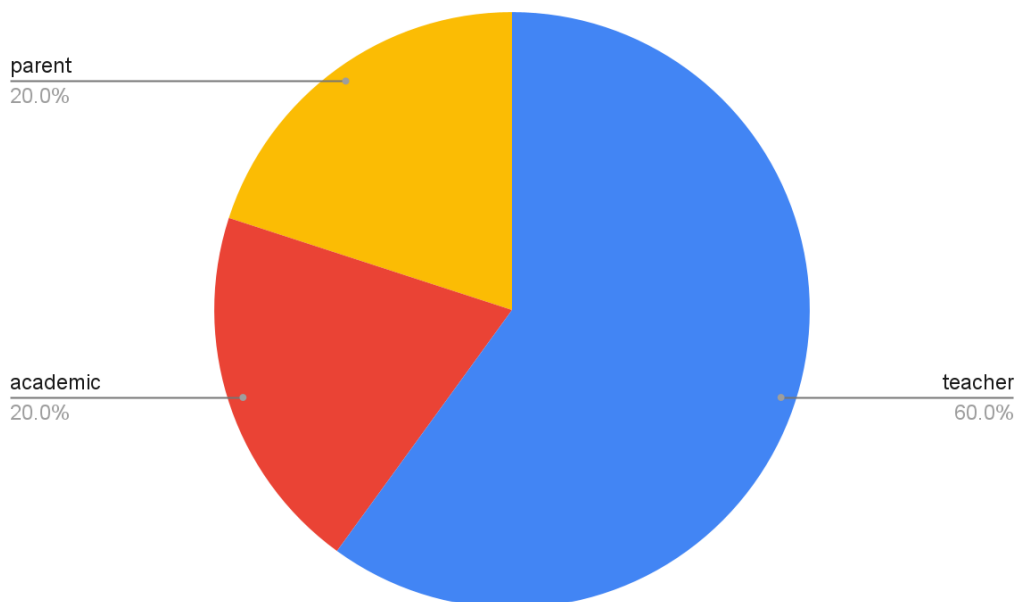


Research - 'The Education We Need Now' Survey

To explore ideas from academics, teachers and parents, with an interest in an alternative education which places a greater emphasis on responding to the climate and ecological emergency, we carried out an online survey. The following diagram shows a breakdown of the roles of respondents.



The first question asked what "The aim of school is..." A highlight of the responses is listed below, they provide a sense of a more holistic and long term approach to education.

- prepare children for the future
- enable children to lead full, rich lives (as individuals, community members, citizens and workers), and equip them to understand, contribute to and reshape society.
- help kids to feel confident in themselves, give them an understanding of the world around them and resilience and tools for dealing with difficulties they might face. To help kids feel prepared for the life ahead of them.
- develop the minds of young learners.
- help children discover their potential in this world
- develop social skills, independence, team work, listening, communication (written and spoken), kindness, resilience and learn about the world around us (local to global).
- Prepare young people for the future and to open their eyes to the world beyond the classroom.

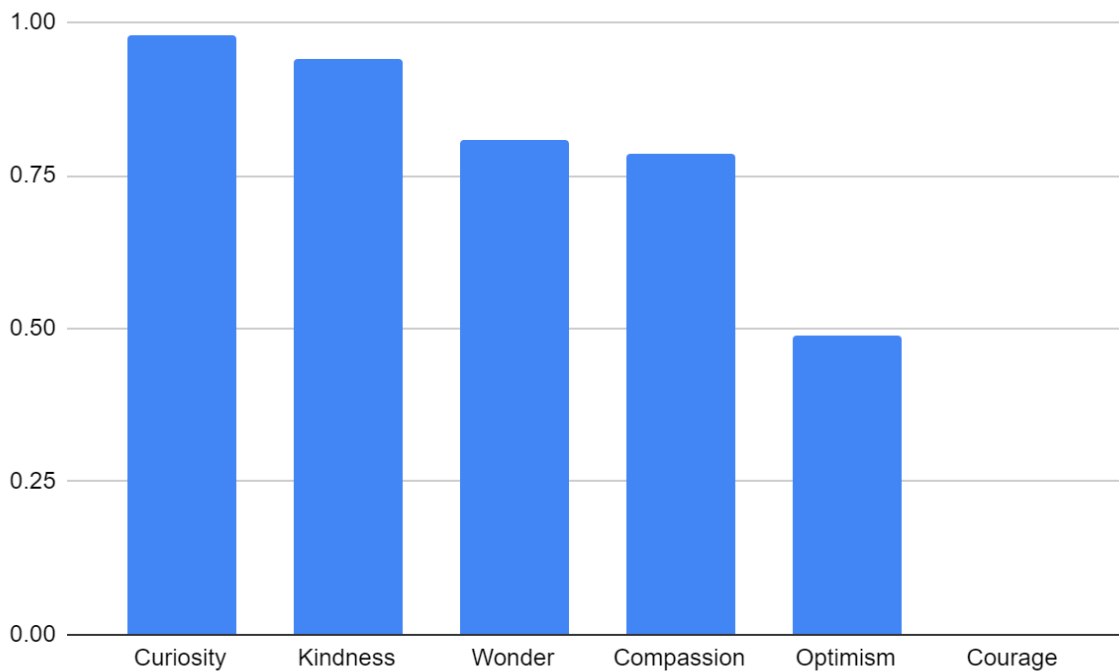
Question two asked “Schools would be better if ...” responses highlighted below convey the desire for a shift away from a culture of assessment.

- there was less focus on exam results and "academic" subjects
- They were lower-stress environments and encouraged collaboration over competition.
- they were shaped around the present and future needs of young people.
- there was a LOT less focus on learning facts and being tested on knowledge of facts and a lot more focus on creativity, connection, understanding of self, connection with nature etc. Schools would be better if kids weren't expected to sit in a classroom most of the day and if there was flexibility for kids of multiple ages to mix; if kids felt respected and not made to feel subservient to teachers/taught not to question teachers; if creative subjects were valued equally in and of themselves alongside subjects such as maths; if kids weren't asked from a very young age 'what they want to be'...
- they connected children to nature and enabled them to develop relationships with and a value for the environment
- standardised testing was scrapped.
- There was less rigidity with how children have to learn.
- they tested less and were more integrated in their local community - using local experts, elders, local spaces and businesses for learning ie. food - growing, farming, cooking, waste.
- We threw out the national curriculum and exam factory identity and created places where students were nurtured to understand their place in the world and their effect on it.

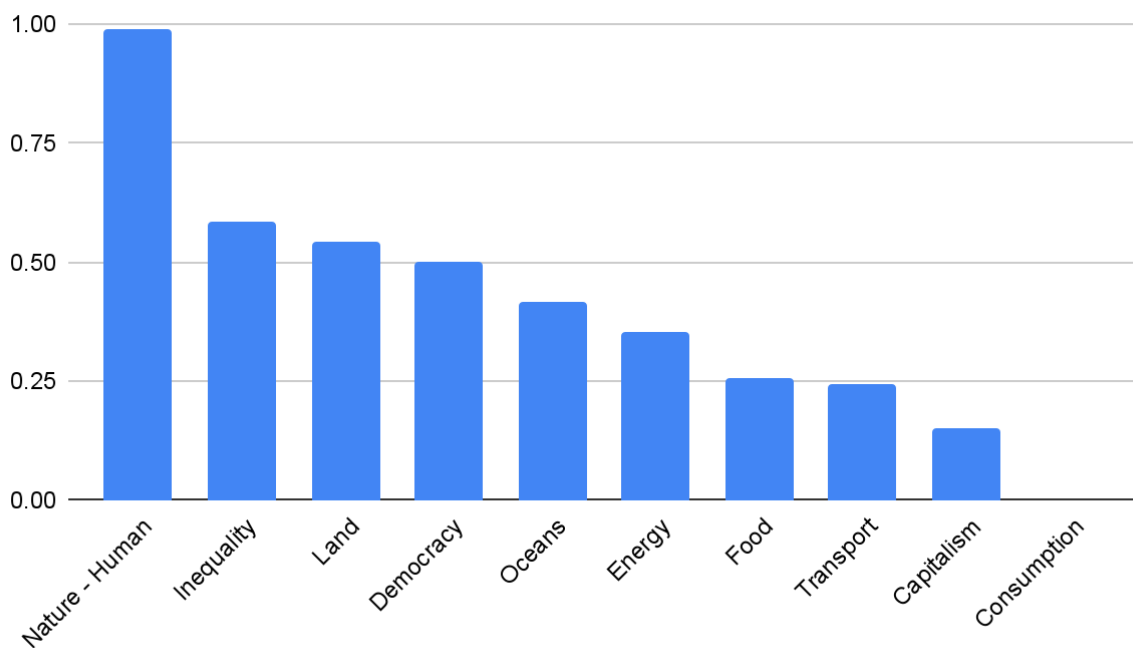
Question three asked respondents to imagine “If I could swipe the slate clean and start again, I would ...” Responses included:

- have no hierarchy of academic subjects and make everything based on life skills
- Look carefully at the mental health of young people and ask serious questions about how school can foster resilience.
- build learning primarily around cooperative learning, complex/real-world tasks and situations, intrinsic motivation, and create schools which are microcosms of a just and sustainable society.
- make them smaller, embed them in their communities, connect them intergenerationally, ensure they all have green and spaces to grow food
- increase practical learning and develop more enquiry based curriculums.
- Focus on environmental education as a theme which runs throughout subjects and topics.

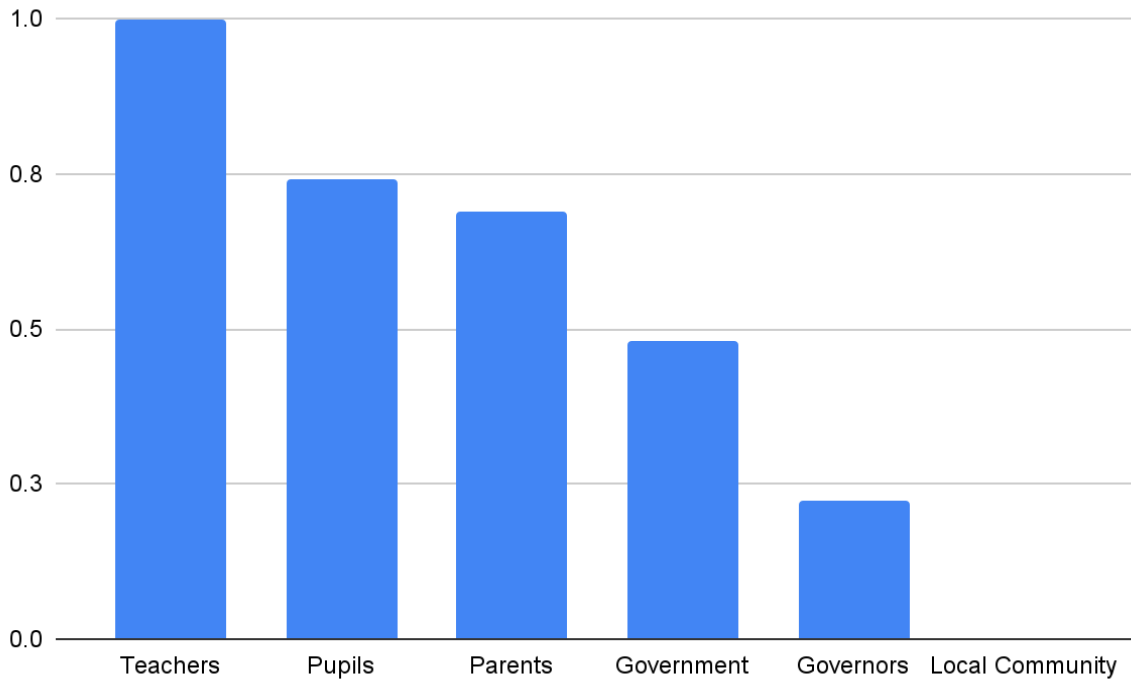
Further questions explored the importance of different values in education. Respondents ranked curiosity and kindness as the most important values which should be placed at the heart of education.



Another question asked respondents to rank a variety of topics which might be part of an eco curriculum. The human-nature relationship was placed highest by a considerable margin. It might be interpreted that the human-nature relationship underpins people's understanding of many of the other aspects.



The final question asked respondents “Successful change in schools requires the engagement of a variety of stakeholders. Who is most / least important?” The rank order is interesting to consider with Teachers, Pupils and Parents ranked highest and governors and the local community lowest.



Responses from the survey provide guidance for the creation of an alternative eco curriculum. These responses also support the findings of other investigations carried by organisations and give further weight to the views held more broadly by the environmental education community.

