

SUMMARY OF SEN POLICY RESEARCH FORUM COVID QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Comparison of agree and agree strongly with disagree and disagree strongly with pooled neutral, do not know or not apply. Most frequent is in bold and when more than twice other values in red+bold

Participants, n=100

Teachers (early years, **primary**, secondary, **SENCOs**, special, senior, **headteachers**), **parent of children/young people with SEN/D**, **advisory/support teachers and professionals**, consultants, academic/researchers, teacher educators/trainers. **(in bold n>10)**

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

1. There has been strong mental health and wellbeing support of all members of your school community or ones you are connected to during the pandemic

Agree 48.5%; disagree 32.4%; neutral, DK, n/a 19.2%

2. There have been more access problems to mental health therapies for children and young people in this setting than before the pandemic.

Agree 58.2%; disagree 20.4% neutral, DK, n/a 21.4%

SENIOR LEADERSHIP

3. Head teachers have been under a lot of pressure to support staff, pupils and families during the pandemic.

Agree 42.4%; disagree 28.3%; neutral, DK, n/a 39.4%

4. School leadership teams have been very important for adopting an effective whole school approach to SEND during the pandemic.

Agree 83.7%; disagree 7.2% ; neutral, DK, n/a 9.2%

CHALLENGE AND SUPPORT

5. Teachers in my setting/s have had access to the support which they have needed.

Agree 42.4%; disagree 30.3%; neutral, DK, n/a 39.4%

6. Outside agencies in my setting/s, e.g. educational psychology services, speech and language therapy services, have functioned as close to how they did before the pandemic.

Agree 65.7%; disagree 24.3% ; neutral, DK, n/a 15.2%

HOME LEARNING AND PARENTS OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SEN / DISABILITIES IN MY SETTING/S

7. Some pupils with SEN/D struggled to access the online learning on offer.

Agree 91%; disagree 3%; neutral, DK, n/a 6%

8. Some parents of pupils with SEND needed some support for their children to use and access home learning effectively.

Agree 95%; disagree 0%; neutral, DK, n/a 5%

COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION

9. SENCos have collaborated across schools to support each other and exchange advice, resources/materials and guidance.

Agree 46.5% ; disagree 21.2%; **neutral, DK, n/a 48.5%**

10. Official guidance and information (e.g. from Govt) sent to schools regarding Covid has been useful, accurate and timely.

Agree 8.1% ; **disagree 68.7%**; neutral, DK, n/a 23.2%

CHANGE IN GENERAL APPROACH

12. Both wellbeing and academic learning (catch-up) should be given equal priority In school recovery plans.

Agree 96%; disagree 3% ; neutral, DK, n/a 1%

13. Schools need permission to innovate more.

Agree 78% ; disagree 8% ; neutral, DK, n/a 14%

14. Could these lessons be learned from the pandemic?

a. Some children learn better at home than school

Agree 68% ; disagree 15% ; neutral, DK, n/a 17%

b. Blended learning opportunities can enable future learning outside classrooms

Agree 68.7% ; disagree 13.2% ; neutral, DK, n/a 18.2%

c. Some removal of accountability measures showed how teachers could be flexible in meeting the needs of all children

Agree 66%; disagree 12% ; neutral, DK, n/a 22%

d. Assessment should be focussed on what is important to learn rather than just what can be measured

Agree 95%; disagree 1%; neutral, DK, n/a 4%

e. Success should be measured for all pupils in terms of their starting points.

Agree 98% ; disagree 0% ; neutral, DK, n/a 2%

f. Renewed appreciation of the need for a diversity of teaching approaches; no one strategy that will fit all

Agree. 93% ; disagree 0% ; neutral, DK, n/a. 7%

g. How SEND interventions can benefit the whole population.

Agree 93% ; disagree 0% ; neutral, DK, n/a. 7%

h. Bubbles of children were calmer for unstructured time.

Agree 42%; disagree 10%; **neutral, DK, n/a 47%**

i. Renewed appreciation of the need for diversity of teaching approaches: no one strategy that will fit all.

Agree 93%; disagree 0% ; neutral, DK, n/a. 7%

ij. Staggered starts and softer routines at break and lunch were beneficial.

Agree 60% ; disagree 13% ; neutral, DK, n/a 27%

k. Online communication with parents had a positive impact on relationship building between home and schools

Agree 65%; disagree 18%; neutral, DK, n/a 16%

l. Positive ways have been developed by schools for addressing mental health issues.

Agree 45%; disagree 23% ; neutral, DK, n/a 32%

m. Virtual meeting technology is time saving and reduces travel times, e.g. in multi-disciplinary and annual review meetings.

Agree 79%; disagree 5%; neutral, DK, n/a. 16%

n. It is important that there is a national plan for dealing with any future lockdowns/major disruption on the scale of Covid.

Agree 97%; disagree 2%; neutral, DK, n/a. 1%

How probable is it that the above lessons learned from the pandemic will influence policy and practice? (Scale 0-4)

in your setting?

Low (0-1) 20%; **High(3-4) 41%**; Don't know, n/a 24%

in your local area?

Low (0-1) 32%; High(3-4) 20% ; Don't know, n/a 29%

nationally?

Low (0-1) 48%; High(3-4) 10%; Don't know, n/a. 26%

ENABLING LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

15. The window of opportunity for learning lessons is narrow; with the government aiming to get back to schooling as before the pandemic.

Agree 83%; disagree 3%; neutral, DK, n/a. 14%

16. Learning lessons from the pandemic is not just about adding extra work, but knowing what to abandon.

Agree 94%; disagree 2%; neutral, DK, n/a. 4%

17. Support is required for schools, including school governors, so that they lead on lessons to be learned for future provision.

Agree 90%; disagree 1% ; neutral, DK, n/a. 9%

RESOURCES & FUNDING

20. Additional staff and funding are required to enable: schools to provide for child and young peoples' support, e.g. early identification, support services, therapy (not just assessments) and for technology.

Agree 96%; disagree 1%; neutral, DK, n/a.3%

MODERATION OF PRESSURES ON SCHOOLS:

21. Some moderation of curriculum and assessment pressures on schools is necessary.

Agree 85%; disagree 4% ; neutral, DK, n/a. 10%

22 It is very difficult for schools to do something different if they are judged by conventional results.

Agree 97%; disagree 0%; neutral, DK, n/a. 3%

23. The Ofsted inspection framework needs to change to allow schools to be more flexible and to do something different to meet individual needs.

Agree 89%; disagree 1% ; neutral, DK, n/a.10%

TEACHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

24. Opportunities are needed for teaching staff to access supervision and to talk about the issues and challenges.

Agree 94%; disagree 1% ; neutral, DK, n/a. 4%

25. Opportunities for rethinking the nature and purposes of schools.

Agree 92%; disagree 5%; neutral, DK, n/a.3%

Here are some responses to open -ended questions:

ABOUT THE LESSONS LEARNED INFLUENCING POLICY AND PRACTICE

Whilst OFSTED has moved, as a body, towards being a more supportive and celebratory accountability system, the DfE continues to ignore the experience and wisdom of teachers and education leaders, ploughing ahead with divisive and misconceived measures and policies.

very cynical that the national government will learn anything. They listen to the advisors who agree with what they have already decided for political reasons or personal ideology. They do not change policy just because the people doing the job have proved what is more effective.

There is strong motivation amongst professionals locally for lessons learned to inform policy and practice, but how well this translates into action will depend on the quality of leadership and how well agencies work together.

I would like to think it will help those making policy incorporate measures which help provide greater personalisation and flexibility for all. I fear that current education policy (and other policy) will see practitioners revert to old ways. It takes time & bravery to personalise approaches. Whilst that was the aim of the C&F Act, the reality is that many will still follow one size fits nobody approaches.

I do not believe that the Department of Education can make changes - as they appear to be unwilling/unable to learn from experience due to very poor government/leadership at higher levels. The education secretary is unfit for the position.

POINTS TO ADD ABOUT THE CONDITIONS REQUIRED FOR THESE LESSONS TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN SCHOOLS

We could all do with more funding and more resources, but for me the key resource is the teaching staff. If they were better trained in inclusive practice, more skilled, more confident, and more supported as individuals then 'crisis measures' would be drastically reduced.

we need to abandon the rigid ideas of a timetable to learning and development- you must have learnt this by this date etc. This generation are under stress and are the "lost" generation only because there is still an insistence on measuring against peers who have had totally different experiences. They are not behind - they are exactly where they should be for children who have gone through a pandemic. They don't need to "catch-up" they just need to progress. We need flexibility in not forcing them back into the same system. If they've missed their early years experiences then they should be offered them, not squeezed into the particular curriculum demands. We need them to go through the "building block" phases - it will be more detrimental if we try to carry on as normal and ignore that. Whole school has a lot to learn from the more personalised learning goals set for children with SEN. Most teachers know this but they have the pressure of government interference and Ofsted

The current time is a good opportunity for a wide ranging discussion on the nature and purposes of school, and how schooling should look in 21st century.

Provision for SEND was not working well within the pre pandemic curriculum & assessment priorities, hence the need for the SEND review (to be published). Money currently in the SEND system is not always used efficiently but there is also a need to change the landscape for SEND and this will need money to implement. School leaders will be hesitant to make bold changes. I also feel the overhaul of the education system needs much wider consultation than those delivering education & the families in education. This needs the perspective of employers and what is needed in the future workforce, a revaluing of skills e.g sport, art etc to be respected alongside science subjects.

Funding is crucial. Schools are still currently being forced to cut vital staff and services because they don't have the budgets they need.