



# Fermanagh Trust

## Shared Education Project

**Date: April 2008**



# Method & Sample

# Methodology

- Random sample of 400 parents living in selected postal sectors
  - BT74, BT75, BT92, BT93, & BT94
- Conducted as a programme of telephone interviews between 5<sup>th</sup> April and 15<sup>th</sup> April.

## Sample Structure

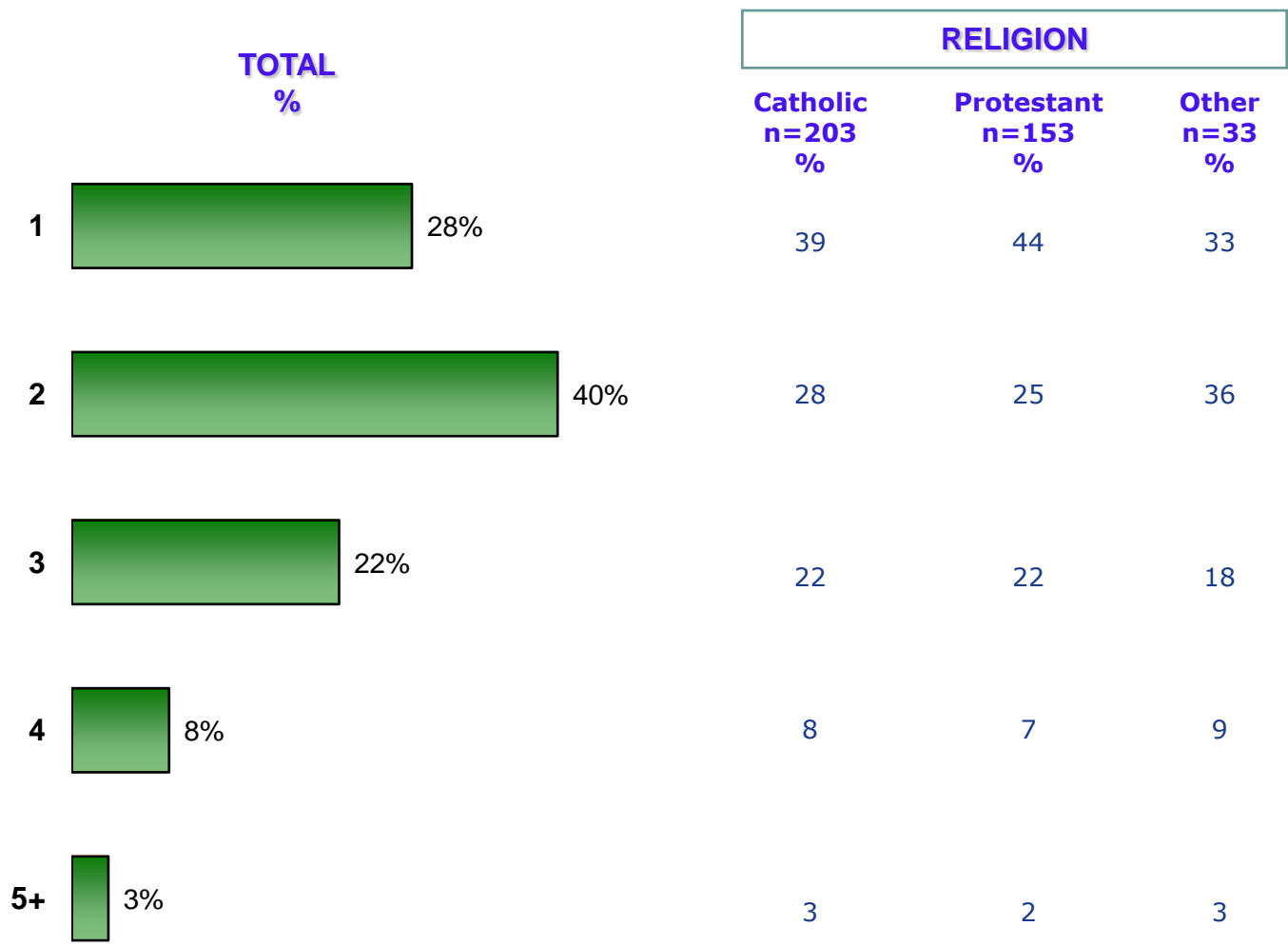
<b>Base</b>	<b>400</b>
Male	21%
Female	79%
Catholic	51%
Protestant	38%
Other	8%
Refused	3%

# Statistical Significance

<b>Sample</b>	<b>Sample size</b>	<b>Statistical sensitivity based on a 50% estimate</b>	<b>Statistical sensitivity based on a 20% estimate</b>
<b>Total</b>	400	±5%	±4%
<b>Catholic</b>	203	±6.9%	±5.5%
<b>Protestant</b>	153	±7.9%	±6.3%
<b>Other</b>	33	±17.1%	±13.6%
<b>Parents of primary aged children</b>	237	±6.4%	±5.1%
<b>Parents of post-primary aged children</b>	230	±6.5%	±5.2%

# Number of Children in Household

Base: All Respondents [n=400]

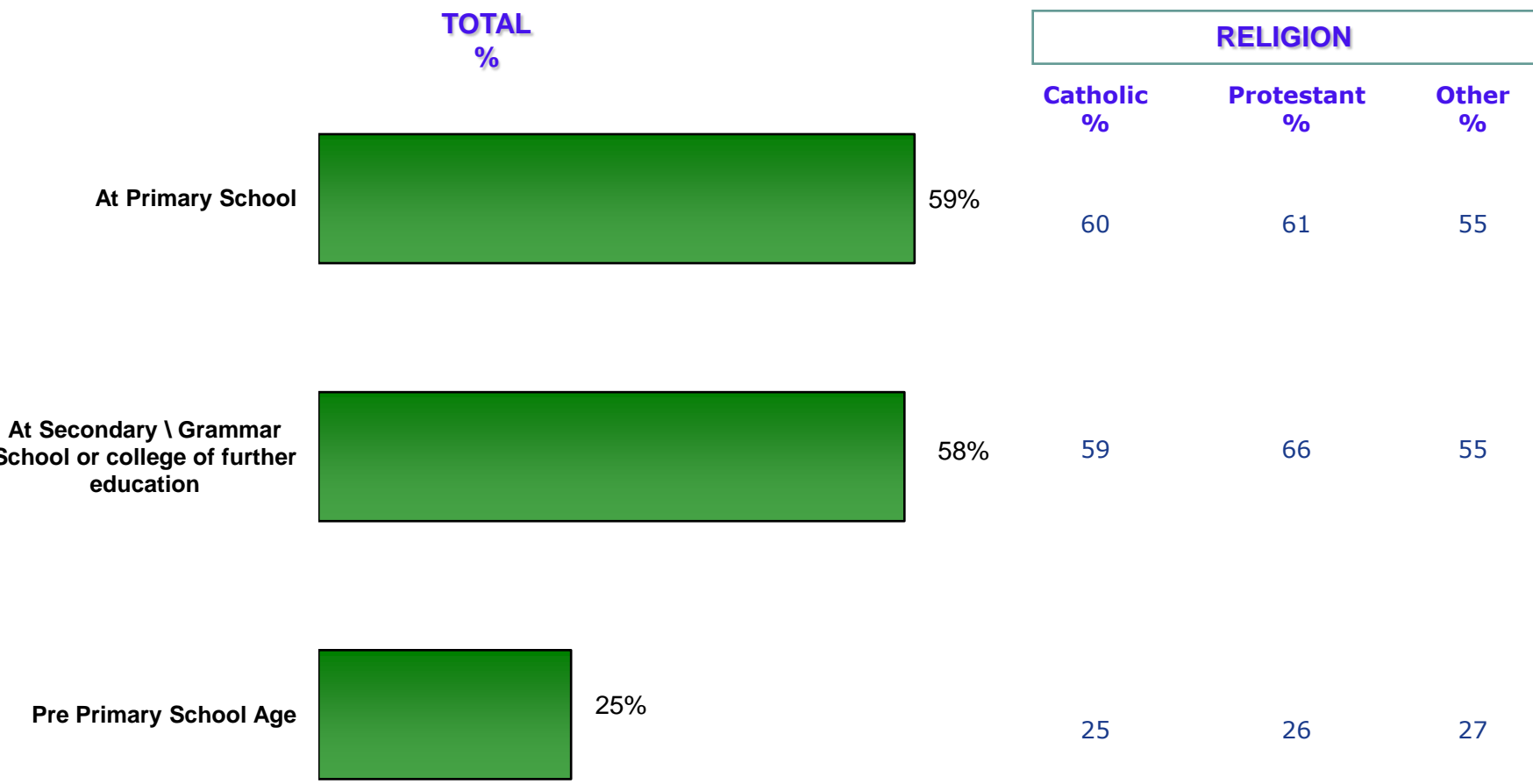


Mean no of children per household = 2.16\*

\*calculated on basis of 5+ children = 5

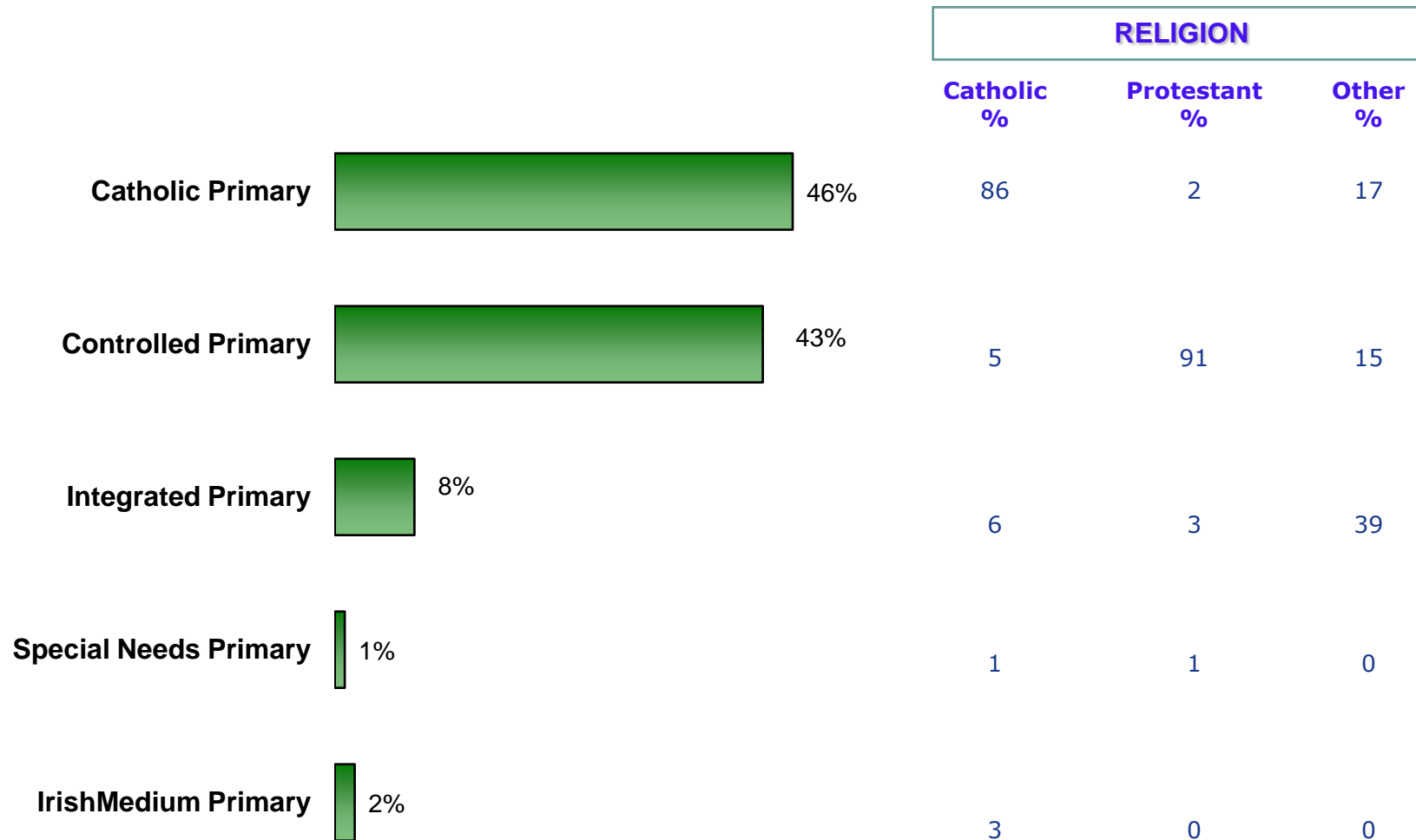
# Incidence of Children at each level of education

Base: All Respondents [n=400]



# Types of Primary School Attended

Base: Those with children at primary school [n=237]

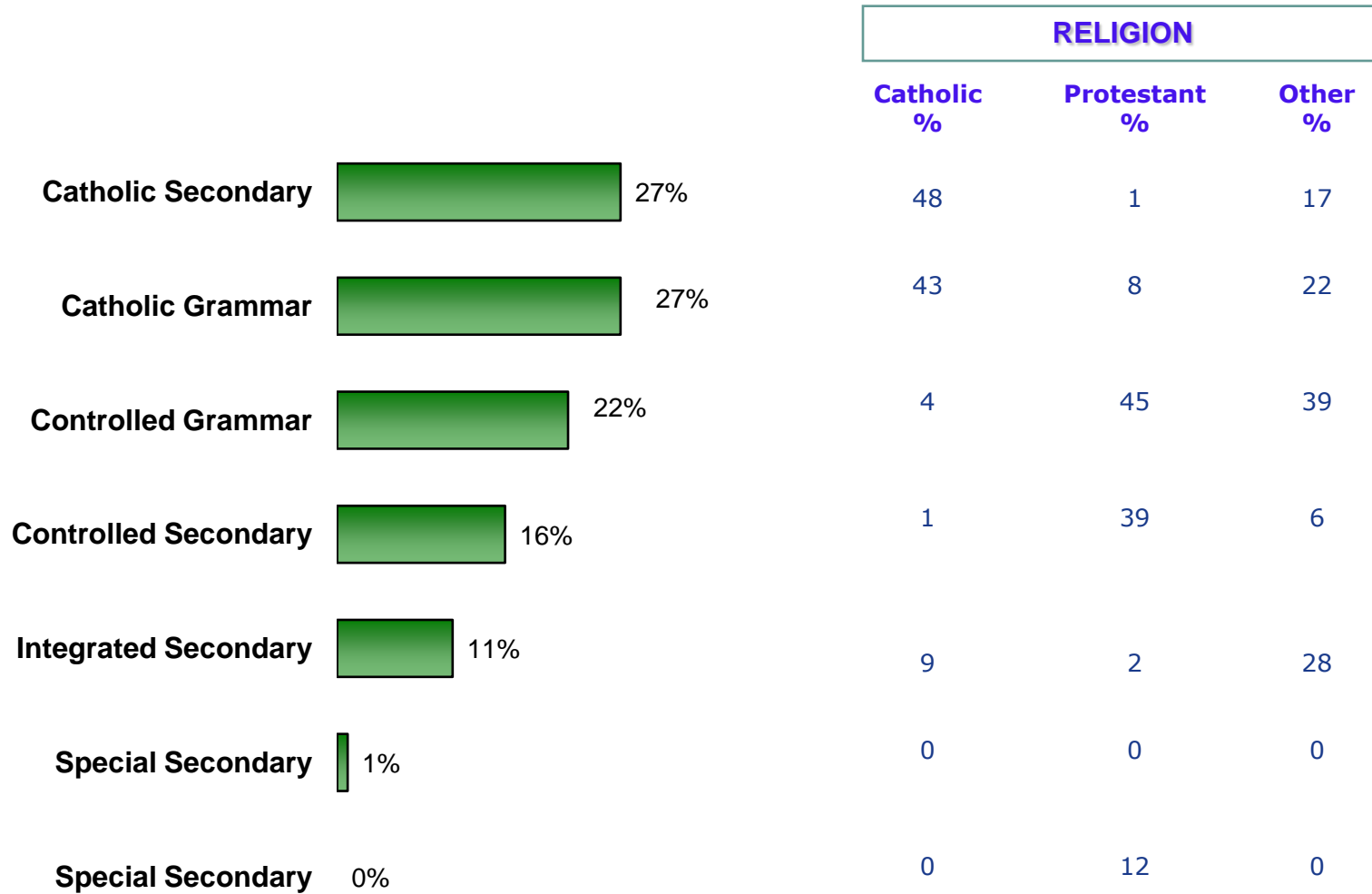


Only 3 respondents out of 237 had children attending different types of primary schools:

- New School Opened in Area (2)
- Moved house & didn't want to transfer children who had already started at other school (1)

# Types of Secondary School Attended

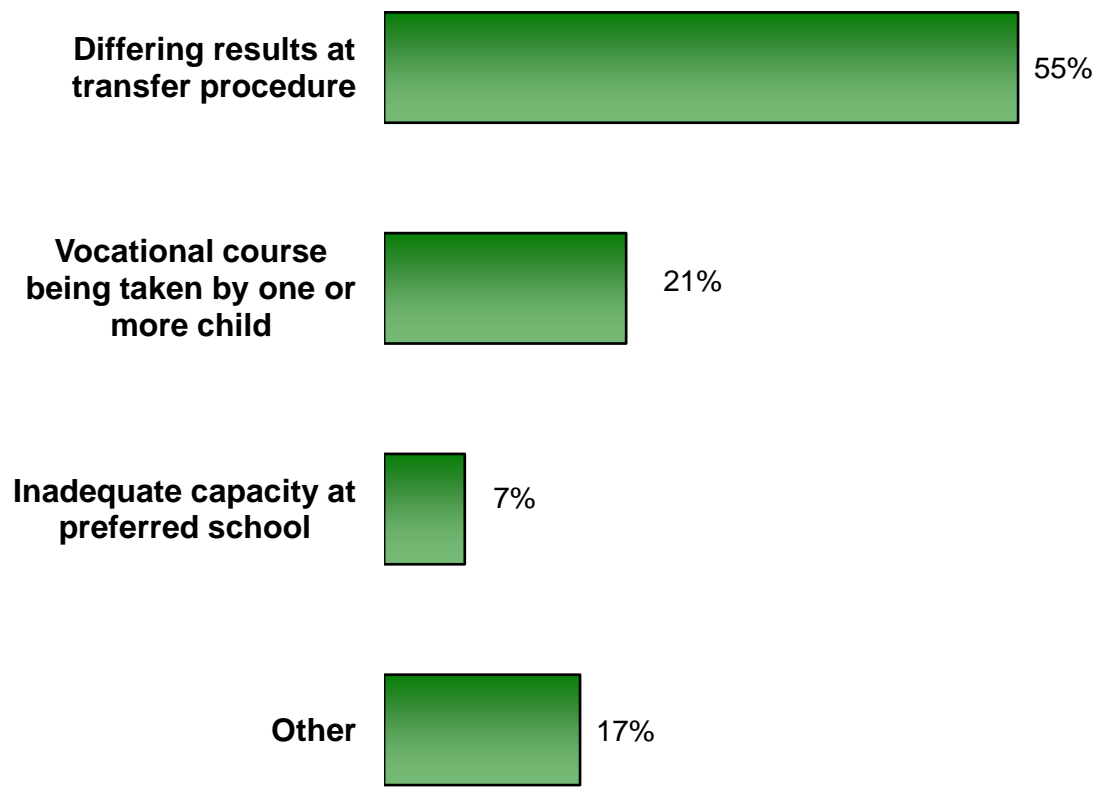
Base: All with children at secondary school [n=230]





# Why different Secondary Schools / Colleges attended

Base: Those with children attending different secondary schools or colleges [n=29\*]

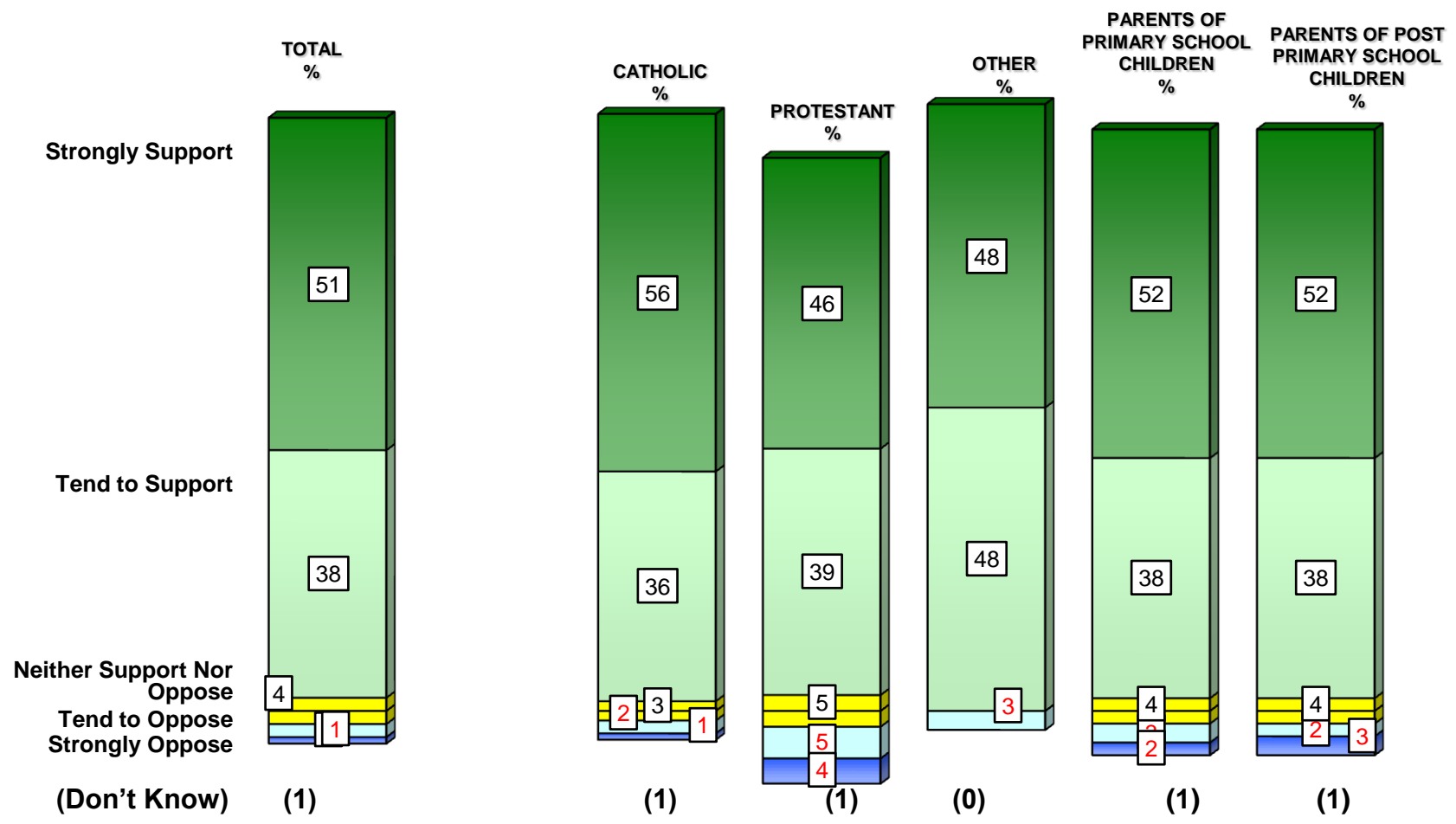




# Attitudes to Shared Education & Integrative Measures

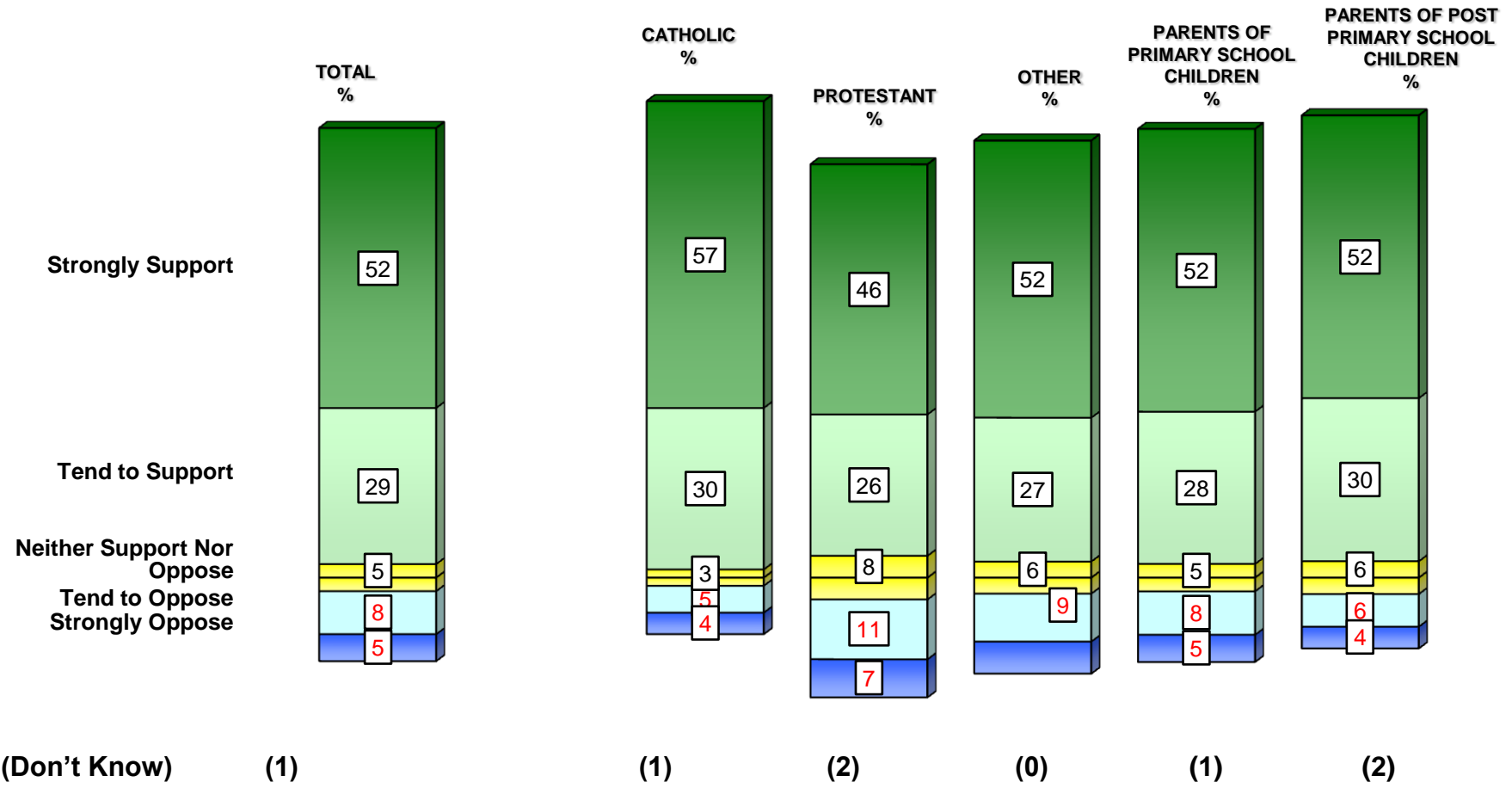
# Degree of Support schools sharing facilities such as a Technology Lab or Sixth Form centre

Base: All Respondents [n=400]



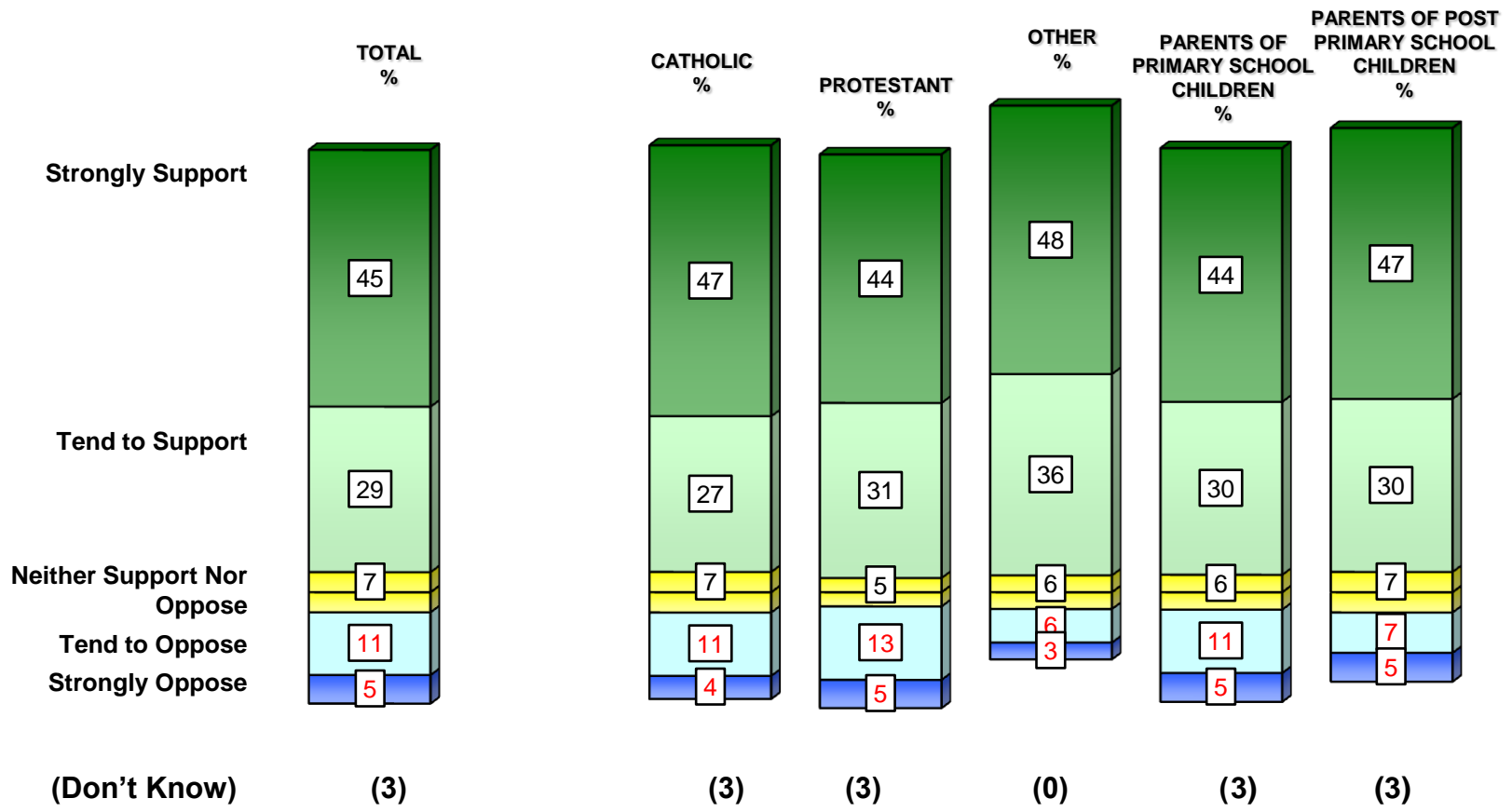
# Degree of Support for Catholic Maintained Schools & State Controlled Schools Sharing a Campus

Base: All Respondents [n=400]



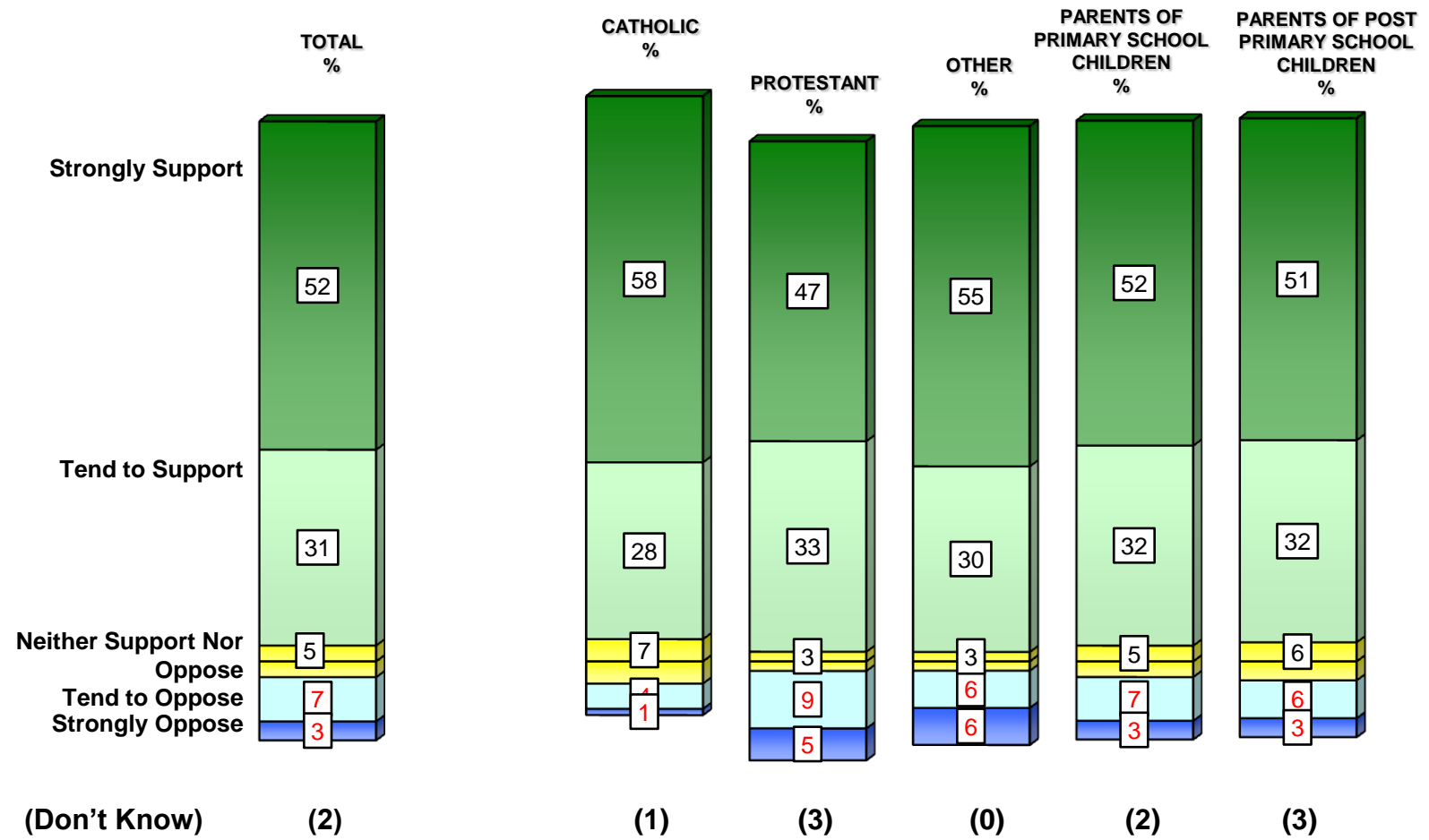
# Degree of Support for children travelling to neighbouring schools to be taught subjects unavailable in their own school

Base: All Respondents [n=400]



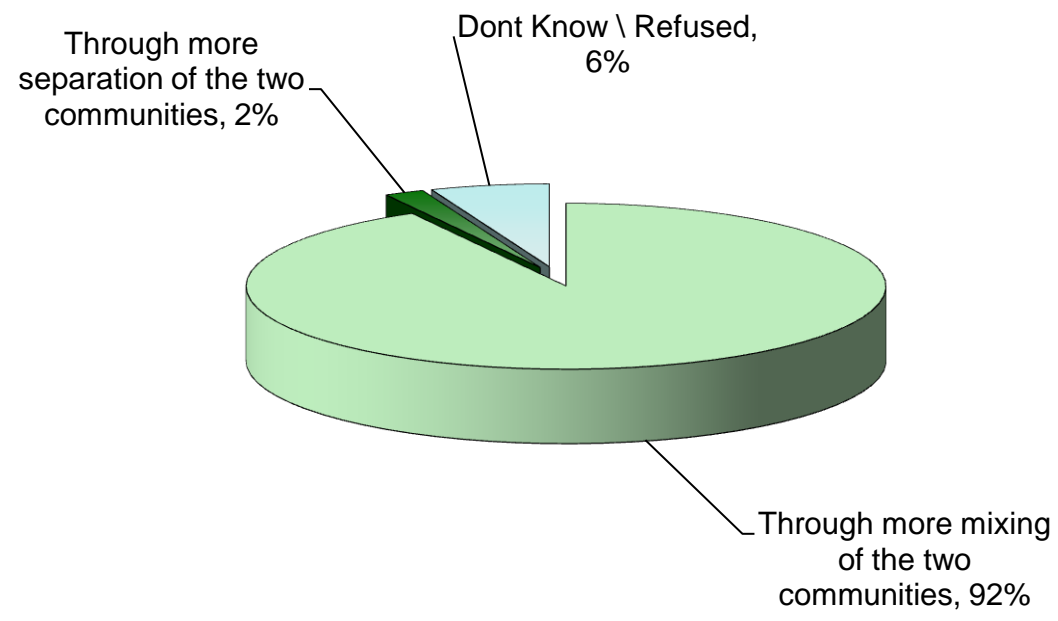
# Degree of Support for teachers travelling to neighbouring schools to teach subjects unavailable in their current school

Base: All Respondents [n=400]



# How good relations can be fostered between the two main communities

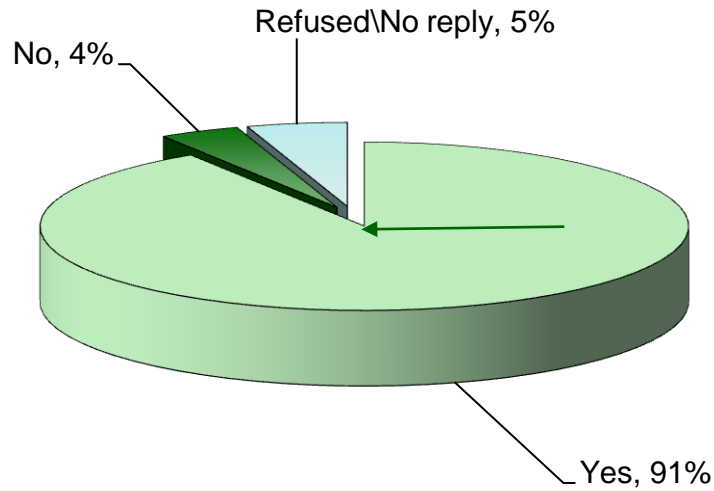
Base: All Respondents [n=400]



	Catholic	Protestant
Through more mixing of the two communities	92%	91%
Through more separation of the two communities	1%	3%
Don't Know \ Refused	7%	6%

# Would like to see enhanced opportunities for children to participate in shared education?

Base: All Respondents [n=400]

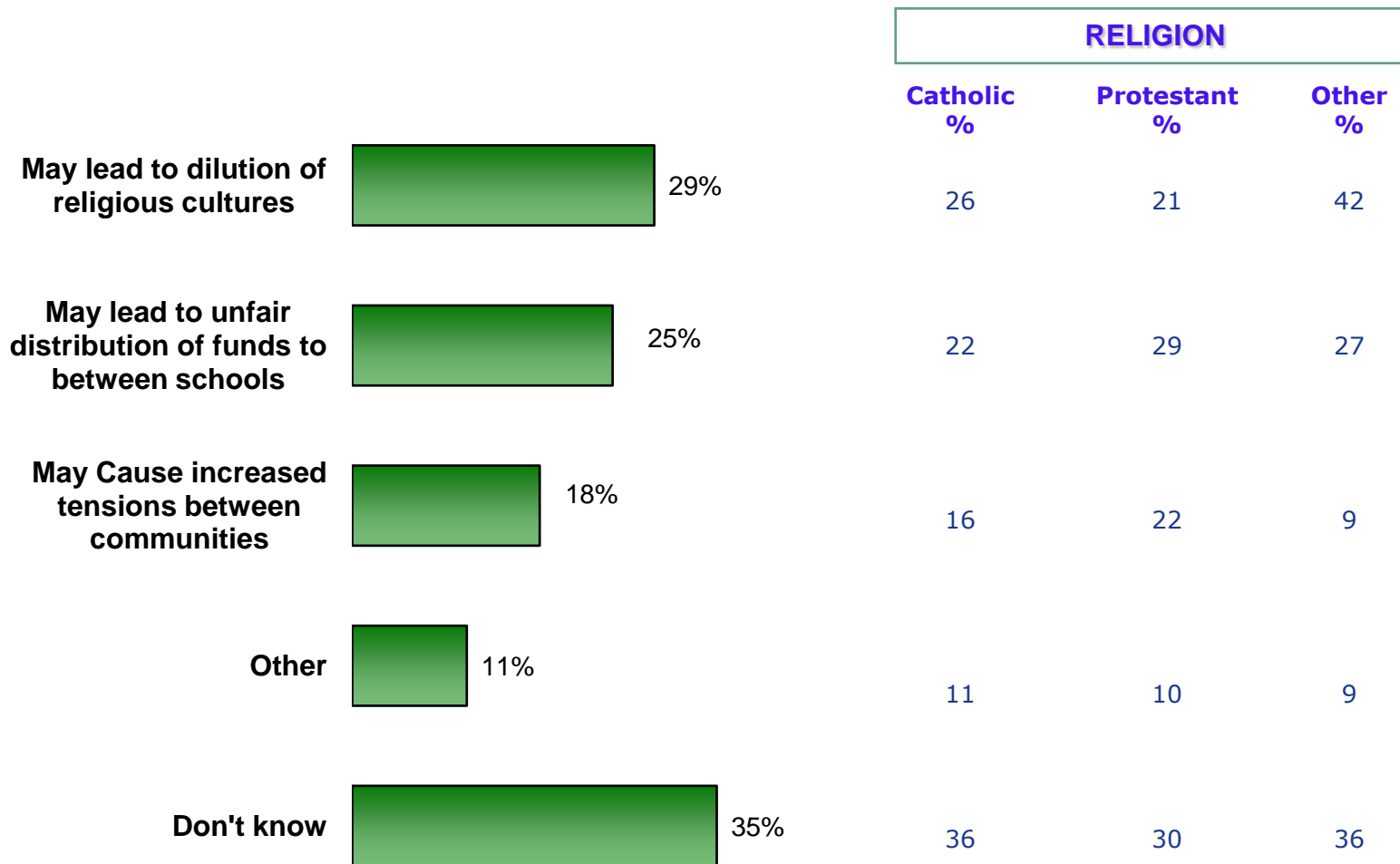


	Catholic	Protestant
Yes	94%	87%
No	3%	7%
Refused/No reply	3%	7%



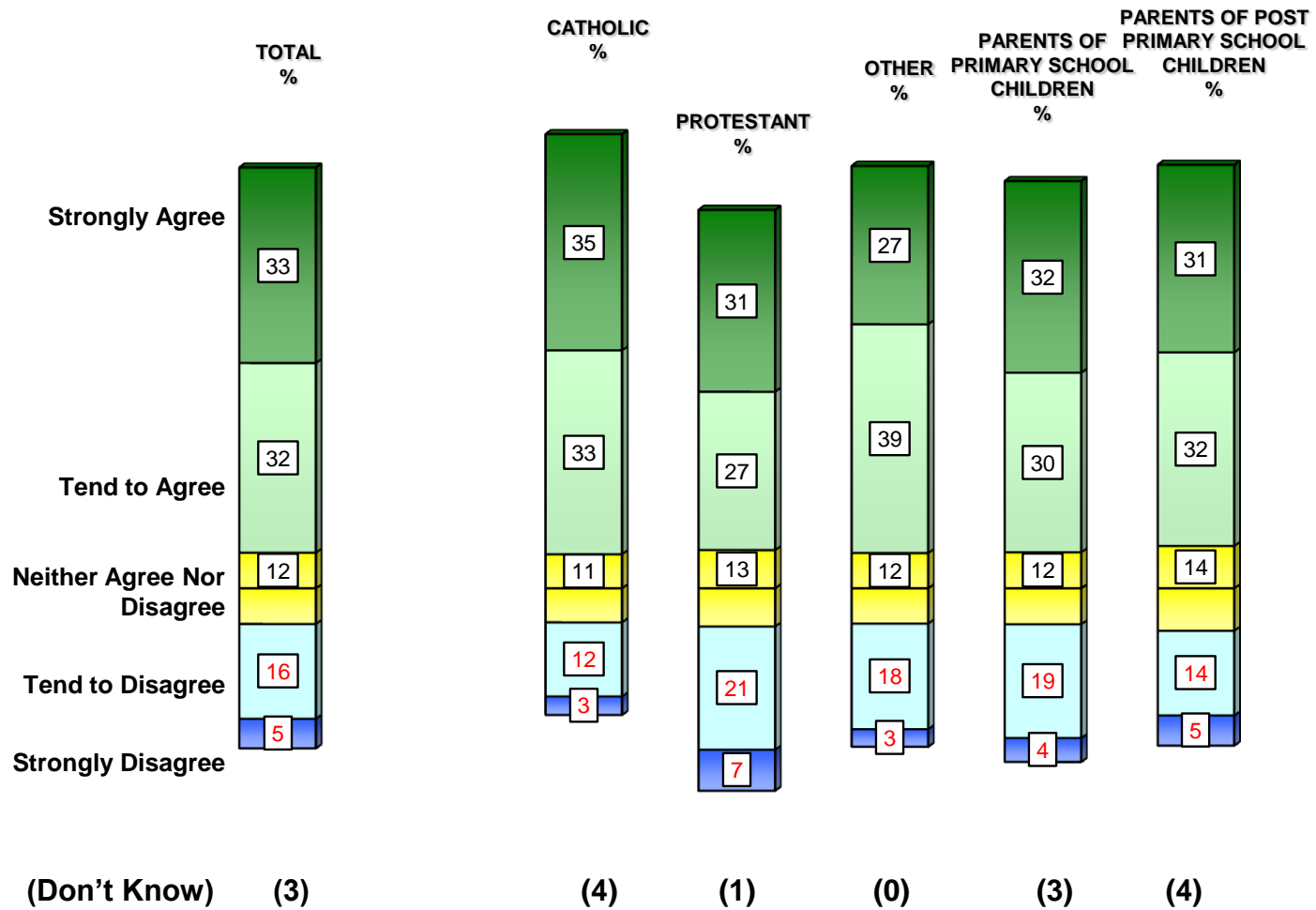
# Main challenges which exist as a result of increased participation in shared educational activities?

Base: All Respondents [n=400]



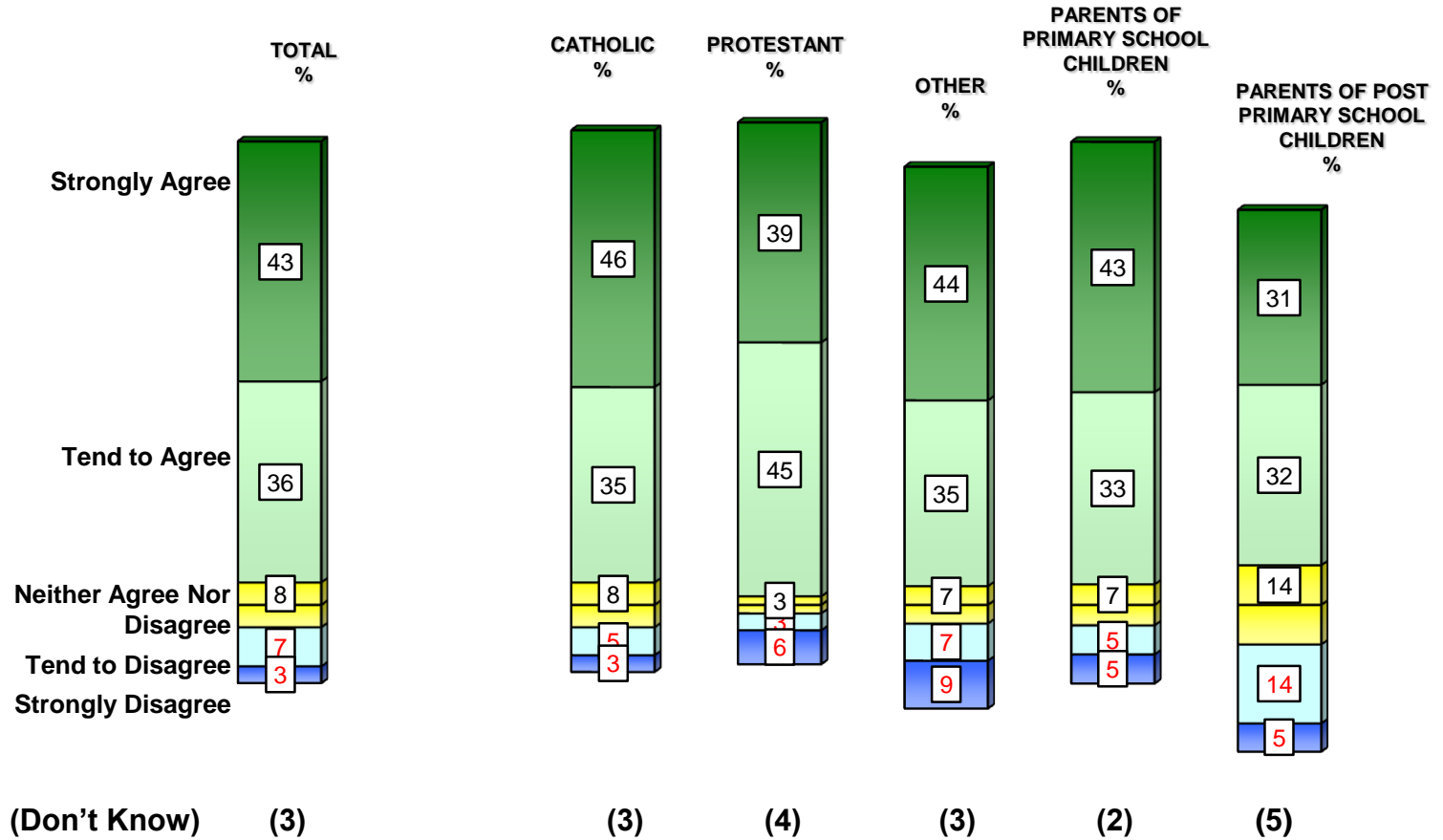
# Views on whether schools that are not mixed should be required to partner with a school with children of a different religion

Base: All Respondents [n=400]



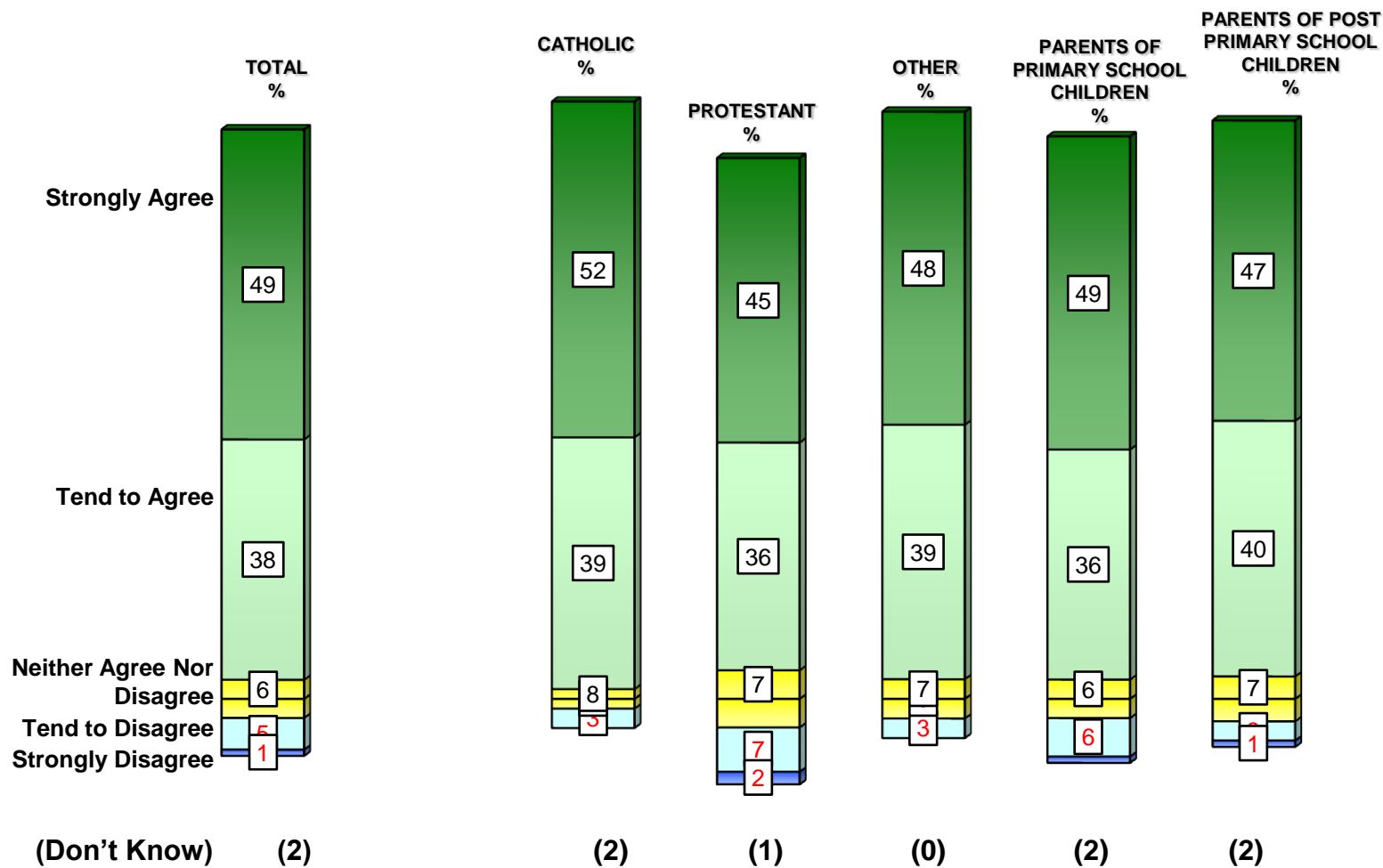
# Views on whether schools that need to partner to deliver the curriculum must partner with their closest neighbouring school, even if not of the same religious composition

Base: All Respondents [n=400]



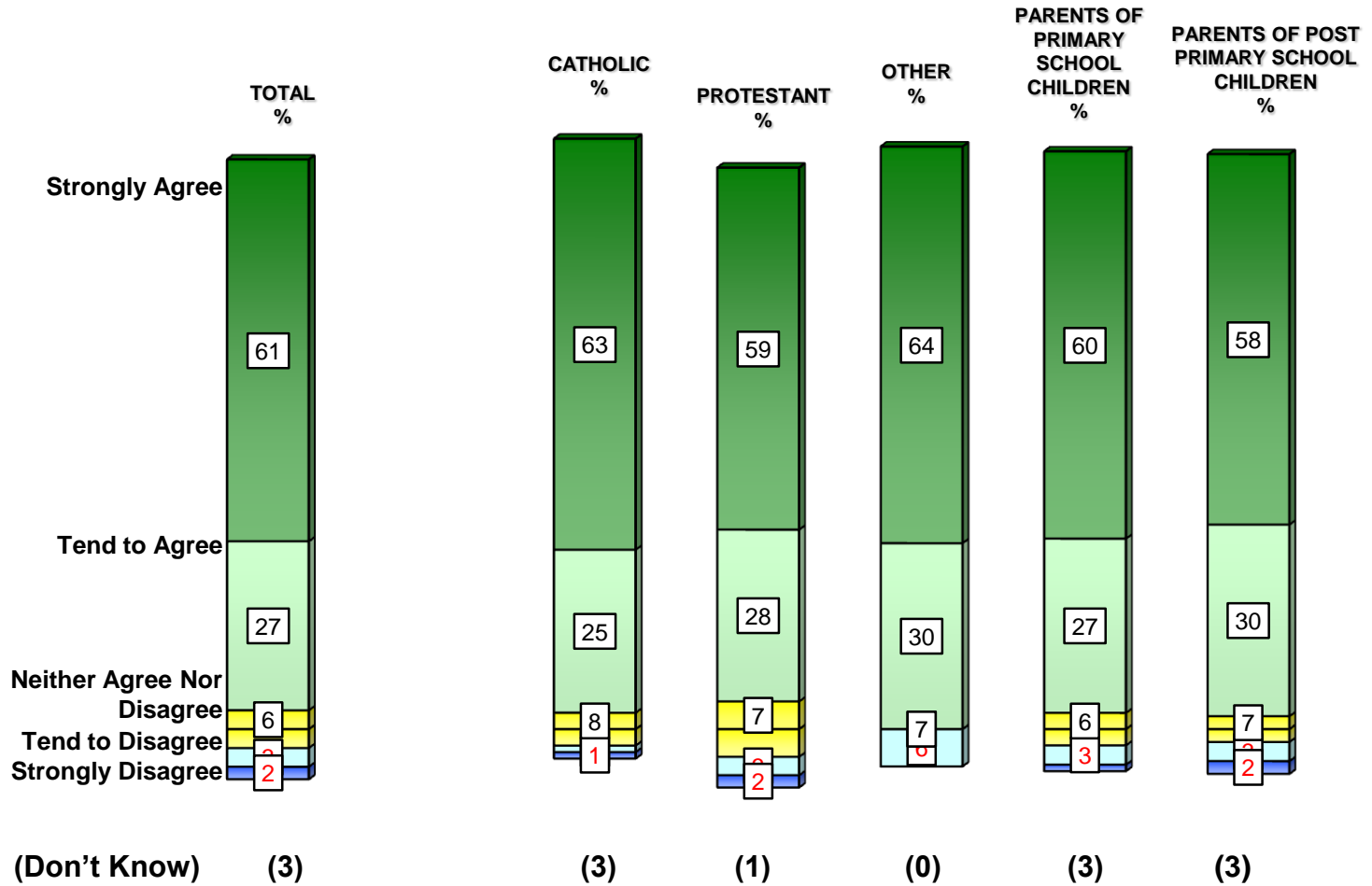
# Views on whether schools of different religious composition enter partnerships, the children from both schools should at least sometimes be taught in the same classroom

Base: All Respondents [n=400]



# Views on whether Shared Education would help promote mutual respect and understanding between children from different religious backgrounds

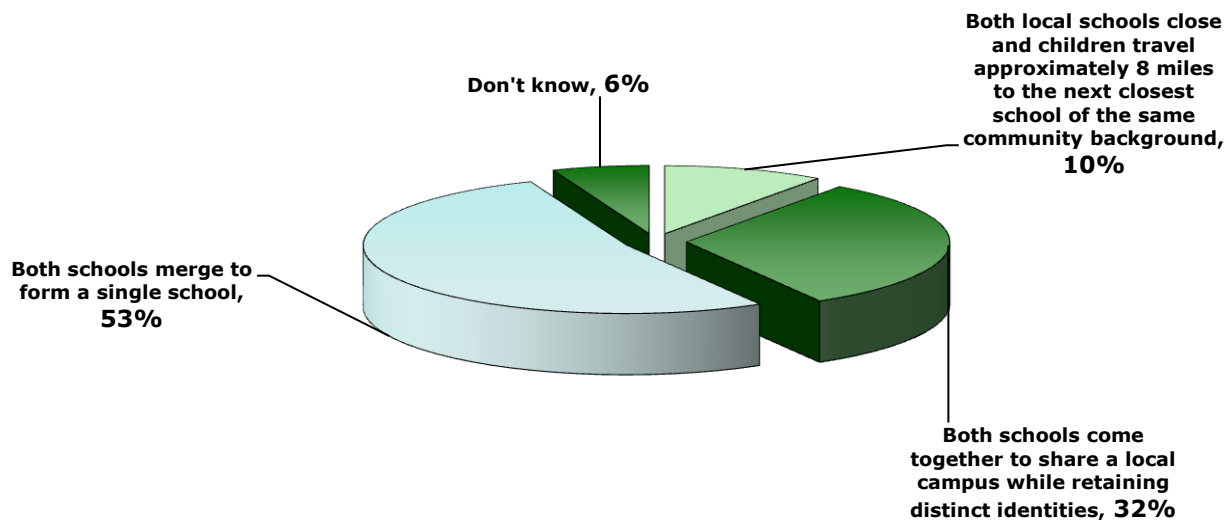
Base: All Respondents [n=400]



# Preferred outcome to hypothetical scenario

Base: All Respondents [n=400]

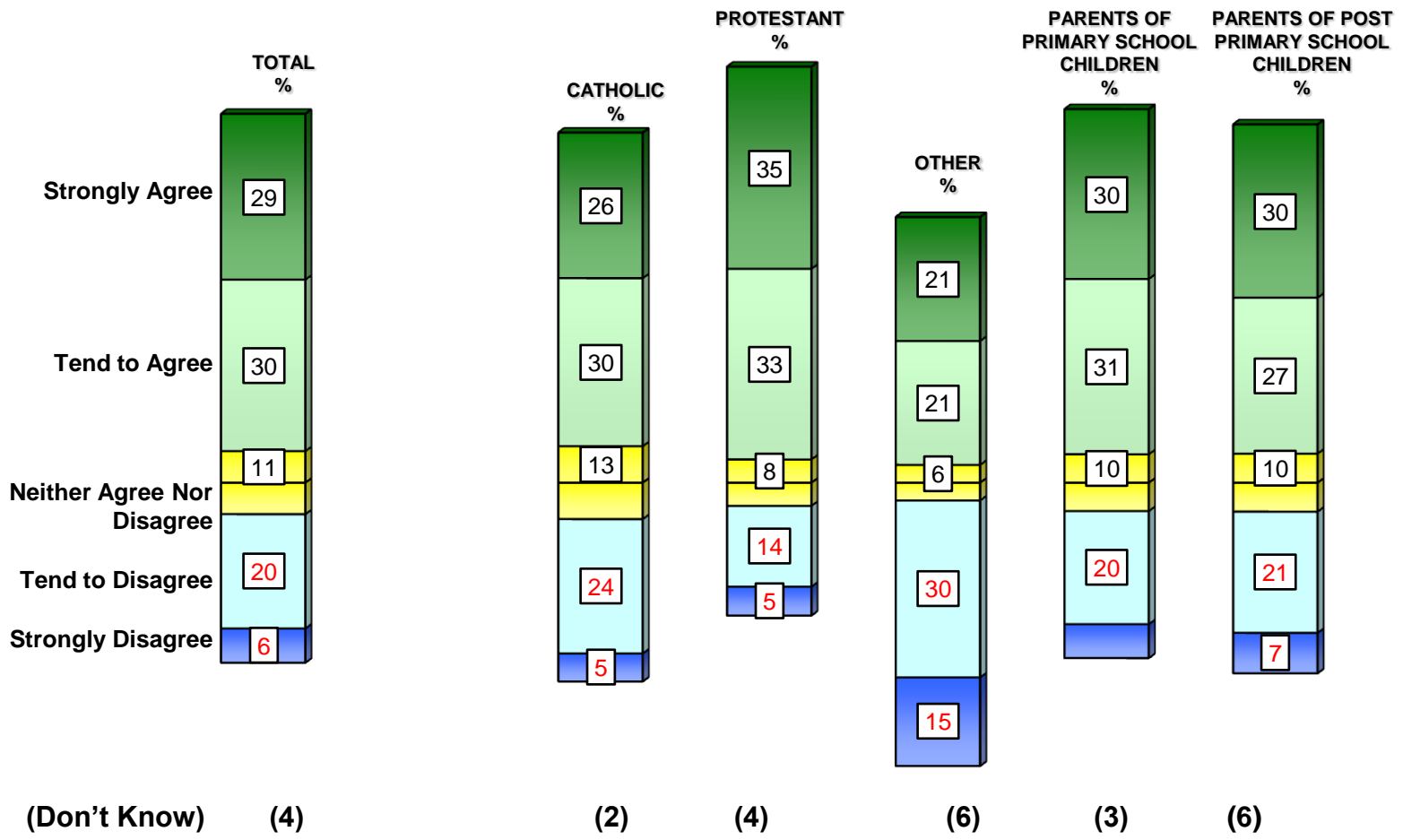
*Scenario: There are two small primary schools located in the same area, one from the maintained sector and one from the controlled sector. Both schools may close due to falling enrolments. As a parent which of the following options would you choose if this were the case in your area?*



	Catholic	Protestant
Both local schools close and children travel approximately 8 miles to the next closest school of the same community background-	8%	12%
Both schools come together to share a local campus while retaining distinct identities	32%	33%
Both schools merge to form a single school	56%	47%
Don't know	4%	8%

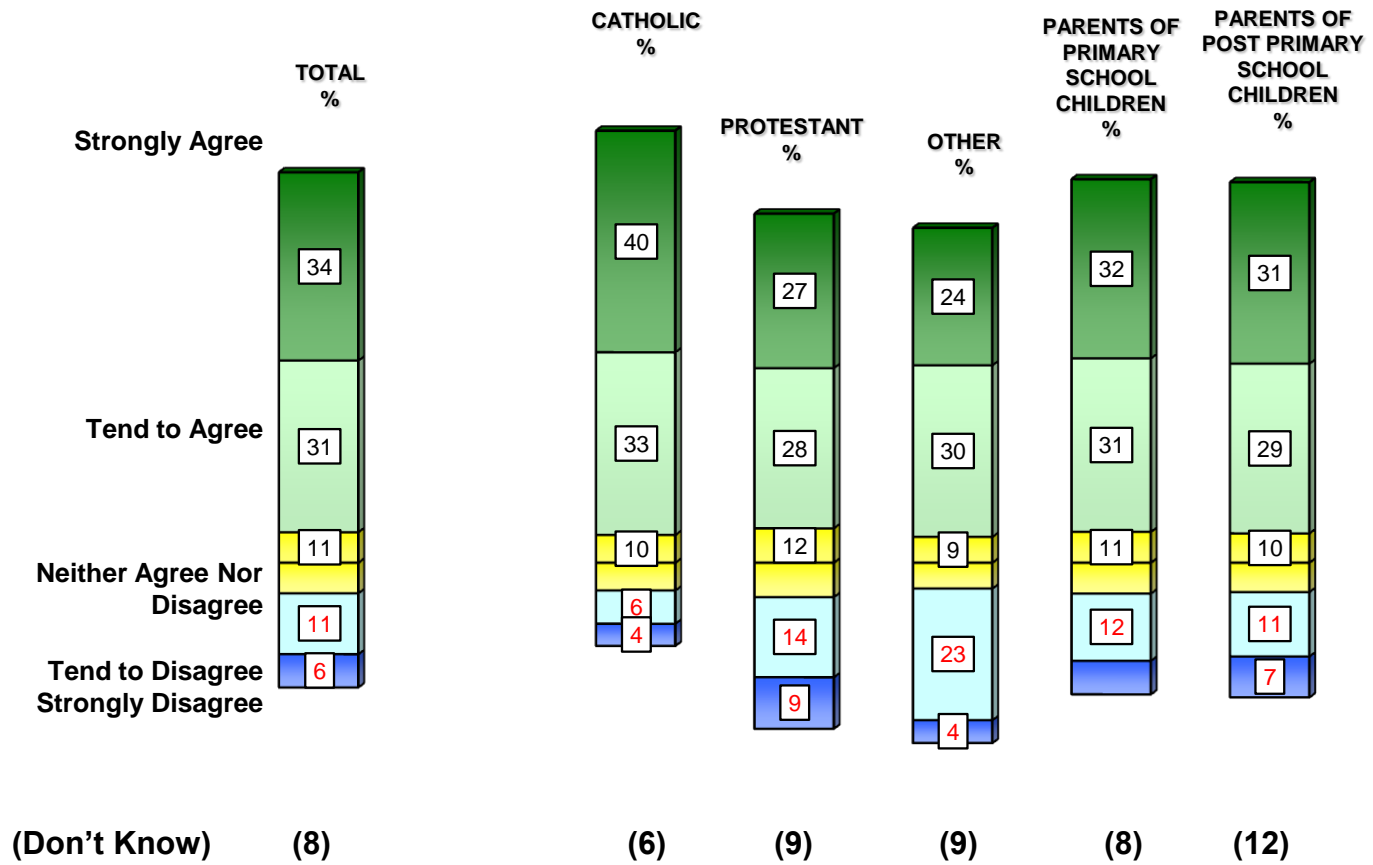
# Views on whether all types of schools in Fermanagh should be retained as they are

Base: All Respondents [n=400]



# Views on whether jointly managed schools should be established, with management shared between Catholic Church and WELB or Protestant Church(es)

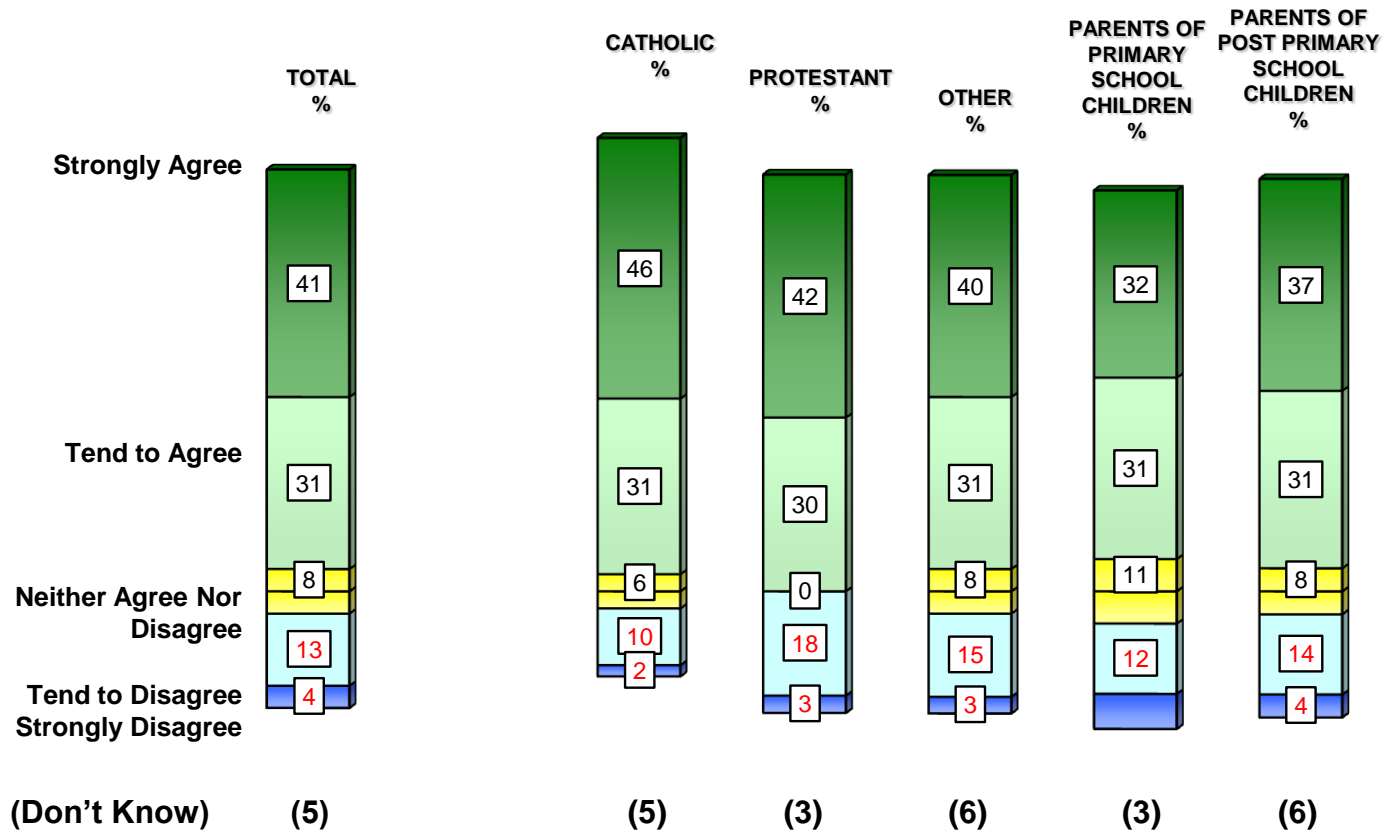
Base: All Respondents [n=400]





# Views on whether the number of formally integrated schools should be increased, with all the partners, including the Churches and the WELB, having a right to play a role

Base: All Respondents [n=400]





# Summary & Conclusions

# Summary

- The average number of children per household is approximately 2.16.
  - 59% of parents (with children aged under 18) have children at primary school level.
  - 58% of parents have children at secondary level or at a college of further education.
  - 25% of parents have children which are pre-primary school level.
- Of those parent with children of school age, 9% send their children to integrated schools, that is 11% with children at an integrated secondary school and 8% with children at an integrated primary school.
- 12% of those parents who have children attending secondary/grammar school/college said that they had children attending different establishments, primarily arising from differing results at the transfer procedure.
- 9 in 10 (92%) respondents consider that the best way to foster good relations between the two main communities in Fermanagh is through more integration.
- Support for measures aimed at filling gaps in educational provision were as follows:
  - 83% would support teachers travelling to neighbouring schools in order to teach subjects not available in a school
  - 81% would support sharing campuses
  - 79% would support sharing facilities such as technology lab or sixth form centre
  - 74% would support children travelling to neighbouring schools in order to be taught subjects not available in their own school
- With the exception of support for children travelling between schools, in all other instances parents from the Catholic community were some 10% more likely to strongly support these measures

# Summary

- 9 in 10 parents would like to see enhanced opportunities for shared education in the Fermanagh area, again Catholic parents are slightly more in favour (by 7%)
- In reacting to four different means by which education provision might be altered, there was strong majority support for all levels of intervention, as outlined below:
  - 88% agree that shared education would help promote mutual respect and understanding between children of different religions
  - 87% agree that in the event that schools of different religions were to partner, children should be taught at least some of the time in the same classroom
  - 79% agree that schools that need to partner with another school should do so with their nearest neighbouring school regardless of its religious composition
  - 65% agree that schools that are not mixed should be required to partner with a school where children are of a different religion
- A third of parents (35%) do not foresee any main challenges to effecting increased participation in shared education. However almost as many would be concerned about the potential dilution of religious cultures (29%) or the opportunity for unfair distribution of funds (25%).
- Given a hypothetical scenario of two primary schools of differing religions faced with closure, over half (53%) of these parents would favour the merging of both schools into one viable institution, a further third (32%) would favour both schools sharing a campus whilst maintaining their distinct identity.
- Only 1 in 10 parents would be willing to have children travel 8 miles to the closest viable school of the same religion.

# Summary

- Considering the way forward for schooling in Fermanagh
  - 72% would agree with increasing the number of integrated schools
  - 65% would agree with the joint management of schools between WELB & church schools, most notably parents from the Catholic community (73% Catholic: 55% Protestant)
  - 59% would like to see the status quo maintained, most notably parents from the Protestant community (68% Protestant: 56% Catholic)

## **Conclusions**

- There is broad support for further integration in education, whether through formally integrated schools or through sharing of campuses/facilities.
- Developing the number of formally integrated schools is the most attractive proposition.
- Whilst 3 in 5 would favour maintaining the current balance of educational institutions, in the case of threatened schools most parents would prefer the merging of schools, or sharing of a campus, rather than having to close schools and the pupils having to travel significant distances.