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## **OPINIONS OF THE IRISH PUBLIC ON THE GOALS OF PRIMARY EDUCATION**

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In a survey of a representative sample of the Irish adult (aged 15+ years) population (n:1,511), respondents were asked in interview their opinion about the emphasis which primary schools placed on 13 goals. In this paper, results are provided for respondent gender, age, socioeconomic level, school leaving standard, and whether or not the respondent had children in the education system. While the findings indicate broad public support for the objectives, there were considerable differences in the approval given various objectives and between categories of respondent. Male and female respondents differed for only three goals. Differences relating to age, socioeconomic status, and school leaving standard were much more common. Younger and better educated respondents were most critical of the current system.

It has been argued that public opinion, which can be defined as the aggregate of individual beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes held by the adult population, eventually, if not immediately, is the basis of policy in a democracy (Markel, 1972), and that it is difficult to discuss forms of political power without implicating pluralities or majorities within civil society (Lewis, 1999). While opinion polls (surveys of opinion using sampling) are not without their problems when regarded as a form of representation reflecting independently constructed rationally formed views (Lewis, 1999; Zaller, 1992), their number seems to be continually increasing to the extent that 'contemporary politics is almost unimaginable without them' (Lewis, 1999, p. 202), perhaps because they appear to be 'an entirely open and egalitarian form of democracy' affording 'everyone, at least statistically, an opportunity to be heard' (Salmon & Glasser, 1995, p. 444).

While frequent polling of the views of the public on political issues is a feature of most democracies (including Ireland), polls which focus on educational matters are much less common. The most recent study of the Irish public's perceptions of educational issues, which was commissioned by the Department of Education and Science and carried out by Millward Brown IMS in June-July 2004 using a questionnaire designed at the Educational Research Centre, was the first major survey since 1974 (Madaus, Fontes, Kellaghan, & Airasian, 1979). In the 2004 study, a nationally representative sample of individuals aged 15+ years were asked in interview about ten key aspects of

education: the goals of education; conditions in schools; information available about schools; teachers and teaching; curricula and examinations; education and the community; school management; improving education; funding of education; and the adequacy of educational provision. The results of analyses of aggregated data for all questions asked in the survey have been published (Kellaghan, McGee, Millar, & Perkins, 2004).

The study described in this paper is concerned only with that part of the questionnaire that asked about the adequacy placed by primary schools on 13 goals of education. In response to questions on this topic, pluralities (in many cases majorities) of respondents agreed that the emphasis placed on a variety of goals in schools (particularly cognitive goals) was just right. Considerable minorities, however, thought that non-cognitive goals (promoting moral development; teaching students to care for others; developing the ability to adapt to new situations) received inadequate emphasis (Kellaghan et al., 2004).

While media reports of the results of polls often ignore differences associated with the personal characteristics of respondents, it is clear that people separated by class, race, or gender tend to have different interests and often view the world differently (Lewis, 1999). Individuals, categorized in a variety of ways on the basis of their shared social life, are likely to share beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes, which in turn are likely to differ from the beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes of others who do not share their social life or, at any rate, certain aspects of it (see e.g., Hurley, 1989; Pettit, 1993). To explore this issue, the analyses described in this paper go beyond the report of the 2004 survey by reporting respondents' perceptions of the adequacy of emphasis placed by primary schools on the goals of education separately for respondents' gender, age, socioeconomic level, school leaving standard, and whether or not respondents had children in the education system.

#### METHOD

##### *Interview Schedule*

For each of 13 goals of primary schools, respondents were asked whether they considered the emphasis placed on it as 'too much', 'too little', 'just right', or 'don't know/not sure'. The goals were (i) giving students an understanding of their religion; (ii) helping students appreciate music, art, and literature; (iii) encouraging students to have opinions of their own; (iv) transmitting Irish culture and language; (v) teaching basic skills of literacy and numeracy; (vi) teaching students to work cooperatively; (vii) teaching foreign languages; (viii) developing communication skills; (ix) developing the ability to adapt to new situations; (x) developing interpersonal skills and relationships; (xi) promoting

physical development, sport, and healthy lifestyles; (xii) promoting moral development; (xiii) teaching students to care for others.

### *Sample*

A sample of 1,511 individuals aged 15+ years was selected on a quota sampling basis to represent the general public in the Republic of Ireland. Quota controls were set for gender, age, and region, based on the Central Statistics Office Population Estimate of April 2003, and for socioeconomic status, using AIMRO-agreed guidelines (based on the 2002-2003 Joint National Readership Survey). There were 108 sampling points which were distributed in urban and rural regions in proportion to the distribution of the national population. Fourteen interviews were conducted at each point. Interviewers were given an address at which to start. In urban areas, they followed a random route calling at every fifth house; in rural areas, the selection of interviewees was based on quota controls only. The numbers in the sample, by gender, age, socioeconomic status, and region are provided in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
*Numbers (and Percentages) of Respondents in Sample, by Gender, Age, Socioeconomic Status, and Region*

	N	%
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	724	48
Female	787	52
<i>Age</i>		
15-24	321	21
25-34	319	21
35-49	412	27
50-64	284	19
65+	175	12
<i>Socioeconomic Status</i>		
Professional/Managerial	182	12
White collar	398	26
Skilled	389	26
Unskilled	397	26
Farmer*	145	10
<i>Region</i>		
Dublin	433	29
Rest of Leinster	379	25
Munster	419	28
Connaught/Ulster	280	18

\*In analyses, farmers were divided into those with 50+ acres and those with less than 50 acres.

### *Analysis*

The percentage (and associated standard error to indicate variability due to sampling error) of respondents saying 'too much', 'too little', 'just right', and 'don't know/not sure' for each goal was calculated for the following categories<sup>1</sup>:

*gender*: male; female

*age group*: 15-24; 25-49; 50+ years

*socioeconomic level*: professional/managerial; white collar; skilled; unskilled; farmer with 50+ acres (n=104); farmer with less than 50 acres (n=41)

*school leaving standard*: primary school only/some post-primary but no examination (n=284); Group Cert/Intermediate Cert/Junior Cert (n=272); Leaving Cert (n=423); further education (n=338); still in education system (n=194)

*children*: respondent has no children (n=626); has children not yet in education system (n=147); has children in education system (n=512); has children who have completed their education (n=335).<sup>2</sup>

Although the standard error may not be entirely appropriate in the case of quota sampling (since selection within strata is not random), it is proposed here as a rough guide to the significance of differences between percentage values when used to establish confidence bands around values. A 95% confidence band can be established by adding 1.96 times the SE to, and subtracting 1.96 times the SE from, a specified value. Where the confidence bands around two percentage values do not overlap, we can say that there is a 95% chance that the percentage values differ from one another. A 99% confidence interval can be obtained by adding 2.58 times the SE to, and subtracting 2.58 times the SE from, a specified percentage value.

In considering variation in the percentage of respondents expressing varying opinions, we will focus for the most part, but not exclusively, on the percentage that judged the emphasis to be too little. This may be justified on the basis not only that it simplifies description but also because the figures for this category are considerably larger and more variable than the figures for the 'too much' category, while the rank correlation for the aggregated data between the percentages judging 'too little' and 'just right' is substantial (.84).

### RESULTS

We will first provide a summary of the results of analyses at the national (aggregated data) level,<sup>3</sup> following which we will describe within-group data

<sup>1</sup>Numbers in categories for gender, age, and socioeconomic status are given in Table 1. Numbers for other categories are provided in parentheses below.

<sup>2</sup>Categories are not mutually exclusive.

<sup>3</sup>More detailed results are provided by Kellaghan et al. (2004).

separately for respondents' gender, age, socioeconomic level, school leaving standard, and whether or not respondents had children in the education system.

*National (aggregated) Data*

A number of points may be made about the national (aggregated) statistics presented in Table 2. First, overall, the largest percentage of respondents said that the emphasis in schools was just right for all goals with the single exception of teaching foreign languages. Almost 6 in 10 (57.1%) said this goal received too little emphasis; only 3 in 10 (31.1%) thought the emphasis was just right.

Table 2

*Percentages of Respondents (and Standard Errors) Indicating the Adequacy of Emphasis Placed on Goals in Primary Schools*

	Amount of Emphasis			
	Too Much	Too Little	Just Right	Don't know/ No opinion
Giving students an understanding of their religion	10.7 (0.8)	27.4 (1.1)	53.4 (1.3)	8.5 (0.7)
Helping students appreciate music, art, and literature	2.3 (0.4)	42.1 (1.3)	46.9 (1.3)	8.7 (0.7)
Encouraging students to have opinions of their own	5.4 (0.6)	32.5 (1.2)	53.5 (1.3)	8.6 (0.7)
Transmitting Irish culture & language	8.2 (0.7)	35.0 (1.2)	50.5 (1.3)	6.2 (0.6)
Teaching basic skills of literacy & numeracy	2.2 (0.4)	20.4 (1.0)	71.6 (1.2)	5.8 (0.6)
Teaching students to work cooperatively	1.7 (0.3)	26.5 (1.1)	61.8 (1.3)	10.0 (0.8)
Teaching foreign languages	2.5 (0.4)	57.1 (1.3)	31.1 (1.2)	9.3 (0.7)
Developing communication skills	1.1 (0.3)	34.2 (1.2)	56.9 (1.3)	7.8 (0.7)
Developing the ability to adapt to new situations	1.0 (0.3)	38.0 (1.3)	50.3 (1.3)	10.7 (0.8)
Developing interpersonal skills and relationships	1.3 (0.4)	35.5 (1.7)	53.4 (1.9)	9.9 (1.1)
Promoting physical development, sport, and healthy lifestyles	3.6 (0.5)	35.7 (1.2)	55.7 (1.3)	4.9 (0.6)
Promoting moral development	1.2 (0.3)	39.8 (1.3)	48.2 (1.3)	10.7 (0.8)
Teaching students to care for others	0.9 (0.2)	39.2 (1.3)	52.2 (1.3)	7.7 (0.7)

Secondly, more than half the respondents said that the emphasis was just right for all goals except teaching foreign languages (as noted above), helping students appreciate music, art, and literature (46.9% considered the emphasis just right), and promoting moral development (48.2% considered the emphasis just right).

Thirdly, the percentages considering the emphasis on a goal as too much tended to be small (ranging from 1.0% to 10.7%, with an average of 3.2%). However, the range of the percentage for subgroups was much wider (0.0 to 18.1%) (Tables 3 to 15).

### *Gender*

Differences in the proportions of male and female respondents in their perceptions of the adequacy of the emphasis placed on goals in primary school were recorded in only three cases. More females than males considered that too little emphasis was accorded giving students an understanding of their religion (Table 3), teaching foreign languages (Table 9), and developing interpersonal skills and relationships (Table 12).

### *Age*

Differences between age groups in their assessments of the adequacy of the emphasis placed on goals in primary schools were recorded for ten goals. The youngest age group (15- to 24-year olds), who of course were the ones with the most recent experience of primary schooling, expressed the greatest amount of dissatisfaction. A greater percentage in this group than in other groups thought that too much emphasis was placed on teaching students to have an understanding of their religion (Table 3), and on transmitting Irish culture and language (Table 6); the latter for the 25-49 year old group was considered to receive too little emphasis. While the percentages are not absolutely very large, they are unusually large for the 'too much' emphasis category.

A greater percentage of the 15-24 year old group, and here the percentages are sizeable, than of other groups, in particular the oldest group (50+ years old), thought that too little emphasis was given to several goals. Respondents in this group differed from respondents in both other groups in saying that too little emphasis was placed on encouraging students to have opinions of their own (Table 5). They differed from the oldest (50+ year old) group in saying that too little emphasis was accorded helping students appreciate music, art, and literature (Table 4), teaching foreign languages (Table 9), developing communication skills (Table 10), developing the ability to adapt to new situations (Table 11), and developing interpersonal skills and relationships (Table 12).

Respondents in the oldest age group (50+ years of age) differed from both other groups in saying that too little emphasis was placed on giving students an understanding of their religion (Table 3), promoting moral development (Table 14), and teaching students to care for others (Table 15).<sup>4</sup>

#### *Socioeconomic Level*

Professional/managerial workers, in contrast with one or more other groups, were more likely to say that goals received too little emphasis. This was so for helping students appreciate music, art, and literature (Table 4), encouraging students to have opinions of their own (Table 5), developing communication skills (Table 10), developing the ability to adapt to new situations (Table 11), and developing interpersonal skills and relationships (Table 12). The largest discrepancy between groups occurs in the case of helping students appreciate music, art, and literature (Table 4). Over half of the professional/managerial group said that this goal received too little emphasis, compared to a quarter of farmers with an acreage less than fifty. Relatively large discrepancies also occur for other goals and other categories of respondent. While 42.9% of white collar workers thought that promoting physical development, sport, and healthy lifestyles received too little emphasis, only 22.0% of farmers with less than 50 acres agreed (Table 13).

Farmers (with more than 50 acres), compared to other groups, also considered that some goals were not sufficiently emphasized. This was the case for giving students an understanding of their religion, especially compared to professional/managerial workers, white-collar workers, and even small (<50 acres) farmers (Table 3). It was also true of promoting moral development. Almost half of farmer respondents with more than 50 acres thought that this goal was accorded too little emphasis, compared to about a third of skilled workers (Table 14).

Farmers, however, were less likely than other groups to say that a goal was accorded too little emphasis. Farmers with less than 50 acres recorded the lowest level of dissatisfaction for the emphasis placed on helping students appreciate music, art, and literature (Table 4), teaching foreign languages (Table 9), and promoting physical development, sport, and healthy lifestyles (Table 13). Farmers with a larger acreage (50+) were least likely to think that the emphasis on teaching students to work cooperatively (Table 8), developing communication skills

<sup>4</sup> Respondents in this group were more likely than respondents in other groups not to express a view, saying that they did not know, which is understandable given that they were the furthest away from their educational experience.

(Table 10), and developing the ability to adapt to new situations (Table 11), received too little emphasis.

#### *School Leaving Standard*

Respondents with only primary education differed from respondents in other categories in their views of several goals, thinking that too little emphasis was accorded giving students an understanding of their religion (Table 3), teaching basic skills of literacy and numeracy (Table 7), promoting moral development (Table 14), and teaching students to care for others (Table 15).

Respondents who were still in the education system were more likely than respondents in other categories to say that too little emphasis was accorded encouraging students to have opinions of their own (Table 5) and teaching students to work co-operatively (Table 8). They also perceived some goals to be accorded too much emphasis: giving students an understanding of their religion (Table 3) and helping students appreciate music, art, and literature (Table 4).

Respondents with further education, who tended to perceive goals as receiving too little rather than too much emphasis, were similar to respondents still in the education system in thinking that too little emphasis was accorded helping students appreciate music, art, and literature (Table 4) and teaching foreign languages (Table 9).

Other categories of respondent did not occupy extreme positions with the exception of respondents with Group, Intermediate, or Junior Certificates who thought that transmitting Irish culture and language received too little emphasis (Table 6).

#### *Children*

It is not surprising that the percentages of respondents without children who expressed lack of knowledge of the topics they were asked about are relatively large. However, this group also contained respondents who were still in the education system, and so their responses might be expected to reflect some of the dissatisfaction expressed by respondents in the 15-24-year old age category noted above. A relatively large percentage of respondents whose children had completed their education also fell in the 'don't know/not sure' response category.

**Table 3**  
*Percentages of Respondents Indicating the Adequacy of Emphasis Which Primary Schools Place on Giving Students an Understanding of Their Religion*

	Amount of Emphasis			
	Too much % (SE)	Too little % (SE)	Just right % (SE)	Don't know/ Not sure % (SE)
<i>National Total</i>	10.7 (0.8)	27.4 (1.1)	53.4 (1.3)	8.5 (0.7)
<i>Gender of respondent</i>				
Male	11.3 (1.2)	24.7 (1.6)	55.1 (1.8)	8.8 (1.1)
Female	10.1 (1.1)	29.9 (1.6)	51.8 (1.8)	8.2 (1.0)
<i>Age group</i>				
15-24	18.1 (2.2)	22.2 (2.3)	50.0 (2.8)	9.7 (1.7)
25-49	11.4 (1.2)	23.7 (1.6)	56.8 (1.8)	8.1 (1.0)
50+	4.4 (0.9)	37.0 (2.3)	50.3 (2.3)	8.3 (1.3)
<i>Socioeconomic level</i>				
Professional/Managerial	12.2 (2.4)	22.7 (3.1)	59.1 (3.6)	6.1 (1.8)
White collar	11.3 (1.6)	22.9 (2.1)	54.2 (2.5)	11.6 (1.6)
Skilled	11.8 (1.6)	27.2 (2.6)	54.8 (2.5)	6.2 (1.2)
Unskilled	9.6 (1.5)	31.7 (2.3)	48.6 (2.5)	10.1 (1.5)
Farmer (50 acres+)	6.7 (2.5)	37.5 (4.7)	51.9 (4.9)	3.8 (1.9)
Farmer (<50 acres)	7.3 (4.1)	26.8 (6.9)	58.5 (7.7)	7.3 (4.1)
<i>Respondent's school leaving standard</i>				
Primary school only/Some second level but no exam	7.0 (1.5)	35.9 (2.8)	46.5 (3.0)	10.6 (1.8)
Group Cert/ Intermediate Cert/ Junior Cert	8.5 (1.7)	27.6 (2.7)	57.4 (3.0)	6.6 (1.5)
Leaving Cert	10.0 (1.9)	28.0 (2.4)	55.9 (2.4)	6.2 (1.4)
Further education	12.8 (1.8)	22.6 (2.3)	54.0 (2.7)	10.7 (1.7)
Still in education system	17.0 (2.7)	22.2 (3.0)	51.5 (3.6)	9.3 (2.1)
<i>Children</i>				
Respondent has no children	15.0 (1.4)	25.0 (1.7)	47.8 (2.0)	12.2 (1.3)
Respondent has children not yet in education system	13.6 (2.8)	20.4 (3.3)	59.9 (4.0)	6.1 (2.0)
Respondent has children in education system	8.2 (1.2)	23.5 (1.9)	63.4 (2.1)	4.9 (1.0)
Respondent has children who have completed their education	4.2 (1.1)	38.6 (2.7)	49.7 (2.7)	7.5 (1.4)

**Table 4**  
*Percentages of Respondents Indicating the Adequacy of Emphasis Which Primary Schools Place on Helping Students Appreciate Music, Art, and Literature*

	Amount of Emphasis			
	Too much % (SE)	Too little % (SE)	Just right % (SE)	Don't know/ Not sure % (SE)
<i>National Total</i>	2.3 (0.4)	42.1 (1.3)	46.9 (1.3)	8.7 (0.7)
<i>Gender of respondent</i>				
Male	2.8 (0.7)	43.0 (1.8)	44.8 (1.8)	9.5 (1.1)
Female	1.9 (0.5)	41.3 (1.8)	48.9 (1.8)	7.9 (1.0)
<i>Age group</i>				
15-24	4.7 (1.2)	46.3 (2.8)	42.2 (2.8)	6.9 (1.4)
25-49	1.2 (0.4)	44.1 (1.8)	46.6 (1.8)	8.1 (1.0)
50+	2.4 (2.2)	36.0 (2.3)	50.7 (2.3)	10.9 (1.4)
<i>Socioeconomic level</i>				
Professional/Managerial	2.7 (1.2)	53.3 (3.7)	37.9 (3.6)	6.0 (1.8)
White collar	2.0 (0.7)	44.1 (2.5)	47.1 (2.5)	6.8 (1.3)
Skilled	2.8 (1.3)	40.7 (2.5)	46.1 (2.5)	10.3 (1.5)
Unskilled	1.8 (1.7)	39.3 (2.5)	48.9 (2.5)	10.1 (1.5)
Farmer (50 acres+)	2.9 (1.6)	37.5 (4.7)	50.0 (4.9)	9.6 (1.9)
Farmer (<50 acres)	2.5 (2.5)	25.0 (6.7)	65.0 (7.5)	7.5 (4.1)
<i>Respondent's school leaving standard</i>				
Primary school only/Some second level but no exam	2.8 (0.6)	33.9 (2.8)	48.1 (3.0)	15.2 (2.1)
Group Cert/ Intermediate Cert/ Junior Cert	2.2 (0.9)	36.4 (2.9)	52.6 (3.0)	8.8 (1.7)
Leaving Cert	1.4 (1.7)	40.4 (0.6)	52.3 (2.4)	5.9 (2.4)
Further education	1.5 (0.7)	52.1 (2.7)	38.5 (2.6)	8.0 (1.5)
Still in education system	5.2 (1.6)	48.5 (3.6)	40.2 (3.5)	6.2 (1.7)
<i>Children</i>				
Respondent has no children	3.0 (0.7)	43.8 (2.0)	43.3 (2.0)	9.9 (1.2)
Respondent has children not yet in education system	1.4 (0.9)	37.0 (4.0)	51.4 (4.1)	10.3 (2.5)
Respondent has children who have completed their education	2.1 (0.8)	38.2 (2.7)	50.1 (2.7)	9.6 (1.6)

**Table 5**  
*Percentages of Respondents Indicating the Adequacy of Emphasis Which Primary Schools Place on Encouraging Students to Have Opinions of Their Own*

	Amount of Emphasis			
	Too much % (SE)	Too little % (SE)	Just right % (SE)	Don't know/ Not sure % (SE)
<i>National Total</i>	5.4 (0.6)	32.5 (1.2)	53.5 (1.3)	8.6 (0.7)
<i>Gender of respondent</i>				
Male	5.4 (0.8)	32.8 (1.7)	53.0 (1.8)	8.9 (1.1)
Female	5.5 (0.8)	32.2 (1.7)	54.0 (1.8)	8.3 (1.0)
<i>Age group</i>				
15-24	3.1 (1.0)	42.8 (2.8)	47.8 (2.8)	6.3 (1.3)
25-49	5.2 (0.8)	33.0 (1.7)	54.7 (1.8)	7.1 (1.0)
50+	7.4 (1.2)	24.5 (2.0)	55.6 (2.3)	12.5 (1.4)
<i>Socioeconomic level</i>				
Professional/Managerial	6.0 (1.8)	40.7 (3.6)	48.4 (3.7)	4.9 (1.6)
White collar	4.3 (1.0)	34.3 (2.4)	53.9 (2.5)	7.6 (1.3)
Skilled	6.4 (1.2)	29.4 (2.3)	56.7 (2.5)	7.5 (1.7)
Unskilled	4.8 (1.0)	30.0 (2.3)	52.6 (2.5)	12.6 (1.5)
Farmer (50 acres+)	7.7 (2.6)	34.6 (4.7)	50.0 (4.9)	7.7 (2.6)
Farmer (<50 acres)	5.0 (3.4)	27.5 (7.1)	60.0 (7.7)	7.5 (4.2)
<i>Respondent's school leaving standard</i>				
Primary school only/Some second level but no exam	7.1 (1.5)	26.5 (2.6)	50.9 (3.0)	15.5 (1.6)
Group Cert/ Intermediate Cert/ Junior Cert	4.8 (1.3)	29.0 (2.8)	57.7 (3.0)	8.5 (1.7)
Leaving Cert	3.8 (0.9)	32.5 (2.3)	57.5 (2.4)	6.2 (1.2)
Further education	6.5 (1.3)	32.8 (2.6)	53.8 (2.7)	6.8 (1.4)
Still in education system	5.7 (1.7)	45.4 (3.6)	42.3 (3.5)	6.7 (1.8)
<i>Children</i>				
Respondent has no children	4.2 (0.8)	35.7 (1.9)	50.2 (2.0)	9.9 (1.2)
Respondent has children not yet in education system	6.1 (2.0)	34.7 (3.9)	52.4 (4.1)	6.8 (2.1)
Respondent has children in education system	5.7 (1.0)	31.6 (2.1)	56.3 (2.2)	6.4 (1.1)
Respondent has children who have completed their education	7.8 (1.5)	24.6 (2.4)	57.2 (2.7)	10.5 (1.7)

**Table 6**  
*Percentages of Respondents Indicating the Adequacy of Emphasis Which Primary Schools Place on Transmitting Irish Culture and Language*

	Amount of Emphasis			
	Too much % (SE)	Too little % (SE)	Just right % (SE)	Don't know/ Not sure % (SE)
<i>National Total</i>	8.2 (0.7)	35.0 (1.2)	50.5 (1.3)	6.2 (0.6)
<i>Gender of respondent</i>				
Male	9.1 (1.1)	34.3 (1.8)	49.6 (1.9)	6.9 (0.9)
Female	7.4 (0.9)	35.6 (1.7)	51.4 (1.8)	5.6 (0.8)
<i>Age group</i>				
15-24	12.8 (1.9)	30.3 (2.6)	52.5 (2.8)	4.4 (1.1)
25-49	7.1 (1.0)	37.8 (1.8)	50.1 (1.9)	4.9 (0.8)
50+	6.8 (1.2)	33.8 (2.2)	49.8 (2.3)	9.6 (1.4)
<i>Socioeconomic level</i>				
Professional/Managerial	8.3 (2.0)	39.2 (3.6)	49.2 (3.7)	3.3 (1.3)
White collar	8.8 (1.4)	34.3 (2.4)	50.1 (2.5)	6.8 (1.3)
Skilled	7.5 (1.3)	33.9 (2.4)	52.2 (2.5)	6.4 (1.4)
Unskilled	7.1 (1.3)	34.8 (2.4)	50.0 (2.5)	8.1 (1.4)
Farmer (50 acres+)	11.5 (3.1)	35.6 (4.7)	51.9 (4.9)	1.0 (1.0)
Farmer (<50 acres)	12.2 (5.1)	34.1 (7.4)	46.3 (7.8)	7.3 (4.1)
<i>Respondent's school leaving standard</i>				
Primary school only/Some second level but no exam	7.4 (1.6)	33.8 (2.8)	48.6 (3.0)	10.2 (1.5)
Group Cert/ Intermediate Cert/ Junior Cert	6.6 (1.5)	40.6 (3.0)	46.5 (3.0)	6.3 (1.5)
Leaving Cert	7.8 (1.3)	34.4 (2.3)	53.1 (2.4)	4.7 (1.0)
Further education	8.3 (1.5)	36.8 (2.6)	48.7 (2.7)	6.2 (1.3)
Still in education system	12.4 (2.4)	27.3 (3.2)	56.7 (3.6)	3.6 (1.3)
<i>Children</i>				
Respondent has no children	9.9 (1.2)	34.8 (1.9)	48.7 (2.0)	6.6 (1.0)
Respondent has children not yet in education system	10.2 (2.5)	37.4 (4.0)	45.6 (4.1)	6.8 (2.1)
Respondent has children in education system	5.7 (1.0)	34.8 (2.1)	55.5 (2.2)	4.1 (0.9)
Respondent has children who have completed their education	7.2 (1.4)	35.6 (2.6)	48.8 (2.7)	8.4 (1.5)

**Table 7**  
*Percentages of Respondents Indicating the Adequacy of Emphasis Which Primary Schools Place on Teaching Basic Skills of Literacy and Numeracy*

	Amount of Emphasis			
	Too much % (SE)	Too little % (SE)	Just right % (SE)	Don't know/ Not sure % (SE)
<i>National Total</i>	2.2 (0.4)	20.4 (1.0)	71.6 (1.2)	5.8 (0.6)
<i>Gender of respondent</i>				
Male	2.1 (0.5)	19.6 (1.5)	72.5 (1.7)	5.8 (0.9)
Female	2.3 (0.5)	21.1 (1.5)	70.8 (1.6)	5.8 (0.8)
<i>Age group</i>				
15-24	3.1 (1.0)	17.6 (2.1)	74.5 (2.4)	4.7 (1.1)
25-49	1.9 (0.5)	20.7 (1.5)	72.4 (1.7)	5.0 (0.8)
50+	2.0 (0.6)	21.8 (1.9)	68.4 (2.2)	7.8 (1.3)
<i>Socioeconomic level</i>				
Professional/Managerial	2.8 (1.2)	17.1 (2.8)	75.7 (3.2)	4.4 (1.5)
White collar	2.0 (0.7)	20.7 (2.0)	71.4 (2.3)	5.9 (1.2)
Skilled	2.1 (0.7)	19.1 (2.0)	72.9 (2.3)	5.9 (1.2)
Unskilled	2.5 (0.8)	23.5 (2.1)	66.7 (2.4)	7.3 (1.3)
Farmer (50 acres+)	1.9 (1.3)	18.3 (3.8)	77.9 (4.1)	1.9 (1.3)
Farmer (<50 acres)	0.0 (0.0)	19.5 (6.2)	75.6 (6.7)	4.9 (3.4)
<i>Respondent's school leaving standard</i>				
Primary school only/Some second level but no exam	1.1 (0.6)	24.7 (2.6)	65.0 (2.8)	9.2 (1.7)
Group Cert/ Intermediate Cert/ Junior Cert	1.1 (0.6)	23.7 (2.6)	70.4 (2.8)	4.8 (1.3)
Leaving Cert	2.2 (0.7)	18.4 (1.9)	75.4 (2.1)	4.1 (1.0)
Further education	3.0 (0.9)	16.7 (2.0)	74.4 (2.4)	6.0 (1.3)
Still in education system	4.1 (1.4)	20.1 (2.9)	70.1 (3.3)	5.7 (1.7)
<i>Children</i>				
Respondent has no children	3.0 (0.7)	17.9 (1.5)	71.5 (1.8)	7.5 (1.1)
Respondent has children not yet in education system	1.4 (1.0)	20.5 (3.3)	70.5 (3.8)	7.5 (2.2)
Respondent has children in education system	1.6 (0.6)	21.4 (1.8)	74.3 (1.9)	2.8 (0.7)
Respondent has children who have completed their education	2.1 (0.8)	22.1 (2.3)	69.9 (2.5)	6.0 (1.3)

**Table 8**  
*Percentages of Respondents Indicating the Adequacy of Emphasis Which Primary Schools Place on Teaching Students to Work Cooperatively*

	Amount of Emphasis			
	Too much % (SE)	Too little % (SE)	Just right % (SE)	Don't know/ Not sure % (SE)
<i>National Total</i>	1.7 (0.3)	26.5 (1.1)	61.8 (1.3)	10.0 (0.8)
<i>Gender of respondent</i>				
Male	2.4 (0.6)	27.8 (1.7)	59.4 (1.8)	10.4 (1.1)
Female	1.2 (0.4)	25.3 (1.6)	63.9 (1.7)	9.6 (1.1)
<i>Age group</i>				
15-24	2.2 (0.8)	28.9 (2.5)	62.6 (2.7)	6.3 (1.4)
25-49	1.5 (0.5)	26.8 (1.6)	62.5 (1.8)	9.2 (1.1)
50+	1.8 (0.6)	24.4 (2.0)	60.0 (2.3)	13.8 (1.6)
<i>Socioeconomic level</i>				
Professional/Managerial	1.1 (0.8)	27.2 (3.3)	63.9 (3.6)	7.8 (2.0)
White collar	0.8 (0.4)	27.5 (2.3)	60.1 (2.5)	11.7 (1.6)
Skilled	2.6 (0.8)	26.0 (2.2)	63.9 (2.4)	7.5 (1.3)
Unskilled	2.3 (0.8)	27.1 (2.2)	58.2 (2.5)	12.4 (1.7)
Farmer (50 acres+)	1.0 (1.0)	21.2 (4.0)	70.2 (4.5)	7.7 (2.6)
Farmer (<50 acres)	2.4 (2.5)	26.8 (6.9)	61.0 (7.6)	9.8 (4.6)
<i>Respondent's school leaving standard</i>				
Primary school only/Some second level but no exam	2.1 (0.9)	25.4 (2.6)	53.0 (3.0)	19.4 (2.4)
Group Cert/ Intermediate Cert/ Junior Cert	0.4 (0.4)	27.9 (2.7)	62.1 (3.0)	9.7 (1.8)
Leaving Cert	2.4 (0.7)	23.6 (2.1)	66.4 (2.3)	7.6 (1.3)
Further education	1.2 (0.6)	26.6 (2.4)	64.5 (2.6)	7.8 (1.5)
Still in education system	2.6 (1.1)	32.5 (3.4)	59.3 (3.5)	5.7 (1.7)
<i>Children</i>				
Respondent has no children	0.8 (0.6)	25.1 (1.8)	66.4 (2.0)	7.7 (1.3)
Respondent has children not yet in education system	1.4 (1.0)	28.6 (3.7)	61.9 (4.0)	8.2 (2.3)
Respondent has children in education system	0.8 (0.4)	25.1 (1.9)	66.4 (2.1)	7.7 (1.2)
Respondent has children who have completed their education	1.8 (0.7)	22.8 (2.3)	61.3 (2.7)	14.1 (1.9)

**Table 9**  
*Percentages of Respondents Indicating the Adequacy of Emphasis Which Primary Schools Place on Teaching Foreign Languages*

	Amount of Emphasis			
	Too much % (SE)	Too little % (SE)	Just right % (SE)	Don't know/ Not sure % (SE)
<i>National Total</i>	2.5 (0.4)	57.1 (1.3)	31.1 (1.2)	9.3 (0.7)
<i>Gender of respondent</i>				
Male	2.2 (0.6)	54.4 (1.7)	34.3 (1.8)	9.1 (1.1)
Female	2.7 (0.6)	59.5 (1.8)	28.2 (1.6)	9.5 (1.0)
<i>Age group</i>				
15-24	2.8 (0.9)	60.6 (2.7)	28.8 (2.5)	7.8 (1.5)
25-49	1.8 (0.5)	61.3 (1.8)	29.7 (1.7)	7.3 (1.0)
50+	3.3 (0.8)	47.9 (2.3)	35.1 (2.2)	13.7 (1.6)
<i>Socioeconomic level</i>				
Professional/Managerial	2.7 (1.2)	63.2 (3.6)	29.1 (3.4)	4.9 (1.6)
White collar	2.3 (0.7)	58.9 (2.5)	29.2 (2.3)	9.6 (1.5)
Skilled	2.1 (0.7)	58.9 (2.5)	30.1 (2.3)	9.0 (1.5)
Unskilled	2.8 (0.8)	52.4 (2.5)	33.8 (2.4)	11.1 (1.6)
Farmer (50 acres+)	1.9 (1.3)	55.8 (4.9)	31.7 (4.6)	10.6 (3.0)
Farmer (<50 acres)	4.9 (3.4)	43.9 (7.8)	41.5 (7.7)	9.8 (4.6)
<i>Respondent's school leaving standard</i>				
Primary school only/Some second level but no exam	2.5 (0.9)	47.5 (3.0)	31.3 (2.8)	18.7 (2.3)
Group Cert/ Intermediate Cert/ Junior Cert	2.6 (1.0)	55.1 (3.0)	35.3 (2.9)	7.0 (1.5)
Leaving Cert	2.1 (0.7)	57.6 (2.4)	32.5 (2.3)	7.8 (1.3)
Further education	2.7 (0.9)	63.9 (2.6)	26.3 (2.4)	7.1 (1.4)
Still in education system	2.6 (1.1)	60.8 (3.5)	30.4 (3.3)	6.2 (1.7)
<i>Children</i>				
Respondent has no children	2.7 (0.7)	57.6 (2.0)	29.0 (1.8)	10.7 (1.2)
Respondent has children not yet in education system	1.4 (1.0)	59.2 (4.0)	32.0 (3.8)	7.5 (2.2)
Respondent has children in education system	2.0 (0.6)	60.4 (2.2)	30.9 (2.0)	6.8 (1.1)
Respondent has children who have completed their education	3.0 (0.9)	51.3 (2.7)	34.6 (2.6)	11.0 (1.7)

**Table 10**  
*Percentages of Respondents Indicating the Adequacy of Emphasis Which Primary Schools Place on Developing Communication Skills*

	Amount of Emphasis			
	Too much % (SE)	Too little % (SE)	Just right % (SE)	Don't know/ Not sure % (SE)
<i>National Total</i>	1.1 (0.3)	34.2 (1.2)	56.9 (1.3)	7.8 (0.7)
<i>Gender of respondent</i>				
Male	1.0 (0.4)	34.0 (1.8)	55.8 (1.8)	9.3 (1.1)
Female	1.3 (0.4)	34.3 (1.7)	57.9 (1.8)	6.5 (0.9)
<i>Age group</i>				
15-24	0.9 (0.5)	37.8 (2.7)	55.3 (2.8)	5.9 (1.3)
25-49	1.0 (0.4)	34.4 (1.8)	58.3 (1.8)	6.3 (0.9)
50+	1.5 (0.6)	31.2 (2.2)	55.8 (2.3)	11.5 (1.5)
<i>Socioeconomic level</i>				
Professional/Managerial	1.6 (0.9)	42.9 (3.7)	52.7 (3.7)	2.7 (1.2)
White collar	0.5 (2.4)	33.9 (2.5)	57.7 (1.3)	7.8 (1.3)
Skilled	1.3 (0.6)	33.2 (2.4)	59.4 (2.5)	6.2 (1.2)
Unskilled	1.5 (0.6)	32.5 (2.4)	55.2 (2.5)	10.8 (1.6)
Farmer (50 acres+)	1.0 (1.0)	27.9 (4.4)	59.6 (4.8)	11.5 (3.1)
Farmer (<50 acres)	0.0 (0.0)	39.0 (7.6)	53.7 (7.8)	7.3 (4.1)
<i>Respondent's school leaving standard</i>				
Primary school only/Some second level but no exam	1.8 (0.8)	33.5 (2.8)	46.5 (3.0)	18.3 (2.3)
Group Cert/ Intermediate Cert/ Junior Cert	0.7 (0.5)	31.3 (2.8)	61.4 (3.0)	6.6 (1.5)
Leaving Cert	1.2 (0.5)	32.1 (2.3)	61.2 (2.4)	5.5 (1.1)
Further education	0.9 (0.5)	36.1 (2.6)	58.3 (2.7)	4.7 (1.2)
Still in education system	1.0 (0.7)	40.2 (3.5)	54.1 (3.6)	4.6 (1.5)
<i>Children</i>				
Respondent has no children	1.3 (0.4)	38.0 (1.9)	50.3 (2.0)	10.7 (1.1)
Respondent has children not yet in education system	0.7 (0.7)	34.0 (3.9)	59.9 (4.0)	5.4 (1.9)
Respondent has children in education system	0.4 (0.3)	33.3 (2.1)	59.8 (2.2)	6.5 (1.1)
Respondent has children who have completed their education	1.8 (0.7)	31.3 (2.5)	56.1 (2.7)	10.7 (1.7)

**Table 11**  
*Percentages of Respondents Indicating the Adequacy of Emphasis Which Primary Schools Place on Developing the Ability to Adapt to New Situations*

	Amount of Emphasis			
	Too much % (SE)	Too little % (SE)	Just right % (SE)	Don't know/ Not sure % (SE)
<i>National Total</i>	1.0 (0.3)	38.0 (1.3)	50.3 (1.3)	10.7 (0.8)
<i>Gender of respondent</i>				
Male	1.0 (0.4)	36.8 (1.8)	50.3 (1.9)	11.9 (1.2)
Female	1.0 (0.4)	39.1 (1.7)	50.3 (1.8)	9.6 (1.0)
<i>Age group</i>				
15-24	1.9 (0.8)	43.4 (2.8)	45.6 (2.8)	9.1 (1.6)
25-49	0.6 (0.3)	38.9 (1.8)	50.9 (1.8)	9.6 (1.1)
50+	1.1 (0.5)	32.8 (2.2)	52.6 (2.3)	13.5 (1.6)
<i>Socioeconomic level</i>				
Professional/Managerial	0.0 (0.0)	44.5 (3.7)	47.8 (3.7)	7.7 (2.0)
White collar	0.0 (0.0)	39.5 (2.5)	48.1 (2.5)	12.4 (1.7)
Skilled	1.0 (0.5)	36.8 (2.4)	53.7 (2.5)	8.5 (1.4)
Unskilled	2.5 (0.8)	37.3 (2.4)	48.7 (2.5)	11.4 (1.6)
Farmer (50 acres+)	1.0 (1.0)	30.8 (4.5)	52.9 (4.9)	15.4 (3.5)
Farmer (<50 acres)	0.0 (0.0)	31.7 (7.3)	58.5 (7.7)	9.8 (4.6)
<i>Respondent's school leaving standard</i>				
Primary school only/Some second level but no exam	1.8 (0.8)	33.0 (2.8)	45.0 (3.0)	20.2 (2.4)
Group Cert/ Intermediate Cert/ Junior Cert	1.1 (0.6)	35.4 (2.9)	57.2 (3.0)	6.3 (1.5)
Leaving Cert	0.5 (0.3)	41.4 (2.4)	50.7 (2.4)	7.4 (1.3)
Further education	0.6 (0.4)	37.6 (2.6)	50.6 (2.7)	11.2 (1.7)
Still in education system	1.5 (0.9)	42.3 (3.5)	46.9 (3.6)	9.3 (2.1)
<i>Children</i>				
Respondent has no children	1.4 (0.5)	39.2 (1.9)	46.6 (2.0)	12.7 (1.3)
Respondent has children not yet in education system	0.7 (0.7)	42.2 (4.1)	48.3 (4.1)	8.8 (2.3)
Respondent has children in education system	0.2 (0.2)	37.1 (2.1)	55.7 (2.2)	7.1 (1.1)
Respondent has children who have completed their education	1.2 (0.6)	34.0 (2.6)	51.3 (2.7)	13.4 (1.9)

**Table 12**  
*Percentages of Respondents Indicating the Adequacy of Emphasis Which Primary Schools Place on Developing Interpersonal Skills and Relationships*

	Amount of Emphasis			
	Too much % (SE)	Too little % (SE)	Just right % (SE)	Don't know/ Not sure % (SE)
<i>National Total</i>	1.3 (0.4)	35.5 (1.7)	53.4 (1.9)	9.9 (1.1)
<i>Gender of respondent</i>				
Male	1.4 (0.4)	33.2 (1.7)	54.7 (1.9)	10.7 (1.1)
Female	1.2 (0.4)	37.6 (1.7)	52.1 (1.8)	9.1 (1.0)
<i>Age group</i>				
15-24	1.0 (0.5)	37.7 (2.7)	52.8 (2.8)	8.5 (1.5)
25-49	1.2 (0.4)	37.0 (1.8)	53.4 (1.8)	8.4 (1.0)
50+	1.5 (0.6)	31.6 (2.2)	53.6 (2.3)	13.2 (1.6)
<i>Socioeconomic level</i>				
Professional/Managerial	1.1 (0.8)	41.2 (3.6)	52.7 (3.7)	4.9 (1.6)
White collar	0.0 (0.0)	35.5 (2.4)	53.7 (2.5)	10.6 (1.5)
Skilled	1.8 (0.7)	35.5 (2.4)	53.5 (2.5)	9.1 (1.7)
Unskilled	1.5 (0.6)	33.8 (2.4)	52.0 (2.5)	12.7 (1.7)
Farmer (50 acres+)	2.9 (1.6)	32.7 (4.6)	55.8 (4.9)	8.7 (2.8)
Farmer (<50 acres)	0.0 (0.0)	34.1 (7.4)	58.5 (7.7)	7.3 (4.1)
<i>Respondent's school leaving standard</i>				
Primary school only/Some second level but no exam	2.5 (0.9)	35.1 (2.8)	46.1 (3.0)	16.3 (2.2)
Group Cert/ Intermediate Cert/ Junior Cert	0.7 (0.5)	35.2 (2.9)	55.6 (3.0)	8.5 (1.7)
Leaving Cert	1.4 (0.6)	36.1 (2.3)	54.5 (2.4)	7.9 (1.3)
Further education	0.6 (0.4)	33.2 (2.6)	57.0 (2.7)	9.2 (1.6)
Still in education system	1.0 (0.7)	39.2 (3.5)	52.1 (3.6)	7.7 (1.9)
<i>Children</i>				
Respondent has no children	0.8 (0.4)	36.7 (1.9)	51.5 (2.0)	11.0 (1.3)
Respondent has children not yet in education system	1.4 (1.0)	33.3 (3.9)	56.5 (4.1)	8.8 (2.3)
Respondent has children in education system	1.4 (0.5)	34.4 (2.1)	57.0 (2.2)	7.3 (1.2)
Respondent has children who have completed their education	2.7 (0.9)	35.7 (2.6)	49.5 (2.7)	12.0 (1.8)

**Table 13**  
*Percentages of Respondents Indicating the Adequacy of Emphasis Which Primary Schools Place on Promoting Physical Development, Sport, and Healthy Lifestyles*

	Amount of Emphasis			
	Too much % (SE)	Too little % (SE)	Just right % (SE)	Don't know/ Not sure % (SE)
<i>National Total</i>	3.6 (0.5)	35.7 (1.2)	55.7 (1.3)	4.9 (0.6)
<i>Gender of respondent</i>				
Male	3.6 (0.7)	34.4 (1.8)	56.6 (1.8)	5.4 (0.8)
Female	3.7 (0.7)	36.9 (1.7)	55.0 (1.8)	4.5 (0.7)
<i>Age group</i>				
15-24	3.1 (1.0)	36.1 (2.7)	56.1 (2.8)	4.7 (1.2)
25-49	3.3 (0.7)	37.1 (1.8)	55.5 (1.8)	4.1 (0.7)
50+	4.6 (1.0)	33.3 (2.2)	55.8 (2.3)	6.3 (1.1)
<i>Socioeconomic level</i>				
Professional/Managerial	5.5 (1.7)	36.3 (3.6)	54.4 (3.7)	3.8 (1.4)
White collar	2.3 (0.7)	42.9 (2.5)	50.0 (2.5)	4.8 (1.1)
Skilled	3.6 (0.9)	32.6 (2.4)	59.1 (2.5)	4.6 (1.1)
Unskilled	4.3 (1.0)	33.0 (2.4)	56.2 (2.5)	6.5 (1.2)
Farmer (50 acres+)	2.9 (1.6)	34.6 (4.7)	59.6 (4.8)	2.9 (1.6)
Farmer (<50 acres)	4.9 (3.4)	22.0 (6.5)	70.7 (7.1)	2.4 (2.4)
<i>Respondent's school leaving standard</i>				
Primary school only/Some second level but no exam	5.3 (1.3)	35.2 (2.8)	51.8 (3.0)	7.7 (1.6)
Group Cert/ Intermediate Cert/ Junior Cert	4.0 (1.2)	36.0 (2.9)	55.1 (3.0)	4.8 (1.3)
Leaving Cert	2.4 (0.7)	35.2 (2.3)	58.7 (2.4)	3.8 (0.9)
Further education	3.3 (1.0)	39.1 (2.7)	53.6 (2.7)	4.1 (1.1)
Still in education system	4.1 (1.4)	31.4 (3.3)	59.8 (3.5)	4.6 (1.5)
<i>Children</i>				
Respondent has no children	2.9 (0.7)	33.3 (1.9)	56.7 (2.0)	7.1 (1.0)
Respondent has children not yet in education system	4.1 (1.6)	37.4 (4.0)	53.7 (4.1)	4.8 (1.8)
Respondent has children in education system	3.9 (0.9)	37.5 (2.1)	56.4 (2.2)	2.1 (0.6)
Respondent has children who have completed their education	5.1 (1.2)	37.0 (2.6)	53.1 (2.7)	4.8 (1.2)

Table 14  
*Percentages of Respondents Indicating the Adequacy of Emphasis Which Primary Schools Place on Promoting Moral Development*

	Amount of Emphasis			
	Too much % (SE)	Too little % (SE)	Just right % (SE)	Don't know/ Not sure % (SE)
<i>National Total</i>	1.2 (0.3)	39.8 (1.3)	48.2 (1.3)	10.7 (0.8)
<i>Gender of respondent</i>				
Male	1.5 (0.5)	40.9 (1.8)	46.5 (1.9)	11.0 (1.2)
Female	0.9 (0.3)	38.9 (1.7)	49.8 (1.8)	10.4 (1.1)
<i>Age group</i>				
15-24	1.9 (0.8)	34.7 (2.7)	52.2 (2.8)	11.3 (1.8)
25-49	1.1 (0.4)	38.4 (1.8)	51.7 (1.8)	8.8 (1.0)
50+	0.9 (0.4)	45.6 (2.3)	40.0 (2.3)	13.5 (1.6)
<i>Socioeconomic level</i>				
Professional/Managerial	1.1 (0.8)	41.8 (3.7)	50.5 (3.7)	6.6 (1.8)
White collar	0.8 (0.4)	40.1 (2.5)	47.4 (2.5)	11.8 (1.6)
Skilled	1.5 (0.6)	34.2 (2.4)	53.0 (2.5)	11.3 (1.6)
Unskilled	1.5 (0.6)	41.9 (2.5)	45.5 (2.5)	11.1 (1.6)
Farmer (50 acres+)	1.0 (1.0)	48.1 (4.9)	39.4 (4.8)	11.5 (3.1)
Farmer (<50 acres)	0.0 (0.0)	41.5 (7.7)	51.2 (7.8)	7.3 (4.1)
<i>Respondent's school leaving standard</i>				
Primary school only/Some second level but no exam	2.1 (0.9)	47.3 (3.0)	34.3 (2.8)	16.3 (2.2)
Group Cert/ Intermediate Cert/ Junior Cert	0.7 (0.5)	41.9 (3.0)	47.8 (3.0)	9.6 (1.8)
Leaving Cert	1.2 (0.5)	38.9 (2.4)	50.5 (2.4)	9.5 (1.4)
Further education	0.0 (0.0)	34.9 (2.6)	55.9 (2.7)	9.2 (1.6)
Still in education system	2.6 (1.1)	36.6 (3.5)	51.0 (3.6)	9.8 (2.1)
<i>Children</i>				
Respondent has no children	1.9 (0.5)	35.0 (1.9)	49.3 (2.0)	13.8 (1.4)
Respondent has children not yet in education system	0.7 (0.7)	38.1 (4.0)	49.0 (4.1)	12.2 (2.7)
Respondent has children in education system	0.4 (0.4)	40.0 (2.2)	53.7 (2.2)	5.9 (1.0)
Respondent has children who have completed their education	1.5 (0.7)	49.4 (2.7)	38.3 (2.7)	10.8 (1.7)

**Table 15**  
*Percentages of Respondents Indicating the Adequacy of Emphasis Which Primary Schools Place on Teaching Students to Care for Others*

	Amount of Emphasis			
	Too much % (SE)	Too little % (SE)	Just right % (SE)	Don't know/ Not sure % (SE)
<i>National Total</i>	1.0 (0.2)	39.2 (1.3)	52.2 (1.3)	7.7 (0.7)
<i>Gender of respondent</i>				
Male	0.7 (0.3)	40.1 (1.8)	50.6 (1.9)	8.6 (1.0)
Female	1.1 (0.4)	38.4 (1.7)	53.6 (1.8)	6.9 (0.9)
<i>Age group</i>				
15-24	1.9 (0.8)	33.9 (2.6)	57.4 (2.8)	6.9 (1.4)
25-49	0.5 (0.3)	38.4 (1.8)	53.8 (1.8)	7.3 (1.0)
50+	0.9 (0.4)	44.2 (2.3)	46.0 (2.3)	8.9 (1.3)
<i>Socioeconomic level</i>				
Professional/Managerial	1.1 (0.8)	40.1 (3.6)	51.6 (3.7)	7.1 (1.9)
White collar	0.8 (0.4)	39.3 (2.4)	51.9 (2.5)	8.1 (1.4)
Skilled	0.8 (0.6)	37.8 (2.5)	54.2 (2.5)	7.2 (1.5)
Unskilled	1.3 (0.6)	40.4 (2.5)	49.0 (2.5)	9.3 (1.6)
Farmer (50 acres+)	1.0 (1.0)	38.5 (4.8)	55.8 (4.9)	4.8 (2.1)
Farmer (<50 acres)	0.0 (0.0)	39.0 (7.6)	58.5 (7.7)	2.4 (2.4)
<i>Respondent's school leaving standard</i>				
Primary school only/Some second level but no exam	1.1 (0.6)	46.5 (3.0)	40.5 (2.9)	12.0 (1.9)
Group Cert/ Intermediate Cert/ Junior Cert	0.7 (0.5)	41.2 (3.0)	50.4 (3.0)	7.7 (1.6)
Leaving Cert	1.4 (0.6)	39.1 (2.4)	54.0 (2.4)	5.5 (1.1)
Further education	0.0 (0.0)	34.3 (2.6)	57.4 (2.7)	8.3 (1.5)
Still in education system	1.6 (0.9)	34.7 (3.4)	58.5 (3.5)	5.2 (1.6)
<i>Children</i>				
Respondent has no children	1.1 (0.5)	37.3 (1.9)	51.0 (2.0)	10.6 (1.4)
Respondent has children not yet in education system	0.7 (0.7)	34.0 (3.9)	59.2 (4.0)	6.1 (2.0)
Respondent has children in education system	0.8 (0.4)	36.9 (2.1)	57.2 (2.2)	5.1 (1.0)
Respondent has children who have completed their education	0.9 (0.5)	46.9 (2.7)	44.5 (2.7)	7.8 (1.5)

Major contrasts in responses are found between respondents whose children had completed their education and respondents without children or whose children were not yet at school. A larger percentage of respondents whose children had completed education than of any other category expressed the view that too little emphasis was accorded three goals: giving students an understanding of their religion (Table 3), promoting moral development (Table 14), and teaching students to care for others (Table 15). They were also less likely than respondents with no children to say that encouraging students to have opinions of their own (Table 5) and developing communication skills (Table 10) received too little emphasis.

#### CONCLUSION

The findings of the survey may be interpreted as indicating broad public support for the emphasis placed on 13 goals in primary education. A plurality of respondents said that the emphasis was just right for all but one goal. Furthermore, the plurality exceeded 50% for 10 goals. However, the findings also provide evidence of variation in the perceptions of respondents in two major respects.

First, respondents varied in the degree of satisfaction they expressed with the adequacy of emphasis accorded different goals. Thus, schools were considered to provide a more satisfactory emphasis in the case of some goals than in the case of other goals. If we accept a high percentage of respondents who regarded the emphasis on a goal as just right and a low percentage who said too little as indicative of satisfaction, then the goals that are most satisfactory are teaching basic skills of literacy and numeracy and teaching students to work co-operatively. The former is somewhat surprising given the problems identified in studies of pupils' achievements in primary school (Eivers, Shiel, Perkins, & Cosgrove, 2005; Shiel, Surgenor, Close, & Millar, 2006).

Using the same criteria, the goal that is least satisfactory is clearly teaching foreign languages. The difference between this goal (considered just right by 31.3% of respondents) and the goal endorsed by the largest percentage (teaching literacy and numeracy endorsed as just right by 71.6% of respondents) is considerable.

The second way in which variation occurred in responses was in relation to participants' gender, age, socioeconomic level, school leaving standard, and whether or not the respondent had children in the education system. The pattern of responses indicated that individuals' perceptions were associated, at least for some objectives, with all these factors.

The fewest number of differences were found in the case of gender. Females, compared to males, thought that too little emphasis was accorded only three goals (giving students an understanding of their religion; teaching foreign languages; developing interpersonal skills and relationships).

Differences related to age were recorded for ten goals. The youngest group disagreed with the oldest group on all ten, while the middle age group tended to agree with the youngest group. The oldest age group were more likely to say that too little emphasis was accorded giving students an understanding of their religion, promoting moral development, and teaching students to care for others. The youngest age group, on the other hand, took a more individualistic approach saying that too little emphasis was accorded encouraging students to have opinions of their own, developing the ability to adapt to new situations, and developing interpersonal skills and relationships.

Differences relating to respondents' socioeconomic status were found for ten goals. In four cases, the professional/managerial group differed from others in saying that goals received too little emphasis (helping students appreciate music, art, and literature; encouraging students to have opinions of their own; developing communication skills; and developing interpersonal skills and relationships).

Respondents differed on nine goals depending on their school leaving standard. Respondents still in the education system were most critical, differing from other groups in saying that four goals received too little emphasis. For two of these, respondents with education beyond the Leaving Certificate gave similar responses. Respondents with the lowest level of education (primary school only/some post-primary but no examination) differed from other groups in saying that too little emphasis was placed on giving students an understanding of their religion, teaching basic skills of literacy and numeracy, promoting moral development, and teaching students to care for others.

Respondents reflected the influence of their children's educational experience (or lack of it) in the case of five goals. Respondents whose children had completed their education differed from other categories of respondent in saying that too little emphasis was placed on giving students an understanding of their religion, promoting moral development, and teaching students to care for others. They also differed from other groups in their view that encouraging students to have opinions of their own and teaching foreign languages did not receive too little emphasis.

These findings suggest that respondents were influenced by their personal experience of the education system, though it is difficult to disentangle the possible effects of age, socioeconomic status, and the educational level attained

by a respondent. However, it is possible to identify clusters of respondents associated with particular response patterns. The first is made up of younger and better educated respondents. These were most critical of the current system insofar as they were most likely to say that too little emphasis was placed on five goals: helping students appreciate music, art, and literature; encouraging students to have opinions of their own; teaching foreign languages; developing the ability to adapt to new situations; and developing interpersonal skills and relationships. The second category, which was made up of better educated but not younger respondents, thought that too little emphasis was placed on developing communication skills. The third category, made up of older respondents and respondents with less formal education, thought that too little emphasis was placed on giving students an understanding of their religion, promoting moral development, and teaching students to care for others. While the categorization is not readily interpretable, it, together with the other findings of the survey, should at the very least serve to remind us that divergence of interests should be taken into account in considering the results of public opinion surveys.

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