

KANTAR PUBLIC

THE ROYAL SOCIETY

Royal Society Broad and Balanced research- phase 2

Presentation

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Research aims

The main aim of the research = To understand parents' views about a broader 14-18 curriculum

Gauge awareness, understanding and perceptions of the curriculum now

in terms of engagement, satisfaction with the status quo of post-16 options, and what drives this

Understand attitudes towards maths and science learning up to age 18

in terms of the link to future earnings/employability, the intrinsic value of these subjects, and whether these are subjects that are 'open to all'

Explore parents' reactions to the idea of curriculum breadth

and the idea of including a broader mix of qualifications and subjects in the post-16 UK education system

Explore the impact of COVID-19 on parents' views

in terms of how the current education system sets children up for the future, and the impact it may have on the choices young people make

Understand how views differ

by parents' socio-economic background, the age and gender of their child, ethnicity, and their own educational / professional background

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Methodology and sample

Quantitative methodology

- This research is effectively a repeat of a study done in November 2018
 - Same method as phase 1 to ensure comparability
- 1,000 interviews with parents of 11-24s completed in April 2021
- 29 questions, 10-minute survey
- Parents screened from Kantar's Profiles panel (high quality online panel)
- Data weighted to Office of National Statistics Labour Force Survey population statistics
- In 2018 we had 24 triads completed in October-November 2018. Fieldwork took place in Greater London, Newcastle, Manchester, and Birmingham

Breakdown of respondents (Phase 2)

Parental gender	Male	Female	
	44%	56%	
Gender of child*	Male	Female	
	60%	62%	
Key stage of children*	Key Stage 3	Key stage 4-5	Age 18-24
	40%	41%	53%

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Main findings

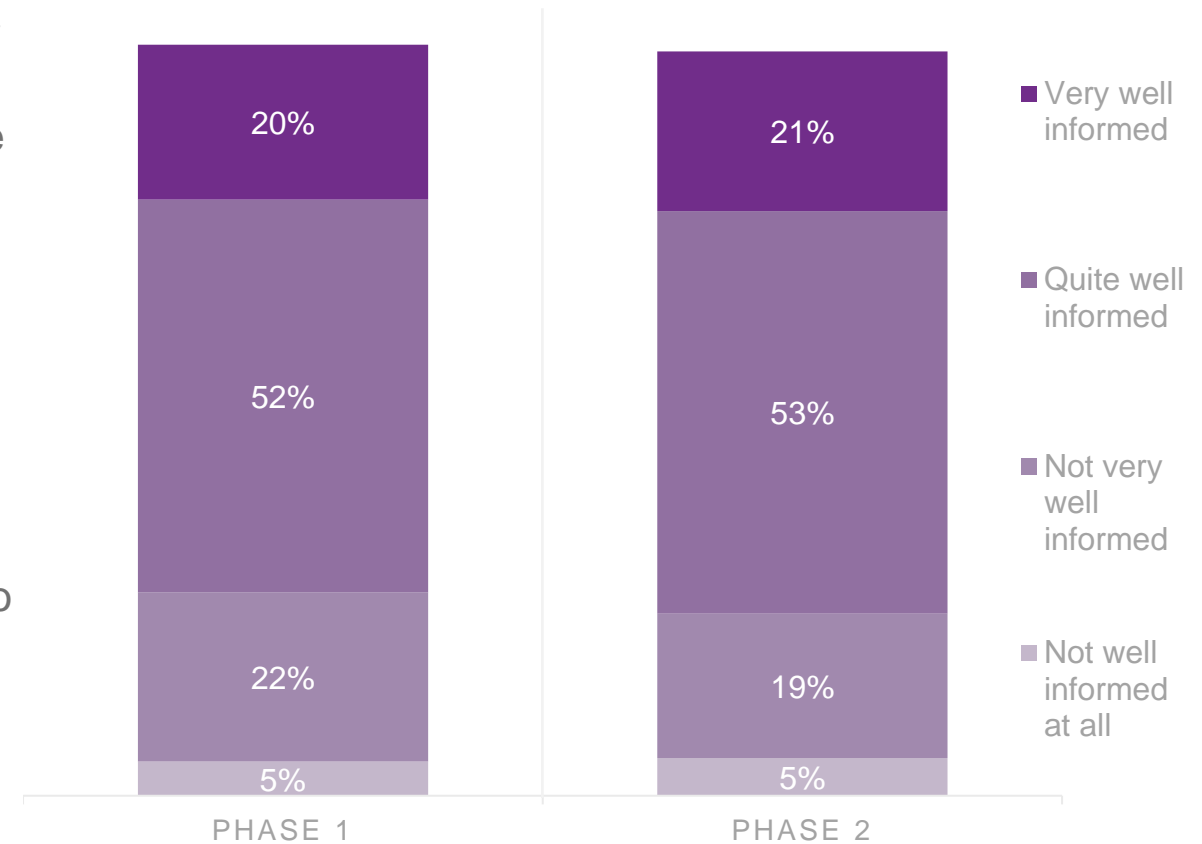


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Knowledge of and attitudes towards current secondary education

Parents' overall knowledge of the secondary education system has remained consistent since 2018

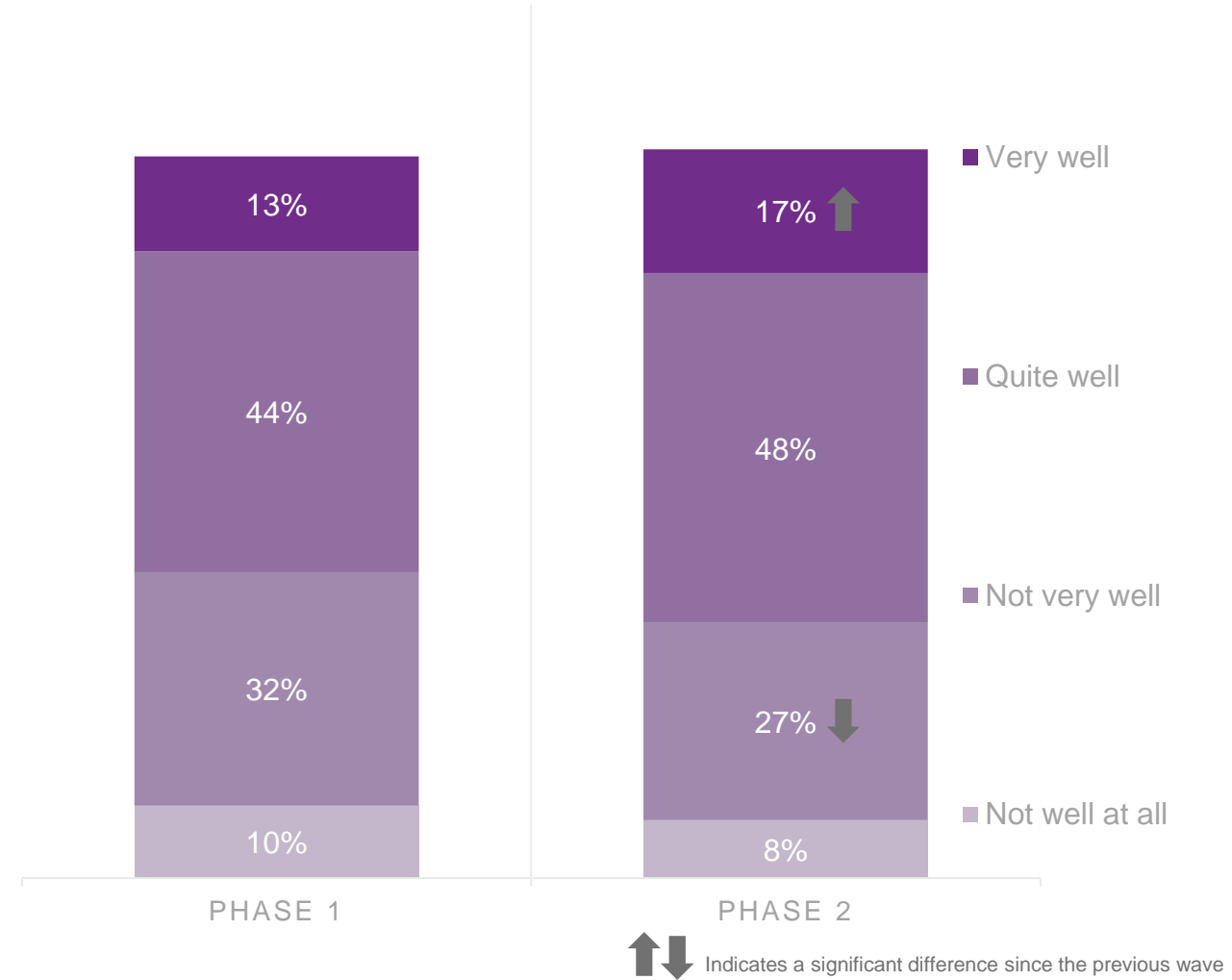
- How well informed parents felt about their child's secondary education broadly stayed the same between phase 1 and phase 2, with around 7 in ten respondents saying they were well informed
- Consistent with phase 1, male parents were more likely to agree that they were well informed. Our 2018 triads revealed that whilst male parents were actually less informed in their children's education system than women, they were more likely to report higher levels of confidence
- Respondents from higher socio economic grades, were also more likely to report being well informed (77% compared to 69%)



↑↓ Indicates a significant difference since the previous wave

A majority of parents think the education system prepares children for adult life very or quite well

- Respondents were significantly more positive in phase 2 of this research, with 65% agreeing that the education system well prepared children for adult life, compared to 57% in 2018
- Parents of key stage 3 children were more likely to agree that it prepared children “very well” (17%) than those with older children aged 18+ (11%)
- BAME parents were more positive than White parents, with 72% agreeing that children were well prepared, compared to 61% of White parents
- Parents from lower socio economic grades were also more likely to say that the current education system does not prepare children for adult life well (39%) than those from the highest grades (30%)

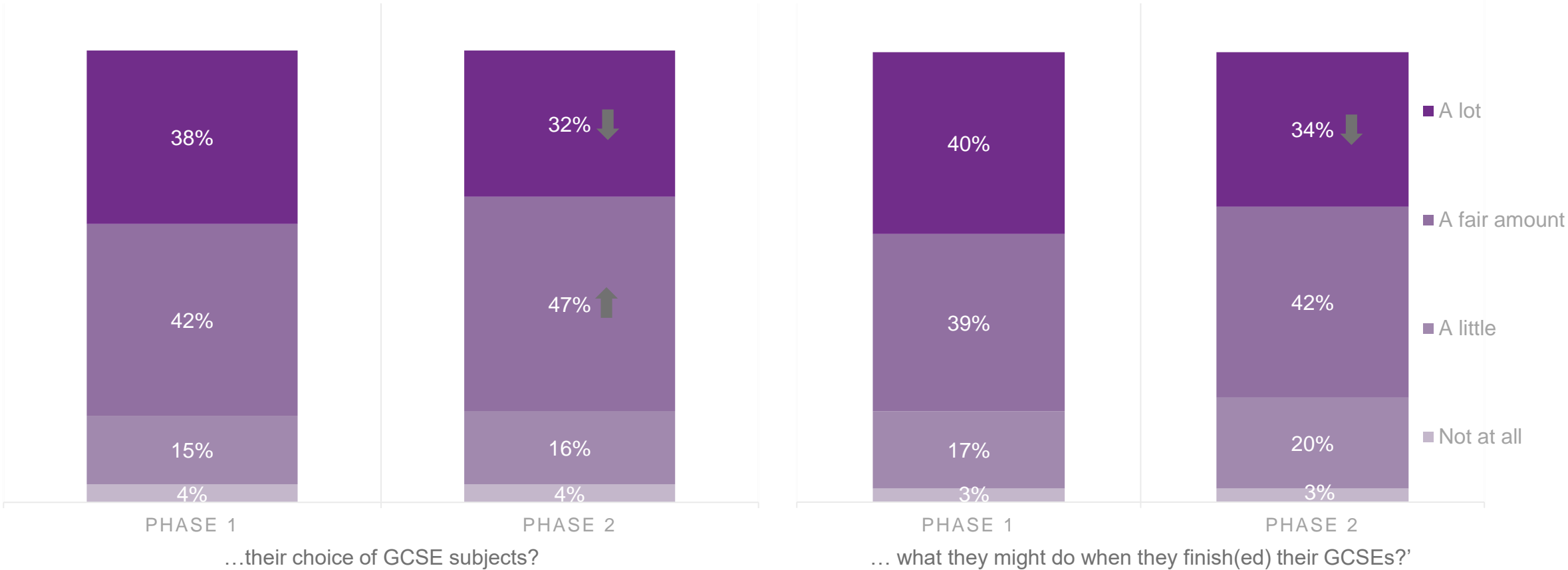


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Parental attitudes towards level of choice

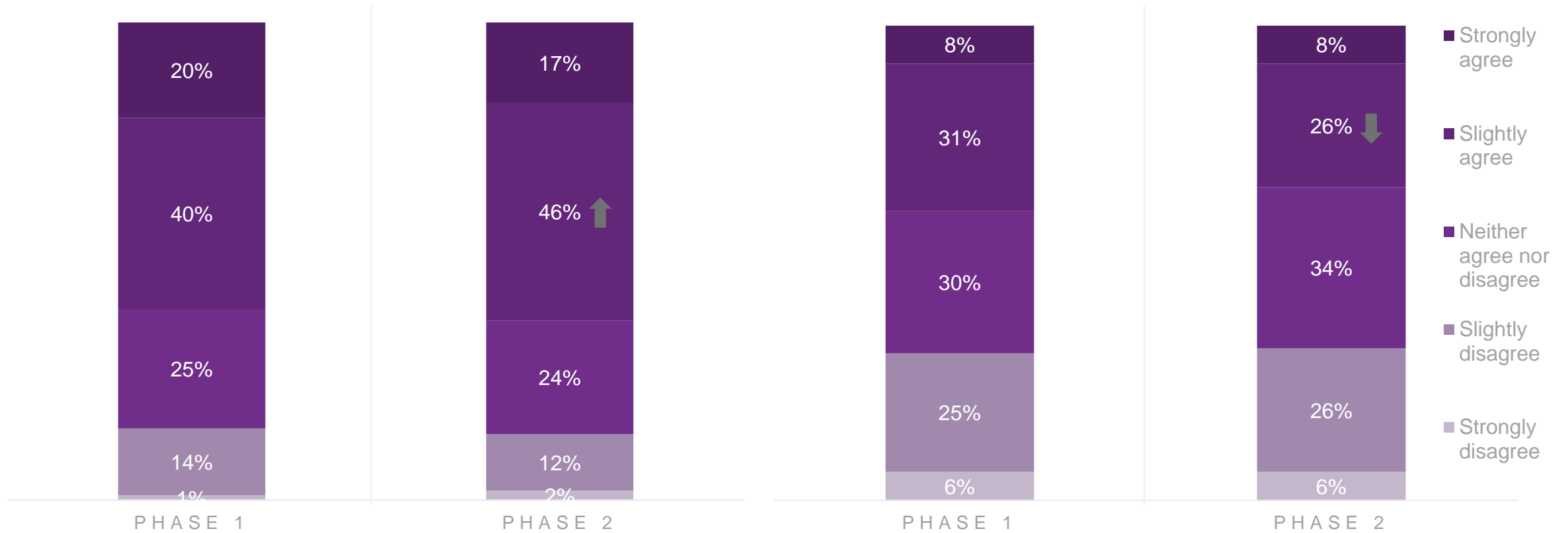
This wave parents have been less likely to talk to their children ‘a lot’ about their GCSE choices and post-GCSE options

How much have you talked or did you talk with your children about ...



↑↓ Indicates a significant difference since the previous wave

There remains some concern that young people do not know enough about how their choices in subjects may affect their future career paths



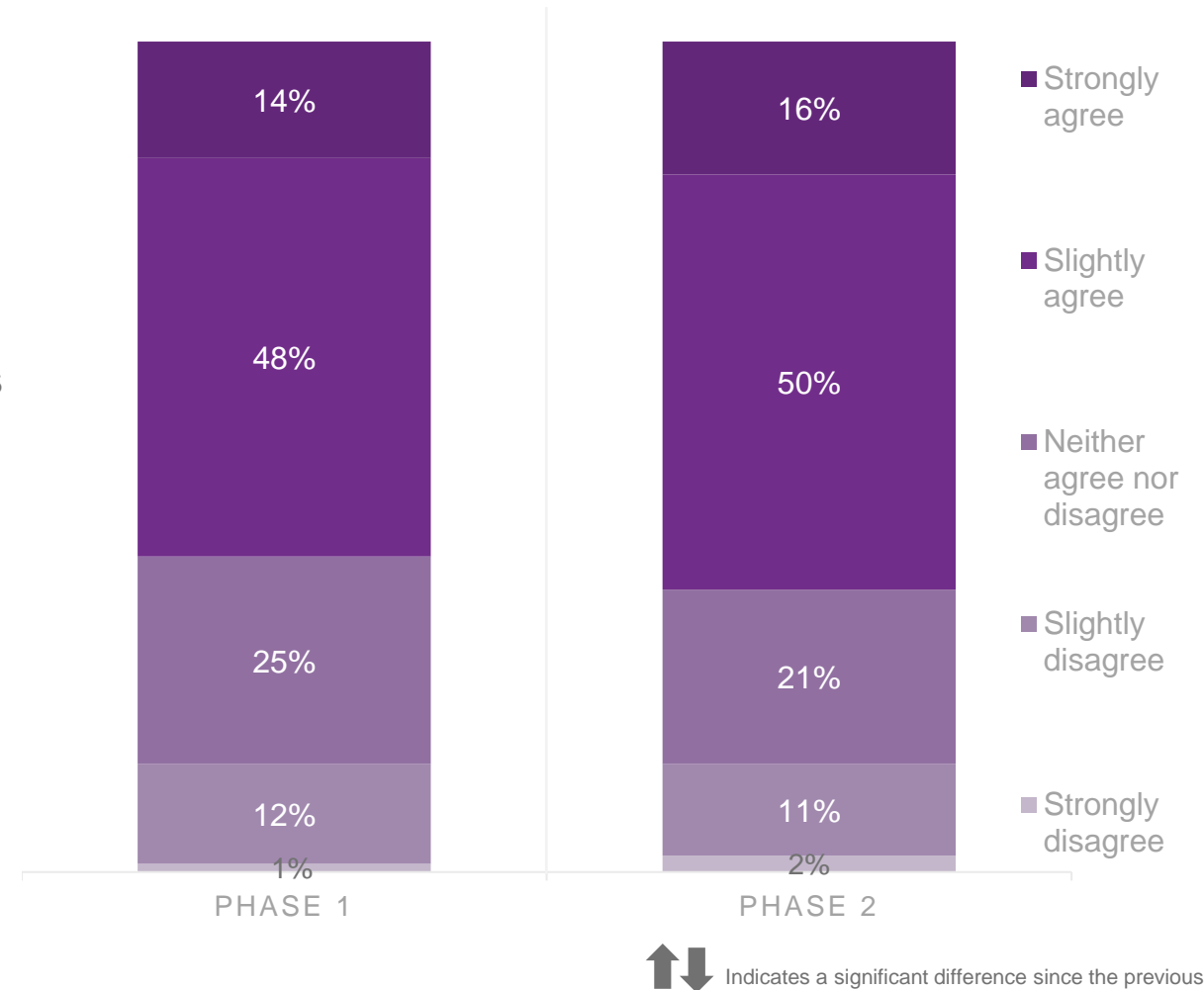
Most young people don't know enough about how their subject choices may affect their possible career paths

Young people should not have complete control over the subjects they can drop

↑↓ Indicates a significant difference since the previous wave

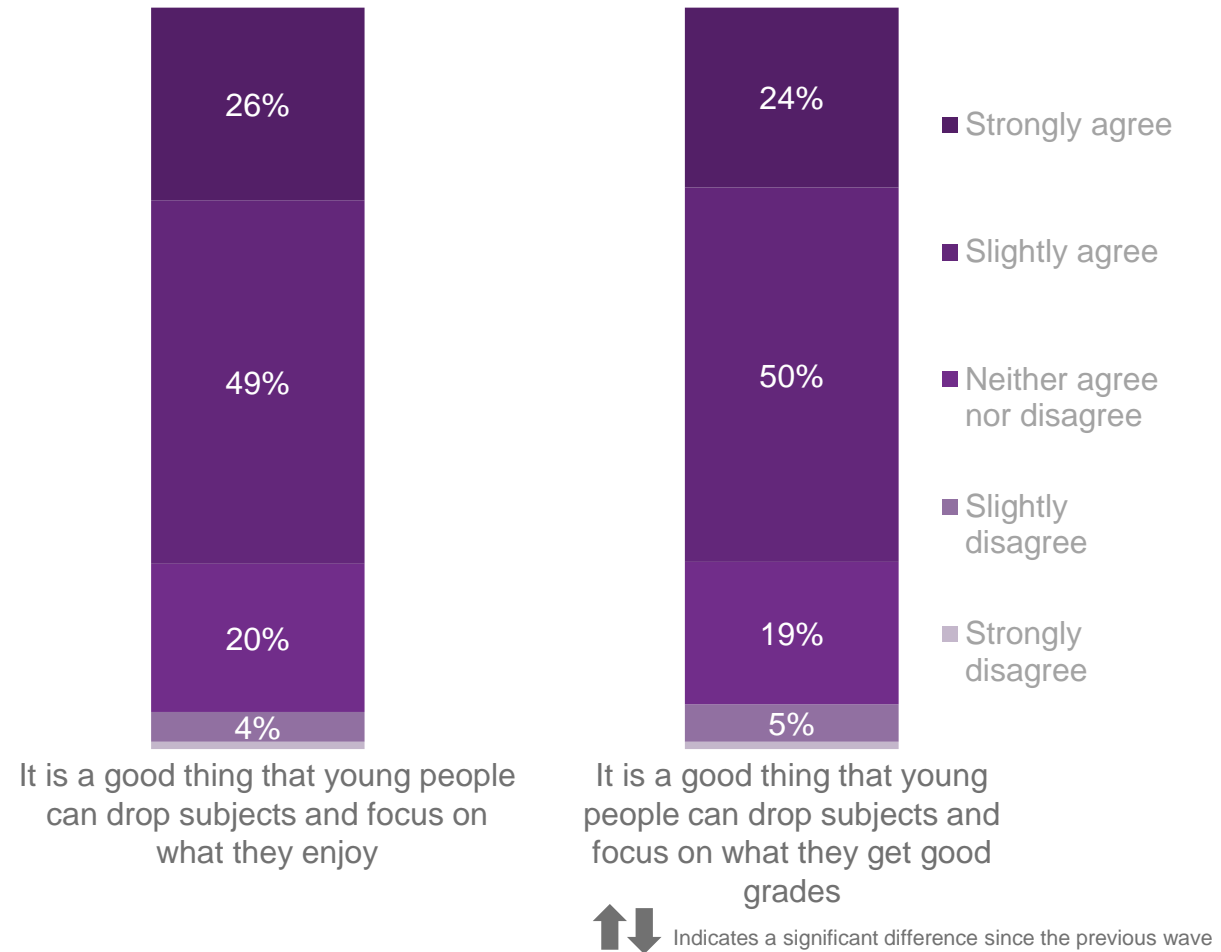
Most parents trust young people to make decisions that are right for them

- Parents views on if young people are capable of making informed decisions about the subjects they should carry on studying has stayed consistent
- In the 2018 qualitative research, parents in the triads supported the idea of young people making their own choices. Parents believed in individual skills sets, aptitudes and interests, and wanted their child to do what they enjoyed
- In the triads, parents with more than one child often spoke about different pathways based on their child's ability or personality



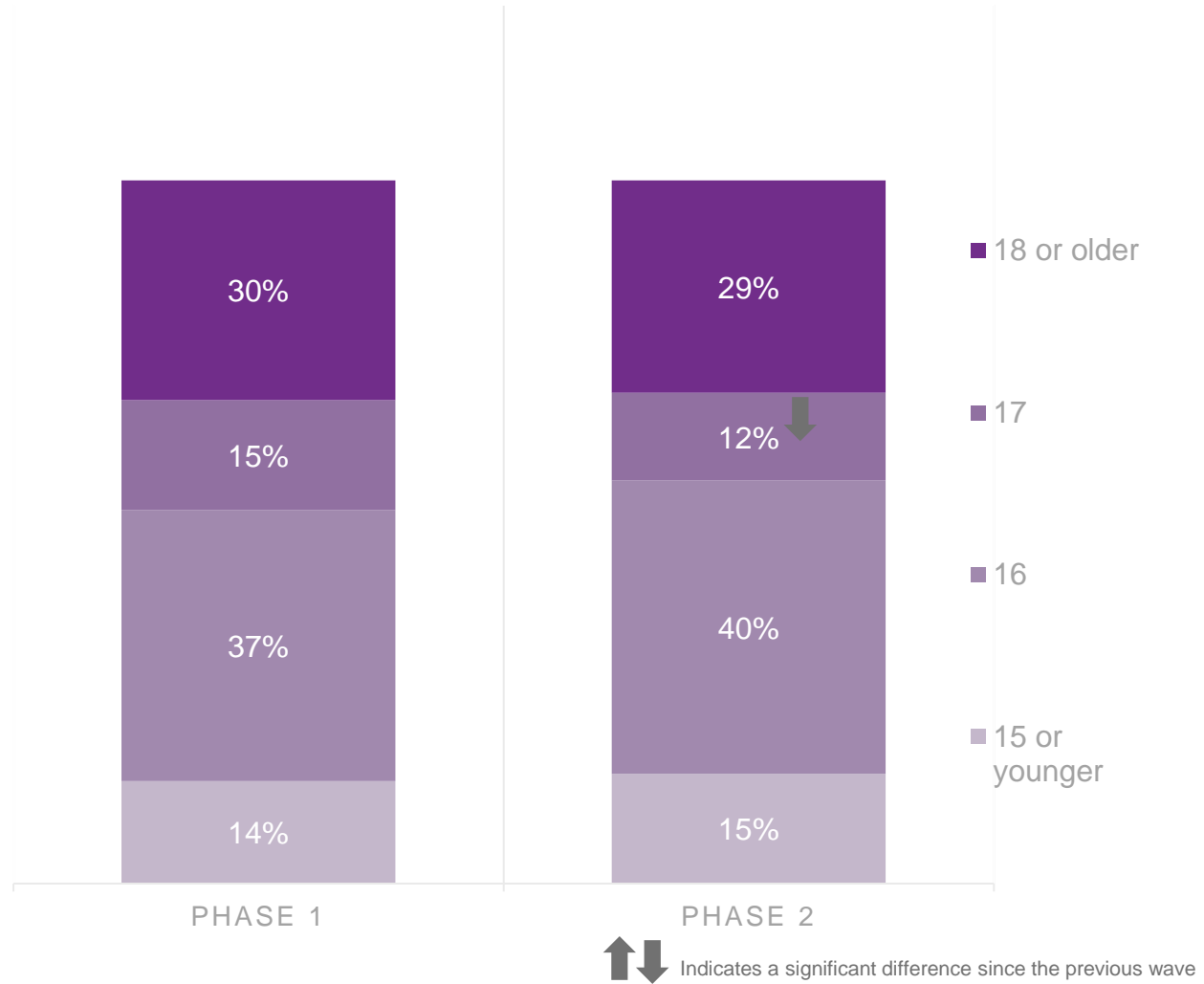
Most parents see positives in allowing young people to drop subjects

- This wave, parents were more likely to agree that it is a good thing that young people can drop subjects and focus on what they enjoy (74% compared to 71% in phase 1)
- Parents who thought they were well informed in their child's secondary school education were more likely to agree with this statement
- Consistent with wave 1, three quarters of parents (75%) agreed that it is a good thing that young people can drop subjects and focus on what they get good grades in
- Interestingly, parents with children in key stages 3-5 were significantly more likely to agree with this statement, whilst parents of children aged 18-24 were more likely to disagree



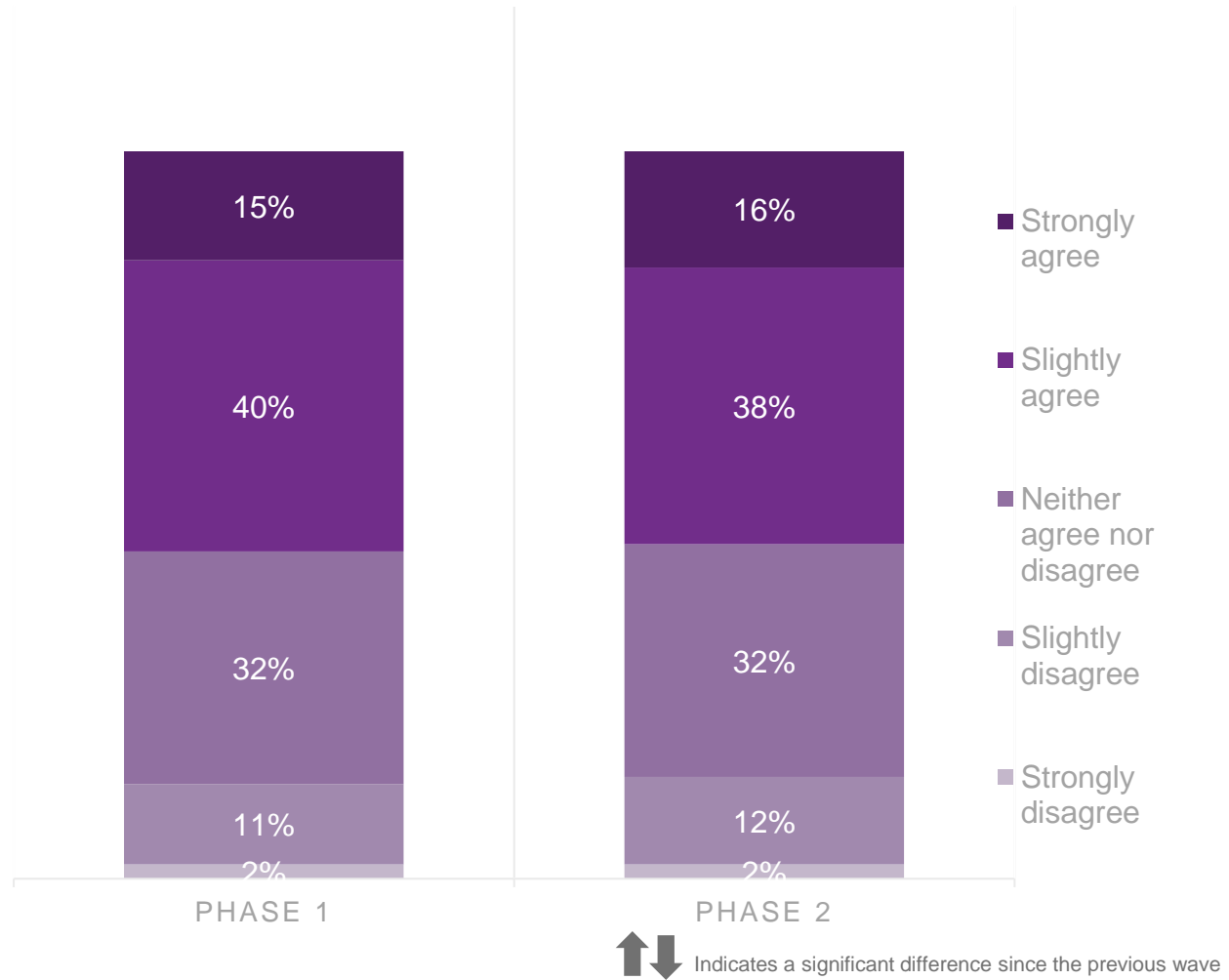
While parents like the idea of choice in education – four in ten felt that total freedom of choice should not come until at least 17

- Parents views on the age young people should have total freedom to choose what they learn has shifted slightly, with a decrease in parents saying the age should be 17
- Parents who were degree educated or higher were more likely to say that total freedom of choice should not occur until young people are 18 or older
- BAME parents also more likely to say that young people should not have total freedom in choosing what they learn until 18 or older (45%) compared to White parents (26%)



More than half of parents agree that young people should be encouraged to study a broader range of subjects than they currently do

- Parents opinions have stayed consistent between waves, with around a seventh (14%) of parents disagreeing with the statement. This shows that parents are open to young people studying a broader range of subjects they currently do
- Parents from high socio economic grades (AB) were more likely than parents from other grades to agree with this statement
- BAME parents were also more likely to agree with this statement than White parents
- Parents with children in key stage 4 or older were more likely to disagree with this statement than parents with children in key stage 3



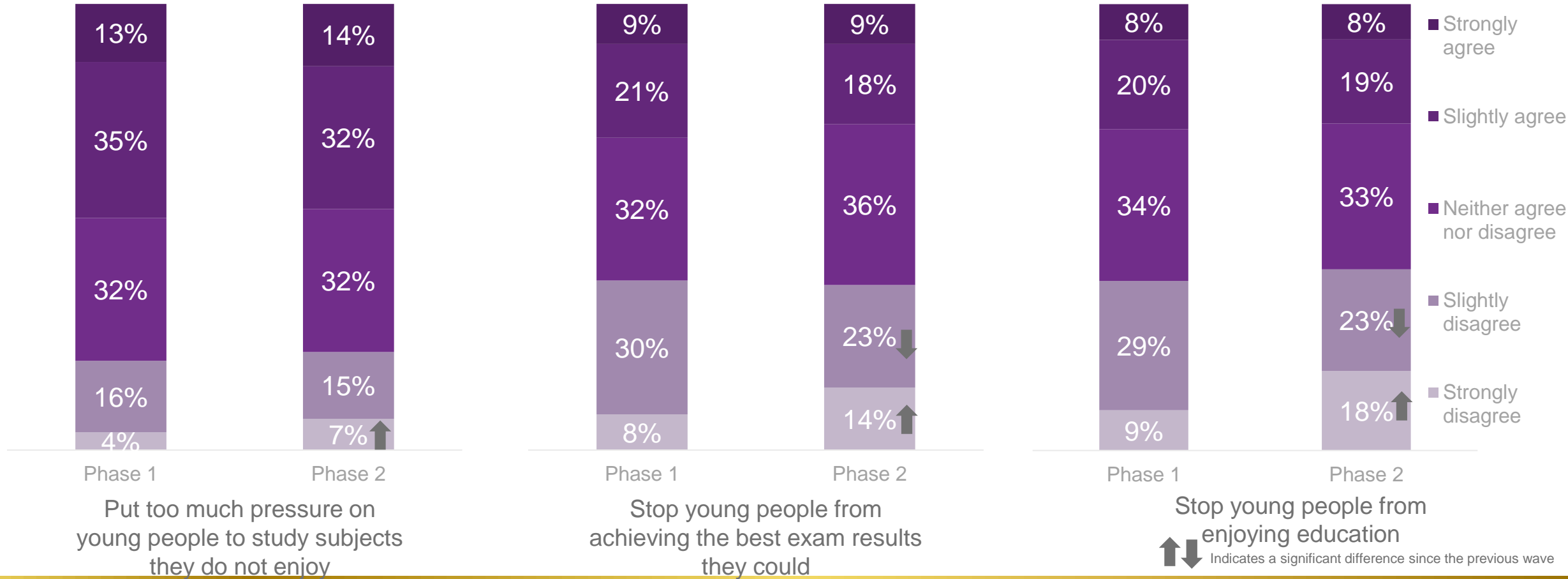
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Parental views on a new curriculum

Parents were introduced to the concept of a new curriculum with this text

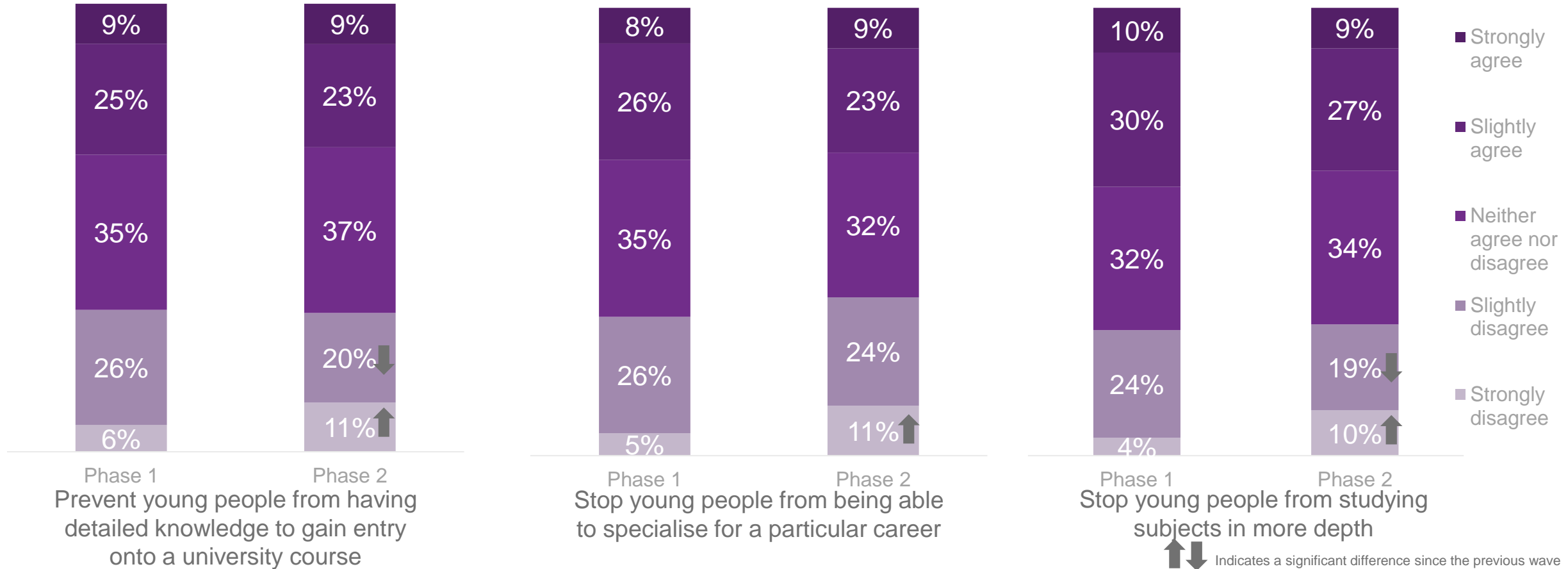
*... We are interested in parents' views on introducing a new type of secondary education in this country. Young people would **still have choice over what they learn and be able to specialise in areas they enjoy or excel in.** However, they would need to continue a **wider range of subjects and learning experiences** to ensure they develop a broad range of skills up to age 18. This might include compulsory work experience, elements of numeracy, practical maths and problem solving, languages, IT, or science and technology. The **overall number of tests and assessments and the total amount of study time would be kept to the same level as it is now - they would not be doing more work overall***

Parents had some concerns about what this type of curriculum might lead to, and compared to phase 1 views have become more biased

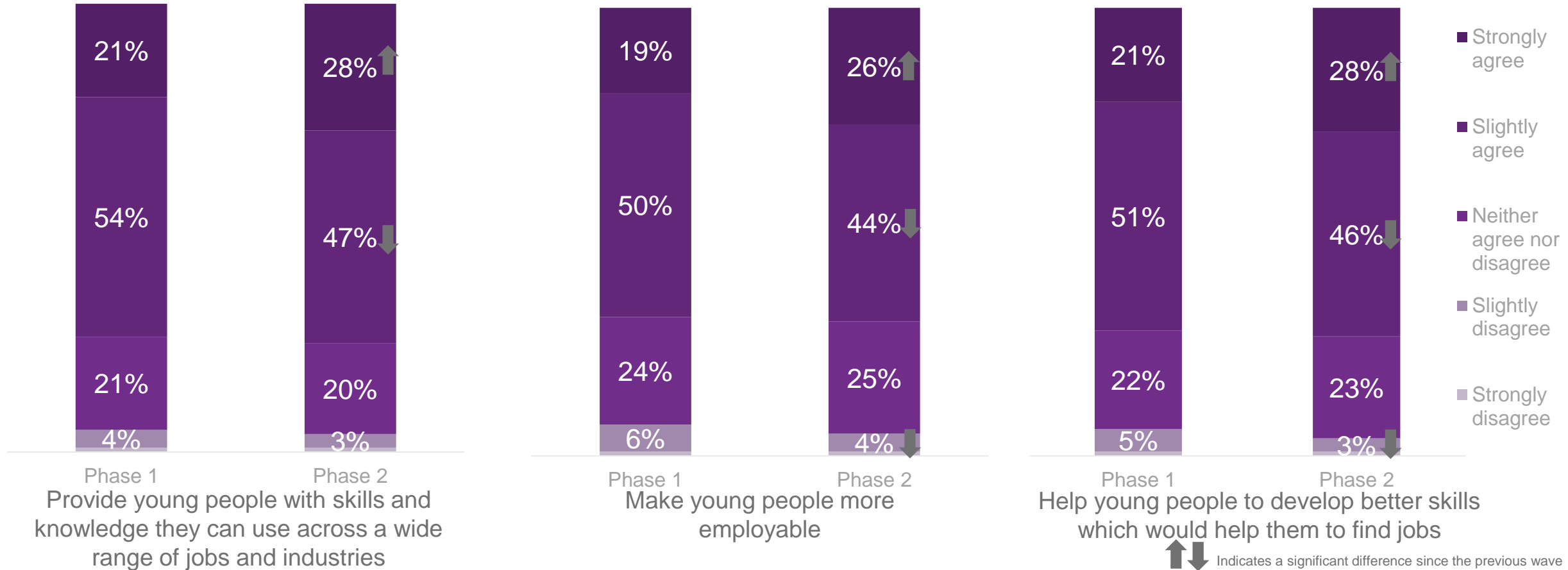


Whilst parents are ambivalent about whether it might restrict ability to specialise

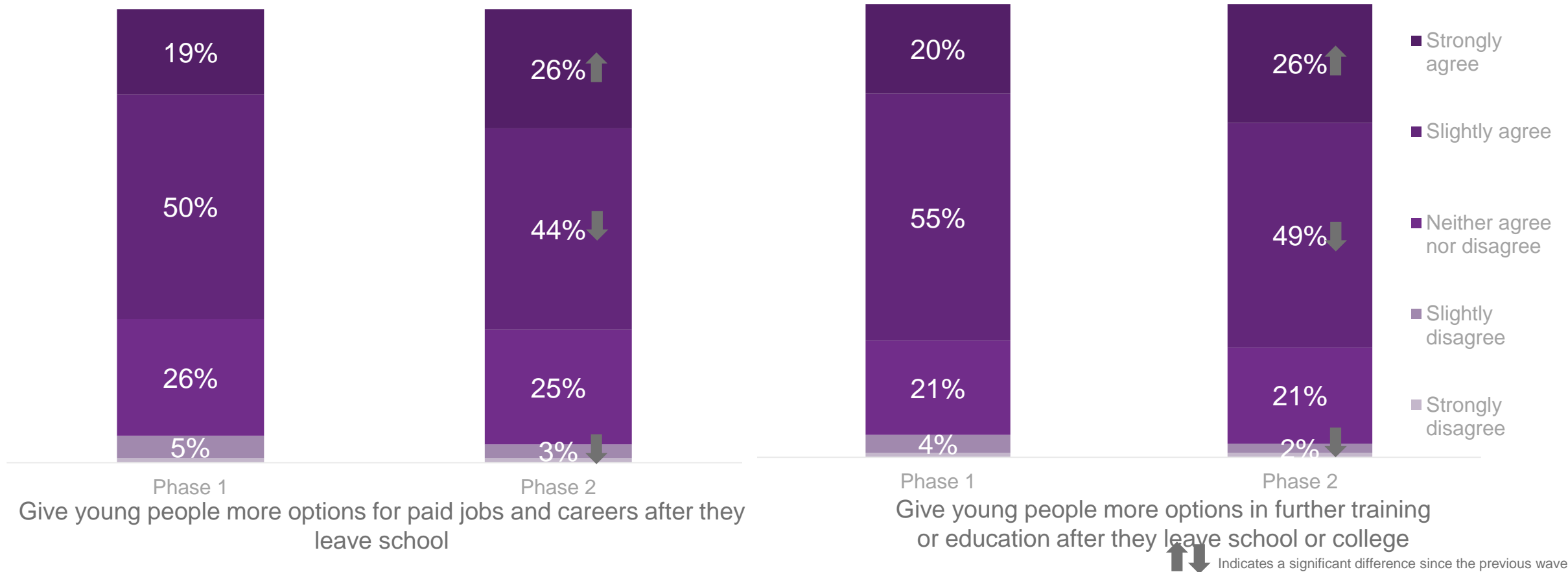
We have again seen increases in the proportion of parents who strongly disagree, indicating that parents may not necessarily be pre-occupied by specialisation



Parents see the benefits of the proposed changes in improving job prospects and positivity has increased



Parents also see the benefits of the proposed changes in widening options and positivity has increased

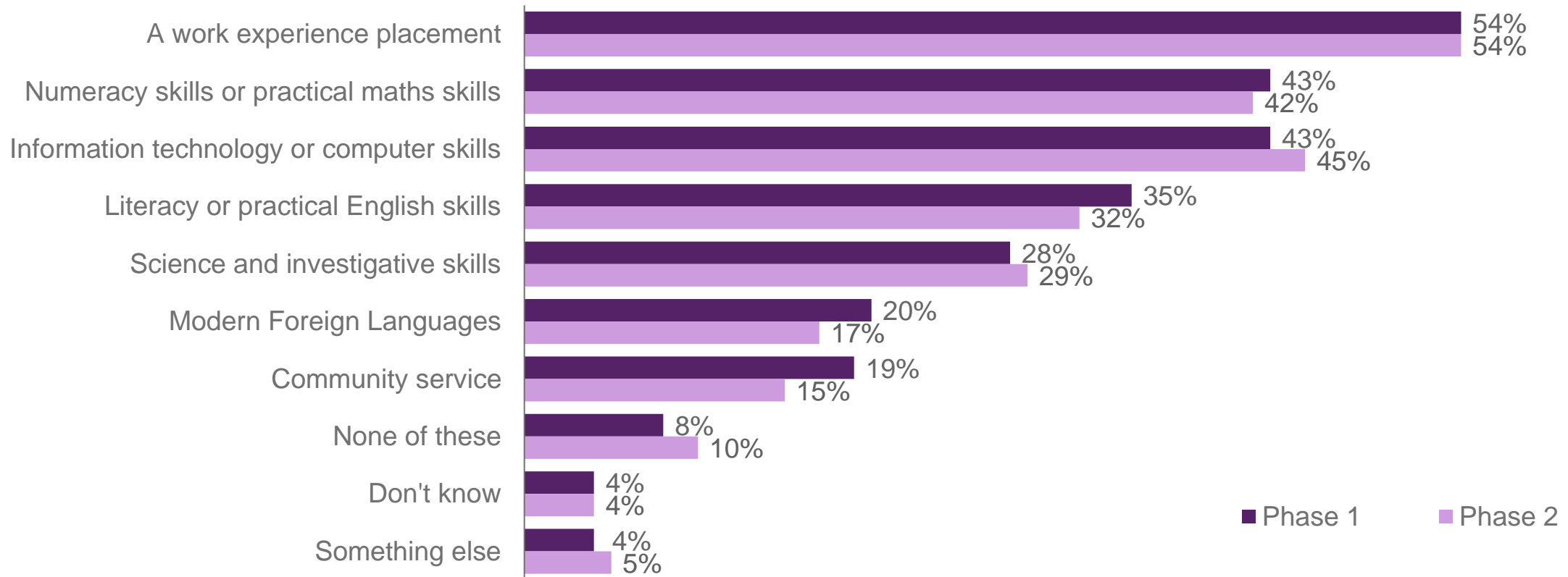


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What parents would value in a new curriculum

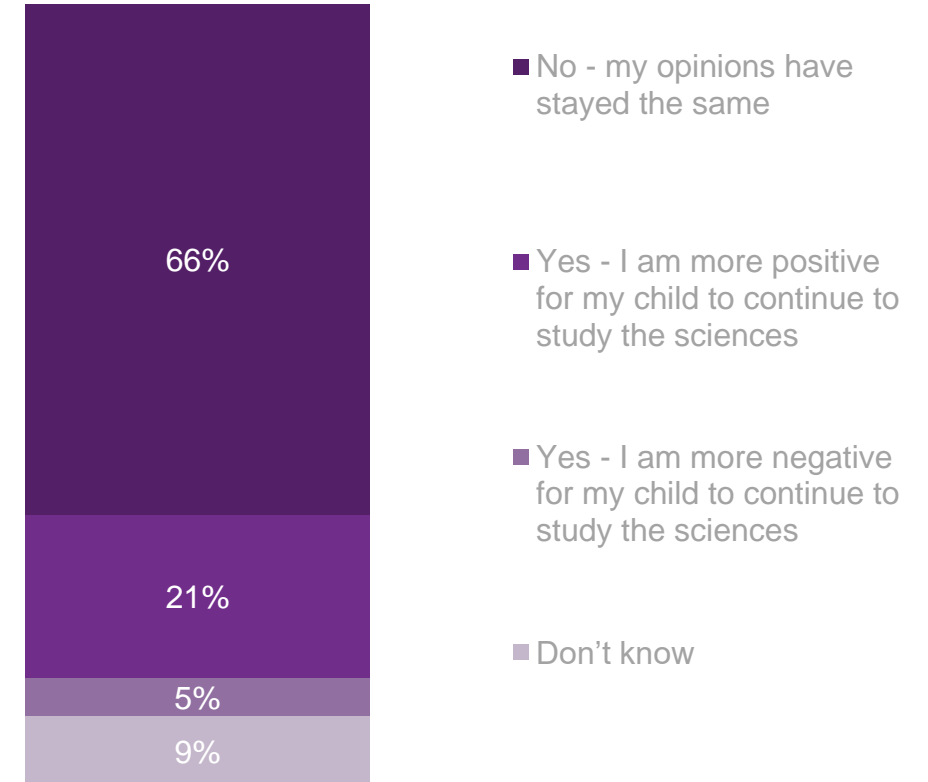
Consistent with previous research, parents continue to want the curriculum to focus on a work experience placement

If secondary education was changed in this way, which of the following things would you most like to see all 16-18 year olds doing? Top three choice



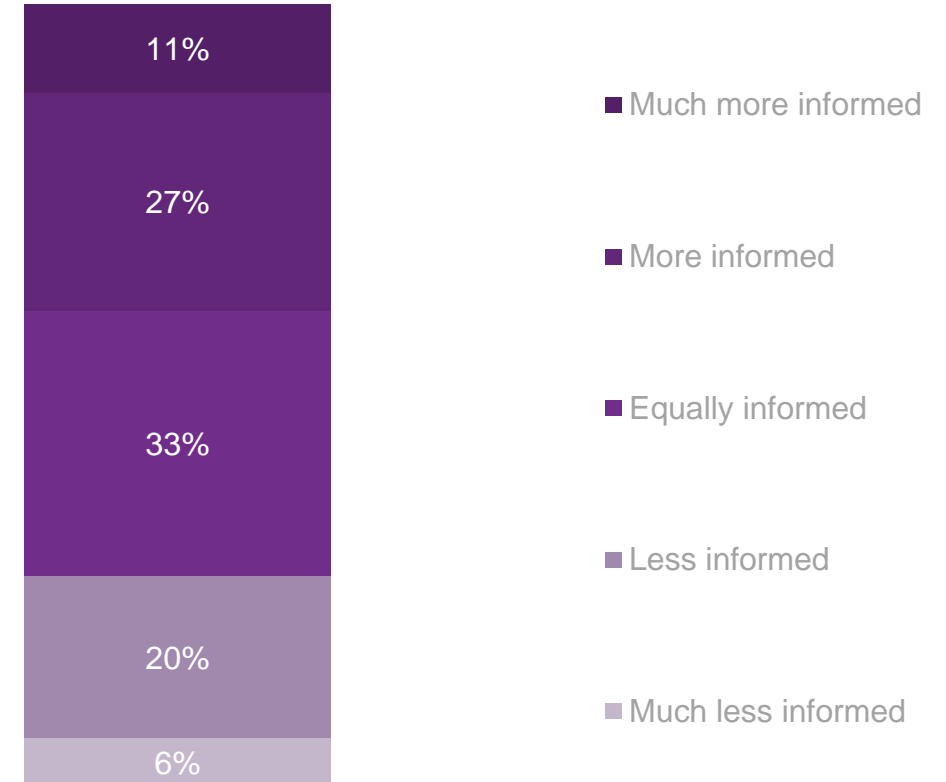
Fifth of parents are now more positive for their child to continue to study the sciences post-16 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, but for most views unchanged

- Parents from higher socio economic grades were more likely to be more positive for their children to continue to study the sciences post-16 than they were prior to the COVID-19 pandemic



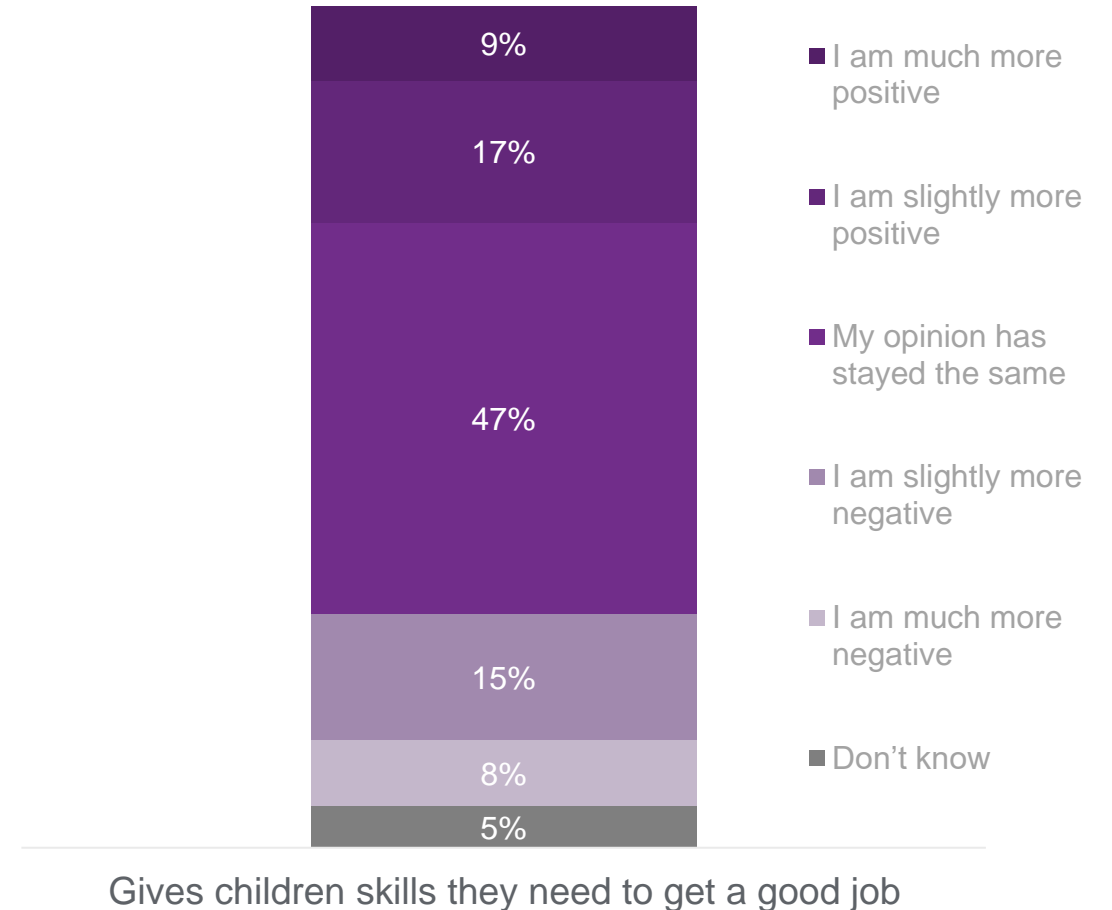
38% of parents felt more informed about their child's education as a result of remote learning

- Seven in ten (71%) parents have had at least one of their children learn remotely due to school closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic
- BAME parents were more likely to say that they were much more informed (22%) than White parents (10%)



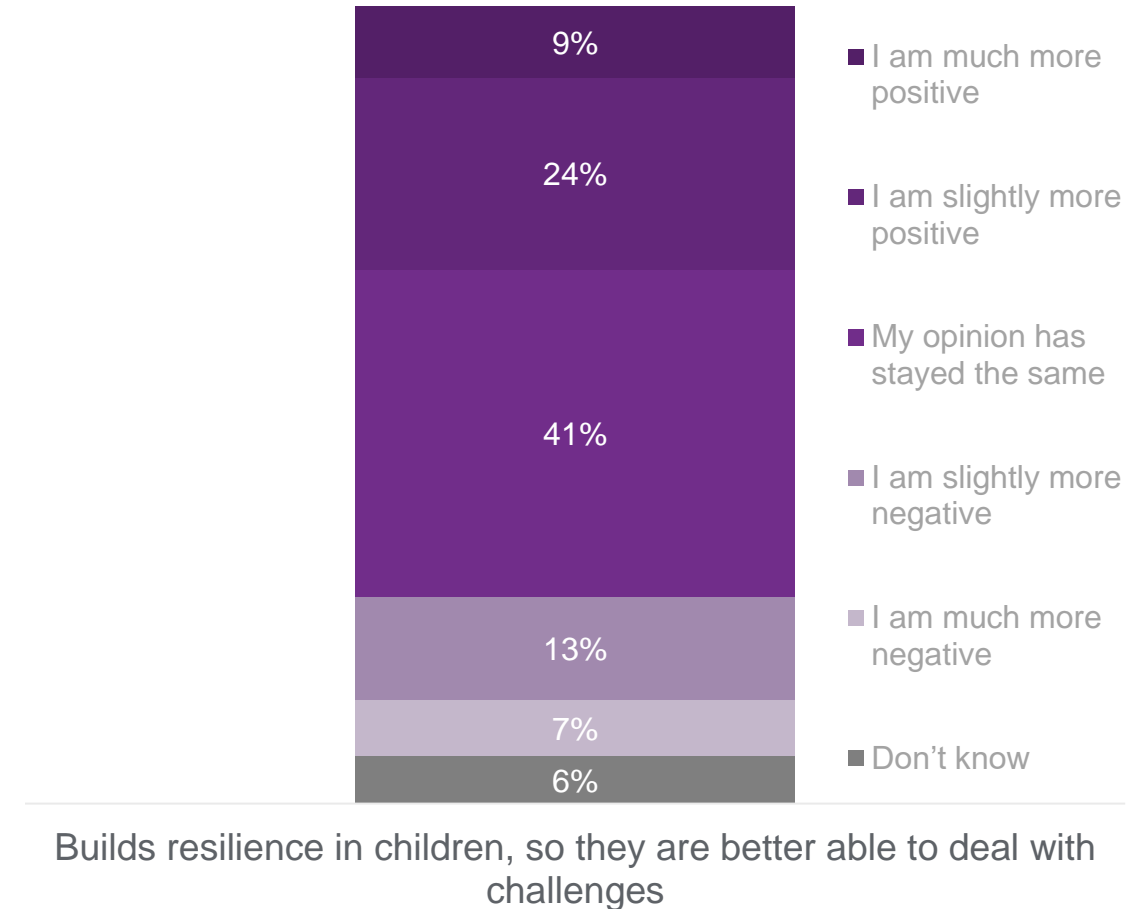
Pandemic not impacted parents overall views on whether the education system gives children skills they need to get a good job

- Parents of children in key stages 3-5 were significantly more likely to be more positive about this statement than parents with older children (29% compared to 21%)
- Parents from a higher socio economic grades were also more likely to be more positive that the education system gives children skills they need to get a good job (33% compared to 24%)
- Those who were not well informed on their children's secondary school education system were more likely to disagree with the statement (43% compared to 16% who were informed)
- Parents who had at least one of their children be required to learn remotely as a result of the pandemic, were also more likely to be negative about this statement (25% compared to 18%)



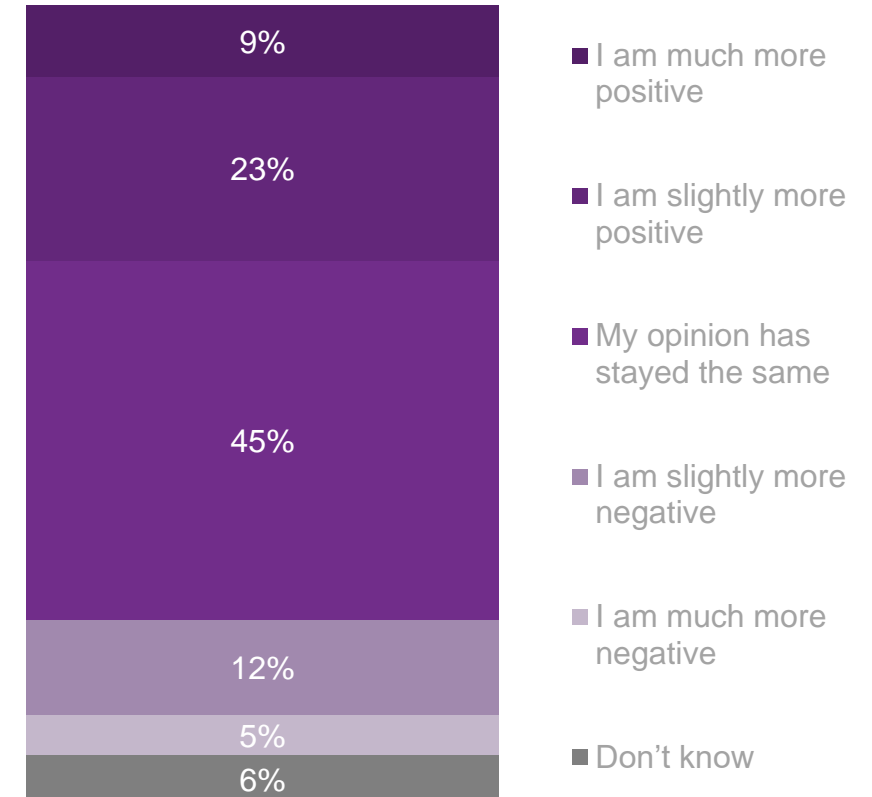
A third of parents were now more positive that the education system builds resilience in children, so they are better able to deal with challenges

- Parents of children in key stages 4-5 (37%) were significantly more likely to be more positive about this statement than parents with older children (30%)
- Male parents were also more likely to be positive (36%) than females (30%)
- White parents were more negative (21%) than BAME parents (12%)



Third of parents also now more likely to feel the education system gives children skills that enable them to interpret information that affects their lives

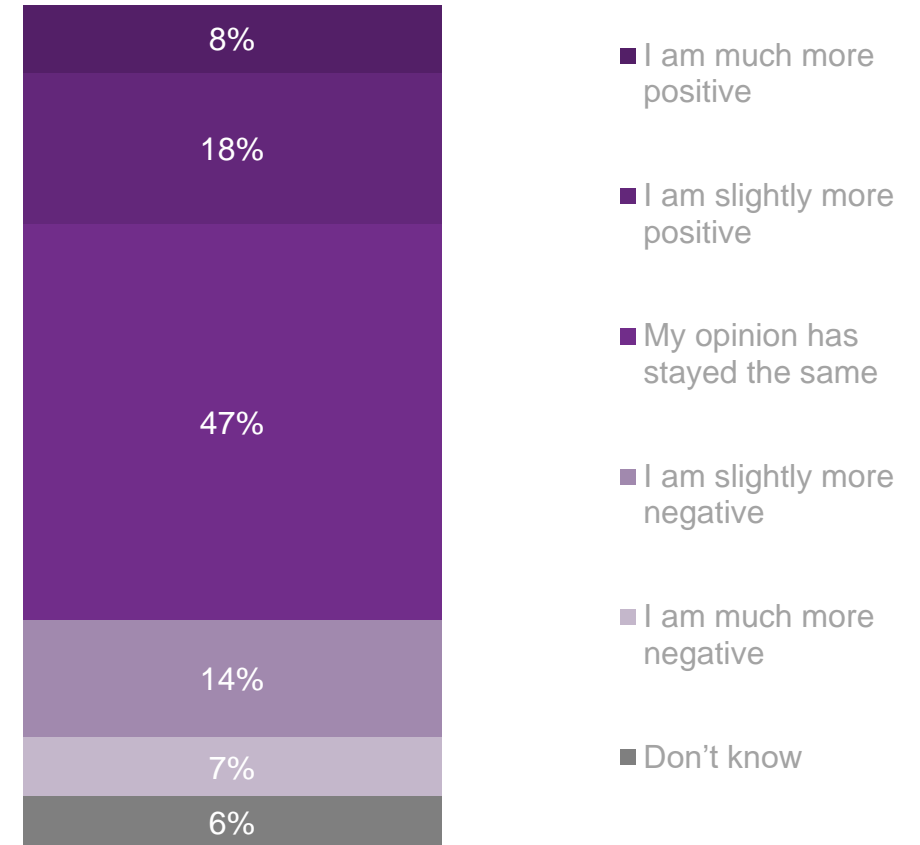
- Parents of children in key stage 3 (36%) were significantly more likely to be more positive about this statement than parents with older children (29%)
- Parents from the highest socio economic grades, were more positive that the education system gives children skills that enable them to interpret information that affects their lives (40%) than those from the lowest socio economic group (28%)
- Parents with a highest level of qualification of an A-level or above, were more negative than parents with qualifications of below 5 GCSEs (A*-C) (19% compared to 9%)



Gives children skills that enable them to interpret information that affects their lives

Views about whether the education system allows children to gain strong science skills remains balanced

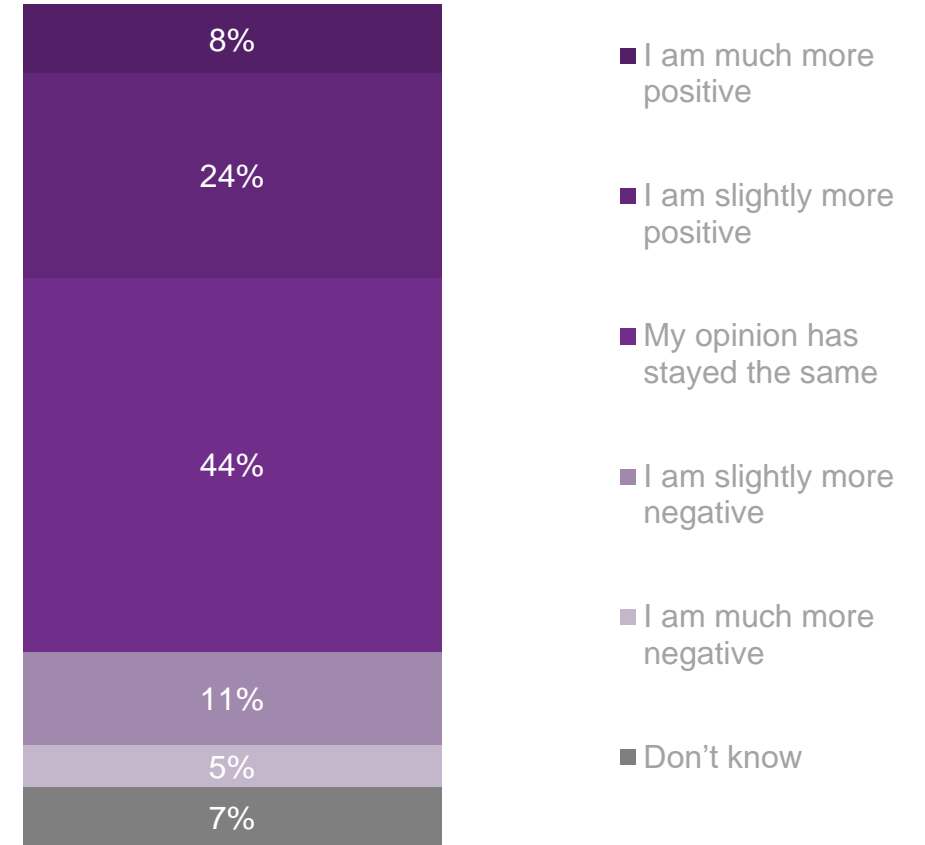
- Parents of children in key stage 3 (31%) were significantly more likely to be more positive about this statement than parents with older children (21%)
- Parents with sons were likely to say they were more positive (29%) than parents with daughters (24%)
- BAME parents were also more positive than White parents (39% compared to 24%)
- Parents who were more positive on their children studying the sciences post-16 were more positive about this statement



Allows children to gain strong science skills

A third of parents were more positive since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic that the education system allows students to understand global issues

- Opinions were broadly consistent across all subgroups
- Parents who agreed they were informed on their child's secondary education were more likely to agree with this statement (39% compared to 15%)



Allows students to understand global issues

68% of parents had spoken with their children about the current education/post-education choices; half these conversations were influenced by the pandemic

- Of those parents 52% agreed that their conversations had been influenced by experiences during the pandemic
- Parents of children in key stages 4-5 were more likely to have had their conversations influenced by the pandemic
- Conversations most commonly about how pandemic influenced current experiences or future choices, but some impact on mental health

Subjects discussed

