



# Annual Parents Survey 2017

Parents' awareness and perceptions of Ofsted



# Background and method



- The objective of this study was to provide Ofsted with robust and timely evidence from parents to inform the development of the organisation's strategy and priorities
- An online survey was developed in conjunction with Ofsted and was carried out amongst parents between 1<sup>st</sup> December and 10<sup>th</sup> December 2017
- The total number of respondents was 1,128 parents; 1,000 with a school-aged child and 128 with a pre-school-aged child attending childcare
- The figures have been weighted and are representative of all parents in England by family type, age of family reference person, social grade and region
- Throughout the report, net figures are shown and they may be slightly different to the raw data shown in charts due to rounding

# Key findings



## Awareness and perceptions of Ofsted

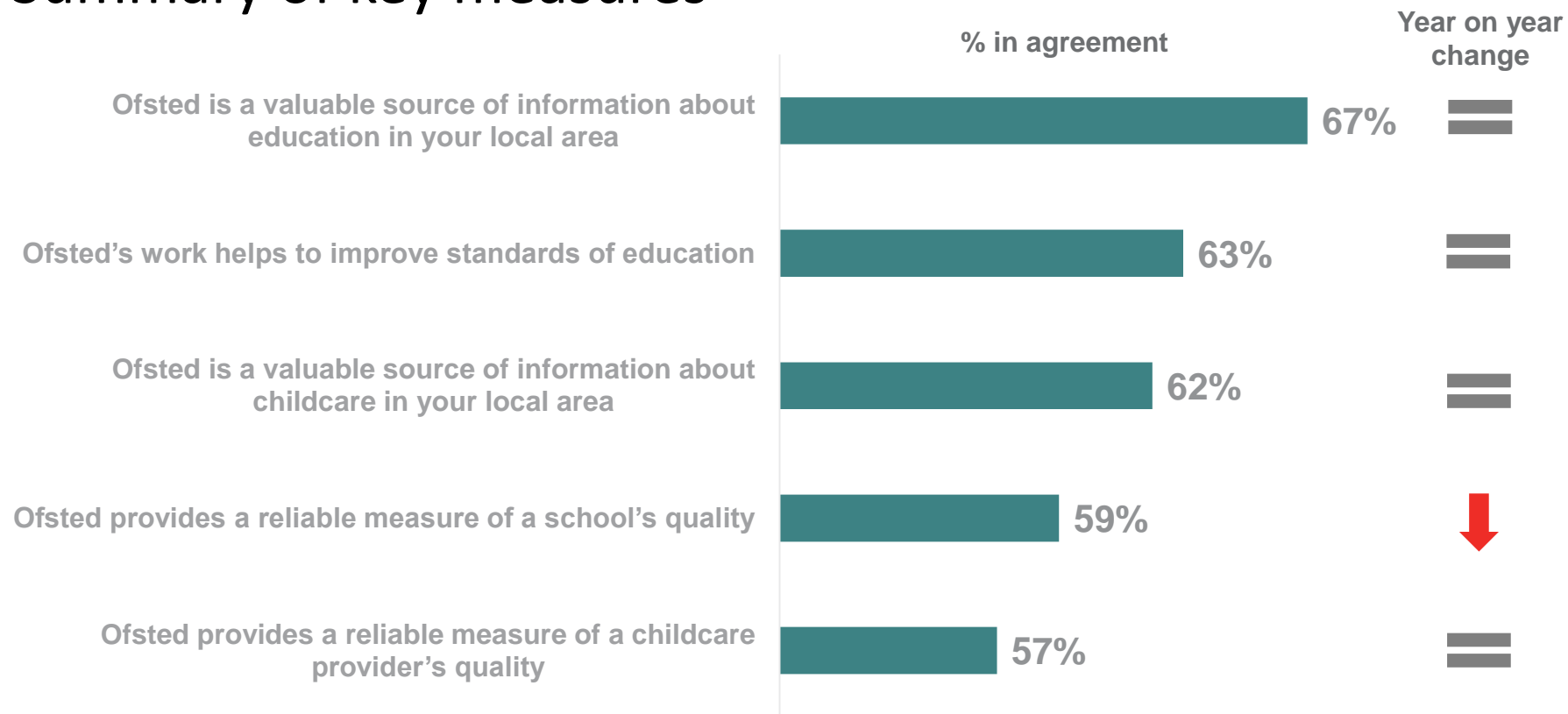
1. Levels of awareness of Ofsted remain broadly unchanged, with six in ten (60%) parents knowing a lot or a fair amount about Ofsted compared with 64% last year
2. For parents of school-aged children, awareness of Ofsted's responsibilities in relation to pre-school children, nurseries/ childminders and further education colleges has increased since 2016
3. Three quarters of parents feel that Ofsted provides reliable information – the main reasons for thinking information that Ofsted provides isn't reliable are the provider/ institution being different during the inspection, inspections being too short and inspectors not looking at the right things
4. The proportion of parents agreeing that Ofsted provides a reliable measure of a school's quality has fallen since 2016 (59% vs 66%)

## Choosing a provider

5. The quality of teaching is most commonly ranked first as the most important factor that parents think about when their child is attending a childcare provider, school or college
6. When actually making a decision on a childcare provider, school or college, the proximity of the provider/ institution to the parent's home and the Ofsted judgement are the most important factors in that decision. Information to inform a parent's choice mainly comes from talking to other parents and the Ofsted reports



# Summary of key measures



## Ofsted ratings and inspection reports

7. A majority of parents (61%) agree that schools shouldn't be given any notice of inspection
8. There is also agreement from over half of parents (56%) that it is more important for schools/colleges to be inspected without notice than for parents to be able feed their views into the inspection process
9. Nearly nine in ten parents know the Ofsted rating of their child's school. The number of parents finding out about the Ofsted rating from the Ofsted website has significantly increased since 2015 – with the proportion of parents receiving information through communications from schools falling
10. Parents of a pre-school-aged child are more likely to have read an inspection report than they were in 2016
11. A fifth of parents read the whole Ofsted report. A further 36% adding they read most of the report but not every detail
12. Of parents who have read an Ofsted report, eight out of 10 parents with a school-aged child find it useful, consistent with previous findings
13. Having a one page summary of key findings or traffic light system and comparisons with other schools are the top two things parents think would make Ofsted reports more useful

## Obtaining parents' views

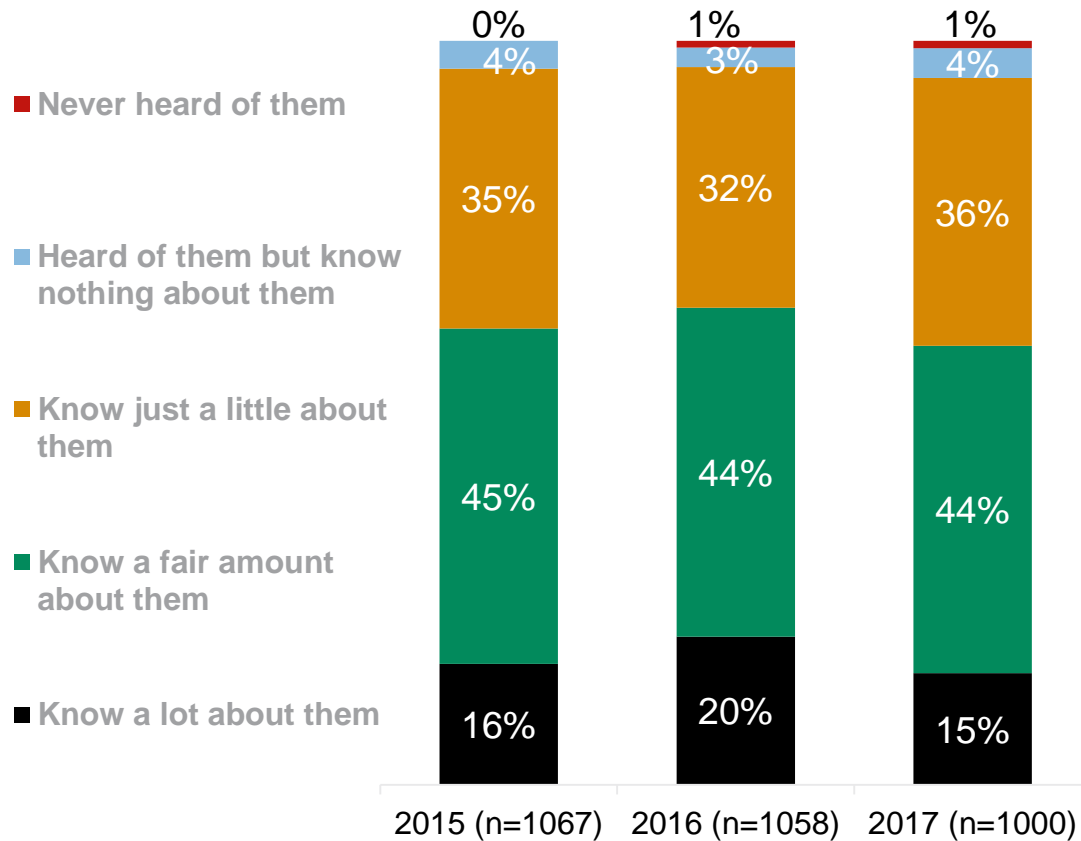
14. Two in five parents have used a childcare or education provider review site in the past 5 years to help them make a choice
15. The quality of the teaching, happiness of children and how the school deals with bullying are the most useful pieces of information for a parent to hear from other parents/ children of a potential new school or college



# Awareness and perceptions of Ofsted



Levels of awareness of Ofsted remain broadly unchanged, with six in ten (60%) parents knowing a lot or a fair amount about Ofsted compared with 64% last year

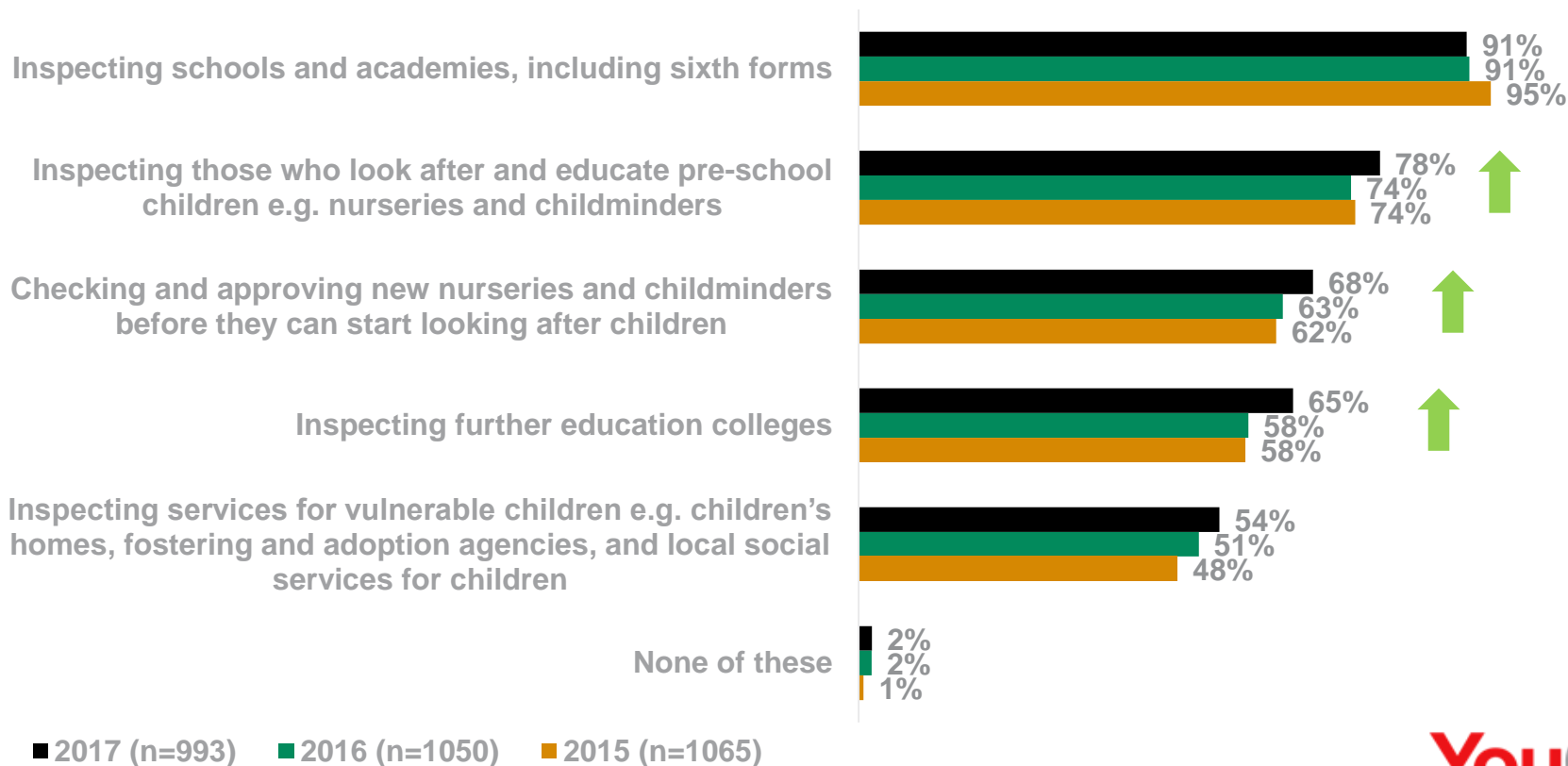


**Four in ten (41%) parents know just a little or nothing about Ofsted.**

- This is more prevalent in parents from a lower social grade (C2DE) (45%) than parents from a higher social grade (ABC1) (35%)
- Two in five (43%) parents aged 18-34 fall into this category compared with a lower proportion of older parents aged 55+ (19%)
- Half of parents (51%) whose highest level of qualification is below degree level know a little or nothing about Ofsted – higher than the 30% of parents with degree or higher level of qualifications who report this

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# Awareness of Ofsted's responsibilities in relation to pre-school children, nurseries and childminders and further education colleges has increased since 2016

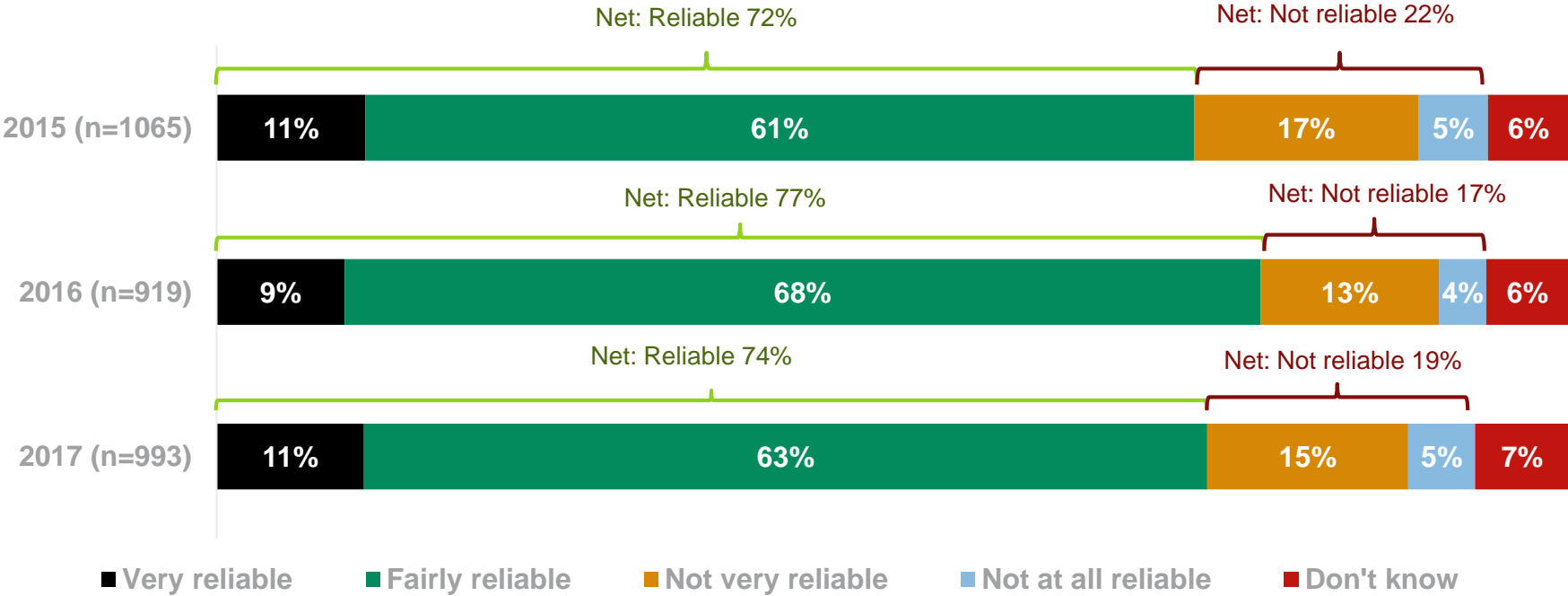


Q2. Which of the following activities do you think is Ofsted responsible for? (Please select all that apply)  
 (Base: parents of a school-aged child who have heard of Ofsted)

↑ Statistically significant change from 2016

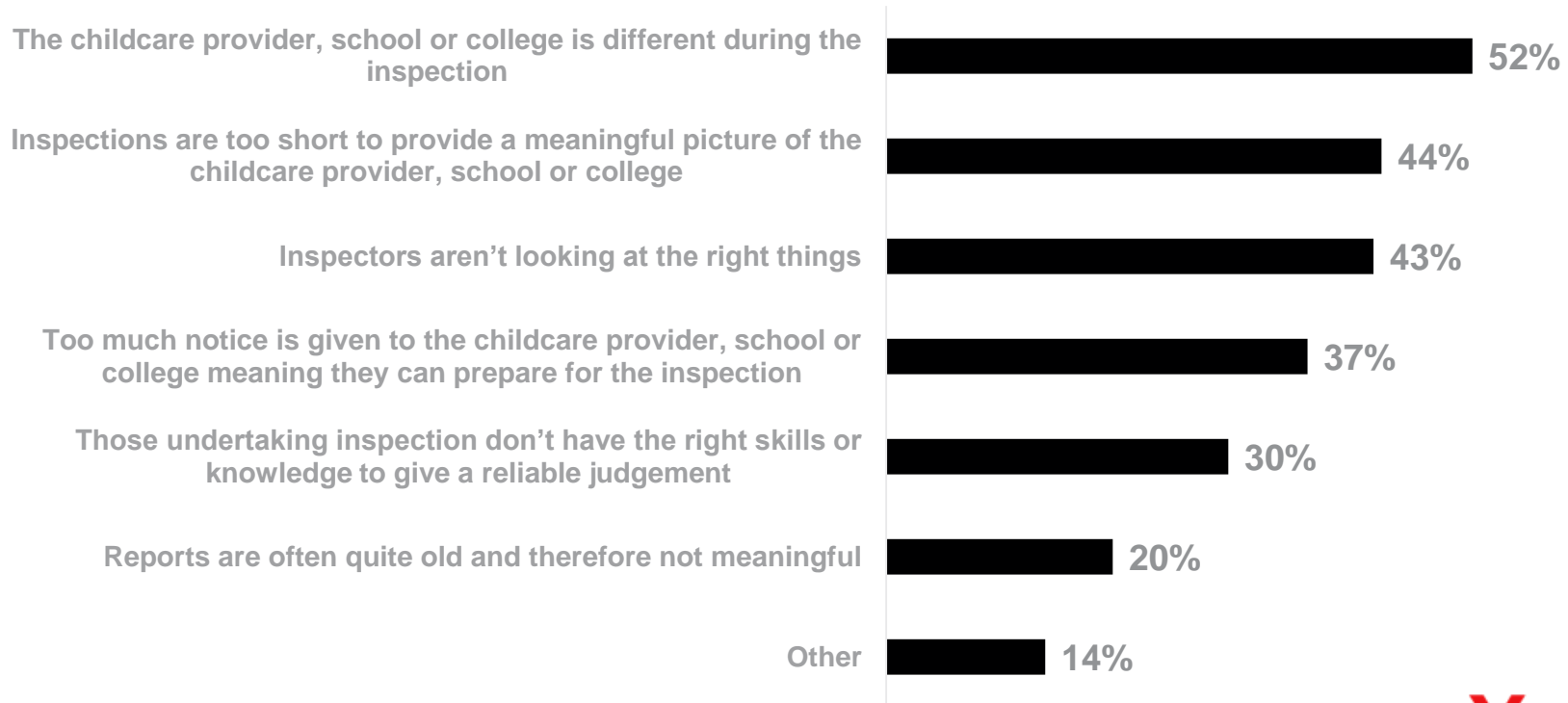


# The proportion of parents agreeing that the information Ofsted provides is reliable has remained broadly stable at 74%



Q20. Thinking in general terms, how reliable or unreliable do you think the information that Ofsted provides is? (Please select all that apply) (Base: parents of a school-aged child who have heard of Ofsted)

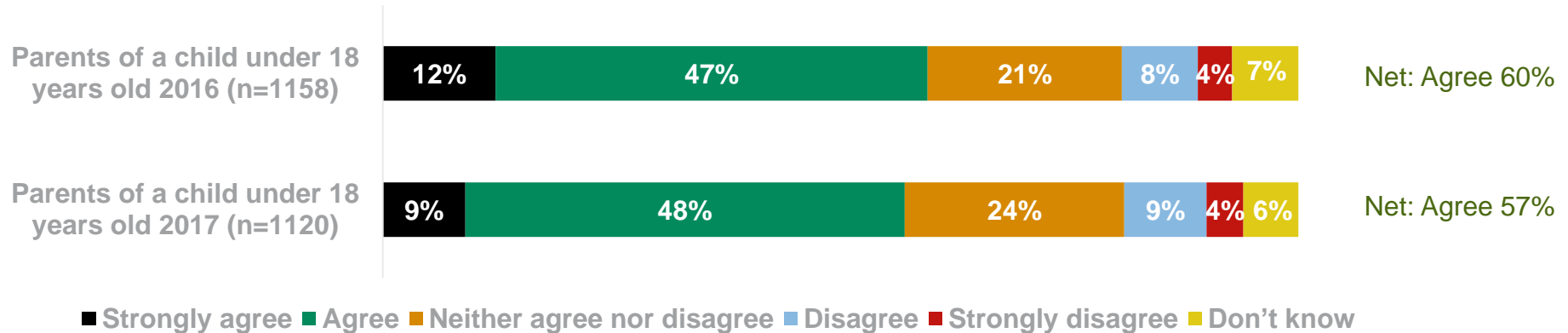
The provider being different during the inspection, inspections being too short and inspectors not looking at the right things are the top three reasons why a minority of parents feel Ofsted information is unreliable



Q21. Why do you think the information Ofsted provides is not reliable? Please select all that apply  
(Base: all parents who feel the information Ofsted provides is not reliable (n=214))

# Six out of ten parents of children 0-18 years old agree that Ofsted provides a reliable measure of a childcare provider's quality

## Ofsted provides a reliable measure of a childcare provider's quality



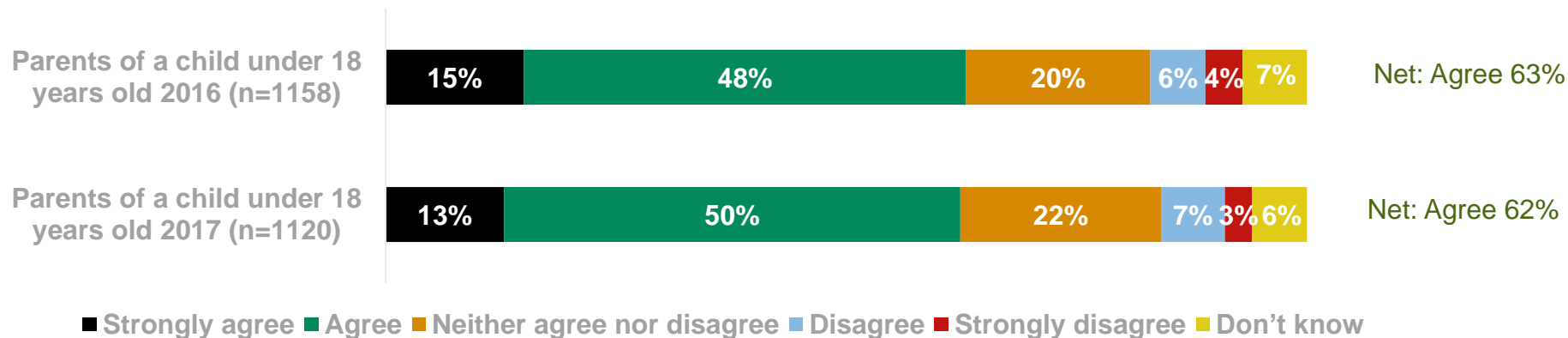
### One in 10 parents disagrees that Ofsted provides a reliable measure of a childcare provider's quality

- This is more prevalent among those with degree level or high qualifications (15%) than those whose highest level of qualification is below degree level (10%)



# The proportion of parents agreeing that Ofsted is a valuable source of information for childcare has remained stable at to 62%

## Ofsted is a valuable source of information about childcare in your local area



### One in 10 parents of a school-aged child disagrees that Ofsted is a valuable source of information about childcare in their local area

This is more likely for:

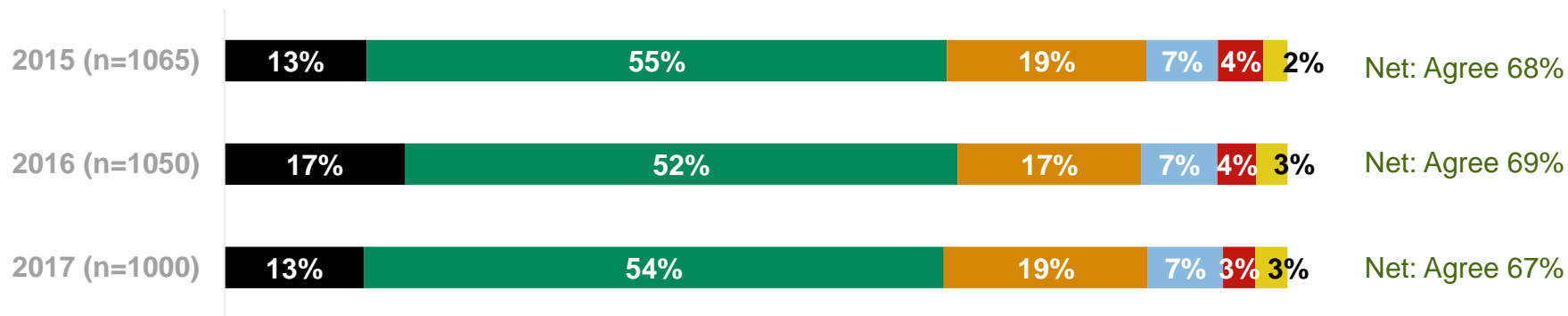
- those from a higher social grade (ABC1) than parents from a lower social grade (C2DE) (13% vs 7%) and
- those with degree level or high qualifications (14%) than those whose highest level of qualification is below degree level (6%)





# The proportion of parents of a school-aged child agreeing that Ofsted is a valuable source of information remains steady compared with previous years

## Ofsted is a valuable source of information about education in your local area



■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know

**One in 10 parents of a school-aged child disagrees that Ofsted is a valuable source of information about education in their local area**

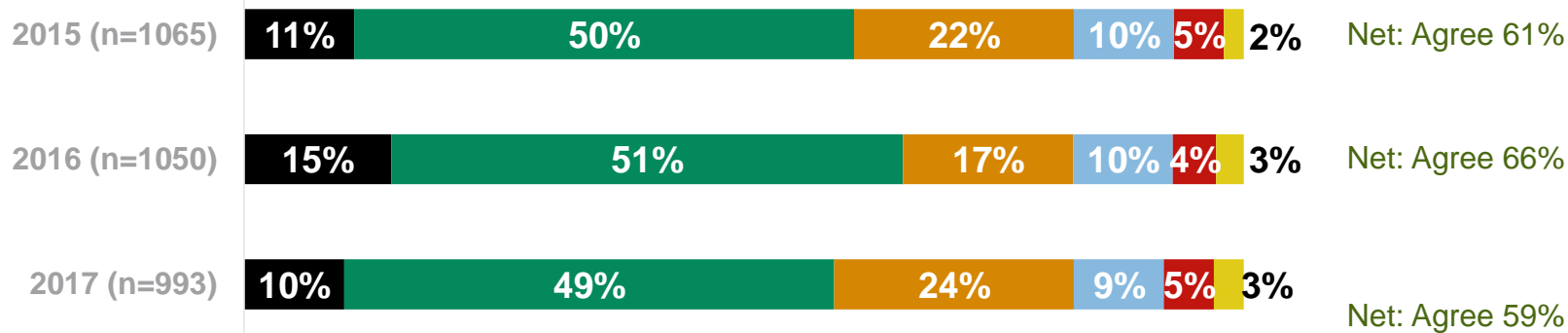
This is more prevalent among:

- those with degree level or higher qualifications (13%) than those whose highest level of qualification is below degree level (6%) and
- those from a white British background (11%) than those from a BAME background (2%)

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# The proportion of parents in agreement that Ofsted provides a reliable measure of a school's quality has fallen since 2016 (59% vs 66%)

## Ofsted provides a reliable measure of a school's quality



■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know

### Around 1 in 7 parents of a school-aged child disagrees that Ofsted provides a reliable measure of a school's quality

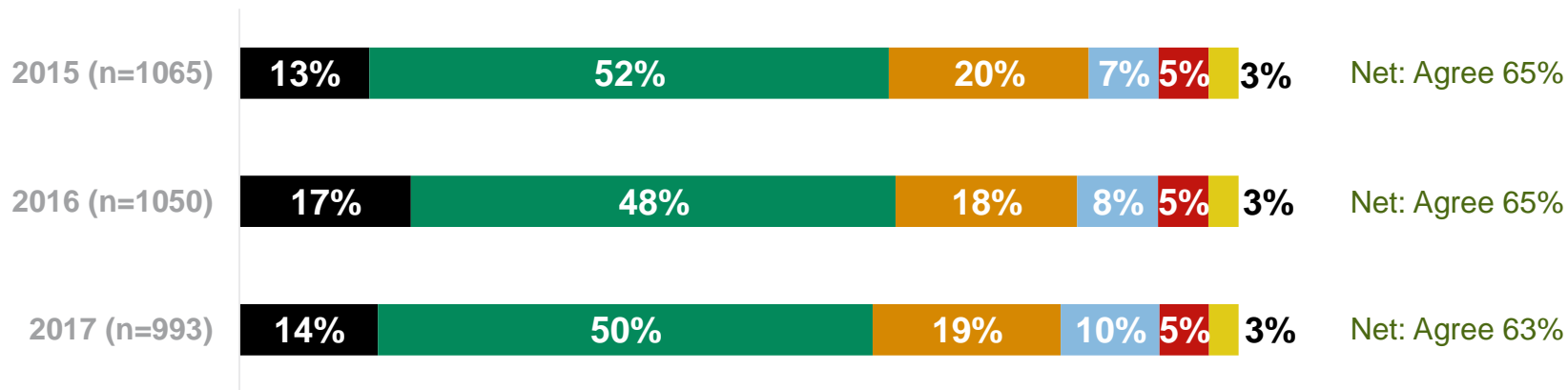
This is more prevalent among:

- those with degree level or higher qualifications (17%) than those whose highest level of qualification is below degree level (9%) and
- those who were not aware of the last inspection grade (20%) than those who were aware (13%)



# Almost two thirds (63%) of parents agree that Ofsted's work helps to improve standards of education, consistent with 2016 and 2015

## Ofsted's work helps to improve standards of education



■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know

### Parents of a school-aged child who are more likely to disagree that Ofsted's work helps to improve standards of education include:

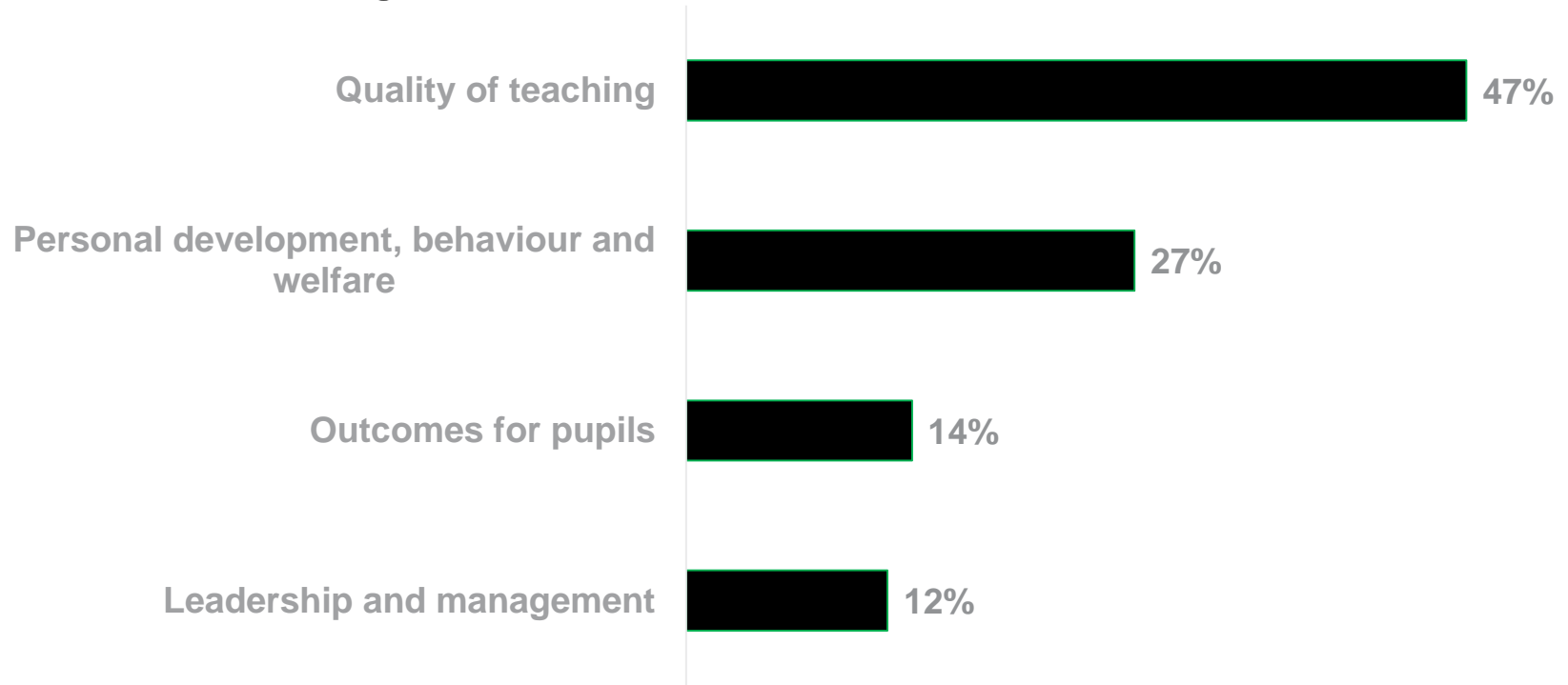
- those from a higher social grade (ABC1) than parents from a lower social grade (C2DE) (18% vs 10%)
- those with degree level or higher qualifications (19%) than those whose highest level of qualification is below degree level (10%)
- mothers (17%) rather than fathers (12%)

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# Choosing a provider

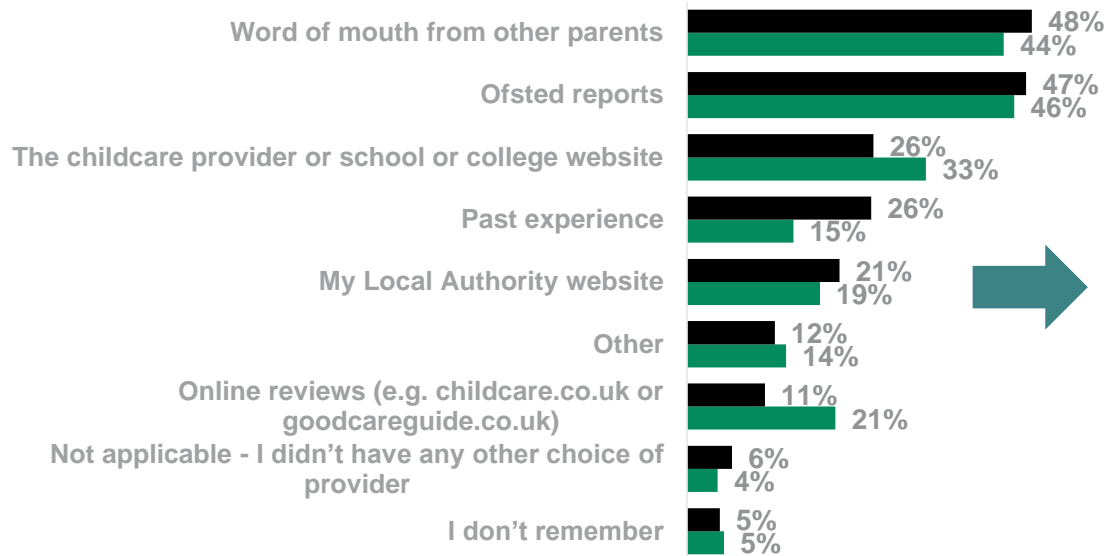


The quality of teaching is the factor most commonly ranked as the most important aspect parents consider when their child is attending a childcare provider, school or college



Q15. Thinking about your child attending a childcare provider, school or college, how important or not are each of these four aspects to you? Please rank them in order of importance, where 1 is most important and 4 is least important (Please select all that apply) Base: all parents (n=1128)

# Talking with other parents and Ofsted reports are the two main sources that parents use when choosing a childcare provider, school or college



## Top 5 most important factors in making a decision

1. Proximity of provider/ institution to home – 61%
2. Ofsted judgement – 50%
3. Siblings at the provider / institution – 25%
4. Latest exam or test results – 23%
5. The breadth of subjects at the institution – 19%

■ Parents of children of school age (n=1000)

■ Parents of children of pre-school age (n=128)

Q1a. When deciding which childcare provider, school or college was right for your child, where did you get your information from?

(Please select all that apply)

Q2. Which of the following, if any, were important to you when making your decision? Please select up to 3. Base: all parents (n=1128)



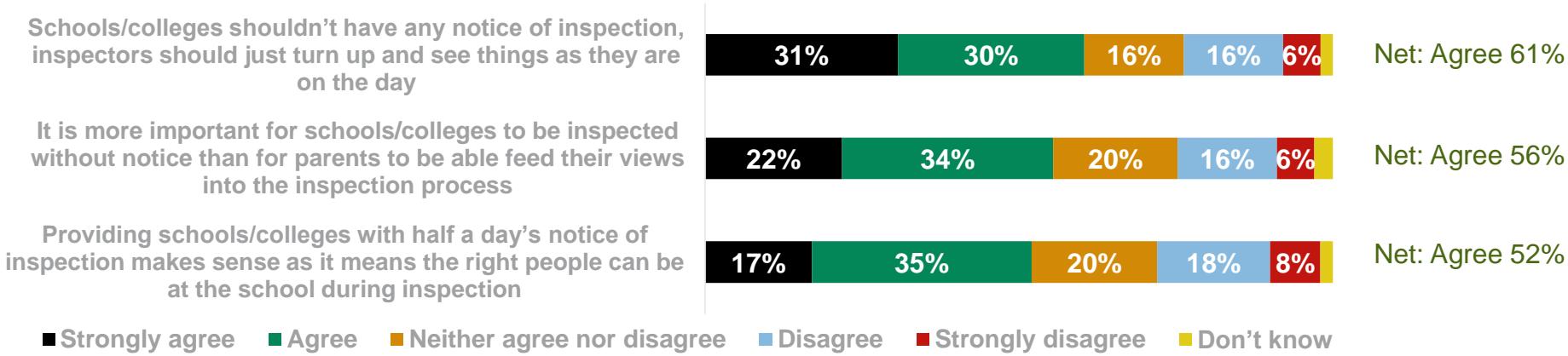


# Ofsted ratings and inspection reports



# The majority of parents (61%) agree that schools shouldn't have any notice of inspection

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

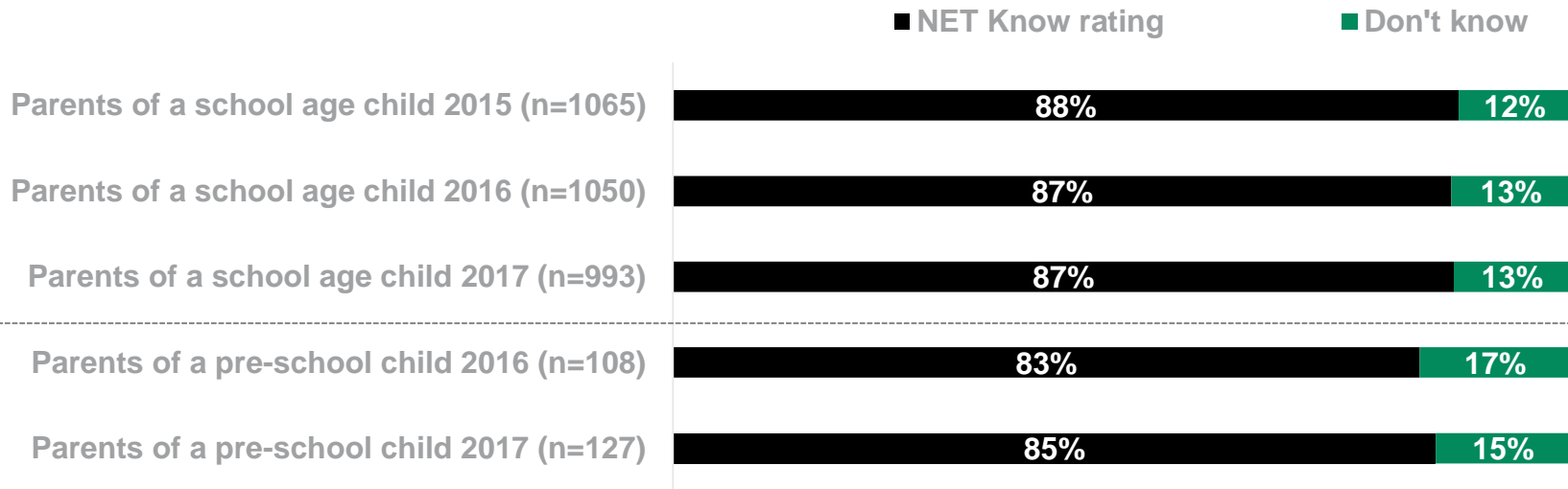


- Parents from a higher social grade are more likely than those from a lower social grade to disagree that schools shouldn't be given any notice of inspection (27% v 16%)
- Parents whose highest level of qualification is degree level or higher are more likely than those with qualifications below degree level to disagree that it is more important for schools/colleges to be inspected without notice than for parents to be able feed their views into the inspection process



Q13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Base: all parents (n=1,128))

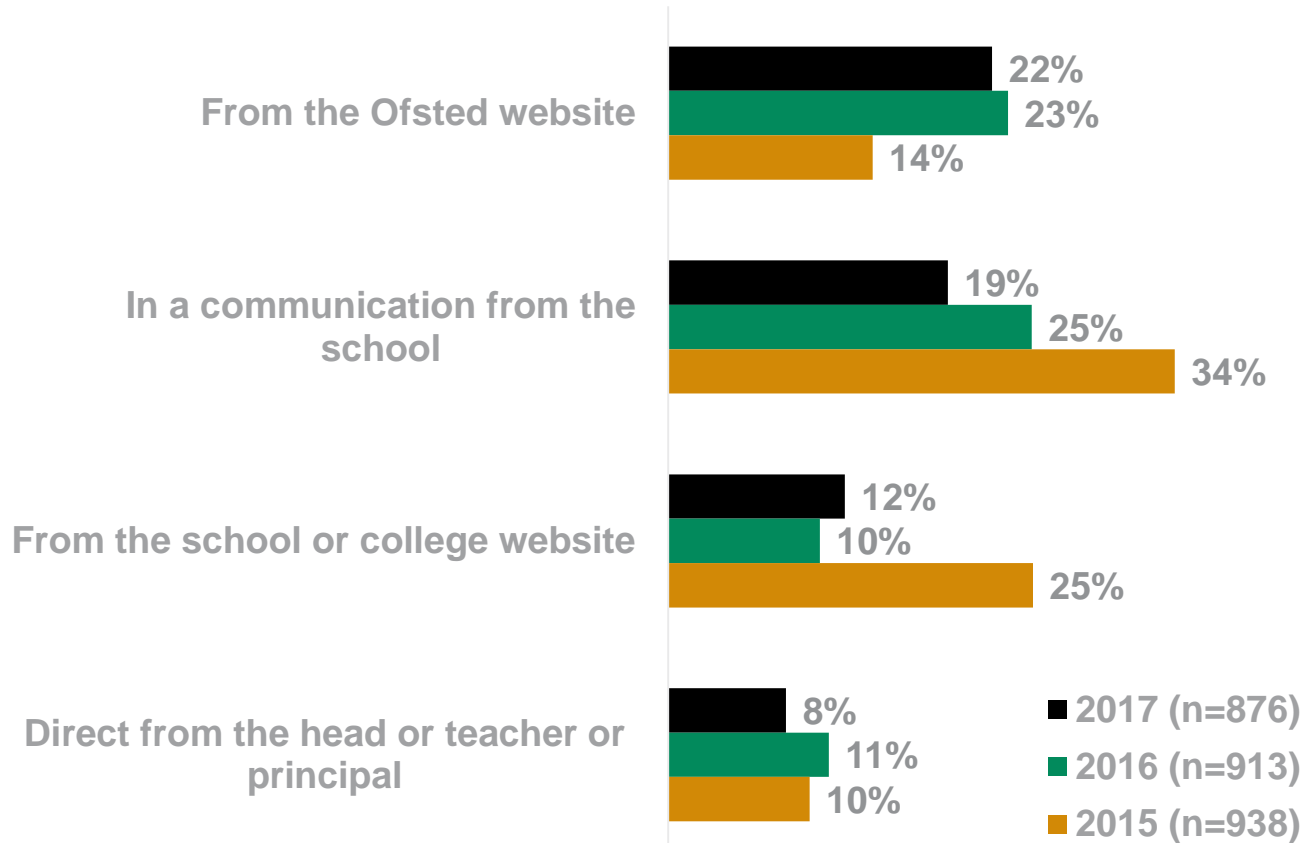
# Nearly nine in 10 parents know the rating their school received in the last Ofsted inspection



**Not knowing the rating of their child's last Ofsted school inspection is more likely for parents who are:**

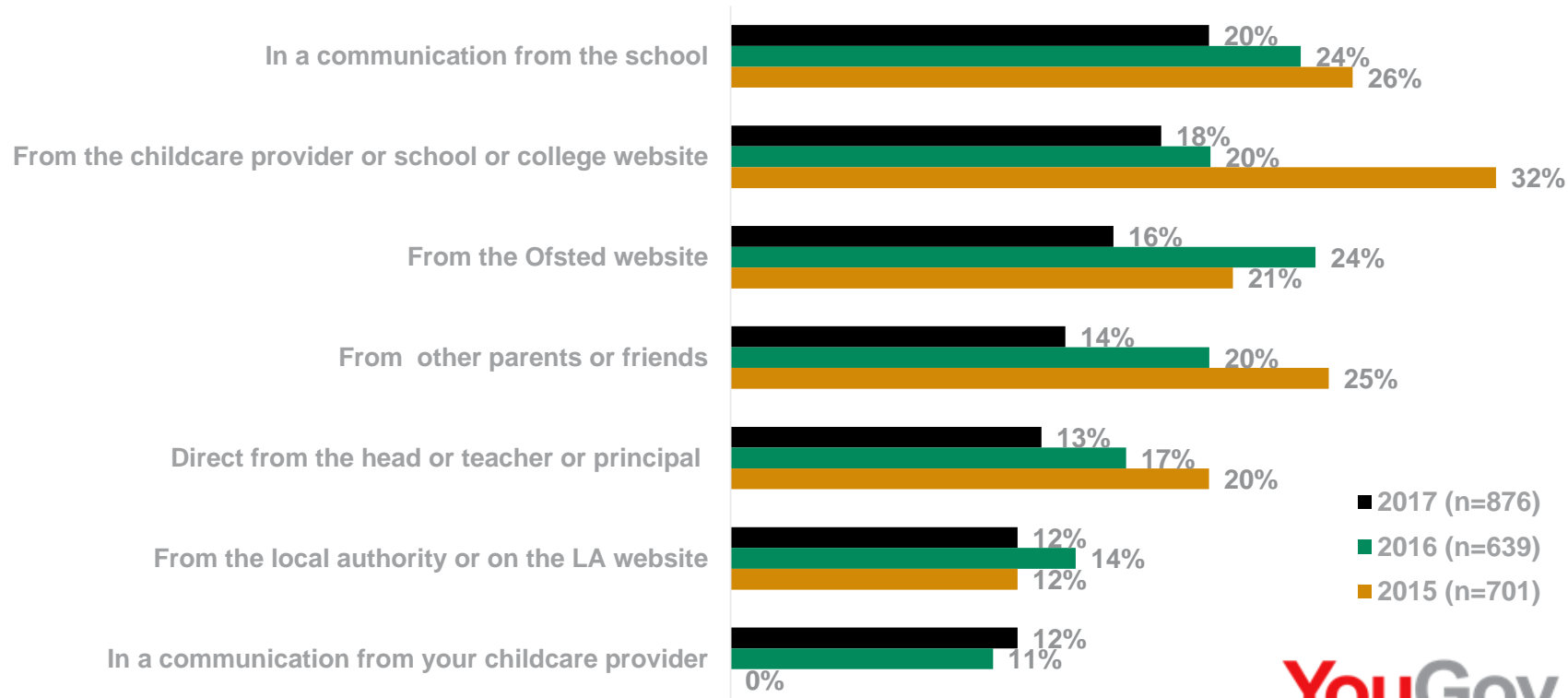
- from a lower social grade (C2DE)
- those whose highest level of qualification is below degree level

Parents first found out the Ofsted rating either from the Ofsted website (22%) or through a communication from the school (19%)



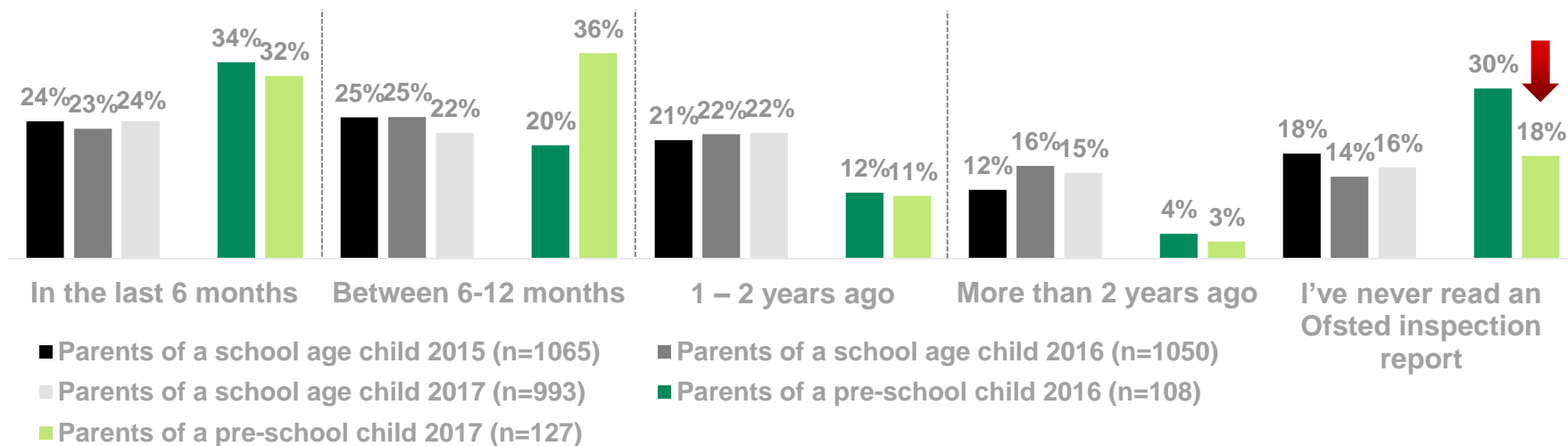
Parents finding out about the rating from the Ofsted website has significantly increased since 2015 – while finding out through communications from schools fell significantly

As well as the Ofsted website and communication from the school, parents are also turning to the provider's website and other parents or friends for information



Q8. How else did you find out about the Ofsted rating? (Please select all that apply)  
 (Base: parents of a school-aged child who found out about the Ofsted rating) Note: Only responses with a value over 10% shown

# Parents of a pre-school-aged child are more likely to have read an inspection report than they were in 2016

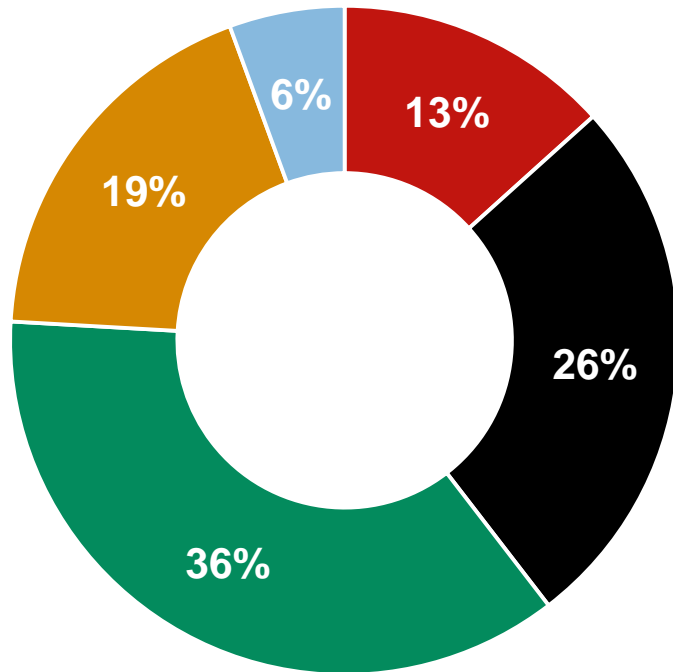


Close to a fifth of all parents (16%) have never read an Ofsted report. These parents are more likely to:

- be from a lower social grade - 24% of those from an C2DE social grade
- be younger – 24% of parents aged 18-34 compared with 14% of those aged 35-54
- have a highest level of qualification below degree level – 20% compared with 12% of those with degree level or higher qualifications

A fifth of parents (19%) read the whole Ofsted report, with a further 36% adding they read most of the report but not every detail

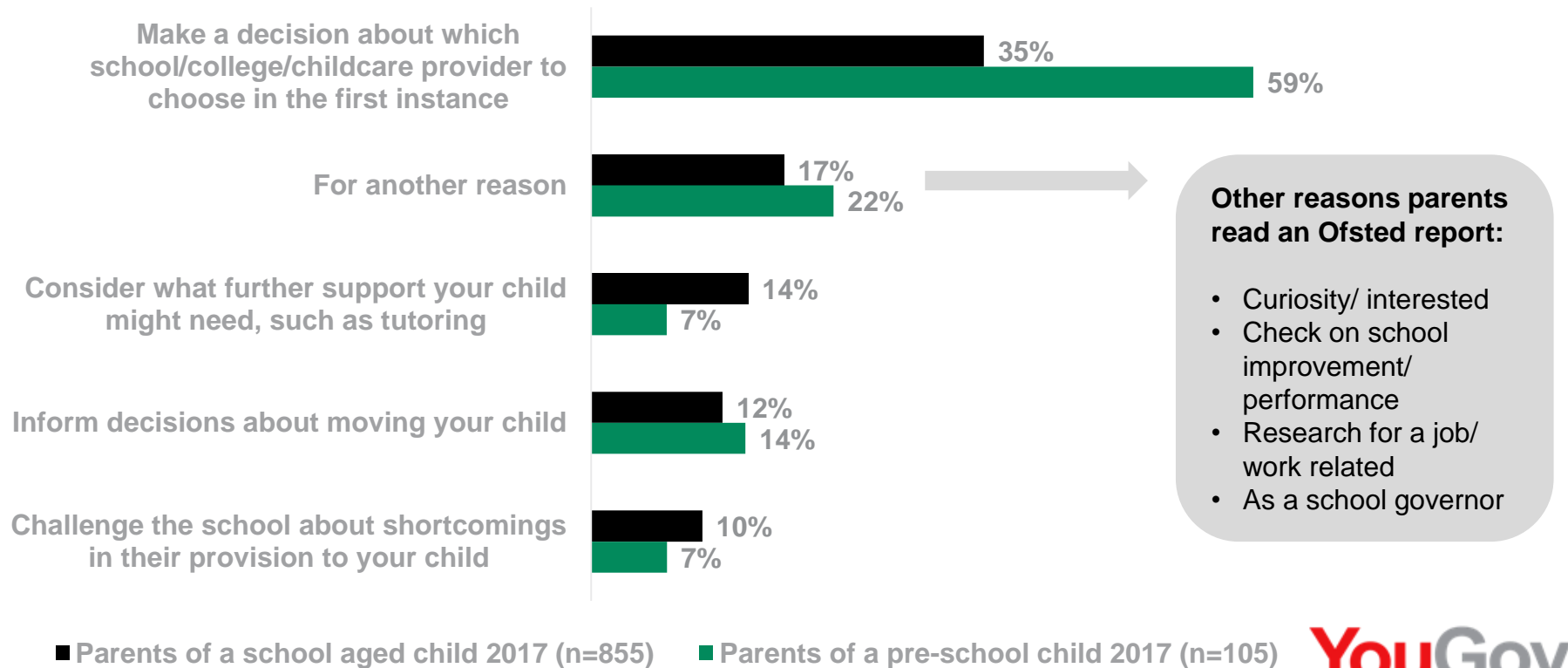
- Just the front page with the overall judgements
- The sections that I was interested in
- Most of it but perhaps not every detail
- The whole report
- Can't remember



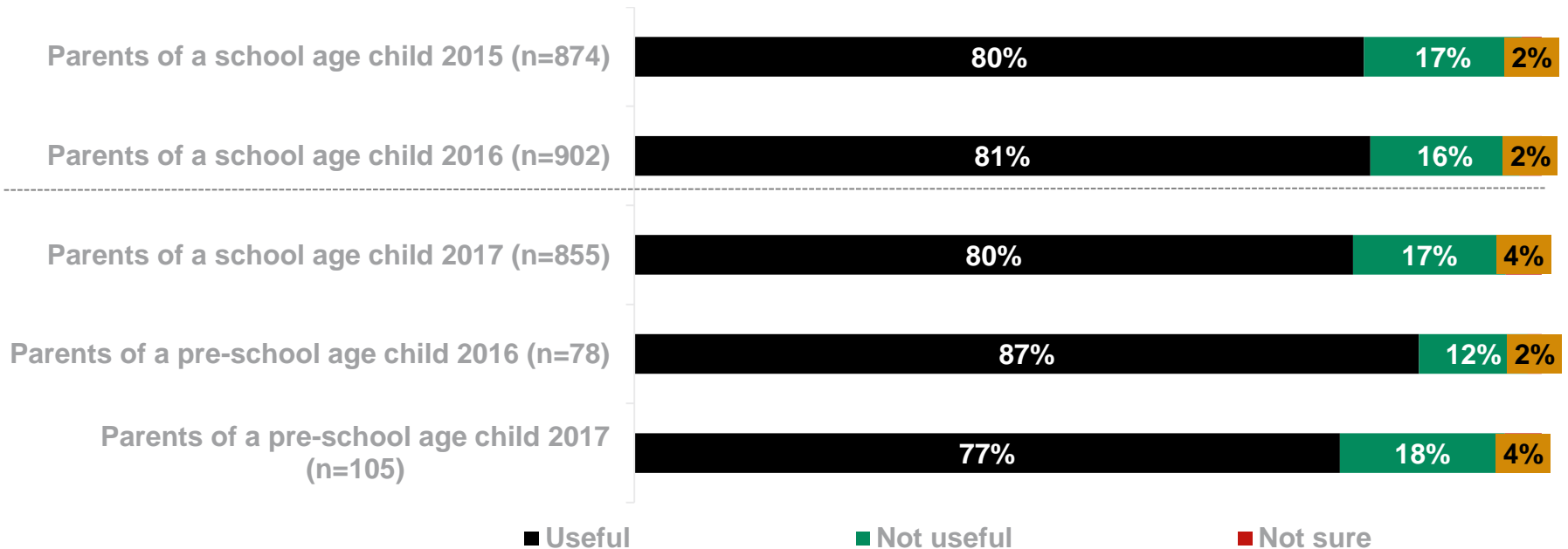
Parents from a lower social grade (32%) were more likely than those from a higher social grade (22%) to only read the sections they were interested in



Parents of a pre-school child are more likely to use an Ofsted report to make a decision about which provider to choose – although this is the most common use of Ofsted reports for all parents



Of parents who have read an Ofsted report, eight out of 10 parents with a school-aged child find it useful – this is consistent with previous findings





Didn't really match what I had seen happening in school

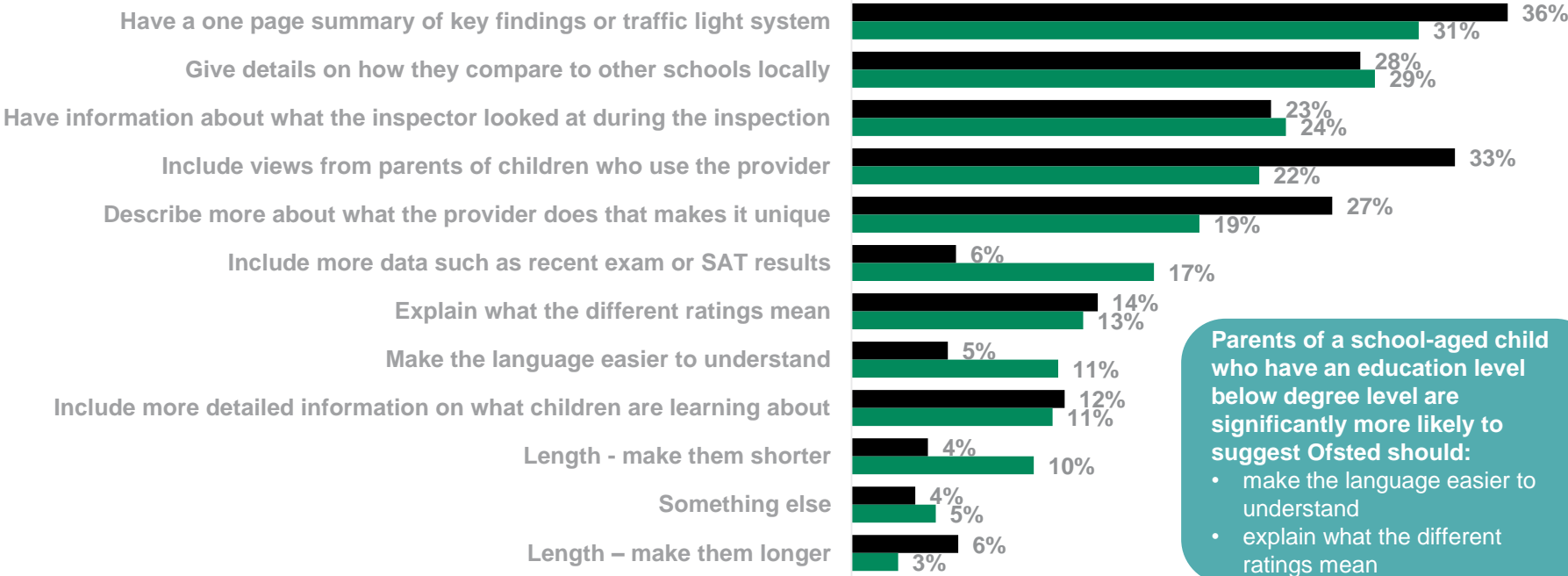
## Why was the Ofsted inspection report not useful?

Because it is only a snapshot of a whole school by one person for a few hours. I rely far more on my own perception of teachers, pupils and my children's progress to make my decisions

I have limited faith in Ofsted inspections. They provide a snapshot of a day rather than a long term view

It only tells you the things the government wants the inspection to look for. That is a very narrow range of things, and often things I don't consider to be important. Education is about much more than that and the only way to really get a feel for the school is to go in and chat to the teachers.

# Having a one page summary of key findings or traffic light system and comparisons with other schools are the top two things parents think would make Ofsted reports more useful



Parents of a school-aged child who have an education level below degree level are significantly more likely to suggest Ofsted should:

- make the language easier to understand
- explain what the different ratings mean

■ Parents of a pre-school aged child 2017 (n=127) ■ Parents of a school aged child 2017 (n=993)



Q17. How could Ofsted improve inspection reports to make them more useful to you? Please select your top 3. (Base: all parents of children aged 0-18 years old)

**One topic/section in the Ofsted report about the childcare provider, school or college that you feel is not covered at all, or in enough detail**

Happiness of children, do they learn to be social human beings? Is the school only bothered about data and results? If so, why? How are they inclusive? Views from children and staff and parents.

Too much legal jargon, make it more simpler.

All round pastoral care.  
More detail about teaching standards

How bullying is dealt with

Not enough on parents experiences. Schools are very good at saying what their policies and values are but does it translate into reality

More comparisons to other schools

In general, child mental health and happiness does not get enough focus. I also care that the staff are happy and engaged but you'll never be able to measure that well in an Ofsted report.

Progress, wellbeing and safeguarding of the children is paramount

Funding levels. Huge concerns at lack of basic equipment and requests to parents to pay for things.

**Are there other areas of childcare, school or college provision that you would like to see a specific judgement on?**

I would like to know how much improvement children at the school are making.

Creativity, passion for learning, how children are nurtured and how they improve purely against their own benchmark, not against other children or standards set by bodies who aren't even teachers themselves.

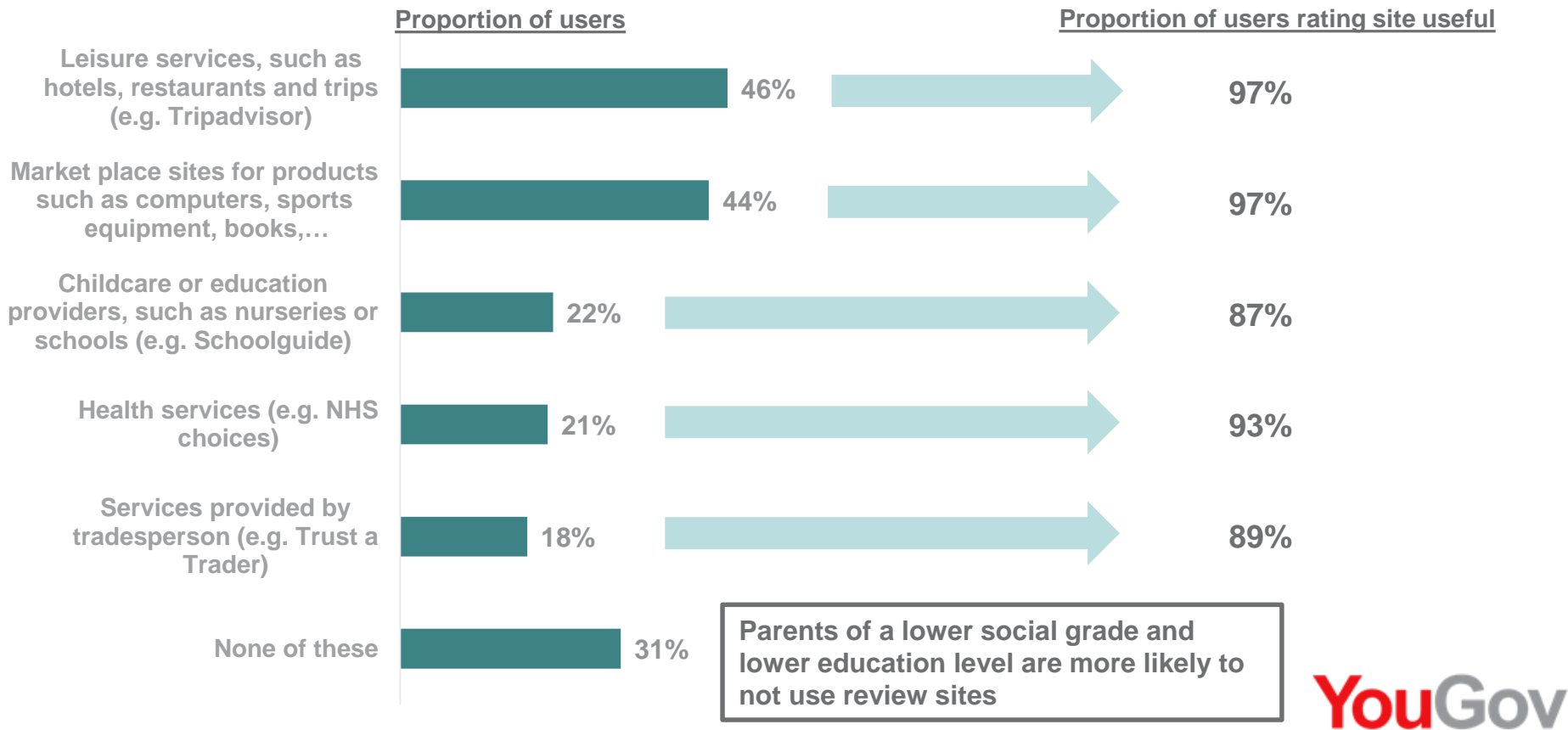
How happy are the children? What provision does the school have for recognizing and reducing stress in children and helping them with stress issues?

# Obtaining parents' views





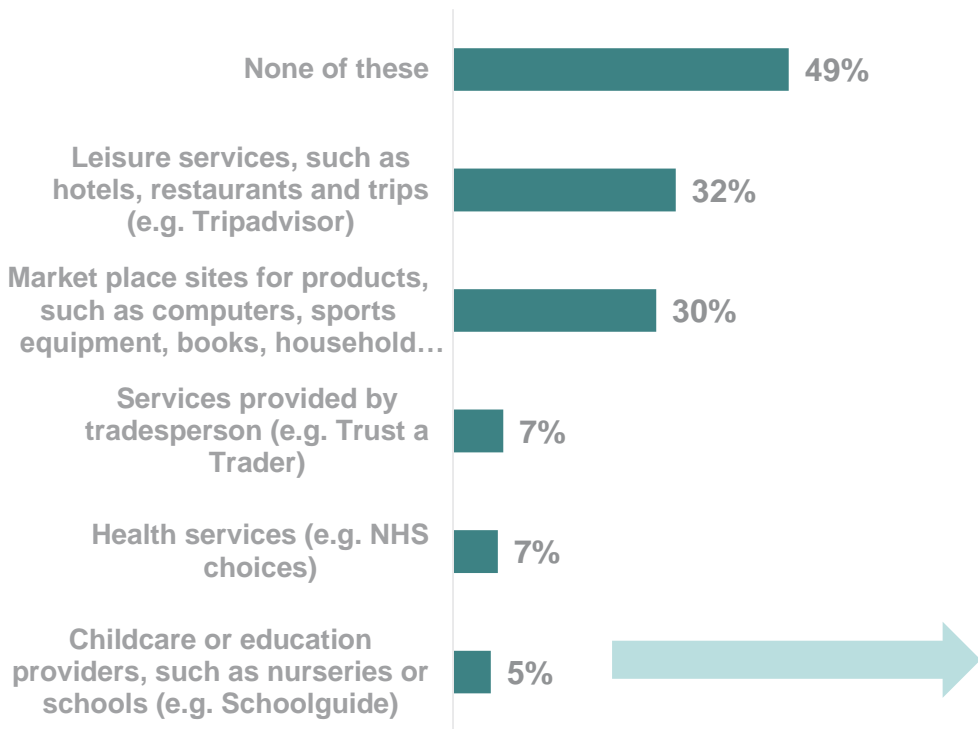
Seven out of ten (69%) parents have used a review site to help them make a choice over the past 5 years – Two in five (22%) have used a childcare/education review site



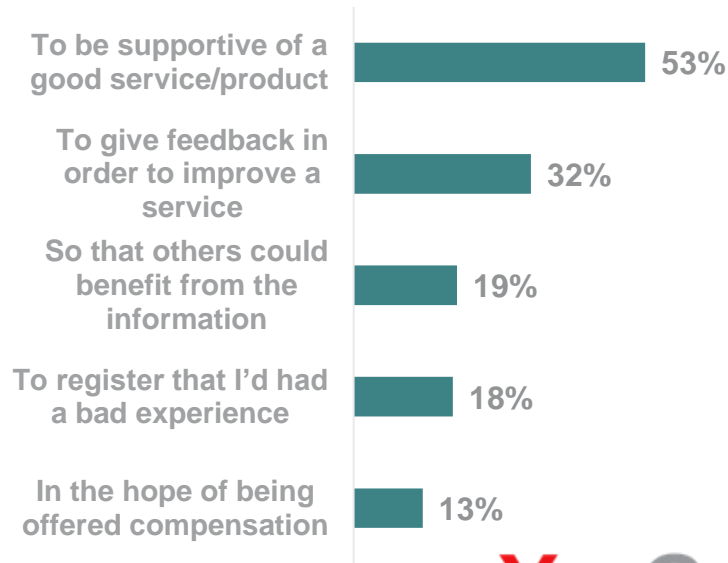
Q28. On which of the following sites, if any, have you read a review that helped you make a choice in the last 5 years? (Base: all parents n=1128)

Half (49%) of all parents have not posted on a review site – 5% of parents report they have posted a review on an childcare/ education review site

Proportion who have posted a review

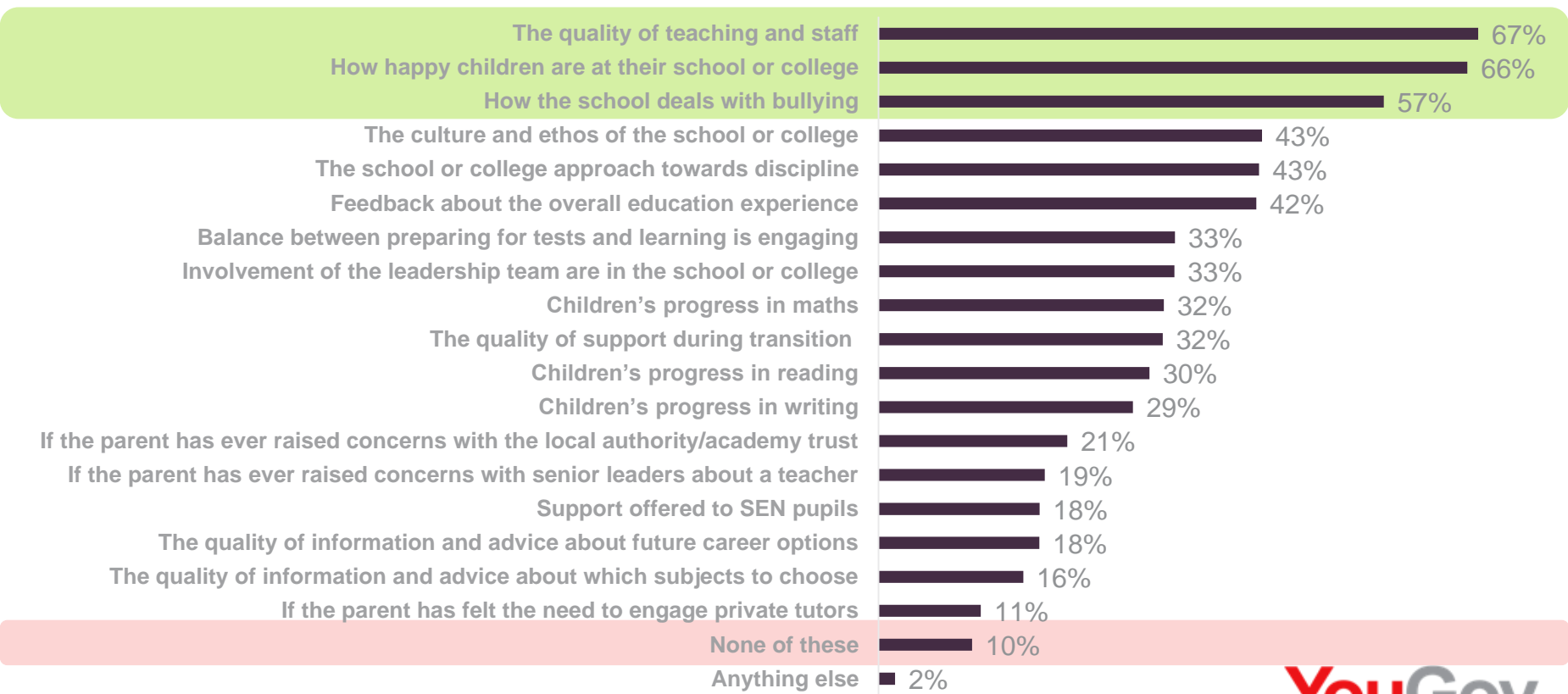


Reasons for posting on a childcare/ education site



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The quality of the teaching, happiness of children and how the school deals with bullying are the most useful information for a parent to hear from other parents/ children of a potential new school or college





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