

*Building the
Evidence Base
Year 2
Staff Survey
Section 1
Executive
Summary and
Analysis*



Secondary schools staff survey

Contents

Executive summary	2
Introduction	2
Structure of this report	3
Overview	3
Key findings	4
Approaches to curriculum review	4
Narrowing the gap	4
Curriculum innovation	4
Curriculum planning and design	5
Implementing curriculum change	5
Leadership and professional development.....	5
Conclusions and implications.....	5
Approach to curriculum review	6
Narrowing the Gap.....	13
Curriculum innovation	15
Curriculum planning and design	19
Implementing curriculum change	20
Leadership and professional development.....	21
The sample and demographic data.....	24
Methodology.....	26

Executive summary

Introduction

1. This is the report of the findings of the practitioner survey conducted by CUREE on behalf of QCDA during 2009. A total number of 46 schools completed the surveys with 17 schools completing all 3 levels of the survey. We tried to establish a pyramid representation with more middle leaders completing their survey than senior leaders and then more classroom practitioners replying than middle leaders. A total of 273 practitioners responded to the survey comprising 55 senior leaders, 103 middle leaders and 115 classroom practitioners. Twenty eight telephone interviews and four focus groups were also carried out to provide a deeper exploration of the issues addressed in and arising from the survey.



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2. The 3 surveys were conducted simultaneously in secondary schools in England in the summer of 2009. Three separate surveys were designed targeted at a) classroom practitioners b) heads of department and other middle leaders, and c) heads and other senior leaders.
 3. We have produced descriptive data (counts, ratios, frequencies) for all the questions in the survey and these are reported in full in the associated Excel workbook. We have subjected a selection of these data to further statistical comparisons. For reasons set out in full in the methodology section we did not test every question against each of these respondent characteristics.

Structure of this report

4. There are a lot of data contained in this report so we have tried to 'layer' them in ways which cater for a range of interests. The whole report is in three separate documents. This section contains this executive summary plus an analysis and commentary on what seem to the report's writers to be the more significant findings (tested via feedback from QCDA staff on a preliminary report). A separate section (**Section 2 – Technical Appendix**) contains a) the full text of the three questionnaires, b) a separate and specific analysis of the focus group responses, c) a separate and specific analysis of the telephone interview responses and d) the statistical analyses. Thirdly, the full summary data set is contained in **Section 3 – Data Set**, an Excel workbook, with several spreadsheets.
5. The analysis and commentary which follows this summary contain sub-sections on:
 - the findings on approaches to curriculum review
 - the findings on narrowing the gap
 - the findings on curriculum innovation
 - the findings on curriculum planning and design
 - the findings on implementing curriculum change
 - the findings on leadership and professional development
 - a description of the sample and its demography, and
 - a description of the methodology.
6. These can be accessed (by selection in the on-line version of this report) via the table of contents above

Overview

7. Three surveys were conducted in secondary schools in England during a 16 week period during the summer of 2009. The surveys targeted:
 - classroom practitioners
 - heads of department and other middle leaders
 - headteachers and other senior leaders.
8. Altogether 273 staff (55 senior leaders, 103 middle leaders and 115 classroom practitioners) from 46 schools took part in the survey; 17 schools were represented at all three levels.
9. The individual surveys contained 28-31 multi-part questions and covered the following six areas:
 - approaches to curriculum review
 - narrowing the gap



- curriculum innovation
- curriculum planning and design
- implementing curriculum change
- leadership and professional development

10. Four focus groups and 28 telephone interviews were also conducted to allow a deeper exploration of the issues addressed by, and arising from the survey.

Key findings

Approaches to curriculum review

11. All three groups said they were influenced by national policy to some extent; middle and senior leaders were particularly alert to these initiatives. The most important national initiatives for all groups were the new secondary curriculum, Every Child Matters and National strategies. The least influential initiatives were Healthy schools, Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) and Building Schools for the Future (BSF).
12. Most participants reviewed the curriculum on a rolling basis and all focused curriculum review at a department/subject level.
13. Whilst virtually all (around 90%) of senior leaders and classroom practitioners felt that all six secondary curriculum reform elements had prompted some change to their school's curriculum, although some more than others, the middle leaders tended to feel that little or no change was required.
14. Out of the eight aspects of the curriculum identified by QCA as in need of improvement, senior leaders put raising achievement in all subjects at the top of their list, whilst middle leaders put personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) at the top of their list. Both groups put transition from primary and progression to HE at the bottom, or next to the bottom.

Narrowing the gap

15. Around half of all the participants said that 'the gap' was not a problem in their schools. A small proportion (around 10% of senior leaders, 19% of middle leaders and 22% of classroom practitioners) said they did not know.
16. The focus group participants and interviewees reported that a wide range of learners were being targeted in order to narrow the gap, including ethnic groups, white working-class boys, learners from single families, underachieving girls and learners with low reading ages and additional special educational needs.
17. Reasons for gaps given by the focus group participants included low aspirations and a downward spiral of learners lacking motivation and engagement combined with poor interaction skills which led to poor behaviour.
18. The ways the participants' schools were addressing the gaps included: more tracking interventions, more targeted support, specialist input, developing curriculum pathways and skills based teaching and learning.

Curriculum innovation

19. When asked to rank six alternative objectives of curriculum innovation, senior and middle leaders put raising student attainment, enjoyment of learning and student engagement in their top three and increasing resilience as a low priority.
20. The focus group participants said they adopted two of the approaches/models of curriculum development identified by Ofsted (focusing on how learners learn and allowing learners to explore a



theme drawing on a range of subjects) more than organising and using curriculum time differently and changing curriculum structure using different pathways.

21. Around half the leaders said that group work and using a variety of activities within and across lessons were already widespread practice and a further 30-40% said there were pockets of practice.
22. All three groups were generally positive about approaches based on key concepts and processes but there was a significant difference between senior leaders' (69% said 'mature' perceptions of how well established these approaches were when compared to classroom practitioners (only 28% said 'mature')).
23. Over half (60%) of senior leaders thought that teachers engaged in subject-based joint planning 'very often'; whereas less than a third (30%) of middle leaders and even fewer (18%) of teachers thought this.

Curriculum planning and design

24. When asked to rate 11 issues which might have featured in their schools' curriculum reviews, all the participants put 'increased emphasis on personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS)' in their top two.

Implementing curriculum change

25. Many of the schools did not think that PLTS was a challenge to implement. Staff commented they were addressing the skills through frameworks such as Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) and Building Learning Power (BLP).
26. Although some schools had experienced difficulties with implementing PLTS, they were still positive and persevering.
27. A significant challenge described by schools was staff and learners' attitudes – eg. 'Learners are quite resistant to this – they don't want to think about how they learn'.
28. In terms of their overall approach to curriculum change, most (82%) of senior leaders said they used a whole school approach whilst only 33% of middle leaders and 29% of classroom practitioners said they did.
29. 60% of senior leaders said they had developed their own curriculum model. For 68% of the practitioners and 55% of the middle managers, the predominant approach used was departmentally based.
30. Looking at the impact of the secondary reforms on the nature and amount of assessment, there was a broad expectation amongst all three groups that the total amount of assessment would rise, including peer and self-assessment.

Leadership and professional development

31. Senior and middle leaders broadly agreed that leadership of the curriculum needed a different approach from the leadership of other things, but they were not particularly stressed by this.
32. All three groups reported they had robust systems for identifying CPD needs, the internal capacity to meet most CPD needs and the extensive use of mentoring and coaching.
33. Specialist coaching was seen as linking performance management and CPD but not curriculum.

Conclusions and implications

34. All our responding groups felt they were influenced by national policy to some extent, with senior and middle leaders, unsurprisingly, being particularly alert to national initiatives. The new secondary curriculum reform was felt to be the most important initiative and senior and middle leaders had found the QCA conceptualisation of the curriculum (as represented by 'A Big Picture of the Curriculum') helpful, some parts more than others. The secondary reforms had prompted some change in the school's curriculum according to senior leaders and practitioners. Middle leaders tended to feel that little or no change was actually required. Senior and middle leaders agreed that



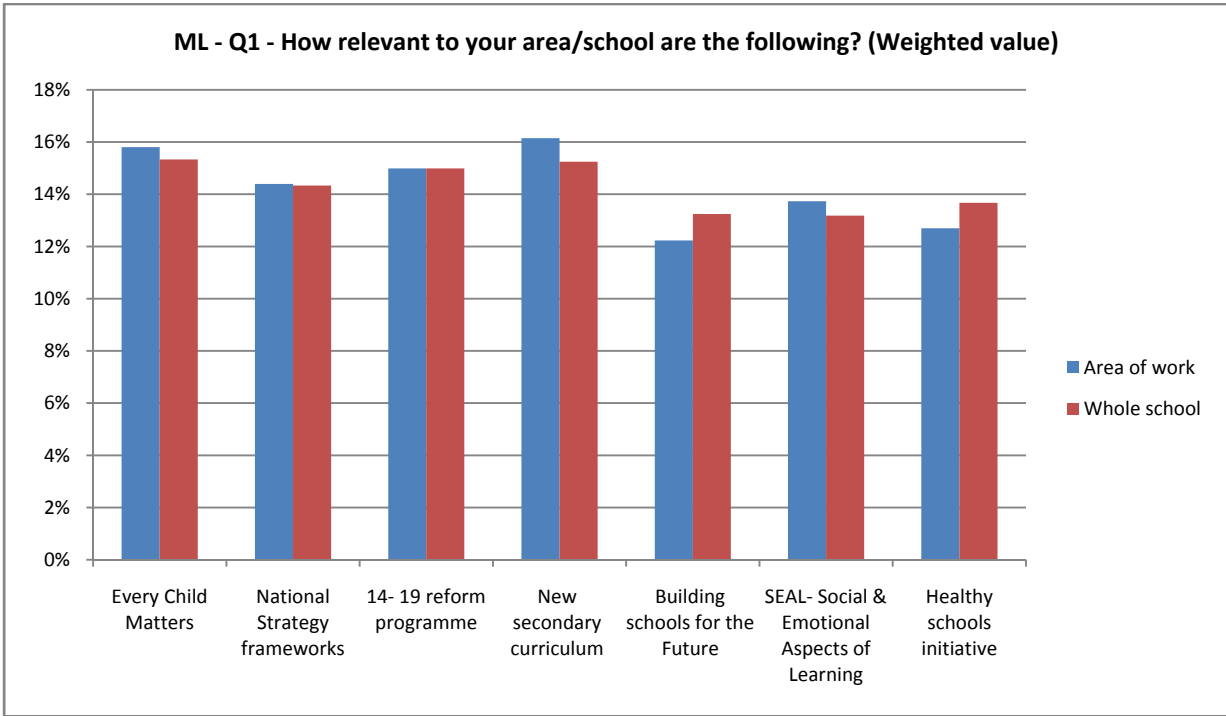
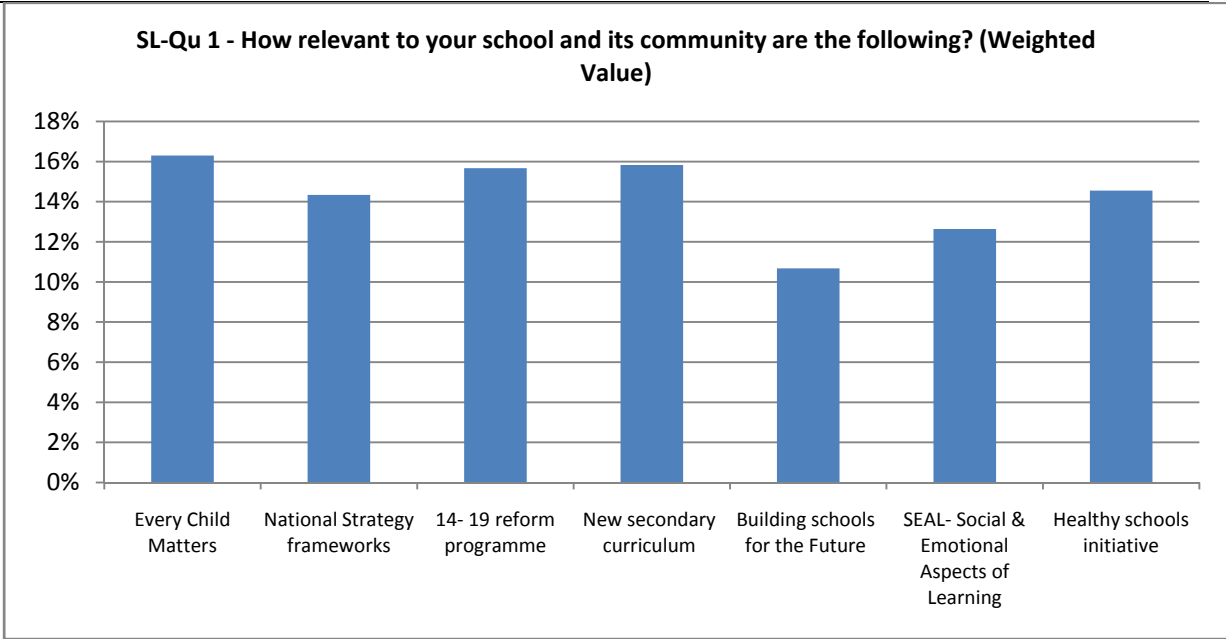
leadership of the curriculum needed a different approach from leadership per se, but felt able to offer it.

35. Schools generally made PLTS a priority in their school's curriculum review and they said that they found them relatively easy to implement. Some were helped by experience of existing frameworks such as SEAL and Building Learning Power. Schools that had had difficulties with implementing PLTS had experienced staff and learners resisting attempts to get them to think about how they learn. Nevertheless, they were optimistic about implementing PLTS successfully and were persevering with them.
36. Surprisingly, half the survey respondents did not see 'a gap' problem in their schools (even though schools in areas of high socio-economic deprivation were well represented in our sample). Those that did, were targeting a wide range of learners, including ethnic groups, white working-class boys, underachieving girls and learners with low reading ages with more tracking interventions, more targeted support, and specialist input etc. Members of focus groups attributed low achievement to family histories and low aspiration, rarely to teaching and learning or other school-based experiences. These factors suggest a need to raise awareness of the existence of the gap, and ways of understanding it in detail, as well as sharing effective ways of addressing it.
37. As the student survey showed, group work was not that widespread a practice amongst the schools involved in our survey. Only around half the leaders reported it was; the rest mostly commented on pockets of practice. There seems to be a general need to bring the research evidence on the importance and value of group work to the attention of leaders and practitioners, together with ways of structuring group work effectively.
38. Likewise, it appears that joint subject-based planning was not that common place either. Interestingly, whilst over half of the senior leaders thought it occurred frequently, less than a third of middle leaders and less than a quarter of teachers felt it did so. The gap in perception between senior leaders and other staff – or sometimes between the distributed leadership and classroom practitioners – of the need for change, or its speed or extent, could be a matter of concern and would warrant further exploration. A similar point can be made about the use of key concepts and key processes based teaching and learning where senior and middle leaders were more confident of its widespread use than were the practitioners.

Approach to curriculum review

39. The survey asked respondents to indicate what external factors influenced their approach to curriculum review, how and how often they set about reviewing the curriculum and which aspects of the curriculum they prioritised (using aspects of the QCA 'Big Picture' as a prompt). There were more questions in this section for middle and senior leaders than for practitioners.
40. All three groups said that they were influenced (on a scale of 0 – 6) by national policy to some extent with, as might be expected, middle and senior leaders being more alert to these initiatives than practitioners. The least influential national initiatives for all groups were Healthy Schools, SEAL and BSF. The new Secondary Curriculum, Every Child Matters (ECM) and National Strategies were the most important but not equally for all groups. So 79% of senior leaders put ECM in the top category. It was most important for 53% of middle leaders but only 15% of practitioners. For this last group, the most significant influence was the new secondary curriculum (32%). These results are illustrated in the charts below.





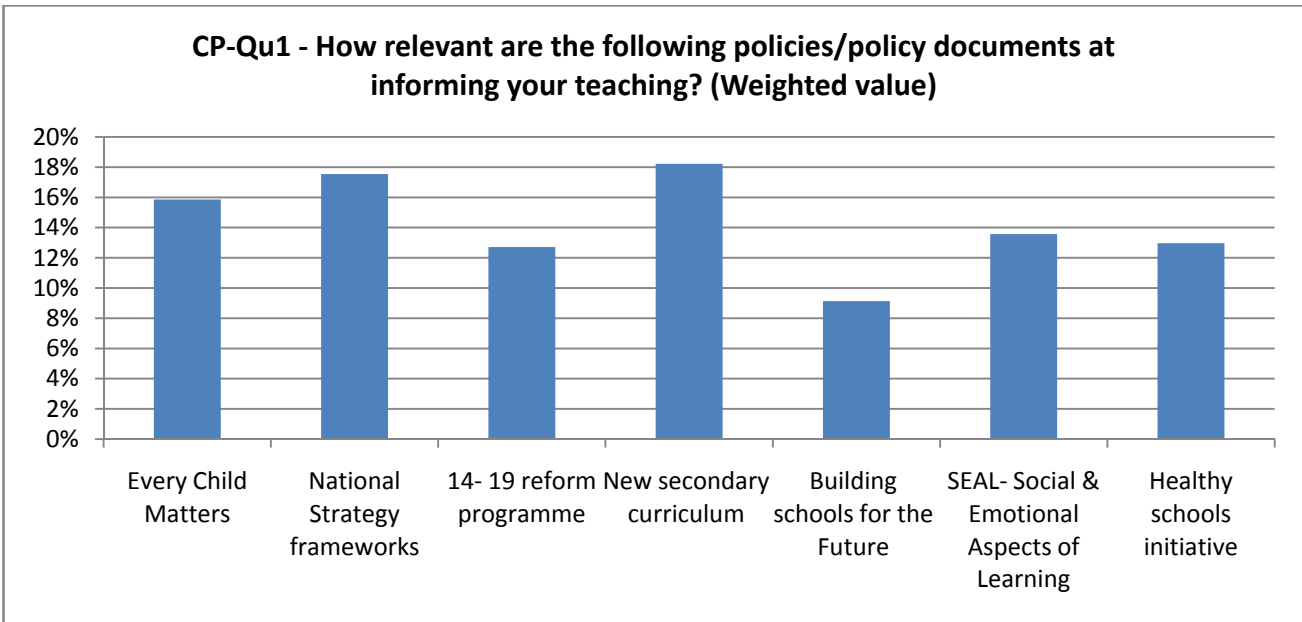
A note on chart representation

The chart heading shows which group’s responses are reported (e.g. SL = senior leaders, ML = middle leaders) and to which question (e.g. Qu1)

Most figures are given as percentages of total responses or, where that is not meaningful, total respondents (i.e. ‘N’). This shows answers to similar questions from different groups on the same scale to allow comparison but at the cost of hiding variations in size of response. Some results are reported as ‘weighted values’. Here we have assigned a simple weighting value (from 0 for ‘not at all’ or ‘N/A’ to 6 for ‘very’) and summed the weighted values for each question. This shows more clearly the relative priority ascribed to a range of choices (for instance, the national initiatives show above) but hides variation in strength of response.

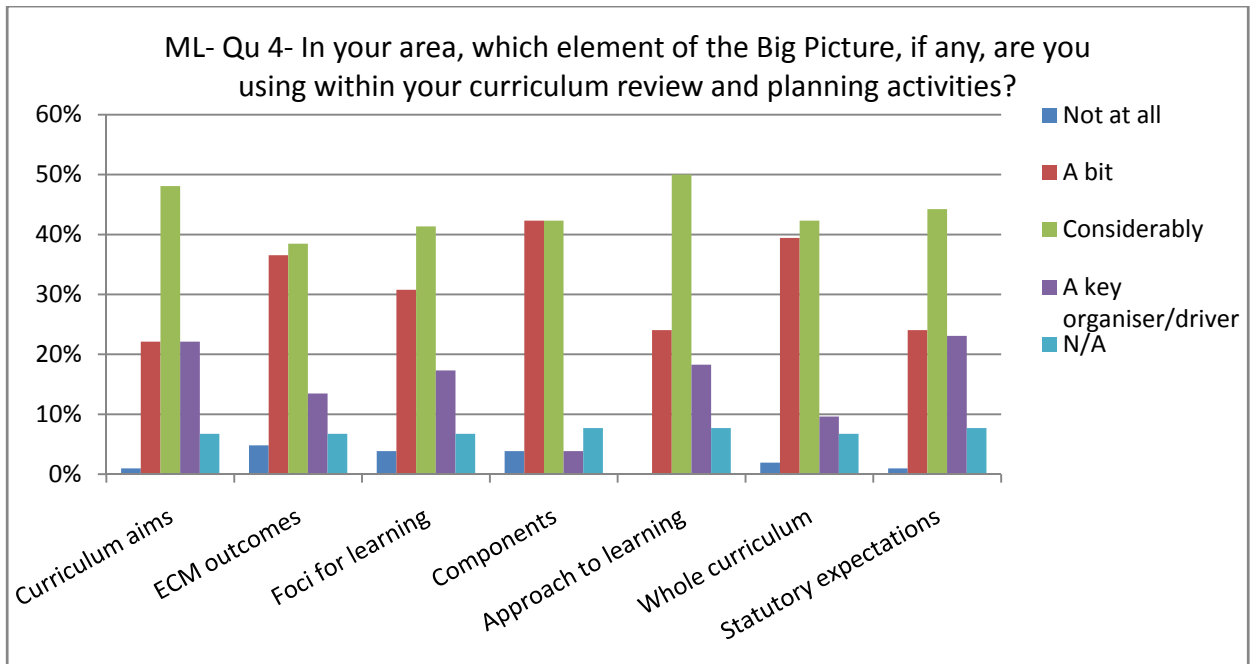
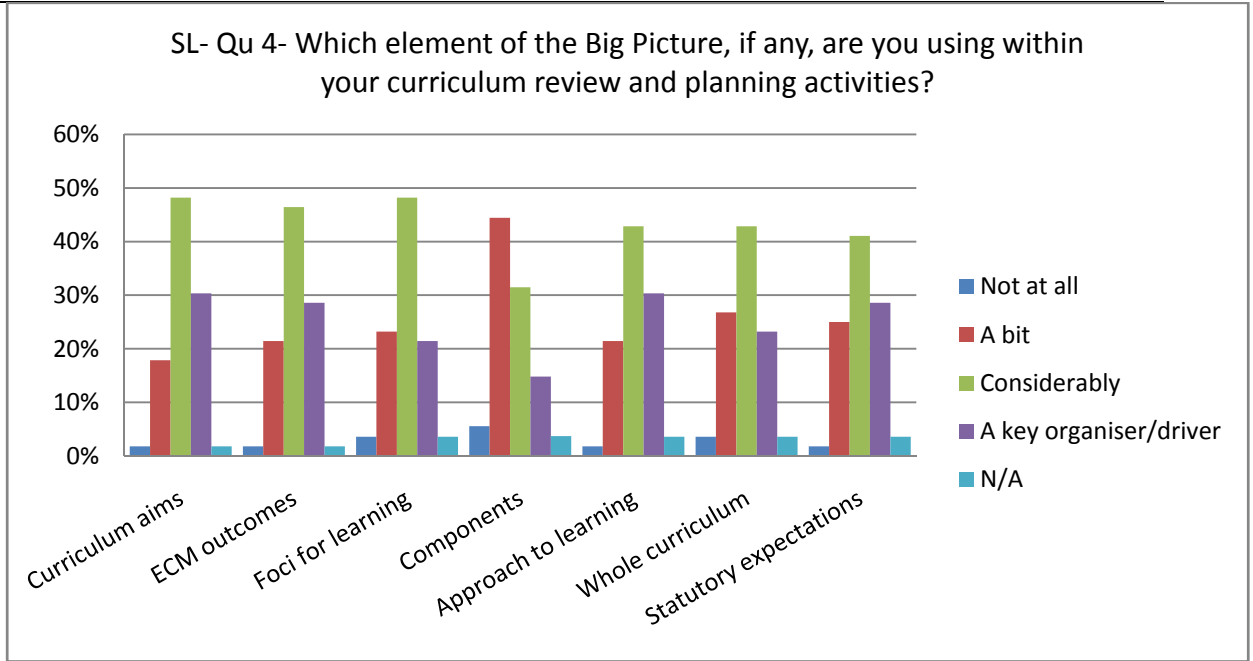


However, all the summarised data are available as simple counts and more complex charts in **Section 3 – The data set** of this report.



41. Respondents were asked what their broad approach to reviewing the curriculum was. The most popular response was that the curriculum was reviewed on a rolling basis (89% of senior leaders, 78% of middle leaders and 67% of practitioners). All respondents reported a curriculum review process focused at departmental/subject level (77-82%). Unsurprisingly, fewer than 5% of any group said that they have no systematic planning.
42. Middle and senior leaders were invited to comment on the extent to which their curriculum review processes were influenced by the various elements of the process as described in the QCA 'Big Picture'. Both groups reported that they were considerably influenced by several elements. Senior leaders, considered all elements of the Big Picture influential but with some variation. So 79% of senior leaders rated Curriculum Aims as either a significant influence or a key driver. At the other end, only 46% rated Curriculum Components in this way. All other elements lay between 66% and 75%. The picture was broadly similar for middle leaders but with a slightly smaller proportion rating the elements as significant or higher (70% for Aims). This question was not asked of classroom practitioners.

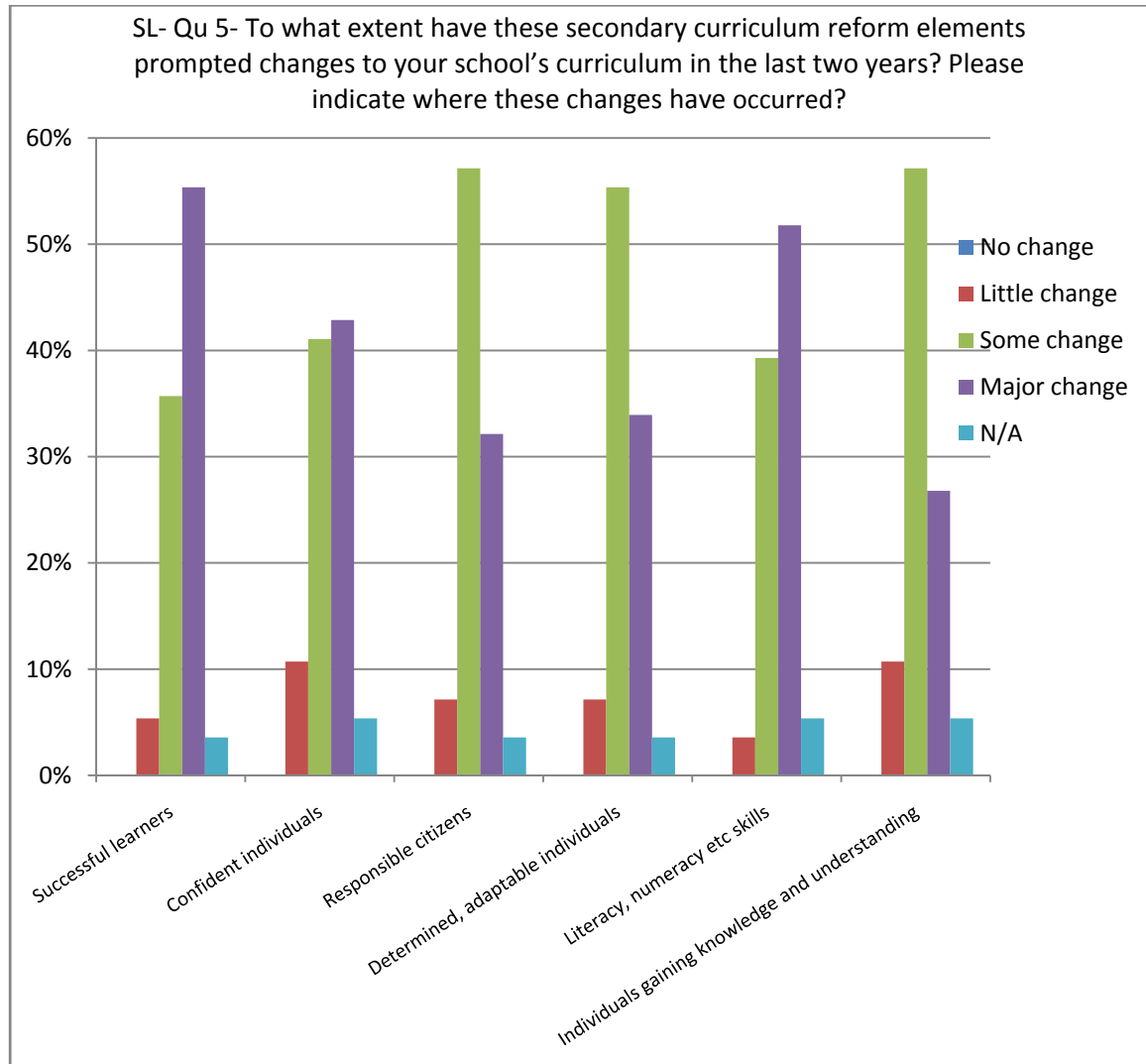


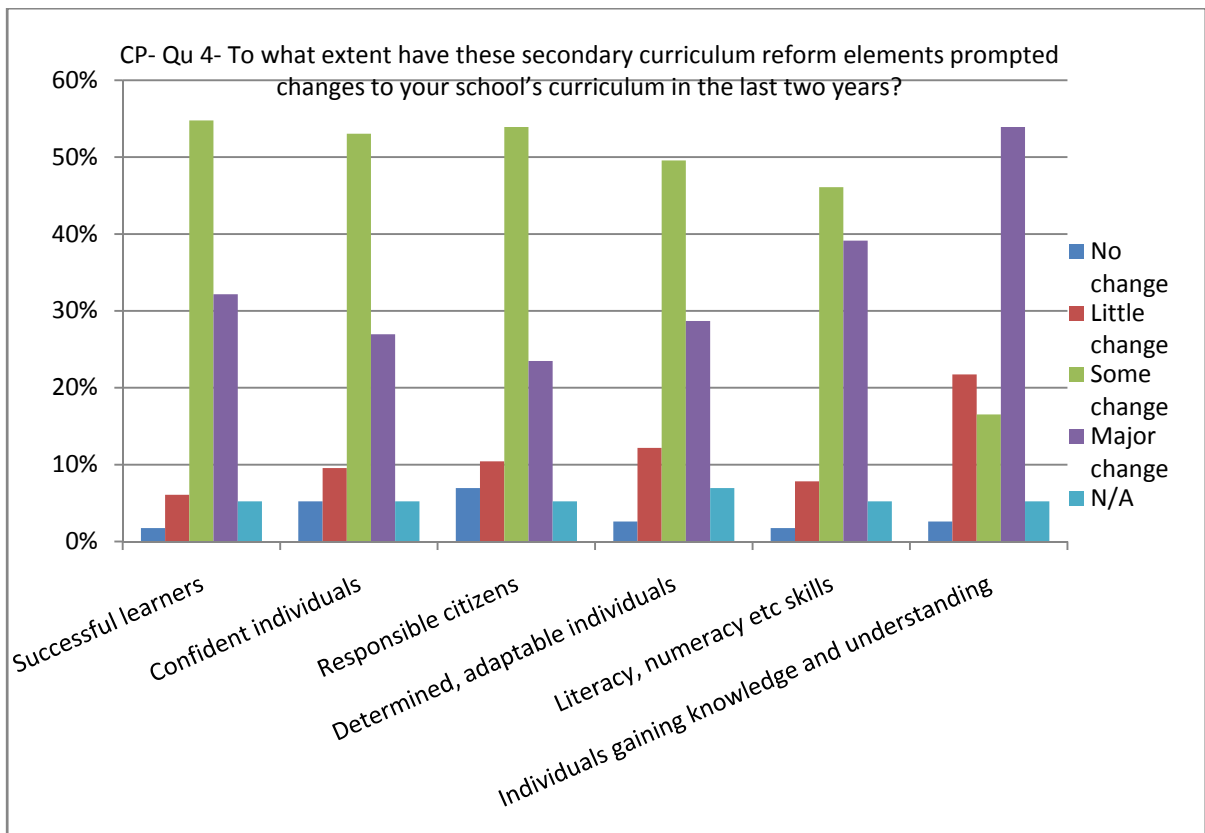
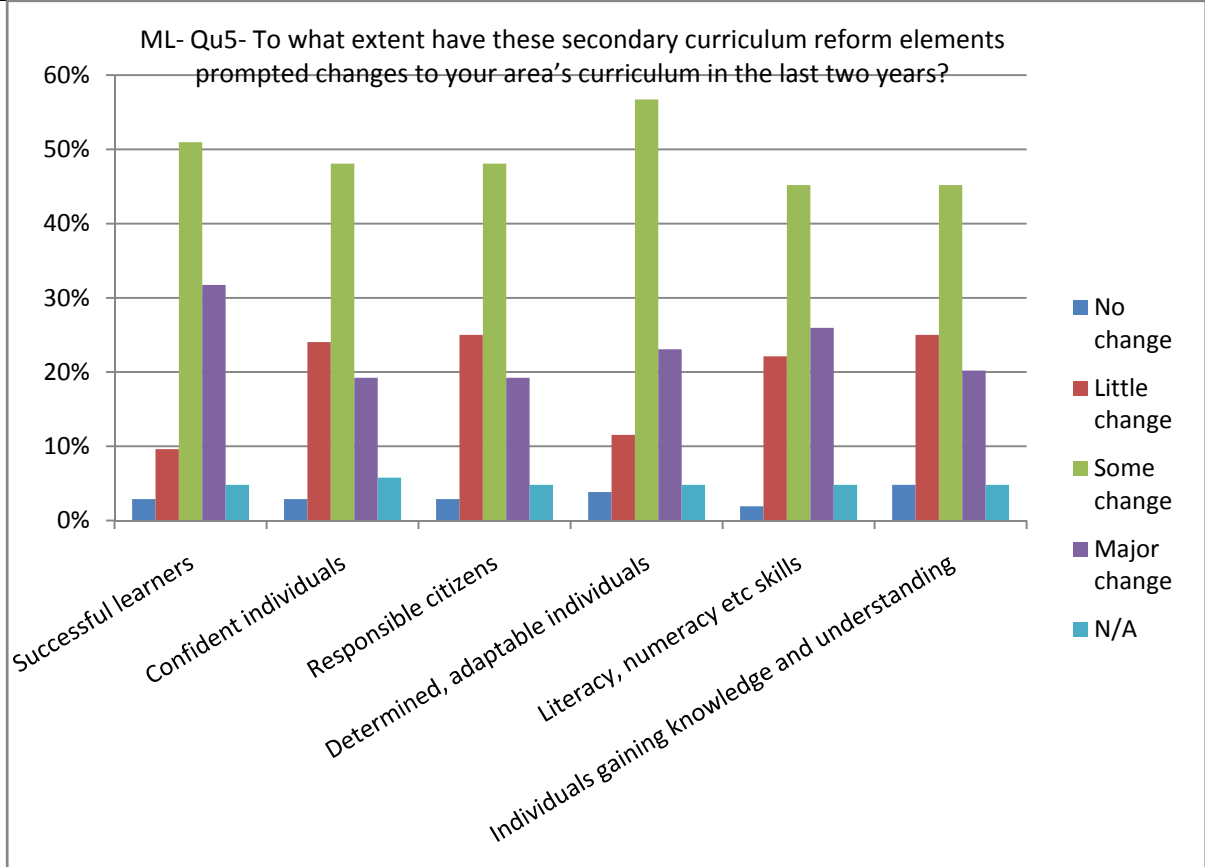


43. Senior and middle leaders were asked to indicate to what extent the secondary curriculum reform elements had prompted change to their school’s curriculum. All six outcomes had required some change according to our senior leader respondents (only around 10% reported that little or no change was required) but there was some variation between outcome. Thus, 56% of these respondents said that ‘Successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve’ required major change but only 27% said that about “Individuals that are gaining knowledge and understanding e.g. big ideas that shape the world”. The responses from middle leaders did not, on this occasion, mirror those of senior leaders. A larger fraction (approaching 30% for some learner outcomes) felt that little or no change was required and a maximum of 32% thought that major change was necessary (“Successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve’). In our sample, classroom practitioners saw the requirement for change more as their senior leaders than the middle leaders. Around 10% saw little need for change. 39% felt that the development of individuals who are gaining skills in literacy, numeracy, ICT and personal, learning and thinking skills

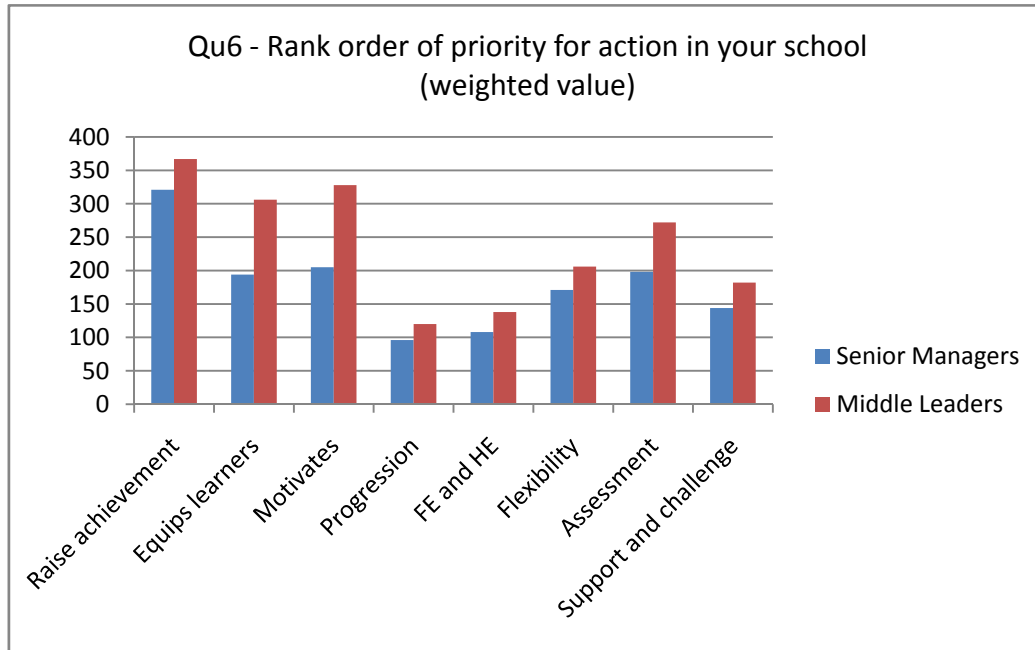


required major change. 54% felt this about developing individuals who are gaining knowledge and understanding e.g. big ideas that shape the world.





44. Finally, in this section, we asked senior and middle leaders to rank in order of priority for action the 8 aspects of the curriculum identified by QCA as in need of improvement. Senior leaders put raising achievement in all subjects at the top of their list followed by motivating and engaging learners. Middle leaders took, on average, a slightly different view ranking raising achievement first followed by personal, learning and thinking skills. Both groups put transition from primary and progression to HE etc as last or second last. This question asked about priorities for action so the answers do not necessarily reflect the absolute priority these issues command for the respondents – merely those which require something to be done in the near to mid-term.



45. In the focus groups and telephone interviews, ‘motivate and engage learners’ and ‘equip learners with the PLTS they will need to succeed in education, life and work’ were consistently prioritised in the top and were often described as underpinning other aspects. One teacher was particularly positive about PLTS:

‘To equip learners with PLTS is our top priority. We need to prepare children as human beings, provide global horizons for them; we need to have more vocational courses to achieve that.’

46. Another classroom practitioner made a link between motivation, PLTS and support to underpin achievement. Aspects placed in the bottom three were often placed there, not because they were considered unimportant, but because they were already being addressed so were not a current focus. Several schools identified transition from primary to secondary as a low priority because they had already done a considerable amount of work to address this:

‘We have done a lot on social and curriculum level to improve transition from primary e.g. we have a clear idea of what they do in the curriculum in year 6 especially in maths.’

47. Encouraging young people to go onto further and higher education was not seen as an appropriate focus in itself but that prioritising the development of PLTS would lead to students making the right decisions for themselves.

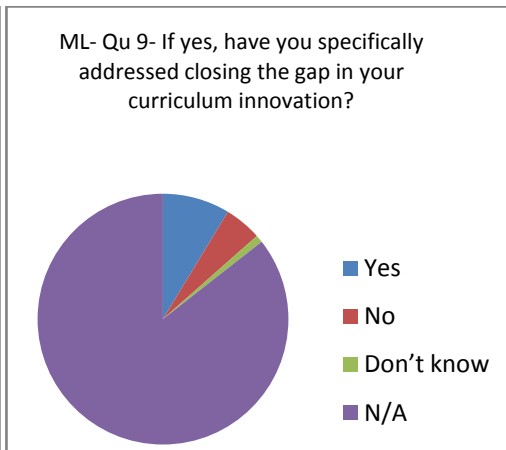
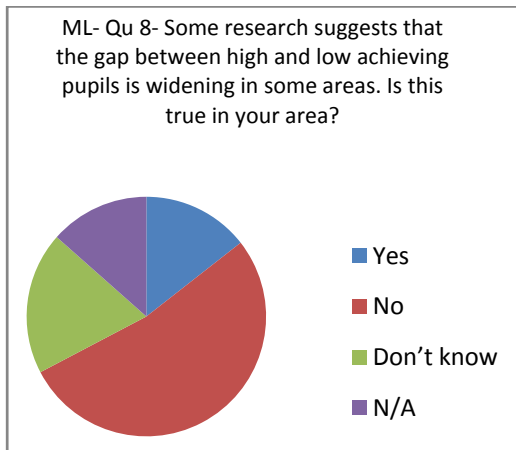
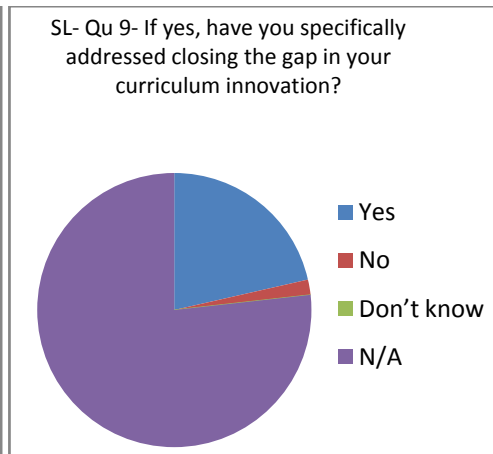
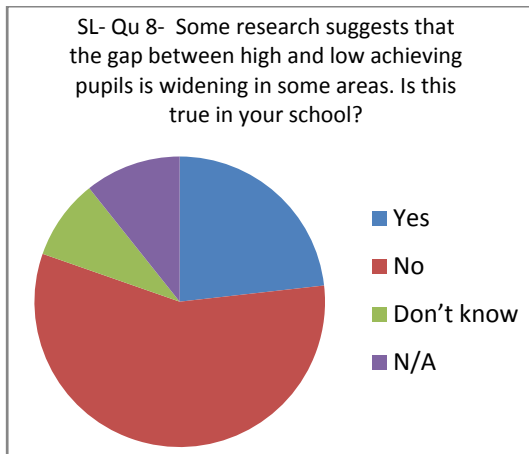
48. There were contrasting views about the aspect flexibility to tailor learning to individual and local needs and as a result differing reasons for placing it as a low priority. Some practitioners identified this as being especially difficult to achieve and was not currently a specific focus for their schools, whereas other staff felt it was a low priority because they were already tackling it effectively.

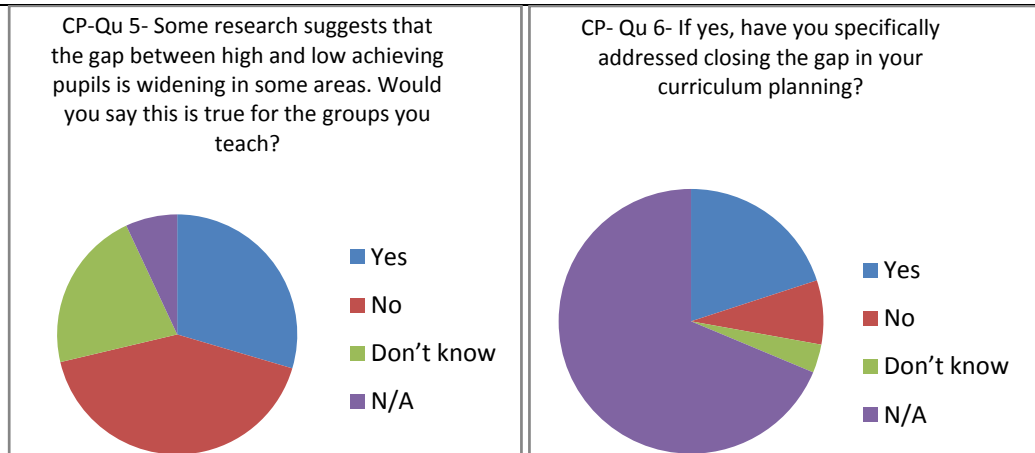


Narrowing the Gap

49. This section of the survey asked whether a widening gap between highest and lowest achieving learners was an issue for their school and, if so, what was being done about it. Over half of senior and middle leaders (57% and 53%) and approaching half of practitioners (42%) said that ‘the gap’ was not a problem in their schools. 10% of senior and 17% of middle leaders didn’t know if it was a problem or not. Less surprisingly, 22% of practitioners didn’t know either. Of those who acknowledged the problem between 11% (practitioners) and 22% (senior leaders) had no curriculum response or didn’t know if they had one. We asked respondents to say what that response was giving a free text answer. These results should be interpreted with caution as the sample size is small. Examples of these responses were:

- by using intervention strategies- small group work
- introduction of more vocational courses at KS4 & KS5
- personalising the curriculum/learning





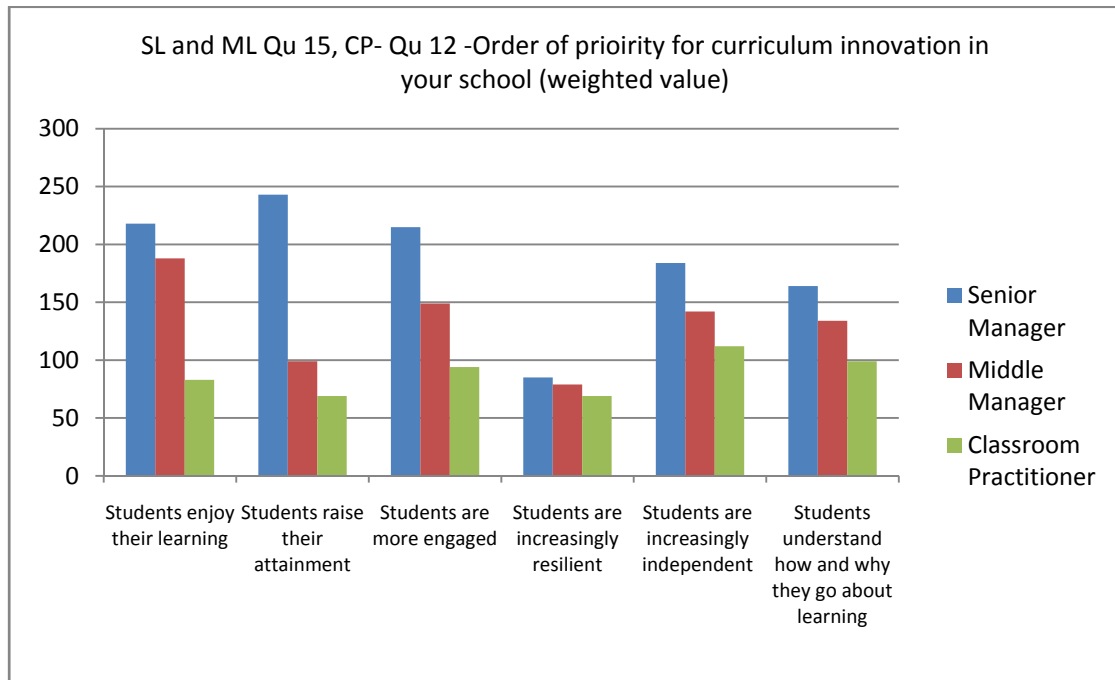
50. In the focus groups, two schools were consistent in identifying the gaps in their schools and were able to come up with perceptions of the reasons for the gaps and also what is happening in their schools to address the issues. One school showed no consistency and identified they were guessing the gaps and did not have whole school data to inform them.
51. The focus groups and telephone interviews highlighted that a wide range of learners were being targeted in order to narrow the gap. These were ethnic groups, white, working class boys, learners from single families, underachieving girls, learners with low reading ages and additional special educational needs, year 11 learners and specific key stage 3 interventions.
52. Practitioners gave a variety of reasons for the gaps in their schools. External factors of social and economic nature were consistently identified. Low aspirations were frequently mentioned. Practitioners described a downward spiral of learners lacking motivation and engagement with poor interaction skills which led to poor behaviour. Practitioners commented how some learners come from families where their family's history of unemployment influences their own aspirations and expectations.
53. One practitioner commented how their learners came from an area where there was relatively good employment but this was low skilled which had also had an impact on aspirations.
54. Few staff made any reference to the fact that the experience a learner has in school may have an impact on the rate of progress or levels of achievement. Exceptionally, one deputy head mentioned how teachers can have an impact:
- ‘There is also variation in the teaching provided which can mean that some teachers’ lessons are less engaging than others.’
55. He also identified how the amount of coursework can have an influence:
- ‘Course work can have a positive and negative impact. At GCSE level there can be an enormous amount of coursework which is fine if you can cope with it but it can be overwhelming if you can’t’
56. Many schools identified ways that they are addressing the gaps:
- more tracking interventions and mentoring
 - more targeted support
 - specialist input
 - developing curriculum pathways
 - skills based teaching and learning.
57. We asked about the approach used to plan curriculum change to close the gap. The responses suggest (but note the caution about sample size) that for senior leaders it happens mostly when



planning new curriculum approaches. For middle leaders and practitioners, the context is either planning schemes of work or when teachers plan individual lessons.

Curriculum innovation

58. We asked all respondents to rank in order of priority 6 alternative objectives of curriculum innovation. Senior leaders gave top priority to raising student attainment, followed closely by enjoyment of learning and student engagement. They gave the lowest ranking to increasing resilience. Middle managers agreed senior managers' top three but put them in a different order (increased engagement, raised achievement, enjoyment of learning). They also put resilience quite a long way last. This broad pattern is repeated in classroom practitioners' priorities but with less differentiation between them except for increasing resilience.



59. During the telephone interviews, practitioners were asked to rate how important certain outcomes for learners were when planning for curriculum innovation. Practitioners were given four outcomes to rate as high, medium or low importance and the outcomes chosen were the ones that had been consistently identified as being of high importance or low importance in the survey. Learners enjoying their learning and learners being increasingly independent were rated consistently of high importance. When asked to identify the most important outcome, practitioners slightly favoured learners being increasingly independent over learners enjoying their learning. Enjoyment was often described as resulting from being independent and from understanding how they learn. Independence was described as a vital life skill.

‘Independence is the most important as it is a vital life skills and they need to learn confidence and not be too dependent on being spoon fed by adults and others.’

60. Learners being resilient were identified as the least important by most however, only three practitioners gave it a low priority initially. Practitioners often stated that it is the least important only because they were being asked to choose one. Some did not see this as important or relevant:

‘I don’t associate resilience with learning.’

‘I don’t understand why they are asking about resilience.’

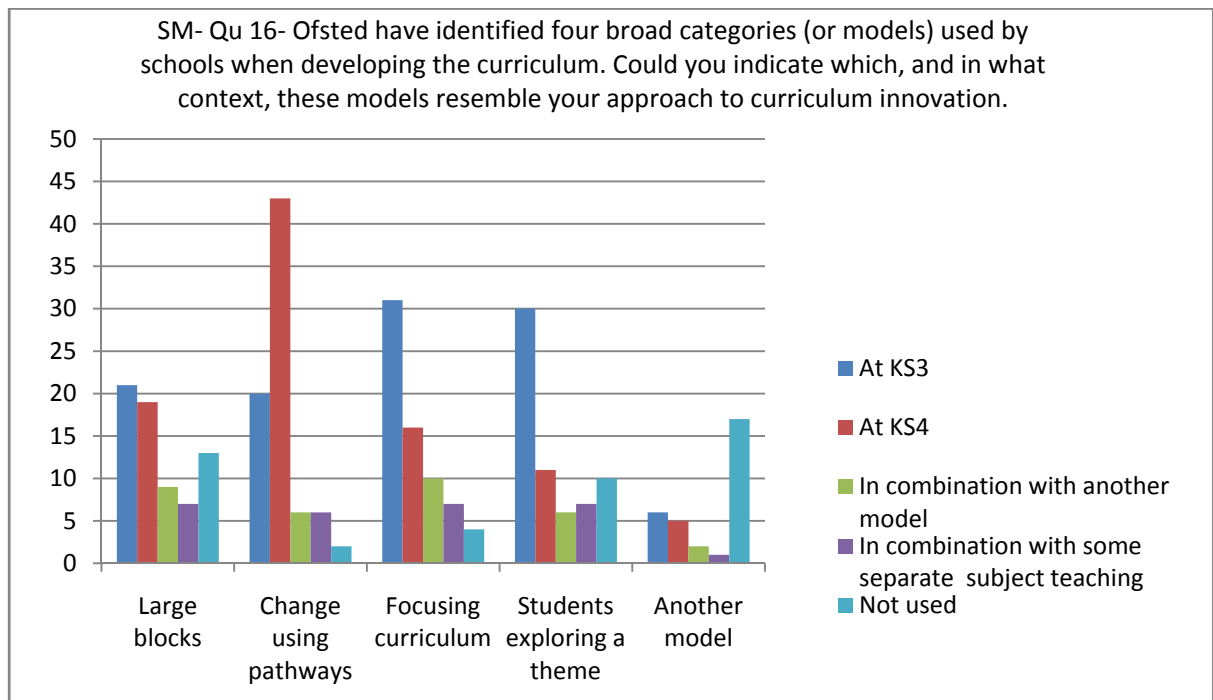
61. In contrast, some staff did identify resilience as important although it was described in general terms:

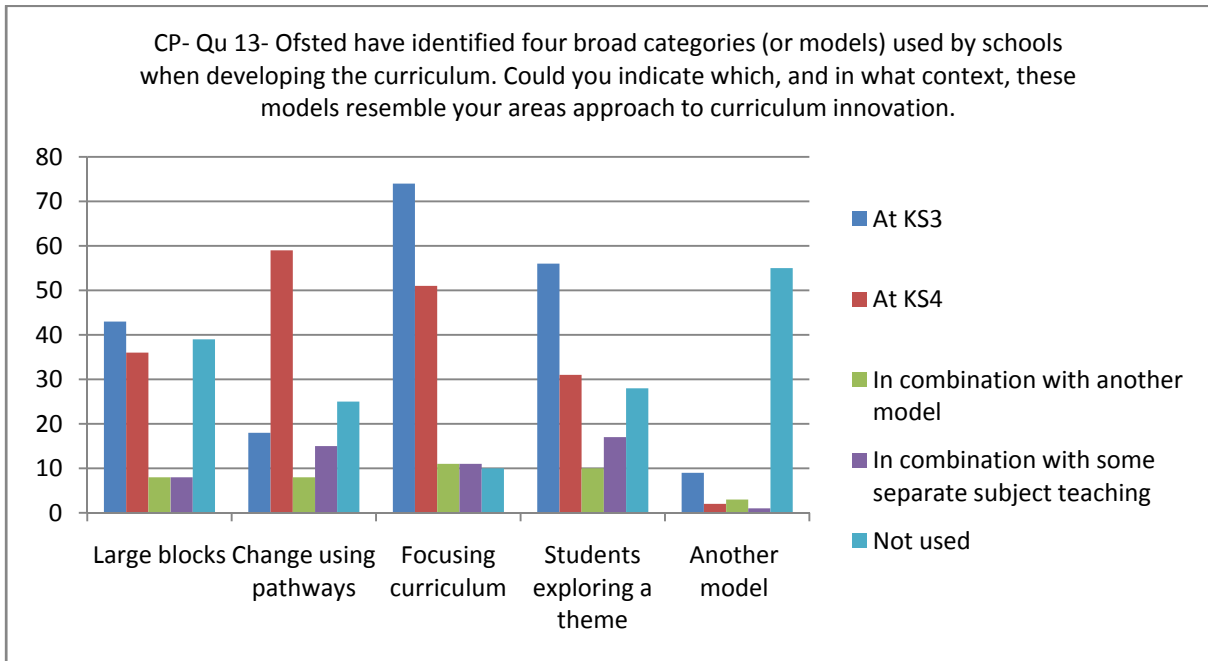
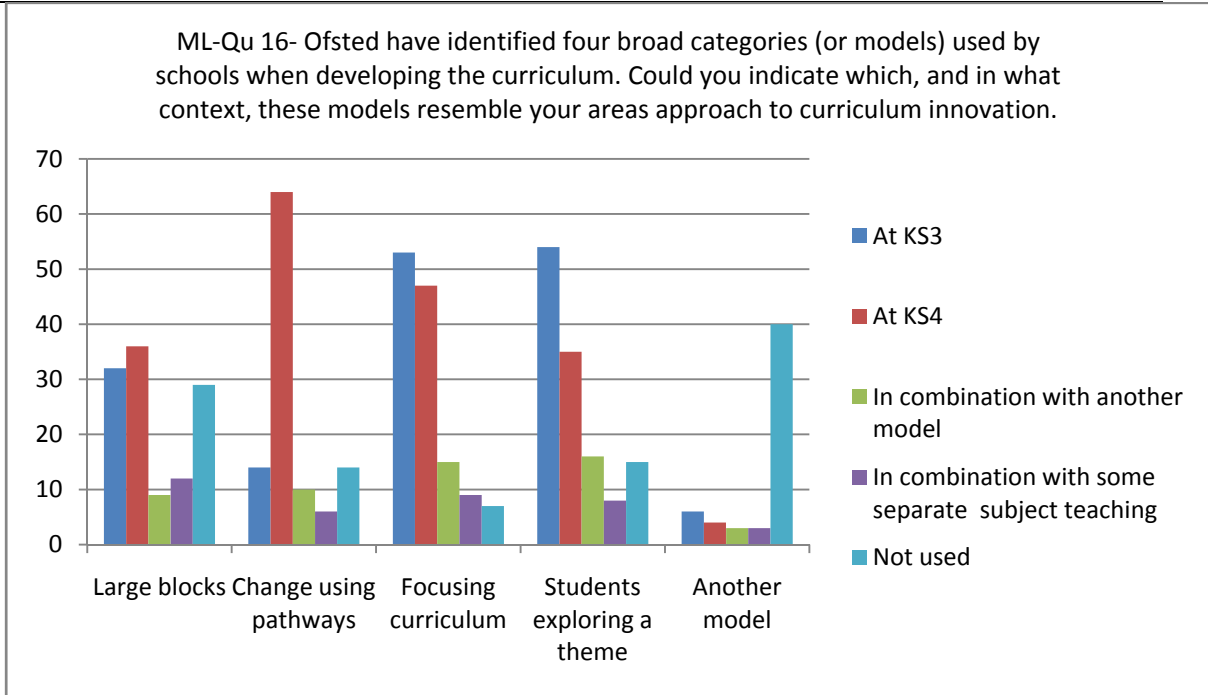


‘We already do a lot for developing resilience so it is not a focus in planning as it is well established.’

62. We then asked our respondents if they adopted any of the 4 approaches or models of curriculum development identified by Ofsted. These are, in brief, a) organising and using curriculum time differently; b) changing curriculum structure using different pathways; c) focussing on how pupils learn; and d) allowing learners to explore a theme drawing on a range of subject. At KS3, all groups claimed to use models c) and d) more than the other two. In contrast (but probably not surprisingly), at KS4 model b) – changing pathways - was substantially more used than the other three. All responding groups reported the use of these models in combination with each other and with individual subject teaching and a small number said they used another model with this slightly more prevalent at KS3. Ten senior leaders offered some description of these models. Examples of these include:

- ‘we have use the idea of 'Big question' to extend, enrich and develop enquiry with learners’
- ‘embedding functional skills across all subject areas and including PLTS and SEAL in all subject areas schemes of learning’.





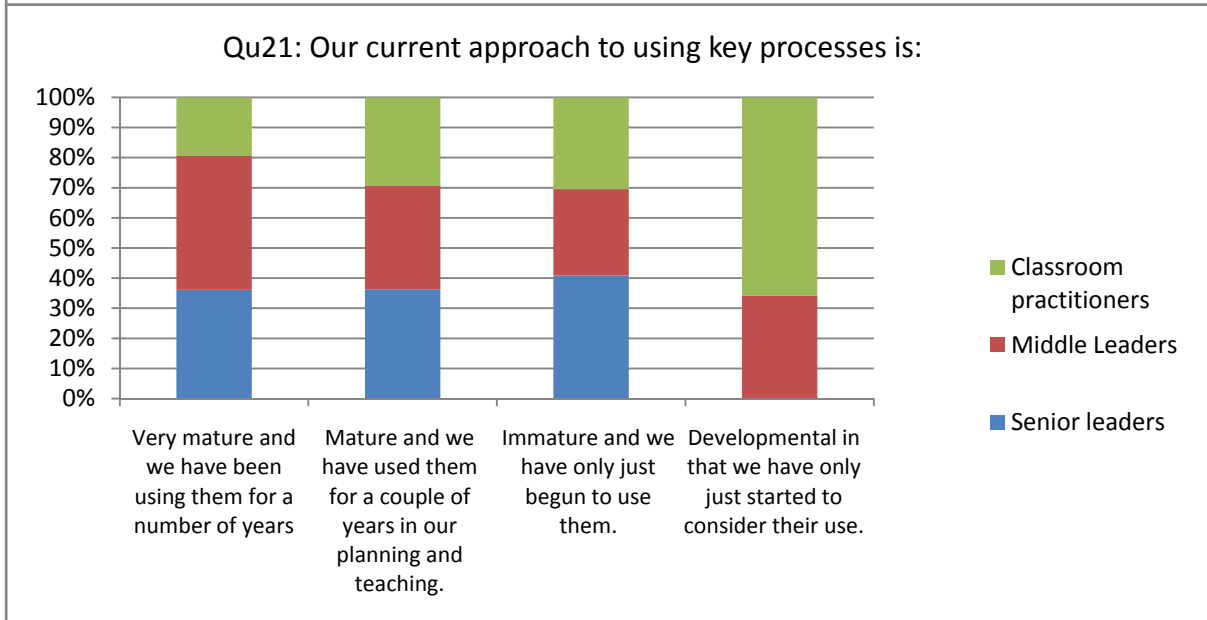
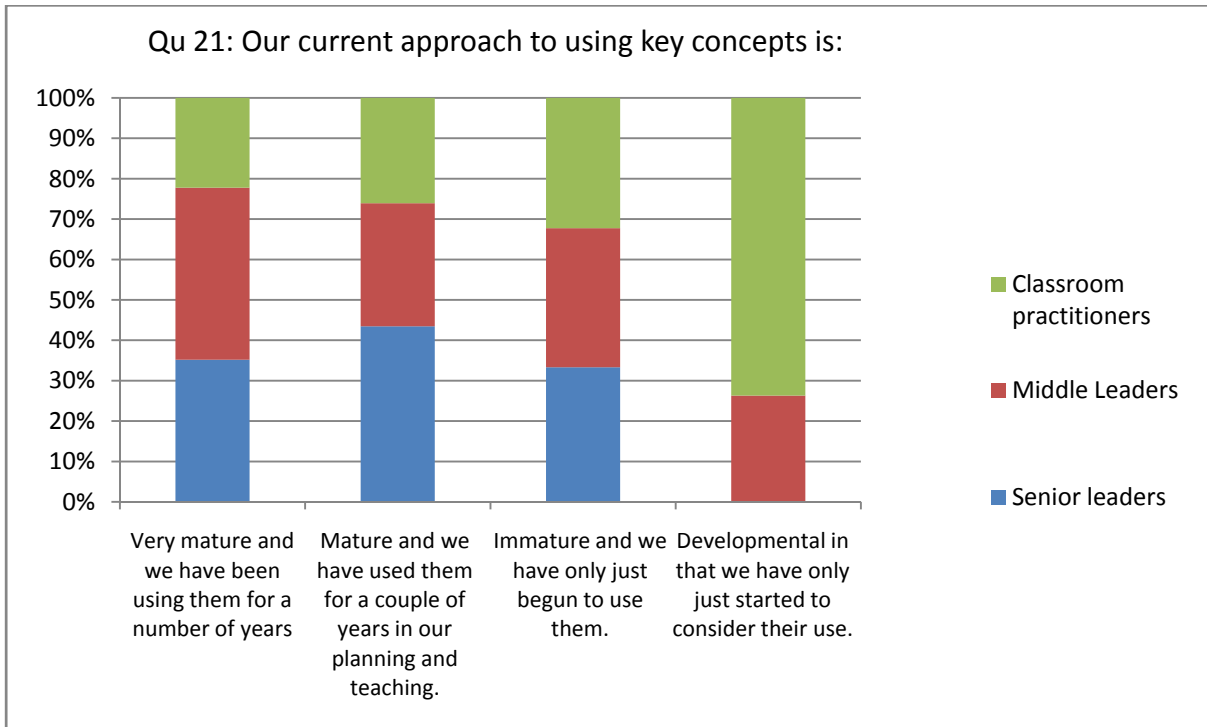
63. We asked leaders to indicate how far they had got in implementing four widely known curriculum practices known to improve student outcomes These were; establishing in advance what individual learners already knew about a topic; connecting lesson content to student experience; using group work and team activities; and using a variety of activities within and across lessons. Around half of both groups stated that the last two approaches (group work and variety of activities) were ‘already widespread practice’ with a further 30-40% saying that there were ‘pockets of practice’. For the first two – establishing what learners know already and connecting content to experience – those proportions were roughly reversed although 25% of middle leaders said that they were less far advanced in ‘establishing what learners already know’ (the equivalent figure for senior leaders was around 20%). Between 7% and 13% thought that these approaches were not relevant to them.

64. The secondary curriculum reforms include the objective of allowing teachers and learners to concentrate on key concepts and key processes so we asked our respondents to what extent they



were using these features. Some 41% of senior leaders and classroom practitioners and around 63% of middle leaders said they were using both. Between 13% (middle leaders) and 20% (the other two groups) said they were using neither.

65. We then asked leaders to what extent these key processes or key concepts were used to support cohesion within subjects and between them. There was not a great deal of differentiation between the responses on average (using a weighted total) – senior leaders were slightly more inclined to use both approaches to support cohesion within subjects. Middle leaders favoured the within subject cohesion outcome more strongly and gave a low score to using key processes to link subjects.



66. We asked all three groups how well established the key concepts/processes approach was. There was little differentiation between key concepts and key processes but significant variation between the groups in their views about maturity. The biggest differences were between senior leaders and practitioners with middle leaders taking a generally middle position. So 69% of senior leaders said



their approach to key concepts was mature or very mature whilst only 28% of practitioners made the same claim. Similarly no senior leaders thought that their approach to either key concepts or processes was 'developmental' whilst 18% of practitioners thought this. Indeed, 33% of practitioners considered that key concepts were not relevant to their teaching.

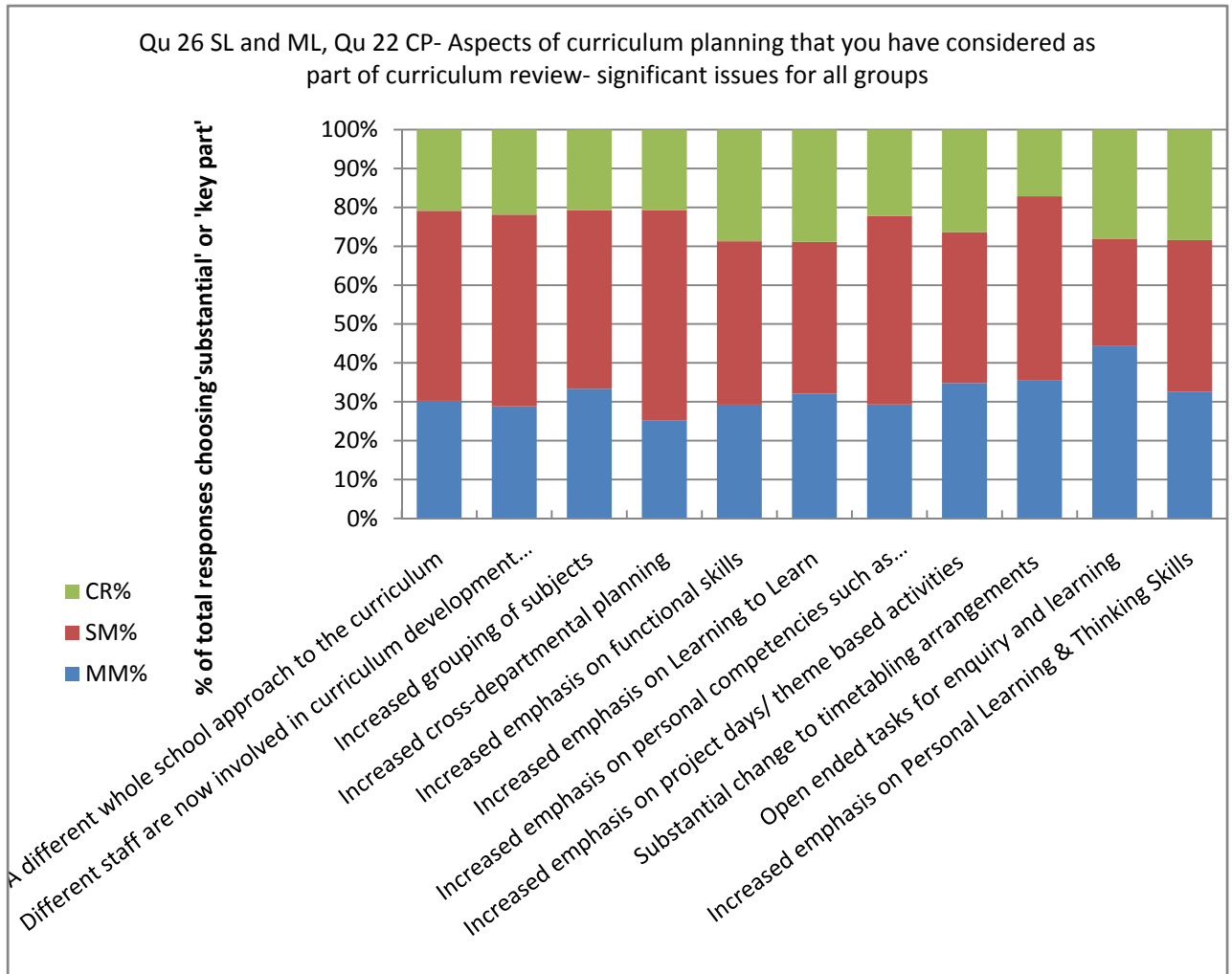
67. We explored a number of possible positive and negative impacts of approaches based on key concepts and processes – for instance increases student involvement in planning, greater staff enthusiasm, threatened sense of professional identity, and increased anxiety. All three groups were generally positive about the approaches with all three groups giving greatest weight to the outcome of 'helping reshape the curriculum so it is more responsive to student interests'.
68. We asked about teacher engagement in point planning and delivery within their own subjects and between them. Nearly 60% of senior leaders thought that teachers engaged in subject based joint planning 'very often' whereas 30% of middle leaders thought this and only 18% of teachers reported planning activities this frequently. Around 45% of middle leaders and practitioners said that this activity happened 'fairly often' (e.g. monthly) – only 30% of senior leaders thought this. Joint planning between subjects was seen by 40% of senior leaders as a monthly activity whereas 48% of practitioners and over 60% of middle leaders thought this was annual. In a puzzling result, over 50% of senior leaders (and 40% - 60% of middle leaders) thought that joint *delivery* was occasional (e.g. annual). Nearly 40% of practitioners thought joint delivery between subjects was occasional but a similar proportion thought that it happened 'never'.

Curriculum planning and design

69. We asked all groups to rate 11 issues which might have featured in curriculum reviews in their schools on a 4 point scale from 'not considered' to 'key part of the review'. For senior leaders, the top issues (with 70% rating it either 'substantial influence' or 'key part of review') were 'a different whole school approach to the curriculum' and 'increased emphasis on PLTS'. Least significant were 'open ended tasks for enquiry and learning' (30%) and 'increased grouping of subjects' (33%). For middle leaders, the top two were 'emphasis on PLTS' (58%) and jointly 'increased emphasis on project days/theme based activities' and increased emphasis on learning to learn (49%). Their bottom two were 'increased cross-departmental planning' (18%) and 'increased grouping of subjects' (24%). For classroom practitioners, the priority issues were, again PLTS (51%) the 'increased emphasis on learning how to learn' (43%); and the least priority were subject grouping and x-departmental planning (both 15%).



Implementing curriculum change



70. We aimed to get some information on the stage of implementation of PLTS and functional skills. Unfortunately, it seems likely that the completion instructions for this question in the survey were misinterpreted making it very difficult to interpret the answers. So survey results are not reported here.
71. In the telephone interviews, practitioners were asked to describe what is most challenging about embedding PLTS into the curriculum. Schools who were already addressing PLTS were able to describe how this was being approached and which subjects it was easier to do this in than others. However, there were contrasting views about which subjects it was easier to embed PLTS into.
72. Many schools did not think that PLTS was a challenge to implement. They commented that they had been addressing these skills through use of frameworks such as SEAL and/ or Building Learning Power and felt that PLTS mapped onto work already being done. Some schools that were already having success at building PLTS into schemes of work were identifying new challenges such as with monitoring and assessment.
73. Although some schools had experienced difficulties with implementing PLTS they were still positive and were persevering in finding ways forward. One teacher described how their school had begun by asking subject leaders to map PLTS onto a grid to identify what they were already doing but everyone had felt overwhelmed by this. The diploma leading the school had been a great help in identifying how to embed PLTS into the curriculum which has helped overwhelmed staff move forward.

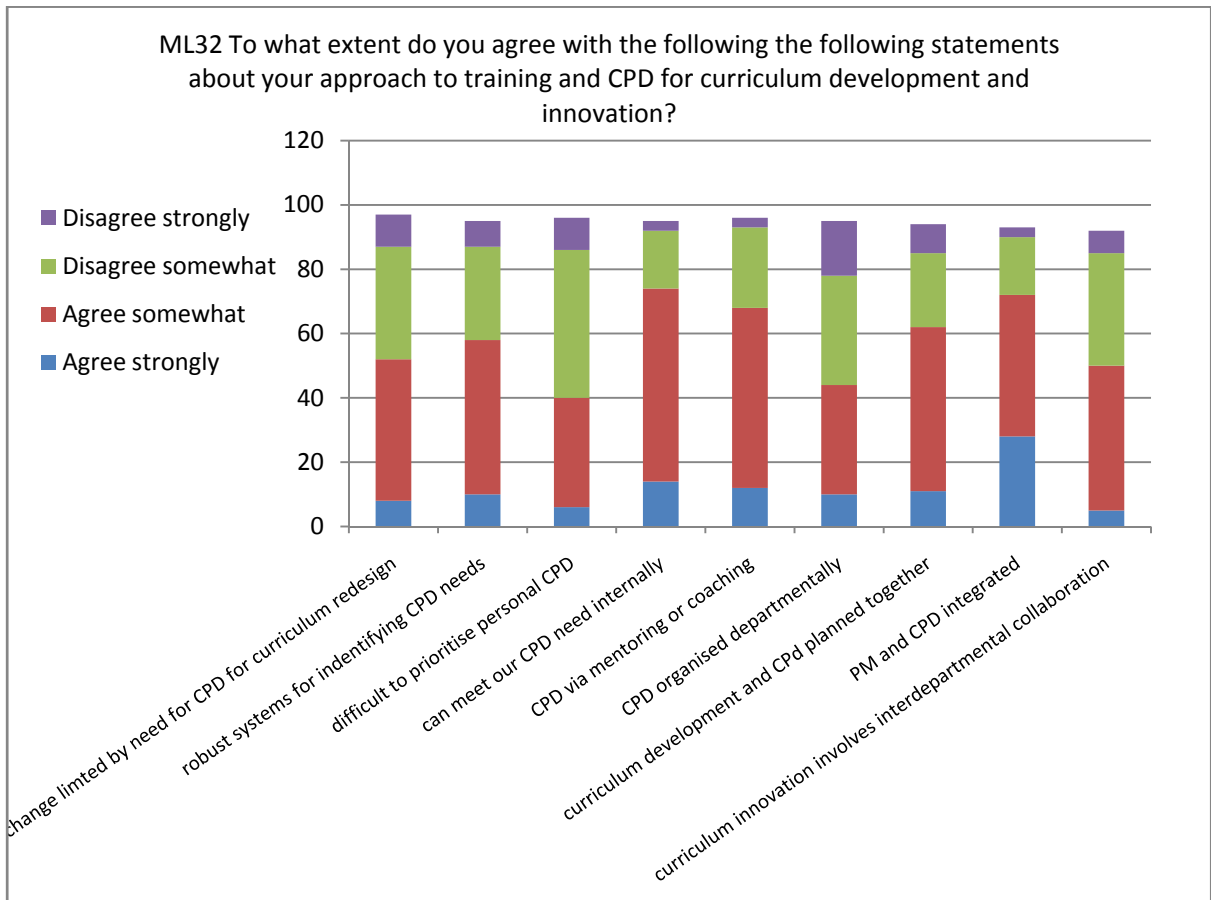
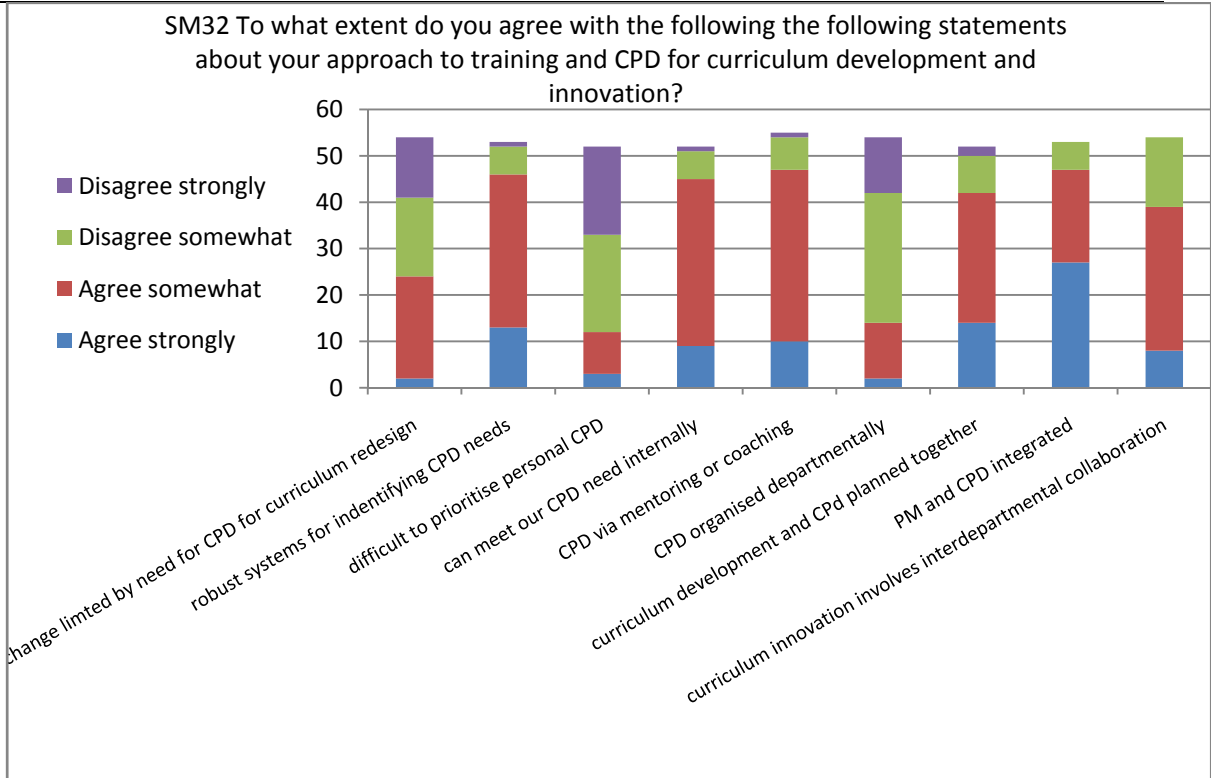


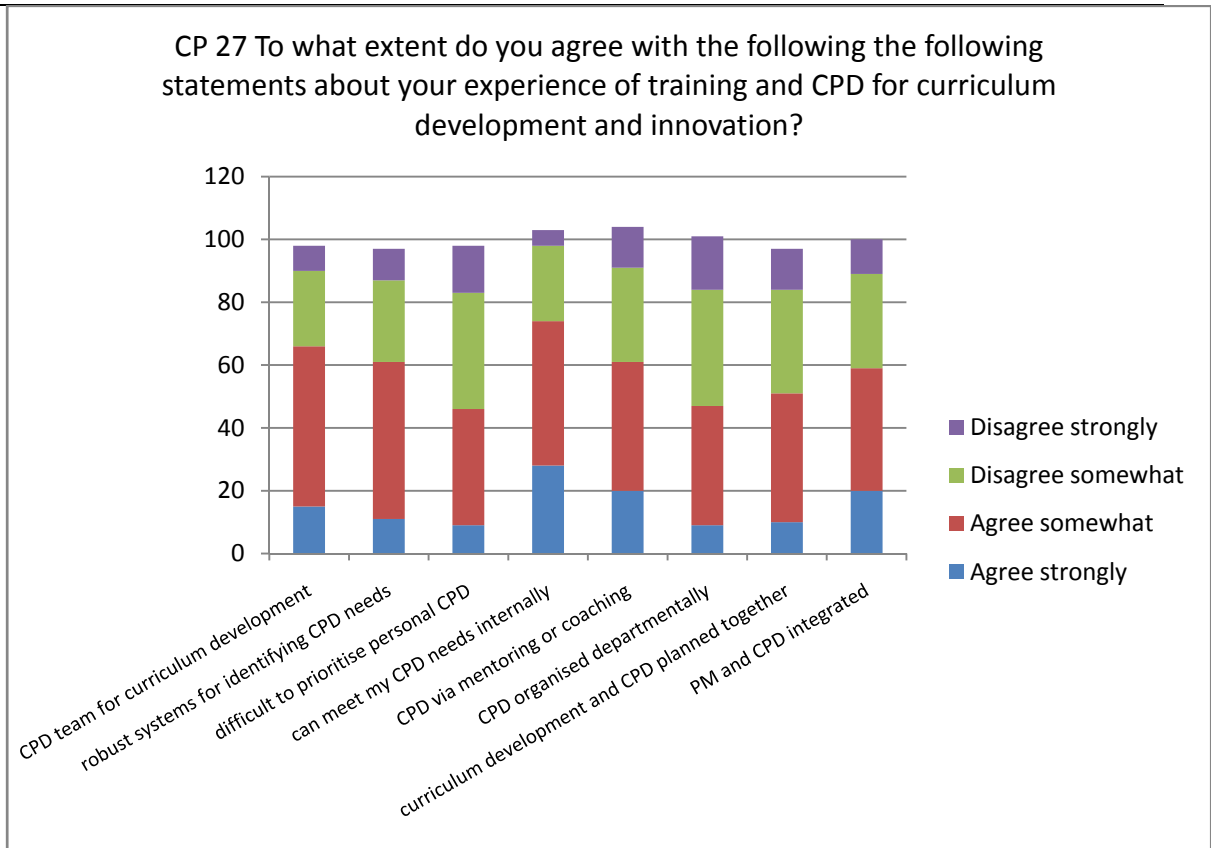
74. A significant challenge described by schools was staff attitude and awareness. Staff also described how learners' attitudes could be a challenge in embedding PLTS:
- “Learners are quite resistant to this- they don't want to think about how to learn; they only want to know how to get through the exams and coursework. This is slowly starting to change because we have 'learning to learn' lessons for years 7, 8 and 9 in which we talk to them about learning.”
75. A minority of staff were negative about PLTS whilst some gave a mixed response. Specific reasons given for this were:
- “PLTS are very good at providing the surface skills and abilities, but not so good at providing the underlying dispositions needed to be effective self-managers and so on. They also suffer from being a little too vague and could benefit from a means of asking learners what they think are required.”
76. The survey asked about the overall approach to curriculum change in our sample schools. A large majority (82%) of senior leaders said that they used a whole school approach and around 60% said they had developed their own curriculum model. 55% said individual departments took the lead. Only 33% of middle leaders asserted a whole school approach and only 21% said they had their own model. These numbers dropped lower still (29% and 15% respectively) for classroom practitioners. For practitioners (68%) and middle managers (55%), the predominant approach was departmentally based.
77. Looking at the impact of the secondary reforms on the nature and amount of assessment, there was broad expectation in all three groups (but particularly amongst middle leaders) that the total amount of assessment would go up. This was accompanied – again across all three groups – by a belief that student peer and self assessment would increase.

Leadership and professional development

78. Finally, we explored approaches to and systems in place for the leadership of curriculum development and the CPD to support it. Senior and middle leaders agreed broadly on a number of things. Leadership of the curriculum needed a different approach from the leadership of other things and that they had to balance the demands of these two domains. They were not particularly stressed by the demands of curriculum leadership and they could and did delegate to others. They did not have capacity problems (though middle leaders were more balanced about this). For senior leaders, there could be a contradiction as they say both that they lead the curriculum development personally and in great detail and that they delegate to departmental level. Middle leaders, on balance, disagree slightly that this delegation happens.
79. This generally positive view continues into our respondents' views on the support for CPD. Majorities in all groups reported robust systems for identifying CPD needs, the internal capacity to meet most CPD needs and the extensive use of mentoring and coaching. Senior leaders did see some limitations on curriculum development arising from the need for relevant CPD first and asserted that CPD was not organised departmentally. In this they disagreed with middle leaders, who were balanced about it, and practitioners who experienced development as a departmental level activity.







80. During the focus groups, practitioners were given 15 statements that could be perceived as CPD/ performance management and curriculum development. The activity was to place the statement on the part of the Venn diagram that they best thought fit. The greatest frequency of activity with 35 responses linked all the three aspects together. When teachers are planning and coaching together to develop resources, they are seen as linking all three together. Specialist coaching is seen as linking performance management and CPD but not with curriculum



The sample and demographic data

81. A total number of 46 schools completed the surveys with 17 schools completing all 3 levels of the survey. We tried to establish a pyramid representation with more middle leaders completing their survey than senior leaders and then more classroom practitioners replying than middle leaders. A total of 273 practitioners responded to the survey comprising 55 senior leaders, 103 middle leaders and 115 classroom practitioners. As these figures show, despite an enormous range of recruiting strategies and persistent communications and persuasion, it proved very difficult, and very expensive, indeed to get a significant response to the survey from practitioners. A significant number of schools who committed to completing the survey did not, in the end do so even though we kept the survey open at their request for several weeks longer than planned. This delayed and significantly shortened the time available for analysis.
82. We did not attempt to stratify the sample at the response stage because it was proving so difficult to recruit respondents. In practice, when we tested the total sample for its match with the English school population we found that the schools in our sample were likely to be bigger and show a higher level of deprivation (as measured by FSM) than the schools population as a whole. The spread geographically was similar to the national population but with a slight bias in favour of urban locations. Our sample schools showed slightly higher contextual value added scores than the national population. These features of the sample are described in more detail below.
83. In terms of deprivation, we had slightly fewer schools than the national average for schools with 6-10% of free school meals but this was balanced by a slightly higher number of schools with 11-15% and 16-20% of free school meals. We also found that our sample was slightly higher than the national figure for schools with 66-70% of free school meals.
84. We had a smaller number of schools with 501-750 learners on roll (7.9%) compared with 17.6% nationally but we had a larger number of schools with 751-1000 learners on roll (30.1%) in comparison to the national average of 26.6%. We also had a much bigger sample of schools with 1501- 1750 learners on roll (15.9%) than the national sample (1.9%).
85. Our sample of community schools (66.7%) was higher than the national average (58.2%) and our number of voluntary aided schools (6.4%) was much lower than the national average.(16.9%). Also when we analysed the data looking at the admissions policy for each school, it was clear that there was a higher percentage of comprehensive schools in our sample (93.7%) than the national average (82.1%).
86. When looking at the KS2-KS4 contextual value added measure, we have a smaller number of schools (40.6%)with a measure of 951-1000 in comparison to a national average of 46.8%). However, when looking at the schools with a measure of 1001-1050, the sample had more schools (58%) than the national average of 52%

Table – Secondary sample characteristics

Characteristic	Type	% nationally in secondary schools	% in our secondary sample
Rural/urban	Hamlet and Isolated Dwelling - less sparse	1.65%	0.00%
	Hamlet and Isolated Dwelling - sparse	0.16%	1.59%
	Town and Fringe - less sparse	10.53%	12.70%
	Town and Fringe - sparse	1.49%	0.00%
	Urban > 10k - less sparse	82.40%	85.71%



	Urban > 10k - sparse	0.51%	0.00%
	Village - less sparse	2.85%	0.00%
	Village - sparse	0.35%	0.00%
% of Free School Meals	0-5%	27.62%	26.98%
	6-10%	27.39%	20.63%
	11-15%	14.84%	20.63%
	16-20%	9.42%	14.29%
	21-25%	6.94%	6.35%
	26-30%	4.50%	4.76%
	31-35%	2.73%	0.00%
	36-40%	2.63%	3.17%
	41-45%	1.36%	1.59%
	46-50%	0.67%	0.00%
	51-55%	0.86%	0.00%
	56-60%	0.44%	0.00%
	61-65%	0.22%	0.00%
	66-70%	0.16%	1.59%
	71-75%	0.16%	0.00%
	76-80%	0.00%	0.00%
	81-85%	0.00%	0.00%
	86-90%	0.00%	0.00%
	91-95%	0.00%	0.00%
	96-100%	0.00%	0.00%
Gender	Boys	5.36%	6.35%
	Girls	6.94%	4.76%
	Mixed	87.63%	88.89%
Number of learners on roll (all ages)	0-250	1.27%	1.59%
	251-500	8.15%	1.59%



	501-750	17.60%	7.94%
	751-1000	26.63%	30.16%
	1001-1250	22.42%	19.05%
	1251-1500	15.06%	17.46%
	1501-1750	1.87%	15.87%
	1751-2000	0.63%	3.17%
	2001-2250	0.13%	3.17%
	2250-2500	0.00%	0.00%
Institution Type	Community School	58.24%	66.67%
	Foundation School	21.56%	23.81%
	Voluntary Aided School	16.90%	6.35%
	Voluntary Controlled School	3.23%	3.17%
Admissions Policy	Comprehensive	82.12%	93.65%
	Modern	5.26%	3.17%
	Not Applicable	7.36%	1.59%
	Selective	5.20%	1.59%
KS2- KS4 Contextual Value Added Measure	0-900	0.16%	0.00%
	951-1000	46.81%	40.58%
	1001-1050	52.02%	57.97%
	1051-1100	1.00%	1.45%
	1101-1150	0.00%	0.00%
	1151-1200	0.00%	0.00%

Methodology

87. The 3 surveys were conducted in secondary schools in England simultaneously over a period eventually extending to 16 weeks in the summer of 2009. Three separate surveys were designed targeted at a) classroom practitioners b) heads of department and other middle leaders, and c) heads and other senior leaders. Surveys of this kind are often completed by one (usually senior) person apparently representing the whole school staff. We attempted to differentiate between the perspectives of staff with different roles. The questions were designed to be consistent between the three groups without being identical. Some questions were only meaningful to people with a



strategic or managerial role. In others, the changes were limited to adjusting context (referring to 'classroom' rather than 'school' for instance).

88. The questions were designed to explore staff experiences of the curriculum in a year in which that curriculum was changing in substantial ways. The challenge is to create a curriculum that:
- raises achievement in all subjects, particularly in English and Mathematics;
 - equips learners with the personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) they will need to succeed in education, life and work;
 - motivates and engages learners;
 - enables a smooth progression from primary, through secondary and beyond;
 - encourages more people to go on to further and higher education;
 - gives schools the flexibility to tailor learning to individual and local needs;
 - ensures that assessment supports effective teaching and learning; and
 - provides more opportunities for focused support and challenge where needed.
89. There were between 28 and 31 questions (plus some capturing demographic data) covering the following areas:
- approach to curriculum review;
 - curriculum aims;
 - narrowing the gap;
 - curriculum innovation;
 - curriculum planning and design;
 - implementing change (including introducing PLTS and functional skills);
 - CPD and the curriculum.
90. Most questions have several parts which, when multiplied by the three respondent groups, represents a very large amount of complex data all of which is capable of being cross-correlated. All answers to all questions are summarised in the associated Excel along with percentage calculations and a number of charts. We have tested the data using formal statistical techniques..
91. We also conducted four focus groups and twenty eight telephone interviews which were designed to provide a deeper exploration of the issues addressed in and arising from the survey. Specifically, they gained views on:
- aspects of the curriculum in need of improvement;
 - planning for priority outcomes for learners;
 - narrowing the gap between high and low achieving learners;
 - how staff are embedding personal, Learning and Thinking skills;
 - what activities staff perceive as being CPD/ performance management/curriculum development; and
 - how staff create challenge for learners.

