

Kent County Council

Children, Young People & Education Directorate

Draft Strategy for the Future of Education in Kent 2025-2030

Analysis of the Consultation survey

Report

January 2025



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Introduction

- 1 In October 2024, Kent County Council [KCC] launched a survey as part of a consultation process on its *Draft Strategy for the Future of Education in Kent for the period 2025 to 2030* [the Strategy].¹
- 2 The survey was open from 23rd October 2024 to midnight on 15th December 2024; participation was either by completing a questionnaire (provided both in paper form and online at LetsTalkKent – an abbreviated version is at Annex A) or otherwise making a written submission. An independent research consultancy, acl consulting, was commissioned by KCC to analyse the responses: this document is acl’s report on the key findings from the survey.

The questionnaire

- 3 The questionnaire invited respondents’ views on the Strategy. It contained both closed questions (yes/no, tick box, and based on a five-point Likert scale, from 1 – strongly agree – to 5 – strongly disagree) and open questions. This report provides an analysis of responses to both types of questions.
- 4 Demographic information was also collected, in part to enable comparisons of how different groups of respondents answered any given question. Were parents/carers, for example, more likely to “strongly agree” with a particular proposition than education professionals?

Respondent profile

- 5 A total of 131 responses were received, the vast majority of which were completed online.² (Full demographic details are at Annex B.)

¹ More information and links to various documents relating to the Strategy are at <https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/education-strategy-25-30#:~:text=The%20consultation%20report%20and%20final,by%20the%20Cabinet%20Member%20for>.

² The substantive written responses received in other than completed survey format have been reviewed to ensure that the points made are appropriately reflected in this report.

- 6 124 respondents gave their postcode; the distribution of these across KCC’s education team areas is as follows: North = 14%; East = 27%; South = 15%; West = 38%.³ (6% of respondents gave postcodes outside the area administered by KCC – principally Medway.)
- 7 Given the level of response, to ensure that the sub-groups were sufficiently large for the purposes of analysis, respondents were initially grouped into two broad categories as illustrated in the following table.

| Q1: Status of respondents – Education professionals | | |
|--|---------------|-------------------|
| | <i>Number</i> | <i>Proportion</i> |
| Education professional or employee | 52 | 40% |
| KCC employee | 12 | 9% |
| Charity or Voluntary, Community or Social Enterprise [VCSE] worker/volunteer | 4 | 3% |
| On behalf of a commercial Kent educational services provider | 3 | 2% |
| <i>Total classified as education professionals</i> | 71 | 54% |

| Q2: Status of respondents – Parents/carers [residents and others] | | |
|--|---------------|-------------------|
| | <i>Number</i> | <i>Proportion</i> |
| Parent/carer of a child in education in Kent from early years through to post-16 | 30 | 23% |
| Kent resident | 13 | 10% |
| Councillor (any level of council) | 3 | 2% |
| On behalf of a friend or relative | 1 | 1% |
| Other | 13 | 10% |
| <i>Total classified as ‘parents/carers’</i> | 60 | 46% |

- 8 The 52 respondents indicating that they were an “Education professional or employee” were asked about the type of education provider they worked for (Q1b) – multiple answers were possible (e.g. Primary and MAT) – and their role in the organisation (Q1c). The responses indicate that:
- There were more responses from staff in the Primary and Early Years than in Secondary and Post-16 phases (by more than 3:1)
 - Responses were received from 2 Pupil Referral Units and 1 Special School
 - Responses from Multi-Academy Trusts [MATs]/their academies outweighed those from local authority schools (by 2:1)

³ Respondents did not have to answer every question in the survey hence, although the total number of responses received is 131, n – the number responding to a particular question – may differ from this (as is the case here).

- Responses were generally from those at a senior level in their organisation (33 of the 52 that responded to Q1c indicated that they were either a Headteacher, CEO or a senior manager).
- 9 The 30 respondents indicating that they were a “Parent/carer” were asked about the phase(s) of education their child(ren) were in (Q1d); again multiple answers were possible. The split between phases here differs to that reported for staff in some respects – more with a child/children in Primary and Secondary, fewer in Early Years and also Post-16 provision (the ratios are 3:1).
 - 10 Parents/carers were also asked whether they had a child/children with special educational needs or disabilities [SEND] (Q1e – 16 had) and, if so, whether an Education, Health & Care Plan [EHCP] was in place (Q1f – it was in 9 cases). Comparing the responses of these parents with those of parents whose child/children do not have SEND/an EHCP there is generally little variation; both are still overwhelmingly positive in the main (the median and mode responses are 1 in almost all cases), with the SEND/EHCP group of parents occasionally agreeing less strongly (i.e. recording a 2 rather than a 1).⁴
 - 11 Only half of respondents gave further demographic information about themselves – from this the “typical” respondent was white, more likely to be female than male, heterosexual, and aged 50 or over. 7 respondents reported that they had a disability.

Analysis

- 12 The remaining sections of this Report present our analysis of the responses to the survey. The Report follows the structure of the survey questionnaire with each of the key elements of the Strategy being covered in questionnaire order – one per section. The relevant closed and open questions are considered together in each section.

⁴ A brief statistical note by way of explanation may help. The median is the middle number of a data set when the values are arranged in order (from smallest to largest or vice versa). The mode is the value in the data set that occurs most often. Also relevant here are the arithmetic mean (calculated by adding all the values in the data set together and dividing the total by the number of values), and the range of the data set (the difference between the highest and lowest values – i.e. 1 and 5 on the Likert Scale used here). For this Consultation the size of the parents/carers data set is relatively small (30): this means that just one or two outliers in the range (e.g. a 4 or a 5 if most responses are 1 or 2) will have a significant impact on the arithmetic mean, and this is indeed the case with the parental/carer data set here. Because the median and mode are less affected by the odd outlier, they are a better reflection of what the data is actually saying – hence we focus on these rather than the mean here.

- 13 As part of the analysis of the responses given to the closed questions, a number of the most useful “cross-tabulations” were run (principally to see if there were any discernible differences between respondent types).⁵ In no instance was there a significant difference in the way one group of respondents – however defined – answered any particular question compared to another group of respondents. This means that, for example, when we say (below) that 113 out of 130 respondents (87%) found the Strategy easy to understand the reader can assume that – subject to rounding error and small chance fluctuations – 87% of parents/carers found it easy to understand, as did 87% of education professionals. For this reason, the responses to the quantitative questions are presented here only on an “all respondents as a whole” basis.
- 14 In Section 2 of the questionnaire, which is where most of the qualitative data has been generated, closed questions were generally followed by one or more open questions where respondents could enter unlimited free text of their choice to explain their answer to the related closed question, and in some cases suggest changes to the particular element of the Strategy under review – e.g. Q5 (To what extent do you agree or disagree with the *Kent Education Mission*?) was followed by Q5a (Please tell us the reason for your response.).
- 15 Open questions often generate a not inconsiderable amount of text which has to be analysed to draw out the key themes; to do this we used the Emerging Themes methodology, which enabled a comprehensive summary of the key points made in response to each open question to be produced. In each of the following sections, the commentaries on the qualitative responses are based on these summaries.⁶ For the purposes of this Report, “quotes” from a selection of the responses are given to illustrate the points being made.⁷

⁵ We provide a technical note on cross-tabulation at Annex C.

⁶ Separately to this Report, a consolidated comprehensive summary of the responses to each open question has been shared with KCC in order that they are aware of all respondents’ comments verbatim.

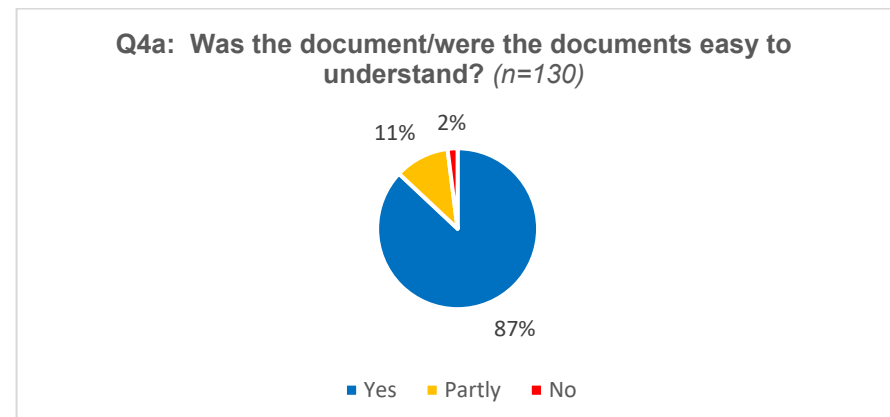
⁷ These are in text boxes throughout the Report; also given in each box is the type of respondent who made the comment and, where appropriate, any additional information that the respondent has given – chiefly the type of education provider they work for and their role for “Educational professionals”, and the phase of education their child/children are in and whether they have SEND/an EHCP for “Parents/carers”. Minor modifications to the text as submitted by respondents have been made in some cases (e.g. for syntax and punctuation); these changes have not been highlighted. Occasionally more major alterations have been made in order more clearly to represent what (it is believed) is the intention behind a respondent’s comment; material changes of this nature are enclosed in square brackets [...].

It is important to note at the outset that, whilst the nature of the comments made – and therefore those reflected here – on balance tend towards being critical/negative in tone, the vast majority of respondents (85%+ – i.e. at least 111 of the 131 respondents – on most indicators) agree with the content of the Strategy, albeit with concerns/reservations in a minority of cases.

The Strategy documents

- 16 Various versions of the Strategy were produced and made available for review as part of the Consultation: a full version (41 pages); a summary version (13 pages); an outline of the Strategy on a single page; and an easy-read version (22 pages). The survey asked: which version(s) respondents had read (Q4) – multiple responses to this question were possible and a third of respondents indicated that they had read more than one version – and if respondents found the document(s) they had read easy to follow (Q4a). An open question asked for suggestions as to how the Strategy could be made easier to understand (Q4b).
- 17 The table and chart below show that the full and summary versions of the Strategy were those most frequently read. 87% had found the document(s) they had read easy to follow and the vast majority of respondents (115) therefore had no comments on how the Strategy could be made easier to understand.

| Q4: Which document did respondents read? | |
|---|---------------|
| <i>(n = 130)</i> | <i>Number</i> |
| The full version | 53 |
| The summary version | 63 |
| The draft on a page | 30 |
| The easy read version | 24 |
| <hr/> | |
| <i>Total number of documents read</i> | <i>170</i> |



- 18 The main criticisms raised/suggestions for improvement made in response to Q4b were that the documents:

- Were too long – this applied to the main document but also, for some, to the summary version which was felt to be “too long for a summary”.

| | | |
|---------------|--|---|
| Kent resident | | I started with the summary draft, then moved to the full version (which I realised was too much to absorb), then ended up using the easy read version which was more helpful to understand actually what the changes on the ground might mean. I liked [having the different priorities within] each area of focus. |
|---------------|--|---|

(On the other hand there was praise for the “on a page” and “easy read” versions, which provided a good overview and were easier to follow for some of those who struggled with the longer versions. No one who looked at the easy read version had found it difficult to understand.)

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|--------------|------------------------|--|
| Parent/carer | Secondary pupil (EHCP) | Main document was too long to review. The ‘on a page’ version was good way to get an overview. |
|--------------|------------------------|--|

- Needed to be made clearer – various suggestions to improve clarity were offered: include more images/illustrations; make the text less dense; reduce the vagueness of the text; differentiate the headings from the sub-headings more clearly; reduce the amount of information being communicated; and tie what is there more closely to the KCC context, existing KCC policies, documentation and programmes, and other consultations.

| | | |
|---------------|--|--|
| Kent resident | | I started with the summary draft, then moved to the full version (which I realised was too much to absorb) then ended up using the easy read version which was more helpful to understand actually what the changes on the ground might mean. I liked [having the different priorities within] each area of focus. |
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- The lack of detail as to how the aspirations described in the Strategy would be achieved, and the timescales and resources for doing this, were also mentioned.

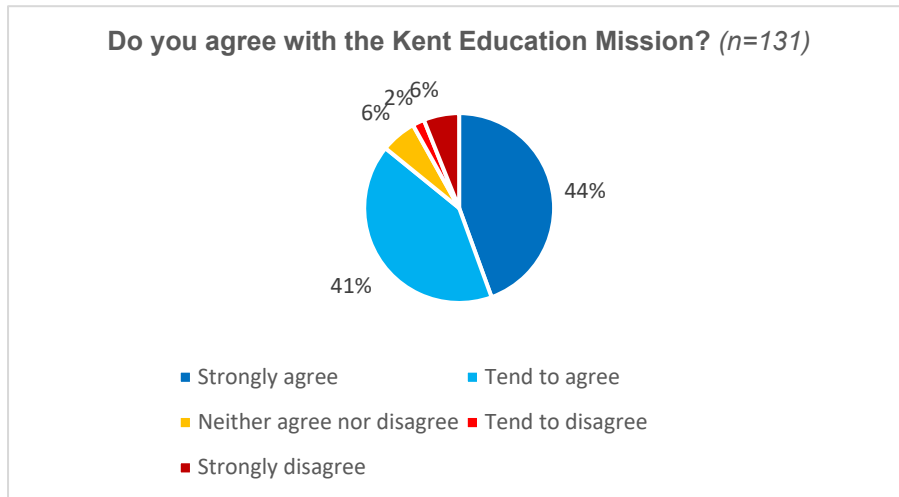
| | | |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Education professional | Head teacher (LA Primary school) | The Strategy sets out ambitions without detailing the actions that will be taken. |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|---|

The Kent Education Mission

19 As outlined in the Strategy, the proposed *Kent Education Mission* is two-fold:

- Collaboratively to develop and support an effective, evidence-informed system of strong leaders and staff grounded in clear moral purpose to respond to the local needs and aspirations of Kent children and parents
- To place all children and young people at the centre of all education, by ensuring they are heard, included and supported to be ambitious, curious and resilient individuals who are well prepared for their future and empowered to achieve.

20 Q5 asked respondents to state the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the *Mission*; all answered this question. Q5a asked respondents to explain their answer to Q5; 104 responded to this question.



21 The vast majority of respondents (85%) agreed with the *Mission*. However these responses are almost equally split between “Strongly agree” and “Tend to agree” (so “agreement” is not as strong here as for other questions), and were sometimes accompanied by comments with potentially negative overtones (e.g. “How could anyone possibly disagree with it?”).

22 Although only a minority made openly critical comments, further work on the *Mission* may therefore be necessary.

| | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Education professional | Senior leader (Post 16 sector) | The intent behind the Strategy is to ensure that all children and young people have high quality education – what’s to disagree with? |
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23 Where the *Mission* was criticised, this was most commonly due to a perceived lack of specificity. What was specifically new? How will we know when we have achieved this?

| | | |
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| Parent/carer | Primary pupil | It is good that there are things you want to do to improve the issues within education. However, I didn't see specifics that could actually be applied, for example the developing of programmes that will support those [children and young people] that are behind [their peer group] is extremely wishy-washy; as is 'supporting early years' (how exactly?!) and as are many of the other points. |
| Kent resident | | Still not exactly sure how each goal will be achieved. All good ideas but putting into practice is harder to understand from document. |
| Educational services provider | Early Years | Places children and young people at the centre, and that their voice(s) should be heard. We like the collaborative approach. We also like the three areas of focus. However, the Strategy is not explicit enough in the delivery plan. |

24 Some respondents stressed the importance of the *Mission* having children at its heart – the inference being that this is not necessarily (or not sufficiently) the case in the document as currently presented.

25 As will become apparent, staffing is an issue that runs across responses to a number of questions – here the concern is two-fold: that school staff (not limited to teachers) are under considerable pressure already; and that the capacity in the system is not there to permit delivery to happen. Some respondents also wondered whether staff – at providers and working elsewhere in the sector – currently have the necessary ethos, skills and/or experience to enable the aspirations reflected in the *Mission* to be delivered.

| | | |
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| Education professional | Teacher (Other establishment) | I agree with the principles behind it. However I would need more information on exactly how these would be achieved without hugely adding to schools' already huge workload. |
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26 Some respondents also expressed concerns as to whether – and how – any of the aspirations would/could apply to children and young people with SEND.

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| Parent/carer | Secondary pupil Post 16 student (SEND) | I do not understand how SEND children will get the support when schools have even more pressure applied with even less financial support. |
|--------------|---|---|

27 Other concerns raised here related to:

- What “moral purpose” means in this context. (The *Mission* has a “... clear moral purpose to respond to the local needs and aspirations of Kent children and parents”. What does this mean?)
- Whether sufficient resources would be made available to enable the *Mission* to be delivered.
- The importance of involving, and role of, parents.
- Various “barriers” to achievement – the education infrastructure in general and, more specifically from a Kent perspective, travel to learn distances, the level of specialist support services in the County, and the selective system which were all cited here.

The Principles

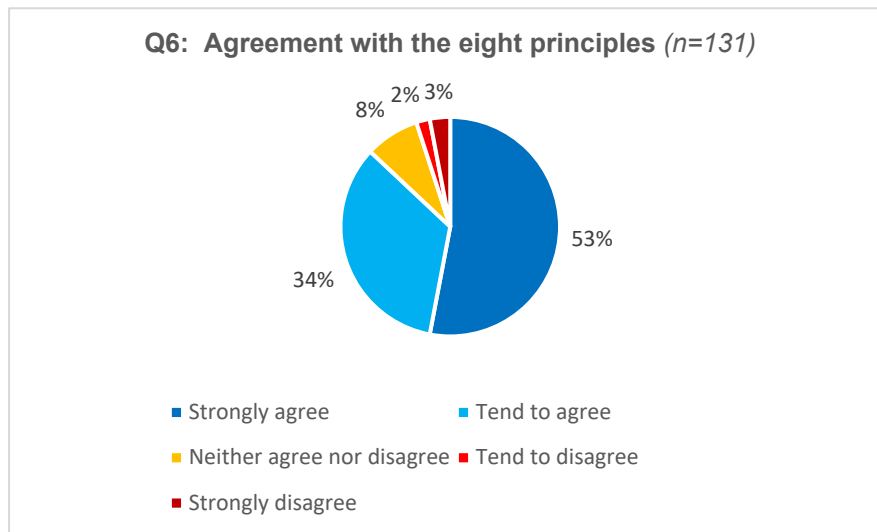
28 The Strategy has eight underlying principles⁸ – these are to be:

- *Ambitious* – striving for the best learning and educational outcomes for all children and young people

⁸ Our understanding is that there is no hierarchy in the way that these principles have been set out (e.g. the fact that *Ambitious* is first in the list does not mean that it is the most important) – they are all equally important. A clear statement to this effect in the Strategy might be helpful as some respondents’ comments indicate that not all have not read the list in this way.

- *Inclusive and child-centred* – promoting safe, relationship-based working to ensure an understanding of individual needs, joined up services, smooth transitions, and equity
- *Sector-focused* – enhancing sector-based leadership, expertise, and skills for effective, continuous improvement
- *Collaborative and place-based* – facilitating collaborative, place-based approaches to education and childcare, meeting local needs through building strong support networks and partnerships
- *Evidence-informed* – being learning and development focused, recognising evidence, and seeking best practice to inform continuous improvement
- *Sustainable* – building for a financially stable and appropriately resourced future
- *Compassionate and principled* – seeking to balance best interests whilst providing appropriate challenge and making difficult decisions
- *Open and consistent* – communicating effectively and consistently to build trust and stronger relationships.

29 The survey asked whether respondents agreed or disagreed with these principles being included in the Strategy (Q6) – all respondents answered this question.



30 The level of agreement is strong – in total 87% (114 respondents) strongly or tend to agree.

31 However, many respondents still offered comments: either in general terms (about the principles as a whole), and/or specifically focused on one or more of the principles (Q6a – 96 responded); or with specific suggestions as to how the eight principles might be improved (Q6b – 62 responded). As with the *Mission* this suggests some further work on the detail might be helpful.

32 Comments on specific principles covered seven of the eight:

- *Ambitious* – the need to draw this principle more widely (“stretch”, “aspiration”), and to be realistic (“children and young people working to the best of their abilities”), to embrace a wider range of disadvantage, and to encourage children and young people to be self-motivated/driven rather than have others project their ambitions for them onto them were all mentioned

| | | |
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| Kent resident | | No mention of children being encouraged to work to the best of their ability. All children's abilities are different and need to be celebrated. Yes, be ambitious but also realistic. |
| Education professional | Other establishment | Possibly more emphasis required on the child's own desire to do well, rather than just the educators' [desires for 'their' children/young people to do well]. A child's internal motivation to be successful must be encouraged (from the earliest age). |

- *Inclusive and child-centred* – comments focused on the difficulties in being inclusive and child-centred [in mainstream settings] for those with SEND in particular, but also in the context of a selective secondary system in Kent which some felt created additional barriers to inclusion, particularly for disadvantaged young people. The lack of funding and insufficient support were also identified as issues hindering progress towards more inclusive provision

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|--------------|--|---|
| Parent/carer | Primary pupil | A selective process is not compatible with an inclusive approach. |
| Parent/carer | Primary pupil Secondary pupil (SEND & EHCP) | Supporting children whatever their needs is so important. |

- *Sector-focused* – there was some confusion around what was meant by “sector”. Practical concerns about the notion of “sector-based leadership” and how this would be delivered to providers that are deemed to need support were also mentioned, as was the additional workload that this approach to continuous improvement would place on providers

| | | |
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| Education services provider | Primary and Secondary sectors | From experience we know the most effective or well-suited partnerships may not always be place-based. For example, a school with high deprivation, high SEND, high Pupil Premium and falling numbers on roll may not find a strong support model locally. Support from a school that understands |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|--|

| | | |
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| | | needs and has a record of success [in similar circumstances is more important than the location of that school]. |
|--|--|--|

- *Evidence-informed* – the use of an evidence-based approach to drive continuous improvement was supported; concerns related to the type of evidence that would be used, how fit for purpose it is for continuous improvement purposes, and how it will be used
- *Sustainable* – the principal concern was how the resources required to implement the Strategy would be secured and maintained

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| Education professional | Primary and Secondary sectors | An element that stands out is the principle of financial sustainability of education and services for children and young people, ensuring they are appropriately resourced; at present this remains a challenge for many settings within the formal and informal education sector. |
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- *Open and consistent* – comments focused on the importance of communication and the need for it to be improved.

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| Other | | Accountability and transparency: The detailed outline of the feedback and consultation process, including timelines and reporting mechanisms, suggests a principle of accountability and transparency. This principle aims to ensure that the development and implementation of the Strategy are open and accountable to the public. I welcome this if KCC are making it a focus as it has not always been demonstrated in the past, and I feel that this lack of transparency has hindered KCC [previously] and led to reputational damage. |
|-------|--|--|

33 More comments were made in relation to the set of principles as a whole/about the principles in general terms. 30 of these can be classified as broadly positive towards/supportive of/in agreement with the principles as stated – this is reflected in words/phrases such as “worthy”, “a good set”, “sensible”, “appropriate”, “ambitious and sustainable”, “strategically clear and concise”, “relevant across all phases”, “pertinent”, “clear and relevant”, and “a positive take on education”. Reference was made to the steps that have already been taken across Post-16 provision to start to address at least some of the issues embodied in the principles.

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| KCC employee | | All the listed principles feel broadly appropriate but I wonder whether there are too many and whether some might be condensed/grouped – e.g. sector based, collaborative and place based; sustainable, compassionate and principled, and open and consistent. |
|--------------|--|--|

- 34 37 respondents were more negative in tone – reflected in phrases such as “focused on the providers and the system that they operate within rather than on children and young people”, “pay[ing] too little attention to the Kent context”, “structural and other [insurmountable] difficulties in the education system”, a “lack of the necessary resources (and capacity)”, and “a lack of detail in the documentation regarding implementation”. There was a general sense of scepticism among around a third of respondents as to how progress would be made, however laudable the principles.

| | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| Parent/carer | Post 16 student | The principles are good. But how do they fit Kent's selective system of education? |
| Kent resident | | These principles are [fine in] theory. [However], in practice they will not work as schools are too large, and our education system is outdated and not fit for 2024. I agree with them, however I doubt they will be implemented under the current educational model. |
| Education professional | SENCO/Inclusion Lead (Primary sector) | Every stakeholder wants and strives for this. But in reality, how is this going to be achieved? We can keep paying lip service to the issues but in reality the system is utterly broken. There's no disagreement with the principles – but how we are all going to get there. |

- 35 A number of enhancements (additions) to the existing eight principles were suggested – principally the need for:

- More flexibility and support to enable mainstream provision to be more inclusive
- A safer learning environment (broadly defined to include the physical state of school buildings, safeguarding, and actions to address bullying, mental health issues and poor behaviour)
- A workforce that is better trained and more supported, but also more accountable and subject to challenge
- A curriculum that better equips young people for the world that they will face when they leave full-time education
- A sector that is properly resourced to deliver the aspirations contained in the Strategy.

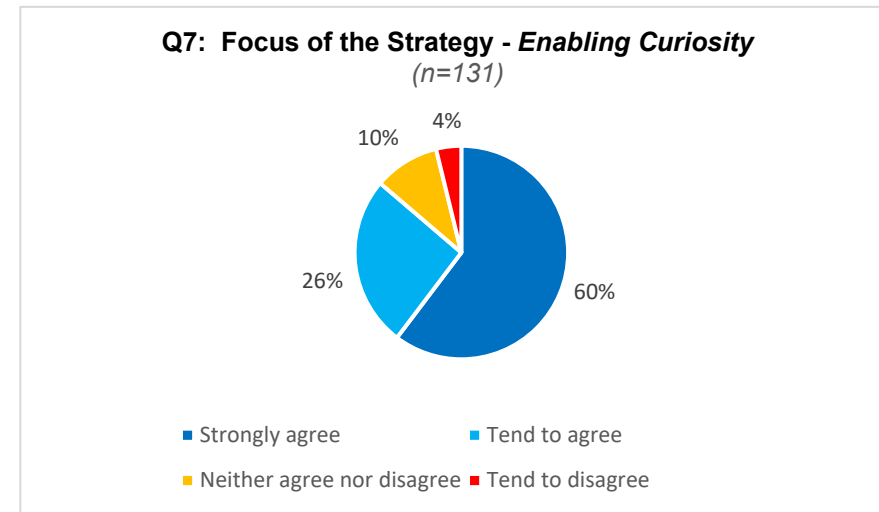
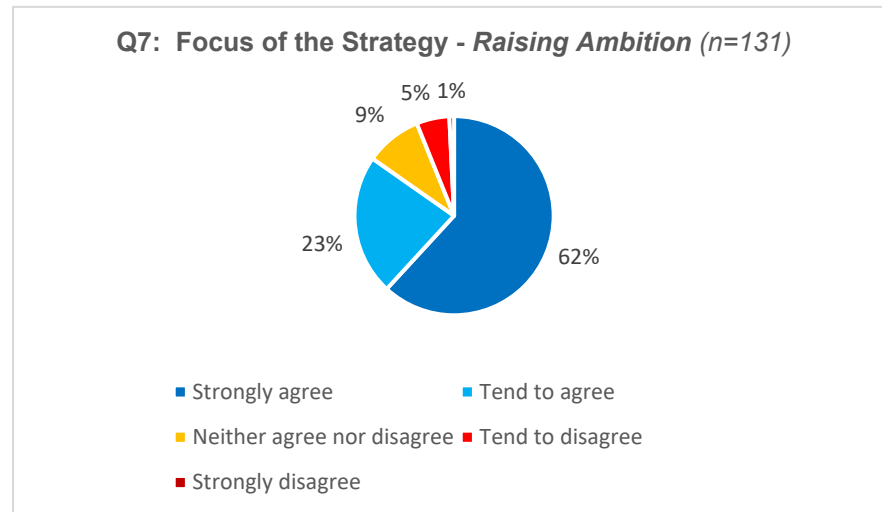
- 36 Equally there was a view that eight were perhaps too many, and that the content of at least one (*Compassionate and principled* was mentioned) could perhaps be absorbed elsewhere without anything being lost.

Areas of focus

37 The Strategy has three “areas of focus” – described in the easy-read version as the things that are most important for a good education:

- *Raising ambition.* To be ambitious for all children and young people by creating firm floors that provide secure starts and long ladders to enable everyone to reach beyond expectations. (*Raising ambition* reflects the fact that teachers are expected to inspire, motivate and challenge pupils, pushing them beyond their limits.)
- *Enabling curiosity.* To enable children and young people to be ready to learn and to support and encourage them to explore their interests and wider horizons. (*Enabling curiosity* is a powerful way to engage children and young people in their learning while they are at school; it also encourages and enables young learners to become lifelong learners.)
- *Building resilience.* To build resilience for the education system by addressing barriers and encouraging effective, collaborative working. (In a climate characterised by change and challenge, *Building resilience* is important for everyone engaged in learning – children and young people, schools and education providers, and the wider system.)

38 Q7 asked respondents to what extent they agreed or disagreed that these are the areas to focus on in the Strategy.





39 Strong support was demonstrated for each *Area of focus*, with very few disagreeing (between 5 and 8 respondents only) and a greater proportion of respondents strongly agreeing (rather than tending to agree) when compared to the responses to other questions.

40 Q7a asked respondents who disagreed with any or all of these as areas of focus for the Strategy to explain why this was the case; 20 responses were received. Q7b asked respondents to suggest how the areas of focus could be improved; 24 responses were received.

41 In relation to *Raising ambition*, a key theme from the comments received is the need for greater personalisation of learning, to ensure both that children and young people are not pushed beyond their abilities and/or their ability to cope, and that they are exposed to a wider range of opportunities as part of their core curriculum thereby better addressing the abilities of more young people. The practical steps that would be necessary for this *Area of focus* to be achieved were a concern.

| | | |
|--------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Parent/carer | Secondary pupil (SEND & EHCP) | While it is good to be ambitious, this may lead to children being pushed beyond their abilities. It should not be a blanket approach, but rather be based on ability in learning as well as handling the workload. Offer more to those you know can achieve more easily, help those who struggle to achieve and meet expectations. I have seen student suffer with mental health problems due to being pushed too much and not being able to handle the workload even though they were very capable. |
|--------------|-------------------------------|--|

42 Respondents thought that *Enabling curiosity* could be extended to encompass creativity, problem-solving and motivation. The narrowness of the post-Early Years curriculum, and the constraints imposed by the National Curriculum and Ofsted's inspection regime were identified as barriers to progress being made here that were beyond KCC's control.

| | | |
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| Education professional | Head teacher (Other establishment) | Enabling curiosity – [fine but] we still have to [fit] in the National Curriculum, [and are judged by Ofsted on this]. |
| Education professional | Teacher (Other establishment) | Enabling curiosity - yes we want young people to explore new areas of the changing world. [This is], only possible through opportunity and variety; most schools have narrowed their curriculum, not increased the offers of subjects. |

- 43 Whilst *Raising ambition* and *Enabling curiosity* were seen as being learner-focused, respondents felt *Building resilience* was more organisational/structural in nature – at least as currently worded. (If this is not the intention then some redrafting would be of value.) Some respondents sought to redress this perceived imbalance in their comments, for example: “encouraging self-development and grow[ing], evolving and adapting (rather than “build[ing] resilience”); “creating the right context for young people to learn; ensuring mental resilience”; and “equipping young people with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to cope with the world as they [will] find it”.

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| Parent/carer | Secondary pupil Post 16 student (SEND & EHCP) | Raising ambition and curiosity really focused on children, but the contents of resilience [is] about schools infrastructure. Need to state [that] resilience is about ensuring the context around children and young people; [providing] the protective factors for children and young people when/if they are in adversity can [also be about resilience]. |
| VCSE worker or volunteer | | Resilience is too subjective. 'Encouraging self-development' recognises that this promotes a lifelong journey - we don't 'build' resilience. We grow, continually evolving and adapting [and this is what makes us resilient]. |

- 44 At the level of the organisation/system, there is scepticism as to whether the level of collaboration required to build something that is resilient is possible given the current structures and [financial] pressures in the system. Also of concern is whether there is a full appreciation of/the appetite for the tough decisions that *Building resilience* will require (e.g. re. aspirations for SEND provision; re. the allocation of resources). For some the size and scope of the *Building resilience* task – a major overhaul of the current system, requiring the cooperation of players beyond Kent – was insurmountable.

| | | |
|------------------------|--|--|
| Education professional | SENCO/Inclusion lead (Primary sector) | Areas of focus in theory are one thing, practically managing and achieving this is another. Everyone wants this but without adequate funding, listening to professionals at the chalk face and the systems to support and bolster these, frankly these are just words. |
| Other | | It is not the direction of travel I question but the capacity of the players in the system to achieve [what will be required of them] given the complexities of the current context. |

- 45 The themes of a lack of resources to enable the ambitions reflected in the three areas of focus, and of provision for children and young people with SEND (both noted elsewhere) were mentioned here.
- 46 The importance of children and young people actually enjoying their learning was felt to be worthy of [more] comment within the areas of focus.

Priorities

- 47 Each of the three areas of focus reviewed above is supported by a number of “goals” or “priorities for action” in the Strategy: the next three sub-sections cover these in turn. The format of the questions is the same for each *Area of focus* – i.e. three questions to:
 - Measure strength of agreement with each using a five-point scale
 - Give respondents who disagreed with what was proposed the opportunity to say why
 - Ask all respondents for suggestions that might improve the goals/priorities.
- 48 In the tables and paragraphs below, for obvious reasons we can only give abbreviated versions of each priority – the full text is available in the Consultation documentation at <https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/education-strategy-25-30#:~:text=The%20consultation%20report%20and%20final,by%20the%20Cabinet%20Member%20for.>

Raising ambition

49 The level of agreement with the priorities for *Raising ambition* is shown in the table below (n=131 or 130 in all cases).⁹

| Q8: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following 6 goals/priorities are the right ones to support <i>Raising ambition</i> | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | <i>High standards</i> | <i>Strong starting points</i> | <i>Good pathways</i> | <i>Great schools, strong Ofsteds</i> | <i>Meeting specific needs</i> | <i>Equality of opportunity</i> |
| Strongly agree | 82 (63%) | 92 (70%) | 99 (76%) | 62 (48%) | 97 (74%) | 99 (76%) |
| Tend to agree | 40 (31%) | 32 (24%) | 26 (20%) | 41 (32%) | 21 (16%) | 24 (18%) |
| <i>Total 'agree'</i> | 94% | 94% | 96% | 80% | 90% | 94% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 4 (3%) | 4 (3%) | 2 (2%) | 16 (12%) | 7 (5%) | 7 (5%) |
| Tend to disagree | 4 (3%) | 2 (2%) | 2 (2%) | 8 (6%) | 3 (2%) | 0 |
| Strongly disagree | 1 (1%) | 1 (1%) | 1 (1%) | 3 (2%) | 3 (2%) | 0 |
| <i>Total 'disagree'</i> | 4% | 3% | 3% | 8% | 4% | 0% |

50 Support is strong for all of these priorities (90%+, or at least 117 respondents) – the only relative ‘dip’ is *Great schools with strong Ofsted outcomes*. Just two provoked much in the way of comment in Q8a and Q8b:

- *Great schools with strong Ofsted outcomes* – comments varied from the simple “[Ofsted is] not fit for purpose” to specific criticisms about Ofsted’s lack of understanding of the sector, inflexible and over-rigid adherence to procedure, the pressure it puts on schools and teachers, and the unreliability of a snapshot of school performance based on its judgements. These comments reflect a more general concern that, however good KCC’s intentions, without reform “the system” (here Ofsted) will act as a major block to progress being made

⁹ The colour scheme for the figures in the table matches that used in the pie charts – shades of blue for agree; amber for neutral; reds for disagree.

| | | |
|--------------|--|---|
| KCC employee | | Yes we need great schools, but is Ofsted the best way of judging this? I do not believe it is. |
| Other | | Not all schools who achieve great results for their children are [appropriately] recognised by Ofsted inspection. |

- *Meeting specific needs through inclusion and appropriate SEND provision* – comments focused on the difficulties that inclusion posed to mainstream schools in terms of the resources required for effective inclusion, and the impact on other [non-SEND] children and young people, and their teachers and other staff.

| | | |
|--------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Parent/carer | Primary pupil Secondary pupil | [I need] more sense of how schools will be supported to do this. They already say they are trying to do the above but feel unsupported and are angry at the level of needs they are expected to support in mainstream with no additional funding or support. |
| Parent/carer | Primary pupil | SEND children get so much focus without the resources to back this up; this takes away from other children - you should provide more teaching staff, not just train teachers to do more on their own, it is detrimental to other children in the class. |

51 A number of suggestions were made to improve the priorities; chief among these was the sense that something more visionary (less generic) was required.

| | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Education professional | Head teacher (Secondary sector) | This is too generic; the comments are fine but the detail is missing. |
| Education professional | CEO (Other establishment) | Something more visionary about what our ambition is for children & young people in Kent. It feels a little bit like a Strategy for collecting data rather than, having collected the data, a visionary Strategy for raising ambition with specific targets. |

52 Concerns were also raised as to how achievement was going to be (a) measured and (b) maintained.

Enabling curiosity

53 The level of agreement with the priorities for *Enabling curiosity* is shown in the table below (n is between 129 and 131 in all cases).

| Q9: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following 5 goals/priorities are the right ones to support <i>Enabling curiosity</i> | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| | <i>Effective pastoral care</i> | <i>Great teaching and learning</i> | <i>Good health</i> | <i>Good physical fitness</i> | <i>Creativity</i> |
| Strongly agree | 90 (69%) | 105 (81%) | 84 (65%) | 82 (64%) | 100 (76%) |
| Tend to agree | 34 (26%) | 23 (18%) | 38 (29%) | 34 (26%) | 28 (21%) |
| <i>Total 'agree'</i> | 95% | 99% | 94% | 90% | 97% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 5 (4%) | 1 (1%) | 6 (5%) | 11 (9%) | 2 (2%) |
| Tend to disagree | 1 (1%) | 1 (1%) | 2 (2%) | 2 (2%) | |
| Strongly disagree | 1 (1%) | | | | 1 (1%) |
| <i>Total 'disagree'</i> | 2% | 1% | 2% | 2% | 1% |

54 Support is strong for all of the priorities underpinning *Enabling curiosity* (90%+, or at least 116 respondents) – none provoked much comment in Q9a, and no one took up the invitation to suggest additional priorities in Q9b.

55 From responses to Q9a, again there is a sense that something more visionary (less generic) with more detail on implementation, measurement and maintenance of performance/improvement is required. Concerns noted elsewhere re. the lack of freedom for teachers to develop the broad curriculum implied in order to enable curiosity, and the way the offer is presented to meet the specific needs of and is made accessible to young people were also covered here.

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Education professional / employee | Head teacher (Primary sector) | Explanations of HOW this will be achieved [are needed]. At the moment, these are just unsubstantiated promises - how are you going to help schools to provide this - other than just insisting that it is done? |
| Education professional / employee | CEO (Other establishment) | I have put tend to agree for opportunities for arts, culture and music – this is because I don't think these subjects should be classified as 'opportunities' but rather that they should be embedded into the essential educational offer for all schools. Classing them as opportunities suggests schools will be able to opt out. STEM subjects are not listed as opportunities and I would like to think that we could get to a situation in schools where arts subjects are treated similarly – that is not considered as [optional] extras but woven into the fabric of curricula and extra-curricular activities in all schools. |

Building Resilience

56 The level of agreement with the priorities for *Building resilience* is shown in the table below (n is between 127 and 129 in all cases).

| Q10: To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following 5 goals/priorities are the right ones to support <i>Building resilience</i> | | | | | |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| | <i>Safe-guarding</i> | <i>Mental Health</i> | <i>System wide cohesion</i> | <i>School to school improvement</i> | <i>Future-proofing</i> |
| Strongly agree | 112 (87%) | 101 (78%) | 84 (65%) | 79 (61%) | 78 (61%) |
| Tend to agree | 14 (11%) | 19 (15%) | 33 (25%) | 32 (25%) | 32 (25%) |
| <i>Total 'agree'</i> | 98% | 93% | 90% | 86% | 86% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 2 (2%) | 6 (5%) | 10 (8%) | 13 (10%) | 14 (11%) |
| Tend to disagree | | 1 (1%) | | 2 (2%) | 1 (1%) |
| Strongly disagree | 1 (1%) | 2 (2%) | 2 (2%) | 1 (1%) | 1 (1%) |
| <i>Total 'disagree'</i> | 1% | 2% | 2% | 1% | 1% |

57 As for the other areas of focus, the strength of agreement here, as measured on the five-point scale, is high – over 85% in all cases (or at least 109 respondents). The main exceptions are *Support[ing] the self-improving system*, where comments in Q10a focused on the practical difficulties this raised and how these would be managed.

| | | |
|-------|--|--|
| Other | | Empowering school-to-school support isn't enough, [it] needs appropriate funding and resourcing to make it work. There isn't spare capacity in the system to make this happen right now. |
|-------|--|--|

58 Other points raised principally related to *Good mental wellbeing* – respondents were concerned that fostering mental resilience, and indeed mental health support generally, were outside the competence of most teachers; that external expertise was therefore going to be necessary; and that, as this expertise was already in short supply, how would the additional resources required be found and funded?

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| Parent/carer | Primary pupil | I think teaching strategies for resilience in schools is a good thing, but I don't agree that effective mental health support should be done through schools. [It should be done] through qualified medical professionals. |
| Education professional / employee | Head teacher (MAT) | There are extremely limited MH services to support children and families - schools are funding these as much as they can, putting even more pressure on our funding. Children are struggling and suffering, along with their families, since the wait times are far too long. SEMH children are in our schools now and finding school a negative place to be since it is not able to fully meet their needs, despite how hard professionals are working for them. |

59 *Future-proofing* appeared not to be fully understood by some respondents.

60 Suggested improvements in response to Q10b tended to reiterate points made elsewhere re. a fragmented system leading to difficulties in keeping academy schools on board, insufficient resources being available to make things happen, and the need to track, measure and sustain/maintain what was being achieved as the Strategy is taken forward.

Other comments on the Strategy

- 61 Respondents were offered the opportunity to make any other comments about the draft Strategy. Inevitably these showed some variation, but they can be brought together under a number of headings, some of which reflect themes already noted:
- Implementation and the level of stakeholder contributions required – some respondents expressed concern that, in a system within which academies enjoyed a great deal of independence, it might prove difficult (a) to agree on a direction of travel (even at the strategic level), and then (b) to ensure that this was actioned
 - SEND (both its place in the Strategy, and more generally) – there are reservations among some parents/carers over inclusion and the effect of placing children with additional needs in mainstream schools: these are expressed by both those with children with SEND/an EHCP, and those whose children do not have them. A perceived shortage of resources to support inclusion was also a cause of concern
 - The content of the Strategy – some of the statements made were felt to be about self-evident “good things” (Who could possibly oppose or disagree with?)
 - The aspirations as articulated in the Strategy were out of step with the reality of current funding (How can we achieve this with what we have?)
 - Provision for Early Years and its place in the Strategy – some felt that reference to/the inclusion of Early Years was not as fully integrated as it should be
 - Concerns over the resources needed to implement the Strategy successfully – significant investment in human resources was considered to be essential if the Strategy was to have a chance of success (this was not just a matter of money, but also about attracting and retaining skilled professionals); some doubted if this would be achievable
 - Environmental issues – some felt these needed more coverage within the Strategy.

Comments on the Equality Impact Assessment [EqIA]

- 62 Alongside the draft Strategy, KCC published an initial EqIA to assess how the proposals might affect those with protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation) and those with carer responsibilities. Q12 asked respondents for their views on the EqIA and whether there was anything else that KCC should consider in relation to how the Strategy might affect those with protected characteristics.
- 63 Few comments were made in relation to the EqIA, and those that were are invariably reflected in concerns already noted elsewhere in this report. KCC will need to consider whether any changes it makes to the Strategy as a result of this Consultation (e.g. in response to comments made regarding SEND provision) have an impact on the EqIA, and to make changes to it accordingly. However, the low level of response to this question, combined with the demographic profile of the respondents, mean that in practice the survey alone has not highlighted any clear and specific areas in relation to or from those with protected characteristics that require addressing.

Concluding comments from acI

Broad support

- 64 Even allowing for the “How can anyone possibly disagree with ...?” type of comment from some respondents, perhaps the most important thing to say is that there is broad support for/agreement with much of what is in the Strategy. Any changes that are contemplated purely on the basis of the survey findings will therefore need to be carefully considered by KCC; there is no groundswell of opinion that X must change/go etc. – quite the reverse in fact.
- 65 There are nevertheless some recurring themes in the qualitative responses that point to areas where the Strategy could be improved.

Implementation

- 66 A common theme in many of the responses was the need to see more information on how the Strategy would be delivered; there are various dimensions to this:

- Resources – where will what is (in the opinion of some respondents) the substantial additional resource that will be required to implement the Strategy come from? There is a concern that the current level of resourcing is insufficient to enable the Strategy to be delivered, and therefore a view in the responses that for anything practical to happen in terms of delivery additional resources (human and financial) will be needed
- Impact on staff – related to the preceding point, there is a concern that in particular there is not sufficient human resource within the system to make the Strategy happen, including: staff within schools (e.g. for collaboration and mentoring other providers); sufficient central resource to support delivery (e.g. for pupils with SEND within mainstream schools); a sufficiently experienced/trained workforce to take on what appear to be expanded roles (e.g. to support pupils with SEND in mainstream again; mental health support). The impact that any increased pressure staff experience as a result of attempting to deliver the Strategy might have on staff wellbeing, recruitment and retention were also raised in this context
- Roles and responsibilities – what does the process of taking forward the Strategy look like? Who is responsible for what? Over what period of time? Etc. A clearer idea of what an implementation plan looks like could be helpful
- Monitoring – how will we know how well we are progressing, and how far we have progressed towards our aims? What data do we already have that could help to demonstrate this? What else do we need? Early consideration of what the suitable indicators of the baseline and to assess progress are, and how they can be evidenced is important
- Sustainability – what differences should we expect to see, and how are we going to ensure that we retain what we have achieved/the progress that we have made? There are both evidence and resourcing dimensions to this that need addressing if the Strategy is to continue to be relevant over time.

67 The challenges of seeking to deliver in what some described as a fragmented system within Kent, and with what many felt were the current priorities of relevant parties external to Kent hindering/acting as block to progress (e.g. the drivers on provision imposed from Ofsted via the current inspection regime, and the restrictions of the national curricula) are also relevant here.

68 In broad terms, the overall question respondents had was: “How can the Strategy be delivered given the current operational context?”

Curriculum

- 69 There is a sense among respondents that how the abilities, skills and interests of those who are less or not “academic” are put as front and as centre as those who are will be critical to the success of the Strategy.
- 70 If the Strategy is to deliver on its promise to, to quote the *Mission*, “Place *all* children and young people at the centre of all education [and ensure that they are *all*] heard, included, and supported to be ambitious, curious and resilient individuals who are well prepared for their future and empowered to achieve”, then every child and young person must believe that they can have their individual needs met and that they can all be aspirational and achieve.

SEND inclusion

- 71 Many respondents were concerned as to how appropriate the drive to include those with SEND in mainstream provision is – points were made by parents of SEND young people (would their children be sufficiently well-supported to be able to cope), parents without SEND (would their children’s education be disrupted by inadequately supported young people with SEND), and staff (would they be sufficiently well trained, resourced and supported to provide all young people in their classes a good education).
- 72 SEND is a major focus of work currently within KCC, and much of this will doubtless be familiar. The key point for the Strategy is to ensure that SEND is appropriately reflected in it – the sense from some of the responses is that this may not currently be the case; we are by no means best-placed to form a view on this, however others will be.

The documentation

- 73 Notwithstanding the generally positive feedback, of the four sets of documentation made available the full and summary versions were (perhaps inevitably), felt to be less clear than those that were easy-read and on-a-page. There may be ways in which how elements of the Strategy are presented in the latter can be incorporated into the former to improve their clarity.

- 74 We also noted the occasional internal consistency in terminology between and within the different versions of the Strategy that should be addressed – for example the term used to describe “what lies below” the three areas of focus needs settling on and standardising across all versions.

Annexes

A The Consultation questionnaire – abbreviated version

This annex contains an abbreviated version of the questionnaire.

Section 1 – Background information

- Q1. Asked respondents to select from a list of options the one that most closely represented how they were responding to the Consultation (e.g. “As a Kent resident”; “As an education professional / employee”; “As a KCC employee”).
- Various supplementary questions (a. to f.) asked for further details – for education professionals/employee the type of organisation worked for and their role; for parents/carers whether they have a child (children) in education and, if so, which phase(s) of education they are in and whether they have SEND and an EHCP).
- Q2. Asked for the first part of the respondents postcode (or the postcode of the organisation they worked for if responding “on behalf of an organisation” at Q1).
- Q3. Asked how the respondent found out about this Consultation.

Section 2 – Your views on the *Draft Strategy for the Future of Education in Kent 2025-2030*

- Q4. Asked which version(s) of the Strategy the respondent had read
- Supplementary questions (a. and b.) asked how easy the Strategy was to understand, and if they had struggled to follow it to suggest how the Strategy could be made easier to understand.
- Q5. Asked respondents about the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the [overall] *Kent Education Mission*, as outlined in the documentation¹⁰

¹⁰ All agree/disagree options offered respondents a five-point scale – Strongly agree; Tend to agree; Neither agree nor disagree; Tend to disagree; Strongly disagree – plus a ‘Don’t know’ option.

A supplementary question (a.) asked respondents to explain their answer

- Q6 The Strategy proposes 8 principles – “... that we will be: ambitious; inclusive and child-centred; sector-focused; collaborative and place-based; informed by evidence; sustainable; compassionate and principled, and open and consistent”. Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with these principles being included in the Strategy.

Supplementary questions (a. and b.) asked respondents to explain their answer, and to suggest anything that should be added to improve the set of principles.

- Q7. Set out the three areas of focus for the Strategy (*Raising ambition. Enabling curiosity. Building resilience*). Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed that these were the areas to focus on.

Supplementary questions (a. and b.) asked respondents to explain their answer (if they disagreed), and to suggest anything that should be added to improve the areas of focus (all respondents).

[Questions 8, 9 & 10 each took an *Area of focus* for the Strategy and identified a number of goals/priorities that supported it.]

- Q8. Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the 6 priorities identified as supporting *Raising ambition* (i.e. high standards and strong progression: strong starting points and better life chances; good post-16 pathways; great schools with strong Ofsted outcomes; meeting specific needs through inclusion and appropriate SEND provision; and equality of opportunity).

Supplementary questions (a. and b.) asked respondents to explain their answer if they disagreed, and to suggest anything that should be added to improve these priorities.

- Q9. Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the 5 priorities identified as supporting *Enabling curiosity* (i.e. effective pastoral care; great teaching and learning in schools that fosters curiosity; good health and physical fitness to enable participation in education; and opportunities to develop passions and talents).

Supplementary questions (a. and b.) asked respondents to explain their answer if they disagreed, and to suggest anything that should be added to improve these priorities.

- Q10. Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the 5 priorities identified as supporting *Building resilience* (i.e. strong and well-integrated safeguarding; effective support for mental health; system wide cohesion; school to school improvement; and future proofing the system).

Supplementary questions (a. and b.) asked respondents to explain their answer if they disagreed, and to suggest anything that should be added to improve these priorities.

Q11. Asked respondents for any other comments they would like to make about the draft Strategy.

Section 3 – Equality analysis

Q12. Asked respondents to comment on the initial Equality Impact Assessment published by KCC alongside the draft Strategy, and to make suggestions for anything else that should be considered relating to equality and diversity.

Section 4 – More about you

Questions in this section (Q13 to Q20) asked about the respondents gender, age, religion, disabilities, caring responsibilities, sexual orientation, and ethnicity.

B Respondents to the Consultation – demographics

Introduction

- 1 In this Annex we describe the demographic and other characteristics of the respondents to the Consultation questionnaire.
- 2 As noted in the main text, a total of 131 responses were received, the vast majority of which were submitted electronically.
- 3 The information in this Annex is taken from questions Q1 to Q3 and Q13 to Q20 of the questionnaire. The order in which information is presented below is slightly different from the questionnaire order.

Respondent information

Who were the respondents?

- 4 Respondents were asked to choose the single category that best reflected how they were completing the questionnaire from the list given in the table below. Entries are broadly in descending order and percentages are rounded:

| Status of respondents | | |
|--|---------------|-------------------|
| | <i>Number</i> | <i>Proportion</i> |
| Education professional or employee | 52 | 40% |
| Parent/carer of a child in education in Kent from early years through to post-16 | 30 | 23% |
| Kent resident | 13 | 10% |
| KCC employee | 12 | 9% |
| Charity or Voluntary, Community or Social Enterprise (VCSE) worker/volunteer | 4 | 3% |
| Parish / Town / Borough / District Council / County Councillor in an official capacity | 3 | 2% |
| On behalf of a commercial Kent educational services provider | 3 | 2% |
| On behalf of a friend or relative | 1 | 1% |
| Other | 13 | 10% |
| Total | 131 | |

Respondents' location

- 5 Respondents were asked for the first part of their postcode. The answers given are summarised in the following table. Not all respondents gave a postcode.

| Location of respondents | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Postcode</i> | <i>Number</i> | <i>Proportion</i> | <i>Area total</i> |
| S - Ashford | 4 | 3% | South 15% |
| S - Dover | 8 | 6% | |
| S - Shepway | 7 | 6% | |
| E - Canterbury | 16 | 13% | East 27% |
| E - Swale | 12 | 10% | |
| E - Thanet | 5 | 4% | |
| W - Maidstone | 23 | 19% | West 38% |
| W - Tonbridge and Malling | 14 | 11% | |
| W - Tunbridge Wells | 10 | 8% | |
| | | | |
| N - Dartford | 8 | 6% | North 14% |
| N - Sevenoaks | 5 | 4% | |
| N - Gravesham | 4 | 3% | |
| Bexhill | 1 | 1% | Non-KCC 6% |
| Medway | 4 | 3% | |
| Rochester | 3 | 2% | |
| Total | 124 | | |

Respondents' professional roles

- 6 Where respondents had indicated that they were an education professional, they were asked about their job role. Answers were as follows. Multiple answers were possible (e.g. Primary & MAT) so neither totals nor percentages are relevant:

| Respondents' professional roles | |
|--|---------------|
| | <i>Number</i> |
| Early Years | 12 |
| Primary | 11 |
| Secondary | 5 |
| Post-16 | 2 |
| Multi Academy Trust | 10 |
| LA maintained | 5 |
| Pupil Referral Unit | 2 |
| Special school | 1 |
| Other responses | 13 |

- 7 Similarly, these respondents were asked what position they occupied in their establishments. Here answers were exclusive so totals and percentages can be given:

| Respondents' position in organisation | | |
|--|---------------|-------------------|
| | <i>Number</i> | <i>Proportion</i> |
| Governor | 1 | 2% |
| Chief Executive | 2 | 4% |
| Headteacher | 19 | 37% |
| Senior leader | 12 | 23% |
| Middle leader | 1 | 2% |
| SENCO | 4 | 8% |
| Teacher | 2 | 4% |
| Other school employee | 1 | 2% |
| Other role | 10 | 19% |
| Total | 52 | |

Parents responding to the questionnaire

- 8 Where respondents indicated they were parents or carers, they were asked about the phase(s) of education their child(ren) were in. A total of 31 parents/carers responded and responses were as follows. Again multiple answers were possible (and occurred) so no totals or percentages are given.

| Children of parents responding to the questionnaire | |
|--|---------------|
| | <i>Number</i> |
| Early Years | 5 |
| Primary | 14 |
| Secondary | 16 |
| Post 16 | 5 |

- 9 Parents/carers were also asked whether their children had special educational needs or disabilities [SEND] and if so whether an Education, Health & Care Plan [EHCP] was in place. Responses were as follows.

| Special Educational Needs | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| | <i>Number</i> |
| EHCP | 9 |
| SEND but without an EHCP | 7 |

Other demographic factors

- 10 Respondents were asked if they were prepared to provide certain other demographic information about themselves. 69 (53%) agreed provided at least some of this information. However the questionnaire stated that it was not necessary to answer these questions if a respondent was representing an organisation – the response rate from parents/carers and other individuals “eligible/able” to respond is higher than this implies. Of those who responded¹¹:
- 51 (74%) identified as female and 18 (26%) male. 66 (97%) did not identify as transgender, either at present or in the past, and 2 (3%) preferred not to say

¹¹ Different numbers of respondents may have replied to each question in this section. The most common number of responses was 68.

- 61 respondents (88%) said they were heterosexual or straight; 1 stated she was a gay woman/lesbian; 7 respondents preferred not to say
- 31 respondents (46%) regarded themselves as belonging to a particular religion, of whom 27 stated they were Christian
- 7 respondents said that they had a disability (10%) while the remainder either stated they did not or preferred not to say. Disabilities reported included physical impairment (2 responses), sensory impairment (2), mental health (3), learning disability (1) longstanding disability not specified (3), other disability (1). [It was the disability of the respondent, not their child(ren), that was enquired about]
- 10 respondents (15% of the potential 68 responses) stated that they were carers (a definition of the term had been provided in the questionnaire). The remainder either said they were not, preferred not to say, or left the question blank
- The ethnic groups to which respondents stated they belonged are shown in the table below (4 of the 69 preferred not to say):

| Ethnic groups of respondents | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| | <i>Number</i> | <i>Proportion</i> |
| White English | 56 | 81% |
| White Irish | 2 | 3% |
| White Welsh | 2 | 3% |
| Asian or Asian British Indian | 1 | 1% |
| Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi | 1 | 1% |
| Other | 3 | 4% |

11 Respondents were asked to state their age in one of nine bands. The responses are as follows. (Note that the age bands are not of equal width and those with a nil return – 0 to 15 and over 85 – have been excluded.)

| Age groups of respondents | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| | <i>Number</i> | <i>Proportion</i> |
| 16 to 24 | 1 | 1% |
| 25-34 | 2 | 3% |
| 35-49 | 17 | 25% |
| 50-59 | 23 | 34% |
| 60-64 | 11 | 16% |
| 65-74 | 7 | 10% |
| 75-84 | 7 | 10% |
| Total | 68 | |

Where did respondents find out about the Consultation?

- 12 Q3 in the questionnaire asked where respondents had found out about the Consultation and associated documentation. Multiple responses to this question were possible so totals and percentages are not given. The main sources (anything cited by 5 or more respondents) are presented in descending order below:

| How respondents found out about this Consultation | |
|--|---------------|
| | <i>Number</i> |
| Letstalkkent.gov.uk | 79 |
| Website or KELSI | 10 |
| Social media | 9 |
| Staff intranet | 8 |
| Education provider | 6 |

C Cross-tabulation – a technical note

- 1 When comparing the responses made by different groups of respondents to the same question, a technique called cross-tabulation can be used. The table below shows, for instance, how education professionals (broadly defined to include others who, on the basis of their response, worked in the education sector); parents and carers¹²; and other respondents answered Q5 – the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the *Kent Education Mission*.

| Agreement with the <i>Kent Education Mission</i>: observed responses | | | | |
|---|----------------------|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| | <i>Professionals</i> | <i>Parents/Residents</i> | <i>Others</i> | Totals |
| Strongly agree | 36 | 16 | 6 | 58 |
| Tend to agree | 27 | 18 | 9 | 54 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 5 | 3 | 0 | 8 |
| Tend to disagree | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Strongly disagree | 3 | 4 | 1 | 8 |
| Totals | 71 | 44 | 16 | 131 |

- 1 How is this table (technically known as a contingency table) to be interpreted? The usual technique is to consider what the table would look like if the three groups of respondents had all reacted to the question in the same way.
- 2 For example, 58 out of 131 respondents (44.2%) strongly agreed with the *Mission*. There are 71 education professionals in the response sample. If these education professionals had answered this question in the same way as everyone else, one would expect

¹² Including residents who may or may not currently be parents.

44.2% of them to strongly agree too. This would represent 31.4 professionals. Compare this with the figure of 36 highlighted in the table above.

- 3 One can repeat this calculation for every cell in the table (software solutions are available to do this). Doing so yields the “expected” table below:

| Agreement with the <i>Kent Education Mission</i>: “expected” responses | | | | |
|---|----------------------|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| | <i>Professionals</i> | <i>Parents/Residents</i> | <i>Others</i> | Totals |
| Strongly agree | 31.4 | 19.4 | 7.1 | 58 |
| Tend to agree | 29.3 | 18.1 | 6.6 | 54 |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 4.3 | 2.7 | 1.0 | 8 |
| Tend to disagree | 1.6 | 1.0 | 0.4 | 3 |
| Strongly disagree | 4.3 | 2.7 | 1.0 | 8 |
| Totals | 71 | 44 | 16 | 131 |

- 4 Notice that the row and column totals remain the same as in our original table.
- 5 Now one can compare the two tables. Obviously they are not going to be identical: as a minimum there are going to be small random variations between the two (and no decimals in the observed table for a start). But are there any cases where the differences are significant?
- 6 To test for significance, for large samples a statistical test (using the “chi squared” statistic) can give a fairly definitive answer. However technically the numbers in our table are too small to use this test – the usual requirement is that the numbers in all the cells in the “expected” table (the second table above) are at least 5. But what we can do is look at the differences and take a view.
- 7 The biggest difference between the two tables is indeed the one we started with: 36 professionals strongly agreed with the *Mission* where we would have “expected” 31.4. This is a difference of 4.6; all other differences are less than 4. But if we look at “strongly agree”

plus “tend to agree” education professionals score 63 when we would have expected 60.7. At this point it is a matter of judgement, but it is suggested that most readers would not see the difference between these figures for education professionals’ support of the *Mission* as significant – around 62 agree. And so for the rest of the table.

- 8 In other words, this technique has demonstrated that there is no evidence here that the three constituencies (professionals, parents, other) think differently about the *Mission*. [Strictly speaking, the double negative implicit in this statement is important!]
- 9 For the purposes of this Report, this means that we can just present the data at “all respondent level” – any variations between types of respondent, however defined, are within the boundaries of small chance.

D Glossary of terms

The following acronyms occur in this report, either in the main text or in text from Consultation respondents. Not all are in common use.

| | |
|-------|---|
| CEO | Chief Executive Officer |
| EHCP | Education, Health and Care Plan |
| EY | Early Years |
| FE | Further Education |
| HE | Higher Education |
| KCC | Kent County Council |
| KELSI | Kent Education, Learning and Skills Information |
| LA | Local Authority |
| MAT | Multi Academy Trust |
| PE | Physical Education |
| PRU | Pupil Referral Unit |
| SEMH | Social, Emotional and Mental Health [difficulties] |
| SEN | Special Educational Needs |
| SENCO | Special Educational Needs Coordinator |
| SEND | Special Educational Needs and Disability |
| STEM | Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics |
| TA | Teaching Assistant |
| TEP | The Education Partnership [contractor to KCC] |
| VCSE | Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise [organisation or staff member] |