

# NICIE - Integrated Education

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June 2013

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# Research Objectives

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The research brief included details of Primary School plans that have been published by the Belfast Education and Library Board for consultation. The overall objective of this proposed research was ‘to capture parents’ response to this proposal to increase integrated provision to a third.

## Key issues (as specified in the brief)

Research was required to show public attitudes to the relevant issues in the context of primary school area based planning. In particular the focus was on the following broad areas:

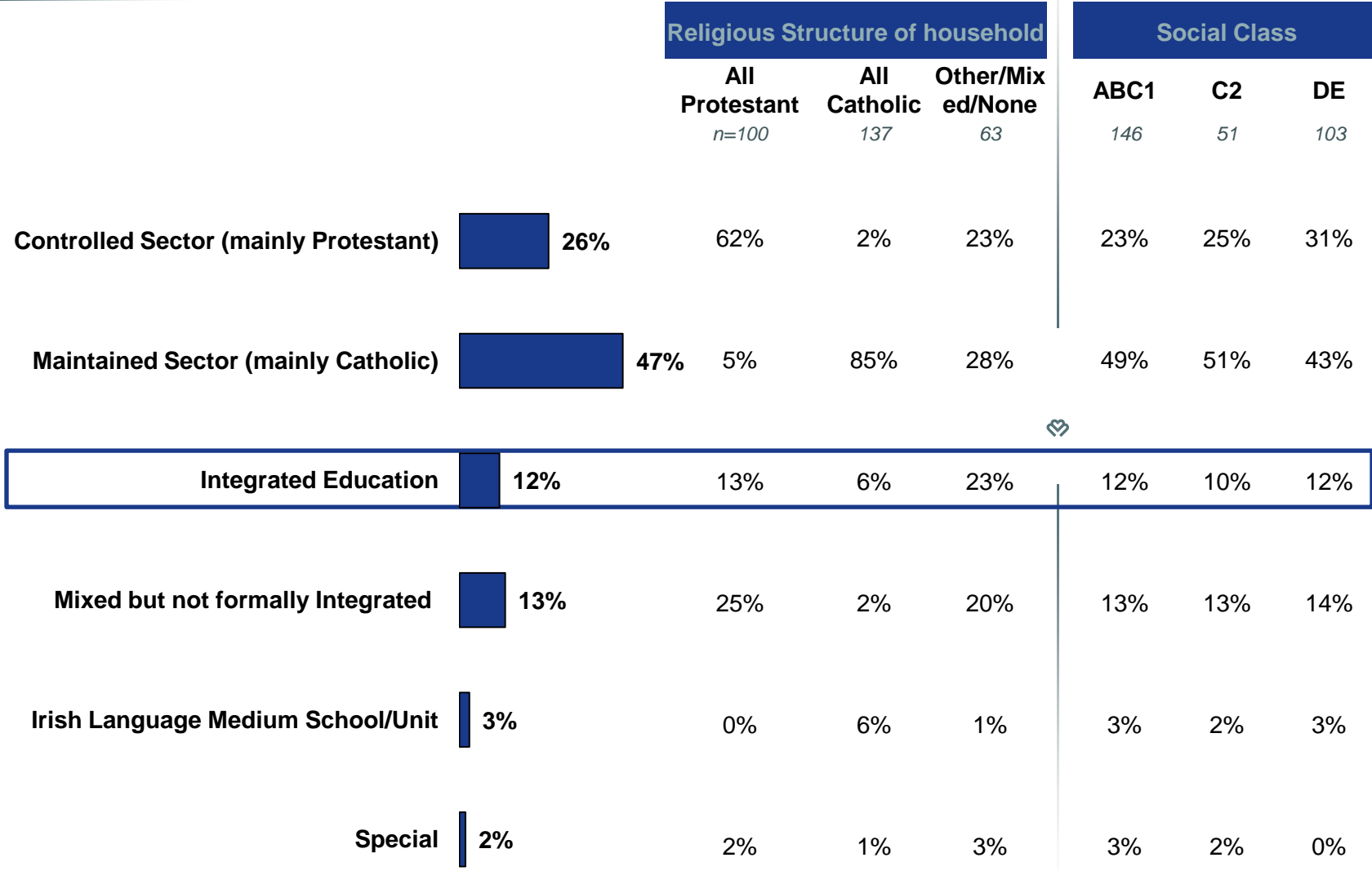
- Parental thinking about the value of integrated education
- Parental understanding of what is meant by integrated education
- Parental demand for integrated education for their own children
- Parental thinking about an equality of provision for IE schools and the impact of same on other schools
- Analysis of demand where there is no provision at the moment
- Analysis of demand by religious background and district

# Methodology

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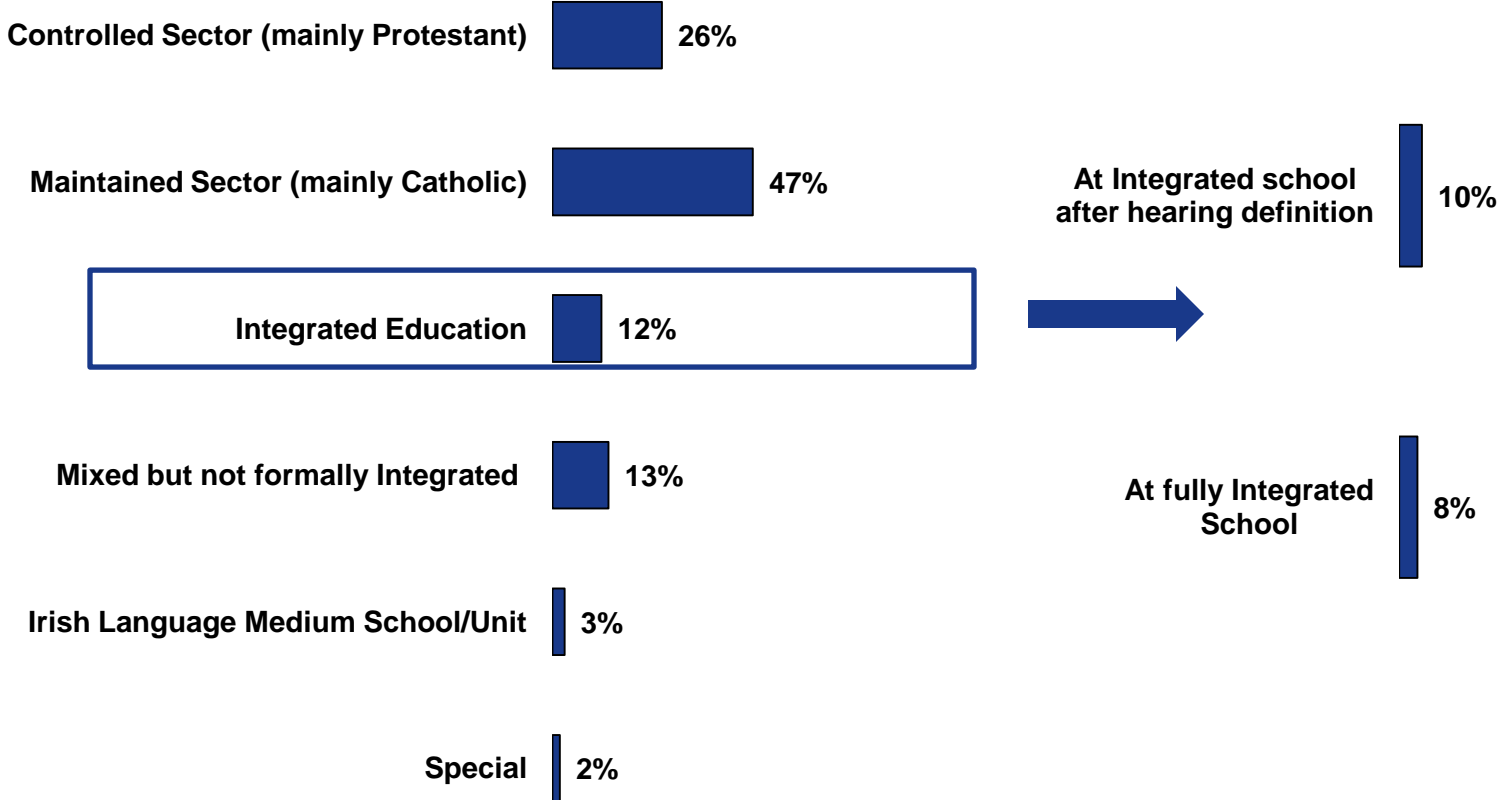
- Telephone Survey amongst a representative sample of parents of children aged under 12 living in the Belfast Education and Library Board area
- 400 interviews highly representative of the target population of parents in Belfast in terms of:
  - religious structure of household
  - area of Belfast
  - socio-economic group
- Weighted where necessary
- Fieldwork conducted 4-14<sup>th</sup> June 2013
- All research conducted in compliance with the International Standard ISO 20252 : 2006

Before the definition of Integrated Education was provided, just over 1 in 10 parents claimed to have a child at an Integrated Primary School, this was highest amongst those in households that were not exclusively either Protestant or Catholic. The majority of Catholics had their children at school within the maintained sector



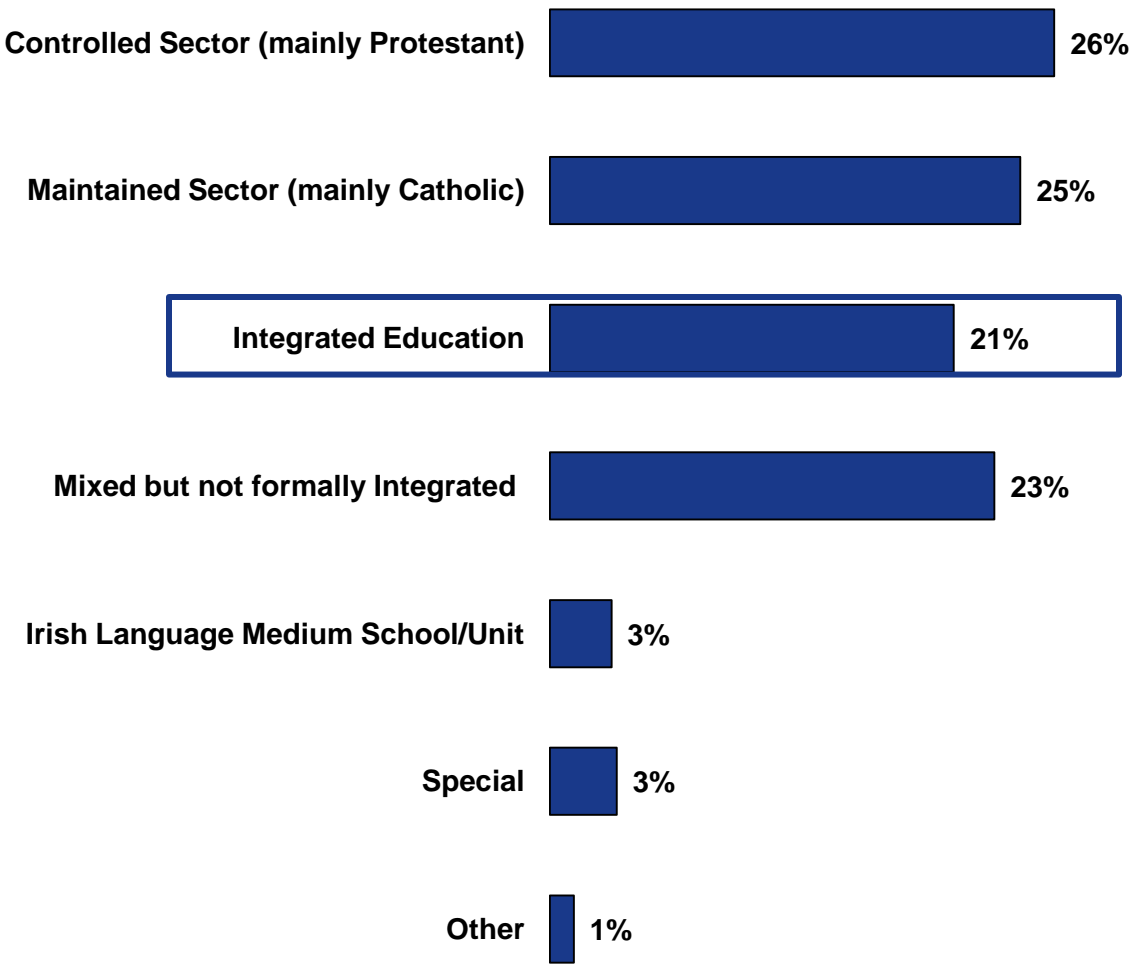
Q.1a Which of the following describes which type of primary school your child(ren) attend?  
 Base: All parents with children currently at primary school n=300

Following the provision of a definition for Integrated Education, the number with a child at an Integrated Primary School fell slightly to 10% and again to 8% on checking against existing Integrated Primary school listings



Q.1a Which of the following describes which type of primary school your child(ren) attend?  
Base: All parents with children currently at primary school n=300

There was a wider spread of school types attended within the preschool or nursery age group. Just over 1 in 5 stated their children were at an Integrated preschool



Q.1b Which of the following describes which type of nursery or preschool school your child(ren) attend?

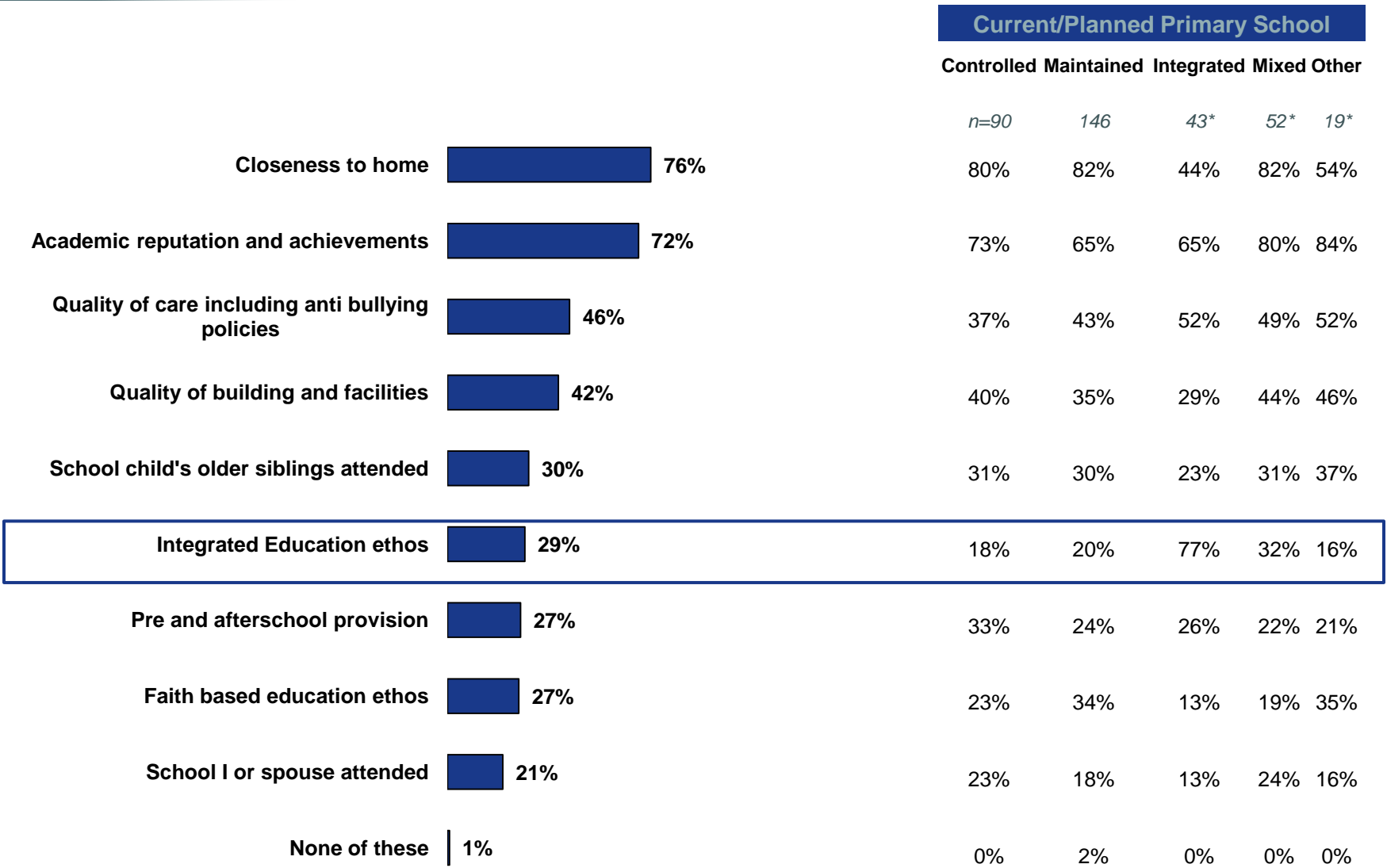
Base: All respondents with children at preschool/nursery n=66

Future intentions or hopes to send children to an Integrated Primary School was at a higher level than current attendance levels at almost 2 in 10. Intentions were highest amongst those from households not exclusively Catholic or Protestant and amongst ABC1's

|   |     | Religious Structure of Household |                           |                    | Social Class      |                   |
|---|-----|----------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|   |     | All Protestant<br><i>n=54</i>    | All Catholic<br><i>54</i> | Other<br><i>52</i> | ABC1<br><i>81</i> | C2DE<br><i>79</i> |
| Controlled Sector (mainly Protestant)   | 24% | 49%                              | 0%                        | 24%                | 20%               | 29%               |
| Maintained Sector (mainly Catholic)     | 31% | 2%                               | 72%                       | 15%                | 33%               | 28%               |
| Integrated Education                    | 19% | 19%                              | 13%                       | 28%                | 23%               | 15%               |
| Mixed but not formally Integrated       | 13% | 22%                              | 2%                        | 18%                | 9%                | 18%               |
| Irish Language Medium School/Unit       | 3%  | 0%                               | 8%                        | 2%                 | 4%                | 3%                |
| Special                                 | 1%  | 2%                               | 0%                        | 0%                 | 0%                | 1%                |
| No plans for type of primary school yet | 8%  | 9%                               | 4%                        | 13%                | 9%                | 7%                |
| Other                                   | 1%  | 2%                               | 1%                        | 0%                 | 2%                | 0%                |

Q.1c Which if the following describes which type of primary school you intend to send or hope to send this child(ren) to? Base: All parents with children not yet at primary school n=160

Closeness to home and academic reputation and achievements stood out as the most important factors in choosing a primary school. Almost 3 in 10 believed an integrated education ethos was important



Q.2a I would like you to think about what (is) was important to you in deciding which primary school to send your child(ren) to – All Important? Base: All respondents n=400 \*small bases



An integrated education ethos was as expected higher amongst those in households not exclusively Protestant or Catholic and slightly higher amongst ABC1's . A faith based education ethos was slightly higher amongst those in Catholics households

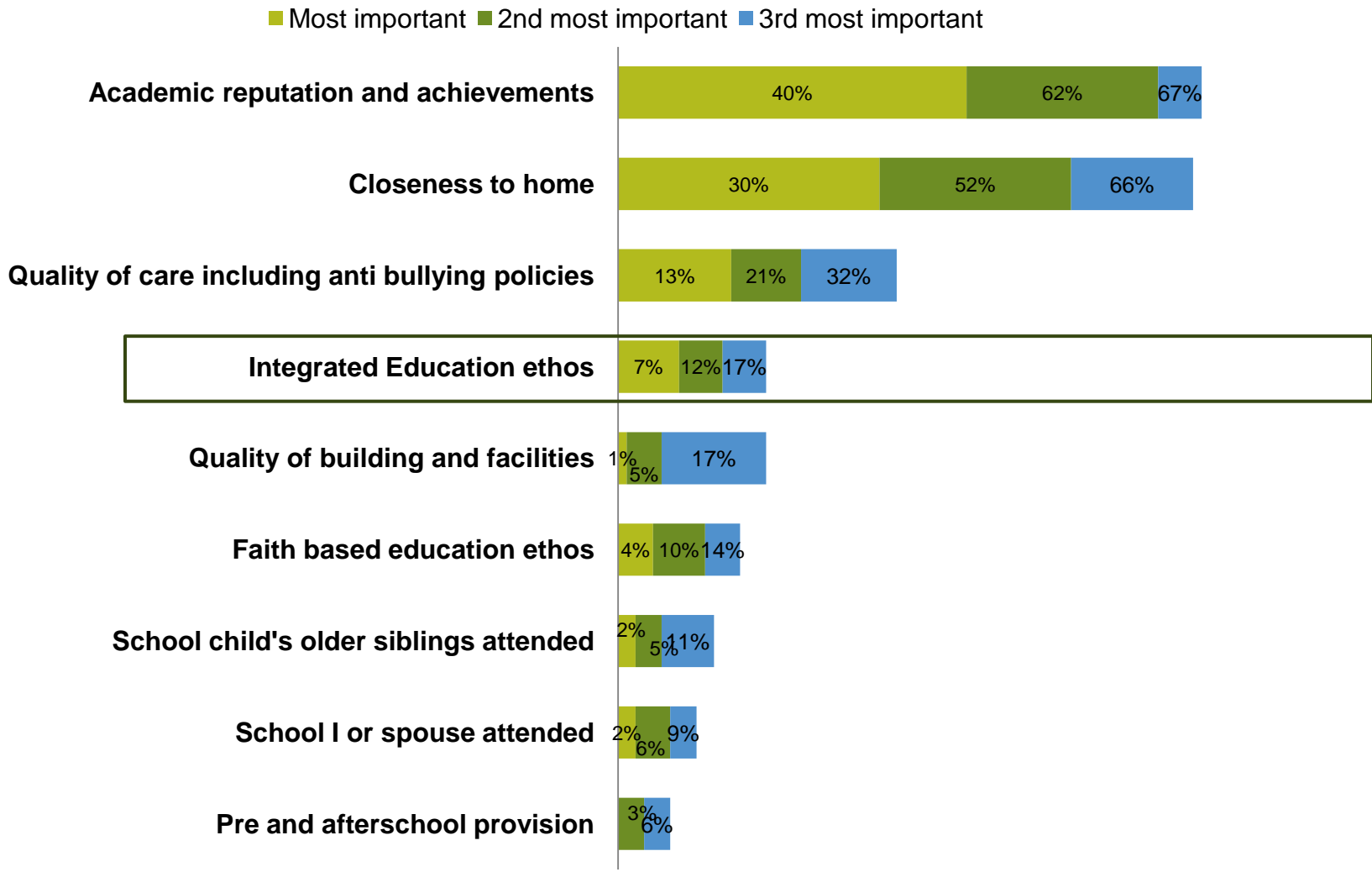
|  |            | Religious Structure of Household |          |       | Social Class |     |     |
|--|------------|----------------------------------|----------|-------|--------------|-----|-----|
|  |            | Protestant                       | Catholic | Other | ABC1         | C2  | DE  |
|  |            | 133                              | 167      | 100   | 196          | 64  | 140 |
| Closeness to home                                | 76%        | 75%                              | 80%      | 70%   | 76%          | 69% | 81% |
| Academic reputation and achievements             | 72%        | 74%                              | 69%      | 75%   | 75%          | 68% | 69% |
| Quality of care including anti bullying policies | 46%        | 45%                              | 47%      | 44%   | 46%          | 46% | 45% |
| Quality of building and facilities               | 42%        | 42%                              | 43%      | 38%   | 44%          | 35% | 41% |
| School child's older siblings attended           | 30%        | 29%                              | 34%      | 26%   | 28%          | 25% | 37% |
| <b>Integrated Education ethos</b>                | <b>29%</b> | 25%                              | 24%      | 44%   | 31%          | 29% | 27% |
| Pre and afterschool provision                    | 27%        | 26%                              | 29%      | 27%   | 31%          | 26% | 23% |
| Faith based education ethos                      | 27%        | 28%                              | 32%      | 14%   | 22%          | 39% | 28% |
| School I or spouse attended                      | 21%        | 23%                              | 19%      | 20%   | 20%          | 18% | 24% |
| None of these                                    | 1%         | 1%                               | 1%       | 0%    | 1%           | 0%  | 1%  |

Q.2a I would like you to think about what (is) was important to you in deciding which primary school to send your child(ren) to – All Important? Base: All parents n=400

\* caution small bases



Academic reputation and achievements was most likely to be chosen as that with greatest importance, followed by closeness to home. Integrated education ethos moved upwards in the terms of order when considering first, second and third choices only



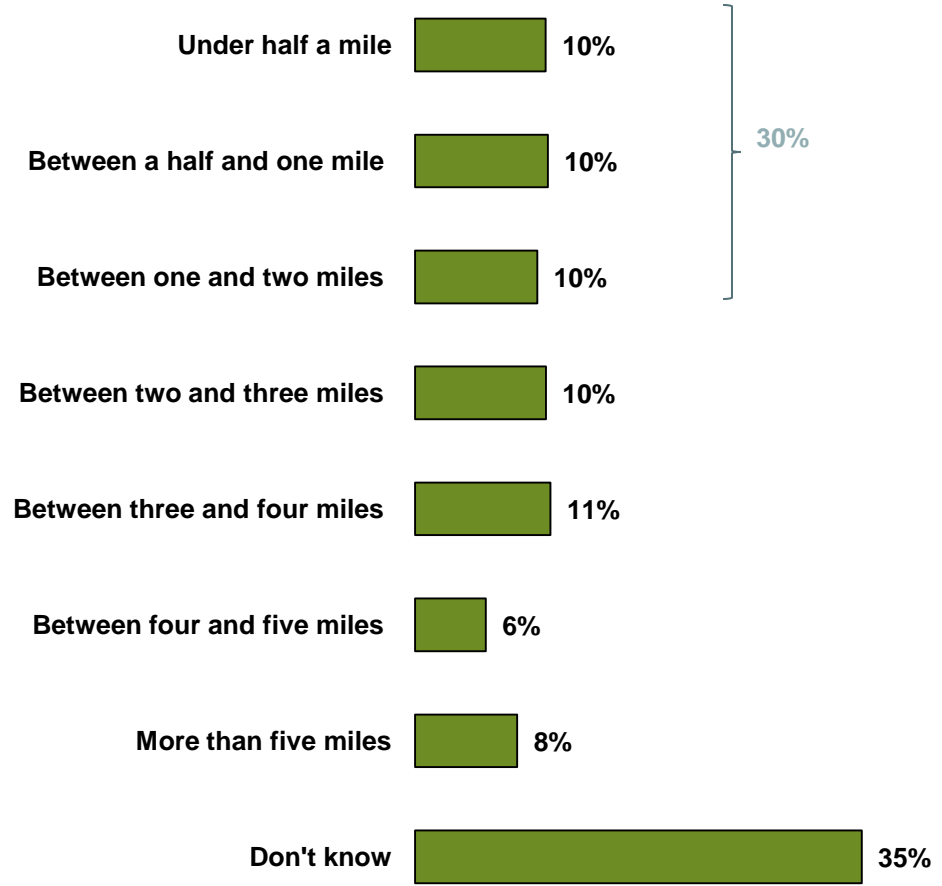
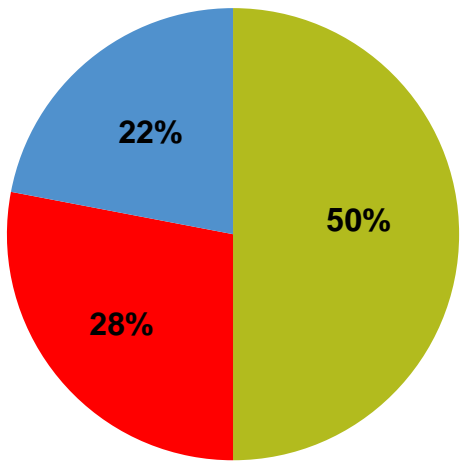
Q2b. And which would you say was most /second most/third most important?

Base: All parents n=400

Half of parents, with children not currently at an Integrated Primary School believed there was such a school in their area. When further probed about the nearest Integrated primary school, 3 in 10 understood it was within 2 miles away












**Integrated Primary School in area**

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know



Q4a/b. Integrated School in Area? / (Do you know) how far away the nearest Integrated (this) Primary School is from your home? Base: All parents with children not at Integrated Primary School currently n=361

When asked why they hadn't either sent or not planning to send their children to an Integrated Primary school, the overwhelming reason was proximity, with other schools closer or the nearest Integrated school just too far away or they were happy with the reputation of their local school. 14% said they preferred a faith based school, rising to 23% amongst Catholics

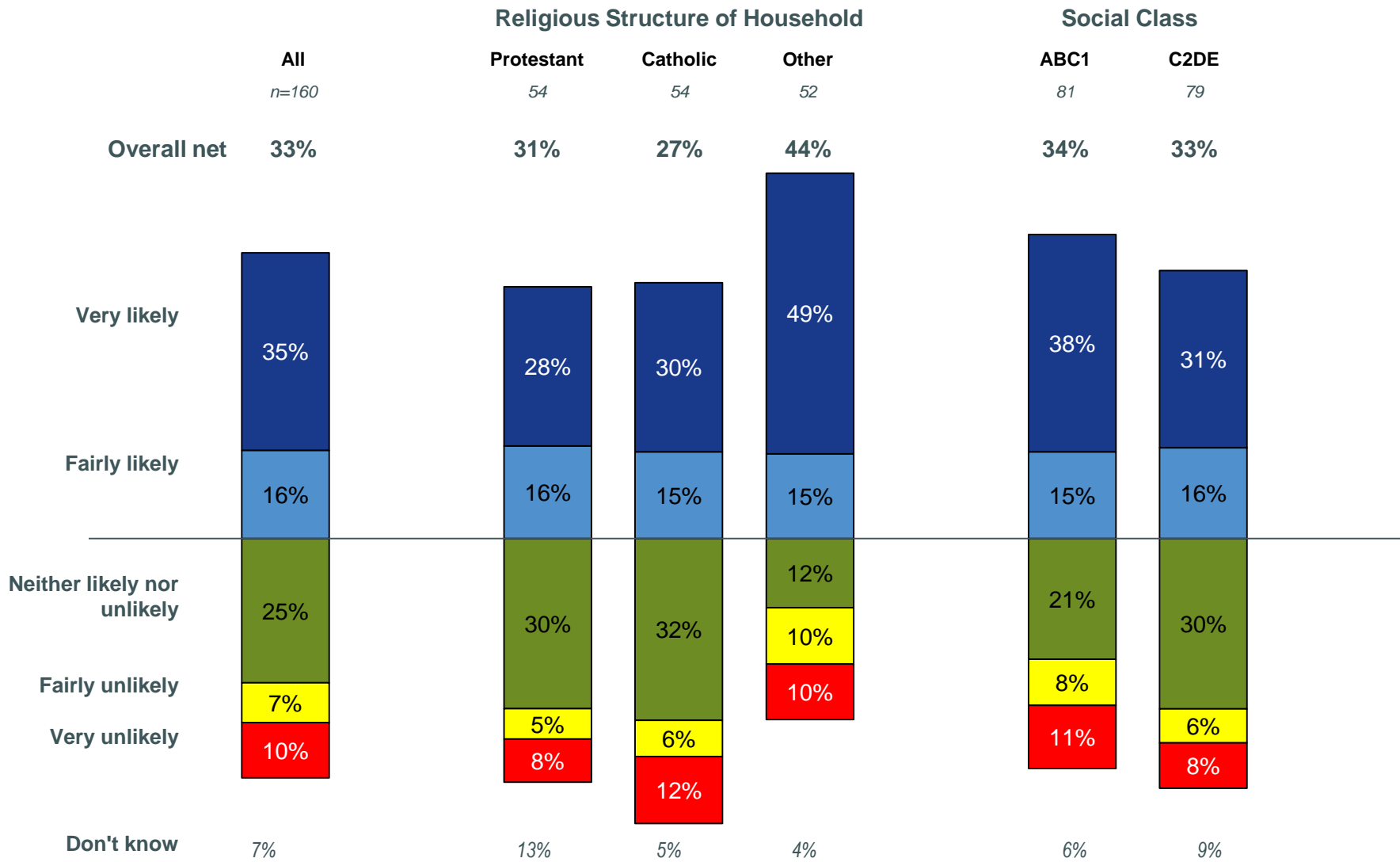
|   | Religious Structure of Household |                        |                    | Social Class       |                 |                  |
|---|----------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|------------------|
|   | Protestant<br><i>n=117</i>       | Catholic<br><i>146</i> | Other<br><i>72</i> | ABC1<br><i>158</i> | C2<br><i>55</i> | DE<br><i>122</i> |
| Other schools closer  37%   | 43%                              | 34%                    | 37%                | 40%                | 35%             | 35%              |
| Too far away  23%   | 28%                              | 22%                    | 17%                | 18%                | 28%             | 27%              |
| Prefer a faith based school (Catholic or Protestant)  14%   | 5%                               | 23%                    | 10%                | 17%                | 9%              | 13%              |
| Haven't thought about it yet  11%   | 14%                              | 4%                     | 20%                | 11%                | 4%              | 13%              |
| Nearby school has good academic reputation\prefer the local school  10%   | 11%                              | 9%                     | 10%                | 13%                | 10%             | 7%               |
| Sent child(ren) to same primary school older siblings went to  7%   | 5%                               | 10%                    | 3%                 | 8%                 | 8%              | 5%               |
| Don't know enough about the school  6%   | 5%                               | 7%                     | 4%                 | 5%                 | 7%              | 6%               |
| Sent child(ren) to same primary school I (or spouse went to)  5%  | 4%                               | 6%                     | 5%                 | 3%                 | 3%              | 9%               |
| Didn't apply as didn't think there would be any enough places nursery so went to another and then onto that primary school  4% | 3%                               | 6%                     | 0%                 | 5%                 | 7%              | 1%               |
| Don't know enough about Integrated Education  3%   | 3%                               | 3%                     | 3%                 | 1%                 | 4%              | 4%               |
| Other  7%   | 7%                               | 4%                     | 13%                | 7%                 | 9%              | 6%               |

Q6. There are many reasons parents may or may not choose to send children to an Integrated School. Can I ask why you did not choose to send or have no plans to send (all) your children to an Integrated Primary School?

Base: All parents whose children are not at Integrated Primary or not intending to send n=335



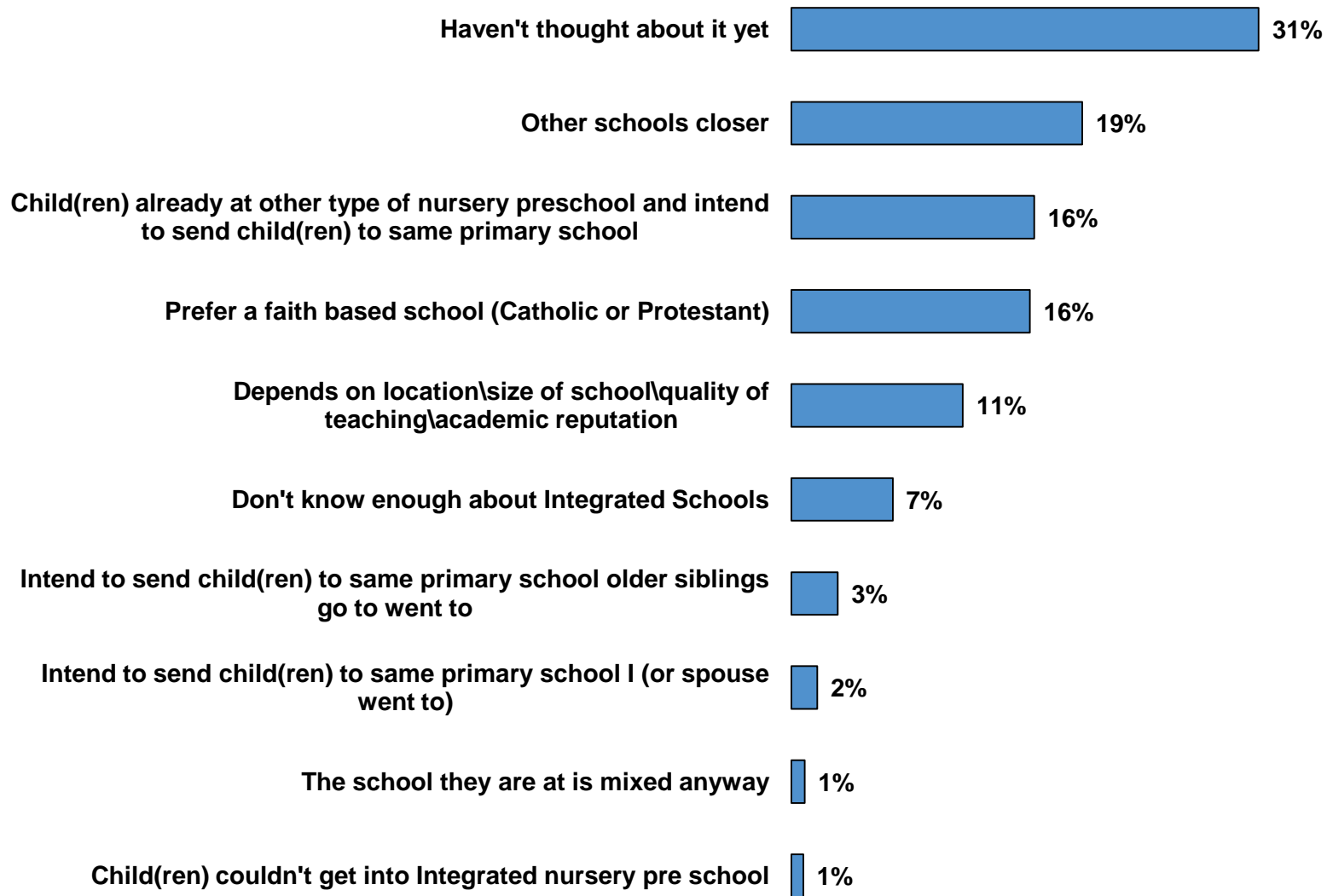
If the choice of an Integrated Primary School in their area with places existed, just over half said they would be likely to send their children (those not yet started school) to such a school, a third said they would be very likely. This was slightly higher amongst ABC1's and as expected amongst those from households not exclusively Protestant or Catholic



Q7a. If you did have a choice of an Integrated Primary school with places available in your area. How likely or unlikely are you to consider sending (any) of your children not already at primary school to an Integrated Primary School?

Base: All parents with children not yet started primary school *n=160*

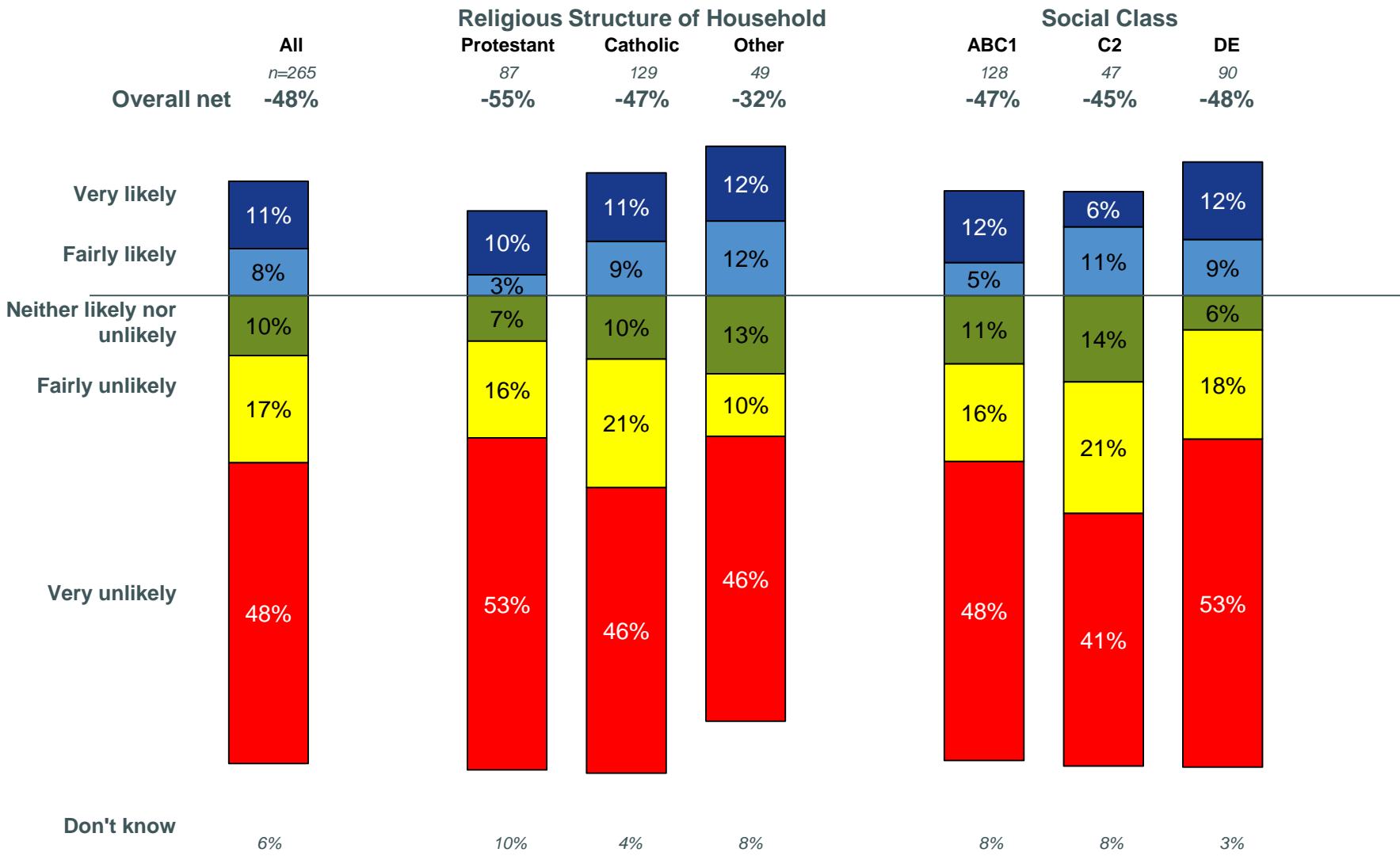
For many of those not saying they were at this stage 'very likely' to send their child to an Integrated Primary School the reason was that they just hadn't thought about it yet. For others, there were other schools closer or the child was already 'committed' to a primary school as they were currently at a preschool. Around 1 in 6 of this group preferred a faith based school



**Q7b. Why do you say that – ie why didn't say 'very likely'?**

Base: All parents with children not yet at primary school who didn't say they were 'very likely' to send child to Integrated School if one in area n=104

If the choice of an Integrated Primary School in their area with places existed, just under 1 in 5 said they would be likely to consider moving their children (those already at school) to such a school, 1 in 10 said they would be very likely. This was marginally higher amongst DE's and as expected amongst those from households not exclusively Protestant or Catholic

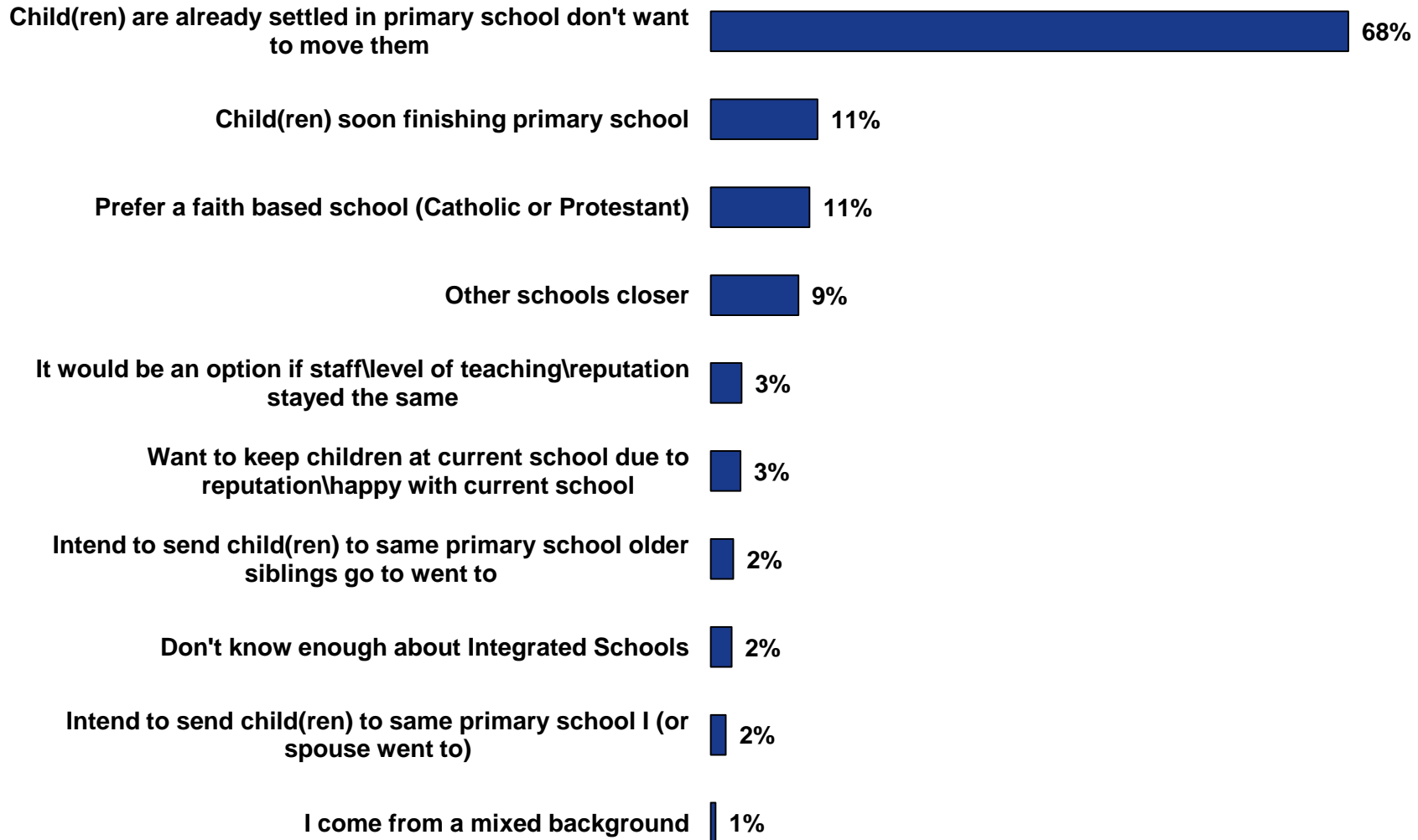


Q7c. If in the next academic year you did have a choice of an Integrated Primary school with places available in your area) How likely or unlikely are you to consider moving (any) of your children already at primary school to an Integrated school?

Base: All parents with children at primary school but not Integrated Primary School n=265



**Not surprisingly the main reason for not considering moving their children was that they were already settled and they wouldn't want to move them or they were soon finishing primary school. Just over 1 in 10 preferred a faith based school**

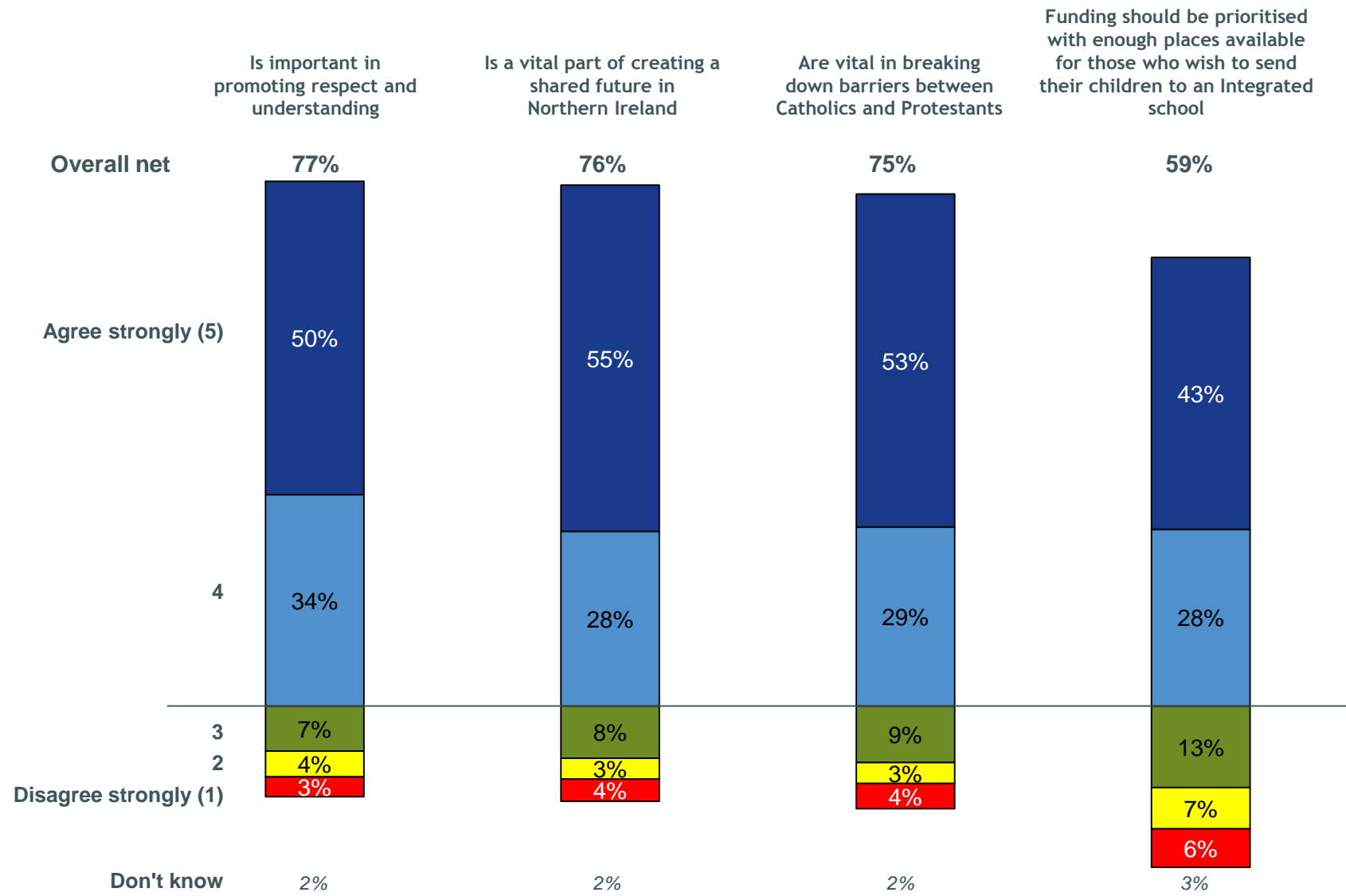


Q7d. Why did you not say you were 'Very likely'?

Base: All respondents with children at primary school but not integrated and not 'very likely' to move them. n=284

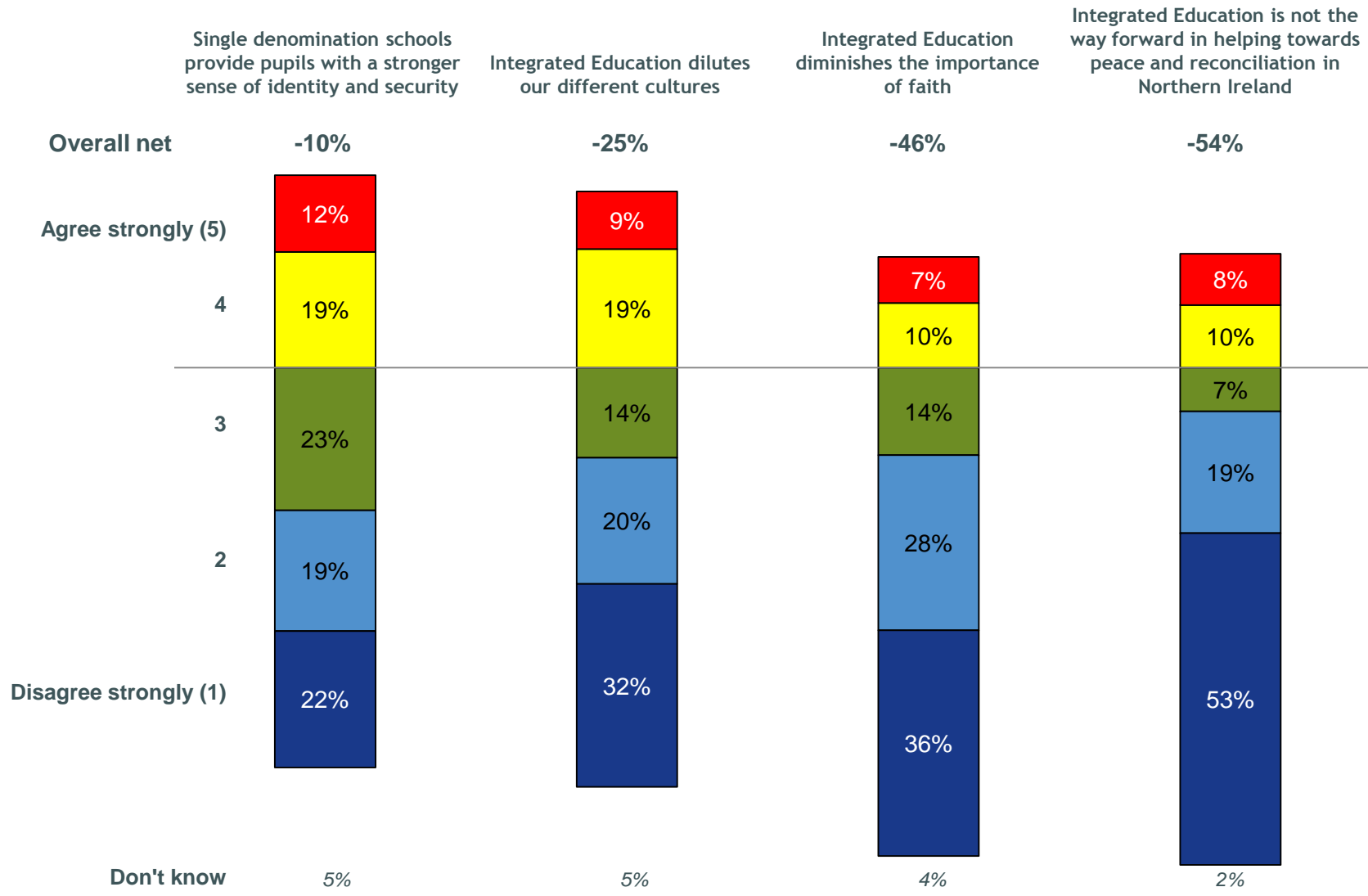


On a scale of 1 to 5, where 5 agree strongly, a clear majority scored Integrated Education as a 4 or 5, in terms of it's importance in *promoting respect and understanding, creating a shared future in NI and in breaking down barriers between Catholics and Protestants*. Most also agreed that *funding should be prioritised with enough places available for those wishing to send their children to integrated schools*



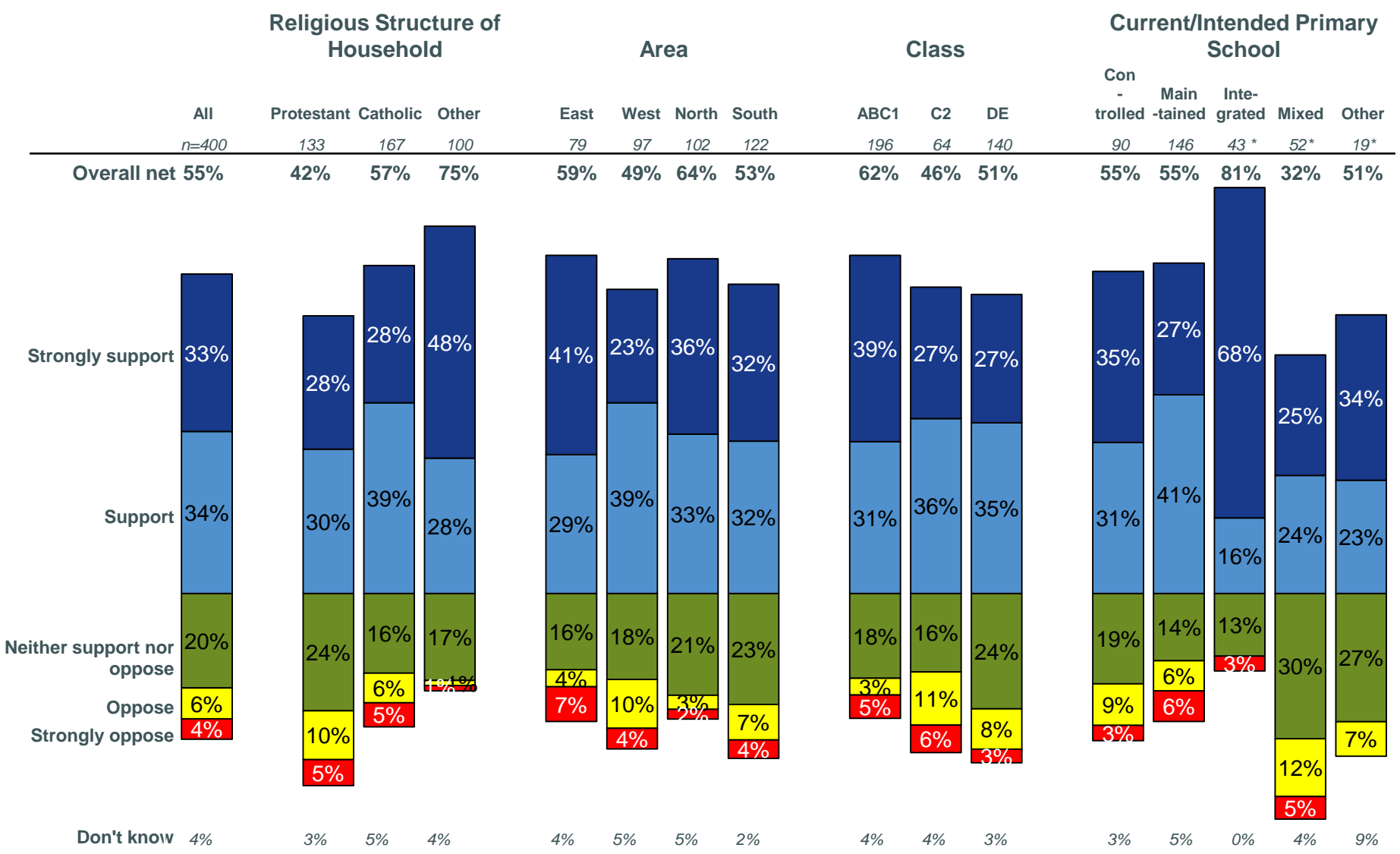
**Q8. Agreement Integrated Education ...**  
 Base: All respondents n=400

On the other hand most disagreed that Integrated Education *diminishes the importance of faith or is not the way forward in helping towards peace and reconciliation in NI*. Opinions were slightly more divided in terms of agreement that Integrated Education *dilutes our different cultures* and fairly equally divided with regards to *single denomination schools provide pupils with a stronger sense of identity and security*



Q8. Agreement Integrated Education ...  
Base: All respondents n=400

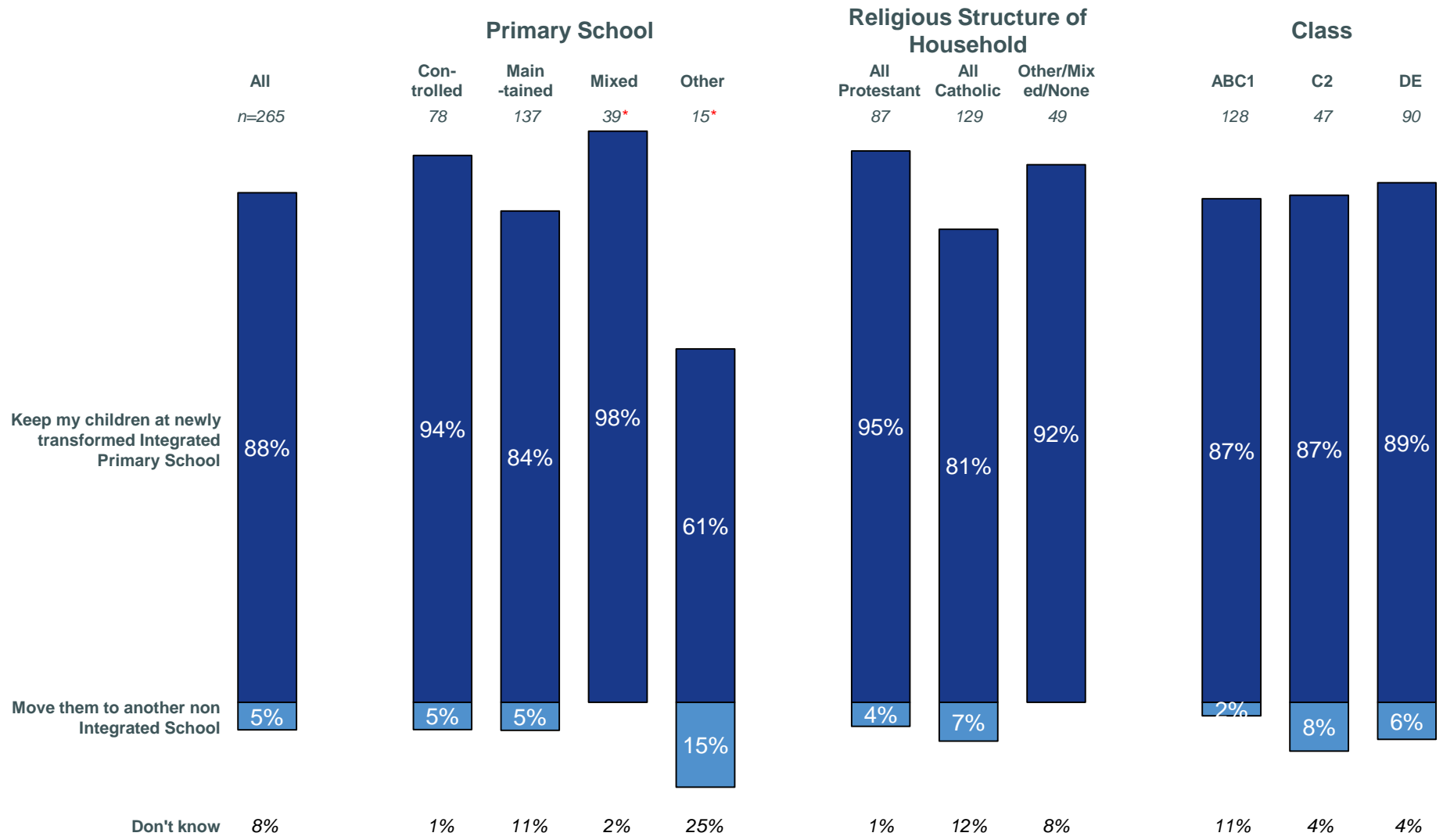
There was overwhelming support for proposals to increase the number of Integrated Primary school places in BELB, with two thirds in support compared to only 1 in 10 opposing. One third strongly supported the proposals. Support was greatest amongst ABC1's, those living in the East and North of Belfast and those in households not exclusively Protestant or Catholic



Q9. To what extent would you support or oppose these proposals for an increase in Integrated Primary School Places?

Base: All respondents n=400 \*small bases

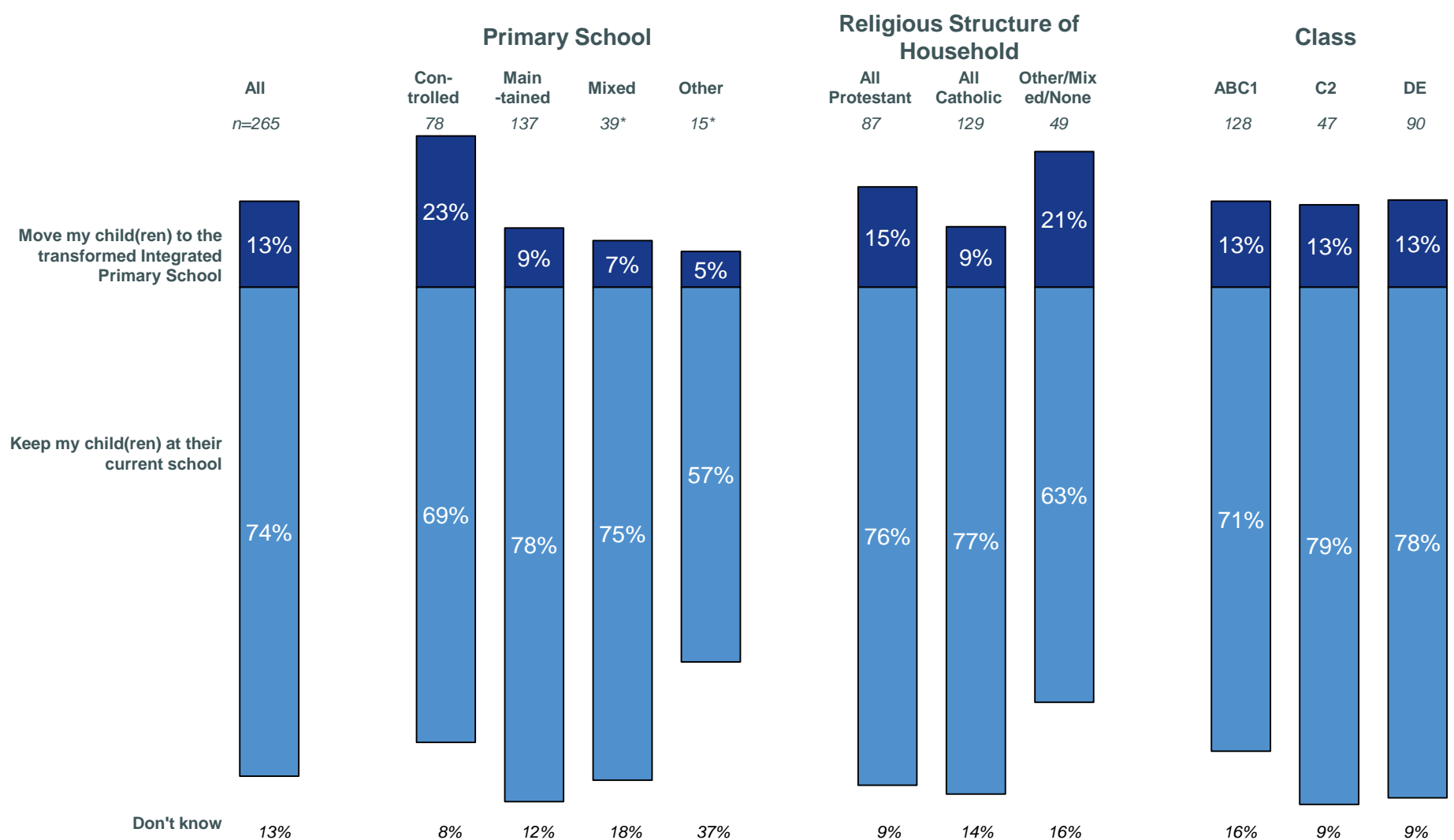
Amongst parents of those at primary school, the vast majority would keep their child at the same school should it be transformed to an Integrated School, only 5% would move them away to a non-integrated school



Q10a1. Thinking of your child(ren) currently at primary school, what action do you think you would take if The Primary School your children currently attend was considering transformation into an Integrated Primary School?

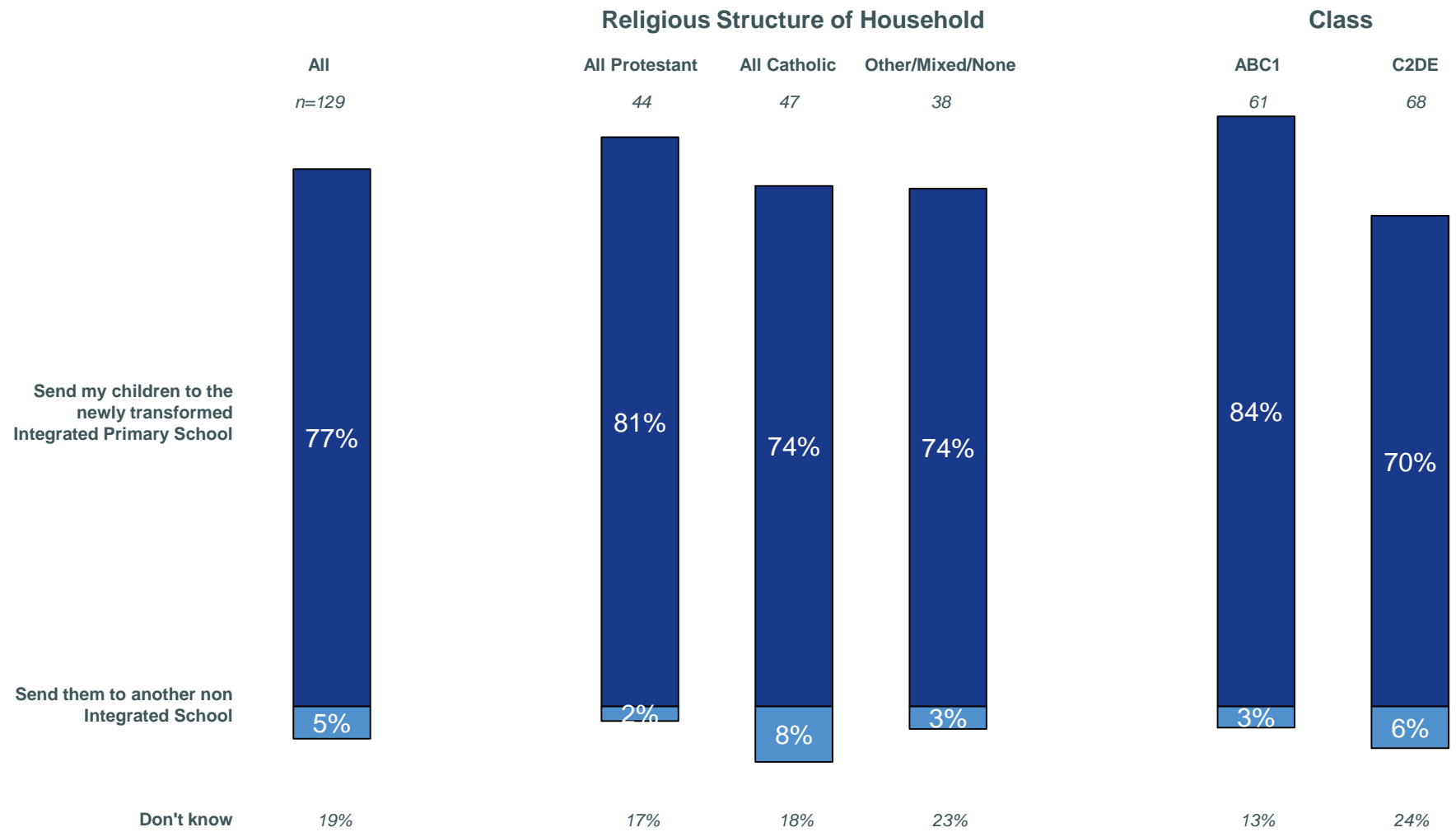
Base: All respondents with children currently at primary school but not at Integrated Education n=265 \* small bases MillwardBrownUlster

Again amongst parents of those currently at primary school, while most would not move their child from their current school if another school in the area was transformed, more than 1 in 10 would be prepared to move them away to the newly transformed Integrated school, with the same number undecided



Q10a2. Thinking of your child(ren) currently at primary school, what action do you think you would take if Another existing school in your area, was transformed into an Integrated School, with provision at the school your children current attends unaffected? Base: All respondents with children currently at primary school but not at Integrated Education n=265 \*small bases

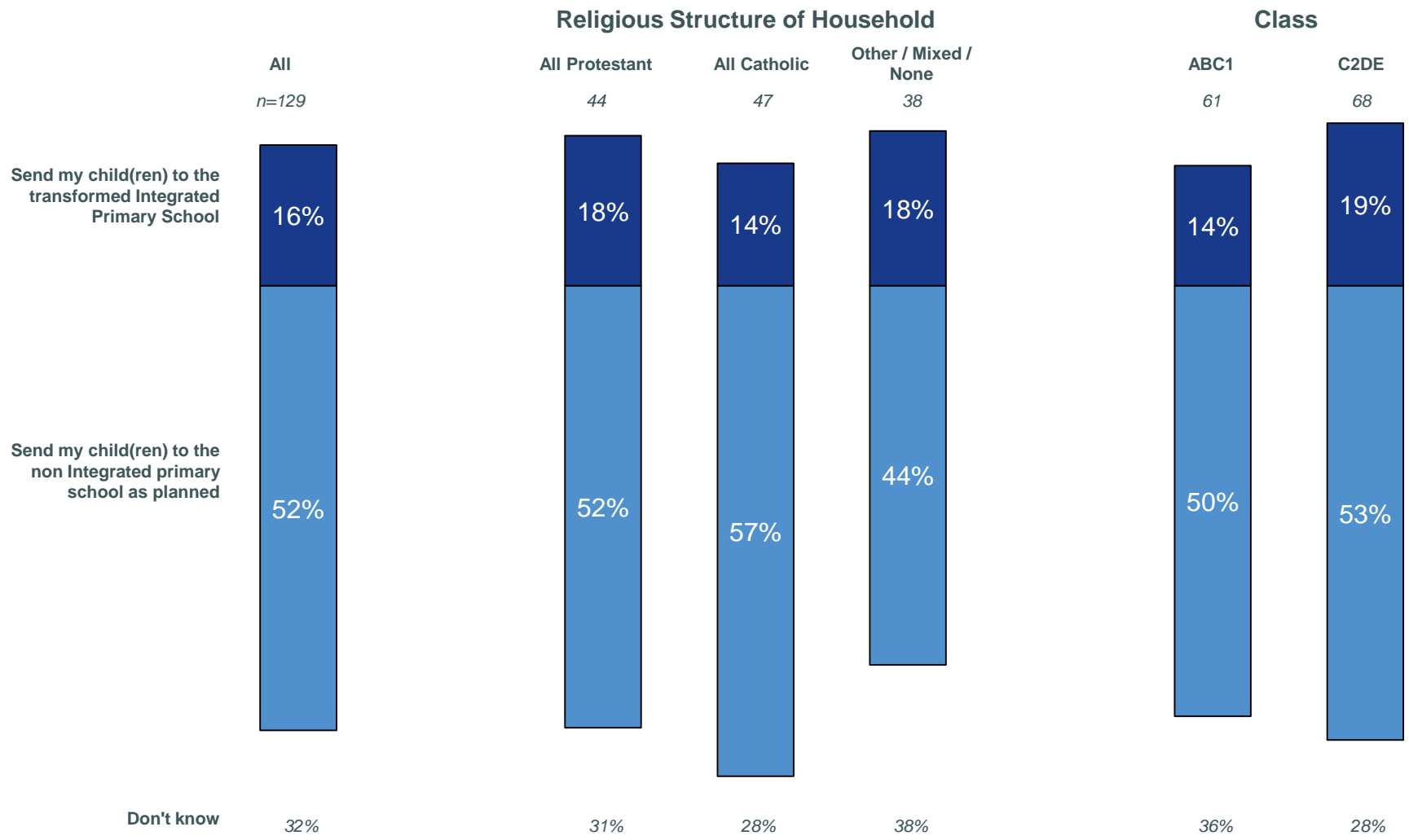
Amongst parents of those not yet at primary school, the majority would still send their child to the school as planned should it be transformed to an Integrated School, only 5% would send them to another non-integrated school with 19% undecided



Q10b1. Thinking of your child(ren) not yet started primary school, what action do you think you would take if The Primary School your children are planning to attend was considering transformation into an Integrated Primary School?

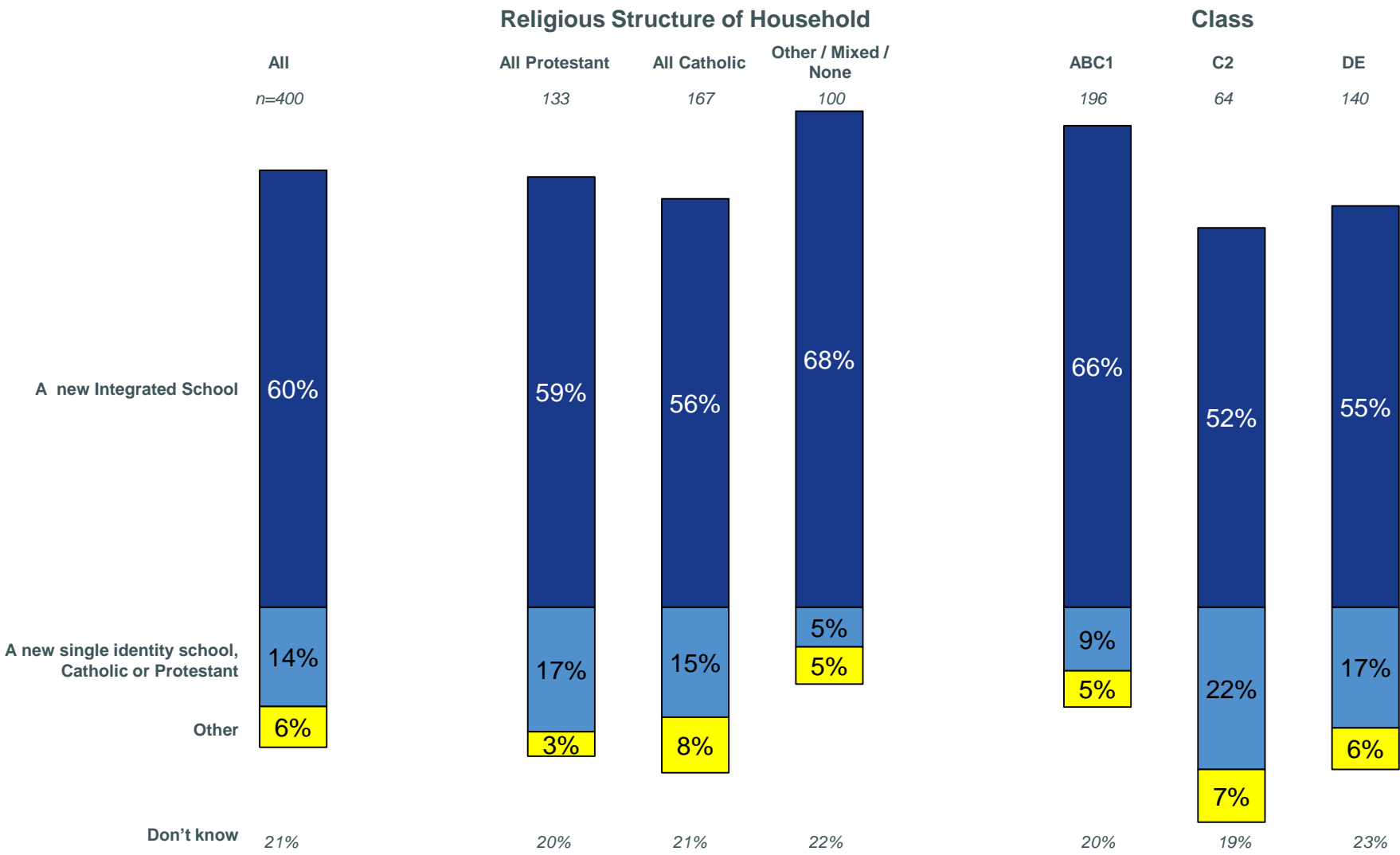
Base: All respondents with children not yet started primary school and not intending to send to Integrated n=129

Again amongst parents of those not yet at primary school, just over half would send their child to the non Integrated school as planned if another school in the area was transformed, however 1 in 6 would change their plans, sending them instead to the newly transformed Integrated school, with 1 in 3 unsure what they would do



Q10b2. Thinking of your child(ren) not yet started primary school, what action do you think you would take if Another existing school in your area, was transformed into an Integrated School, with provision at the school your children intend to attend unaffected? Base: All respondents with children not yet started primary school and not intending to send n=129

If a process of consolidation was to be carried out whereby a number of primary schools would be closed and replaced by one bigger school, 6 in 10 favoured having a new Integrated Primary school compared to just over 1 in 10 who would prefer it was single identity



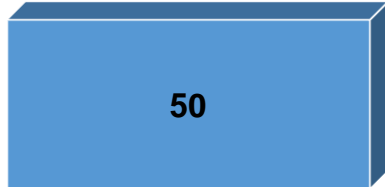
Q10c If there were plans to reduce the number of primary schools in your area by a process of consolidation whereby several smaller schools would close and be replaced by one larger school. Which type of school would you prefer?

Base: All respondents n=400



# Summary of main findings

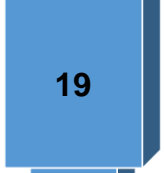
Integrated Primary School in their area (Base: not at integrated currently)



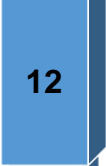
Integrated Primary School within 2 miles (Base: not at integrated currently)



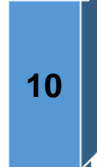
Inclined to send child to Integrated primary (Base: not at school yet)



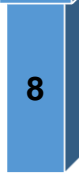
Currently at Integrated Primary - before definition (Base: all at primary school)



Currently at Integrated Primary after definition (Base: all at primary school)



Currently at Integrated Primary - fully Integrated (Base: all at primary school)



Variety of Questions and Bases

# Summary of main findings

Children at non integrated primary school

Children not yet at primary school

All parents

11%

18%

33%

35%

50%

66%

% Very likely to move child to new Integrated PS

% Very or fairly likely to move child to new Integrated PS

% Strongly support new proposals

% Very likely to send child to new Integrated PS

% Very or fairly likely to send child to new Integrated PS

% Support new proposals

Variety of Questions and Bases

# Conclusions

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## Sentiment around integrated education

- There is overwhelming support for NICIE's proposals to increase the volume of integrated primary school places in the BELB area from 4% to 33% even though this will mean an offset reduction in places in the controlled and maintained sectors that might impact on their own local schools. Two thirds (66%) of parents support such proposals with one third being strongly supportive. Opposition to such an increase is relatively small at only 1 in 10 (11%) and only 4% of parents being strongly opposed to such a change.
- 68% of Catholic households and 57% of Protestant households support such a change in primary school provision, households that define themselves as of mixed, other or no religion are even more strongly supportive (76%). Levels of opposition are low at 15% in Protestant households and 11% in Catholic households.
- Support for the concept of integrated education is very strong: over 4 in 5 parents think that integrated education is important in promoting respect and understanding (84%); is a vital part of creating a shared future in NI (83%) and is vital in breaking down barriers between Catholics and Protestants (82%).
- Almost 3 in 4 parents (72%) believe that funding for integrated education should be prioritised with enough places available for those who wish to send their children to an integrated school.

# Conclusions

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## Sentiment around integrated education - contd

- Three quarters (72%) disagree with the statement that integrated education is not the way forward in helping towards peace and reconciliation in NI, whilst two thirds (64%) disagree that integrated education diminishes the importance of faith and over half (53%) disagree that integrated education dilutes our different cultures (almost twice as many as agreed 28%).
- Finally opinion on single faith schools was more balanced, with 4 in 10 (41%) disagreeing and 3 in 10 (31%) agreeing that single denomination schools provide pupils with a stronger sense of identity and security. Protestant (42% disagree & 30% agree) and other (52% disagree & 22% agree) households were more likely to disagree with this statement whilst Catholic households were equally split on the issue (35% disagree & 36% agree)

## School preferences if primary schools in their area were reconfigured

- If the number of primary schools in their area were reduced by a process of consolidation whereby several smaller schools would close and be replaced by one larger school 3 in 5 parents would prefer that this school be an integrated school, 1 in 7 would want the school to be a single identity (Catholic or Protestant) school.

# Conclusions

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## School preferences if primary schools in their area were reconfigured - contd

- If the number of primary schools in their area were reduced by a process of consolidation whereby several smaller schools would close and be replaced by one larger school 3 in 5 parents would prefer that this school be an integrated school, 1 in 7 would want the school to be a single identity (Catholic or Protestant) school.
- If the controlled or maintained school their children currently attend were to be transformed into an integrated primary school 9 in 10 (88%) parents would keep their children at the same school only 1 in 20 (5%) would move their child(ren), 8% were unsure what they would do in these circumstances. Thus 95% of those with an opinion would keep their children at their current school if it were transformed to an integrated school.
- If another school in the area were transformed to an integrated primary school, most parents would keep their children at their current school, though 1 in 8 (13%) would move their child(ren), Parents of children at controlled schools would be much more interested in moving (23%). With 13% being unsure what action they would take in these circumstances, 15% of those with an opinion would move their child(ren) to another school if it were transformed into an integrated school.

# Conclusions

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## Current schooling choices

- 8% of the parents with children at primary school are sending one or more child to a bon fide Integrated Primary school in the BELB area. A further 4% considered that their children are attending an integrated school but are mistaking shared schooling with fully integrated schools. Hence 17% of parents send their children to schools where there is some element of sharing or mixing (not including Integrated). Just under half of parents are sending their children to maintained primary schools, whilst 26% send their children to controlled primary schools.
- Integrated schools feature more strongly in the preferences of parents with children at pre-school or nursery, where 21% state that they are using integrated facilities.
- Academic reputation and proximity to home are the top two parental considerations when selecting a primary school for their children.
- 1 in 5 parents (19%) hope to send their children to an integrated primary school, but only 30% of parents not sending children to an Integrated primary school know of an integrated primary school within two miles of their home. Overwhelmingly physical inconvenience is the key barrier to sending children in Belfast to an integrated primary school, with 52% citing this as the reason for not using or planning to use an integrated primary school.

# Conclusions

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## How parents might change their schooling choices if more integrated school places were available

- If availability of integrated primary schools places were more extensive, half (50%) of parents with pre primary age would be likely to consider sending their children to an integrated primary school and a third (35%) would be very likely.
- Naturally most parents with children already at school would be reluctant to move these children to a new integrated primary school if one were established in their area, nonetheless 1 in 5 (18%) parents would be likely to consider taking such a step, with 1 in 10 (11%) of those not attending an integrated primary school being very likely to consider making such a move if it were possible.