Hackney: schools for everyone

Consultation Report
December 2017

Hackney

Report prepared by:

Dan Beagle
Senior Consultation Officer
Communications and Consultation

Hackney Council
Ext: 1739

Contents

Foreword

Schools in Hackney have transformed beyond recognition over the last 15 years, and the impact of this is felt well beyond the playground.

Where once we had some of the very worst schools, we now have some of the very best. Our seven-year-olds are top in the country for reading, writing and maths, our 11-year-olds are top for writing and Hackney is joint top for GCSEs.

Crucially, this success is not confined to young people from affluent backgrounds. Our children who receive free schools meals are achieving some the best results in the country for that group, and by some measures are outperforming the national averages for all children. Similarly, children and young people in care in Hackney are continuing to outperform their peers thanks to the support they are receiving.

The opportunities this turn around has created cannot be overestimated, as our children leave school better prepared to go on to further education or into the workplace, taking advantage of some of the incredible apprenticeships and training schemes in the borough's thriving tech, design and hospitality sectors. Hackney is known nationally - and across the world - for being an innovator in education, and just a few months ago I welcomed a delegation of education experts from Europe who were keen to learn from Hackney's success.

This is why we were so concerned when the Government announced a raft of policies that would shake our education system to the core. Earlier this year, with the threat of schools being forced to become academies, the expansion of grammar schools which would accept pupils based on academic ability, and the continued severing of ties between councils and schools, we decided to ask residents what they thought of our schools and how they wanted them to look in the future.

We carried out a similar survey in 2003, and the results of that gave us a very clear mandate to ensure that the academies that opened in Hackney were non-selective, non-denominational and mixed sex.

Schools For Everyone confirmed what we thought we knew: that Hackney residents really care about education. More than 2,500 people responded to the questionnaire we sent out with Hackney Today, we also ran focus groups to ensure the responses were as representative of the borough as a whole as possible.

This report provides a detailed analysis of the feedback, but some of the key findings were that, on the whole, respondents believe education in Hackney has improved; they are opposed to academic selection a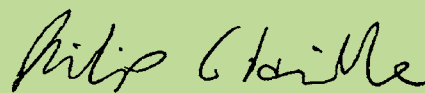nd forced academisation; they believe that the Council should oversee the school admissions process and ensure it's fair, and want our schools to be inclusive.

Grammar schools and forced academisation may be off the table for now, but they are clearly still on the Government's agenda, and your response to this survey will inform our response to national education policies and proposals over the coming years.

We will:

- Work hard to protect the values that have contributed to the success of our schools

- Do all we can to maintain the close links to our whole family of schools to ensure we can support them to access important services like school improvement and admissions.

- Respond to future Government policies on behalf of Hackney's schools, parents and residents

- Ensure there are adequate school places for local children in Hackney schools

- Continue to campaign for fair funding for all of our schools, including more funding for special educational needs and disabilities.

I'd like to thank everyone who took part in the Schools For Everyone consultation. Your feedback is valuable in helping us to shape an education system that reflects the sorts of schools our residents want.

Philip Glanville
Mayor of Hackney

Councillor Anntoinette Bramble
Deputy Mayor

Background

In 2016, Hackney's students were rated top in the country for performance at Key stage 1 (7 years old), and the borough came top in the country for progress at GCSE level. All Hackney schools, with only a few exceptions, have been rated good or outstanding.

Over the past 15 years, Hackney's schools have changed beyond recognition, transforming the educational opportunities for our children in Hackney. The borough's schools were once the worst in the country; now we have some of the very best.

Much of this transformation in the secondary sector began with the decision to shut failing schools and replace them with brand new academies, some of the first created under the then government's original academies programme, and which remain some of the most successful schools in the country.

Back in 2003, when this process was underway, the Council consulted Hackney residents on what kind of schools they wanted to see in the borough. Residents responded with a clear demand for non-selective, non-denominational, mixed-sex comprehensive schools.

This feedback allowed the Council to negotiate the first phase of the academies programme to deliver exactly that. Those schools, along with our maintained secondary schools are delivering amongst the best results in London. Since that time, more than £500 million has been invested in the fabric of Hackney's school buildings, seeing many schools completely rebuilt and renewed.

In 2016 Hackney schools face a new set of challenges. This consultation sought to understand residents' views about Hackney's education offer, especially the type of schools residents would like to see, and their views about what the Council's role should be in bringing this about. The consultation sought to hear from as many and as wide a range of Hackney residents as possible, especially parents of school age and pre-school children, recent school leavers and people considering raising their families in Hackney.

Consultation methodology

The public consultation ran from **28 November 2016 to 21 July 2017**.

A number of communications channels were used to distribute information to local residents. Where possible, the consultation team has ensured the borough profile is reflected in the response data to ensure a rounded view of all of Hackney's residents. Where there was paucity in data from specific demographic groups such BME or religious groups, the consultation team arranged targeted events such as workshops - see *Focus Group Data section* - or, in the case of council property tenants, visited localised residents' events to gather responses. Information on this can be found in the *Who took part in the consultation?* Section below.

Distribution

A questionnaire was circulated to 108,000 properties in the borough and was distributed with Hackney Council's bi-monthly newspaper, Hackney Today, during week commencing 28 November 2016.

Copies of the questionnaire were also made available at Hackney Town Hall and Hackney Service Centre during the consultation period.

An online version of the questionnaire was made available on Hackney's dedicated consultation website (**http://consultation.hackney.gov.uk**) and featured on the homepage at the beginning and end of the consultation period. Residents were also able to download pdf versions of the questionnaire on the website.

A letter from the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Anntoinette Bramble, and Anne Canning, Group Director for Children, Adults and Community Health, along with surveys were sent to all head teachers and teaching unions in the borough. It was also provided via Hackney School Governors' Association website and social media.

Posters promoting the consultation were distributed to and displayed at all libraries and children's centres in the borough.

The consultation was featured in numerous newsletters, including Hackney Learning Trust (5 December 2016) and HCVS (1 December 2016).

Translation and large print request forms were also included as part of the survey.

Events

A series of outreach and engagement events took place during the consultation period. These included:

- Attendance at the Cranston Estate Christmas Fayre on 3 December 2016;
- Attendance at the Woodberry Down Estate Winterfest event on 7 December 2016;
- Drop-in session with parents at Randal Cremer Primary School on 4 January 2017;
- Coffee morning with parents at De Beauvoir Primary School on 17 January 2017;
- Deliberative event with members of the Hackney Matters citizen panel on 26 January 2017;
- Coffee morning with parents at Thomas Fairchild Primary School on 1 February 2017;
- Focus group with stakeholders form the Charedi community on 23 February 2017;
- Focus group with Parents with hearing impairments (Via DeafPlus) on 1 March 2017;
- Focus group with parents with children special educational needs and disabilities on 22 March 2017;
- Three focus groups with residents from local authority and housing associations housing between 30th May and 1st June 2017;
- Attendance at Estate fun day on the Warburton Estate on 16th July;
- Attendance at Hackney More in Common event on 17th July 2017; and
- Attendance at the Woodberry Down Fun Day on 17th July 2017.

Summary of results

A total of 2572 residents responded to the consultation, which ran from November 2016 until July 2017. The consultation survey was circulated to 108,000 properties and was publicised using a number of channels from Hackney Today to community newsletters.

The consultation survey was supplemented with a number of focus groups and deliberative events to test and contextualise the themes that emerged in the statistical data. These events included sessions with council tenants, the Charedi community, and residents with hearing impairments among others.

Improvements in Hackney's educational offer

Overall, Hackney residents paint a positive picture of education in the borough with **73%** of respondents stating that it had improve a lot or improved in recent years.

70% of respondents rated the standard of education in Hackney positively with either very good or good. Over two thirds of respondents (67%) thought primary schools across the borough are very good/good and with over half (57%) rating secondary schools as very good/good.

The Borough's biggest challenges

The report highlights respondents' genuine concern about the impact of population growth and the need to provide an educational for all in the borough. **80%** of respondents were concerned with lack of school places as a result of rapid population growth and the impact this could have on Hackney's schools both from an admissions view point as well as equality of access.

73% were very concerned or concerned with forced academisation and **68%** of respondents were very concerned or concerned with schools introducing selection based on academic results. Of those who identified as parents of children aged 0-11, **90%** were concerned with the intro of selection based on academic result and the forced academisation of schools in the Borough. **78%** of respondents who identified themselves as parents believed that access to schools in Hackney shouldn't be based on academic selection.

Lastly, **65%** were concerned with the issue of unregistered schools in the borough.

Hackney's role and priorities

When asked about the role the Council should take in Hackney's school, **92%** respondents thought the local authority should ensure there are enough school places locally, **88%** said the council should support the wellbeing of vulnerable children, **85%** identified access to special educational needs provision, **83%** said the Council should ensure schools work together to provide high quality education. **83%** of respondents believed that it was the Borough's role to oversee the schools admission process and ensure that it's fair.

Respondents were also asked to rate on a scale of *very important to not important at all* the priorities for schools in Hackney. Providing sufficient primary and secondary school places was considered *very important* for **90%** of respondents, with equal opportunities, maintaining high standards and investing high quality facilities receiving over **80%** of responses as *'very important'*, followed by schools working together at **74%**.[1]

What policies should we pursue?

In this section of the survey we ask respondents if they agreed or disagreed with a number of policy proposals for schools in the borough. **88%** of respondents agreed that school governor boards should include parent governors elected by parents. **83%** agreed Hackney schools

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[1] Respondents were given the option of multiple choices for this section of the survey.

should be non-denominational and 65% were positive towards mixed gender schools. **78%** agreed that Hackney schools should be open to all residents without educational achievement restricting entry.

77% of respondents agreed there should a policy on compulsory registration of home schooled children and **53%** of respondents supported the idea that a Schools Trust should be established to safeguard the family of schools in the borough. **40%** responded positively to funding new schools by building and selling private homes.

Who responded to the survey?

Given the theme of the consultation, it is unsurprising that parents (57%) and women (73%) form the largest group of respondents to the survey. A high proportion of respondents came from the N16, E5 and E9 areas and were either home owners or living in mortgaged properties. Where there was paucity in data from specific demographic groups such as BME groups or those in council properties, the consultation team arranged focus groups to gather responses from these cohorts.

It should be noted that despite the lower percentage of BME or council tenant respondents, responses from these groups are reflective of wider trends within the overall data.

Interpretation of the data

Percentages in a particular chart will not always add up to 100%. This may be due to rounding, or because each respondent is allowed to give more than one answer to the question. Differences between sub-groups will not always be statistically significant. We need to exercise appropriate caution where a small group of self-selected respondents has been analysed.

Unless otherwise stated, no responses (where no response has been provided for a question) have been suppressed.

The questionnaire consisted of 10 questions, plus equalities monitoring questions. Please see Appendix A for a copy of the survey.

Methodology of analysing qualitative data

The coding of qualitative data has been defined so that themes and perspectives relevant to the research questions can be identified.

Qualitative responses quoted in this report are intended to be illustrative and cannot be viewed as representative of the views of any given demographic group. It also deals in perceptions rather than facts all quotes are verbatim or as written in the survey and should be viewed alongside quantitative data holistically.

Who took part in the consultation?

A total of 108,000 surveys were distributed to properties the borough of which 2572 residents responded.

The largest group represented in the consultation is the 35-44 cohort who have children currently in primary or secondary education and proportionally, more females responded to the survey (73%/1775) compared to males (25%/641).
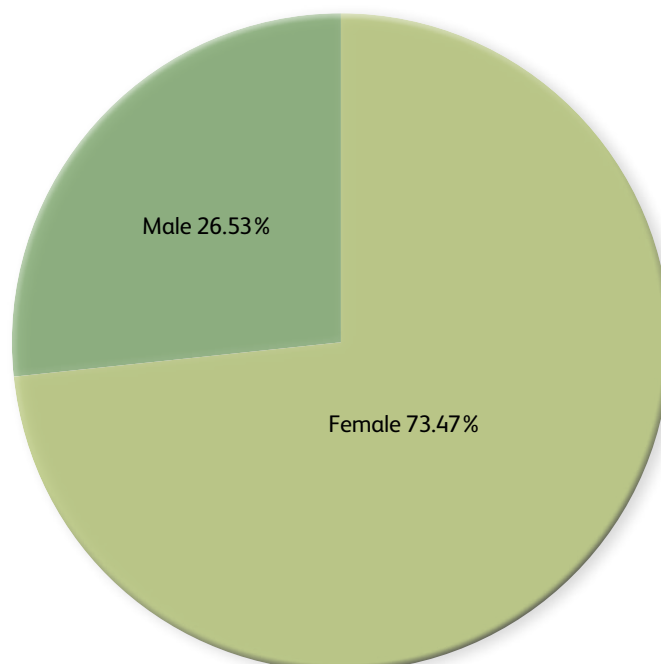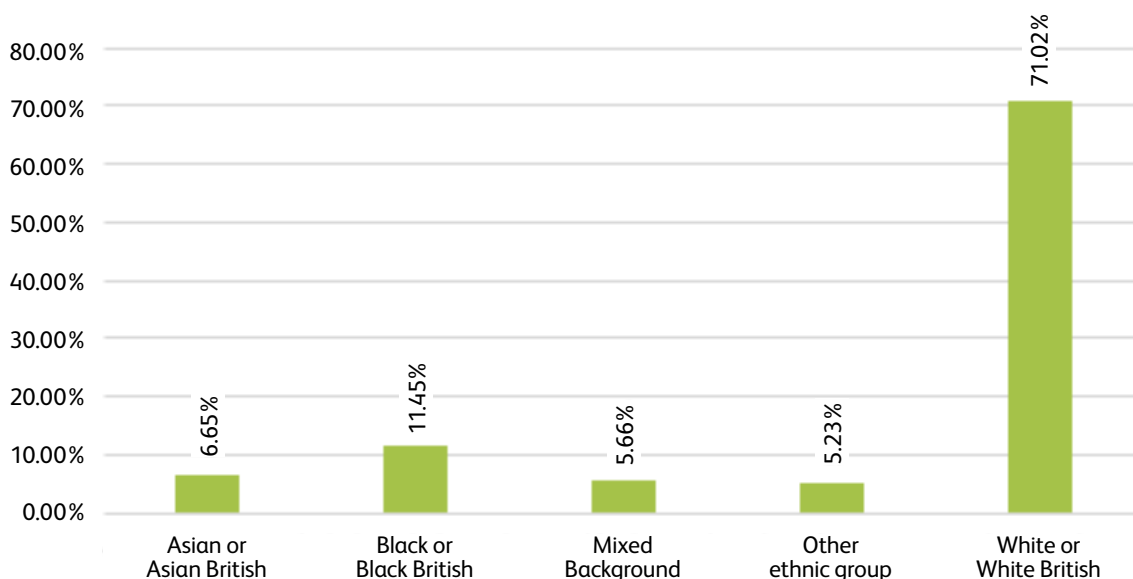
Age

Chart 1:1 **Respondents by age group**
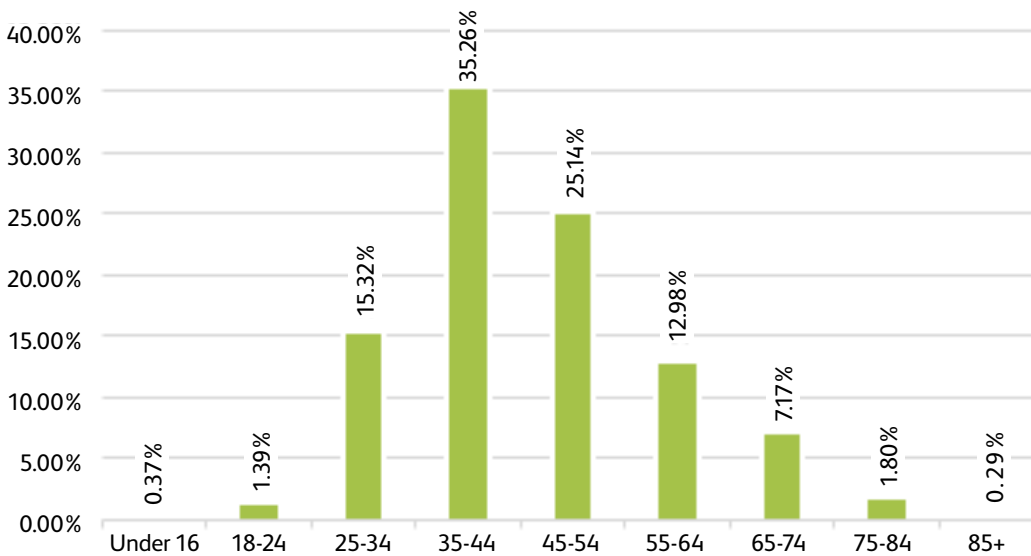
Gender

Chart 1:2 **Respondents by gender**

Ethnicity and Religion

Chart 1:3 **Respondents by ethnicity**

Chart showing respondents by ethnicity:
- Asian or Asian British: 6.65%
- Black or Black British: 11.45%
- Mixed Background: 5.66%
- Other ethnic group: 5.23%
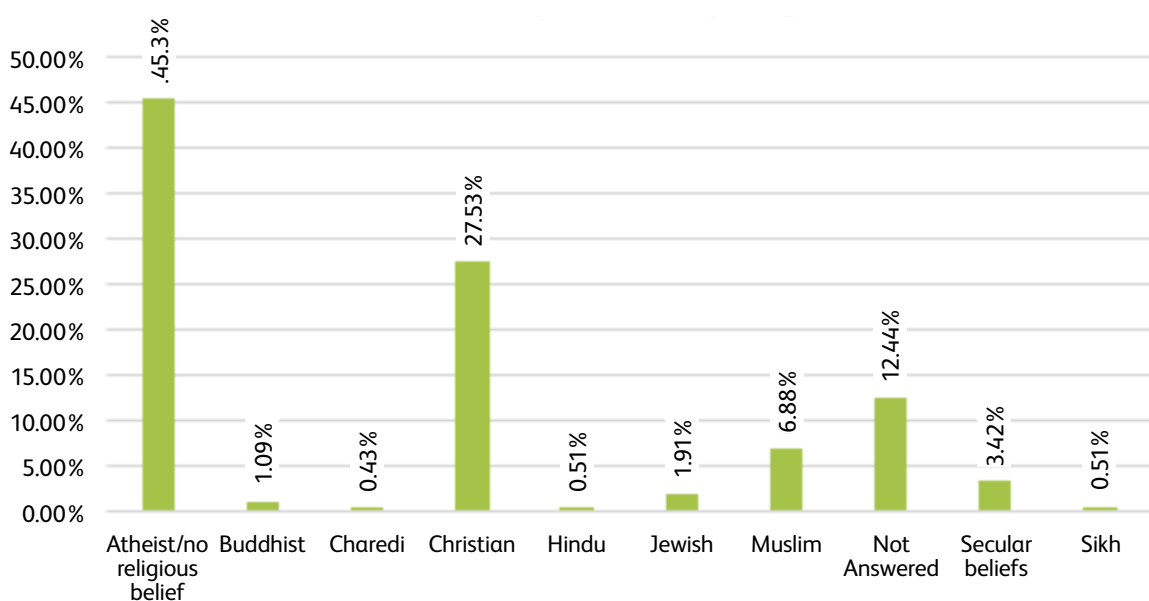- White or White British: 71.02%

Seven out of ten (71%/1644) identified as White or White British compared to the borough profile of 36% of the overall borough population. Due to the over representation of this demographic, the view of White and White British may be overstated in this sample profile.

11% (265) of respondents identified as Black or Black British which is 12% short of the borough's total Black or Black British population of 23%, while 6% (154) of respondents identified as Asian.[2] It should be noted that despite the lower percentage of BME respondents, responses from these groups are reflective of wider trends within the overall data.

Other ethnic groups (5%/121) identified by respondents were Turkish/Turkish Cypriot, Irish, White European, Chinese, and other European.

Chart 1:4 **Respondents by religion**

Chart showing respondents by religion:
- Atheist/no religious belief: 45.3%
- Buddhist: 1.09%
- Charedi: 0.43%
- Christian: 27.53%
- Hindu: 0.51%
- Jewish: 1.91%
- Muslim: 6.88%
- Not Answered: 12.44%
- Secular beliefs: 3.42%
- Sikh: 0.51%

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[2] ONS mid-year population estimated for 2016 Link.

Nearly half (45%/1165) of all respondents to the survey identified as Atheist/no religious belief, followed by the Christian cohort with 27% (708) of respondents which is 10% below the borough profile.

Hackney is home to a number of smalle cultural communities including the Charedi Jewish people who predominately live in the north of the borough and represent an estimated 7.4% of the overall population. A total of 0.4% (11) who responded to the survey were Charedim along with further 2% (49) who identified as Jewish. However, it should be noted that low level of response was due to objections, and a subsequent boycott, from the Charedi community (communicated by the Jewish-Christian Forum of Stamford Hill/Inter Faith Matters) on the basis that the consultation was anti-religious.
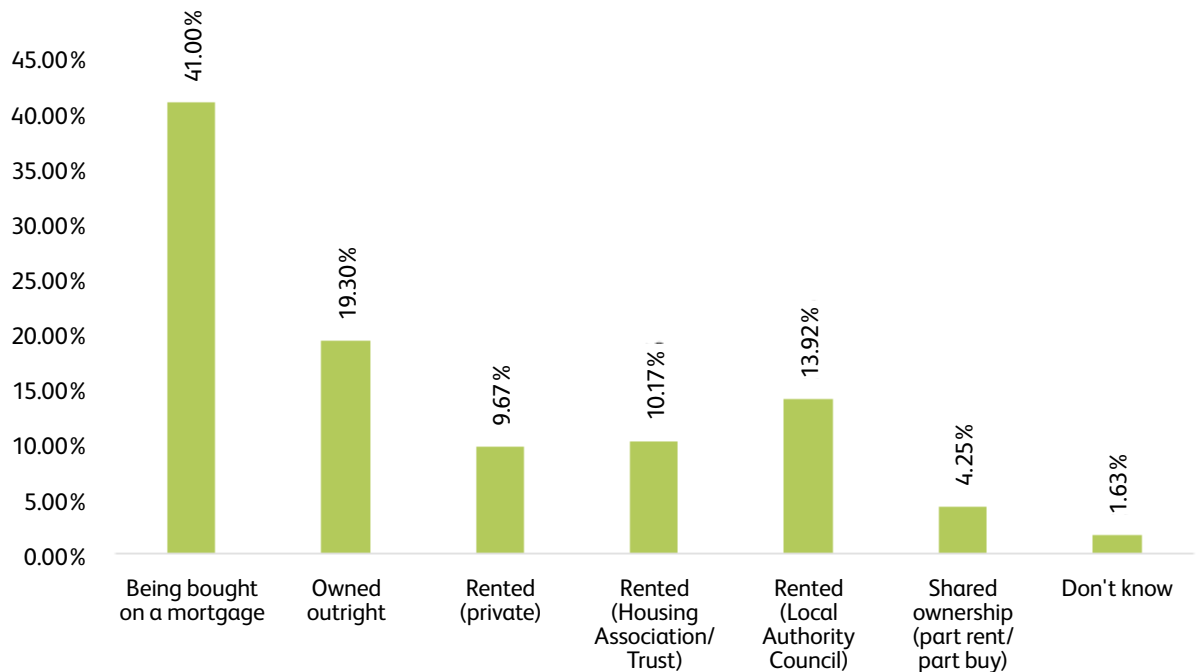
Housing

Chart 1:5 **Respondents by postcode**
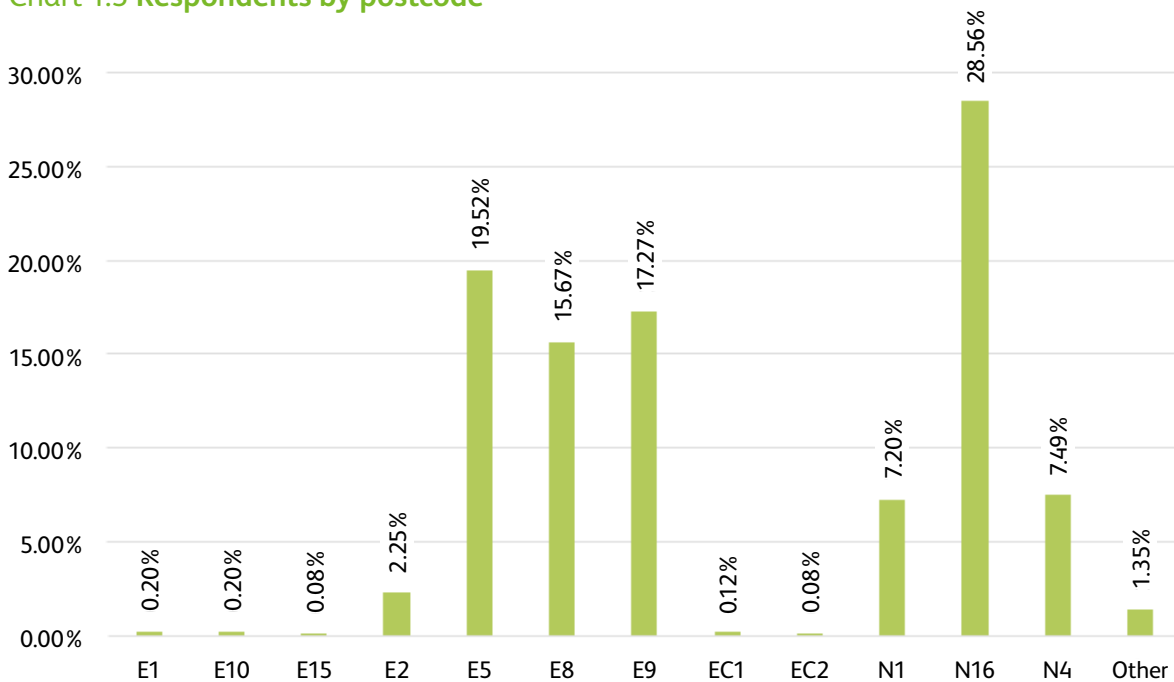
By and large, respondents' postcode areas were distributed across the centre of the borough in Clapton (E5), Dalston/London Fields/Haggerston (E8) and Homerton/Victoria (E9) with a spike in the N16 area.

Housing tenure	Percentage
Being bought on a mortgage	41.00%
Owned outright	19.30%
Rented (private)	9.67%
Rented (Housing Association/Trust)	10.17%
Rented (Local Authority Council)	13.92%
Shared ownership (part rent/part buy)	4.25%
Don't know	1.63%

Mortgaged properties or those who owned their properties outright made up more than half of the respondents at 60% (1448), with council or housing association properties constituting 23% of all responses, 10% behind the overall borough profile.

Where the demographic representation did not fit the borough profile, the project team sought to increase engagement by organising focus groups and attending various community events as outline above and in Section 6.

Current Provision

In this section of the survey, respondents were asked to provide graded score ratings on the improvements to the educational offer within the borough. This was focused on the current, primary level and secondary level provision, and whether education in general had improved or declined in recent years. This section of the survey also offered respondents the opportunity to provide comments to support their rating choices.

How would you rate current education in Hackney overall?

Chart 2:1 **Q.1 - How would you rate current education in Hackney overall?**
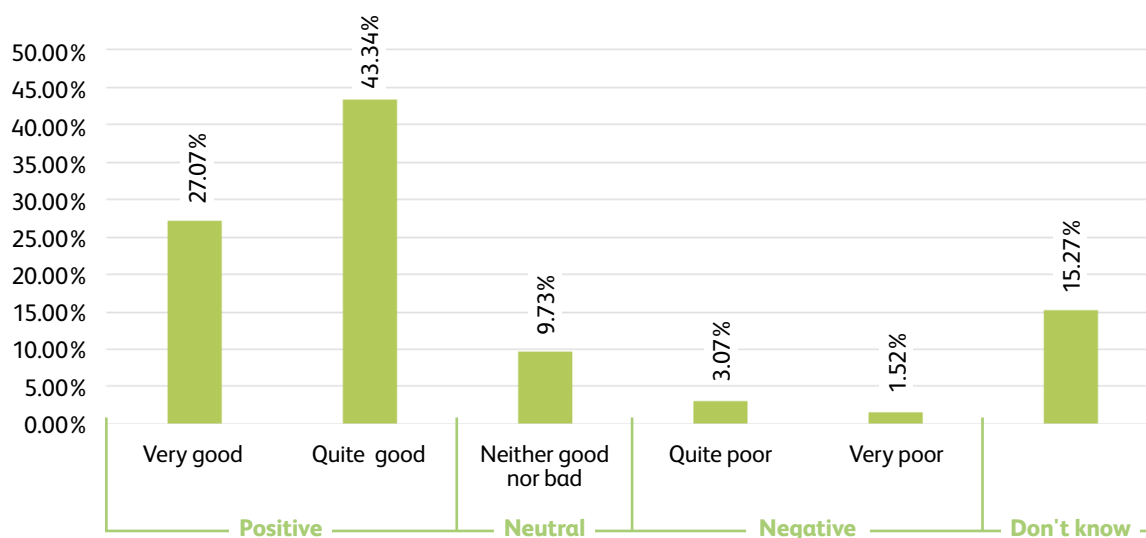
When asked to rate education overall in the Borough 70% (1766) of respondents rated the current offer positively with 43% (1087) responding *very good* and 27% (679) *responding 'good'*.
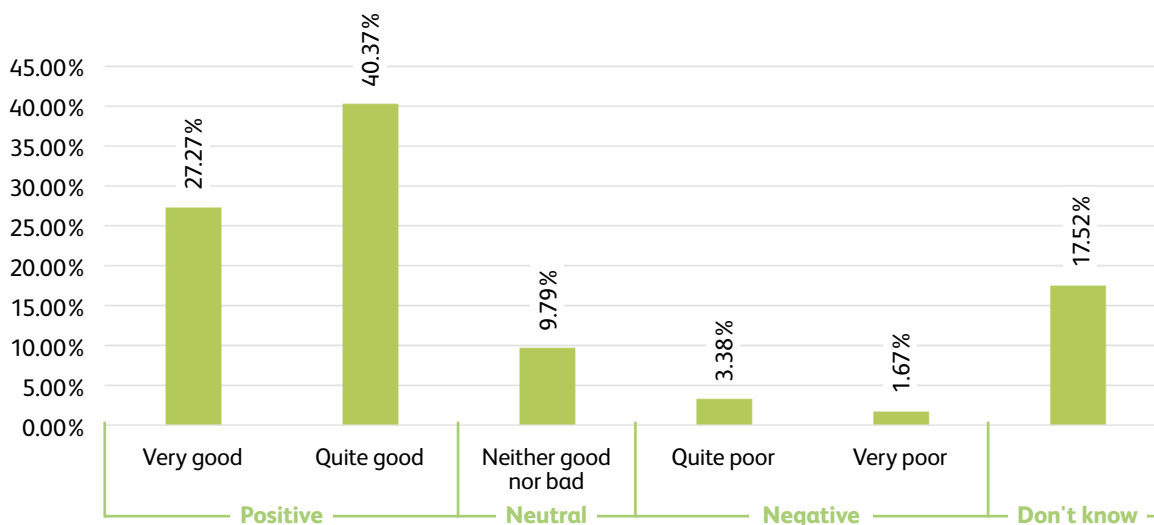
By and large, parents with children currently in or who have recently been in education, i.e. 5 to 17 years old, emerged as the largest cohort to provide positive responses (1108) to this question.

The second largest group identified in the data were the *'don't know'* category, representing 15% (383) of respondents. Analysis indicates that this group has limited current experiences in education and were unable to provide a positive or negative view. Although 'don't knows' represents a relatively small dataset, this trend is noteworthy as it is replicated across all the questions within the Current Provision section of the report.

Those who rated education in the borough negatively formed a small fraction of respondents with only 4% (115) marking it as *'quite poor'* and *'very poor'*. However, it is important to note that, on the whole, this cohort responded negatively to this section of the survey. Where possible, a correlation between these individuals based on demographics, housing tenure types etc., was sought to analyse group responses but there does not appear to be a relationship that binds this cohort into an explicable group other than assumptions of personal experiences.

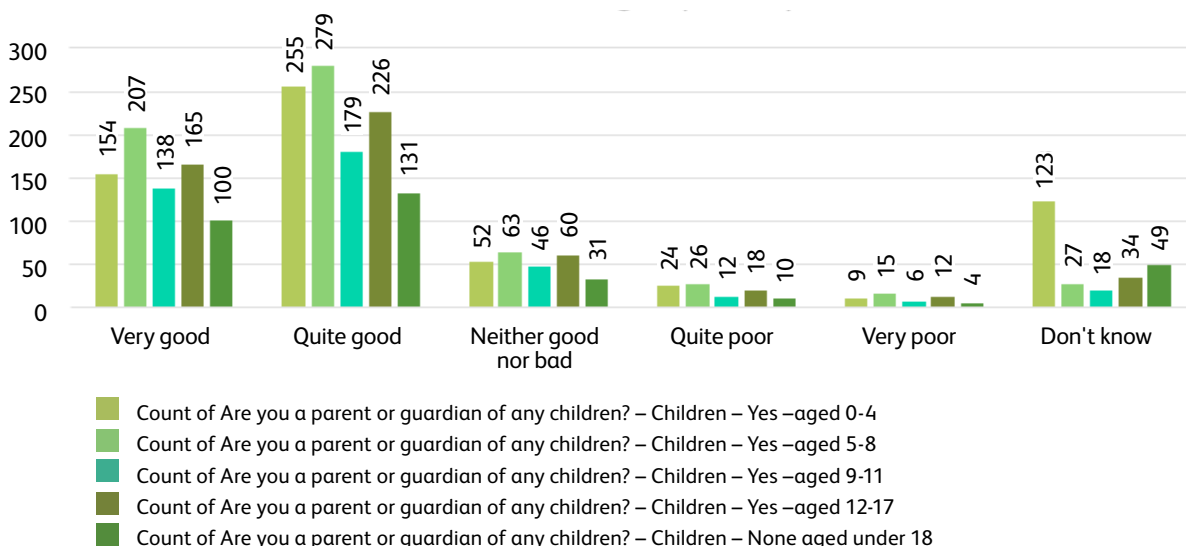# How would you rate primary education in Hackney?

Chart 2:1 Q.2 - How would you rate current education in Hackney overall?

Nearly two thirds (1699) of respondents provided positive feedback on primary education with *'quite good'* pooling the most responses at 40% (1014) followed by *'very good'* at 27% (685).

Parents with children currently in education are the main group to provide positive responses to this question. Over two thirds of respondents (486) with children between the ages of 5-8 responded positively with 57% (279) responding *'quite good'* and 42% (207) with *'very good'*. Similarly, 56% (179) of parent respondents with children aged 9-11 responded *'quite good'* and 43% (138) responding with *'very good'*.

Chart 2:3 Parental rating of primary education

Count of Are you a parent or guardian of any children? – Children – Yes –aged 0-4
Count of Are you a parent or guardian of any children? – Children – Yes –aged 5-8
Count of Are you a parent or guardian of any children? – Children – Yes –aged 9-11
Count of Are you a parent or guardian of any children? – Children – Yes –aged 12-17
Count of Are you a parent or guardian of any children? – Children – None aged under 18

Despite this positive picture, a narrative from the qualitative responses emerged which identified a lack of improvement at the primary level within the borough. Specifically, there was a recognition among respondents that progress that had been made generally, and especially at the secondary level, but improvements had not happened at a primary level.

"Secondary schools have really improved but the experience with primary has been very different. They have struggled a bit more.''

– Resident, E9

"Secondary school education has improved massively in the past ten years, but the quality of primary school education is still rather hit and miss. My son had particularly poor teaching in Y2 and Y3 at primary school due to having two consecutive teachers who were incredibly poor at maths."

– Resident, E5

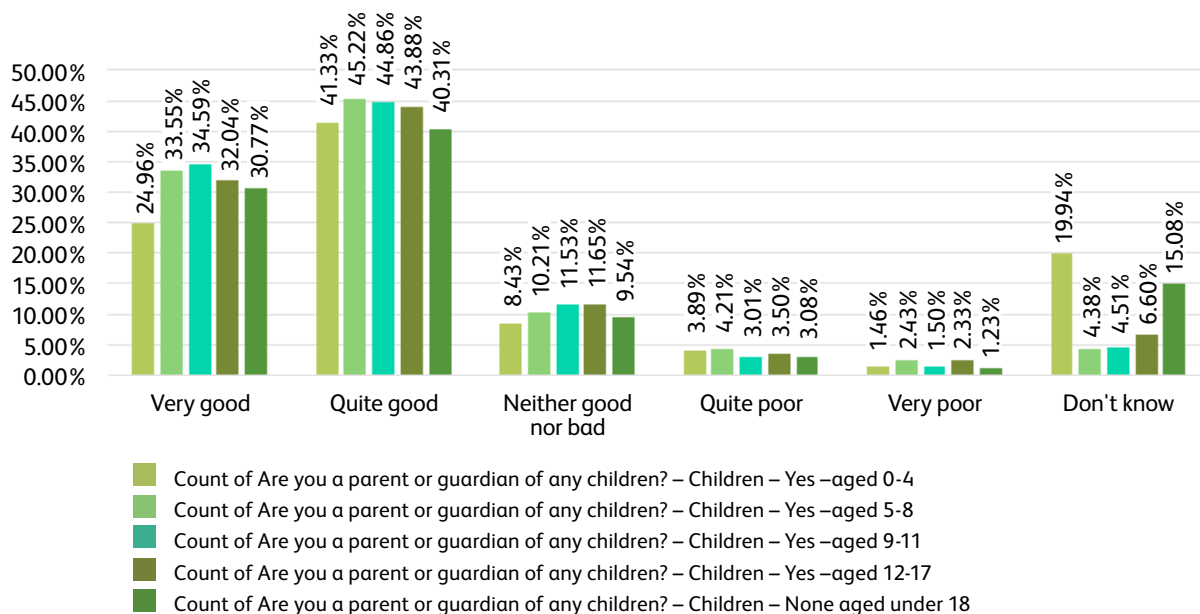## How would you rate secondary education in Hackney?

Chart 2:4 Q.3 - How would you rate secondary school education in Hackney?
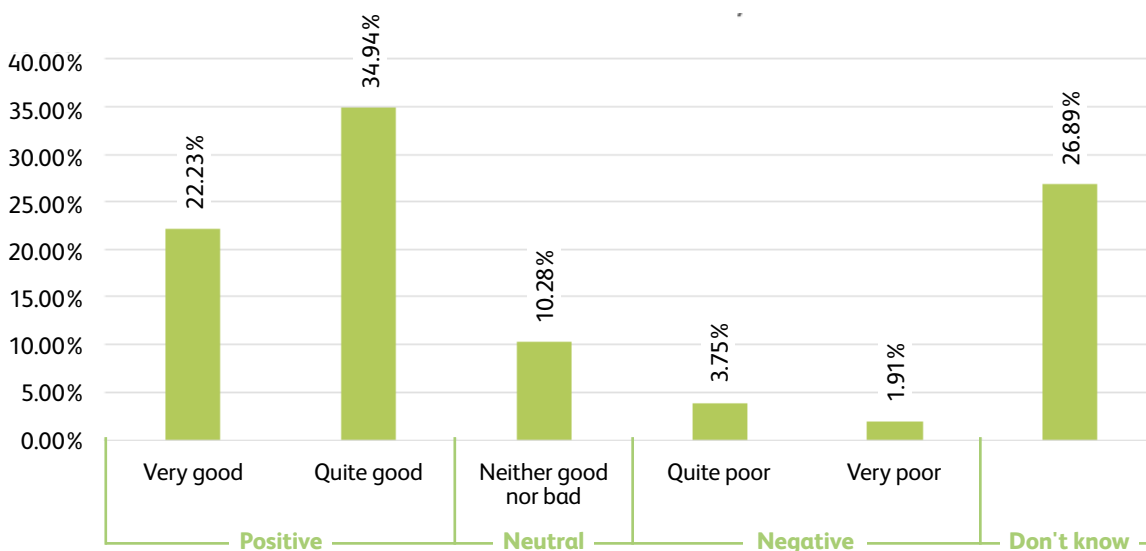
57% (1465) of respondents were positive towards secondary education in the borough with 22% (558) responding with a *'very good'* rating and 34% (877) indicating it was *'quite good'*.

Second to this is the *'don't know'* category with 26% (675) although analysis of this group indicates they are parents of children at primary age, or do not have children. To provide further context to this, we crossed analysed datasets and, proportionally, parents of with children between 12-17 years old, i.e. those in secondary education, offered a more positive picture with 35% (185) rating *'very good'* and 45% (233) as *'quite good'*. The response data indicates that a number of parents who no longer have children at later key stages also hold largely positive views.

Chart 2:5 **Parental rating of secondary education**

Legend:
- Count of Are you a parent or guardian of any children? – Children – Yes –aged 0-4
- Count of Are you a parent or guardian of any children? – Children – Yes –aged 5-8
- Count of Are you a parent or guardian of any children? – Children – Yes –aged 9-11
- Count of Are you a parent or guardian of any children? – Children – Yes –aged 12-17
- Count of Are you a parent or guardian of any children? – Children – None aged under 18

Data values:

Rating	0-4	5-8	9-11	12-17	None under 18
Very good	24.96%	33.55%	34.59%	32.04%	30.77%
Quite good	41.33%	45.22%	44.86%	43.88%	40.31%
Neither good nor bad	8.43%	10.21%	11.53%	11.65%	9.54%
Quite poor	3.89%	4.21%	3.01%	3.50%	3.08%
Very poor	1.46%	2.43%	1.50%	2.33%	1.23%
Don't know	19.94%	4.38%	4.51%	6.60%	15.08%

Following the trend set out in response to Question 1 *(How would you rate education overall in the borough?),* qualitative data on perceptions of secondary education provided a varied and more nuanced picture of respondents' opinions. Respondents largely gave positive feedback on their experiences and improvements to education, however, there is a negative slanted trend towards academies and their approach to teaching, with many considering it as 'process driven' and focused solely on results.

This trend is touched on later, but comments provided by respondents shed light on general concerns over the uneven way in which academisation takes place, schools settings' approach to taught subjects and admission processes.

> *"A lot of progress have been made through the academy programme. Hackney Learning Trust does not have a great track record in turning schools around in helping outstanding schools to support others!"*
>
> – Resident, E8

> *"Although education has improved dramatically over the last decade (and longer), I am concerned about the variability in standards. My children have attended several primary and secondary schools and the difference between them is striking."*
>
> – Resident, E5

To what extent do you feel that education overall in the borough has improved or declined?
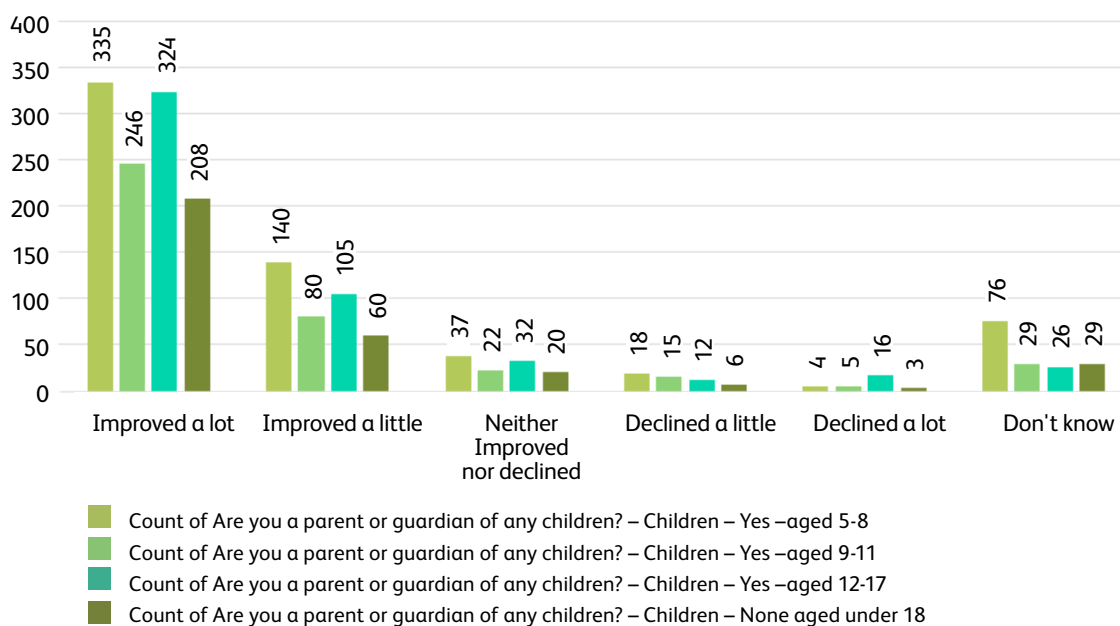
Chart 2:6 **Q.4 - To what extent do you feel that education overall in the borough has improved or declined?**
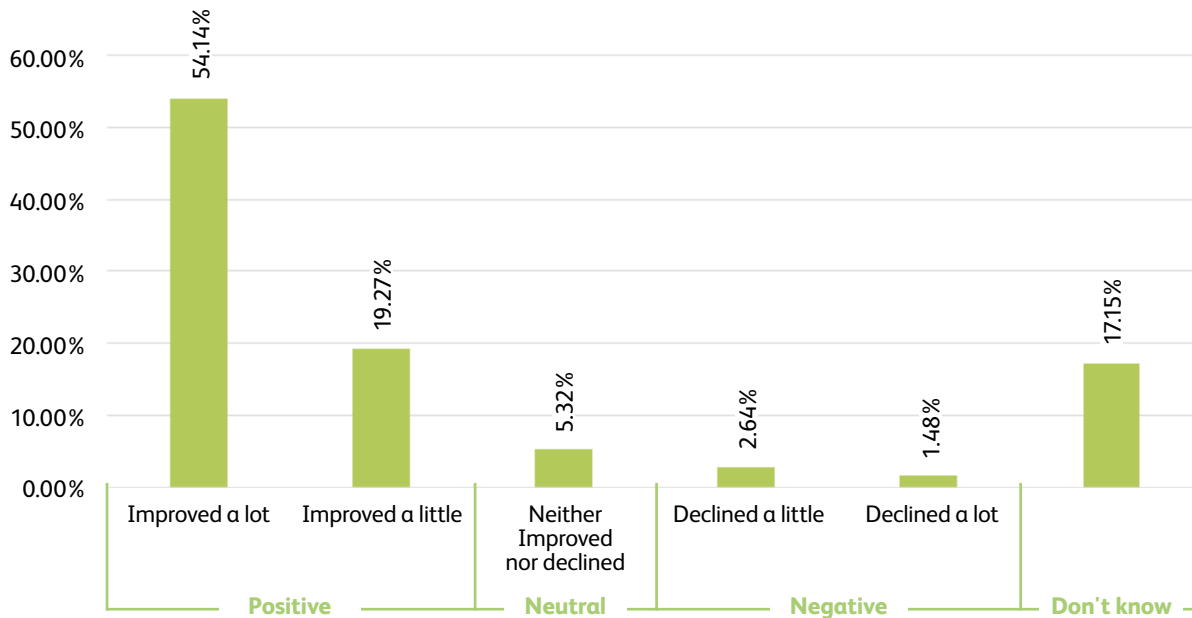
73% (1836) of respondents provided a positive picture of the overall educational offer in the borough with 54% (1354) stating it had *'improved a lot'* and 19% (482) *'improved a little',* compared to the negative statements at only 3% (103) of the total responses.

Importantly, 77% (475) of respondents with children aged 5-8, 81% (326) of those with children aged 9-11, 82% (429) of those with children age 12-17, and 81% (268) those with no children under 18 parents reported education across all key stages had improved either a lot or a little.

Chart 2:5 **Parental rating of secondary education**

Legend:
- Count of Are you a parent or guardian of any children? – Children – Yes –aged 5-8
- Count of Are you a parent or guardian of any children? – Children – Yes –aged 9-11
- Count of Are you a parent or guardian of any children? – Children – Yes –aged 12-17
- Count of Are you a parent or guardian of any children? – Children – None aged under 18

Chart values by category:

	Improved a lot	Improved a little	Neither Improved nor declined	Declined a little	Declined a lot	Don't know
aged 5-8	335	140	37	18	4	76
aged 9-11	246	80	22	15	5	29
aged 12-17	324	105	32	12	16	26
None under 18	208	60	20	6	3	29

17% (429) of respondents marked *'don't know'*. The extent to which education has improved or declined can be explored through analysing comments (932) which provide more context and background to the statistical data.

Many respondents recognise and identify positively how funding and extra provisions, including Hackney Learning Trust's (HLT) role, has helped improve education in the borough, but, as touched on earlier, there is concern about what population changes mean for existing communities, with a perception that people on lower incomes could be excluded if there is a shift in education policy towards more selective models.

Respondents suggested that Hackney schools are diverse with comparatively low segregation between pupils from different backgrounds and this was something to be safeguarded by the local authority. From this emerged a narrative about respondents' fears that children could be left behind, fuelled in part, by concerns over demographic changes to the borough. What appears to underlie this is general concern that academies could, in future, seek to alter or manipulate the admissions policy to benefit those with better academic results in what is termed by respondents as 'backdoor selection'.

Criticisms appearing in the qualitative data were also focused on the academy system's approach to teaching and what a number of respondents have called 'authoritarian' teaching methods. Respondents identified the arts as a subject under threat from cuts or as a result of greater focus on academic subjects. Specifically, comments focused schools chasing results to the detriment of other areas of student development.

"I was educated in Hackney and I now have a child who attends primary school. I have seen a massive change in the quality of teaching over the years. As a primary school teacher myself, I can see the amount of money and effort that has gone into improving schools in Hackney, especially when compared to boroughs such as Haringey, who have not received as much funding and support."

– Resident, N26

"Don't have children in schools, so can't comment on primary/ secondary school performance, but overall perception of borough is that there have been major improvements in the past decade with positive results. Interested and looking forward to the continued improvement of education services."

– Resident, E8

"Hackney now has a good range of primary and secondary schools providing a high quality of education for many children. There is now a good chance of getting a place in a school close to the child's home. This contrasts with the situation a number of years ago where there was a severe shortage of good school places and many children had to travel to schools in neighbouring boroughs or further afield."

– Resident, N16

Challenges in the Borough

In this section we asked respondents to give their feedback on the key educational challenges for the borough which reflect a number of the proposed changes to the national education policy agenda.

On a sliding scale, respondents identified *('very concerned and 'quite concerned')* the lack of schools places due to rapid population growth as the top 'challenge' for the borough at 80% followed by forced academisation at 73%, selection based academic results i.e. grammar schools at 68% and unregistered schools at 65%.

Lack of school places due to rapid population growth

Chart 3:1 **Challenges - Lack of school places due to rapid population growth**
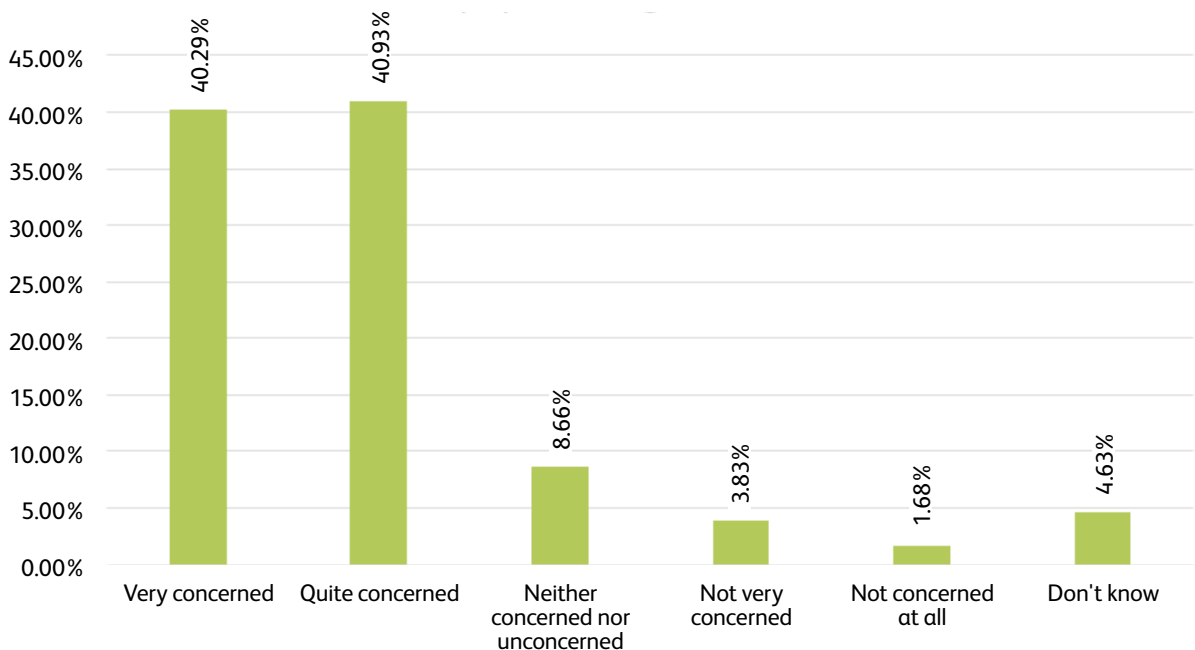
80% (2036) of respondents were concerned with lack of school places as a result of rapid population growth. By far this was the most prominent issue with 83% (1170) considering it the role of the local authority to deal with this by providing more places for local students.

This theme is expressed in varying tones in respondents' comments in relation to increased development in the borough and the need to deliver the social infrastructure i.e. schools to support this.

"More schools need to be built. We have a huge development going on Woodberry Down there should have been a school added not just expect the two local primary schools are needed. Hackney is adding all this housing but no schools to go with it."

– Resident, N16

> *"Hackney desperately needs more primary and secondary schools. I am aware of a school that was promised more help if they took on an extra class of reception children a few years ago. This is not how it should be. The children are the future of this country, therefore educational cannot be compromised. We need more schools."*
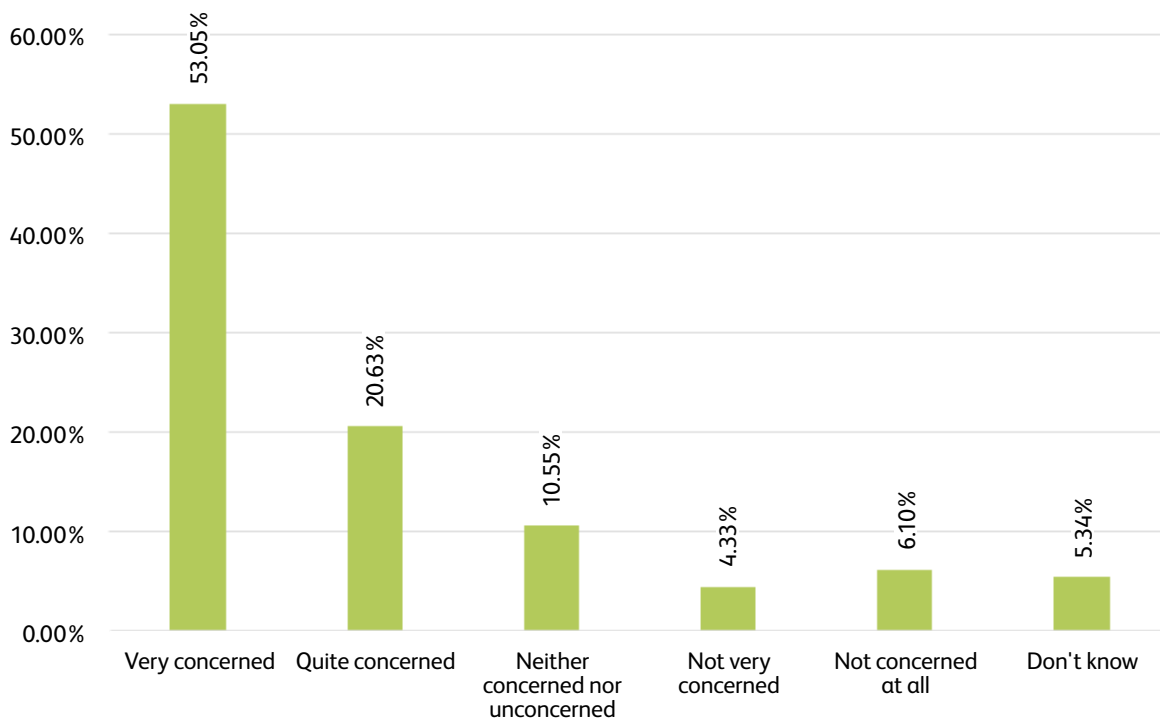>
> *– Resident, E8*

Similarly, comment responses on the challenge of population growth highlight respondents' concerns in relation to how the influx of more affluent residents may affect the social ecology of the borough and, in particular, more disadvantage communities.

> *"Despite the improvement in Hackney schools we are concerned about the increasing segregation that is apparent in some schools. To achieve equal opportunity for all the council needs to prevent schools being siphoned off to white privileged middle class communities and genuinely ensure a diverse allocation of school places"*
>
> *– Resident, E5*

Forced Academisation

Chart 3:2 Challenges - Forced Academisation

Response	Percentage
Very concerned	53.05%
Quite concerned	20.63%
Neither concerned nor unconcerned	10.55%
Not very concerned	4.33%
Not concerned at all	6.10%
Don't know	5.34%

The direction of travel for educational provision i.e. academies, comprehensives, free schools appear to be a significant concern for respondents. More than half of respondents (1779) believe that secondary education standards have improved in recent years; however, perceptions towards academy schools are largely negative with 73% of respondents reporting to be either *'very concerned'* (53%/1322) or *'quite concerned'* (20%/514) by forced academisation.

Qualitative data indicates that respondents see the correlation between the academies and better educational attainment as borne out in exam results, but despite this, respondents appear to have negative views of the academy system as a whole. Evidence provided also highlights concerns about the fragmented nature of some of the academies' standards, an unease about the management and investor structures associated with academies and the perceived lack of oversight or involvement by the local authority.

> *"I do not like the academy model, and would prefer schools to be locally accountable. Having said that the new academies in Hackney have been part of a great improvement from a situation with not enough places and poor standards to the current positive arrangements. I am uncomfortable with the increasing power and corporate ethos of academy chains and the risks to children if standard size slip of if the chain struggles as a business. Please let's not go back to the awful, divisive school grammar system."*
>
> – Resident, N16

> *"I am resolutely opposed to forced academisation of schools and also opposed to the introduction of grammar schools in Hackney. All children of all levels of academic ability should have the same high education standards at school not "better schools for brighter kids."*
>
> – Resident, E8

> *"I would like to see a clear and unequivocal commitment from the council to the defence of comprehensive and inclusive state education. While I recognise that the well-funded growth of secondary academies has probably boosted academic achievement in terms of test/exam results, but this has come at a cost to pupils, teachers and support staff."*
>
> –Resident, N16

Schools introducing selection based on academic results (grammar schools)

Chart 3:3 Challenges - Schools introducing selection based on academic results
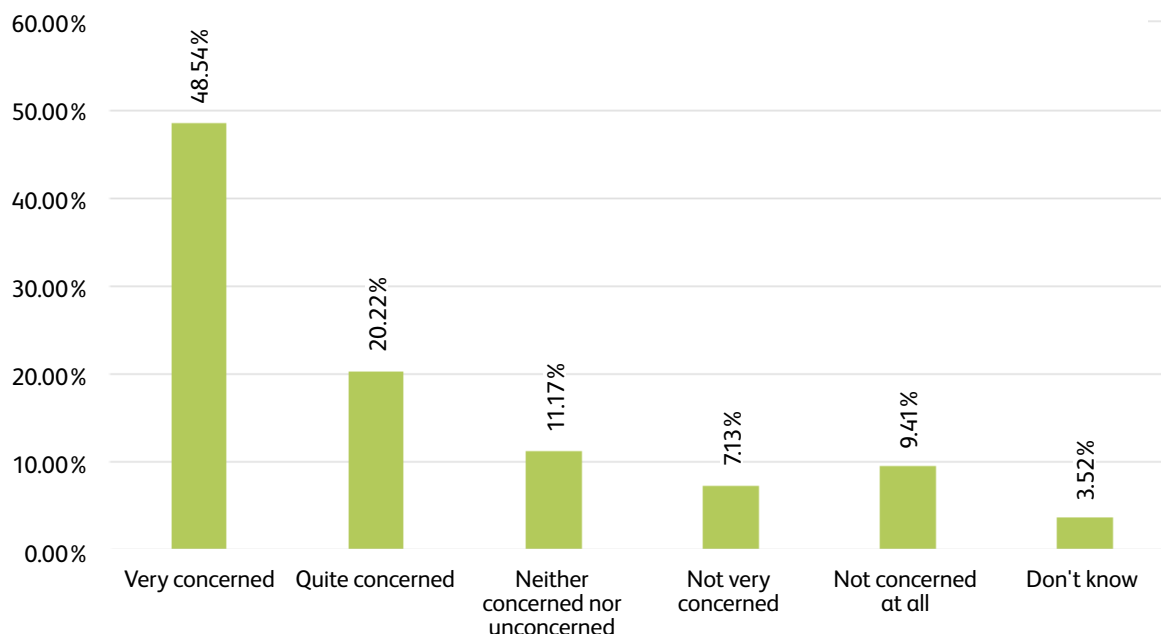
Largely respondents responded negatively to selective education based on academic testing. 68% (1717) were either *'very concerned'* (1212) or *'quite concerned'* (505), with the next largest cohort the *'not very concerned'* and *'not concerned at all'* with 16% (404) of responses followed by *'neither concerned'* nor *'unconcerned'* at 10% (267).

Compared to other challenges identified in the report, just under half (43%) of those who were not concerned by selection were also not concerned with forced academisation. This is a stark difference compared to the 90% of parent groups respondents who were both concerned with selection and forced academisation within the borough.

One clear trend from the survey indicates that parents with younger children, i.e. between 0-11 years old, were broadly against to the idea of selecting students based on academic results, and indicated a preference for the local authority to oversee the schools admission process (72%) as identified in the Council's priorities in this report. Comments from those with children who will enter secondary education within the next 5-10 years, further highlights a nervousness about the impact of selection.

"Strongly disagree with the idea of grammar schools. Disagree with academisation and local education authority should work in partnership e.g. Tower Hamlets and Camden model of education provision. Strongly believe in inclusion - children and young people with special educational needs should be in mainstream schools - there should be continued support for pupils and schools of a strong central team of specialist teachers and other staff."

– Resident, E5

"I don't think the introduction of grammar schools isn't necessarily a bad thing. I think it provides high achieving students with the opportunity to access a broader and better quality curriculum. It allows those from poorer working class backgrounds to have the opportunity to gain access to more life chances through exposure to an education model similar to that of a private educational establishment."

– Resident, E9

Interestingly, the response data indicates concerns over selection are founded on fears of population changes and the effects selection would have on the overall educational offer and community cohesion in the borough.

Respondents' comments also identified that BME communities would be significantly exposed to the negative impacts of selection and could entrench inequalities in a range of areas outside of education.

"Hackney has always been a diverse borough. The gentrification has been positive but the introduction of grammar schools could devastate local communities by creating haves and have nots. Surely education is an equal human right?"

– Resident, E5

"I went to a grammar school and benefited considerably from it in terms of academic achievement. However, I recognize that the Hackney Learning Trust has achieved great things in this borough, and if government policy would upset or destroy the successful ecology they have achieved, then I would strongly support whatever the Trust felt was the best course of action, including keeping schools non-selective."

– Resident, E8

Unregistered schools

Chart 3:5 **Challenges - Unregistered schools**
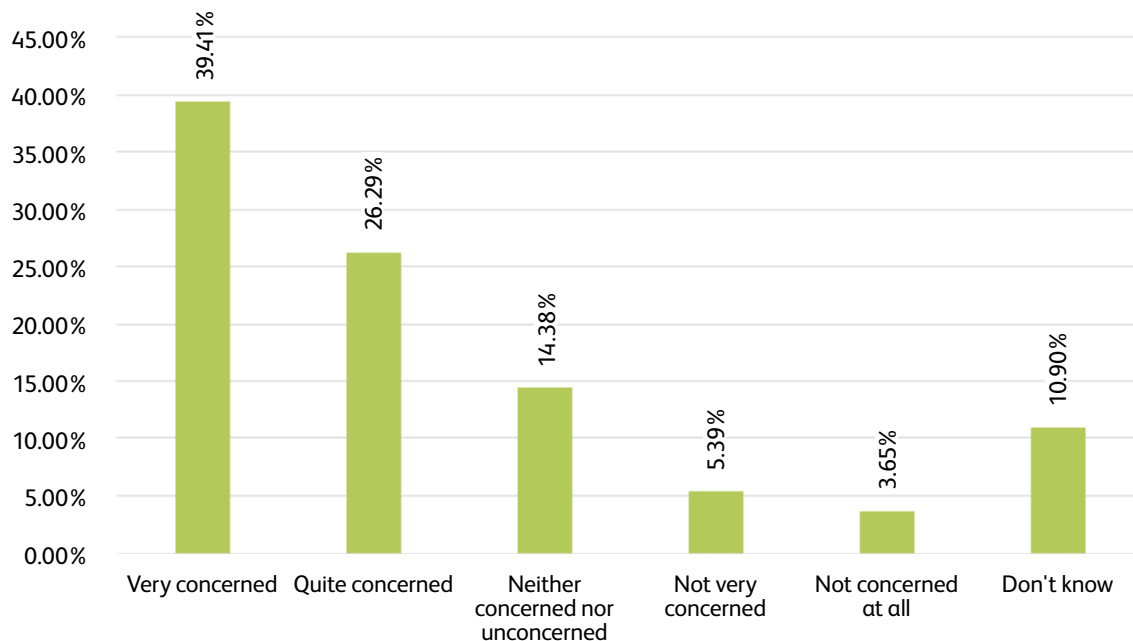
65% of respondents were concerned with the issue of unregistered schools in the borough. 39% of respondents were *'very concerned'* with this issue in the borough with 26% *'quite concerned'*. Primarily, these responses came from the N16 (27%) post code area followed by the E5 (19%) area where this issue has been highlighted both in the media and by the Council as a particular challenge for the local authority.

Much of the commentary from respondents on unregistered schools focuses on opposition to faith schools, aligning educational standards with *'mainstream'* or state education and safety of the children at particular school settings.

"I am concerned about the number of unregistered faith schools in the borough which do not appear to be regulated by local or national bodies; do not provide a broad curriculum and whose buildings are not safe or fit for purpose."
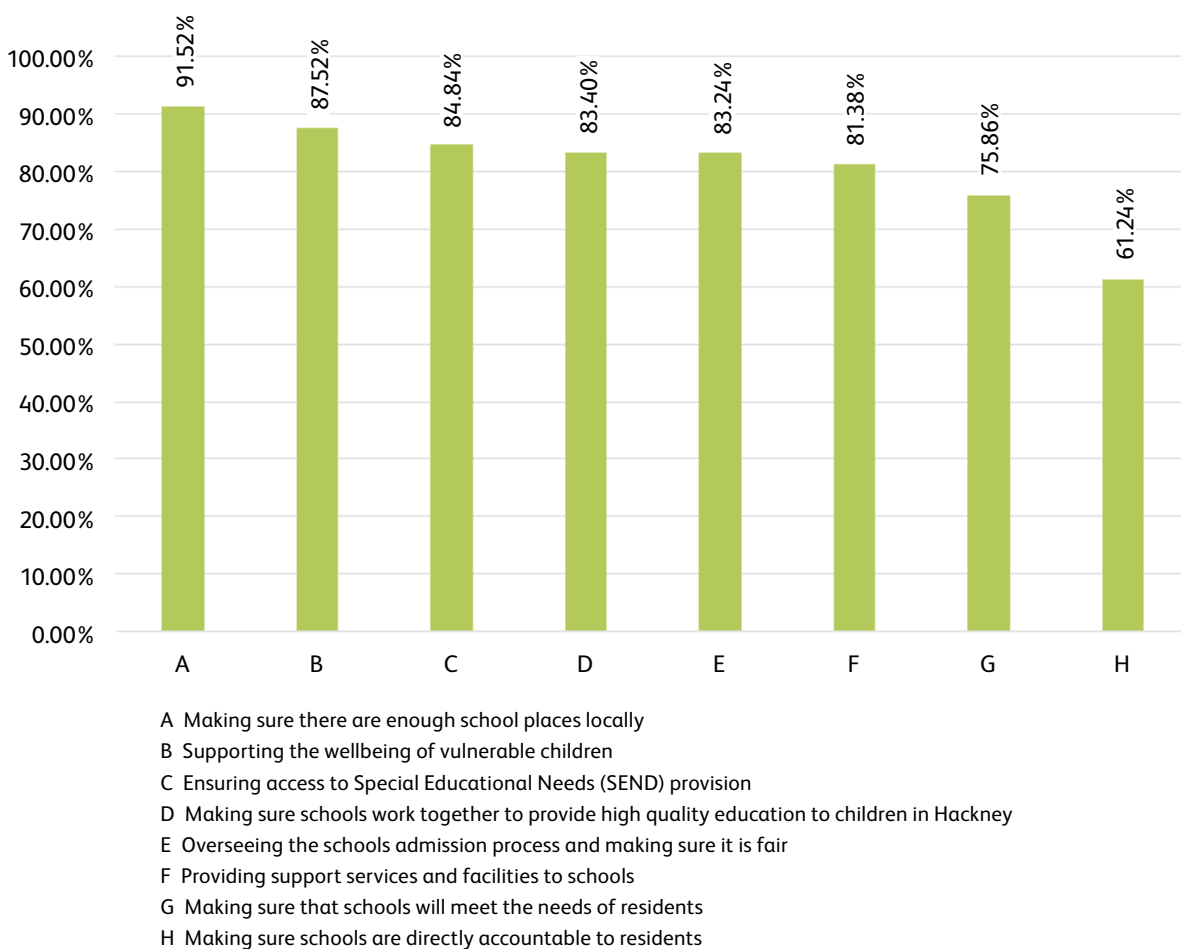
–Resident, E8

Council Role and Priorities

In consideration of the significant pressures facing the Council, respondents were asked for their views on the priorities for schools in the Borough and the role of the Council in Hackney's schools. Analysis in this section indicates support for the Council to take a continued and active role to maintain the current success story of provision in the borough and allow it to plan sufficiently for school places.

When interpreting these findings it should be borne in mind that participants had limited access to the Council's current role and responsibilities.

Roles for Hackney Council

Chart 4:1 **Roles for Hackney Council**

A Making sure there are enough school places locally
B Supporting the wellbeing of vulnerable children
C Ensuring access to Special Educational Needs (SEND) provision
D Making sure schools work together to provide high quality education to children in Hackney
E Overseeing the schools admission process and making sure it is fair
F Providing support services and facilities to schools
G Making sure that schools will meet the needs of residents
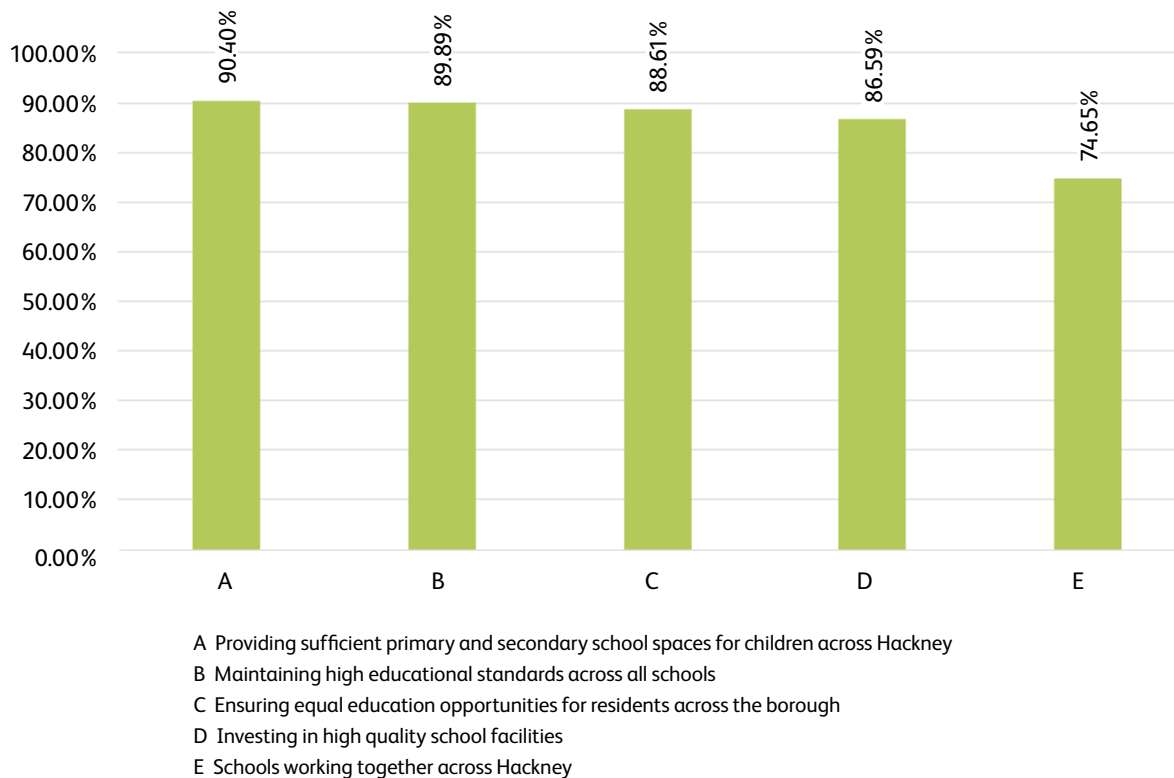H Making sure schools are directly accountable to residents

When asked to rate what role Hackney Council should take in education, respondents consider adequate provision of school places (92%), supporting the wellbeing of vulnerable children (88%), access to SEN provision (85%), ensure schools work together to provide high quality education (83%), and overseeing the schools admission process (83%) as the top five roles for the local authority.

By and large, respondents' opinions on the role of the Council is informed by what they consider to be key issues or challenges for the borough. This includes equality of access, accountability and ensuring that the Council continues to play a role in the provision of education against the back drop of issues such as forced academisation and unregistered schools.

Priorities for Schools in Hackney

Chart 4:2 **Priorities for schools in Hackney**

A Providing sufficient primary and secondary school spaces for children across Hackney

B Maintaining high educational standards across all schools

C Ensuring equal education opportunities for residents across the borough

D Investing in high quality school facilities

E Schools working together across Hackney

Looking at the scale of intensity for the priorities, there are a number of significant correlations between respondents' expectation of the Council's role and identified priorities for schools for the Borough. Largely, school places, equal opportunities and maintaining high standards were identified as *'very important'* priorities for schools in the borough.

Across the data, the strongest indication from respondents is the Council's role and responsibility to provide sufficient spaces for local students. This is evidenced in the *Challenges* section of this report where 80% (2036) of respondents identified the impact of population changes as a key concern. Comparing this to the 84% (1170) of those who believe it is the role of the Council to ensure enough school places locally against those are *concerned* (1170) with the lack of school places, it provides a strong indication that respondents consider this is a key issue for the Council to resolve.

Those concerned with population growth against the Council's role in ensuring school places.

Chart 4:3 Council roles against dealing with increased population growth

Making sure there are enough school places locally

- Very concerned with population growth
- Quite concerned with population growth
- Neutral with population growth
- Not very concerned with population growth
- Not concerned at all with population growth
- Don't know
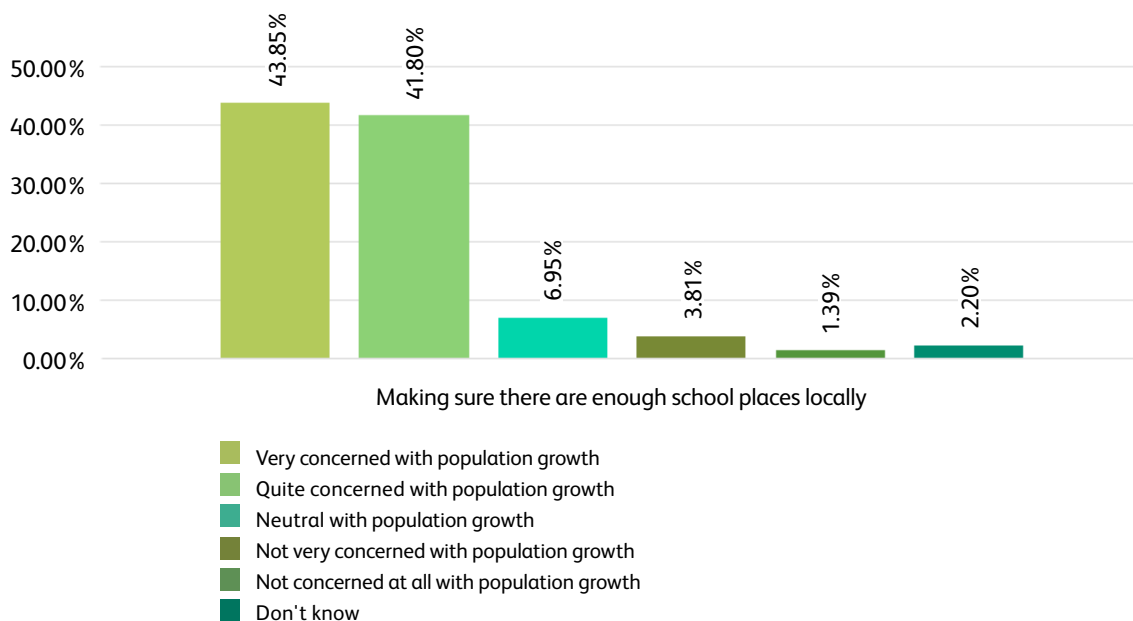
Qualitative data also illustrates respondents' concern that shifts in demographics, coupled with new national policies on education could affect those who are less resilient to change.

> "I am concerned that some primary schools are becoming middle-class only due to high house prices and proximity. I support a diverse intake of pupils across income as well as ethnicity."

> "I think maintaining the diversity of pupils within a school is essential to Hackney's character. This means maintaining the diversity culturally area - economic terms, within our schools. We don't need grammar schools here- it will destroy what works why change?"

Likewise, there was significant support for the borough to continue to protect vulnerable students. 87% (2250) of respondents identified safeguarding the wellbeing of vulnerable children and 83% (2182) identified special educational needs funding as priorities for the Council.

One clear indication from respondents is a desire for the local authority to have a continued and strengthened role in school governance structures including admission processes and ensuring schools work closely together. 74% of the Parents with younger children (0-11) who raised concerns over selective education believed it was the Council's role to oversee the admission process. This evidence is echoed by 96% (2364) of those who were concerned by the introduction of selective testing also believed that it was the role of the Council to ensure there were equal education opportunities for residents across the borough.

Those concerned with introducing selective testing against the Council's role in ensuring equal education opportunities.

Chart 4:4 Council role against concerns with introducing selective testing
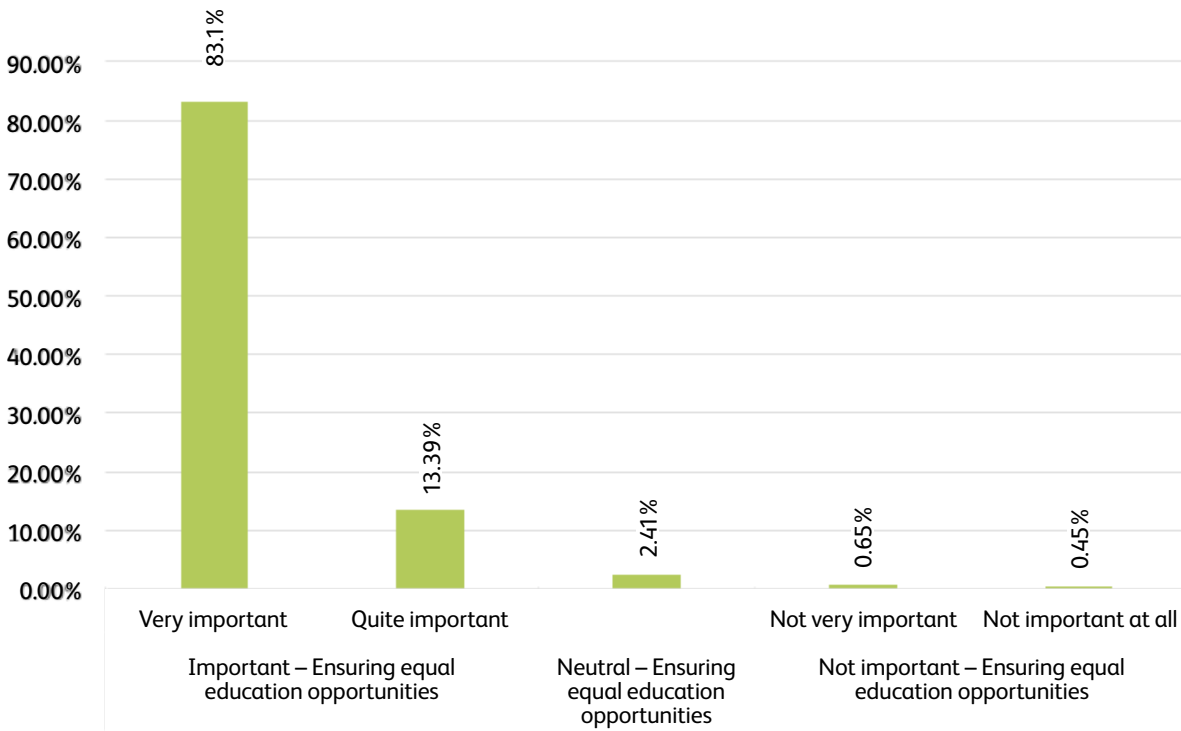
Views on Policy Proposals

The response data, both qualitative and quantitative, collected in this section echoes much of what has been discussed around roles and priorities and provides the Council with a steer on a number of policy issues.

Chart 5:1 **Hackney schools should be non-denominational**
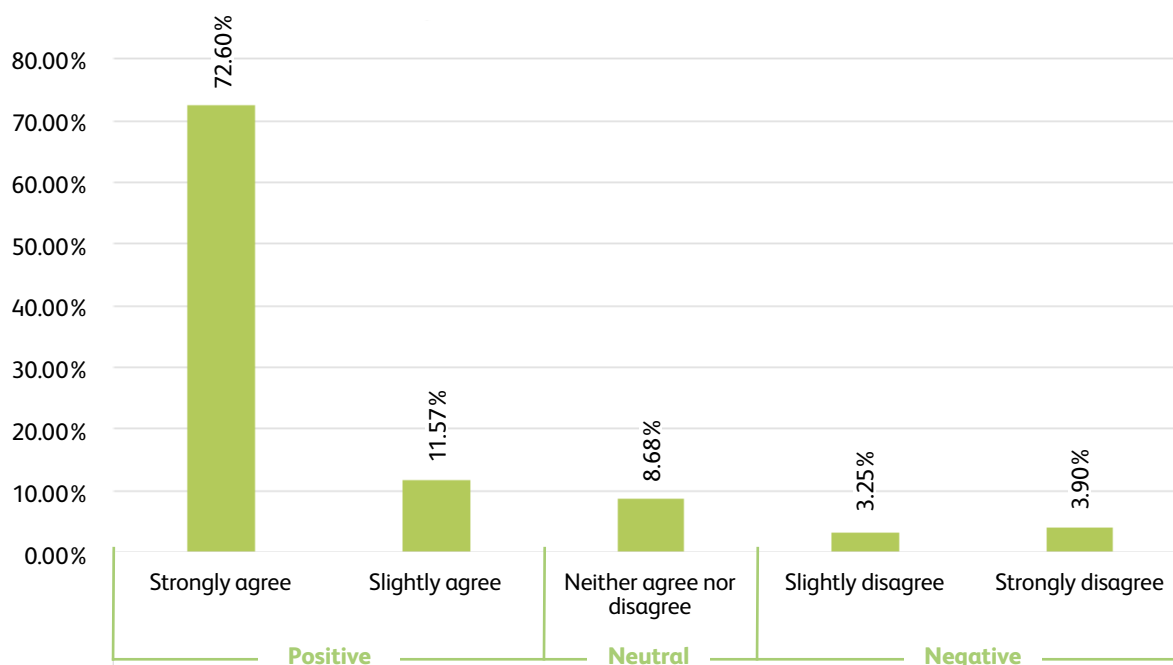
72% (1807) of respondents strongly agree with non-denomination schools proposal and a further 11% (288) slightly agreeing. The next largest group was the *'neither agree nor disagree'* cohort with 8% (216) with the *'slightly disagree'* and the *'strongly disagree'* group collectively pooling 6% (178) which suggests there was significant support for this policy.

Importantly, there does not appear to be any correlation between those who identified as having a faith and not supporting the non-domination approach to education.

Chart 5:2 Hackney schools should be open to all residents without educational achievement restricting entry
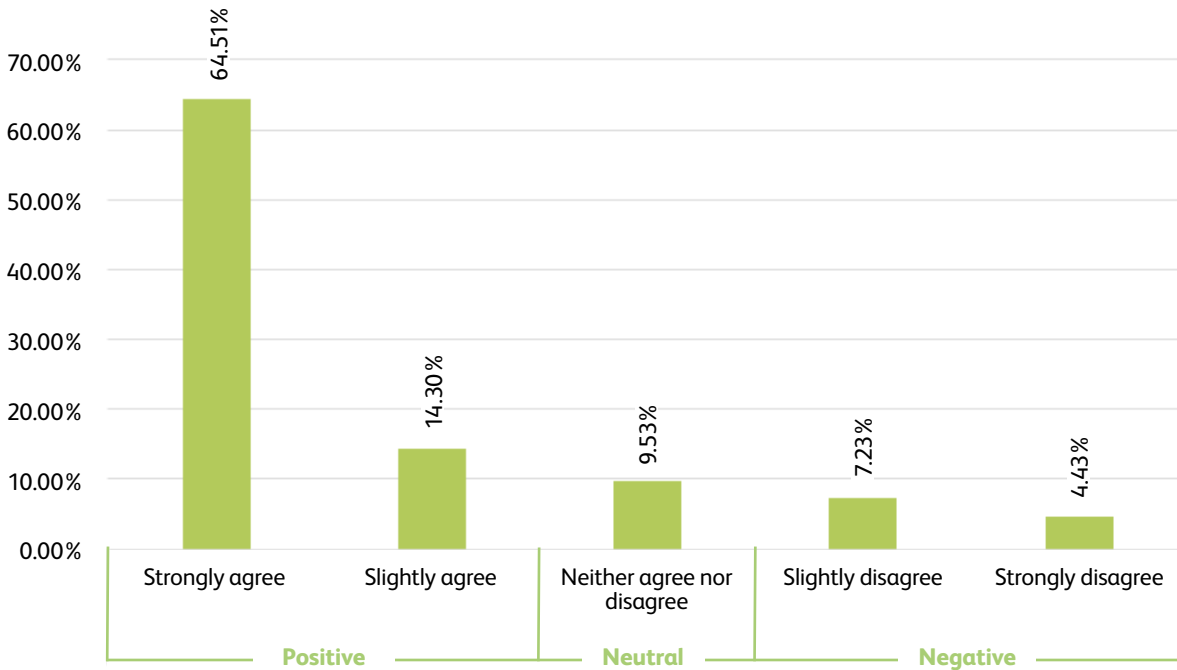
The majority of residents (78%/1953)) either *'slightly agree'* or *'strongly agree'* that Hackney schools should be open to all residents without educational achievement restricting entry. Those who opposed this policy proposal totalled 11% (226) responses.

This underlines evidence from earlier sections of the survey and indicates that academic selection is not a policy model respondents would like the Council to pursue.

Chart 5:3 All school governing boards should include parent governors elected by parents
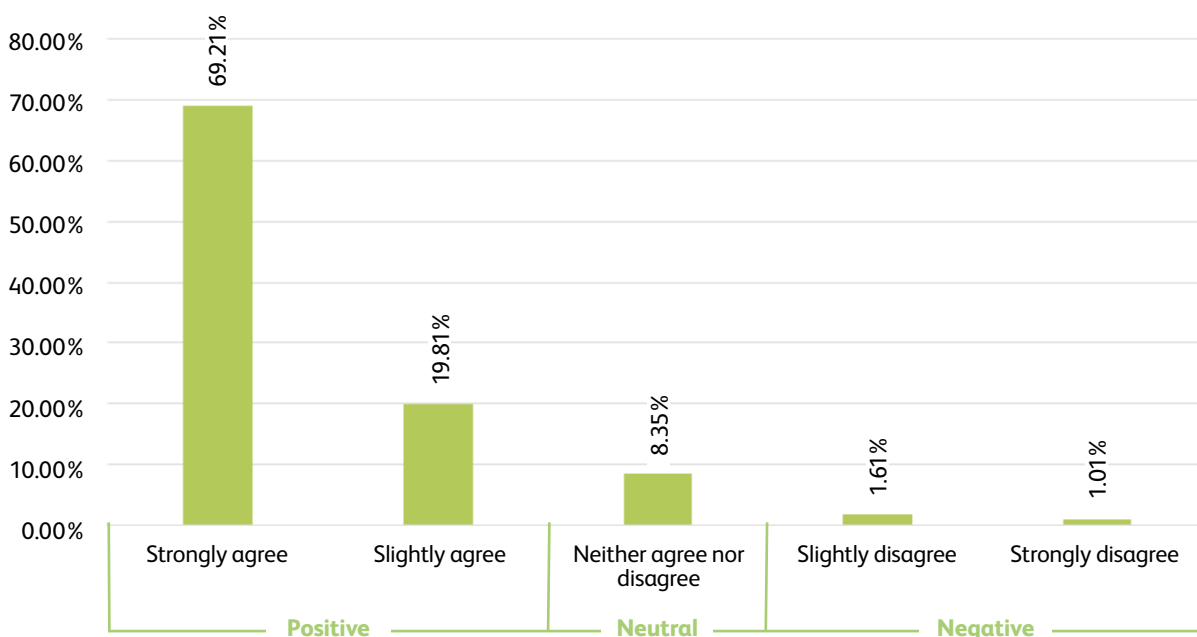
88% (2206) of respondents agreed that school governor boards should include parent governors elected by parents, supported by respondents' concerns outlined earlier that there is not enough control locally over schools. However, when viewed against respondents' views on roles of the council, only 61% supported the *'making sure schools are accountable to local parents'* which presents a less clear picture in support of this proposal.

However, of those respondents who were concerned about forced academisation in the borough, 79% (1162) also indicated that schools should be directly accountable to residents.
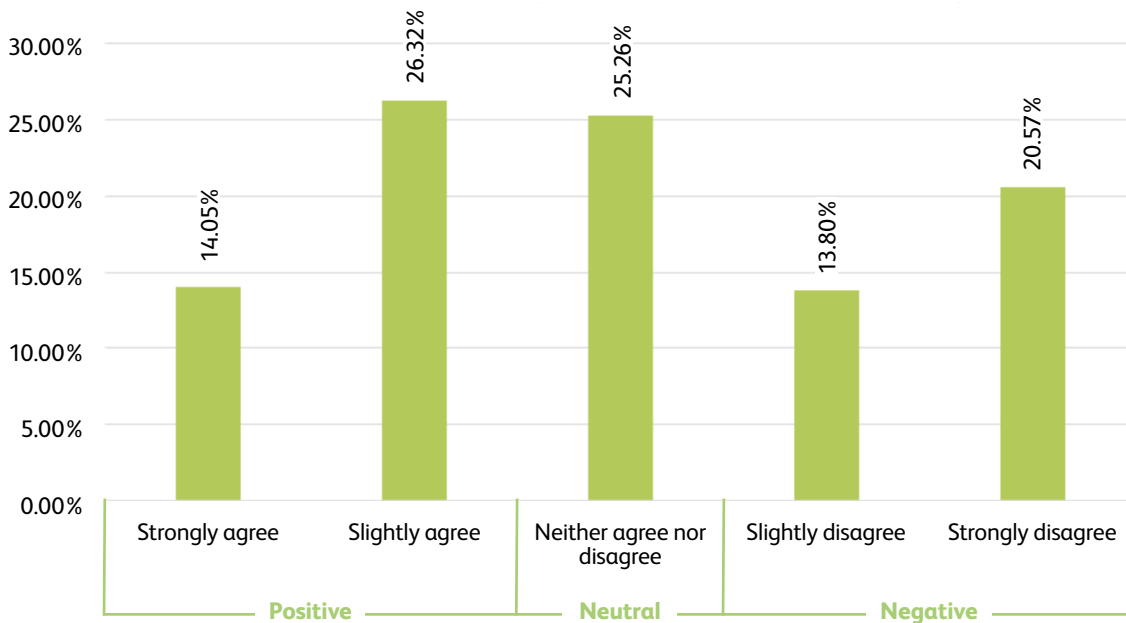
As identified in the Challenges section of the report, 65% (1621) of respondents were concerned with unregistered schools and support for a policy of compulsory registration of home school pupils is 77%, with only 5% against the proposals.

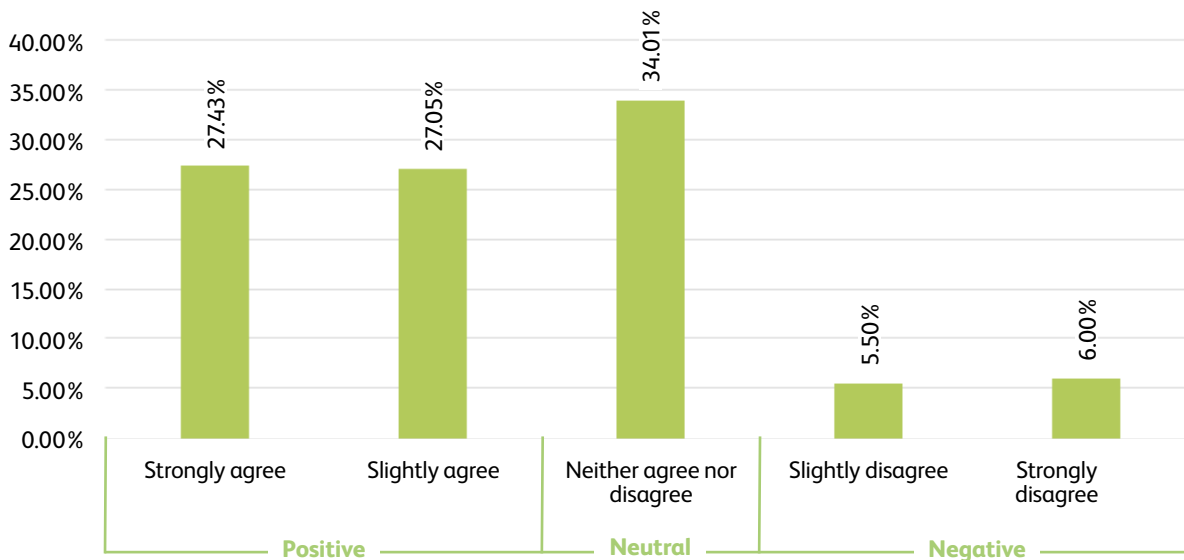Chart 5:4 **There should be compulsory registration of home schooled pupils**
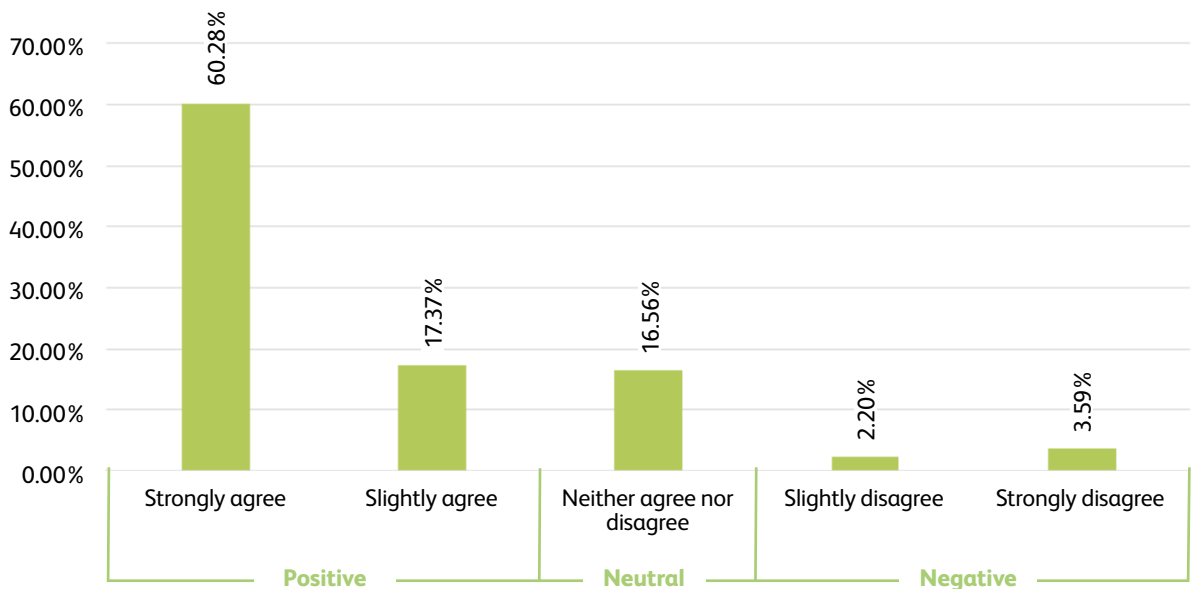
65% (1640) were positive towards mixed gender schools with 31% (797) *'neither agree nor disagree'*. In view of comments made about community cohesion within the borough and ensuring Hackney schools are open to all, this evidence would suggest that respondents are content with the existing policy of mixed schools and would not want to see a move away from this.

Chart 5:5 Hackney schools should be mixed gender

	Positive		Neutral	Negative	
	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree
	14.05%	26.32%	25.26%	13.80%	20.57%

Over 50% (2095) of respondents either *'strongly agreed'* or *'slightly agreed'* that a Schools Trust should be established to safeguard the family of schools (academies) in the borough. This policy is, in part, acknowledged by respondents support for schools to work together across the borough (74%) and would support a similar governing structure, however, 25% of respondents neutral towards this proposal, thus underlining the need to communicate this policy further.

Chart 5:6 A Hackney Schools Trust should be set up between multiple Hackney academy schools

	Positive		Neutral	Negative	
	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree
	27.43%	27.05%	34.01%	5.50%	6.00%

Within this section, the policy with the most varied response was the policy proposal to fund new schools through building and selling new homes.

Chart 5:7 Funding the new schools in Hackney through building and selling private homes
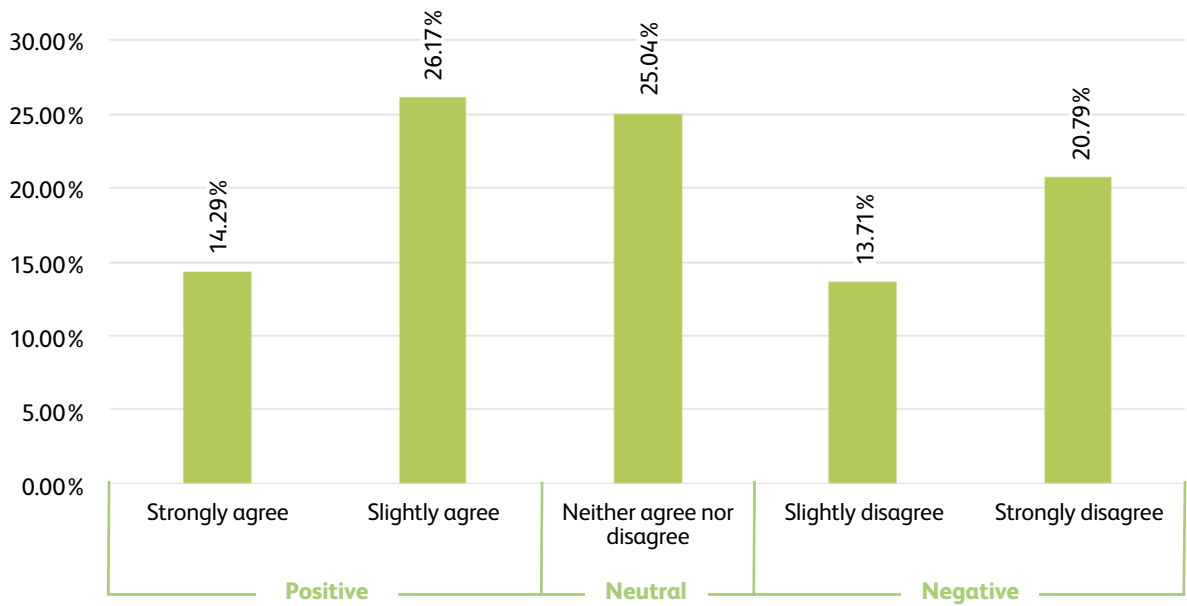
Only 40% (971) responded positively while 25% (601) *'neither agreed nor disagreed'* and 33% (828) responded negatively to this proposal. It is not possible to analyse the meaning of this data beyond the statistical evidence of a split in opinion as little qualitative data was reported on this particular issue. However, it is possible to look at the linkages between the responses of borough wide issues such as population growth as a potential driver of inequality as being a reason respondents do not want to see the sale of private homes funding new schools.

Focus Group Data

In total, eight separate focus groups were held including a deliberative event with members of the Hackney Matters citizen panel, a focus group with stakeholders form the Charedi community, a focus group with parents with hearing impairments, a focus group with parents with children with special educational needs and disabilities, and three focus groups with residents from Local Authority and housing associations housing. As these groups are self-selecting, it should be borne in mind that responses collated within this section of the report are not wholly representative of any individual group.

During the sessions, participants were asked their thoughts on particular issues relating to the survey and moderator(s) allowed residents to discuss points as they arose.

The feedback from the focus groups sessions largely paints a positive picture of education in the borough with most recognising significant improvements at both primary and secondary levels. But behind the data, many are aware of the pressures that the education system is under and the delicate balance that needs to be struck in order to maintain momentum behind the work undertaken by the council and the Hackney Learning Trust.

While each group raised various issues relating to their own experiences and circumstances, there were a number of emerging trends across all the sessions based on the impact of population growth on school places and provision, diversity, attainment and role of the local authority.

Deliberative event with members of the Hackney Matters Citizen Panel 26.01.17

Key Issues

- The importance of Council oversight of Hackney schools has led to concerns about the lack of accountability for academies. In particular, this focused on concerns with the implications of business involvement through multi-academy chains.

- Concern about creating competition between schools in Hackney, rather than working together. Participants were eager to see academies develop closer links with the community they serve.

- Participants were particularly concerned about the number of school places locally both at primary and secondary due to increased population.

- Concern about academies adopting selective admissions policies, focusing on inadvertent selection by income i.e. only those that can afford it can live in a particular catchment area. Similarly, most felt that the introduction of grammar schools would create further division in Hackney, both in regards to income and ability to pass the 11+ test. Participants identified there was a need to improve schools across the board, rather than leaving some schools behind. In particular, participants wanted to strengthen comprehensive education, where the brightest pupils encourage others to succeed.

- The groups recognised there is a lot of support in some schools, however there is a lack of provision in certain areas with a lack of experience and training of teaching staff.

- The importance of parent choice.

Focus group with stakeholders form the Charedi community via Interlink 23.02.17

Key Issues

- Schooling is seen to be paramount to Jewish traditions and religion. The group felt that the Charedi school system is highly aspirational and should be celebrated, but is misunderstood by the Local Authority.

- The Council is viewed with suspicion in its intentions to intervene into Charedi education. Specifically, this focused on unregistered schools and students and mixed sex schools.

- Population increases were a concern for the community, and the Council should work with the Charedi community to help deal with this issue.

- Health and safety and pre-school provision are two areas where the Council and the Charedi community could work together positively.

- Respondents did not feel that Hackney school provision as a whole was of interest to their community. They wished to be engaged in a bespoke way based on specific needs of the community.

- While participants did not consider it relevant to the Charedi community, there was overall consensus on the negativity of selective testing.

Focus group with parents with hearing impairments (Via DeafPlus) 01.03.17

Key Issues

- The significant barriers deaf parents face in communicating with Hackney schools, including the lack of provision for interpreters in schools, the lack of deaf awareness amongst school staff and more general support for parents.

- The challenge for deaf parents accessing information about Hackney schools and understanding the admissions system – both are complicated and nuance so very difficult to understand. The group identified a number of other barriers deaf parents face when supporting hearing children throughout their education (e.g. helping with homework).

- Despite the positive outcomes for children who pass the 11+ test, there was a concern about the pressure tests would put on children at a young age. A preference for on-going assessment to determine ability rather than a one-off test.

- The delegated welcomed the positive impact academisation has had on Hackney schools which has resulted in consistently strong academic results. However, there was a concern about making changes to the current system, which is currently working – particularly more Council involvement which could have a negative effect.

Focus group with parents with special educational needs and disabilities children 22.03.17

Key Issues

- There are a number of good Special Educational Needs Coordinators in the borough (SENCO) however there is high turnover causing discontinuity of the service.

- There should be greater consultation with parents prior to their children starting school. Recommendation of a specialist parents forum feeding into the borough wide Hackney Independent Forum for Parents (HIP)

- Accountability to the Council and lack of transparency of academy system is key concern. Hackney Council should have the final word as the regulator and schools should be more accountability to the Council. SEND Information, Advice and Guidance Service (SENDIAG) should also be involved in the management of schools.

- There is disadvantage and bias towards SEND children and their academic potential. Selection would exacerbate this issue and force the service into retreat.

Focus groups with tenants from Local Authority and housing associations.
30.05.17-01.06.17

Key Issues

- Concerns over population growth and the popularity of Hackney schools and the number of problems that arise from this.

- A number of participants in the groups feared that there may be a shift in the equality and quality of education, fuelled in part by demographic changes to the borough.

- Participants identified the process of gentrification, perceived or real, as major factor in pressure on education. While attracting new residents to the borough was beneficial this puts pressure on established communities.

- Participants at the focus groups identified the strength of the education at a secondary level comes from the demographic diversity in the borough. Many considered it should be a priority for the council to ensure this diversity continues to help combat cohesion challenges, including intergenerational tensions between young people and adults, and so-called 'postcode' divisions.

- There was concern that back-door selection was already taking place within the academy system and that any moves to further select students based on academic results would undo the achievements of the past decade of investment in schools and educational system.

- There was a noted concern that funding at a primary level. Many teachers and schools were struggling to adequately support students. This point was illustrated by comments about perceived under achievement at an early years and primary level and were considered concerns on the implications this would have on future attainment.

have **your** say

⊢⊣ **Hackney**