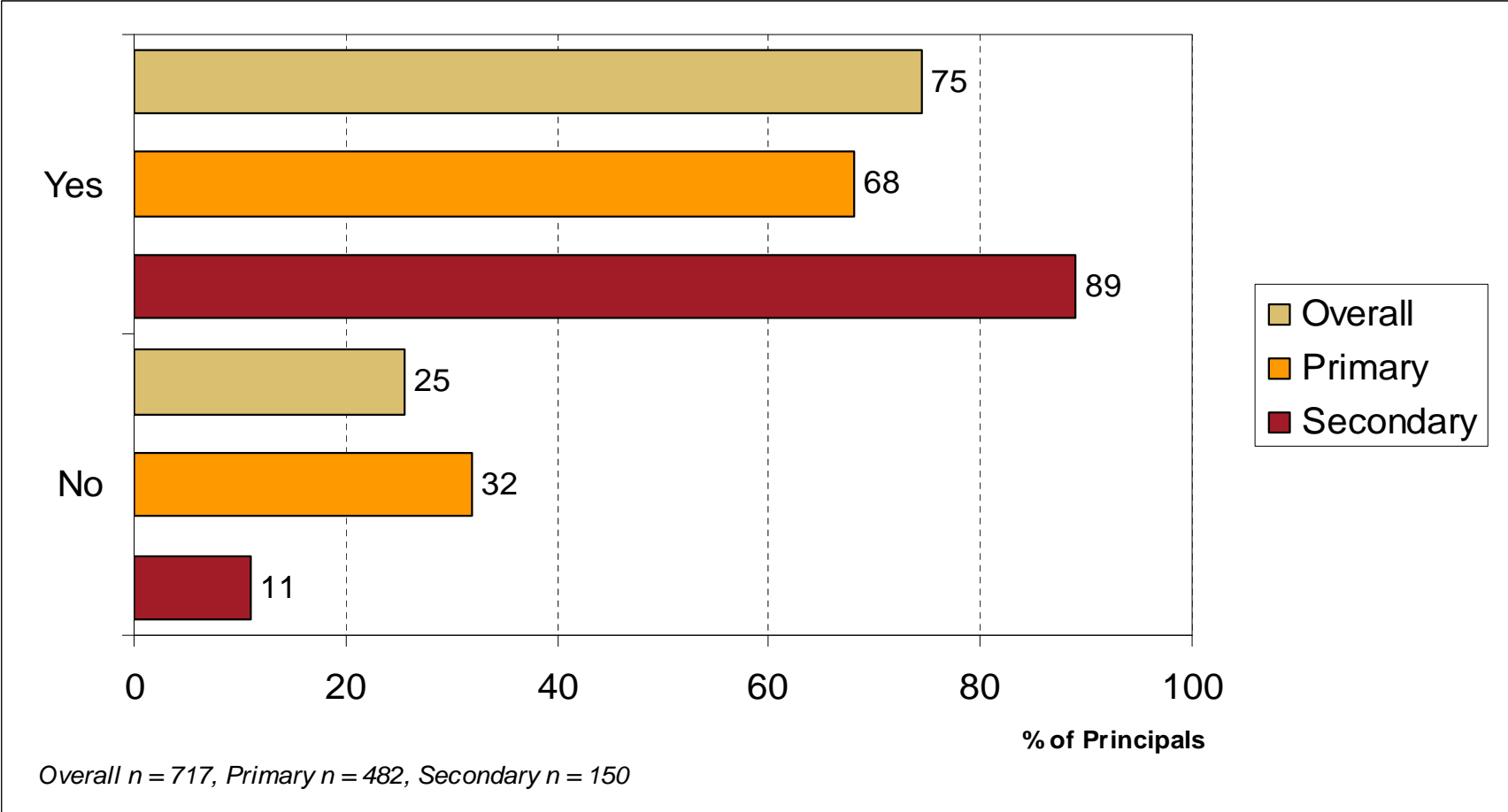
# Which of the following collaboration arrangements best describes your schools links with other schools?



## What is the biggest benefit for your school from this collaboration?

	Primary	Secondary	Overall
Smoother transition of pupils from feeder schools	17%	8%	17%
Better entitlement for 14-19 year olds	0%	57%	14%
More sports and arts activities	19%	2%	13%
More extended services	14%	4%	11%
Improved curriculum	11%	14%	11%
Training and development for staff	10%	5%	8%
Development of own staff from supporting other schools	8%	2%	7%
Other	6%	1%	6%
Better strategic leadership	5%	2%	5%
There are no benefits	4%	3%	4%
Improved community relations/cross community relations	4%	2%	4%
<i>Overall n = 665, Primary n = 448, Secondary n = 136</i>			

# Do you have any collaboration with other external organisations?



•90% of Voluntary school Principals have links with external organisations.

## What are these collaborations?

	Primary	Secondary	Overall
Health and social care providers/professionals	66%	50%	65%
Further Education	37%	79%	51%
Other training providers	39%	36%	39%
The business community	41%	41%	38%
The voluntary sector/not-for-profit organisations	40%	22%	34%
Higher Education	26%	43%	32%
Childcare providers	34%	9%	28%
Career services	6%	78%	28%
Others	12%	4%	9%
<i>Overall n = 534, Primary n = 326, Secondary n = 133</i>			

- 73% of female Principals collaborate with Health and Social Care providers / professionals; this compares with 59% of male Principals.
- 65% of Secondary Heads in England and Wales have links with the Business Community, as opposed to 41% of Secondary Principals in NI.

## Are there any other comments you would like to make regarding the future of school leadership in Northern Ireland?

	Primary	Secondary	Nursery	Special	Overall
Excessive workload / poor worklife balance	43%	21%	30%	21%	37%
Improved access to training / more support from government parents and staff	20%	19%	13%	24%	20%
Insufficient resources to implement change	15%	3%	11%	6%	12%
The pace / uncertainty of change is having an impact on school leadership	8%	11%	2%	12%	8%
Need high quality leadership which is involved more in decision making	6%	13%	4%	6%	8%
Salaries should be improved	3%	5%	8%	3%	3%
All schools/pupils should be treated equally	3%	3%	2%	3%	3%
Other	4%	8%	0%	0%	4%
<b>Overall n</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>725</b>

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