

# Dyslexia in Schools: Awareness, Interventions and Government Support



June 13, 2008



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# Executive Summary



## Executive summary

- The Dyslexia in Schools; Awareness, Interventions and Government Support survey was commissioned by the Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand to examine attitudes to dyslexia in New Zealand schools
- From 16-26 May 347 education professionals completed the online survey on a range of questions related to dyslexia and dyslexic students
- Nearly all education professionals have taught a dyslexic student, with most teaching between one and three students a year, higher in secondary schools
- Identifying these students was typically based on experience and personal research; MoE materials were infrequently used
- While nearly all have taught a dyslexic student, a quarter of schools are ignoring the issue (particularly in the North Island). However, a third of schools are taking action
- Interventions schools most relied on were Structured Cumulative Approaches (SCA) and referrals to solution providers outside of the school. SCAs (such as SPELD, Davis Learning Strategies, Multisensory, Orton-Gillingham etc.) were considered the most effective intervention, and were the most recommended

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## Executive summary (continued)

- The Government's recent Schools Plus initiative lacks both awareness and belief in it being supportive. Only just over one-third of respondents were aware of the initiative (higher amongst principals), and of those who were aware just over half believed it would provide support
- Nearly all respondents (95%) believed in specific funding for dyslexic students and the majority felt that teacher training should be a priority for this funding
- 99% believed specific funding for dyslexia would benefit non-dyslexic students too
- Dyslexic students were generally seen as having more creativity but less self-esteem and socially acceptable behaviour than non-dyslexic students Dyslexic students were considered slightly more disruptive
- The MoE site lacks the visitation and effectiveness to support education professionals with dyslexic students. Only just over a third had visited the site, and not many found it useful in providing further information or assistance with strategies on dyslexia
- 90% of education professionals were aware of DFNZ.

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# Introduction



# Objectives

- The Dyslexia Foundation of New Zealand (DFNZ) – as part of its effort for Dyslexia Awareness Week – engaged Nielsen to survey school education professionals on a range of questions related to Dyslexia in schools.
- The survey was designed to understand the following:
  - Education professionals' exposure to dyslexic students
  - Awareness of DFNZ
  - What are schools currently doing for dyslexic students and its effectiveness
  - Awareness of Government support and need for specific funding
  - Behavioural traits of dyslexic students

## Research Methodology

- DFNZ provided to Nielsen a listing of education professionals (teachers, principals, teacher aides, RTLB, and RT:Lit) from across the country who were willing to be surveyed. All on this listing were emailed an invitation to complete the survey, 347 completed the survey (246 teachers, 26 principals, 8 teacher aides, 53 RTLB, and 14 RT:Lit).

Methodology	Online survey
Target Population	Education professionals (teachers, principals, teacher aides, RTLB, and RT:Lit) across the country
Sample Size	347, giving a sampling error of +/- 5.25% (at the 95% level of confidence).
Survey Period	16-26 May 2008
Interview Length	18.5 minutes

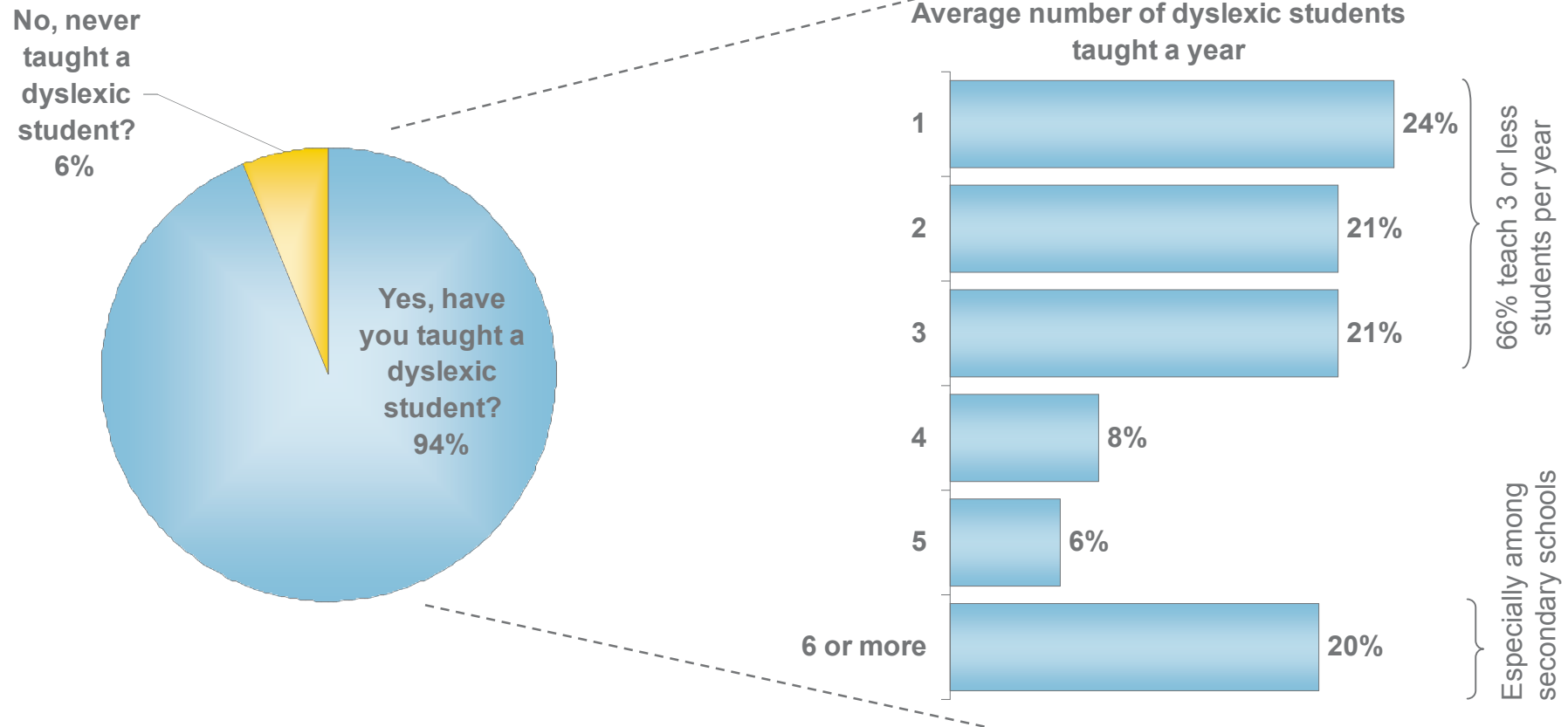


# 1. Overview



# The incidence and number of dyslexic students

- Nearly all education professionals taught a dyslexic student during their career. Two-thirds of education professionals teach 3 or less students per year.

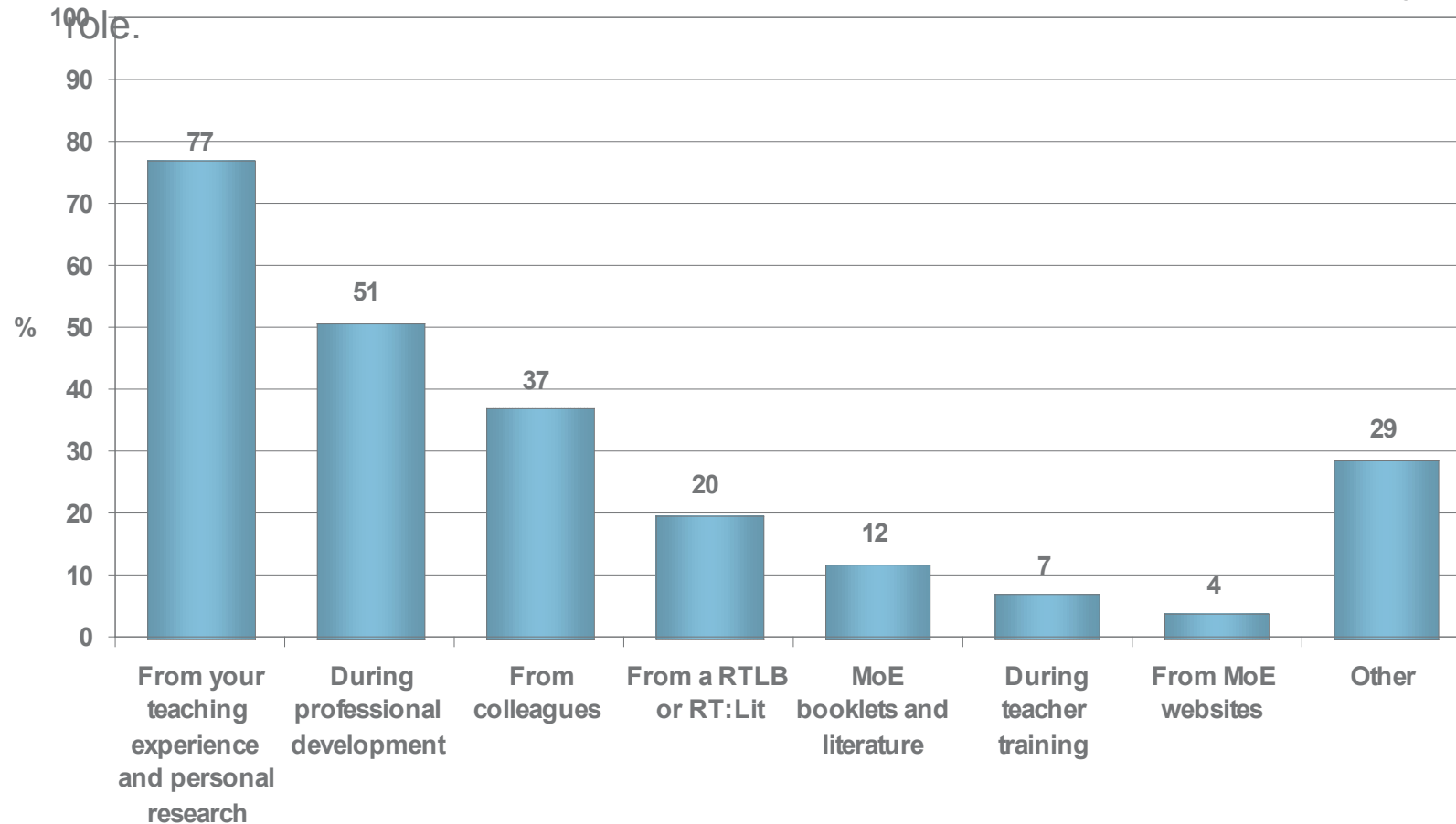


Base : All respondents n=347

Base : All respondents who have taught Dyslexic students n=324

## Where education professional learned how to identify dyslexic students

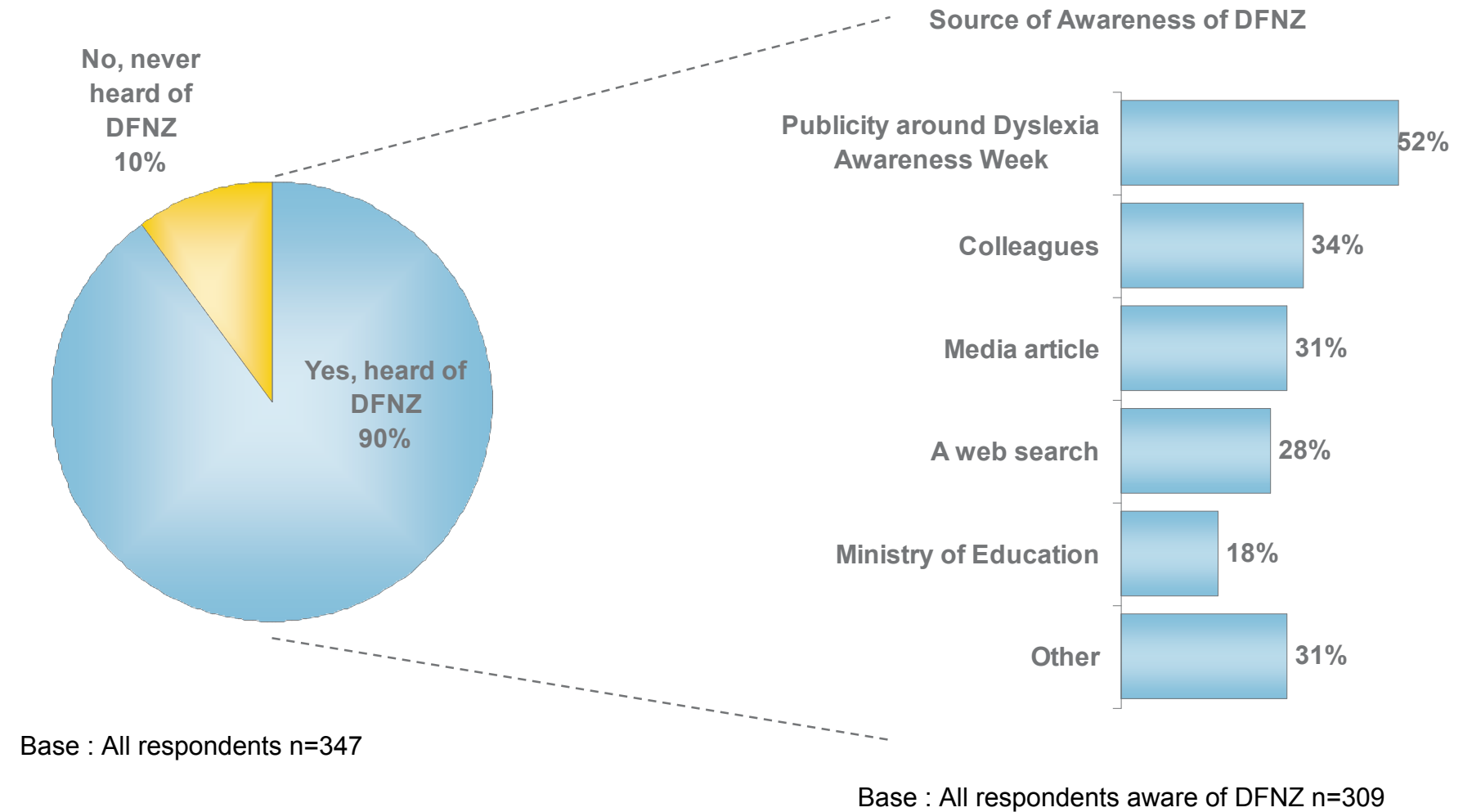
- Education professionals have learned to identify dyslexic students from their experience and personal research. The MoE literature and web resources played little



Base : All respondents who had ever taught a dyslexic student n=324

# Awareness and source of awareness of DFNZ

- Most have heard about DFNZ through Dyslexia Awareness Week

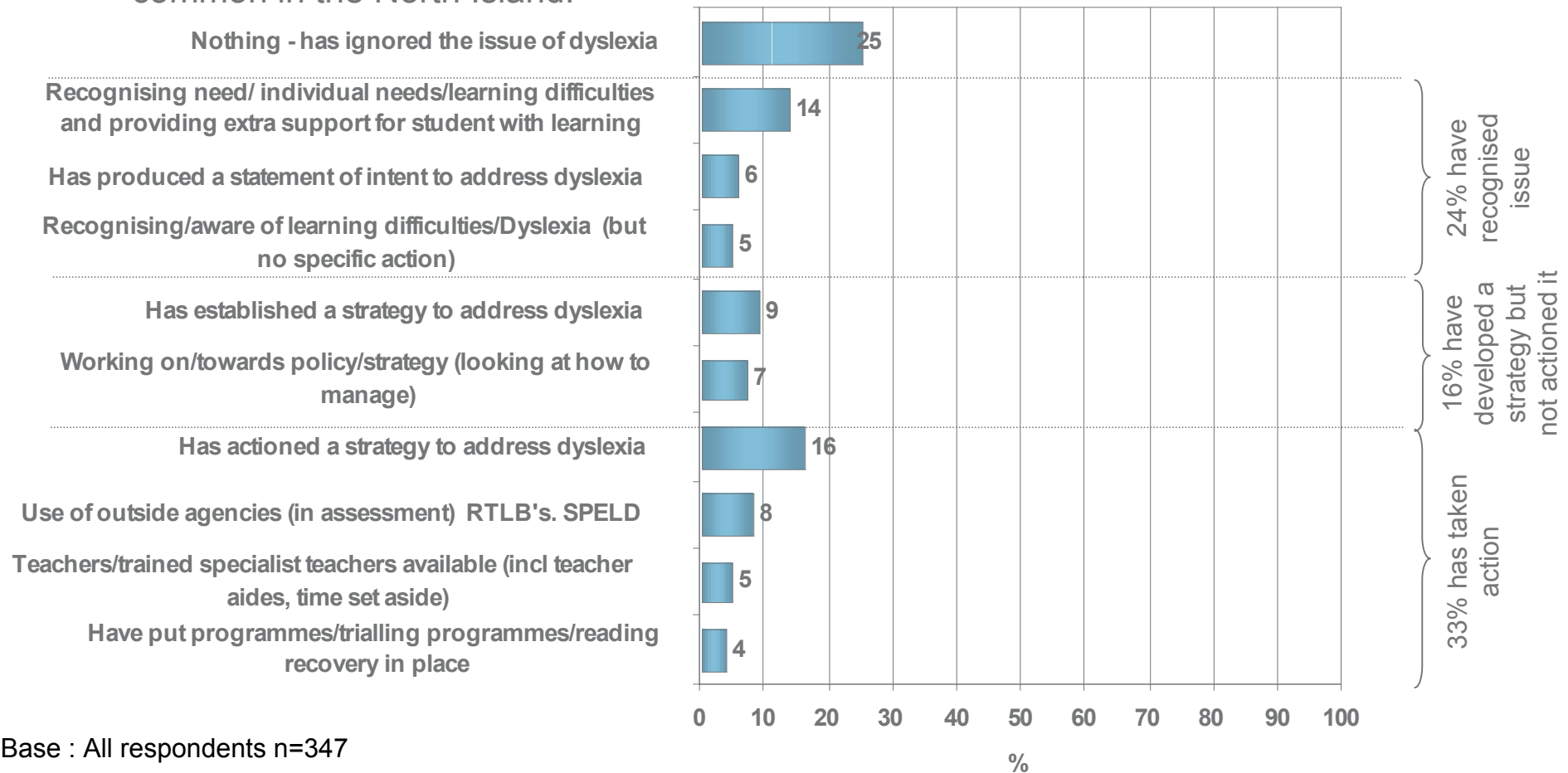


## 2. What Schools are Doing

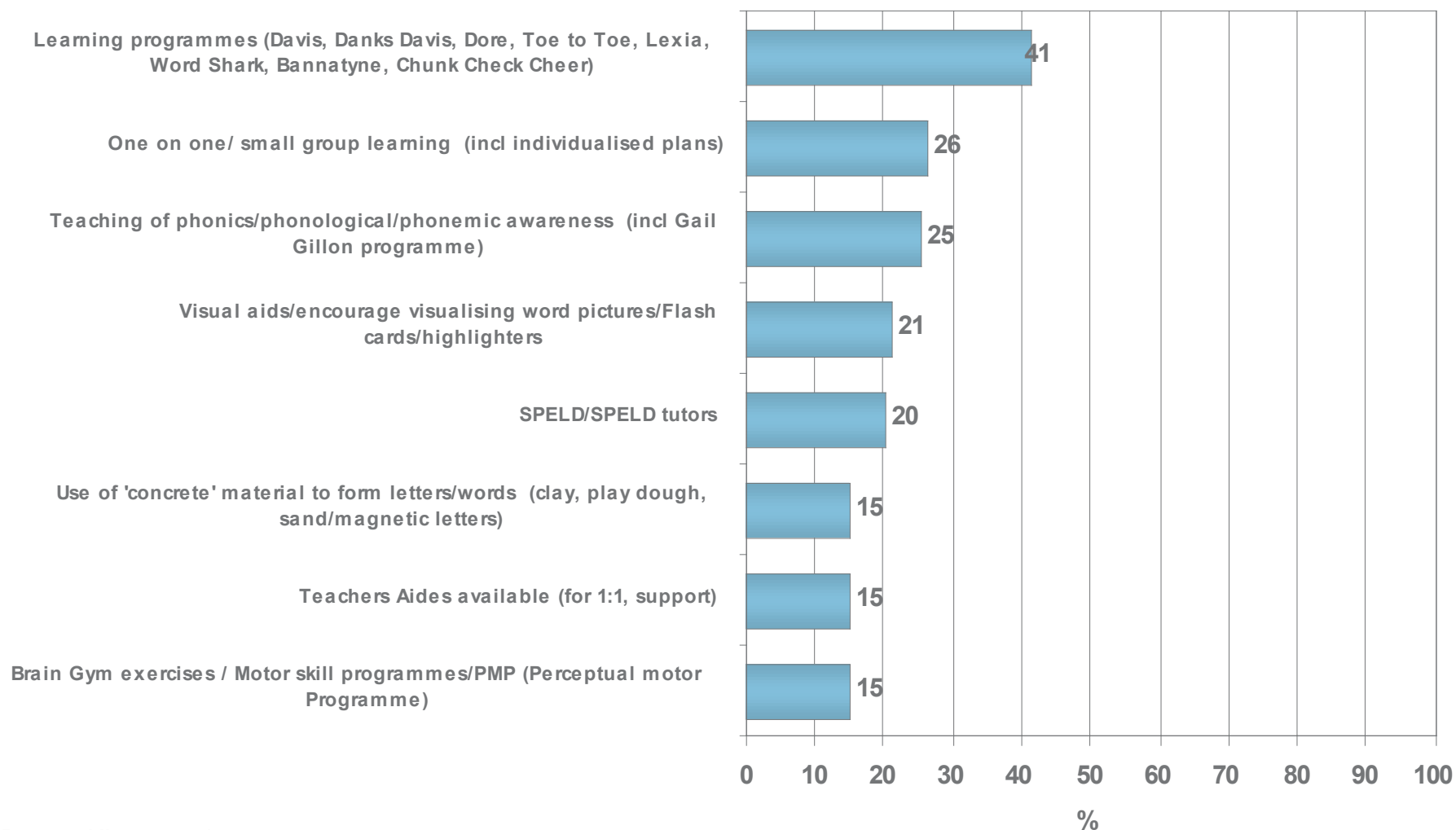


# Approaches school currently taken towards dyslexia

- Given that 94% of education professionals have taught a dyslexic student some of the schools ignoring the issue (25%) must be aware of it. Ignoring the issue was more common in the North Island.



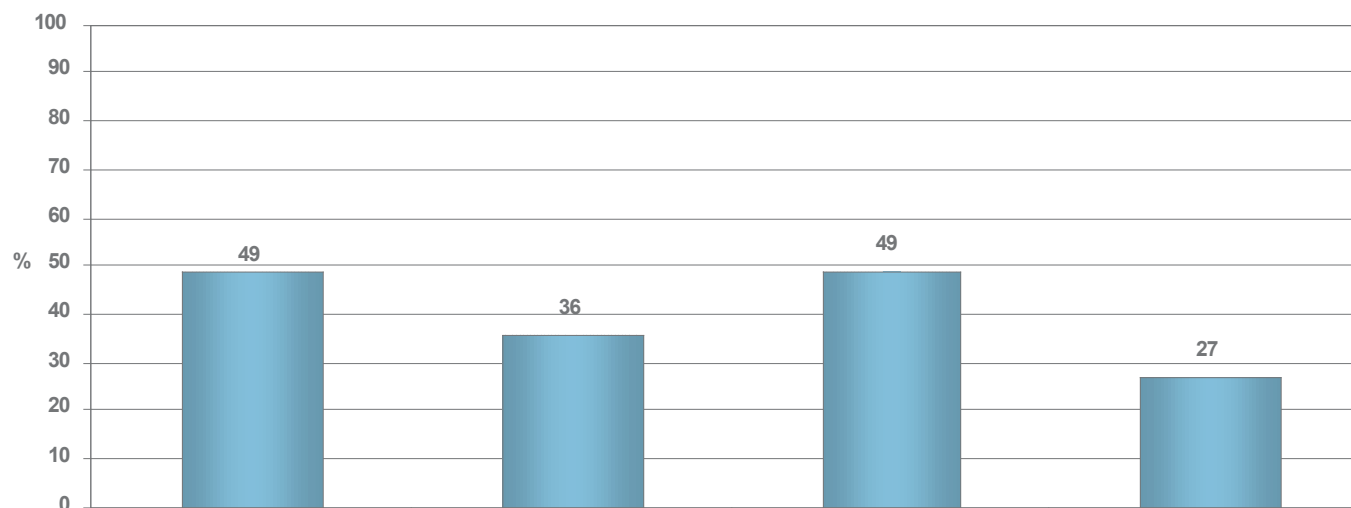
# Actions education professionals have ever used or observed in their careers



Base : All respondents n=347

# Types of interventions ever offered by schools

- Structured Cumulative Approaches (SCA) and Referrals were the most common interventions, with SCA considered the most effective.



	Structured Cumulative Approaches (offered within the school)*	Approaches using computers (offered within the school)**	Referrals to solution providers outside of school (paid for by parents)***	Don't Know/
Percentage saying very effective or effective	85 (n=171)	82 (n=132)	74 (n=175)	
Percentage saying very ineffective or ineffective	1 (n=150)	3 (n=112)	4 (n=130)	
Percentage recommending	60 (n=150)	9 (n=150)	11 (n=150)	

\* Examples: SPELD, Davis Learning Strategies, Multisensory, Orton-Gillingham etc

\*\* Examples: Fast ForWord, Wordshark, Lexia, Nessy, ReadOn etc

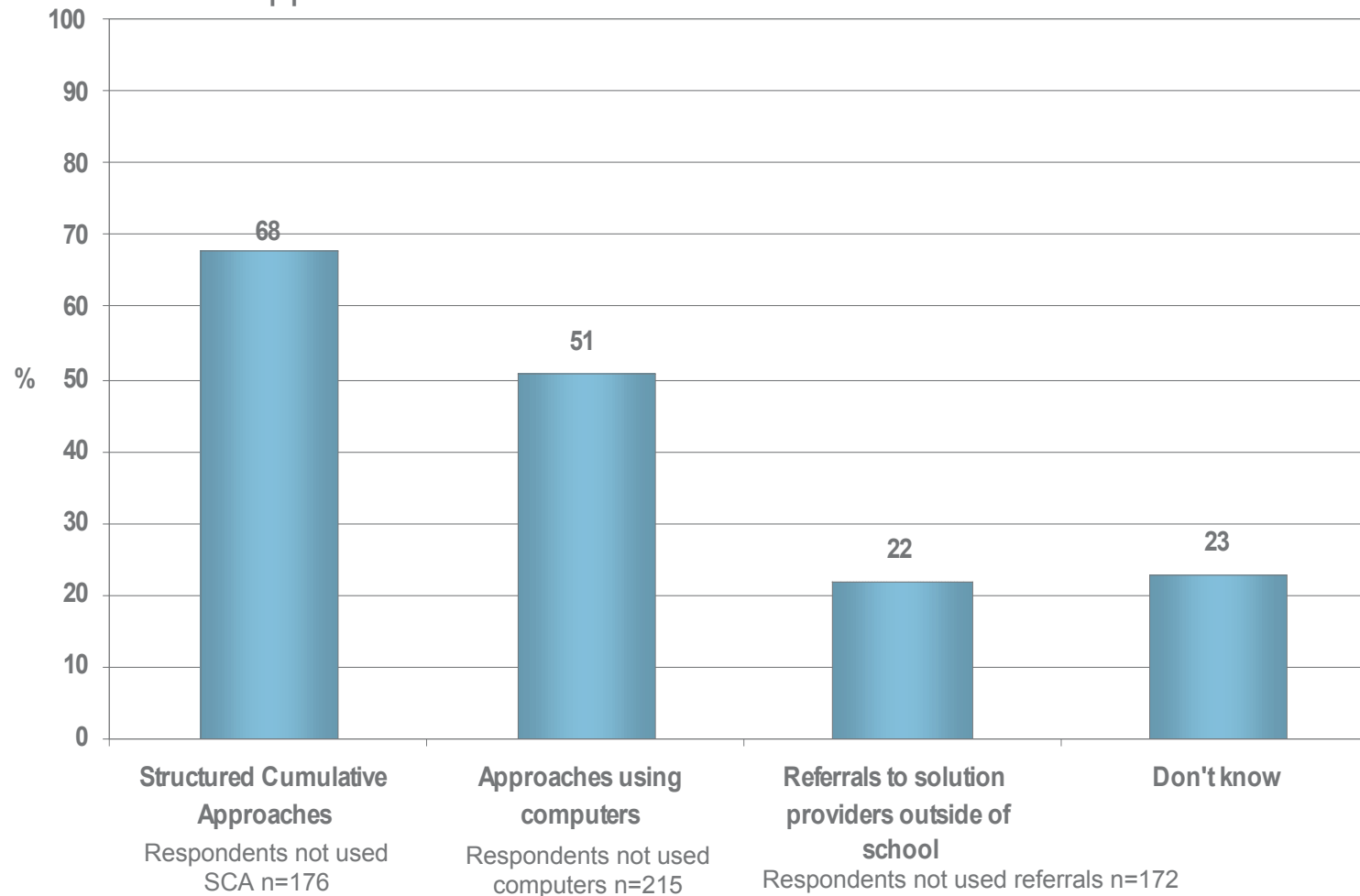
\*\*\* Examples: DORE, Davis Dyslexia Correction, Irlen, Cellfield etc

All respondents n=347



## Interventions education professionals would like to see introduced in their schools

- Over two-thirds of those not already offering Structured Cumulative Approaches would like to see this approach offered

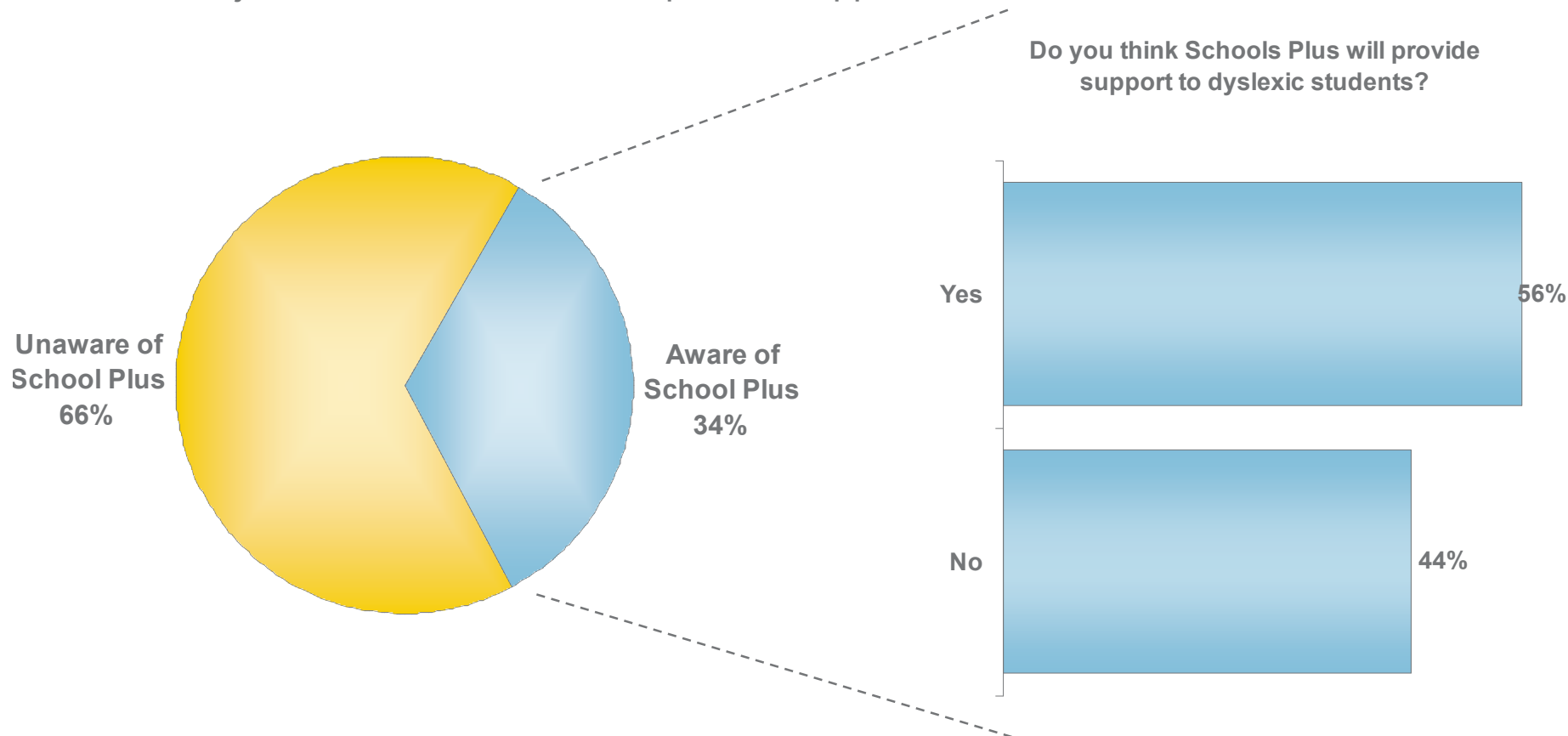


### 3. Government Support



# Awareness of the Government's Schools Plus initiative

- Awareness of Schools Plus is low overall, but very high among principals. Of those aware just over half believe it will provide support.

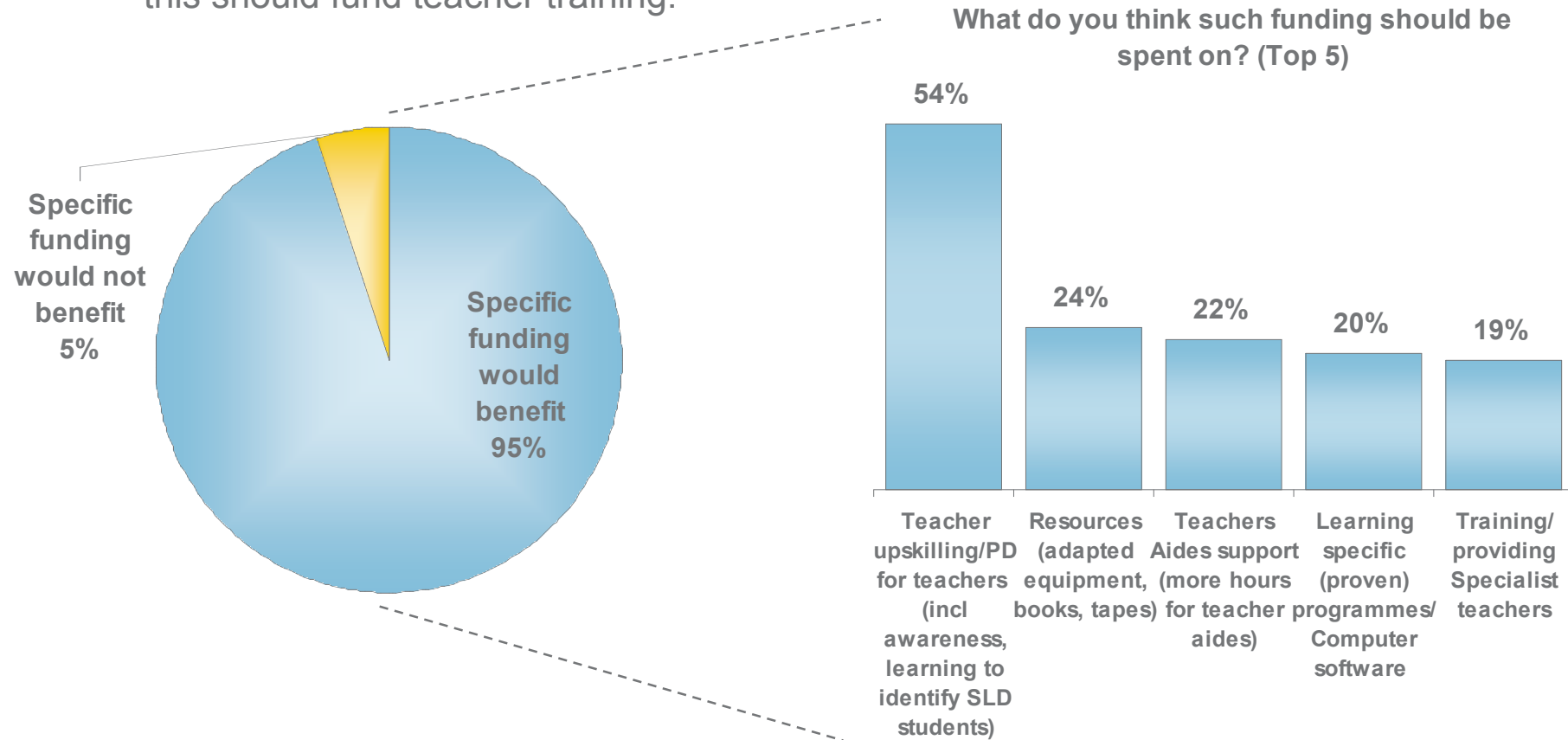


Base : All respondents n=347

Base : All respondents aware of Schools Plus n=121

# Opinions on benefit of specific funding and what to fund

- Nearly all respondents believed in specific funding for Dyslexic students. Most felt that this should fund teacher training.



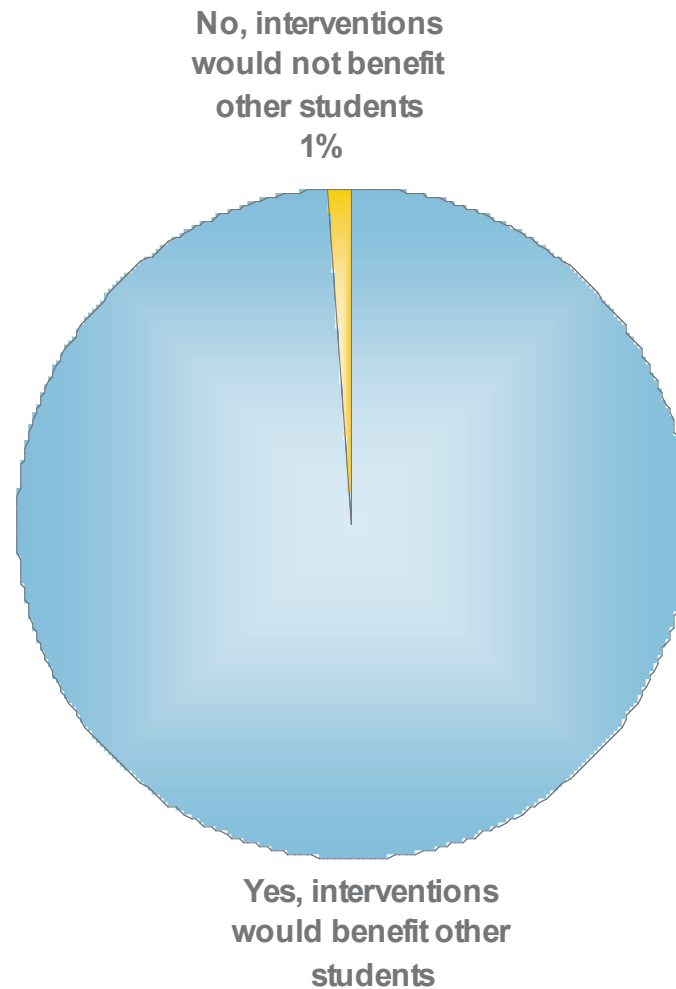
Base : All respondents n=347

Base : All respondents saying funding will be a benefit n=337

## Key verbatim comments on what funding should be spent on:

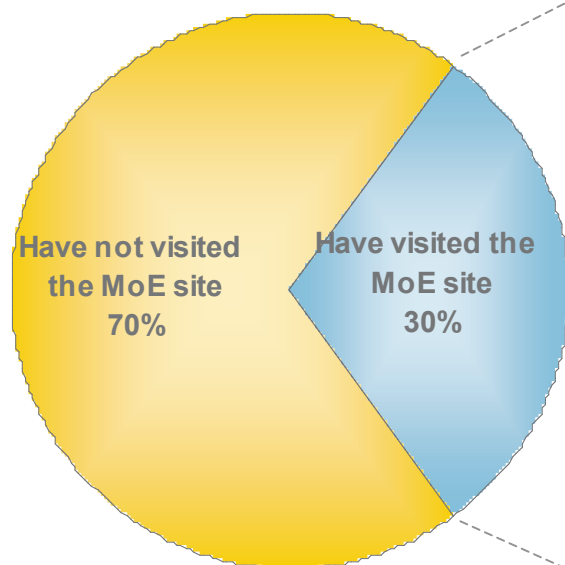
- “Professional Development for teachers identifying students in need giving students support and resources to aid in their learning ”
- “Teacher aides in the classroom is by far the best use of money and they also assist in producing differentiated learning activities”
- “Teacher time made available to spend one on one or in small groups. Outside agencies to assist”
- “Resources for students-computers, teachers aides, books, experts. Work shops for teachers, parents, teacher aides future employers to attend”
- Further training for teachers to be able to identify and work with dyslexic students. Also funding for teacher aides to work alongside students and teachers in the classroom. The key is professional development for teachers.

## Would interventions benefit other students?



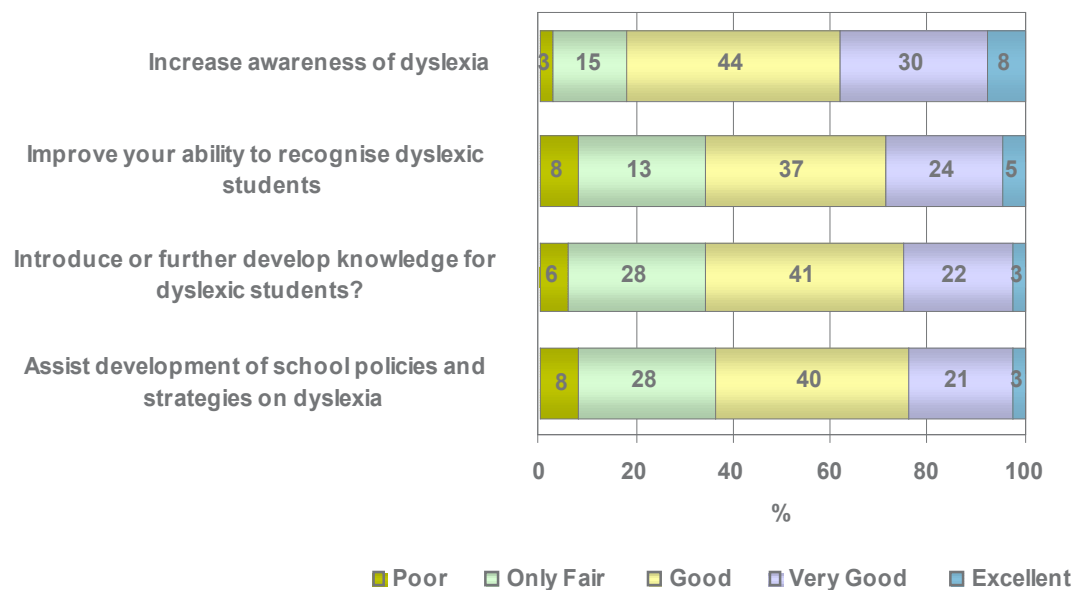
Base : All respondents n=347

# The MoE website



Base : All respondents n=347

## MoE website performance



Base : All respondents who visited the MoE website n=99

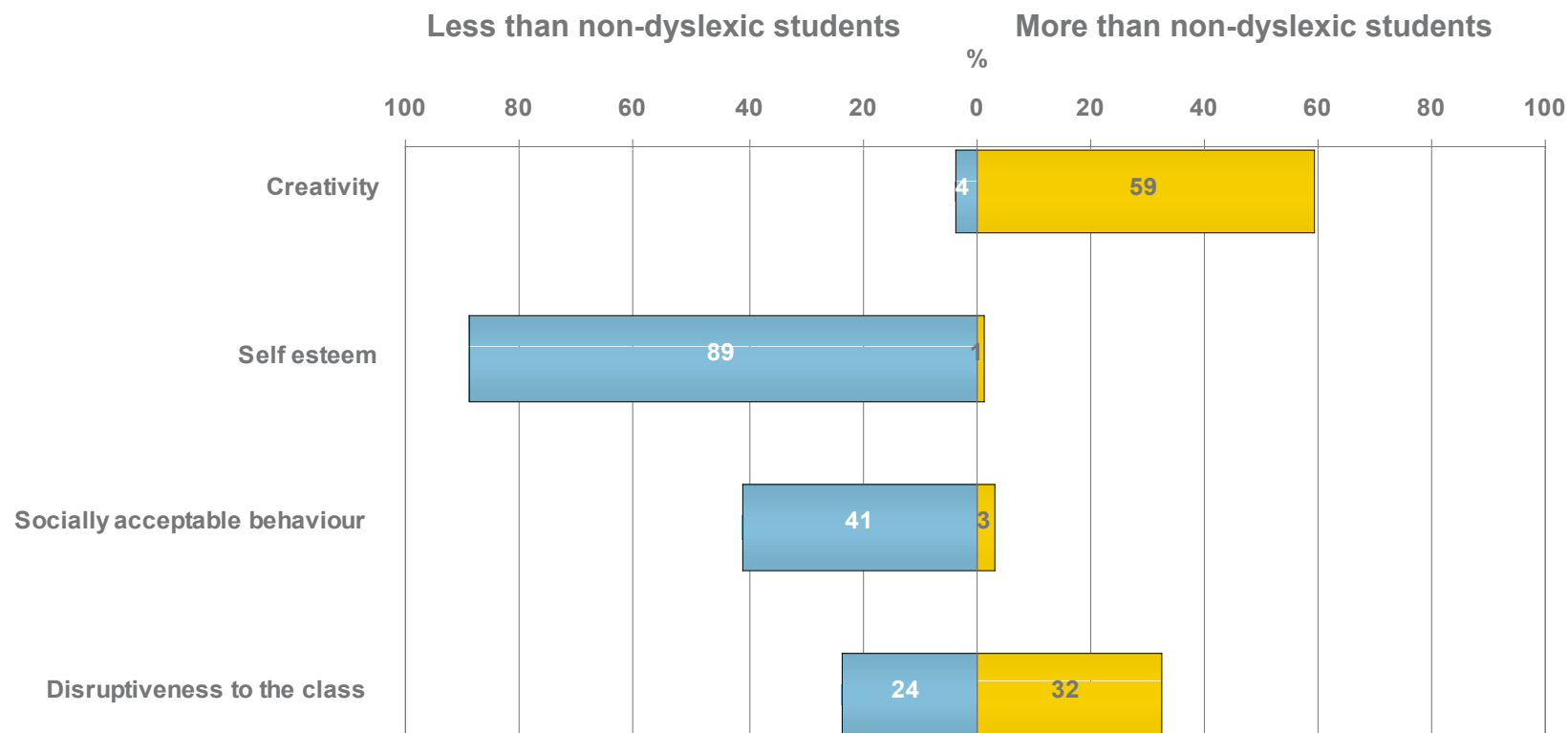
## 4. Behavioural traits of dyslexic students





# Comparing dyslexic students to non-dyslexic students

- Dyslexic students were generally seen as having more creativity but less self-esteem and socially acceptable behaviour than non-dyslexic students. Dyslexic students were considered slightly more disruptive.



Base : All respondents who have ever taught Dyslexic students n=323

## Key verbatim comments on types of disruptive behaviour exhibited by dyslexic students

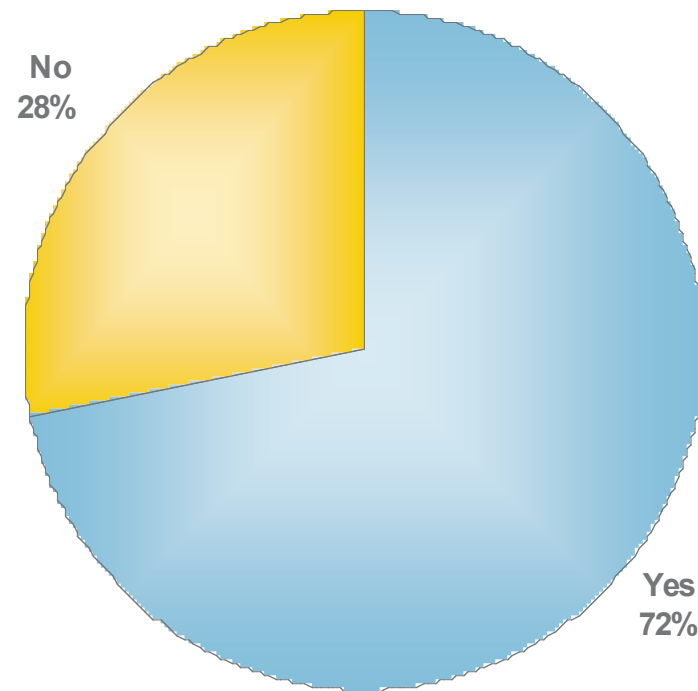
- “Frustration at not being able to complete the same tasks. Embarrassment at their learning difficulties, so drawing attention in other ways. ”
- “Difficulty following instructions, listening to directions can mean work is not completed and time wasted distracting others. Can be the class clown as avoidance tactic to complete set tasks. Restless on the mat and not focused, time wasting for teacher control. ”
- “Off task, avoidance, chatting, out of seat, pencil sharpening again and again, when written work or reading is expected. ”
- “Shortness of temper. Lashing out at their peers. Disliking being singled out for extra assistance. ”

## 5. Sample details



## Percentage who have had exposure to people with dyslexia outside of teaching

Exposure to Dyslexia outside teaching?



Base : All respondents n=347

## Key sample details

Position:	%
Teacher	68
Principal	11
Teacher Aide	3
RTLB	12
RT:Lit	6

Years teaching	%
Less than 1 year	2
1 to 3 years	5
4 to 6 years	6
7 to 10 years	10
More than 10 years	77

Type of school:	%
Primary	57
Intermediate	5
Secondary	10
Combined Primary and Intermediate	18
Combined Intermediate and Secondary	3
Years 1 -13	6

School size:	%
Less than 50 students	7
50 to 100 students	5
101 to 500 students	71
501 to 1000 students	10
1001 to 1500 students	3
More than 1500 students	5