
Consultation report for English and Mathematics K–2 syllabuses

November 2021

Released November 2021

© 2021 NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales.

The NESA website holds the ONLY official and up-to-date versions of these documents available on the internet. ANY other copies of these documents, or parts of these documents, that may be found elsewhere on the internet might not be current and are NOT authorised. You CANNOT rely on copies from any other source.

The documents on this website contain material prepared by NESA for and on behalf of the Crown in right of the State of New South Wales. The material is protected by Crown copyright.

All rights reserved. No part of the Material may be reproduced in Australia or in any other country by any process, electronic or otherwise, in any material form, or transmitted to any other person or stored electronically in any form without the prior written permission of NESA, except as permitted by the Copyright Act 1968.

When you access the material you agree:

- to use the material for information purposes only
- to reproduce a single copy for personal bona fide study use only and not to reproduce any major extract or the entire material without the prior permission of NESA
- to acknowledge that the material is provided by NESA
- to include this copyright notice in any copy made
- not to modify the material or any part of the material without the express prior written permission of NESA.

The material may contain third-party copyright materials such as photos, diagrams, quotations, cartoons and artworks. These materials are protected by Australian and international copyright laws and may not be reproduced or transmitted in any format without the copyright owner's specific permission. Unauthorised reproduction, transmission or commercial use of such copyright materials may result in prosecution.

NESA has made all reasonable attempts to locate owners of third-party copyright material and invites anyone from whom permission has not been sought to contact the Copyright Officer.

Phone: (02) 9367 8289

Fax: (02) 9279 1482

Email: copyright@nesa.nsw.edu.au

Published by

NSW Education Standards Authority

GPO Box 5300

Sydney NSW 2001

Australia www.educationstandards.nsw.edu.au

D2021/324117

Contents

Contents	2
Introduction	4
Consultation methodology	5
Consultation analysis	6
Summary of results and actions taken	7
English K–2 draft syllabus feedback and NESA responses	8
Mathematics K–2 draft syllabus feedback and NESA responses	11
Appendices – Consultation participation	14

Introduction

The NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) has redeveloped the English and Mathematics K–2 syllabuses guided by our revised [syllabus development process](#) in response to the recommendations of the 2020 NSW Curriculum Review.

The purpose of this consultation report is to document the feedback received from English and Mathematics K–2 syllabus consultation and the actions taken by NESA in response to the feedback.

The consultation process began with the release of the draft syllabuses on 23 March 2021. Stakeholders were invited to participate in public and targeted consultation activities throughout two consultation periods, ending on 23 August 2021.

Consultation methodology

NESA's consultation on the English and Mathematics K–2 syllabuses was completed in two rounds. Round 1 was conducted between 23 March 2021 and 30 April 2021 and Round 2 between 2 August 2021 and 23 August 2021. Information about the consultation process and opportunities to provide feedback were made available through the [NESA website](#), in [NESA News](#), Curriculum Reform subscriber email and on the [Curriculum Reform website](#).

Specific information regarding consultation activities is provided in the appendices.

Public consultation

Online survey

An online survey was used to collect feedback from stakeholders about the English and Mathematics K–2 syllabuses. Survey respondents had the opportunity to provide feedback collected as both quantitative and qualitative data. In Round 1 of consultation 743 survey responses were received ([see Appendix 1](#)) and in Round 2, there were 538 responses ([see Appendix 3](#)).

Targeted consultation

Targeted focus groups were held with stakeholders such as special education, EAL/D, gifted and talented and Aboriginal education groups to ensure feedback was inclusive of the diversity of learners and to gather additional advice ([see Appendix 5](#)).

Thirteen targeted focus group meetings took place between 23 March 2021 and 23 August 2021 for:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders
- diversity stakeholders
- subject associations.

The targeted focus group meetings included a briefing from NESA officers. Following the briefing, participants were invited to provide feedback on the syllabuses. The design of questions, meeting format and collection of data were dependent on the stakeholder group and focus of the meeting.

Technical Advisory Group

The Technical Advisory Groups (TAGs) reviewed, provided feedback and suggested amendments to draft syllabus outcomes and content. They advised NESA staff about issues or controversial matters that may arise during syllabus development and/or consultation.

Feedback from sectors

Sector Reference Groups (SeRGs) were informed of the progress of syllabus development and consulted on matters relating to syllabus implementation. A number of written submissions were received from the sectors that provided constructive and valuable feedback, which was used to further refine the syllabuses after the consultation period.

Consultation analysis

A data consultant was engaged to analyse the data generated during the consultation. The quantitative data was analysed for trends. The qualitative data, including survey feedback and meeting notes, was analysed to develop themes, which were subsequently reflected in the analysis of the second round of consultation feedback. In addition, the NESA subject matter experts reviewed all feedback.

The strengths and key matters presented in this report were determined based on the relevance of the feedback to the scope of the project, and the salience and frequency of the matters raised ([Appendices 1–5](#)). Minor matters raised during consultation, such as edits, errors of fact and terminology, were considered but may not be represented in the report.

Summary of results and actions taken

Strengths

The majority of stakeholders found the syllabus outcomes and content to be explicit, appropriate and useful, and reflecting clear learning progressions. Syllabus aims and rationales were supported by most stakeholders. The inclusion of access content points, provided for students with significant intellectual disability, was very well received, with over 80% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that they will benefit their students by providing better support for the diversity of learners.

Improvements – syllabus content and examples

The English K–2 syllabus has improved the outcomes and content, in particular those related to Creating written texts. Concerns regarding the outcome expectations being too high during the Round 1 consultation were actioned and the outcomes were accordingly revised. Following the Round 2 consultation, Creating written texts heading organisers were revised to better represent content under them and the progression of content was refined, and the order of content was adjusted for clarity.

In the Mathematics K–2 syllabus, refinement to content has improved the visibility of the working mathematically processes. Outcomes and content related to place value were strengthened. 'Money' was included as a learning context for Number within the syllabus. Improvements were made to representations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

Teaching advice and implementation

The inclusion of teaching advice as syllabus support was widely appreciated. The advice in relation to supporting the diversity of learners was welcomed as an important aspect supporting teachers. 80% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the teaching advice will benefit their teaching. Suggestions for further improvements to the teaching advice were provided, particularly in relation to addressing the needs of the full range of diverse learners. These suggestions informed the further development of teaching advice.

Summary

Consultation with stakeholders was both positive and constructive. Key content and outcome suggestions were implemented, and inclusivity and diversity concerns were actioned. Following the consultation, the draft syllabuses were reviewed and updated. The final syllabuses include refined outcomes and content as per the below feedback.

English K–2 draft syllabus feedback and NESA responses

Summary of feedback received from 23 March to 30 April 2021 and from 2 August to 23 August 2021

The following is an overview of the feedback received during both rounds of consultation.

Strengths of the draft syllabus	Sources
<p>Progression of learning and reduced content</p> <p>Respondents found the draft syllabus emphasised key foundational skills and the progression of learning across stages. Many respondents indicated they were happy with the reduction in content and the increased clear and explicit focus on the essential skills and knowledge required in the early years.</p>	<p>Subject Associations, Survey, TAG</p>
<p>Content heading organisers</p> <p>Feedback supported the new content organisers that identify the essential skills and knowledge for each outcome.</p>	<p>Subject Associations, Survey</p>
<p>Oral language</p> <p>The separation of vocabulary into a discrete outcome was welcomed, as it is an important area of learning.</p>	<p>Diversity, TAG</p>
<p>Literature</p> <p>Highlighting literature has been essential in the development of core knowledge for subject English.</p>	<p>Subject Associations, Survey, TAG</p>
<p>Writing</p> <p>Stakeholders welcomed the clarity and expectations for revised outcomes and acknowledged the need to give more emphasis to writing, and in particular to ensure that students have a clear understanding of how sentences develop.</p>	<p>Survey, TAG</p>
<p>Catering for the diversity of learners</p> <p>Stakeholders affirmed the accessibility of the outcomes and content for all students. Teaching advice related to Aboriginal students was strongly supported. The inclusion of access content points for students with significant intellectual disability was also strongly supported.</p>	<p>Aboriginal Ed, Diversity, Survey</p>

English K–2 key matters received from 23 March to 30 April 2021 and from 2 August to 23 August 2021

Key matters	Sources	NESA's response to the key matters
Round: 2 The place of phonemic awareness could be clarified, particularly in reference to 'segmenting and blending', in phonological awareness.	Subject Associations, Survey, Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wording adjustments have been made to the syllabus content for clarity and to reflect the change made to the outcome. The syllabus content now specifically refers to segmenting and blending. • Teaching advice has been restructured and now includes additional important information, particularly on the subskills of phonemic awareness such as blending, segmenting and manipulating phonemes.
Round: 2 Suggestion for the continued inclusion of an outcome for Stage 1 phonological awareness, as was seen in the initial consultation period.	Subject Associations, Survey, Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the small amount of new content needed to address students' knowledge and skills following on from Early Stage 1, the Phonological awareness content was embedded in the Phonological component of Spelling in Stage 1.
Round: 2 'In parallel links' between outcomes were welcomed with suggestion that they could be expanded to ensure all connections between outcomes in English K–2 are recognised.	TAG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional 'in parallel' links were included for additional syllabus outcomes and aligned in the relevant teaching advice.
Round: 1 and 2 Some of the footnote examples needed to be revised for clarity and quality.	Survey, TAG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refinements to footnote examples were made to the syllabus to enhance understanding of the content.
Round: 1 Representations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures could be strengthened.	Aboriginal Ed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content, examples and sample teaching advice have been reviewed and amended.

Key matters	Sources	NESA's response to the key matters
Round: 1 and 2 Concern the outcome expectations for Early Stage 1 and Stage 1 Creating written texts were too difficult, content needed to reflect step-by-step learning development more clearly	Survey, TAG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome expectations for Creating written texts were revised after Round 1 consultation to ensure they are more developmentally appropriate. • Outcome and content points were refined after Round 2 to support systematic teaching in the early years covering sentence structure, grammar and punctuation in factual, persuasive and imaginative texts.
Round: 2 Reorganise and/or rename some content heading organisers, revise and reposition content for clarity.	TAG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some content heading organisers in Early Stage 1 and Stage 1 Creating written texts were renamed and repositioned. Content was revised to ensure clarity for key learning points under each heading.
Round: 2 Access content points could be refined.	Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access content points provided for consultation have been reviewed to ensure they describe learning opportunities that will enable students to demonstrate progress towards the Early Stage 1 outcomes. Further access content points are being developed in consultation with education sectors and key stakeholders prior to the release of the syllabus.

Key: Survey (Survey), Subject Associations (Subject Associations), Diversity stakeholder targeted meetings including Disability, EAL/D and Gifted education (Diversity), Aboriginal Education targeted meeting (Aboriginal Ed) and Technical Advisory Group (TAG).

Mathematics K–2 draft syllabus feedback and NESAs responses

Summary of feedback received from 23 March to 30 April 2021 and 2 August to 23 August 2021

The following is an overview of the feedback received during both rounds of consultation.

Strengths of the draft syllabus	Sources
<p>Progression of learning and reduced content</p> <p>Respondents found the draft syllabus emphasised key foundational skills and the progression of learning across stages. Many respondents indicated they were happy with the reduction in content points and the increased clear and explicit focus on the essential skills and knowledge required in the early years.</p>	<p>Subject Associations, Survey, TAG</p>
<p>Content heading organisers</p> <p>Feedback supported the new content organisers that identify the essential skills and knowledge for each outcome.</p>	<p>Subject Associations, Survey</p>
<p>Language</p> <p>Respondents approved of the greater focus on the language and vocabulary required for learning in mathematics. It was recognised that this builds understanding and encourages greater precision and accuracy in mathematical language. They recognised that developing language in mathematics can help reinforce learning in other areas, including reading, writing and oral language.</p>	<p>Diversity, Survey</p>
<p>Increased emphasis on reasoning</p> <p>Respondents supported the increased focus on mathematical reasoning in the early years that is embedded throughout the outcomes and content. They acknowledged the useful opportunities identified in draft syllabus to develop mathematical reasoning in the content.</p>	<p>Subject Associations, Survey, TAG</p>

Mathematics K–2 key matters received from 23 March to 30 April 2021 and from 2 August to 23 August 2021

Key matters	Sources	Response to the key matters
<p>Round: 1 and 2</p> <p>There were concerns over a perceived lack of visibility for the working mathematically processes.</p>	<p>Survey, TAG</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The importance of the key working mathematically processes were expanded after Round 2 in the preamble section of the syllabus to further emphasise the importance of the processes. A revised syllabus content structure diagram was developed to illustrate the important role working mathematically plays across all areas of mathematics. Further work was undertaken to ensure Working Mathematically was embedded in the content. The digital presentation of the syllabus will overlay the Working Mathematically outcome alongside the other outcomes for greater visibility.
<p>Round: 1</p> <p>Concern that the outcomes and content were not sufficiently inclusive to allow the full range of learners to demonstrate their skills and abilities, particularly students with disability.</p>	<p>Diversity, Survey</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Syllabus access content points have been developed for students with significant intellectual disability to help them access the Early Stage 1 outcomes. Additional teaching advice provides guidance for supporting the range of student learners in achieving syllabus outcomes.
<p>Round: 1</p> <p>Respondents suggested that content related to money had been removed.</p>	<p>Aboriginal Ed, Survey</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following TAG recommendations, examples related to money have been linked to appropriate content to support learning about money in the context of Number.
<p>Round: 1</p> <p>Concern that the importance of place value was not evident in the outcomes and content, given its importance in the early years.</p>	<p>Survey</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An outcome dedicated to place value in Stage 1 Number was included. Outcomes and content related to place value were strengthened.

Key matters	Sources	Response to the key matters
<p>Round: 1 and 2 Feedback suggested a need for increased representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.</p>	<p>Aboriginal Ed, Survey</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resourcing was allocated to support the development of content and examples. Aboriginal educators led the development of draft content, examples and teaching advice related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. • An additional meeting was held with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders to seek feedback on the drafted amendments. • NESA officers leading syllabus development analysed the feedback and increased the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

Key: Survey (Survey), Subject Associations (Subject Associations), Diversity stakeholder targeted meetings including Disability, EAL/D, and Gifted education (Diversity), Aboriginal Education targeted meeting (Aboriginal Ed) and Technical Advisory Group (TAG).

Appendices – Consultation participation

Appendix 1: Online survey demographic data Round 1 consultation

NESA received **439 responses** to the English survey and **304 responses** to the Mathematics

Each of the **three education sectors** were represented

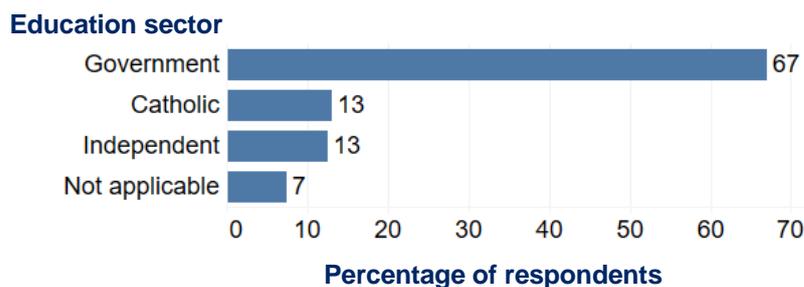


Figure 1: Educational sector of respondents to the English and Mathematics K–2 ‘Have your say’ survey (Round 1)

Respondents came from a range of education contexts, with a majority of **68% being primary school teachers**

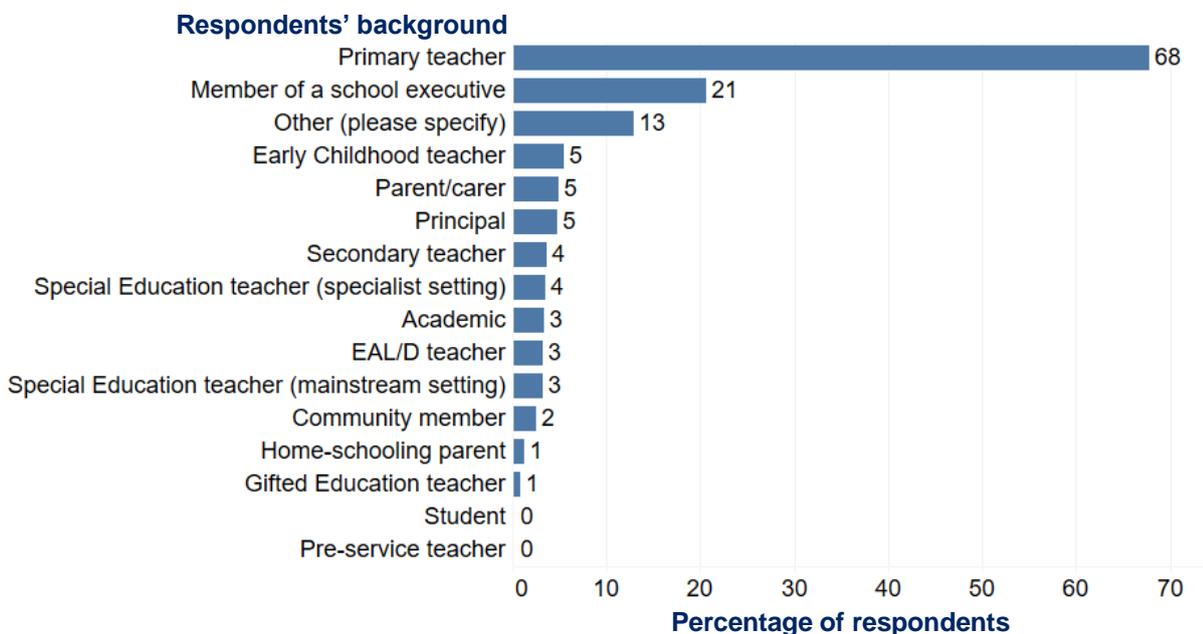


Figure 2: Background of respondents to the English and Mathematics K–2 ‘Have your say’ survey (Round 1)

Other respondents included teacher’s aides, speech pathologists, education officers from Catholic School dioceses, educational consultants, representatives of professional organisation, a reading interventionist, and a curriculum advisor

Of participants who are teachers, teaching experience varied, with **44% of respondents having taught for more than 20 years**

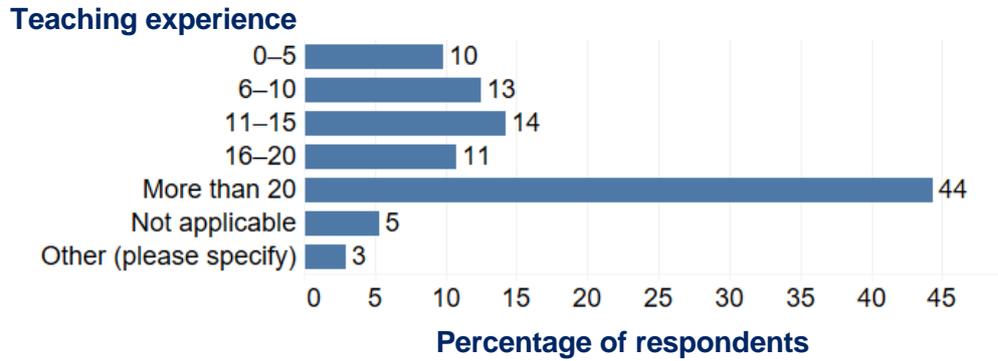
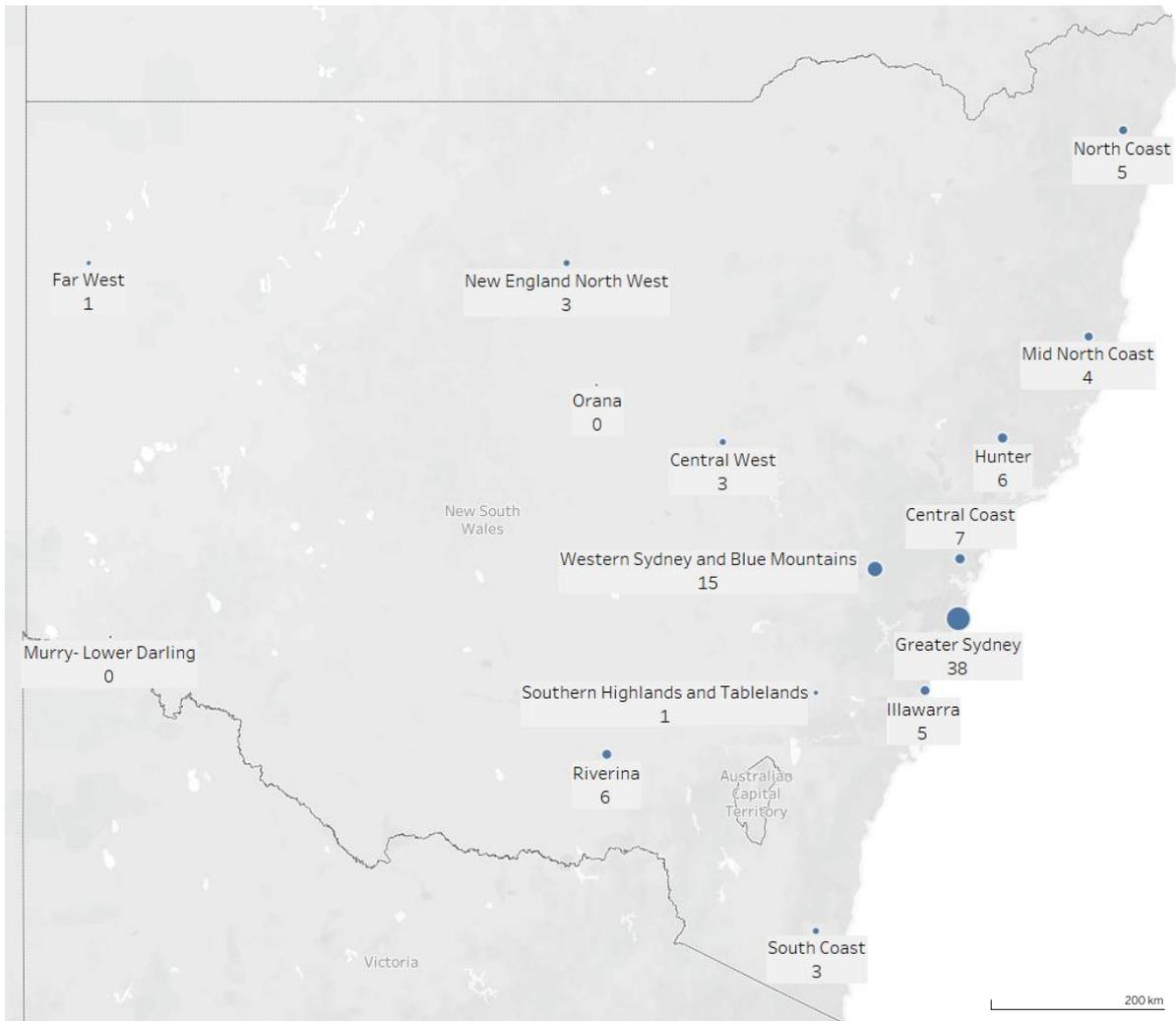


Figure 3: Number of years as a practising teacher for respondents to the English and Mathematics K–2 ‘Have your say’ survey (Round 1)

Stakeholders across **New South Wales** participated, with 38% of respondents coming from the Greater Sydney area

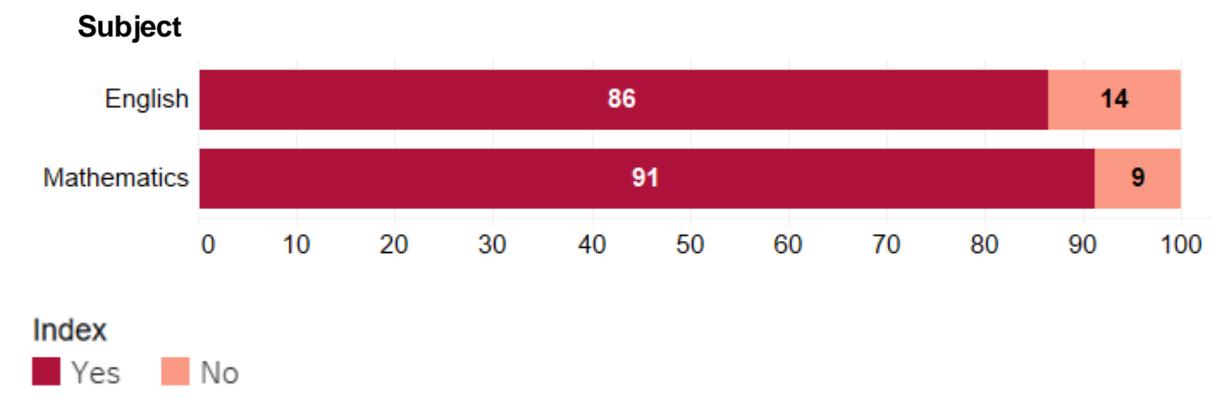


Map 1: Map of New South Wales with the location and percentage of respondents to the English and Mathematics K–2 ‘Have your say’ survey (Round 1)

Appendix 2: Online survey quantitative data Round 1 consultation

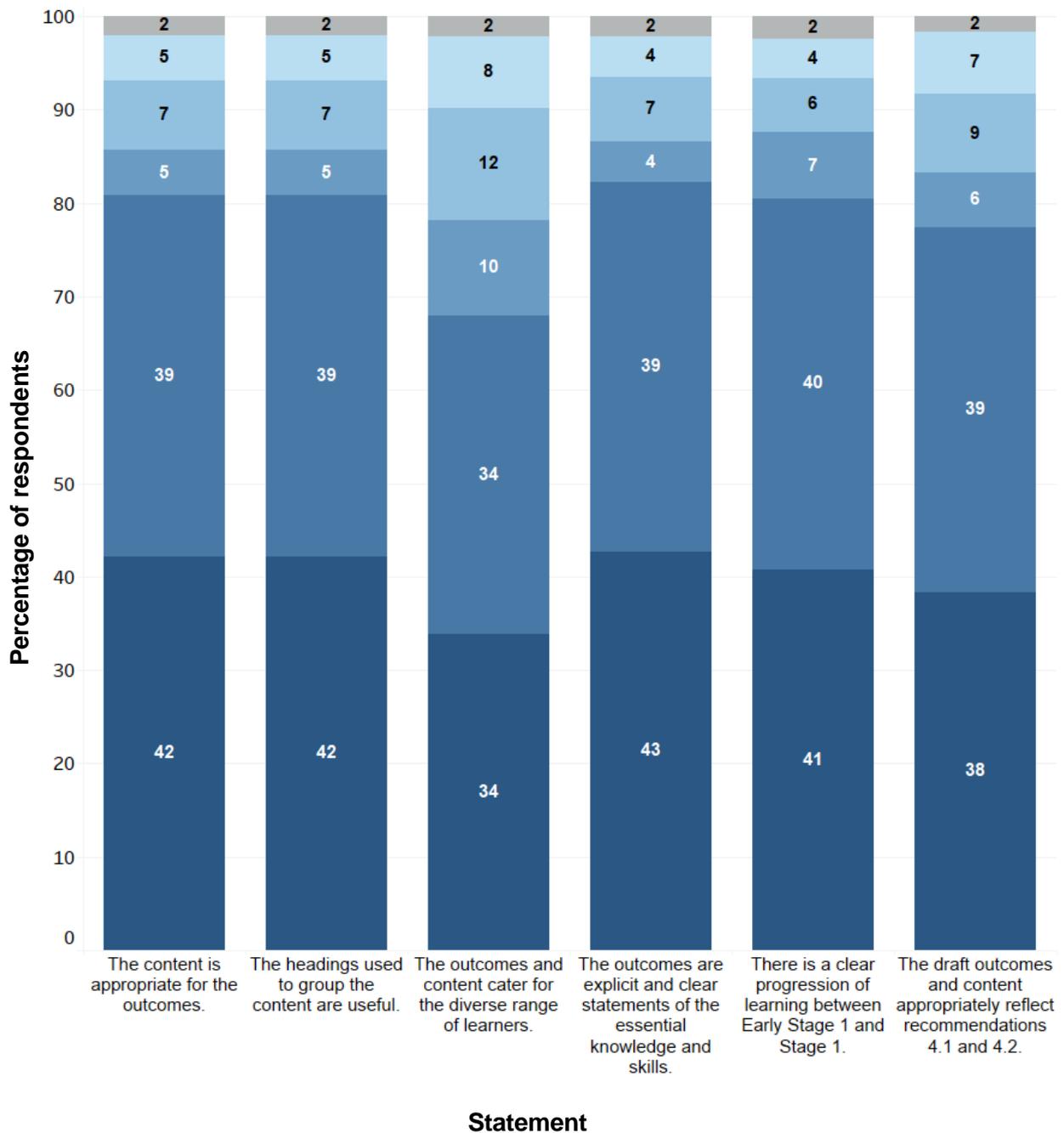
Figures 4, 5 and 6 provide an overview of survey quantitative data gathered on the outcomes and content.

Figure 4: percentage breakdown of responses to the question “Is the sample teaching advice helpful?”



English

Figure 5: Average percentage breakdown of responses to the question 'To what extent do you agree with the following statements?'

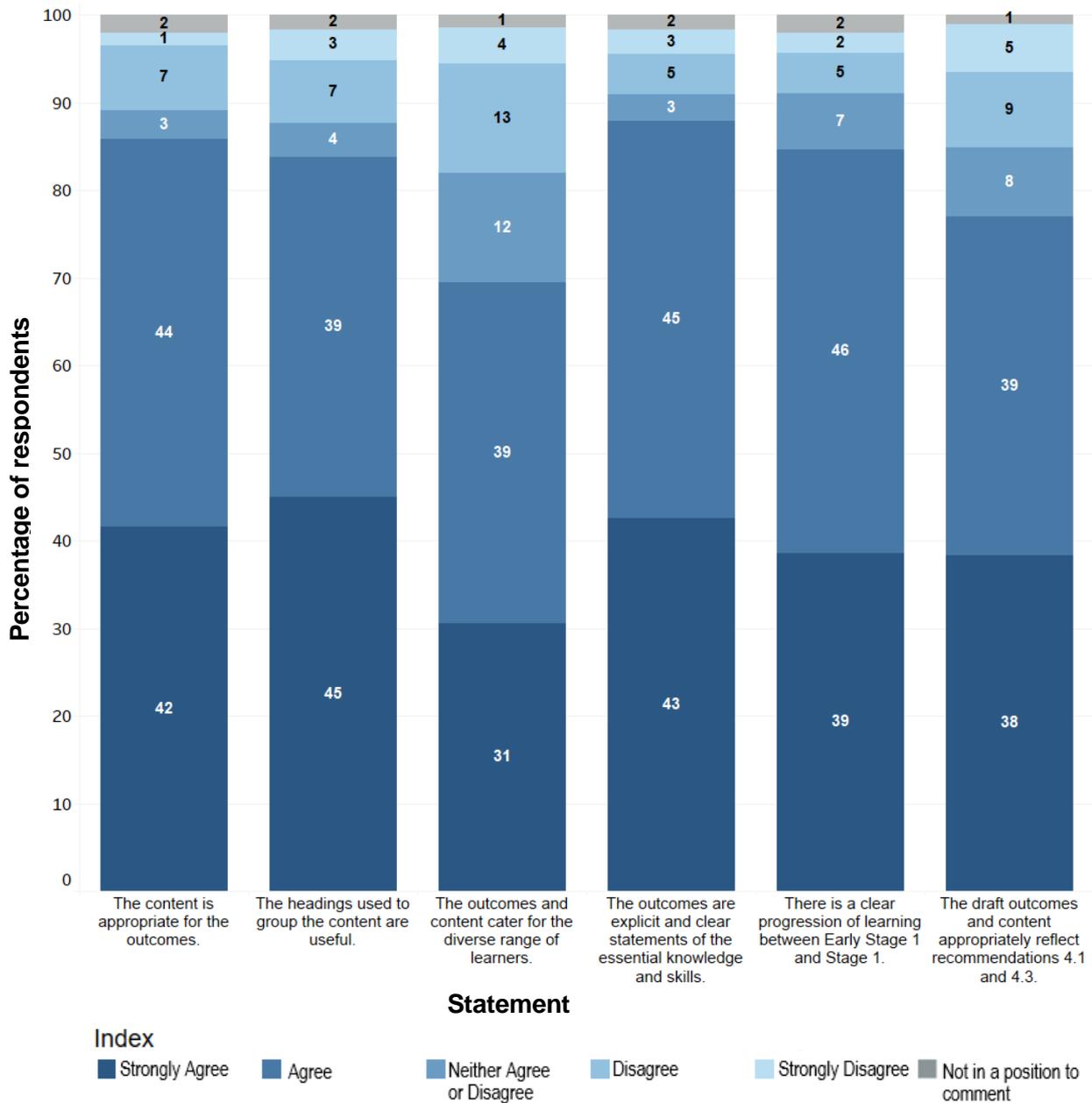


Index

■ Strongly Agree
 ■ Agree
 ■ Neither Agree or Disagree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Strongly Disagree
 ■ Not in a position to comment

Mathematics

Figure 6: Average percentage breakdown of responses to the question 'To what extent do you agree with the following statements?'



Appendix 3: Online survey demographic data Round 2 Consultation

NESA received **323 responses** to the English Survey and **215 responses** to the Mathematics Survey

Each of the **three education sectors** were represented

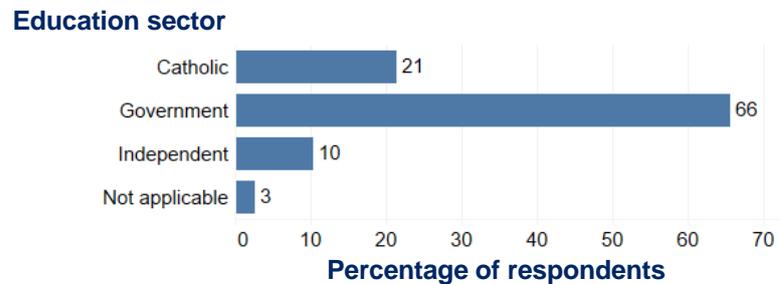


Figure 7: Educational sector of respondents to the English and Mathematics K–2 ‘Have your say’ survey (Round 2)

Respondents came from a range of education contexts, with a majority of **63% being primary school teachers**

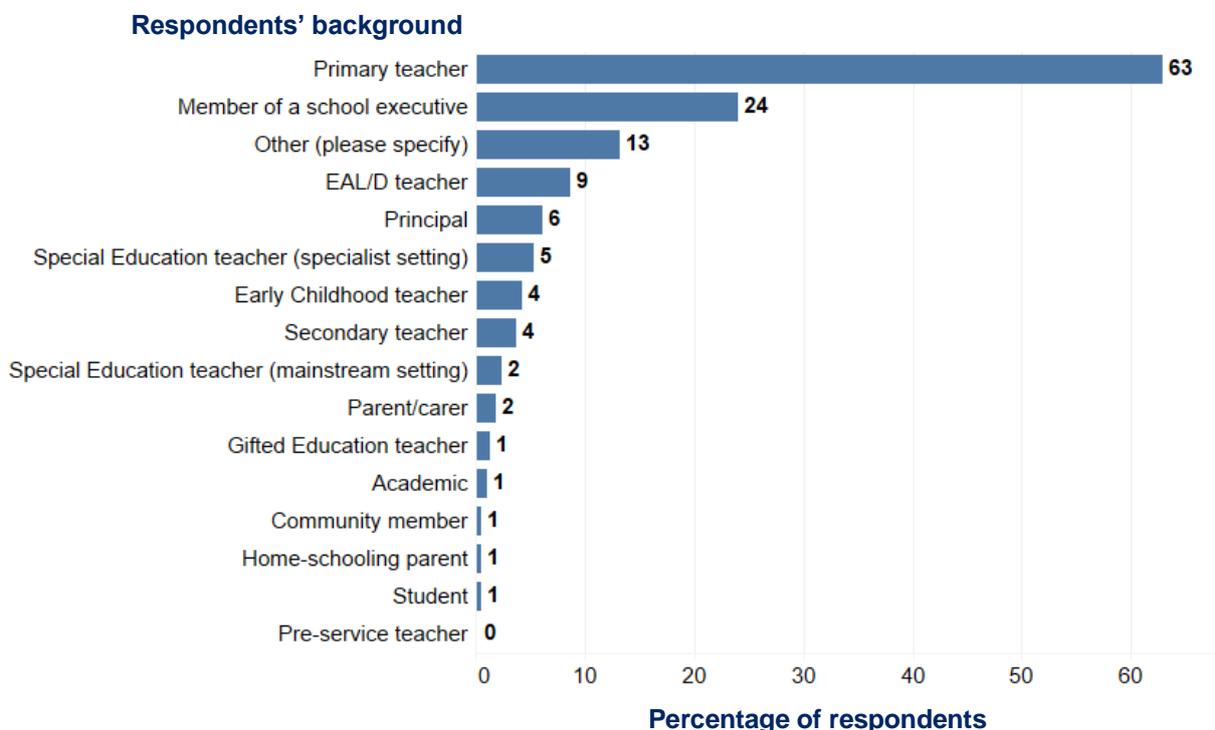


Figure 8: Background of respondents to the English and Mathematics K–2 ‘Have your say’ survey (Round 2)

Other respondents included a publisher, community associations, an itinerant hearing support teacher, an education officer for the early years, a senior literacy specialist, teaching educators, and a curriculum advisor

Of participants who are teachers, teaching experience varied, with **47% of respondents having taught for more than 20 years**

Teaching experience

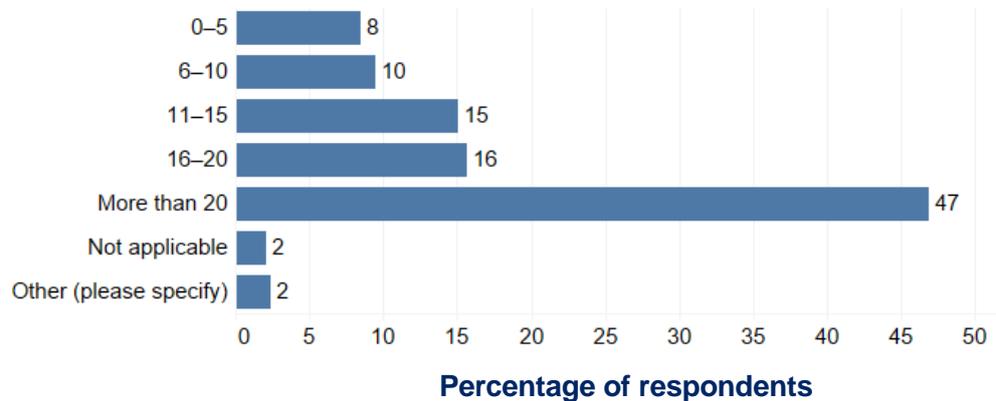
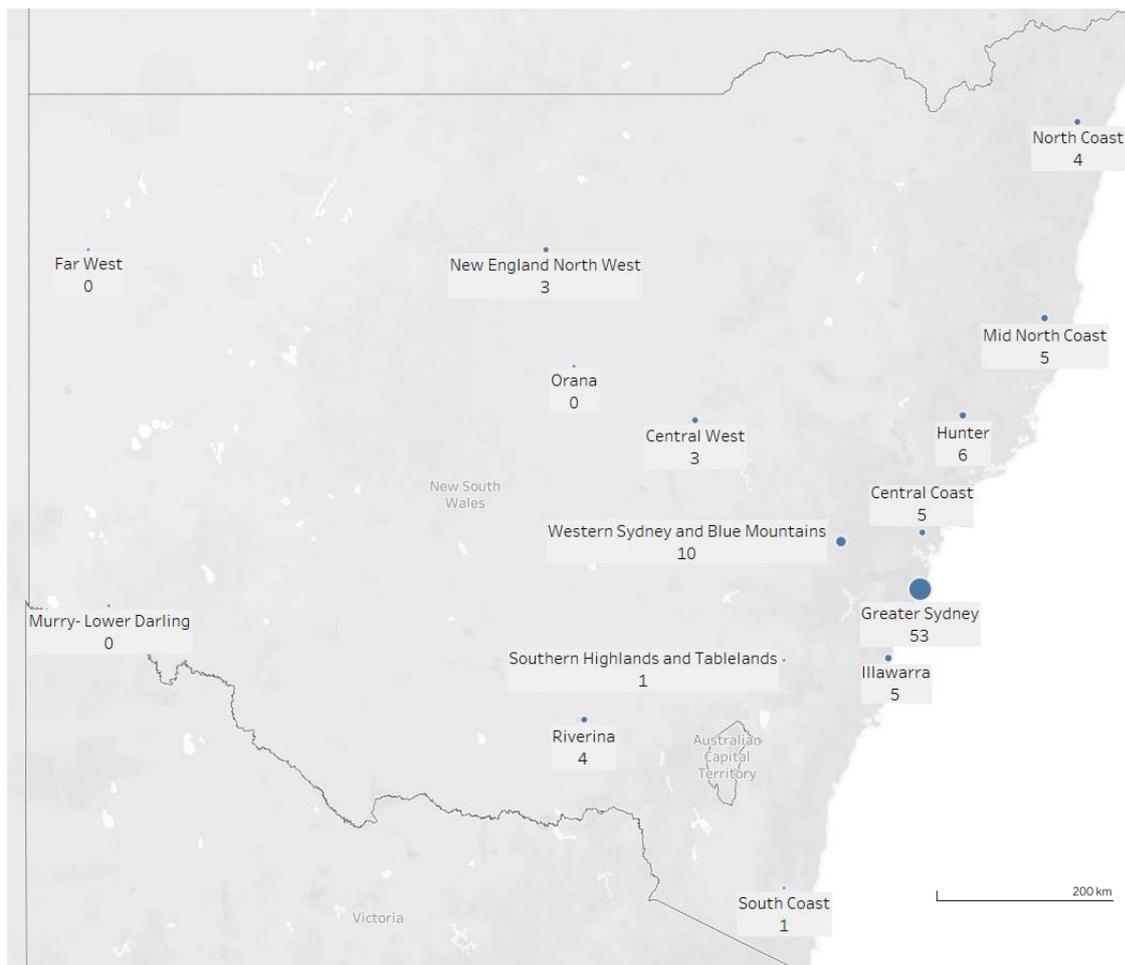


Figure 9: Number of years as a practising teacher for respondents to the English and Mathematics K–2 ‘Have your say’ survey (Round 2)

Stakeholders **across New South Wales** participated, with 53% of responders coming from the Greater Sydney area

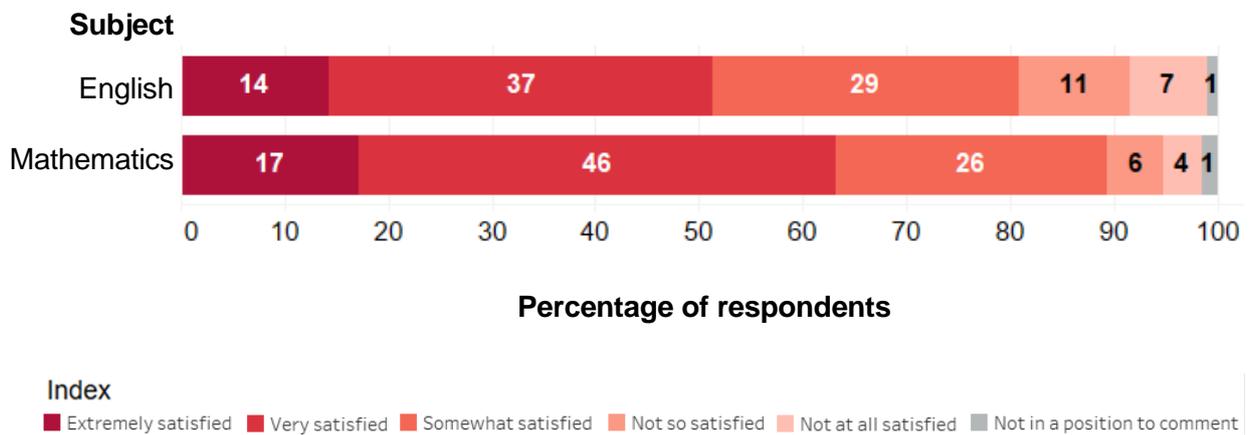


Map 2: Map of New South Wales with the location and percentage of respondents to the English and Mathematics K–2 ‘Have your say’ survey (Round 2)

Appendix 4: Online survey quantitative data Round 2 consultation

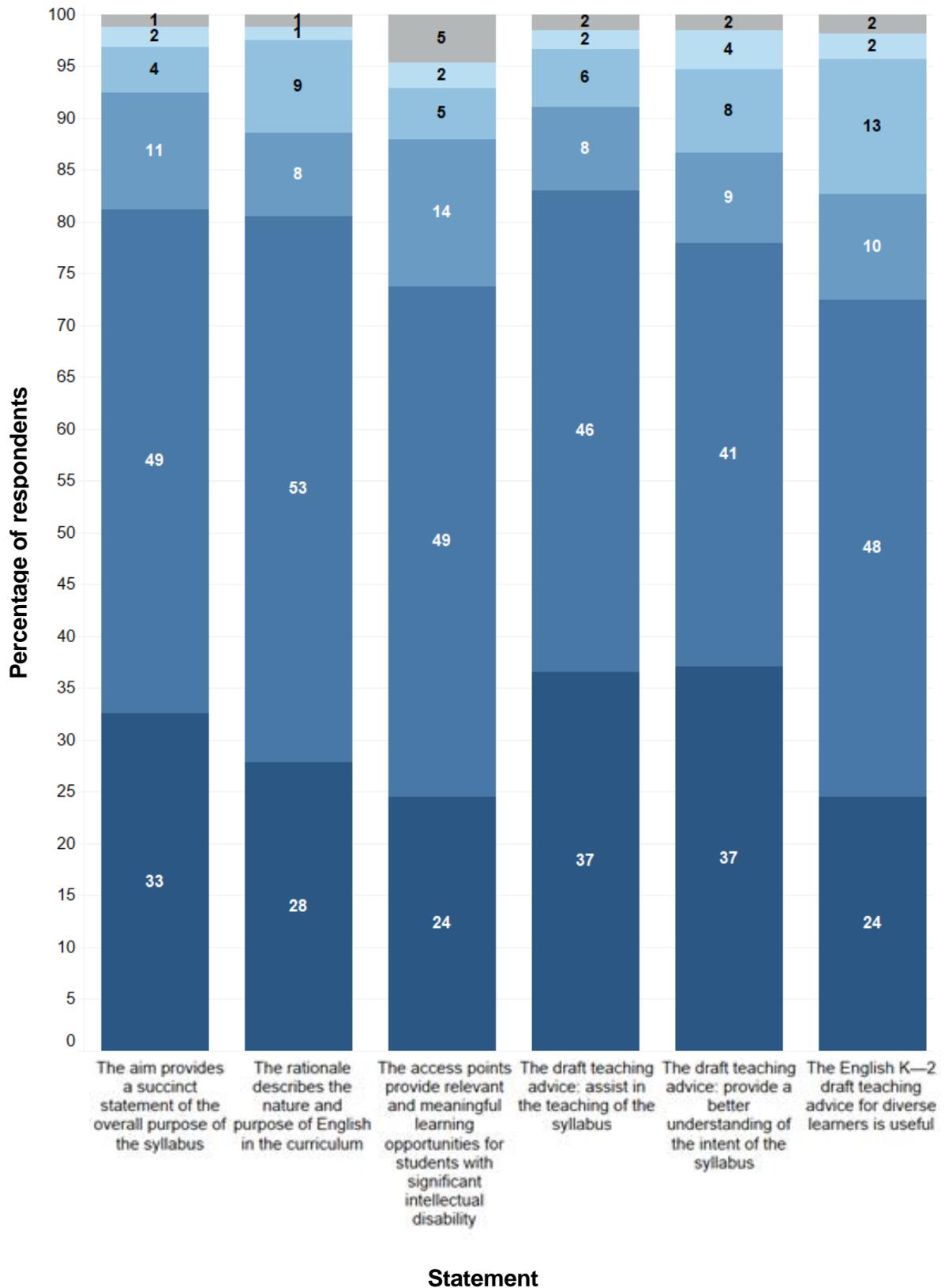
Figures 10, 11 and 12 provide an overview of survey quantitative data gathered on the draft syllabus.

Figure 10: Percentage breakdown of responses to the question 'How satisfied are you with the draft syllabus?'



English

Figure 11: Percentage breakdown of responses to the question ‘To what extent do you agree with the following statements?’

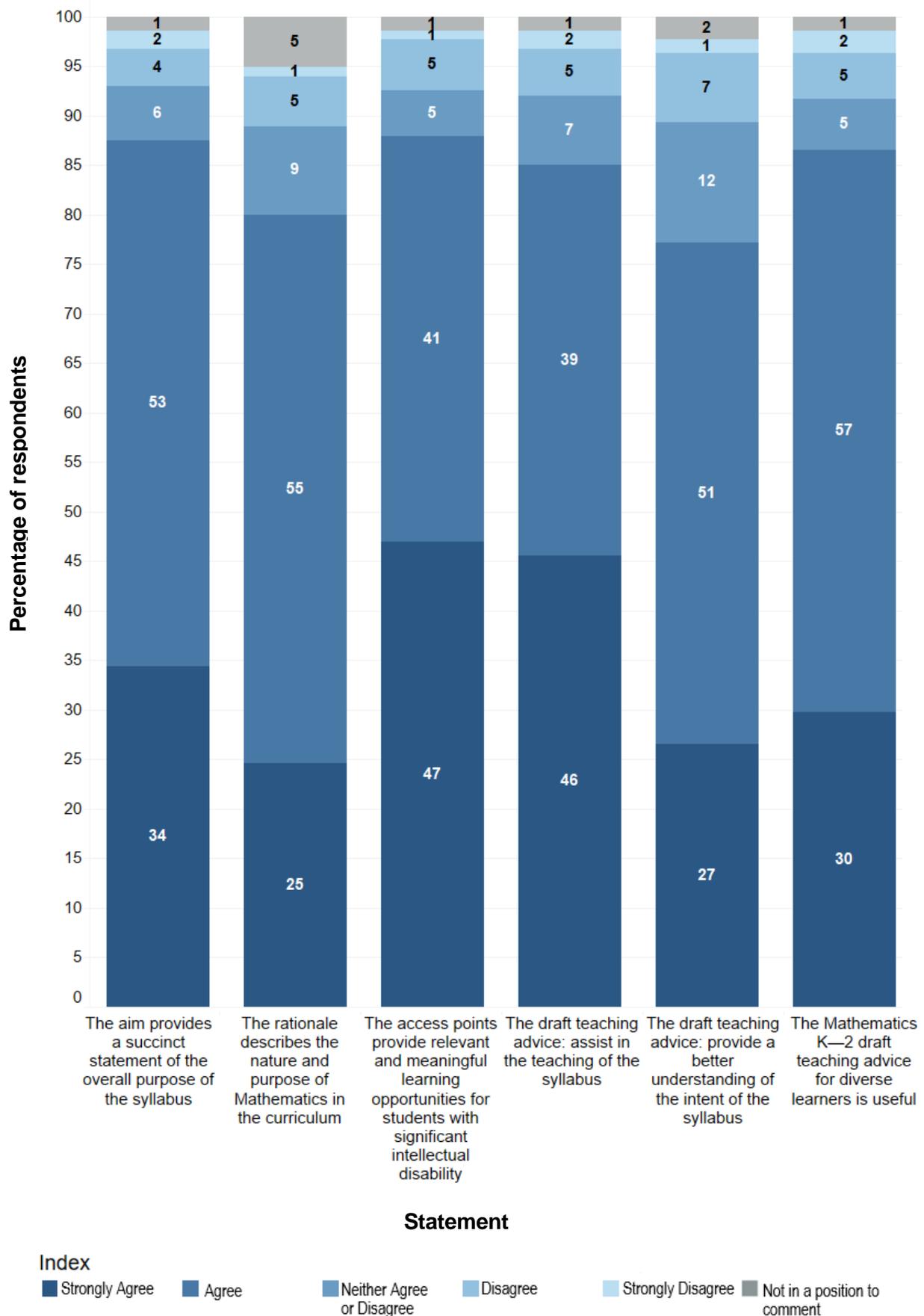


Index



Mathematics

Figure 12: Percentage breakdown of responses to the question ‘To what extent do you agree with the following statements?’



Appendix 5: Targeted focus groups

Aboriginal Education (code: Aboriginal Ed)

The Aboriginal Education targeted focus group meetings acquired feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders on the English and Mathematics K–2 draft syllabuses.

Subject	Location	Date (2021)	Number of attendees
English Draft Outcomes and Content	Online	20 April, 11 May	5
Mathematics Draft Outcomes and Content	Online	21 April	8
English Draft Syllabus	Online	10 August	6
Mathematics Draft Syllabus	Online	18 August	9
Mathematics Draft Syllabus: Representations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures	Online	15 September	6

Diversity (code: Diversity)

The Diversity targeted focus group meetings acquired feedback from stakeholders on the inclusion of students with disability, EAL/D students and gifted and talented students in the syllabuses.

Subject	Location	Date (2021)	Number of attendees
English and Mathematics Draft Outcomes and Content: Diverse learners	Online	22 April	20
English and Mathematics Draft Syllabus: Disability	Online	16 August	14
English and Mathematics Draft Syllabus: English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) education	Online	17 August	5
English and Mathematics Draft Syllabus: Gifted education	Online	19 August	4

Subject association (code: Subject Association)

The subject association targeted focus groups acquired feedback from stakeholders in relation to English and Mathematics K–2.

Subject	Location	Date (2021)	Number of attendees
English Outcomes and Content	Online	30 March	7
Mathematics Outcomes and Content	Online	29 March	4
English Draft Syllabus	Online	11 August	7
Mathematics Draft Syllabus	Online	16 August	8

Appendix 6: English K–2 Technical Advisory Group consultation meeting

Subject	Location	Date
Technical Advisory Group	Online	28 October 2020
Technical Advisory Group	Online	14 January 2021
Technical Advisory Group	Online	3 February 2021
Technical Advisory Group	Online	24 February 2021
Technical Advisory Group	Online	4 May 2021
Technical Advisory Group	Online	1 June 2021
Technical Advisory Group	Online	21 July 2021
Technical Advisory Group	Online	27 August 2021

Appendix 7: Mathematics K–2 Technical Advisory Group consultation meeting

Subject	Location	Date
Technical Advisory Group	Online	28 October 2020
Technical Advisory Group	Online	3 February 2021
Technical Advisory Group	Online	26 February 2021
Technical Advisory Group	Online	6 May 2021
Technical Advisory Group	Online	2 June 2021
Technical Advisory Group	Online	21 July 2021
Technical Advisory Group	Online	27 August 2021
Technical Advisory Group	Online	7 September 2021