Teachers' work and professional learning

Findings from the NZCER National Survey of Primary and Intermediate Schools 2016

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NZCER
Rangahau Mātauranga o Aotearoa

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Key findings

The New Zealand Curriculum (introduced in 2007) heralded a learner-centred approach that paid new attention to increasing the agency of students as partners in their learning, deliberately focusing on strategies that build their skills as learners, whatever the content. We saw a real increase between 2007 and 2010 in these learning opportunities for students reported by teachers in the NZCER national surveys, and the growth of schools as stronger professional learning cultures for teachers. We saw this progress stall in 2013. Three years later, the 2016 national survey shows no change. Teachers reported that some learning experiences that support development of key competencies were less frequent for students in 2016, while most were about the same as they had been 3 years earlier. In 2016, there was an increase in teachers saying that National Standards had narrowed the curriculum. Students' involvement in assessment experiences had changed little, compared with 2013.

However, there was marked progress in supporting learners who were identified among the Ministry of Education's priority groups. Just under half of teachers thought that one of their main achievements over the last 3 years had been that they were better at meeting the needs of students with additional learning needs (44%, up from 28% in 2013). Thirty-six percent included better meeting the needs of Māori students among their main achievements, up from 25% in 2013. There were also more teachers including among their achievements increased student engagement, development of students' social and emotional competencies, and more involvement of parents and whānau in their children's learning.

These gains in teachers improving their practice are consistent with marked increases in those who found their professional learning helpful. Some examples: 67% said they had had practical help from their professional learning in building positive relations with parents and whānau (up from 47% in 2013) and 60% said it had given them practical help in engaging Māori students (up from 41% in 2013). Schools were also more supportive of teachers learning from each other within the school, and there had been a lift in those who could go to see other schools' practice when they wanted to do things differently.

The greater attention being paid to students with additional learning needs also meant that more teachers were aware of their needs, wanted better provision for them, and wanted more support to adapt *The New Zealand Curriculum* for their learning needs.

Teachers continued to report good levels of support and sharing in their school culture. Most used reflection, self-review, and inquiry in their work, and most could access feedback on their teaching from colleagues. Just over half (58%) reported getting feedback from performance management that helped and motivated them to improve their teaching.

Teachers wanted more time to do their work well: more noncontact time for preparation and to work with other teachers; more time to work with individual students; more time to reflect, plan, share ideas, or design relevant local learning activities; and more time to work with parents and whānau. Teachers

still get very little time for such work: the median timetabled noncontact hours per week for classroom teachers with no additional responsibilities were actually lower in 2016 (1 hour, down from 1.2 hours in 2013, but the same as the median in 2010). Ten percent of all teachers were not usually getting the number of noncontact hours for which they were timetabled.

As well as having more time in order to be able to teach well, teachers wanted to adjust the balance of different aspects of their workload: to reduce administration/paperwork, class size, assessment workload, and the number of initiatives at any one time; and increase support staff.

Nearly half of teachers identified too much being asked of schools as one of the major issues facing their school. Fewer teachers were concerned about the adequacy of digital technology and internet access than had been the case in 2013.

Teachers' enjoyment of their work remained high in 2016. Most were getting the in-school support they need to do their work effectively. Levels of work-related stress and the manageability of their workload had not changed since 2013. Teachers' morale had slipped slightly, with 69% of teachers reporting very good or good morale, compared with 74% in 2013. There was also a slight increase in the hours teachers were working outside their timetabled hours, compared with 2013.

Apart from a slight decrease in teachers' interest in becoming a principal, their career plans for the coming 5 years were much the same as they had been in 2013.

1.

Introduction

Every 3 years NZCER's national survey of primary and intermediate schools[1] asks teachers about their work: what they are doing in classes; their school culture and support for their work; their achievements; their issues; and their workload and morale.

In 2016, we continued our focus on how teachers were using aspects of *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC) introduced in 2007. We also asked about the use of National Standards and digital technologies for learning, which we have reported separately.[2,3]

What we see in the 2016 findings largely indicates a period of consolidation in teaching practices rather than new directions. We start by looking at what teachers report about their use of two core changes introduced by NZC: key competencies and student inquiry into their learning, to build student agency and lifelong learning capability.

The student assessment information teachers collect and how information is stored and used is reported next, followed by teachers' views of the professional learning culture and their experiences of professional learning in their school. We then take a look at teachers' main achievements, the changes they would make to their work, and what they see as major issues facing their school. The final section describes how teachers were feeling about their work, before outlining their career plans, and overall comments about their work as a teacher.

The characteristics of the teachers who took part in the 2016 national survey

NZCER sent teacher surveys to the office managers at the 349 primary and intermediate schools in our representative national sample, along with guidelines for distributing them randomly to every second teacher at the school. A total of 771 teachers at 228 schools (65% of the schools in the sample) completed surveys.

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1   The Appendix gives a description of the NZCER National Survey of Primary and Intermediate Schools 2016.
2   Bonne, L. (2016). *National Standards in their seventh year: Findings from the NZCER national survey of primary and intermediate schools 2016*. Wellington: NZCER. Available at www.nzcer.org.nz/research/publications/national-standards-their-seventh-year
3   Bolstad, R. (2017). *Digital technologies for learning: Findings from the NZCER national survey of primary and intermediate schools 2016*. Wellington: NZCER. Available at www.nzcer.org.nz/research/publications/digital-technologies-learning-national-survey

The response rate for teachers was 38%. The maximum margin of error[4] for the teacher survey was approximately 3.5%. Sometimes we report results for smaller groups of teachers, in which case the maximum margin of error does not apply.

The survey returns for teachers were generally representative of schools in the sample, with a slight under-representation of large schools, and an over-representation of small–medium and small schools.[5] Slight under-representations were evident of decile 1 schools and schools in the Auckland and Hawke's Bay/Gisborne Ministry of Education regions.

Most teachers responding were female (88%) and New Zealand European/Pākehā (85%). Ten percent identified as Māori, 6% as European, and 3% as Pasifika (Samoan, Tongan, Cook Island Māori, or Niuean).

Teaching experience and roles

Almost half the teachers (49%) had been teaching in their current school for 5 years or less—a similar proportion to that found in the 2013 survey. One-quarter had been teaching in their school for less than 2 years. Eighty-four percent of teachers who completed surveys were in permanent positions, and a further 15% were in fixed-term positions.

A small number of teachers (3%, *n* = 23) reported having recognition as an Advanced Classroom Expertise Teacher (ACET).

Most respondents (84%) were classroom teachers, and 28% had formal leadership roles (deputy principal, assistant principal, curriculum/syndicate leader: English/Literacy, curriculum/syndicate leader: Mathematics). Only 37% of teachers had just one role in their school. Eight percent of teachers reported having more than five roles.

Roles that teachers undertook included:
- classroom teacher (84%)
- associate teacher (23%)
- mentor (23%)
- senior teacher (18%)
- associate teacher for student teachers on practicum (17%)
- tutor teacher/mentor to a provisionally certificated teacher (15%)
- curriculum/syndicate leader—English/Literacy (13%)
- curriculum/syndicate leader—Mathematics (11%)
- deputy principal (9%)
- subject specialist (8%)
- staff rep on the school board (8%)
- specialist roles such as SENCO, Reading Recovery, gifted and talented education, PB4L, and ESOL (7%)
- assistant principal (5%)
- curriculum leader in learning area other than English/Literacy or Mathematics (3%).

Teachers' roles included combinations of classroom teacher, senior teacher, mentor/tutor teacher, staff rep on the school board, or curriculum leader.

Teachers' responses were analysed according to school characteristics (decile, size, and location), the year level taught, and whether or not teachers held formal leadership roles. We also examined teachers' responses according to the year level(s) of their home class (grouping them into Years 0–2, Years 3–4, Years 5–6, Years 7–8, or No home class)—year-level combinations that are approximately aligned with curriculum levels in NZC. We report only statistically significant differences ($p > 0.05$). We found very few statistically significant differences related to school characteristics, level taught, or school role.

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4   The maximum margin of error added to and subtracted from a proportion gives a confidence interval. We can say there is a 95% chance that the proportion is inside this range of numbers.
5   Small schools had up to 100 students; small–medium schools had 101–200 students; medium–large schools had 201–350 students; and large schools had 351 students or more.

2.

What progress was being made with the emphases in NZC?

A constant feature of teachers' work since 2007 has been NZC,[6] in which "Our vision is for young people who will be confident, connected, actively involved, and lifelong learners" (p. 8).

NZC underscored the importance of the key competencies. In our 2010 and 2013 surveys, we asked teachers about the learning experiences they provided to help their students learn how to learn. Teachers' responses in 2013 suggested a plateau in their being able to provide learning experiences that weave key competency development though the curriculum learning areas. We suggested that more deliberate work was needed to help schools and teachers "make NZC a powerful reality".[7]

We also found that attention had shifted away from developing school-based curricula to the National Standards in reading, writing, and mathematics that were made mandatory in 2010. In 2013 around two-thirds of principals and half the teachers thought National Standards had narrowed the curriculum. Although many thought the gains from National Standards were not commensurate with the attention they took, there were also indications that teachers were becoming more aware of rates of student progress in these three areas.[8]

In 2016 there was an increase in principals reporting NZC drives what they do in their school (54%, up from 38% in 2013). Alongside this, though, 32% of principals said that National Standards drive what they do in their school, and 40% that the focus on literacy and mathematics had taken their attention away from other aspects of NZC. In 2016, more teachers thought National Standards had narrowed the curriculum they taught (69%, up from 50% in 2013).[9] Against this backdrop, we begin this section with what teachers said about how much they value learning experiences that support students' development of the key competencies.

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6   Ministry of Education. (2007). *The New Zealand Curriculum*. Wellington: Learning Media.
7   Wylie, C., & Bonne, L. (2014). *Primary and intermediate schools in 2013. Main findings from the NZCER national survey*. Wellington: NZCER, p. 41. Available at www.nzcer.org.nz/system/files/NZCER%20Survey%20Report%20Final%20web_0.pdf
8   Wylie, C., & Berg, M. (2013). *National standards: What difference are they making?* Paper presented at NZARE Annual Conference. Available at www.nzcer.org.nz/system/files/NZARE%20National%20Standards%20conference%20paper.pdf
9   A full picture of the current role of National Standards in schools is given in Bonne, L. (2016). *National standards in their seventh year: Findings from the NZCER national survey of primary and intermediate schools 2016*. Available at www.nzcer.org.nz/research/publications/national-standards-their-seventh-year

Key competencies

Since 2010, we have asked teachers about the importance of a range of learning experiences that can build key competencies, and how often their students have these types of experiences in their class. The 2010 and 2013 pictures were similar, with at least 80% of teachers indicating they valued students having these types of learning experiences. Noticeably smaller proportions reported their students having these opportunities quite often or most of the time.

Figure 1 shows that most teachers continue to value these learning experiences for their students in 2016. They were most likely to think it was important or very important for students to think and talk about how they are learning, and provided this experience with the greatest frequency. Also among the learning experiences most valued by teachers and most frequently provided were students working together to solve problems or suggest solutions, taking part in hands-on or practical activities, learning from taking risks or experiments that did not succeed, and making connections with things in their own culture or life outside school.

The learning experiences that were least frequent continue to be some of the most challenging in terms of existing practice: students working together on a project or activity that will make a difference to their class, school, local environment, or community; working on individual projects or inquiries; students directing their own learning pace or content; and investigating their own questions.

FIGURE 1   **Importance and frequency of learning experiences, reported by teachers (*n* = 771)**
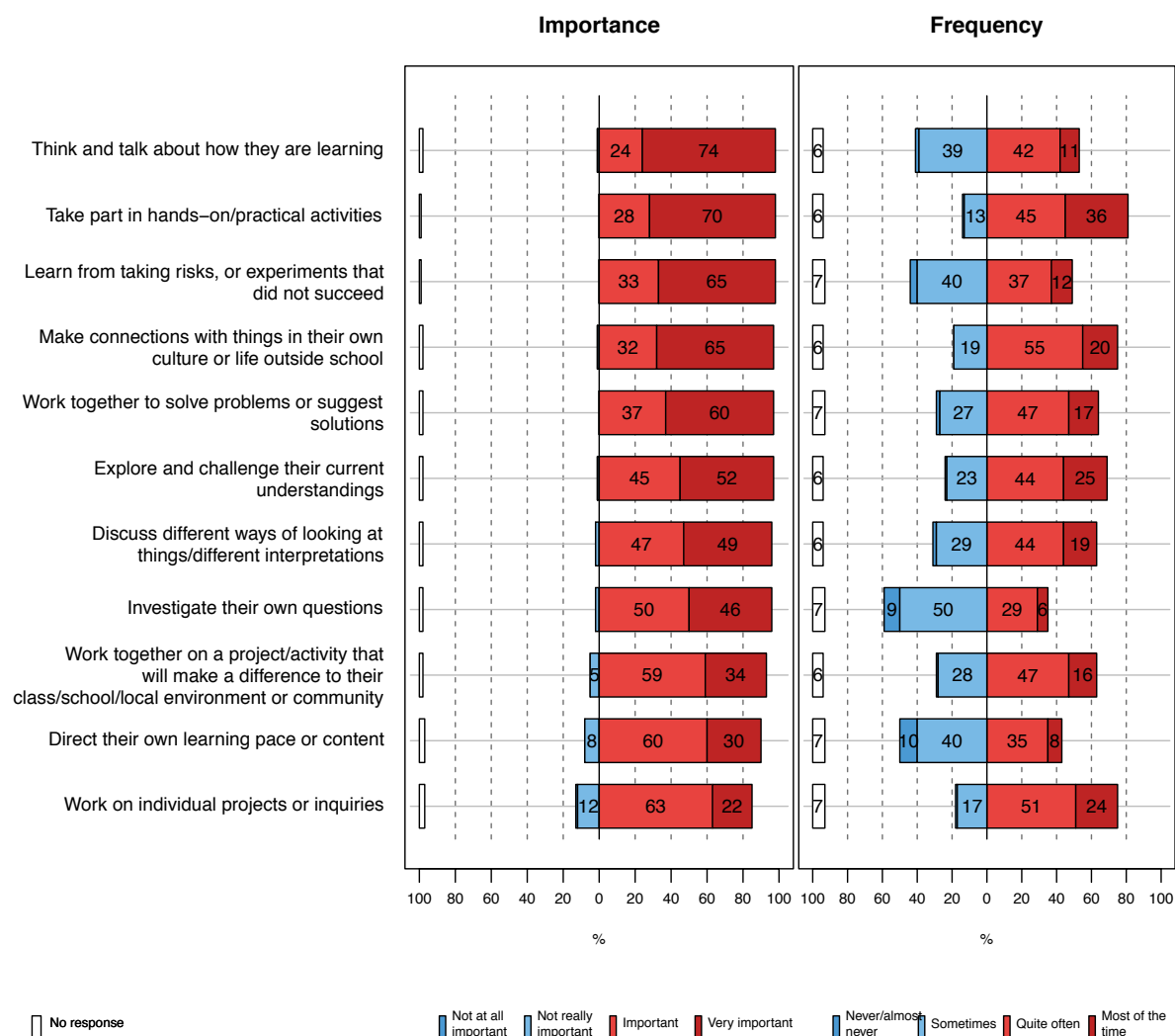
More teachers in 2016 than in 2013 or 2010 thought that three kinds of experience were very important for their students.

- Learn from taking risks, or experiments that did not succeed (65%, compared with 56% in 2013 and 54% in 2010).
- Work together to solve problems or suggest solutions (60%, compared with 51% in 2013 and 54% in 2010).
- Direct their own learning pace or content (30%, compared with 22% in both 2013 and 2010).

Three different student learning experiences were reported as being less frequent in 2016 compared with 2013 or 2010.

- Take part in hands-on/practical activities (75% reported their students did this most of the time or quite often, compared with 85% in 2013- and 83% in 2010).
- Make connections with things in their own culture or life outside school (69% in 2016, compared with 78% in 2013 and 84% in 2010).
- Investigate their own questions (53% in 2016, compared with 61% in 2013[10]).

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10 This item was new in the 2013 survey.

We checked for differences in teachers' responses in what they thought was important and how often they provided associated learning experiences, in relation to whether they taught students in Years 0–2, Years 3–4, Years 5–6, or Years 7–8 (reflecting the approximate curriculum levels of NZC). Table 1 shows overall patterns in teachers' responses for four learning experiences for which teachers of Years 0–2 gave significantly different responses from those who did not have such young students in their home class. More Year 0–2 teachers thought it was very important for students to take part in hands-on or practical activities, and reported their students did this most of the time or quite often.[11]

Conversely, fewer Year 0–2 teachers thought it was very important for their students to investigate their own questions, direct their own learning pace or content, and work on individual projects or inquiries, and 41% or fewer said their students did these things most of the time or quite often. As students' year levels increased, so did the proportions of teachers who rated these learning experiences as 'very important' and who indicated their students do this 'most of the time' or 'quite often'. These three learning experiences contribute to students' taking responsibility for their learning—an important part of the key competencies.

So there are some differences in what teachers think are important learning experiences, and the frequency of these, that are related to students' year levels. However, these do not account for the overall changes in teachers' answers between 2013 and 2016.

TABLE 1   **Percentage frequency of teachers' responses about students' learning experiences, by year level of students taught***

Learning experience	Teachers' responses	Teachers of Years 0–2 (n = 282) %	Teachers of Years 3–4 (n = 252) %	Teachers of Years 5–6 (n = 202) %	Teachers of Years 7–8 (n = 128) %
Take part in hands-on practical activities	Rated 'Very important'	84	68	57	57
	Students do this 'Most of the time' or 'Quite often'	87	75	66	62
Investigate their own questions	Rated 'Very important'	39	46	51	55
	Students do this 'Most of the time' or 'Quite often'	41	50	64	60
Direct their own learning pace or content	Rated 'Very important'	23	27	33	38
	Students do this 'Most of the time' or 'Quite often'	41	44	58	53
Work on individual projects or inquiries	Rated 'Very important'	12	25	33	31
	Students do this 'Most of the time' or 'Quite often'	19	42	66	63

*Note: These year-level groupings are not mutually exclusive. For example, a teacher may have taught students in Years 4–6, in which case their responses were included in both the Years 3–4 and Years 5–6 groups.

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11 We acknowledge that it might be difficult to present students with any one of these learning experiences 'most of the time' and so have combined these responses with 'quite often'.

Students inquiring into their learning

Learning to learn is a foundation principle in NZC and students taking responsibility for their own learning is integral to the key competencies. This can be supported by providing students with opportunities to be involved in assessment processes and conversations about their next learning steps.

Figure 2 shows that the most common assessment practices in which students take an active role are reviewing their progress with the teacher and parents and whānau, assessing their own work against set criteria, and assessing each other's work and giving feedback. Least common is critiquing examples of actual work across a range of quality, and documenting their own learning achievements. The 2016 picture is much the same as in 2013.

FIGURE 2   **Frequency of students' involvement in assessment experiences, reported by teachers (*n* = 771)**
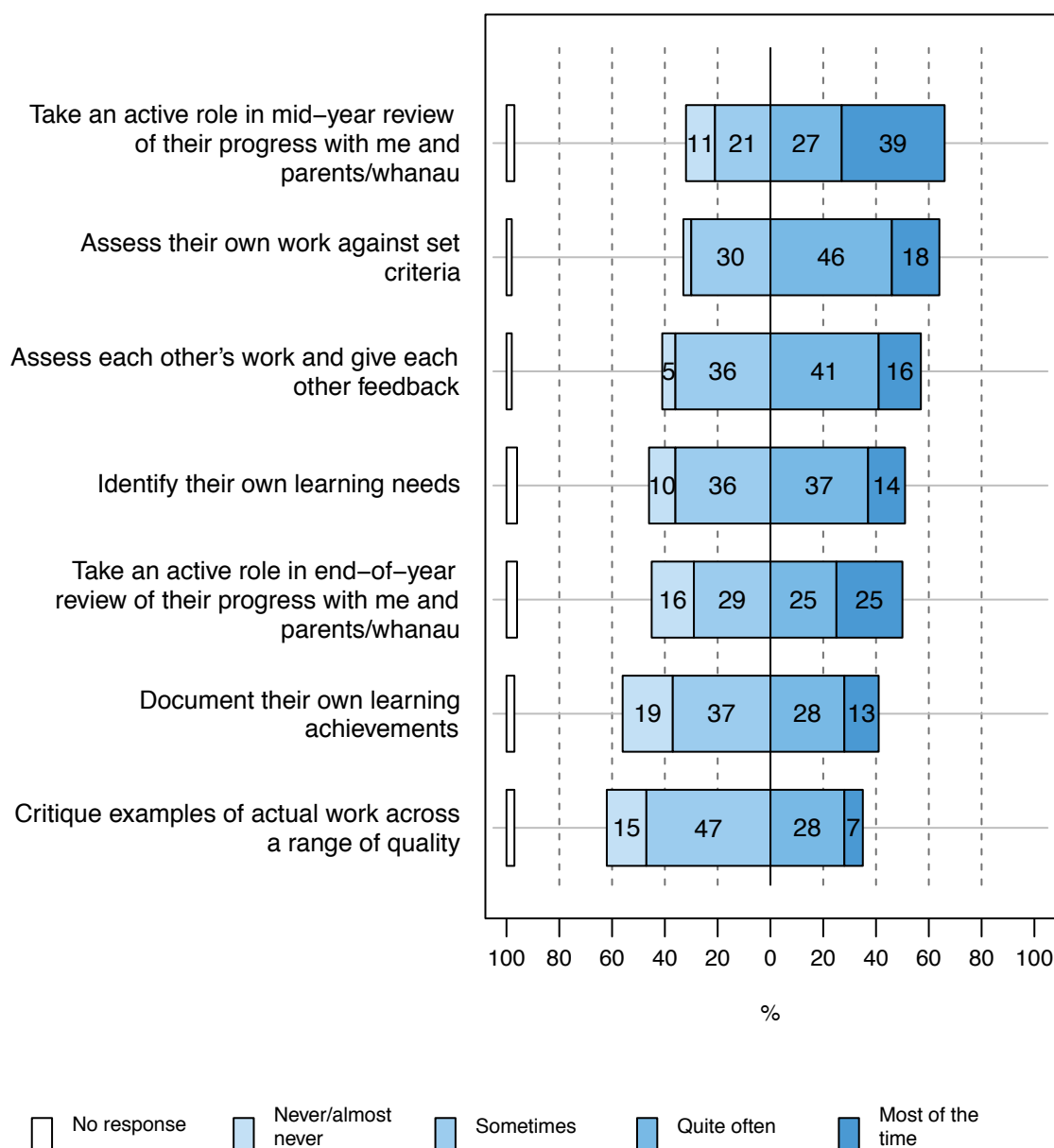
Students' involvement in assessing their own learning was associated with year level, with increasing student involvement as they progressed through school. The biggest increases associated with year level were in the proportions of teachers who said their students did these things most of the time or quite often:

- Assess each other's work and give each other feedback (39% of Year 0–2 teachers, increasing to 73% of Year 7–8 teachers).
- Identify their own learning needs (37% of Year 0–2 teachers, increasing to 67% of Year 7–8 teachers).
- Document their own learning achievements (29% of Year 0–2 teachers, increasing to 63% of Year 7–8 teachers).

Assessing students' learning

In NZC, assessment of students' learning is positioned as an integral component of an ongoing process of teaching as inquiry. Teaching as inquiry links the purpose of teaching with assessment of students' strengths and needs to decide what to emphasise and to see if teaching strategies have helped students make progress.

Teachers draw on a range of information to assess what students have learnt and to plan their teaching. Table 2 shows the assessments that teachers used in relation to five key purposes. In almost every instance, assessments were most likely to be used to identify individuals' next learning steps.

Teachers' observations and classroom work had the widest use. Student self-assessment and peer assessment were used most to identify the next learning steps for individuals. Formal achievement assessments were used more than observations or classroom work to track students' progress over time.

Table 2 also shows that most assessments teachers make have multiple uses: that fine-grained assessments used to identify a student's next learning steps are also used as part of the picture to make the Overall Teacher Judgements (OTJs) for National Standards reporting.

Some of the assessments included in Table 2 have set items, and result in numeric data such as a student's curriculum level for mathematics, or their reading age. Assessments such as PAT and GLOSS are collections of items that can give a global indicator of a student's achievement across a learning area as well as fine-grained pictures of student performance in different aspects of mathematics, reading, or writing.

Global indicators lend themselves to tracking over time, reporting at various levels, and in some cases comparing to national norms. Some of these assessments can be used with a whole class and produce reports about the class, as well as individual students.

The Assessment Resource Banks (ARBs)[12] are different from other assessment resources included in the table. They are intended primarily for formative assessment purposes, and are used for teaching and learning activities other than the purposes we asked about. The ARBs do not come as pre-packaged collections; teachers have to identify the individual task they need for a specific purpose. Rather than yielding numeric data, a teacher has to analyse and interpret a student's response to each task. One of the strengths of the ARBs is the information they provide to teachers to help them interpret student responses and to suggest possible next steps and related resources that would support students' learning.

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12 The ARBs are available at www.nzcer.org.nz/tests/assessment-resource-banks

TABLE 2   **Teachers' use of assessments (*n* = 771)**

Source of information	Identify individuals' next learning steps %	Inform OTJs %	Plan targeted teaching for small groups %	Track individual student progress over time %	Position students in relation to NZC levels %	Don't use this %
My observations	92	91	86	74	46	<1
Classroom work	92	88	80	74	45	<1
Nonstandardised reading assessment (e.g., PM Benchmarks, PROBE, instructional text levels)	88	83	78	87	56	4
Nonstandardised numeracy assessment (e.g., GLOSS, IKAN, NUMPA)	84	80	77	83	55	6
Standardised assessment (e.g., PAT, e-asTTle, STAR, Observation Survey)	79	77	69	79	54	6
Nonstandardised writing assessment (e.g., writing samples benchmarked against exemplars)	79	77	67	74	50	9
Student self-assessment	73	24	26	32	11	10
Peer assessment	53	19	23	23	7	21
The Assessment Resource Banks (ARBs)	16	15	17	10	10	53

Teachers of Years 7–8 students made the most use of standardised assessments and of student self-assessment and peer assessment. Smaller proportions of Years 7–8 teachers used a nonstandardised assessment for reading, compared with teachers of Years 0–6 students, indicating that fewer older students needed the close monitoring of reading skills provided by nonstandardised assessments.

Support for teachers to use their information about students and learning

How do teachers store achievement information and other information they collect about their students in a way that makes various combinations readily accessible for analysing, using, and reporting? One way is to use a student management system (SMS) software application, now used in 99% of New Zealand schools.[13] The effective use of an SMS can play a role in improving student outcomes and supporting inquiry into effective teaching practice, by enabling teachers to identify patterns and monitor students' progress over time. Access to achievement information via the SMS by students, their parents, and whānau also has the potential to increase their engagement.

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13 See Ministry of Education. (2016). *DELTA programme: Student information sharing initiative report*. Retrieved from: www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Ministry/consultations/SISI-Report-FINAL.pdf

Figure 3 shows that around 70% of all teachers reported being able to effectively use their school's SMS to put together different assessment information to inform their OTJs, generate individual student reports, and track the achievement of their class as a whole.

Just under half of teachers indicated they could effectively use their school's SMS to store longitudinal achievement data, with a further third of teachers uncertain about this. For teachers with formal management roles, who are likely to be more involved in analysis of student data that looks beyond one class over one school year, the proportions were not significantly different.

Currently there is concern about the capacity to use SMS for longitudinal tracking capacity across schools.[14] The growing number of Communities of Learning I Kāhui Ako, for instance, will need to be able to share information that travels with the student as they transition between learning organisations, but this information is not always easily transferred from one SMS to another. This particularly affects students in low decile schools, where transience rates are higher.

FIGURE 3   **Teachers' agreement they can effectively use their school's SMS in relation to student achievement (*n* = 771)**

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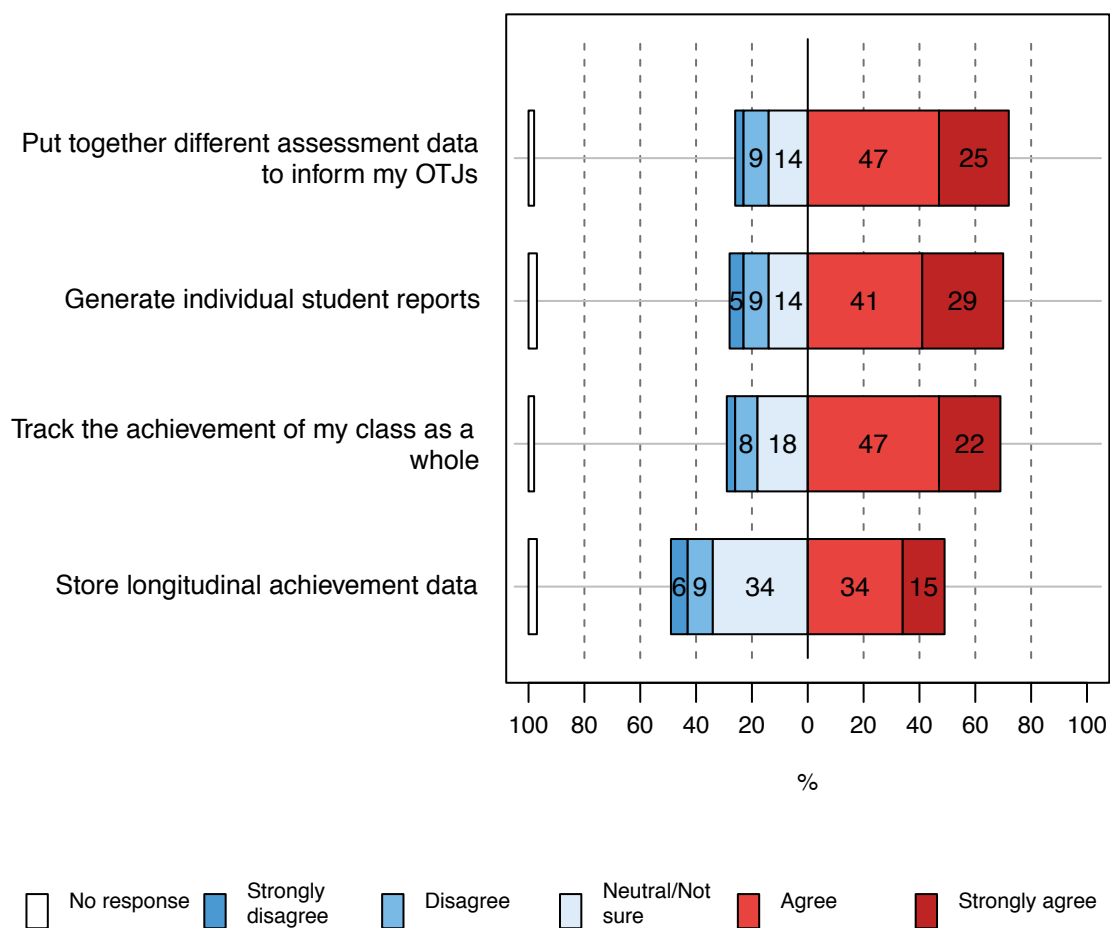
14 This was identified during the Starpath project that involved secondary schools. The project's final evaluation report is available at: https://cdn.auckland.ac.nz/assets/education/about/research/starpath/documents/Starpath%20 Summative%20Report.pdf

Table 3 shows that teachers are making more use of their school's SMS in relation to achievement data. More were using their SMS effectively to put together assessment data to inform their OTJs (a 17 percentage point increase to 72% in 2016).[15] Using their SMS for this purpose would be a time-efficient way for teachers to draw together the variety of evidence teachers reported using (Table 2).

Teachers' ability to use their SMS for tracking their class's achievement and storing longitudinal data also increased between 2013 and 2016.

TABLE 3 **Teachers' use of their school's SMS in relation to student achievement, 2013 and 2016:** *Agree* **and** *Strongly agree* **responses**

Uses the school's SMS effectively to:	2013 (n = 713) %	2016 (n = 771) %
Put together assessment data to inform my OTJs	55	72
Generate individual student reports	66	70
Track the achievement of my class as a whole	61	69
Store longitudinal achievement data	40	49

Use of SMS in relation to student attendance and behaviour

A school's SMS can also be used to track student attendance and behaviour concerns, which both affect achievement. Three-quarters of teachers agreed or strongly agreed they can effectively use their SMS to track and alert them to student attendance concerns (see Figure 4). A student's attendance pattern is likely to cause concern when there are repeated absences over time, and the SMS would provide this longitudinal picture.

Behaviour concerns are likely to demand an immediate response from teachers who are likely to talk with colleagues, in the first instance, to discuss appropriate strategies. Less than half (48%) of teachers reported they can effectively use their SMS to track and alert them to student behaviour concerns. One reason this may be relatively low is that a high proportion (85%) of teachers indicated that sharing knowledge of individual students is good or very good in their school culture (see Figure 5). Teachers may not, therefore, rely so much on their SMS to alert them to behaviour concerns. However, adding this information to the SMS would have the advantage of giving a longitudinal picture that shows progress for individual students and groups of students.

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15 For more about teachers' views about National Standards, see Bonne, L. (2016). *National standards in their seventh year: Findings from the NZCER national survey of primary and intermediate schools 2016.* Wellington: NZCER. Available at www.nzcer.org.nz/research/national-survey

FIGURE 4   **Teachers' agreement they can effectively use their school's SMS in relation to student behaviour (*n* = 771)**
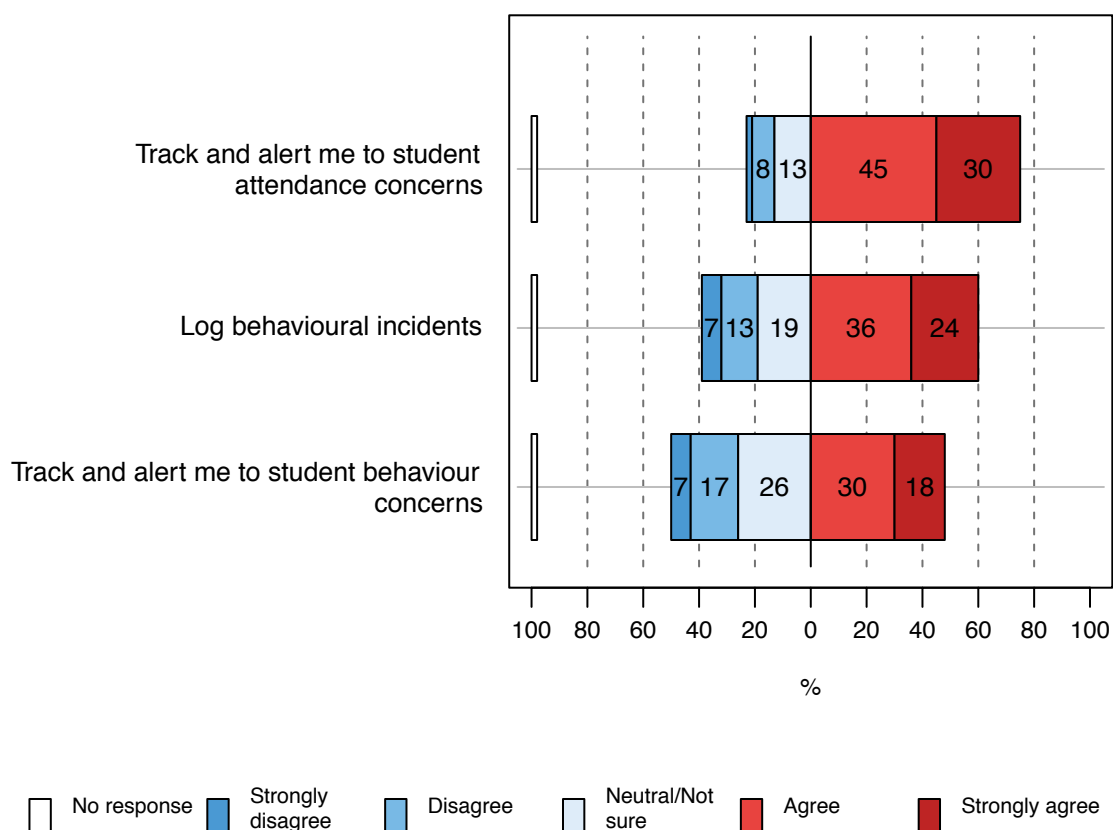
Teachers' ability to effectively use their SMS in relation to student behaviour had also increased quite markedly in 2016 from 2013, particularly in tracking and alerting them to student behaviour concerns (see Table 4).[16]

TABLE 4   **Teachers' use of their school's SMS in relation to student behaviour, 2013 and 2016: *Agree* and *Strongly agree* responses**

Uses the school's SMS effectively to:	2013 (*n* = 713) %	2016 (*n* = 771) %
Track and alert me to student attendance concerns	55	75
Log behavioural incidents	46	60
Track and alert me to student behaviour concerns	34	48

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16 For more about students' behaviour and wellbeing, see Boyd, S., Bonne, L., & Berg, M. (2017). *Finding a balance: Fostering student wellbeing, positive behaviour, and learning in primary and intermediate schools.* Wellington: NZCER. Available at www.nzcer.org.nz/research/national-survey

Use of SMS to support student learning beyond the classroom

In comparison to achievement and behaviour-related uses of SMS, fewer teachers reported being able to effectively use their SMS to track each student's school-organised extracurricular activities (21%) or link to online areas where parents and whānau can view their child's progress (12%). The pattern here was much the same in 2013.

Summary

On the whole, teachers continue to value the importance of learning experiences that contribute to developing the key competencies. At least 85% of teachers thought each of the learning experiences we asked about were important or very important. There were decreases from 2013 in the frequency with which students took part in hands-on activities, made connections with things in their own culture or life outside school, and investigated their own questions. Particular learning experiences that contribute to building a student's responsibility for their own learning increased in frequency with students' year level.

The purposes for which teachers were most likely to use assessments were to identify individuals' next learning steps and also inform their OTJs for National Standards. There was little change in 2016 in students taking an active role in assessment processes.

Teachers' ability to use their school's SMS to track students' achievement, attendance, and behaviour had increased markedly from 2013. However, fewer than half the teachers seemed confident about storing longitudinal achievement data using their SMS. Teachers will need support if they are to be able to make good use of student achievement data to personalise learning pathways, to use the data as an integral aspect of teaching as inquiry, and as a focus for school reviews of progress.

3.

Schools as professional learning cultures

Teachers' work benefits from working in strong professional learning cultures. Traditionally, primary and intermediate teachers have a high level of collegial sharing of ideas and resources. Although such exchange between teachers is an important aspect of working collectively, on its own this is "insufficient for the kind of collective approach that is called for in the new professional learning and development and Investing in Educational Success policies" (Wylie, 2014, p. 11).[17] What is also needed is for teachers to be co-participants in collective action where a shared set of priorities drives their decisions.[18] Related to school goals and vision, we asked teachers about the quality of consistent messages about the overall vision or values of the school: 82% rated these as 'good' or 'very good' in 2016, much the same as in 2013. Teachers who reported the highest levels of collective practice had higher morale, and were most likely to be in schools where NZC "drives what we do", had focused on teaching as inquiry and the development of the key competencies, and were least likely to identify major issues facing their school.

Analysis of teachers' views of schools as professional learning cultures from the 2013 survey identified five factors: teacher sharing; improvement focus in work together; timely support; coherence in school professional culture; and useful feedback.[19] This section gives teachers' views of their schools as professional learning cultures in relation to these five aspects in 2016. Have we seen any improvements?

Teacher sharing

A high level of sharing was reflected in teachers' responses in 2016, much the same as in 2013.[20] Between 74% and 85% of teachers reported the sharing of various resources and ideas for improving teaching and learning was good or very good in their school (see Figure 5). Teachers were most likely to think sharing knowledge about individual students between teachers was good or very good, and least likely to think that about sharing of lessons and planning.

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17 See Wylie, C. (2014). *Progress and stalling on the path to learning-centred schools in New Zealand.* Paper presented at AARE-NZARE conference, Brisbane. Available at www.nzcer.org.nz/research/publications/progress-and-stalling-path-learning-centred-schools-new-zealand

18 Little, J. W. (1990). The persistence of privacy: Autonomy and initiative in teachers' professional relations. *Teachers College Record, 91*(4), 509–536.

19 Wylie, C. (2014). *Progress and stalling on the path to learning-centred schools in New Zealand.* Paper presented at AARE-NZARE conference, Brisbane. Available at www.nzcer.org.nz/research/publications/progress-and-stalling-path-learning-centred-schools-new-zealand

20 For details on how teachers were using online technologies to share and find resources, collaborate with others, and participate in online discussions about teaching, see Bolstad, R. (2017). *Digital technologies for learning: Findings from the NZCER national survey of primary and intermediate schools 2016.* Available at www.nzcer.org.nz/research/national-survey

FIGURE 5   **The quality of key aspects of school culture: Teacher sharing (*n* = 771)**
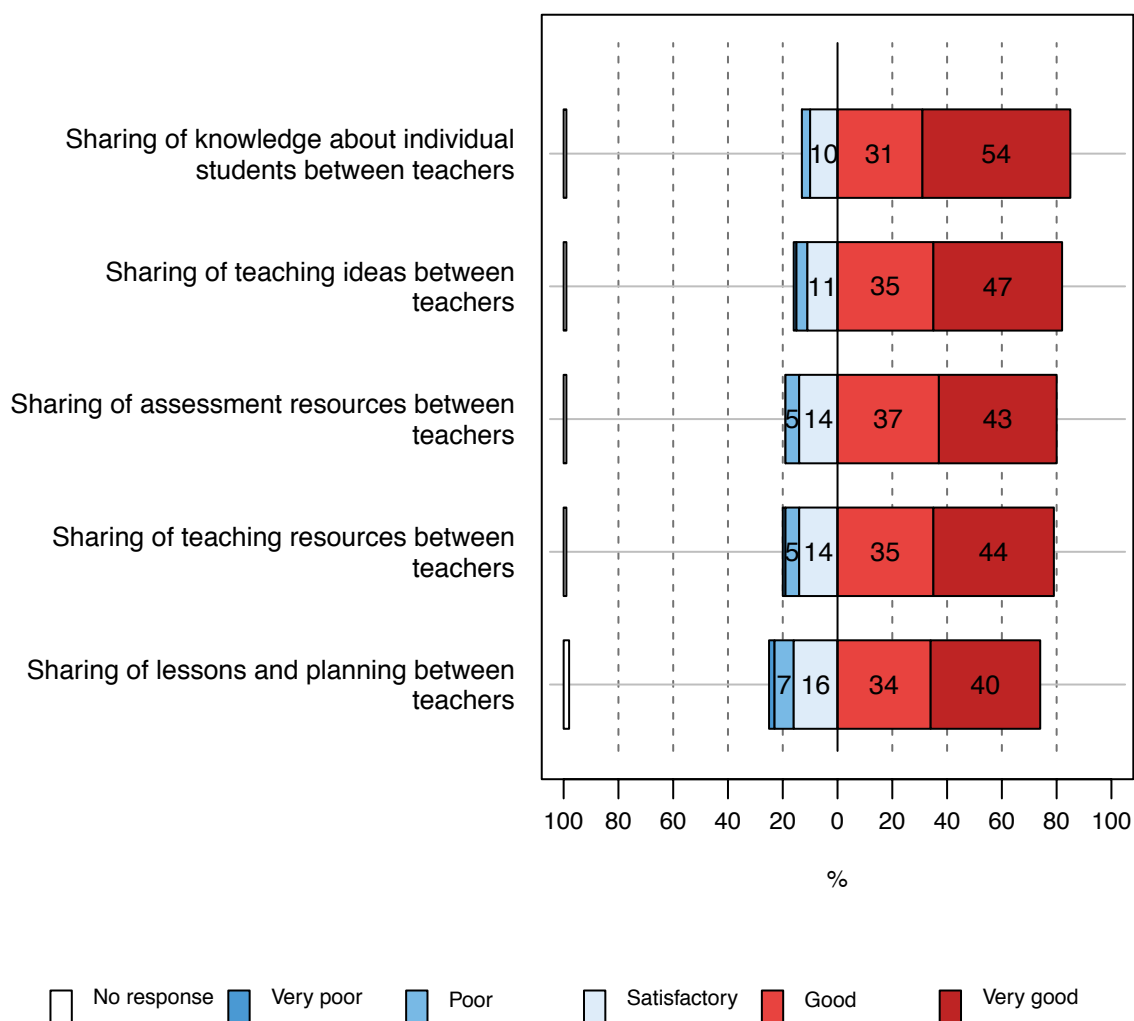
Improvement focus in teachers' work together

Using evidence of student learning as a focus for collective inquiry into the effectiveness of teaching practice has become more prominent in the guidance given schools since our last survey in 2013.[21]

Figure 6 shows teachers' responses to items related to the quality of the improvement focus in their joint work. Over three-quarters of teachers rated their school's achievement-related target setting and data analysis to improve teaching and learning as good or very good. Fewer gave these ratings to the analysis and use of data related to students' attendance, behaviour, and wellbeing.

A quarter of teachers rated their school culture as very good at developing leadership skills among teachers (slightly less than the 29% in 2013 and 32% in 2010).

Compared with 2013, there was little change in the proportion of teachers who rated the quality of these aspects of an improvement focus in their school culture as very good. Given the current focus on students' progress, the lack of increase in this area suggests schools need further support to get more out of collective teacher inquiry.

21 Education Review Office. (2016). *School evaluation indicators: Effective practice for improvement and learner success.* Retrieved from www.ero.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/ERO-15968-School-Evaluation-Indicators-2016-v10lowres.pdf

FIGURE 6   **The quality of key aspects of school culture: Improvement focus in teachers' work together (*n* = 771)**
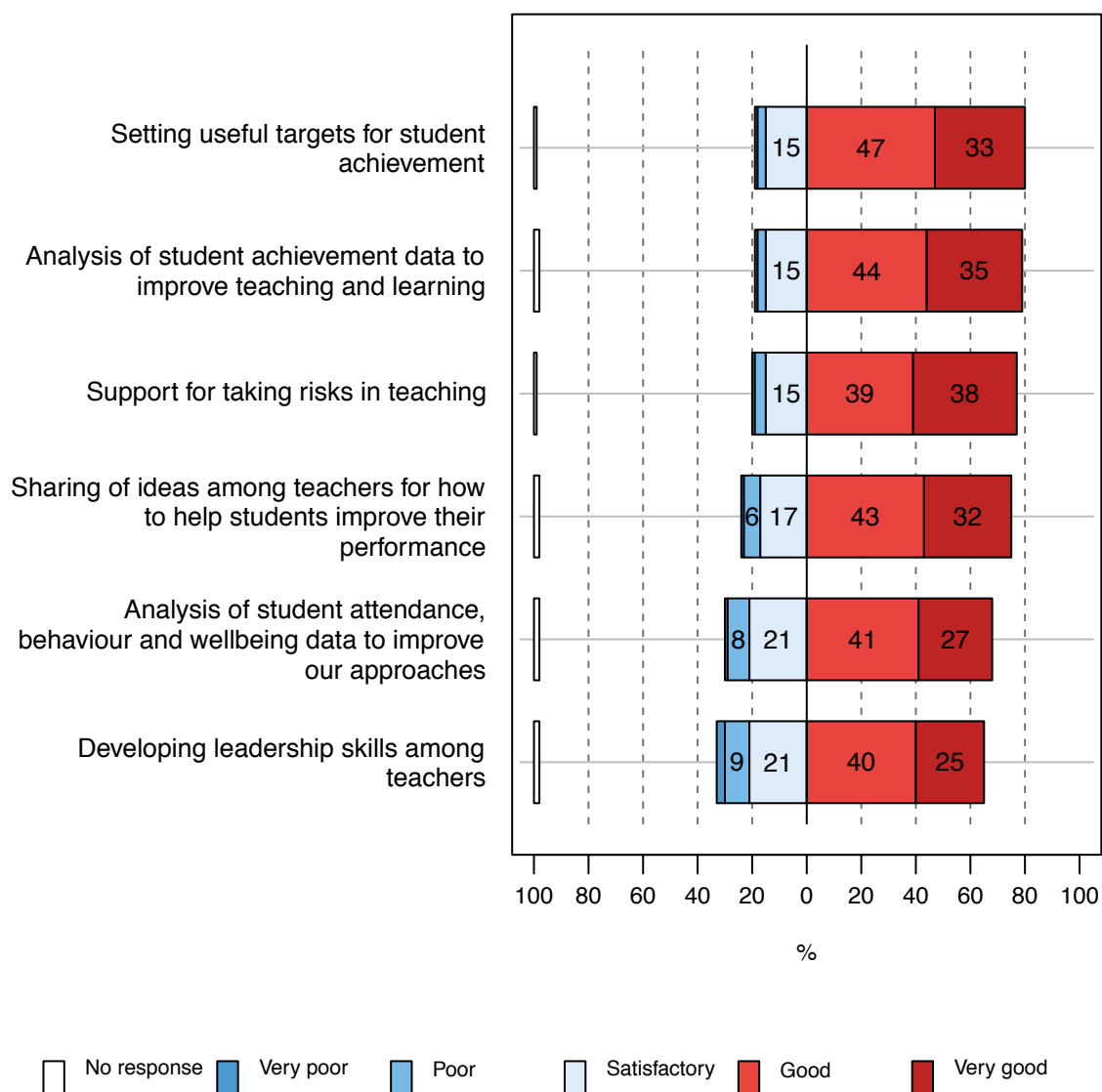
Timely support

Teachers' views of the availability of timely support in their school culture are shown in Figure 7. For most teachers, their school culture was good or very good at providing timely support for problems with student behaviour, and for any teaching problems they encountered. The 2016 picture is much the same as in 2013.

FIGURE 7   **The quality of key aspects of school culture: Timely support (*n* = 771)**
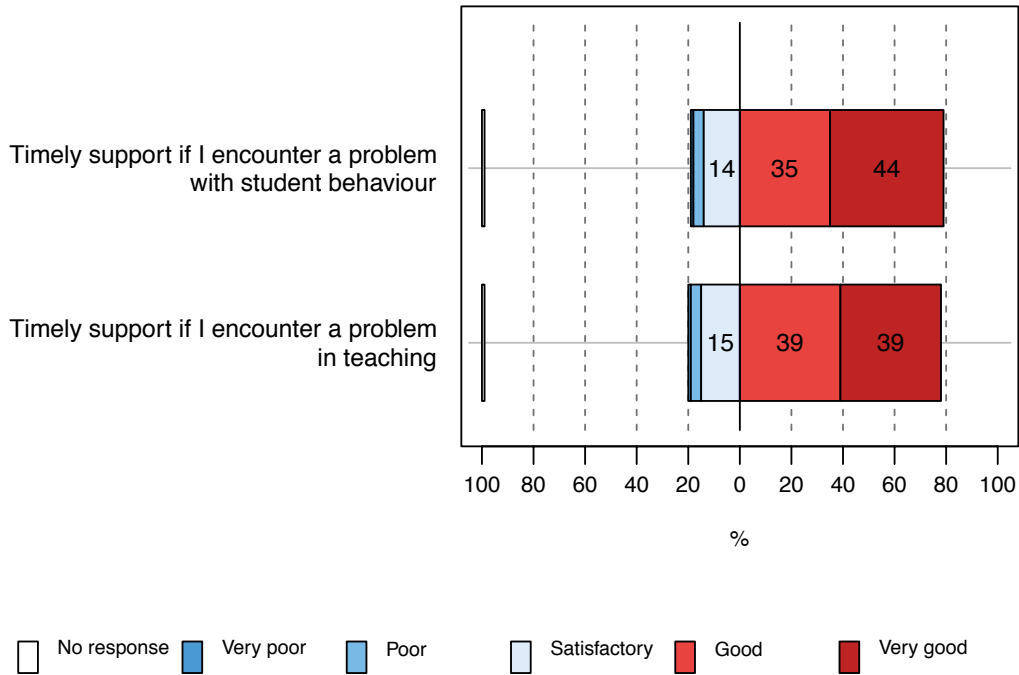
Coherence in schools' professional learning culture

We asked teachers about some of their school processes and ways of working—using syndicate meeting time to discuss student achievement, the provision of time to work together to plan teaching, and staff processes for making decisions.

Figure 8 shows teachers' experiences of aspects of their school's professional learning culture that can contribute to overall coherence. Many teachers indicated their school processes supported some of the work teachers do together. Fewer reported getting sufficient time to do so.

FIGURE 8   **Coherence in the school's professional learning culture, reported by teachers (*n* = 771)**
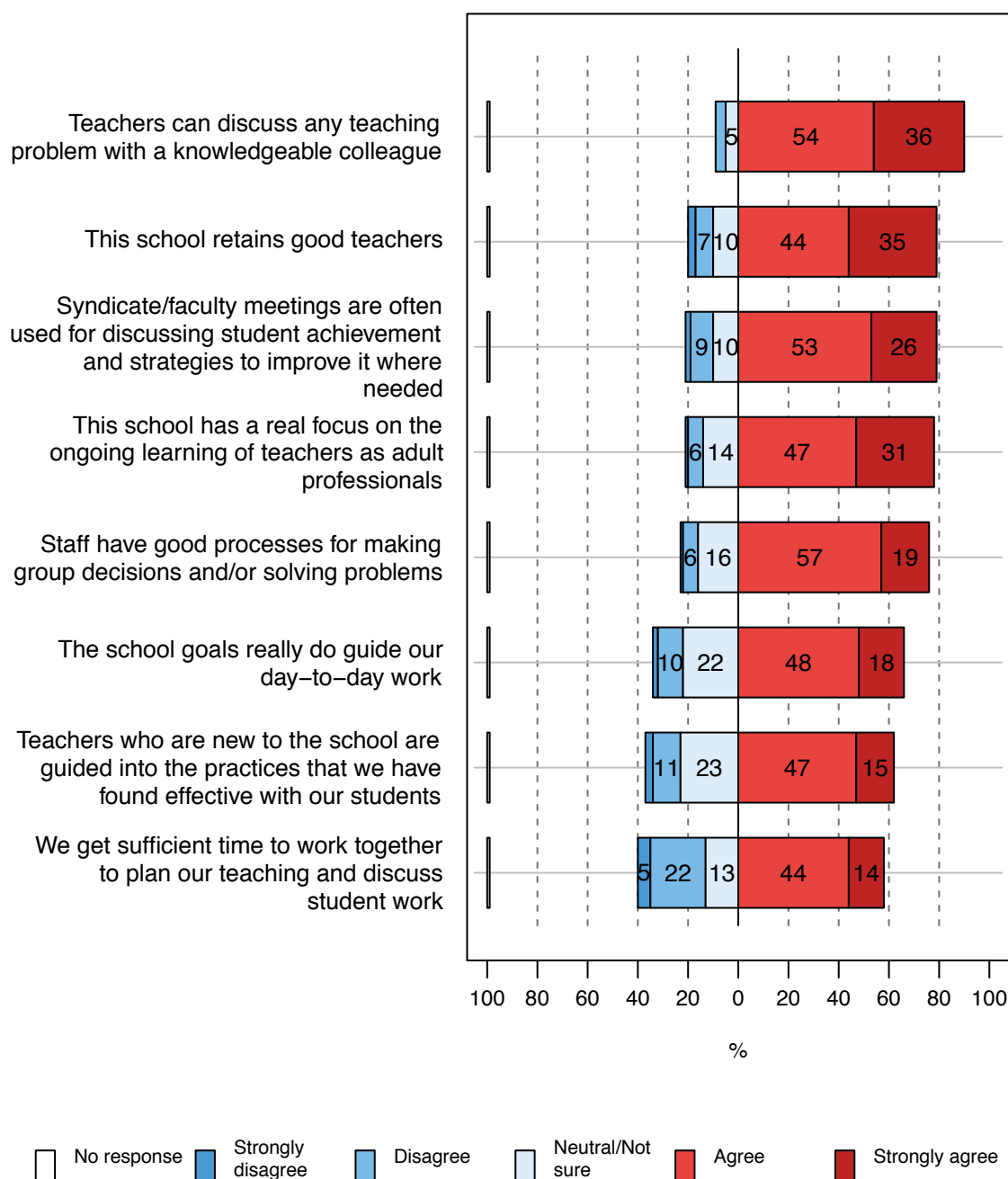
In 2016, more teachers said their school staff had good processes for making group decisions and/or problem solving (76%, compared with around 69% in 2010 and 2013). Otherwise the 2016 picture looked much the same as in 2013.

How the school's professional learning culture supports teachers to improve pedagogy

With the overall aim of improving student outcomes, teachers' ongoing work to improve their pedagogy benefits from observing, and being observed by, colleagues, and the discussion and feedback that follow. Students' experiences and views are also being included in this process.

Figure 9 shows that most teachers could get useful feedback on their teaching and student engagement by inviting a colleague to observe in their class. Just over half (54%) sought student feedback about their practice.

Seventy-one percent of teachers reported getting useful feedback from school leaders through them observing their class. Fewer (53%) had regular meetings with the principal or another school leader about their work that gave them new insights. Teachers' 2016 responses here were similar to those in 2013.

Teacher inquiry into, and reflection on, the effectiveness of their practice also played a role in around 85% of teachers' ongoing professional learning. Teacher inquiry could be informed by feedback from school leaders, sometimes as part of teachers' performance management. Fifty-eight percent of teachers received feedback from performance management processes that helps and motivates them to improve their teaching. Slightly fewer (53%) were getting useful feedback from school leaders through sharing reflections on their teaching with them electronically. This figure had, however, increased from 36% in 2013, indicating greater use was being made of digital technology for this aspect of teachers' professional learning.

Little use was being made by teachers of videoing their practice to review later—either as part of a teacher's inquiry into their practice, or to share with a school leader to identify areas to strengthen.

FIGURE 9 **School professional learning culture (including useful feedback), reported by teachers (*n* = 771)**
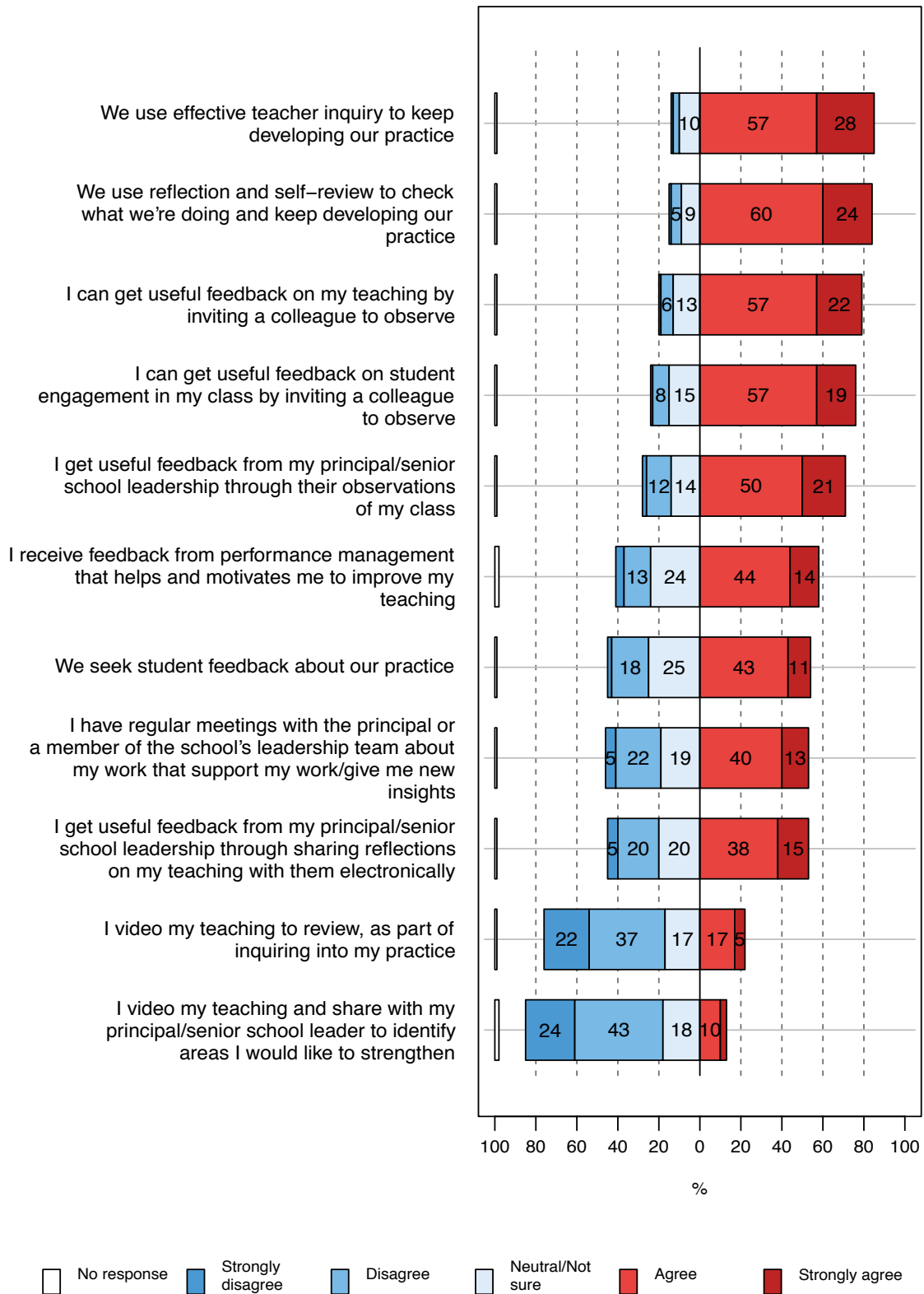
Summary

The lack of progress in schools' developing as professional learning cultures for all teachers that was apparent in 2013 was still evident in 2016, with little change in the five factors identified in Wylie (2014)[22]: teacher sharing, improvement focus in work together, timely support, coherence in school professional culture, and useful feedback. Given the current focus on students' progress, the lack of overall improvement across these factors suggests further support is needed for schools to get more out of collective teacher inquiry.

That said, more individual teachers were using teacher inquiry to develop their practice in 2016. Just over half also said they improved their teaching using feedback from performance management, or from electronically sharing their reflections on their teaching with school leaders.

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22 See Wylie, C. (2014). *Progress and stalling on the path to learning-centred schools in New Zealand*. Paper presented at AARE-NZARE conference, Brisbane. Available at www.nzcer.org.nz/research/publications/progress-and-stalling-path-learning-centred-schools-new-zealand

4.
Teachers' experiences of professional learning

Ongoing professional learning enables teachers to keep improving their practice. As well as the practices of inquiry and using feedback described in Section 3, professional learning also occurs in work with an external facilitator, and reading and discussing new ideas and evidence about effective teaching.

We were interested in learning about the school as a context for professional learning, whether teachers had opportunities to learn from and with colleagues in their own school and other schools, and what practical help teachers had got from their recent professional learning in relation to national emphases.

Figure 10 shows that over three-quarters of the teachers responding to the survey saw school leaders actively participating in their school's professional learning (one of the key leadership practices impacting on student achievement),[23] giving them useful blocks of time for their professional learning, and encouraging and supporting experimentation with new ideas. Many teachers also discussed professional readings, and had support to provide learning with digital technology.

While only 18% did not want more customised advice and support from outside their school, a substantial proportion were neutral or unsure that they would like more external advice and support. This might be related to schools having become prime sources for their teachers' ongoing development, or perhaps teachers not knowing what specific external support might be of benefit to them and whether this is available. Teachers might also be wary about indicating they want more external advice if they feel they do not have adequate time for professional learning. Only 51% of teachers thought their workload was manageable (see Figure 14), and having more time tops the list of changes they would like to see in their job (see Table 9).

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23 Robinson, V., Hohepa, M., & Lloyd, C. (2009). *School leadership and student outcomes: Identifying what works and why. Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration* [BES]. Wellington: Ministry of Education. Retrieved from www.educationalleaders.govt.nz/ Leadership-development/Key-leadership-documents/The-school-leadership-BES

FIGURE 10 **Supporting and enabling teachers' professional learning (*n* = 771)**
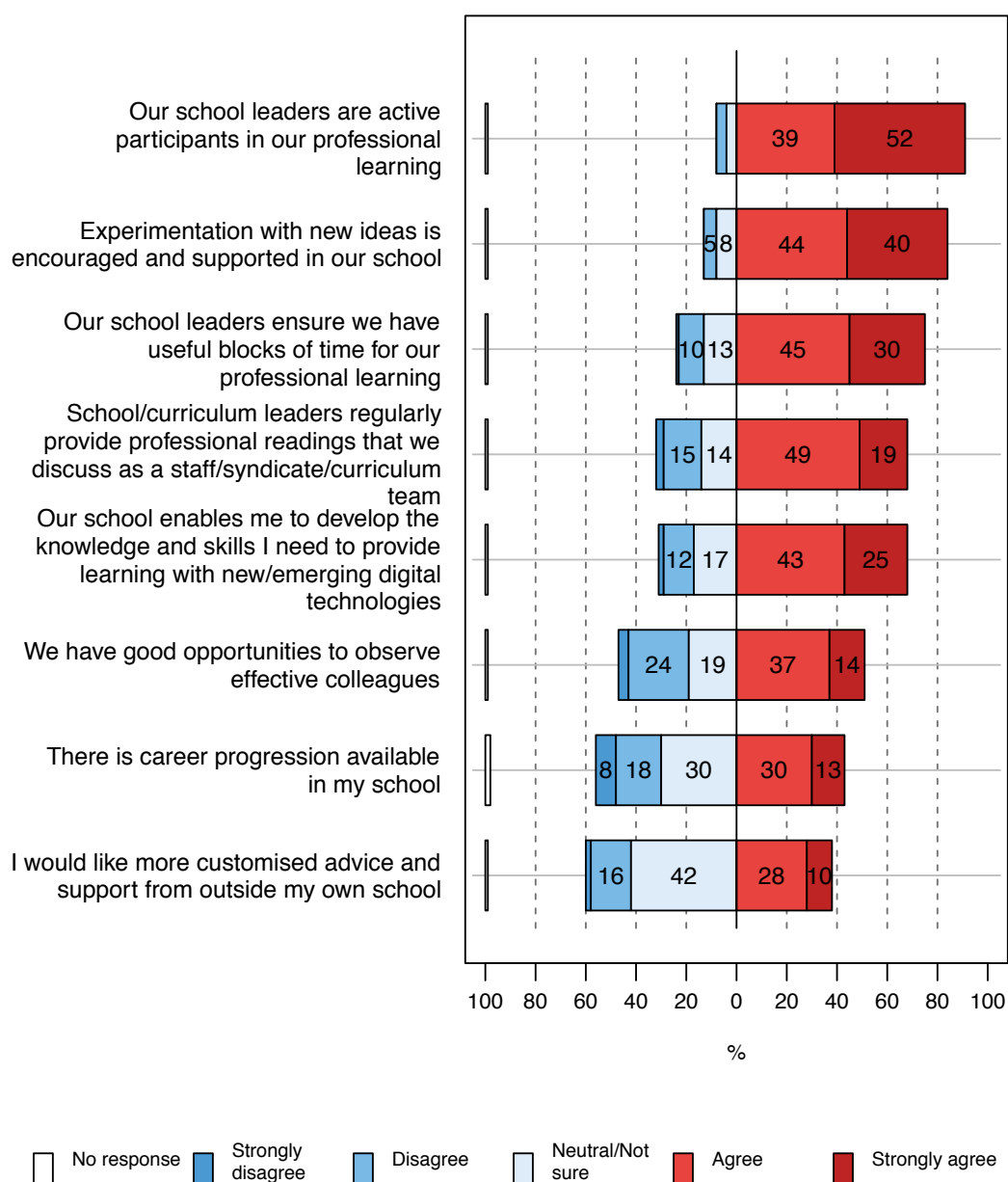
Teachers at small schools were less likely to report their school leaders being active participants in teachers' professional learning (81% agreed or strongly agreed this happened, compared with around 93% of teachers at medium–large or large schools).

Figure 11 shows that around two-thirds of teachers responding gained practical help from their professional learning in the last 2–3 years to support students' social and emotional wellbeing, or build positive relationships with parents and whānau. Slightly fewer teachers reported their recent professional learning gave them practical help for engaging Māori students and students with additional learning needs. An even smaller proportion (37% of teachers) indicated they had gained practical help from their professional learning for engaging Pasifika learners.[24]

24 The distribution of Pasifika students is uneven across schools, which may result in fewer teachers having a focus in their professional learning on engaging Pasifika students.

Just over half the teachers reported professional learning had provided practical help for them to teach te reo Māori, or to learn te reo Māori themselves.[25]

FIGURE 11 **Practical help teachers gained from professional learning (*n* = 771)**

| | No response | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral/Not sure | Agree | Strongly agree |
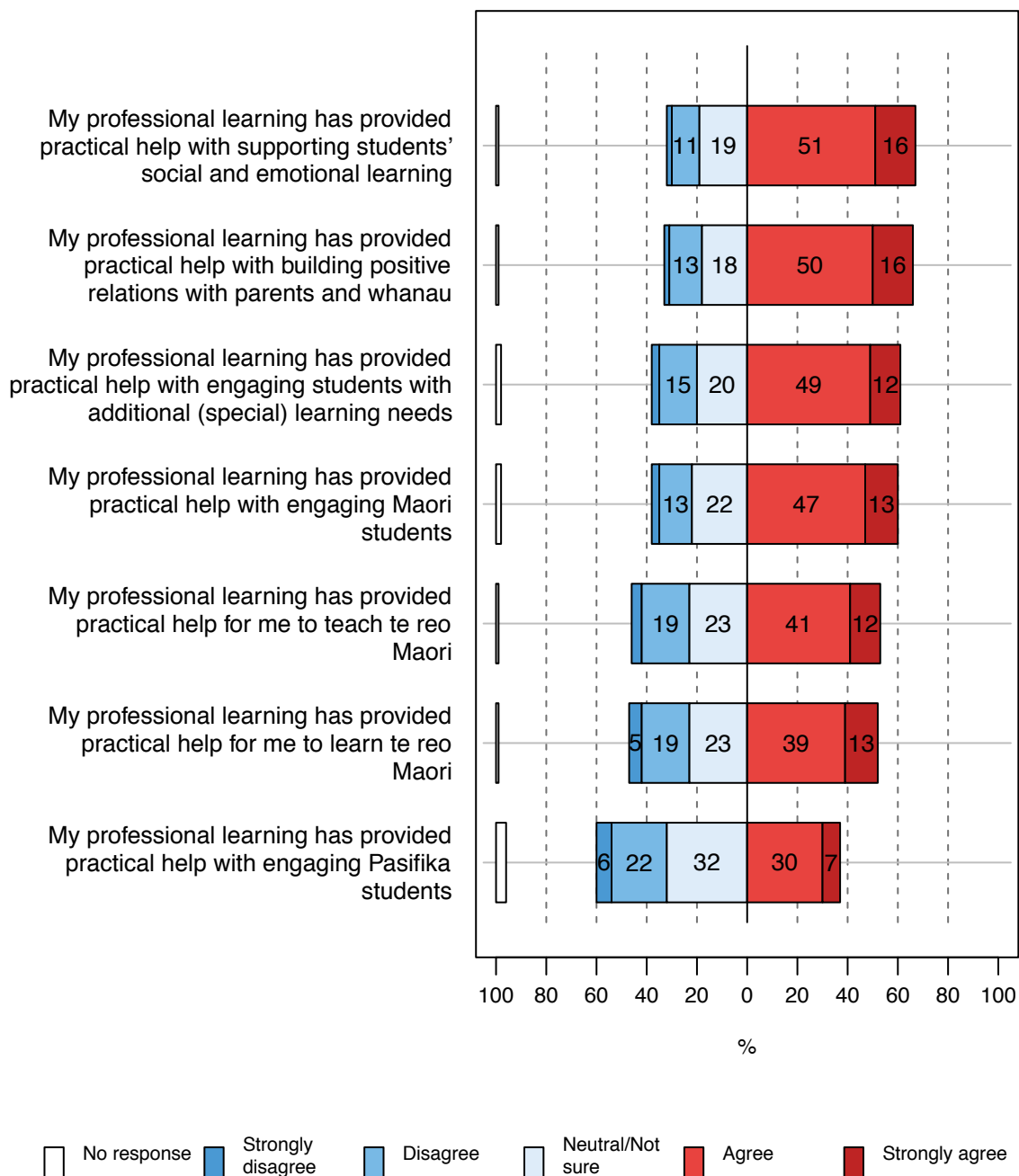
As we will see shortly in the section, *Gains in professional learning since 2013*, gains from professional learning related to working with priority learners were reported by greater proportions of teachers in 2016 than in 2013.

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25 A separate report that includes information on Te reo Māori me ona tikanga is to be added to the National Survey project website. Sign up for report alerts at www.nzcer.org.nz/research/national-survey

Opportunities for professional learning

Figure 12 shows that most teachers thought they had good opportunities to develop an understanding of new approaches and to learn from others within their school, but not so many thought they had opportunities for professional learning from other teachers or specialists beyond their school.

FIGURE 12 **Teachers' opportunities for professional learning (*n* = 771)**
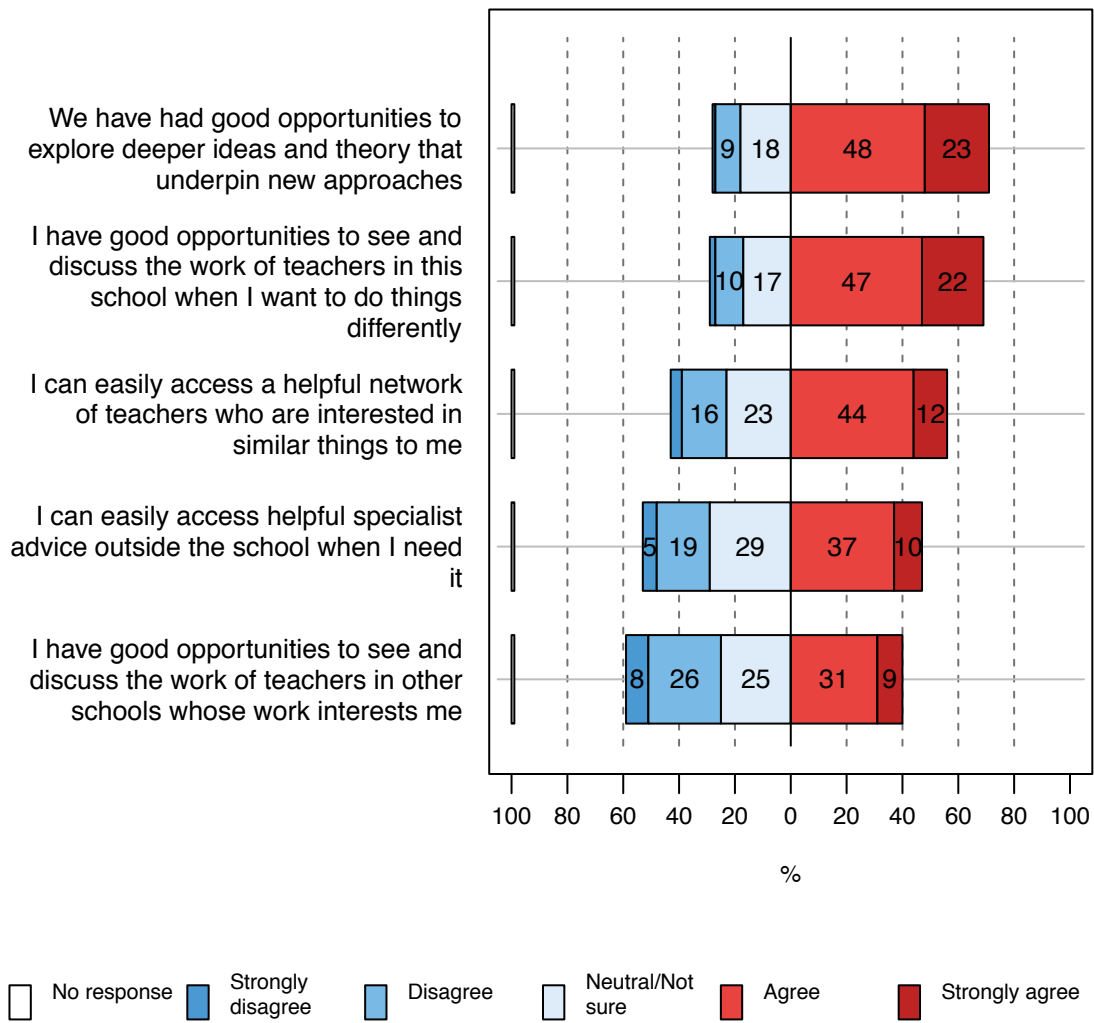
Gains in professional learning since 2013

Overall, teachers were noticeably more positive about their opportunities for professional learning in 2016 than they had been in 2013. Table 5 shows all the items reported in this section that were also included in the 2013 survey. Consistently greater proportions of teachers responded *Agree* or *Strongly agree* to these items, with the exception of wanting more customised advice and support from outside their own school.

TABLE 5 **Aspects of professional learning over the past 2–3 years, reported by teachers in 2013 and 2016: *Agree* and *Strongly agree* responses**

Aspect	2013 (*n* = 713) %	2016 (*n* = 771) %
Experimentation with new ideas is encouraged and supported in our school	75	85
Our school leaders ensure we have useful blocks of time for our professional learning	58	75
We have good opportunities to explore deeper ideas and theory that underpin new approaches	52	71
I have good opportunities to see and discuss the work of teachers in *this* school when I want to do things differently	59	70
My professional learning has provided practical help with building positive relations with parents and whānau	47	67
My professional learning has provided practical help with engaging students with *additional (special) learning needs*	48	61
My professional learning has provided practical help with engaging *Māori* students	41	60
I can easily access a helpful network of teachers who are interested in similar things to me	46	57
I can easily access helpful specialist advice outside the school when I need it	34	47
I have good opportunities to see and discuss the work of teachers in *other* schools when I want to do things differently	28	40
I would like more customised advice and support from outside my own school	41	38
My professional learning has provided practical help with engaging *Pasifika* students	27	37

Two-thirds of the teachers who said they used effective inquiry to keep developing their practice also said that the curriculum they teach had been narrowed by National Standards. This suggests that although teachers continue to work to improve their practice, any improvements in student outcomes may be limited in terms of learning areas to literacy and mathematics.

Mentoring[26]

Seventeen percent of teachers (*n* = 128) indicated they were mentor to a provisionally certificated teacher[27] in 2016. Figure 13 shows that most mentors found their role valued by others in the school as well as being helpful for their own teaching practice and career pathway.

However, less than half the teachers in mentor roles reported getting the time allocated for the role. Only slightly more indicated they have had useful professional learning focused on being an effective mentor; 18% felt they had been left to 'sink or swim' in their mentoring role. A small proportion of teachers in mentor roles did not understand their role as a mentor. This suggests that the value attributed to the mentor role has yet to translate to adequate time allocation and professional learning for all mentors.

Thirty-five percent of all teachers who completed the survey rated the quality of mentoring of provisionally certificated teachers at their school as 'very good', 39% as 'good', 15% as 'satisfactory', and 6% as 'poor' or 'very poor'. Five percent of teachers did not respond to this item.

When all teachers, including those who were not mentoring in 2016, were asked to identify their main achievements as a teacher in the last 3 years from a list of 18 responses, 31% identified mentoring early career teachers as one of their main achievements—further evidence of the role being valued by teachers.

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26 Thanks to Jo MacDonald for developing the survey items related to mentoring, and making helpful comments on a draft of this section.
27 The mentor role has replaced the former tutor teacher role. A provisionally registered teacher (PRT) is now referred to as a provisionally certificated teacher (PCT)—a teacher who is in the first 2 years of their teaching career, during which time their mentor supports their ongoing development through a programme of advice and guidance.

FIGURE 13 **Mentor teachers' experiences of the role (*n* = 128)**
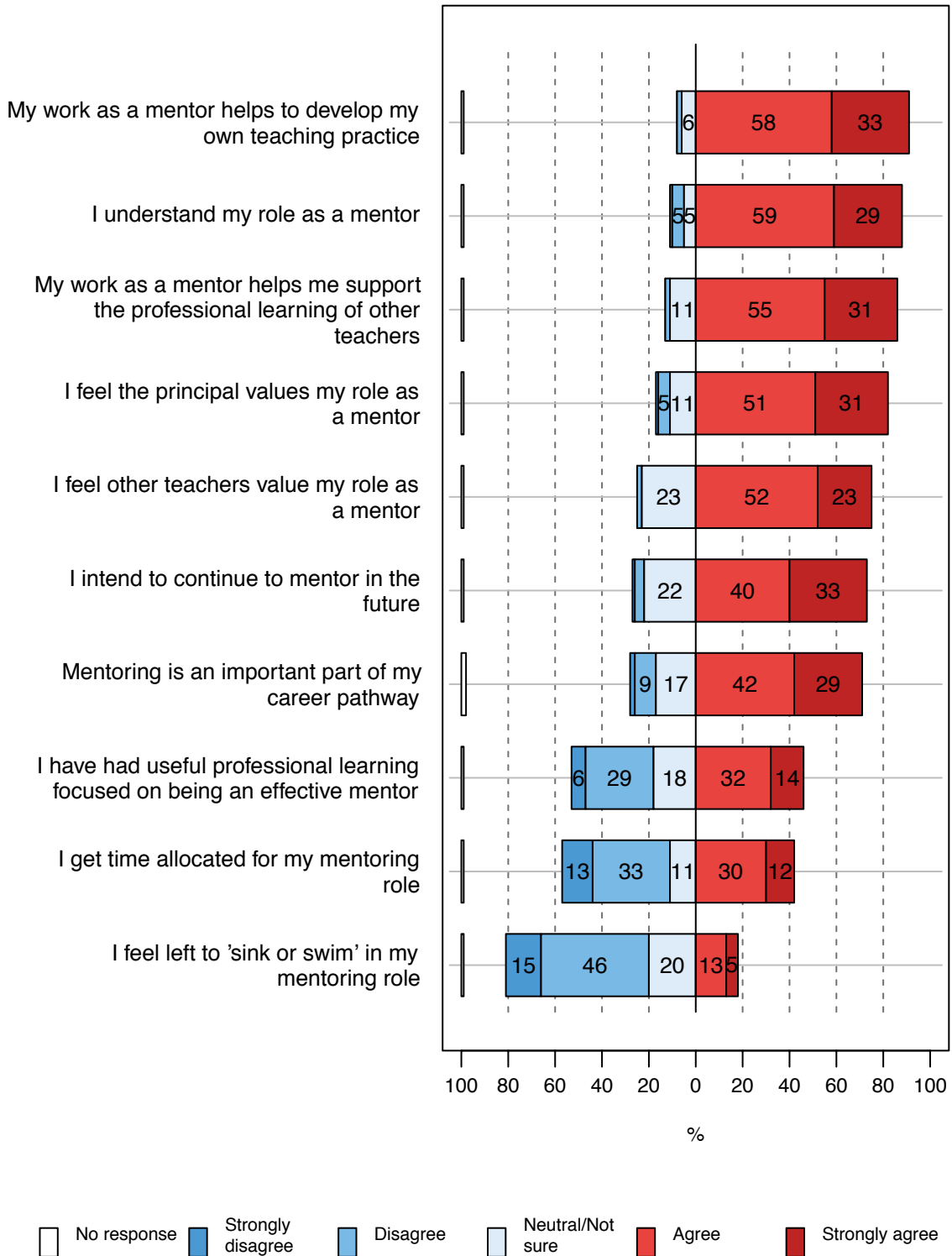
Summary

Teachers' experiences of professional learning stands out as an area in which there were noticeable gains since 2013. Teachers were generally more positive about their school-based opportunities for professional learning and about the practical application of professional learning with their students. They were less sure about wanting more external advice and support.

Teachers generally saw mentoring roles as being valued by the principal and other teachers at their school, and nearly one-third of teachers included mentoring early career teachers as one of their main achievements over the last 3 years. However, this had yet to translate to adequate time allowance and professional learning for all mentors.

5.
Teachers' achievements

Teachers were asked to select what they felt were their main achievements as a teacher in the last 3 years, from a list of items. Their responses for 2016 and 2013 are shown in Table 6.

In 2016, the four achievements teachers most frequently reported were using new pedagogical approaches or teaching practices, improvements in student achievement, an increased student engagement level in their classes, and using digital technologies in new ways for student learning. The same four items headed teachers' list of achievements in 2013, although in a different order.

Apart from the very small number who said nothing had really changed, the least frequently reported achievements were using new approaches as a result of NZC and being better at meeting the needs of Pasifika students. Again, these last items in 2016 were also last in 2013.

TABLE 6   **Teachers' main achievements over the last 3 years; 2013 and 2016**

Achievement	2013 (*n* = 713) %	2016 (*n* = 771) %
Used new pedagogical approaches/teaching practices	67	73
Improvements in student *achievement*	72	71
Increased student engagement level in my classes	64	71
Used digital technologies in new ways for student learning	70	64
Further developed students' competencies such as self-management or independent learning	55	58
Better at meeting the needs of students with *additional (special) learning needs*	28[†]	44
Improvement of student *behaviour*	39	42
Took active role in more collective way of working at the school	37	41
Further developed students' social and emotional competencies	34	40
Improved student assessment for learning	41	37
Better at meeting the needs of *Māori* students	25	36
More involvement of parents and whānau with students' learning	28	36
Mentored early career teachers	*	31
Used National Standards in a positive way in my teaching	30	26
Better at meeting the needs of *Pasifika* students	12	17
Used new approaches as a result of *NZC*	15	13
Nothing has really changed	1	1

[†] In the 2013 survey, we referred to students with "*special education needs*", reflecting the terminology then in use. In 2016, this was modified throughout our survey to "*additional (special) learning needs*".

* Not asked.

In 2016, more teachers' achievements than in 2013 included those related to becoming better at meeting the needs of the students whom the Ministry had described as priority learners: particularly those with additional learning needs, Māori students, and Pasifika students. This is consistent with more teachers having gained practical help from professional learning for engaging students with additional learning needs, and Māori and Pasifika students (see *Gains in professional learning since 2013* in the previous chapter).

More teachers in 2016 also thought they had used new pedagogical approaches or teaching practices; increased the engagement of students, parents, and whānau; and developed students' social and emotional competencies.

There was no increase in the proportion of teachers who included improvements in student achievement and improved student assessment for learning in their main achievements, suggesting progress with these may have stalled.

There were some decile-related differences in teachers' main achievements. A lower proportion of teachers at decile 9–10 schools reported their main achievements included:

- improvement of student behaviour (29%, compared with 44% of teachers at decile 7–8 schools, and 49% of teachers at decile 1–2 schools)
- better meeting the needs of Pasifika students (10%, and 8% of teachers at decile 7–8 schools, compared with 33% of those at decile 1–2 schools). This in part reflects the distribution of Pasifika students across schools of different deciles.

For teachers at schools in the decile 1–6 range, 45% indicated their achievements included better meeting the needs of Māori students, compared with 28% of those at decile 7–10 schools.

A higher proportion of teachers at decile 9–10 schools indicated their main achievements included further developing students' competencies, such as self-management or independent learning (65, compared with 44% of teachers at decile 1–2 schools).

There were also decile-related differences in teachers who indicated that using digital technologies in new ways for student learning was a main achievement (66% of teachers at decile 3–10 schools, compared with 51% of teachers at decile 1–2 schools).

6.
School contexts for teachers' work

We asked all the groups we surveyed to select from a list the major issues facing their school, to get a national picture. These issues also tell us something about the contexts in which teachers work. Teachers were most likely to think that too much was being asked of schools (48%) (see Table 7 overleaf). This was followed by staffing levels/class sizes, the cost of maintenance and replacement of digital technology, and funding.

For one-quarter of teachers, student achievement levels were one of the major issues—the same as in 2013 (with 24% in 2010). This is consistent with improvements in student achievement and student assessment for learning seemingly stalled, as we saw in the previous section.

The most obvious difference compared with the 2013 responses was a drop in the proportion of teachers who thought funding was a major issue facing their school (60% in 2013, almost halved to 33% in 2016). Perhaps related to this was the smaller proportion of teachers identifying the adequacy of digital technology and internet access as a major issue (53% in 2013, dropping to 29% in 2016), which might partly be an effect of the Government's ongoing investment in digital infrastructure over recent years. The proportion of teachers who saw a declining school roll as an issue had also decreased (17% in 2013, down to 7% in 2016), as had those who identified responding to cultural diversity and principal leadership as issues (both dropping from 12% in 2013, to 7% in 2016).

There was an increase in the proportion of teachers identifying the achievement of students with additional learning needs as a major issue (32% in 2016, up from 21% in 2013). This echoes the increases in teachers wanting greater provision for students with additional learning needs, and more support to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of these students. Teachers' responses suggest that as they pay more attention to the needs of these students, they also have an increased understanding of the additional support that is needed. Alongside this, there was also an increase in the proportion of teachers who identified as an achievement that they were better at meeting the needs of students with additional learning needs (44%, up from 28% in 2013).

In 2016, somewhat more teachers also identified student behaviour as a major issue facing their school (25%, up from 17% in 2013).

TABLE 7 **Teachers' views of major issues facing their schools; 2013 and 2016**

Issues	2013 (*n* = 713) %	2016 (*n* = 771) %
Too much being asked of schools	51	46
Staffing levels/class sizes	38	37
Cost of maintenance and replacement of digital technology	*	35
Funding	60	33
Achievement of students with additional (special) learning needs	21	32
Māori student achievement	30	30
Adequacy of digital technology and internet access[†]	53	29
Too much assessment	*	27
Property maintenance or development	25	26
Student achievement levels	25	25
Student behaviour	17	25
Some staff resistant to change	30	25
Parent and whānau engagement	21	23
Providing a balanced programme	*	21
Pasifika student achievement	20	20
Partnerships with iwi and hapū	*	18
Attracting and/or keeping good teachers	*	17
Joining a Community of Learning	*	14
Good quality professional learning and development	*	13
Motivating students	*	9
Declining school roll	17	7
Responding to cultural diversity	12	7
Principal's leadership	12	7
Dealing with inappropriate use of technology (e.g., cellphones, social networking sites)	*	7

* Not asked.
[†] In 2013, the wording was "Adequacy of ICT equipment and Internet access".

Teachers at decile 1–2 schools were more likely than teachers at higher decile schools to identify as a major issue facing their school:
- Māori student achievement (68%)
- student achievement levels (63%)
- parent and whānau engagement (58%)
- achievement of students with additional (special) learning needs (48%)
- Pasifika student achievement (47%)
- student behaviour (44%)
- adequacy of digital technology and internet access (40%).

Teachers at larger schools identified fewer major issues in their school context than their peers in small and medium-sized schools, as the following show:
- declining school roll (3% of teachers at large schools, increasing to 22% of teachers at small schools)
- getting good quality PLD (9%, increasing to 25% of teachers at small schools)
- property maintenance or development (18%, increasing to 40% of teachers at small schools)
- funding (23%, compared with 40–43% of teachers at schools of other sizes)
- the cost of maintenance and replacement of digital technology (28%, compared with 39–44% of teachers at schools of other sizes).

7.

Teachers' feelings and thoughts about their work

Morale, workload, and job satisfaction

Teachers' morale levels were much the same in 2016, with 29% of teachers reporting 'very good' morale (compared with 30% in 2013) and 41% reporting 'good' morale (compared with 44% in 2013).[28] Twenty percent reported having 'satisfactory' morale (19% in 2013), 6% had 'poor' morale (4% in 2013), and 1% reported 'very poor' morale (the same as in 2013).

Figure 14 shows teachers' responses to items about their workload and work-related stress. A little over half (55%) indicated the level of work-related stress in their job is manageable. Just over half thought their workload was manageable, and just under half thought their workload is fair. Nearly a third (30%) of teachers reported their workload is so high they are unable to do justice to the students they teach. The picture here has not improved since 2013.

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28 In 2010, the teacher morale item was worded differently, and 86% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, *My overall morale is good*.

FIGURE 14 **Teachers' workload and work-related stress (*n* = 771)**

Views of morale, workload, and work-related stress were unrelated to the roles teachers had in their school or to school characteristics.

Concern about teachers' workload and stress levels, and needing more release time to help ease these was also expressed by some teachers who added a comment to the items they chose from the list of potential issues facing their school.

> *Too much expectation of teachers working outside school hours—teachers have too many deadlines and too heavy a workload.*

> *Not enough release time to collect data on children.*

> *Teacher time spent on recording and proving they are effective teachers and not on learning opportunities for students.*

> *Too much being asked of teachers by government, by Ministry of Education and by management.*

Figure 15 shows a slight increase in the hours teachers reported working outside the timetabled hours. The proportion of teachers who were working 1–10 hours outside the timetabled hours had decreased to 18%, from 25% in 2013. Those who reported working 11–20 hours outside timetabled hours had increased to 52% from 44% in 2013, taking this 2016 figure closer to the 2010 level.

FIGURE 15 **Hours per week teachers reported spending on their work outside timetabled hours; 2010, 2013, 2016**
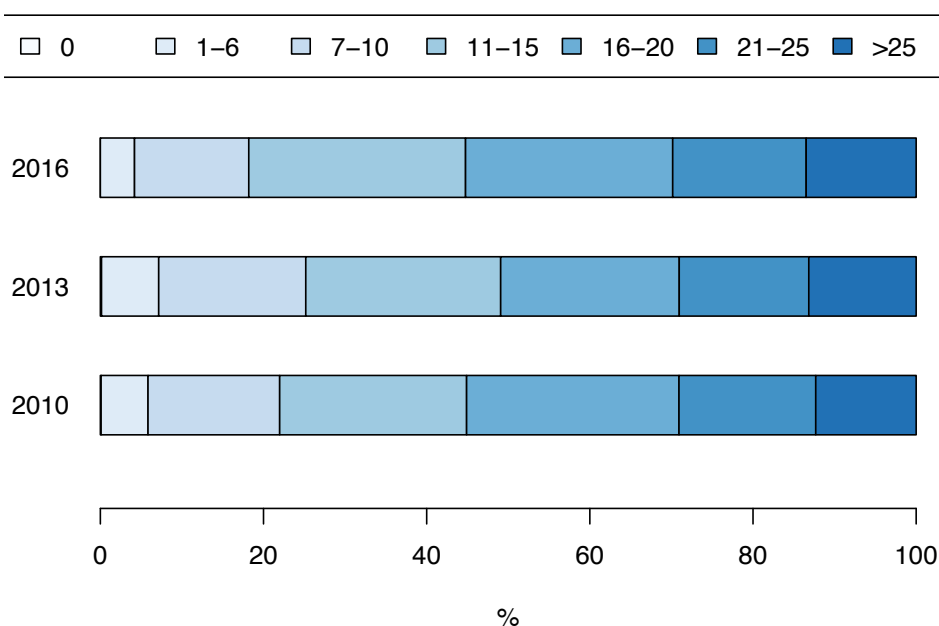
Teachers with formal leadership roles were more likely to work over 20 hours outside timetabled hours (36%, compared with 29% for all teachers).

To undertake their various roles, teachers have noncontact time allocated, within timetabled hours. This noncontact time supports increased expectations that teachers engage in ongoing inquiry into the effects on student outcomes of their teaching, and explore ways to develop their pedagogy. Much of this work needs to be undertaken collectively. When work related to student assessment and programme planning is added to the mix, it is obvious that there are considerable demands on teachers' formally allocated noncontact time.

Yet the noncontact time allocated is small, and appears to have declined. In 2016, the median number of noncontact hours per week for classroom teachers with no additional responsibilities (*n* = 220) was 1, down slightly from 1.2 hours per week in 2013 (*n* = 175), but the same as the median in 2010 (*n* = 324).[29] Most teachers (89%) reported they usually get the number of noncontact hours for which they are timetabled, but 10% said they did not.

Nearly all teachers reported enjoying their job (see Figure 16), and most felt they got the internal support they needed; two-thirds felt they got the external support they needed to do their job effectively. This is much the same as in 2013.

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29 The item was: *How many noncontact hours (classroom release) do you get each week, averaged over a term? _____ hours per week*. Some classroom teachers with no additional responsibilities gave responses of 10 or 12 hours. It seemed reasonable that these responses represented their noncontact hours for a term, and were therefore divided by 10 (number of weeks in most school terms) to give 1 or 1.2 hours per week.

FIGURE 16 **Teachers' job satisfaction and support (*n* = 771)**
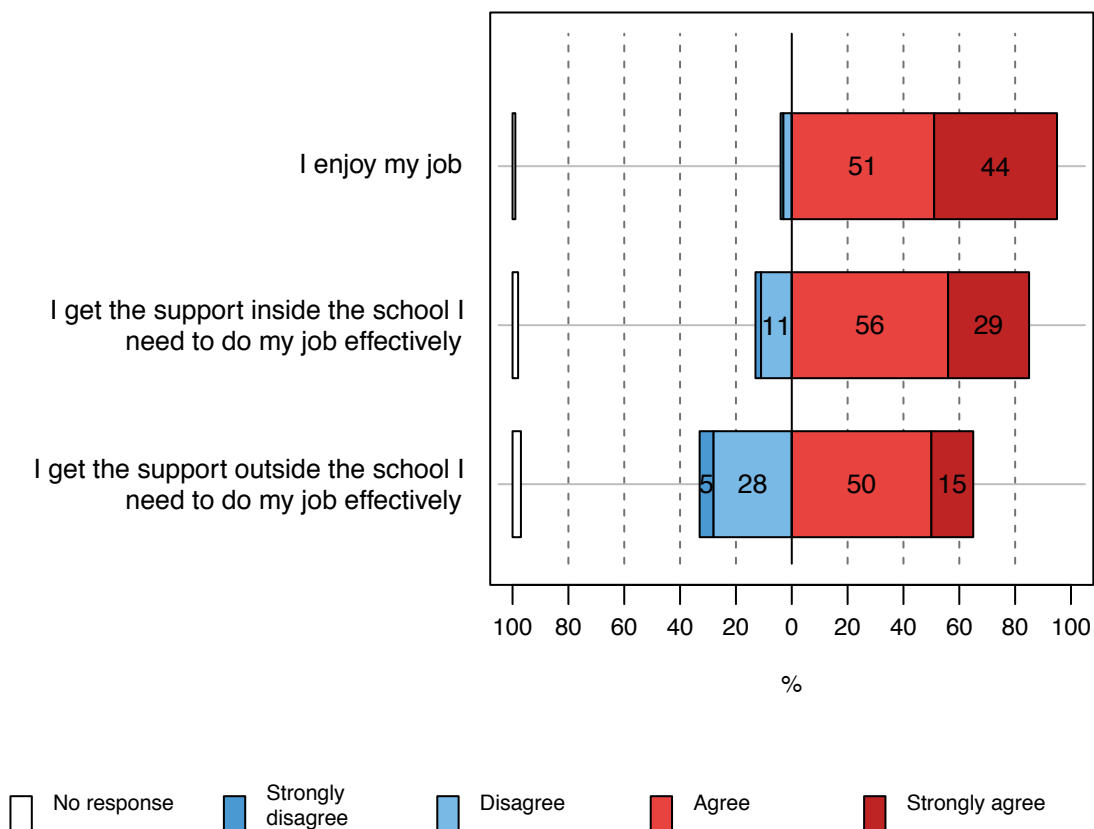
Teachers at large schools were more likely to report getting the support they need inside the school to do their job effectively (89%, decreasing to 73% of those at small schools). There were no other differences associated with school characteristics.

Career plans

Teachers were asked to indicate their career plans for the next 5 years (see Table 8). Overall, the picture is much the same as in 2013, with some slippage in the proportion intending to increase their level of responsibility, take on a leadership role with management units, or change schools. Thirty-eight percent of teachers planned to continue as they were in 2016.

TABLE 8   **Teachers' career plans for the next 5 years; 2010, 2013, and 2016[30]**

What teachers plan to do	2010 (*n* = 970) %	2013 (*n* = 713) %	2016 (*n* = 771) %
Continue as I am now	37	35	38
Increase level of responsibility	29	27	24
Take on leadership role with management units	*	28	24
Apply for a study award/sabbatical/fellowship	17	18	17
Change schools	21	19	15
Begin or complete a postgrad qualification	*	17	14
Get a permanent position	*	8	10
Leave teaching for personal reasons (e.g., travel, family)	13	9	10
Change careers within education	13	11	10
Retrain/change to a career outside education	9	8	9
Retire	9	10	9
Not sure	8	6	7
Get a part-time position	*	5	6
Get a full-time position	*	3	4
Other	4	3	4

* Not asked.

Teachers in formal leadership roles[31] (*n* = 219) were twice as likely to be planning to apply for a study award, sabbatical, or fellowship (26%, compared with 13% of teachers not in these roles). Those in assistant principal roles (*n* = 38) were the most likely group to indicate they planned to continue as they were for the next 5 years (55%). Deputy principals (*n* = 71) were the least likely to be planning to increase their level of responsibility in the next 5 years (14%, compared with 24% of all teachers).

Teachers who responded to the survey also indicated whether they were interested in taking one of the new Community of Learning | Kāhui Ako roles for teachers. Two percent (*n* = 13) had already been appointed to within-school or cross-community roles, with a further 6% interested in the within-school role and 5% interested in the across-school role. Thirty-seven percent of teachers were unsure, and 45% indicated they were not interested in these roles.

Less than half (43%) of teachers agreed or strongly agreed there was career progression available in their school and a further 30% responded *Neutral/Not sure*, much the same as in 2013.

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30 Teachers could give multiple responses here.
31 A teacher was considered to be in a formal leadership role if they were: deputy principal, assistant principal, or curriculum/syndicate leader for English/Literacy or Mathematics.

Thirteen percent of teachers expressed interest in becoming a principal in the future, with a further 19% unsure about this. Sixty-six percent had no interest in becoming a principal. In 2013, a marginally greater proportion had been interested in a principal role (17%), although the 2010 figure (14%) was about the same as 2016.

The proportion of teachers already in formal leadership roles who expressed interest in becoming a principal differed little from teachers not in these roles, apart from deputy principals; 28% of teachers in the deputy principal role were interested in becoming a principal, and a further 20% were unsure.

Changes teachers would make in their work

The main things teachers would change about their work as a teacher are shown in Table 9, alongside teachers' responses in 2013 and 2010. The top seven items in 2016 were also the top seven in 2013, albeit in a slightly different order.

Teachers wanted *more time*: more noncontact time for preparation and to work with other teachers; more time to work with individual students; more time to reflect, plan, share ideas, or design relevant local learning activities; and more time to work with parents and whānau.

Teachers also wanted to *adjust the balance* of different aspects of their workload: to reduce administration/paperwork, class size, assessment workload, and the number of initiatives at any one time; and increase support staff.

In 2013, the proportions of teachers wanting more noncontact time for preparation and more time for reflecting, planning, and sharing ideas had increased from 2010, as did those who wanted to reduce their assessment workload. These increases followed the introduction of National Standards in 2010, and did not increase further in 2016.

More teachers in 2016 said they would like more support staff, and better provision for students with additional learning needs—both up by 9% from 2013, and more wanted more support to adapt NZC to meet these students' learning needs. The proportion of teachers wanting reduced class sizes had also increased.

One change fewer teachers wanted in 2016 was more sharing of knowledge and ideas with teachers from other schools (31%, down from 39% in 2013 and 40% in 2010), an interesting decrease in relation to the introduction of Communities of Learning | Kāhui Ako.

TABLE 9   **What primary teachers would change about their work; 2010, 2013, and 2016**

Change desired	2010 (*n* = 970) %	2013 (*n* = 713) %	2016 (*n* = 771) %
Reduce administration/paperwork	71	74	71
More noncontact time for preparation, etc.	45	58	62
Better pay	58	54	59
More support staff	57	50	59
Reduce class size	57	52	59
More time to work with individual students	63	60	56
More time to reflect/plan/share ideas	47	55	54
More noncontact time to work with other teachers	43	44	50
Reduce assessment workload	38	43	46
More time to design relevant local learning activities	*	48	46
Reduce the number of initiatives at any one time	45	46	44
Better provision for students with additional learning needs	38	33	42
Rework National Standards	*	37	39
More classroom resources	52	40	36
More sharing of knowledge/ideas with teachers from other schools	40	39	31
Reduce curriculum coverage/size	26	23	25
Reduce pace of change	32	27	23
More appreciation of my work by school leaders	20	23	21
More time to work with parents and whānau	*	16	21
More advice available when assessment results show gaps in student learning	18	25	20
Better access to useful curriculum resources	*	22	19
More support for me to adapt *NZC* for students with additional learning needs	*	12	19
More support for me to learn effective ways of managing behaviour	*	11	11
Better access to external curriculum advice	*	16	11

* Not asked.

There were very few differences associated with school decile. A higher proportion (33%) of teachers at decile 1–2 schools indicated they would like more time to work with parents and whānau. More support for teachers to learn effective ways of managing behaviour was something that around 15% of teachers at decile 1–4 and decile 7–8 schools would like, compared with 7% of teachers at decile 5–6 and decile 9–10 schools.

Teachers' comments about their work as a teacher

At the end of the survey, teachers were invited to write any other comments about their work as a teacher, and 29% (*n* = 225) did so. The main themes that emerged from their comments are shown in Table 10. Multiple related themes were evident in many teachers' comments.

TABLE 10 **Teachers' comments about their work**

Main themes	2016 (*n* = 225) %
Enjoyment of working with children; commitment to children's learning	44
Workload, stress; work-life balance difficult to achieve	44
Issues about teaching as a career (e.g., insufficient pay, not a sustainable career, no career path in current school)	27
Teaching and learning quality, enjoyment, and spontaneity being eroded	17
Insufficient Ministry or government support or resourcing	17
Concern about the future of education, including policy and its effects	11
Not feeling valued by school leaders, parents, society, or the media	10

The following comments are illustrative of teachers' expressions of enjoying their work and being committed to children's learning.

> *I love the classroom-based/child-based aspects of my work—seeing their progress and engagement is the best part of this job! I am privileged, as a Year 5–6 teacher, to really get the insight in the special young people my students are becoming, and that is what keeps me satisfied in my job!*

> *I love my job as a teacher and am passionate about motivating and engaging with my students and their whānau.*

> *I am passionate about my job but I often feel frustrated that I don't get time to enjoy it. I want the best for my students but don't get the time and opportunities to plan and teach in what might be the best way all of the time.*

Forty-four percent (*n* = 99) of teachers' comments touched on the difficulties they were experiencing in finding a work-life balance, or related issues of workload and stress.

> *My job has taken over my life, because what could be more important than a child learning what they need to/meeting the National Standards? But I don't want to 'live to work', something has to give. I am doing the best I can for my students with all the demands of teaching, but it bothers me that more and more it is hard to make sure learning experiences are all meaningful and engaging. I know that some-things could be done better, but I don't have the time to make an informed decision of how to and imple-ment it. Too much is expected of teachers; this is a job not a lifestyle. I feel frustrated that I have to give up break times and weekends to coach sport teams just so I am meeting registration requirements.*

Enjoy the kids and participating in their development in all aspects of their life. Hate the workload—too much = average 2+ hours extra on week nights and a minimum of 15 (and up to 30) hours extra work on weekend. At this point in time I would actually advise anyone wanting to become a primary teacher not to!

Huge workload 50+ hours a week plus weekend work and that doesn't count meetings or other expectations. … Teaching takes over your life—as a profession we are unfit and overweight!! Teachers feel they are at the bottom of the heap.

The workload is much higher than I expected when I started. Messages from management about reducing working hours and reducing personal stress don't fit with what is needed for the students or expectations of pedagogical change.

Related to the previous theme, 27% (*n* = 61) of teachers' comments highlighted issues about teaching as a career.

I work hard. I go above and beyond because I don't want to be just another good teacher, I want to be a great teacher! At the end of each day, week, term, year, I look back and I ask myself Why?! I have neglected my own family to be that 'great' teacher and yet the 'good' teachers go home at the end of the day and their day is over. We get paid the same. A [university] student is in my class and will graduate with a Master of Teaching and Learning. She makes all the mistakes as you would expect of a trainee teacher yet she will graduate with a Masters. This is an insult to people like me in my profession. I have no words I can write here to express my feelings around this.

It would be great if the culture of NZ teaching shifted to the ability to work part time. I was surprised that I was unable to return to teaching here without working full time. The work/life balance is not positive for me or my young family. In the UK it was much easier to return to teaching as part-time roles were common. I think there needs to be consideration for the positive aspects of job-sharing. I believe more teachers would remain in the profession and return (following maternity leave) if part-time/job sharing opportunities were available. Great teachers are currently working as relievers as it suits their lifestyle better.

I'm frustrated about the lack of career pathways for teachers. As a teacher with 1 MU [management unit] & ACET [Advanced Classroom Expertise Teacher], I would like to take the next step into management (DP role) but the schools in the area offer either 1 or 2 MUs … this means a drop in salary. Some schools have flattened management & no longer have DPs, but have a 'shared leadership' approach, sharing out MUs. My aim is to become a Principal so working through the management levels is important to me. Taking COL positions does not appear to be a career pathway as you can only hold these positions for a given amount of time … thus they are a road to nowhere. A clear career pathway that is consistent across schools would be great.

The erosion of teaching and learning quality, enjoyment, and spontaneity was a theme that was evident in 17% (*n* = 39) of the comments teachers made.

The 'job' has grown and grown—assessment microscopes pupils' learning and data entry re learning continues to be more demanding. National Standards added another 'layer' to the workload. The fun, motivational aspect of a classroom has been replaced with 'learning goals' and 'WALTs' ['we are learning to']—all very focused but does it create a love of learning?

I love being a teacher and being in the classroom. I do believe that we try to do too much all day, every day. Things are constantly added, but not taken away. We talk about cognitively overloading children, but what about teachers? I constantly feel like that! Sometimes I just want to teach. Not to go here, do this, include that, model this. It is rare, but great, when you have the day to yourself in your class.

I think the NZC is good and provides flexibility in our teaching of it. On the other hand, we're forced to identify target groups and focus on students (who change all the time due to transience and students changing classes), and then push these kids and constantly monitor and assess them. It adds to our pa-

perwork and workload pressure. I have less time to spend creating fun, motivational learning opportunities which has always been a strength of my teaching. I enjoy my job but not the constant feeling of being swamped.

Seventeen percent (*n* = 38) of teachers' comments related to there being insufficient Ministry or government support or resourcing.

The NZ Government undermines the integrity and the hard work that teachers do. I have 3 special needs children, 1 very autistic (has ORS funding), it makes life in the classroom hard as I don't have the full support to meet the needs of these children without neglecting the others in my class. I spend $100s of my own money for resources. I put in huge hours for planning etc., and we just get more things put on top. Minister of Education demeans us and her bulk funding ideas—well—speechless. Haven't time to do anything properly—including this!

I absolutely love my job but it is very challenging because the Government seems to have a very strange view of what is needed. People making decisions NEED to spend some time in the classroom to be able to really understand what it is like and what is needed. I feel undervalued by the Government, but not by my school!

I just wish teachers and the Government could finally work together in a way that benefits both sides. Remember it's the children at the centre of this.

Eleven percent (*n* = 25) of teachers' comments expressed their concern about the future of education, including current policy and its effects.

I am very concerned about the direction that the education system is going. The lack of trust shown in professional teachers by school leaders and MOE and the wellbeing of staff in schools in general. The workload is immense, as is the pressure and stress levels. I am not wanting my own children to grow up fast, but I am wanting them out of this education system. A sad thing for a teacher to say.

We currently have a government who does not listen to those of us at the coal face, who actually do the job and who were trained to do this job. We have a media who further the Government's message that our profession is failing kids and that teachers need to be better trained etc., etc., etc. Our curriculum is getting larger and yet the focus for achievement has got narrower. It is disheartening and frustrating. We seem hell bent on following failing systems like those in the US and UK. Why? Schools are not businesses! Stop treating them as such!

After completing this survey, I feel quite sad as I reflect upon how I felt 2 years ago. The system is failing our most vulnerable students and I am not sure if I can find the positivity to see past this. Something needs to change.

Not feeling valued by school leaders, parents, society, the media, or the Government was reflected in 10% (*n* = 22) of the comments teachers wrote.

Teaching is a rewarding profession; however, society still does not accept the hours/work we do with children. The Government does not value us as educators and this is reflected in our struggles to get adequate and reasonable pay in comparison to other public servants.

I absolutely love my job but I see others burning out. I get sad at reports in the media that we are 'lazy', moaning teachers when most of us work so hard. Pay us better, treat us better, put more value on what we actually do.

My ultimate employer (the Government) does not value teachers or their opinions. This is discouraging when teachers' professional opinions and advice are ignored and undermined. It becomes more difficult to recommend teaching as a career to young adults.

Summary

Teachers' feelings about their work had changed little since the last survey, 3 years before. They were working slightly longer hours outside their timetabled hours, and classroom teachers received less noncontact time each week than they did in 2013.

Overall, teachers' career plans in 2016 resembled those in 2013. Thirty-eight percent of teachers intended to continue in their current role for the next 5 years.

Teachers' comments reflected their commitment to children's learning. Many teachers also described the difficulty they had achieving a work-life balance, and the stress and heavy workload they experienced in their role.

8.
Discussion

Teachers' experiences of professional learning in 2016 stood out as an area that showed distinct improvements from 2013. In particular, more teachers had professional learning that provided practical help with engaging priority learner groups and building positive relationships with parents and whānau, both of which have been a considerable focus for recent Ministry of Education-funded PLD. Further evidence that in 2016 teachers felt they were making headway in their work with priority learners was an increase in teachers identifying as a main achievement, being better at meeting the needs of priority learners, especially those with additional learning needs. As well as the concentration of professional learning aimed at lifting the achievement of priority learners, teachers also reported a greater focus on students who are 'below' or 'well below' National Standards, compared with 2013.[32]

However, more teachers also identified the achievement of students with additional learning needs as a major issue facing their school, and wanted better provision for these students, more support staff, and more support to adapt NZC to meet their needs, suggesting heightened awareness of these challenges.

More teachers reported having opportunities for professional learning within their own school and being provided with useful blocks of time for professional learning. However, having adequate time to do their work as well as teachers wanted to was an issue. Just under half thought their workload was manageable. The median number of noncontact hours for classroom teachers has not increased as it needs to if schools are going to work well as professional learning communities. On the contrary, it has slipped since 2013 and there was a slight increase in the hours teachers were working outside timetabled hours. As the work of Communities of Learning | Kāhui Ako gains momentum, ensuring adequate release time for primary and intermediate school teachers to contribute to their collaborative work will become still more important.

Experiences of teacher sharing, improvement focus in their work together, timely support, and coherence in schools' professional learning culture were all largely unchanged since 2013. The main change here was that more teachers were using teaching as inquiry to keep developing their practice.

Related to the use of inquiry, increases were also evident in teachers' ability to use their school's SMS for tracking the achievement of their class, and pulling together assessment information for OTJs. They were less sanguine about using their SMS for storing longitudinal achievement data, which is needed to identify progress over time at various levels (e.g., school, year level, cohort, individual student) and for different

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32 See Bonne, L. (2016). *National Standards in their seventh year: Findings from the NZCER national survey of primary and intermediate schools 2016*. Wellington: NZCER. Available at www.nzcer.org.nz/research/national-survey

groups (girls/boys, priority learners). Teachers may need more support to become familiar with using their SMS to store longitudinal achievement data, and then to analyse and use it to inform their teaching.

The 2016 picture of students taking an active role in learning to learn was much the same as in 2013. Although students were active participants in some assessment practices, less common was their documenting their own learning achievements or critiquing examples of actual work across a range of quality.

Although no major additions or changes had been made to the work of teachers between 2013 and 2016, their attention seems to have shifted somewhat. In 2016, considerable attention had been given to priority learners, and teachers' work here seemed to be gaining some traction, as well as highlighting further work and resourcing is needed.

Teachers have made it plain that they do not have adequate time to do their work as well as they would like to. When time is at a premium, teachers have to prioritise what they attend to. Recently, their focus has been directed to priority learners and National Standards-related teaching and assessment, with 69% of teachers saying their work with National Standards had narrowed the curriculum they teach. This may in part explain why progress with the key competencies (and overall student performance on the National Standards) has remained in a holding pattern. A dual focus is needed to strengthen these two interconnected areas—students' sense of agency and strategies for learning, and their academic achievement—in order to make visible improvements on a national scale. The National Standards focus on aspects of two key learning areas: English and mathematics and statistics. Students' learning in both these areas ought to go hand-in-hand with their development of the key competencies. Care will need to be taken in future to ensure the balance of what teachers are expected to give their attention to does not prevent them from making the whole of NZC "a powerful reality" for all their students.

The NZCER National Survey of Primary and Intermediate Schools 2016

This year's survey was conducted from August to early September 2016 and was sent to a representative sample of 349 English-medium state and state-integrated primary and intermediate schools (20% of all these schools in New Zealand).[33] At these schools, surveys were sent to the principal and to a random sample of one in two teachers. Surveys also went to the board of trustees' chair, who was asked to give a second trustee survey to someone likely to have a different viewpoint from their own. Additionally, surveys were sent to a random sample of one in four parents at a cross-section of 36 schools. The response rates were 57% for principals (n = 200), 38% for teachers (n = 771), 25% for trustees (n = 176), and 32% for parents and whānau (n = 504).

The survey returns for principals, teachers, and trustees were generally representative of schools in the sample, with the following small variations:

- Principal returns showed a slight over-representation of large schools, and urban schools. Decile 8–10 schools were somewhat over-represented, as were schools in the Auckland region.
- In the schools from which teachers returned surveys, there was a slight under-representation of large schools, and an over-representation of small–medium and small schools. Slight under-representations were evident of decile 1 schools and schools in the Auckland and Hawke's Bay/Gisborne Ministry of Education regions.
- The schools from which we received trustee surveys reflected some over-representation of large schools and under-representation of decile 1 schools.

The maximum margin of error[34] for the principal survey is 6.9%, for the teacher survey around 3.5%, and for the trustee survey around 7.4%. Sometimes we report results for smaller groups of respondents within each survey; the maximum margin of error reported for each survey does not apply to these groups.

Calculating the margin of error relies on random sampling and because we rely on schools to select the teachers and trustees to complete surveys, we cannot guarantee that these samples are random.

Therefore, the margins of error for the teacher and trustee surveys should be regarded as approximations.

The parent and whānau sample is not a random sample; therefore we do not calculate a margin of error for that survey.

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33 Further details about the sample and methodology are available in Berg, M. (2017). NZCER national survey of primary and intermediate schools 2016: Methodology and sample information. Available on the project web page: http://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/national-survey

34 The maximum margin of error added to and subtracted from a proportion gives a confidence interval. We can say there is a 95% chance that the proportion is inside this range of numbers.

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