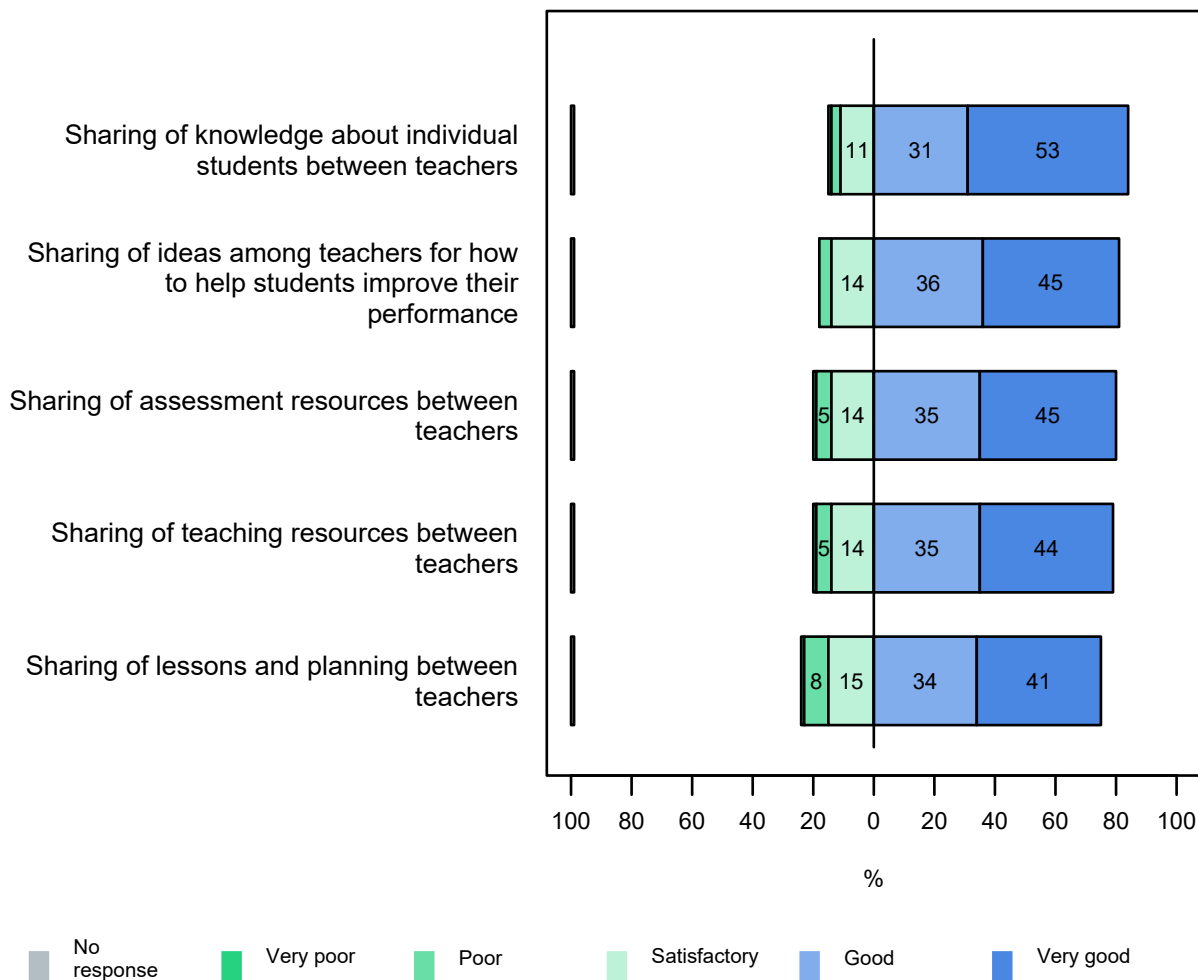

10. School culture and teacher learning

Students and teachers benefit from school cultures where teachers are well supported; share knowledge, ideas, and resources; and keep developing their practice. This section focuses on teacher reports of their school's professional culture, and their professional learning and development, including the use of online resources, professional learning, and sharing. It also covers the time they have to work together, the role of feedback on performance, mentoring of provisionally registered teachers, and the kinds of professional learning they have experienced.

More teachers are sharing ideas to help students improve their performance

Sharing of resources, lessons and planning, knowledge about individual students and ideas for how to help students improve their performance was judged as good or very good within their school by many teachers (see Figure 47). It was not good in the schools of around a fifth of teachers.

FIGURE 47 Teacher sharing within their school (n = 620)

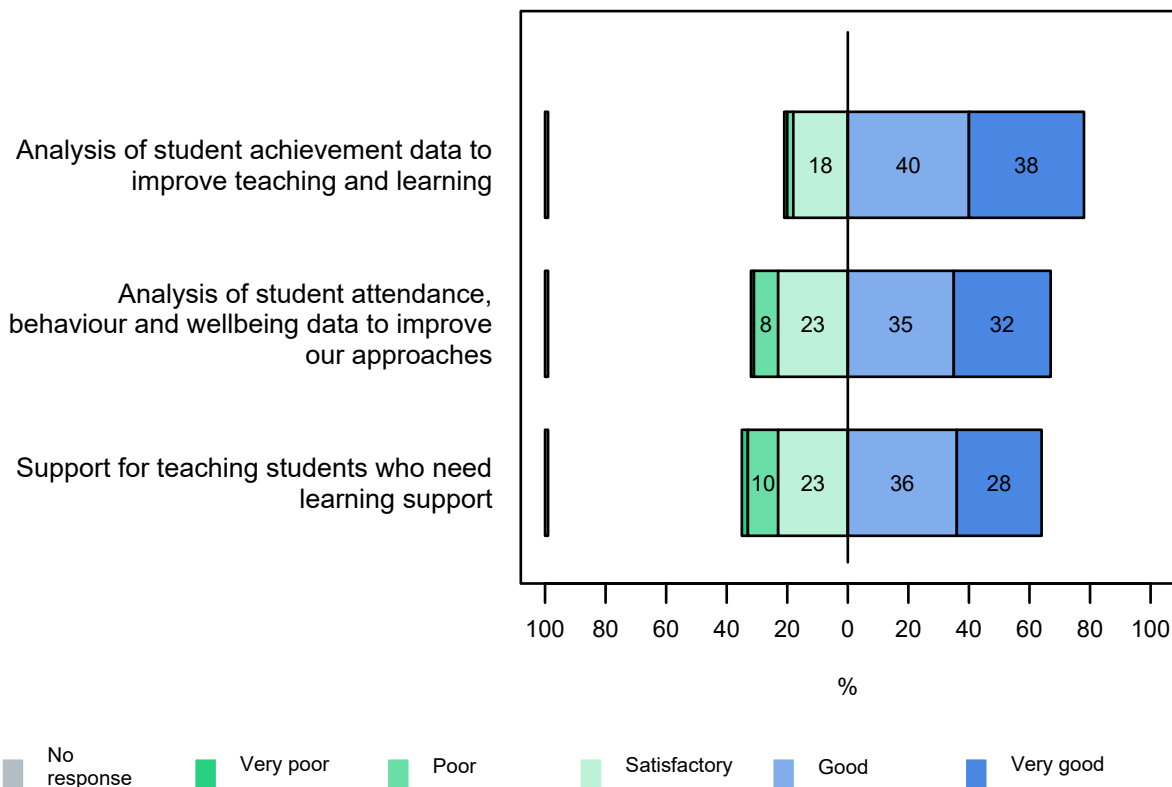


The patterns here have stayed much the same since the 2010 primary national survey. The exception is an increase in the proportion of teachers rating their school's sharing of ideas for how to help students improve their performance as very good from 32% in 2016 to 45% in 2019.

Most teachers think that there is good analysis of student data in order to make improvements

Most teachers thought their school made good use of analysis of student data in order to make improvements, more so in relation to student achievement data than in relation to attendance, behaviour, and wellbeing. Most also thought that their school's setting of useful targets for student achievement was good. Figure 48 has the details.

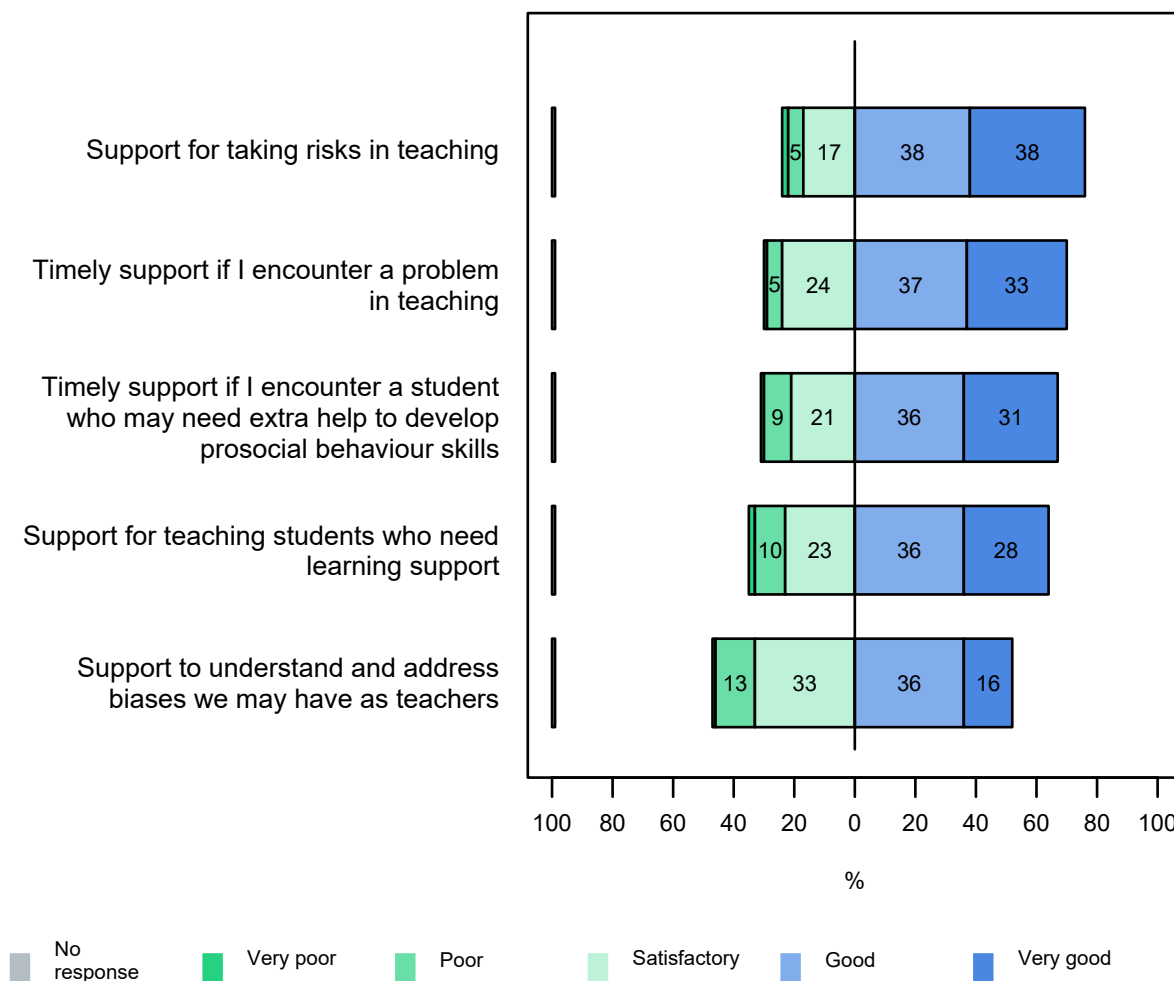
FIGURE 48 School analysis of student data for improvement (Teachers, n = 620)



The support that teachers get from their school varies

We asked teachers about support they get from their school. Figure 49 shows a range of experiences, with many reporting that they get very good or good support, but between 23% and 46% not rating their school’s support as good or very good, particularly in relation to support with particular students, and to understand and address bias. Compared with 2016, somewhat fewer teachers said they had very good or good timely support if they encountered a problem in teaching (70%, compared with 78% in 2016, 79% in 2013, and 78% in 2010).

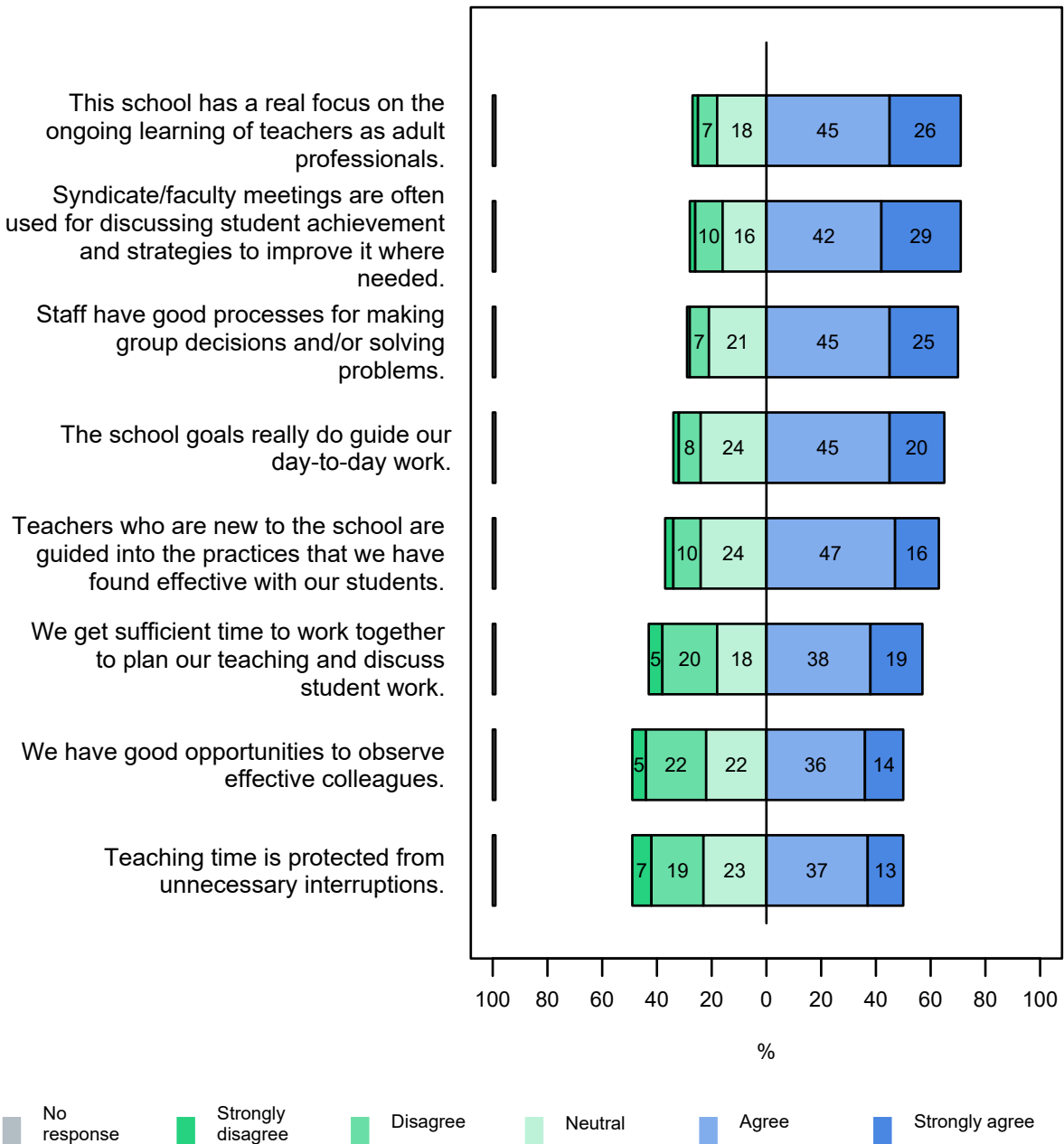
FIGURE 49 School support for teachers (Teachers, n = 620)



Many teachers' schools have a focus on improving practice, but time to work together is still a challenge

Most of the teachers said they worked in schools whose culture was one of ongoing learning for teachers, including the use of meeting time to discuss student achievement and strategies for improvement, and guidance for teachers new to the school on practices that are effective for the school's students. But just over half had sufficient time to work together to plan their teaching and discuss student work, half said their teaching time was protected from unnecessary interruptions, and half had good opportunities to observe effective colleagues. There has been a small decline in the proportion of teachers who said the school's staff had good processes for making group decisions and/or solving problems (70% in 2019, compared with 76% in 2016), and in those who said their school had a real focus on the ongoing learning of teachers as adult professionals (71% in 2019, compared with 78% in 2016).

FIGURE 50 School processes to support ongoing improvement of practice (Teachers, n = 620)

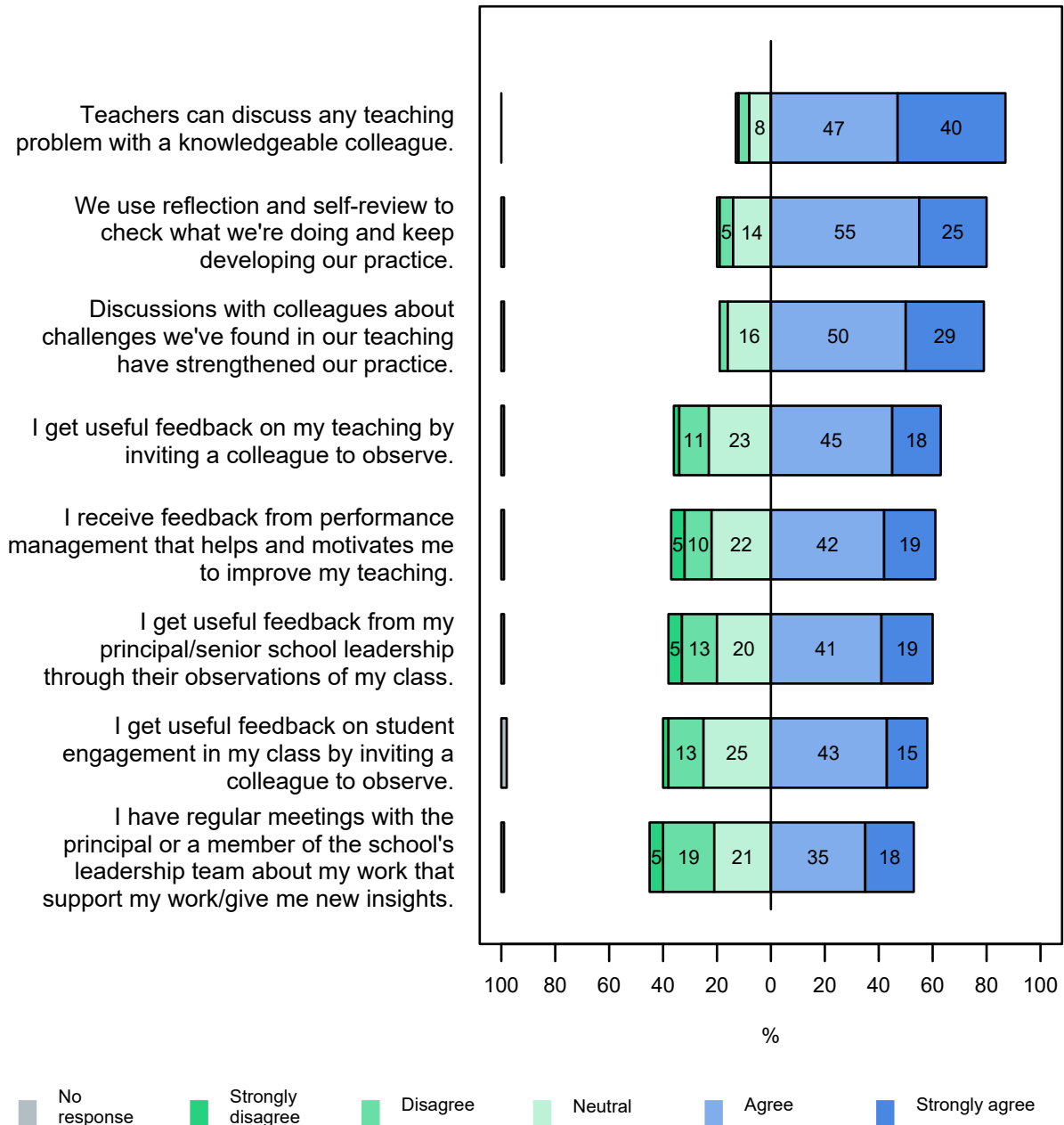


Discussions and reflection are more common for strengthening teaching than feedback

While most teachers report useful discussions and reflection to improve their teaching, fewer teachers agreed that feedback plays a role. Fewer than two-thirds of teachers thought they got useful feedback from collegial or principal/school leadership observations of their teaching or from performance management, and just over half had regular meetings with their principal or someone from the school's leadership team who supported their work or gave them new insights.

There has been a decline in reports of feedback from 2016, when 78% said they got useful feedback on their teaching by inviting a colleague to observe, and 71% that they had useful feedback from their principal/senior leadership's observations of their class. Figure 51 has the details.

FIGURE 51 Feedback, discussions and reflection to strengthen teaching practice (Teachers, n = 620)



In the set of items about school culture and ways of working, we asked teachers to rate their school's development of leadership skills among teachers. Twenty-six percent rated their school as 'very good' at doing this, and 38% as 'good'—64% overall. A further 24% rated their school as 'satisfactory', 11% as 'poor', and 2% as 'very poor' at developing teachers' leadership skills.

Fewer than half of mentor teachers have useful professional learning or time allocated for their role

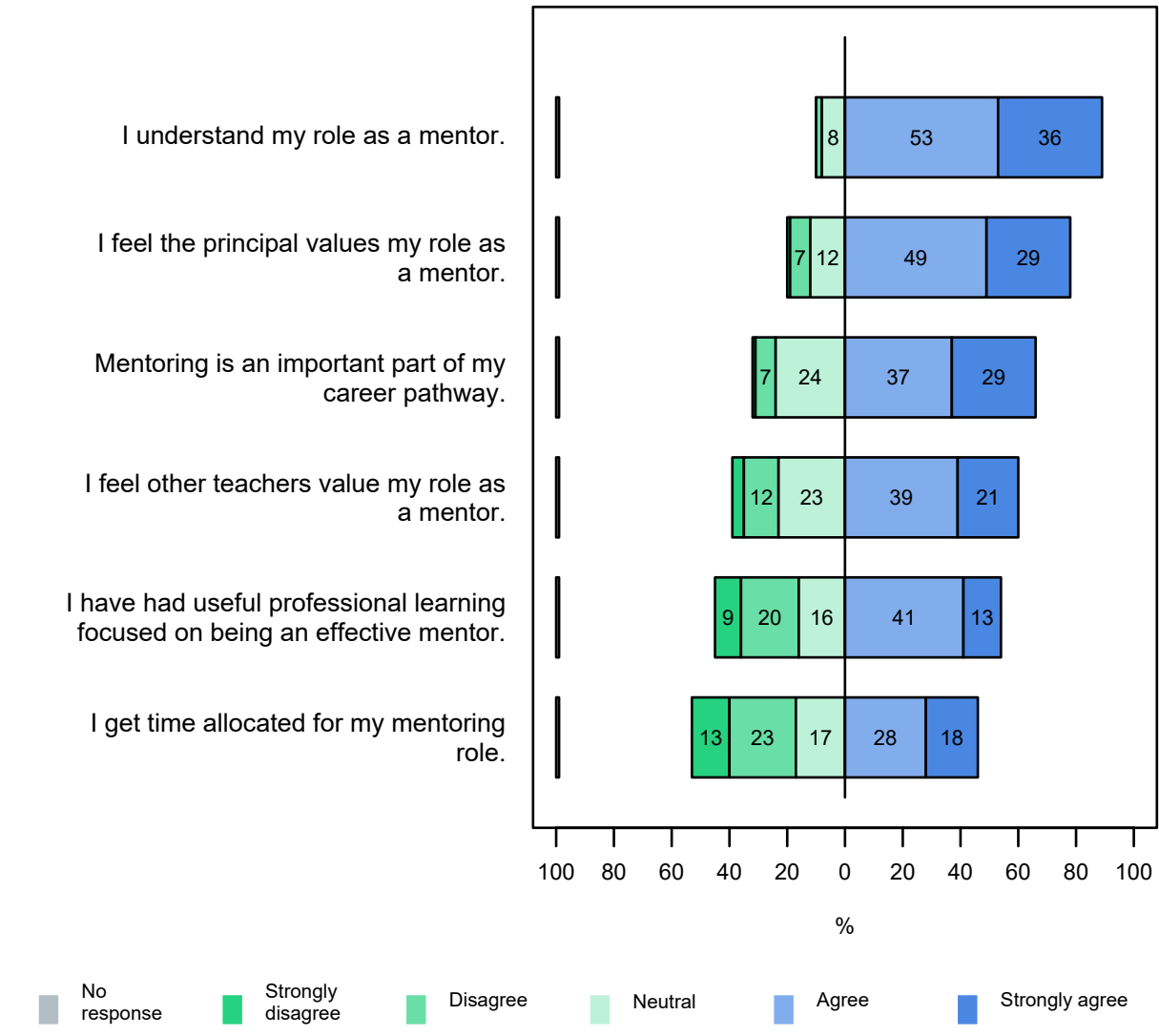
Schools play an important part in the professional development of new graduates and early career teachers.

Almost three-quarters of all teachers who completed the survey rated the quality of mentoring of provisionally certificated teachers in their school as 'very good' or 'good'.

Fifteen percent of the teachers who took part in the survey were mentor teachers for provisionally certificated teachers. Most said they understood their role as a mentor, and thought this role was valued by their principal, and, to a lesser extent, by other teachers (23% gave a neutral answer here, indicating they might not know what other teachers thought). Fewer mentor teachers thought their colleagues valued their role in 2019 than in 2016 (60% compared with 74% in 2016).

However, just under half said they got the time allocated for their role, and 54% had had useful professional learning focused on being an effective mentor, though this is somewhat more than the 46% in 2016 who had had such professional learning. Figure 52 gives the full picture.

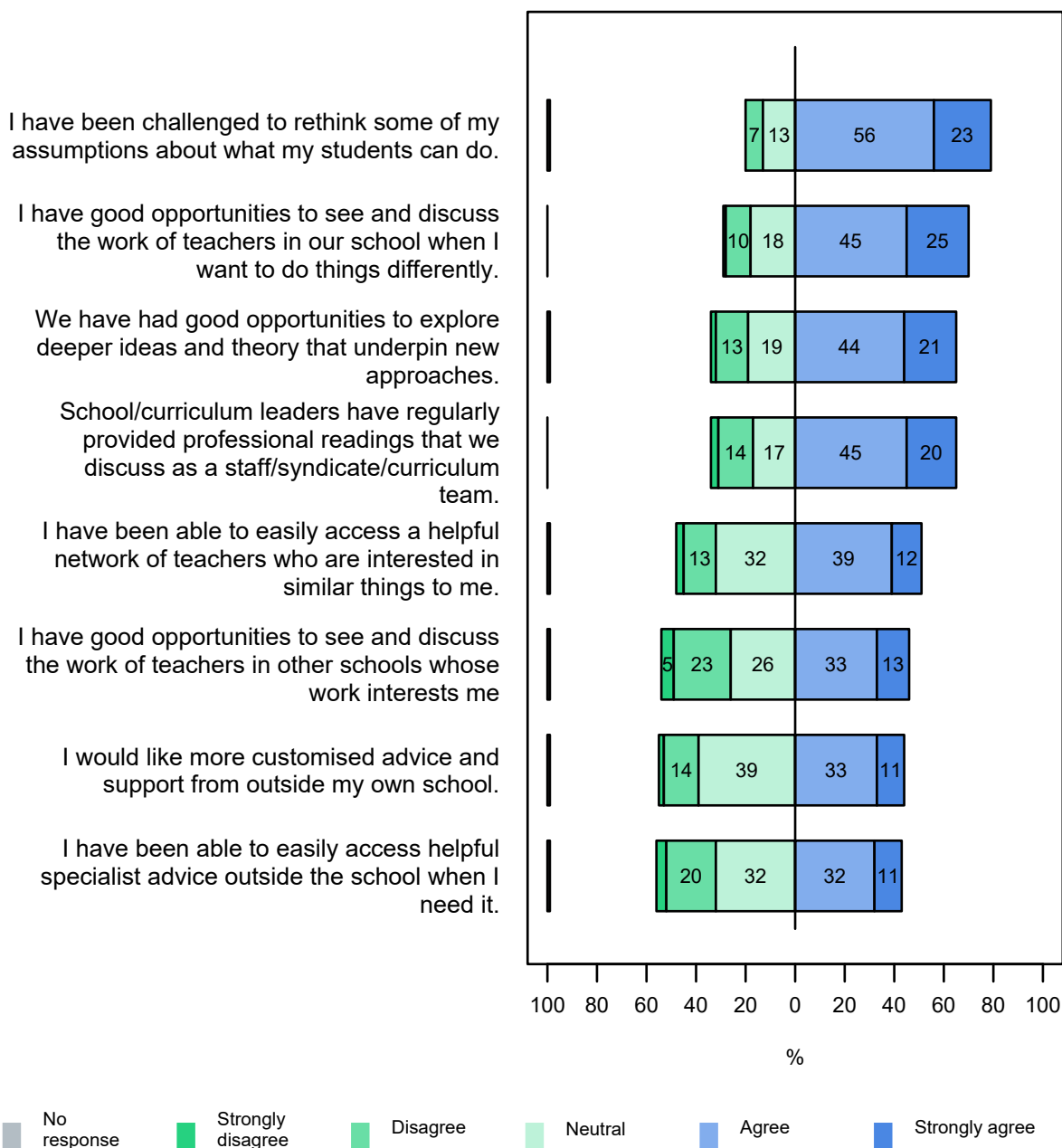
FIGURE 52 Mentor teachers' experiences of the role (n = 95)



Many teachers have a range of professional learning opportunities with colleagues, more within the school than beyond

Figure 53 shows that most teachers thought that their professional learning and development in the last 3 years had challenged them to rethink some of their assumptions about what their students can do. It also shows that within-school PLD opportunities were more of a feature in primary teachers' professional learning than opportunities and advice beyond their school.

FIGURE 53 Teachers' experiences of professional learning over the past 3 years (n = 620)



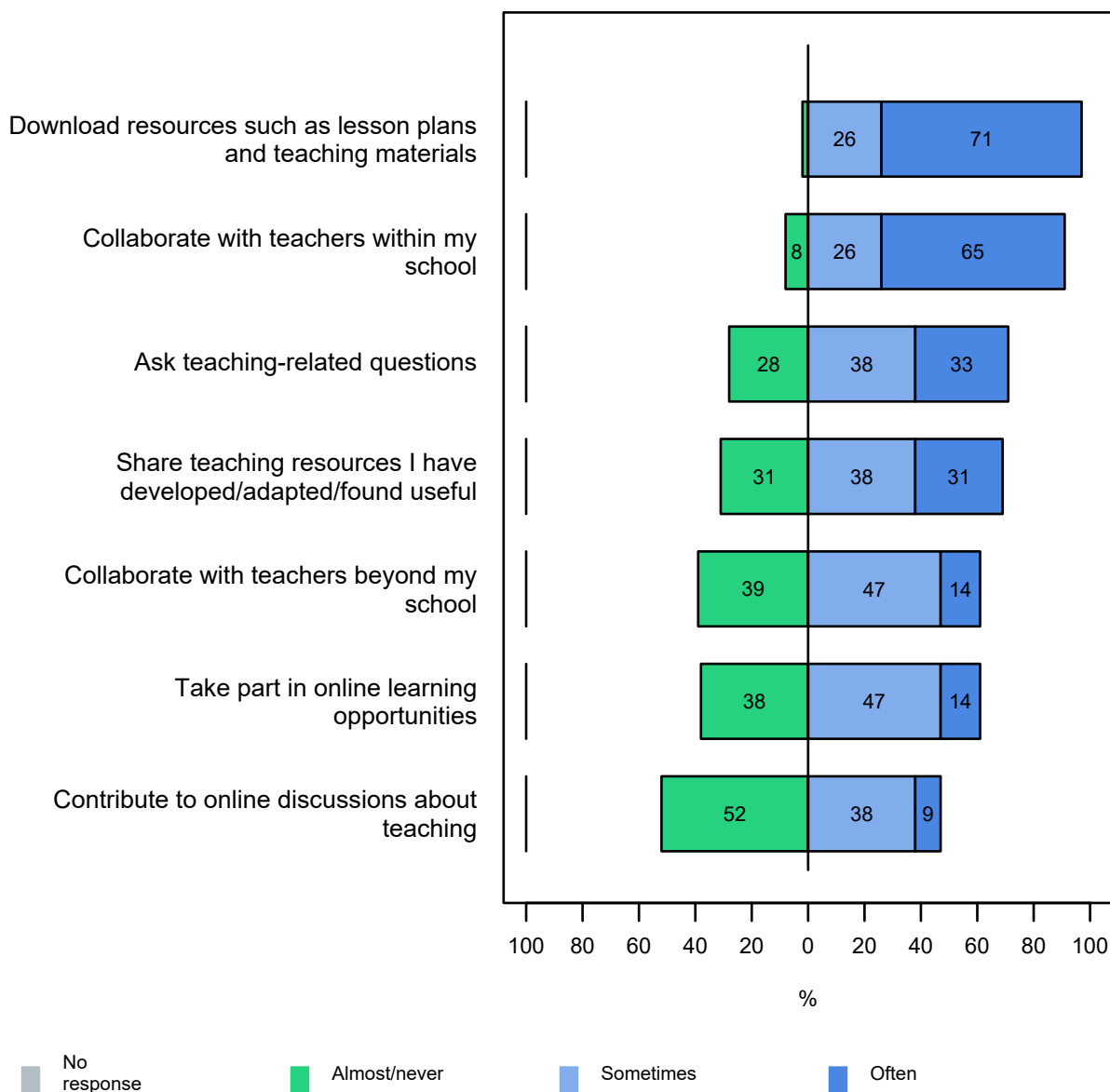
The overall pattern here is much the same as in 2016, with two slight differences:

- In 2019, 44% said they would like more customised advice and support from outside their own school (compared with 38% in 2016).
- In 2019, 51% said they could easily access a helpful network of teachers who are interested in similar things (as did 57% in 2016).

Downloading resources is still the most common online activity for teachers

In late 2019, digital technology was a resource for most, but not all, teachers. The two most frequent uses teachers make of the internet to support teaching and learning were to download resources—such as lesson plans and teaching materials—and collaborate with colleagues inside their school. Figure 54 also shows that around a third seem to rarely or never use the Internet for their own learning or contribution.

FIGURE 54 Teachers' use of the internet (n = 620)



More teachers in 2019 were taking part in online learning opportunities sometimes or often (61%, compared with 50% in 2016), perhaps reflecting the centrally funded PLD to support Kia Takatū ā-Matihiko, the National Digital Readiness Programme. Slightly more were sharing teaching resources online (68%, compared with 62% in 2016).

Summary

Teachers' responses indicated that many worked in schools where there are ongoing opportunities to share, reflect, and discuss their teaching and student learning, with an improvement lens. But ensuring that time is available to make the most of these opportunities was still a challenge. Comparing 2019 teachers' responses to the questions reported in this section with teachers' responses in 2016 raises some questions.

One gain was that more teachers were now sharing ideas for how to help students improve their performance. However, there were somewhat fewer saying they had very good or good timely support if they encountered a teaching problem, that their school had a real focus on the ongoing learning of teachers as adult professionals, that they had useful feedback from observations, and that they could easily access a helpful network of teachers interested in similar things. More were wanting customised support and advice beyond their school.

Overall, the patterns have not changed much: there has been no further progress. While many teachers indicate active attention in their schools to keep improving teaching and learning, there is still a significant minority of teachers—and their students—who were missing out.