



COMPASS Autumn Term 2024 : Ref 24/25/T1

COMPASS.

The School Budgets Report

First published Oct 2024

Strictly Confidential – Not for external release

Introduction.



Welcome to the Autumn edition of Compass. The Compass Report is BESA's termly school insights report which enables you to understand the emerging picture in school budgets, spending intentions, and the pressing concerns facing school leaders.

This Term's report, reflects the financial outlook which we uncovered in our deep dive into school budgets – The Fiscal Report. Many schools are experiencing uncertainty regarding their budgets with a high percentage of schools reporting that they are likely to run into deficit this year.

Despite this, there are reasons to be optimistic. While confidence in school budgets remains cautious overall, this term's report reveals a slight improvement compared to last year's outlook. Recent commitments to increased core school funding should also contribute to a more stable financial situation than schools have seen in recent years. However, the most crucial funding decision will be in March, when the Treasury confirms departmental budgets for the next three years.

A high percentage of schools – especially in the Primary Sector – are expected to reduce spending on capital spending this year. This survey was conducted prior to the Chancellors announcement that there would be real-terms increases in maintenance and capital investment budgets beginning next year. It will be interesting to see how these announcement impact school spending intentions in our next edition of Compass.

For a greater understanding of this picture, I can direct you to our online Compass Dashboard at COMPASS Dashboard where you can interrogate the data provided here, in order to analyse the findings by school type and geographic region, amongst other criteria. And for a more in-depth view of the current state of school spending please see our Fiscal Landscape in English Schools Report which combines government spending data with our compass survey data for unparalleled insights. <https://www.besa.org.uk/insights/the-fiscal-landscape-in-english-schools-report-2024/>

Best regards,

Julia Garvey– Acting Director General

Statistical Confidence Traffic Lights.

BESA has chosen to use the '**Central Limit Theorem**' * for the calculation of statistical confidence.

Below is an illustration of the guidelines we are using.

Confidence Level	 85%	 90%	 95%	 99%
	Caution advised	Confident	Very Confident	Gold Standard
Segment	Responses	Responses	Responses	Responses
Primary Schools	125	300	380	650
Secondary Schools	125	250	350	500
Academy Status	125	250	375	650
LA maintained	125	300	400	650

* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_limit_theorem



CHALLENGES.

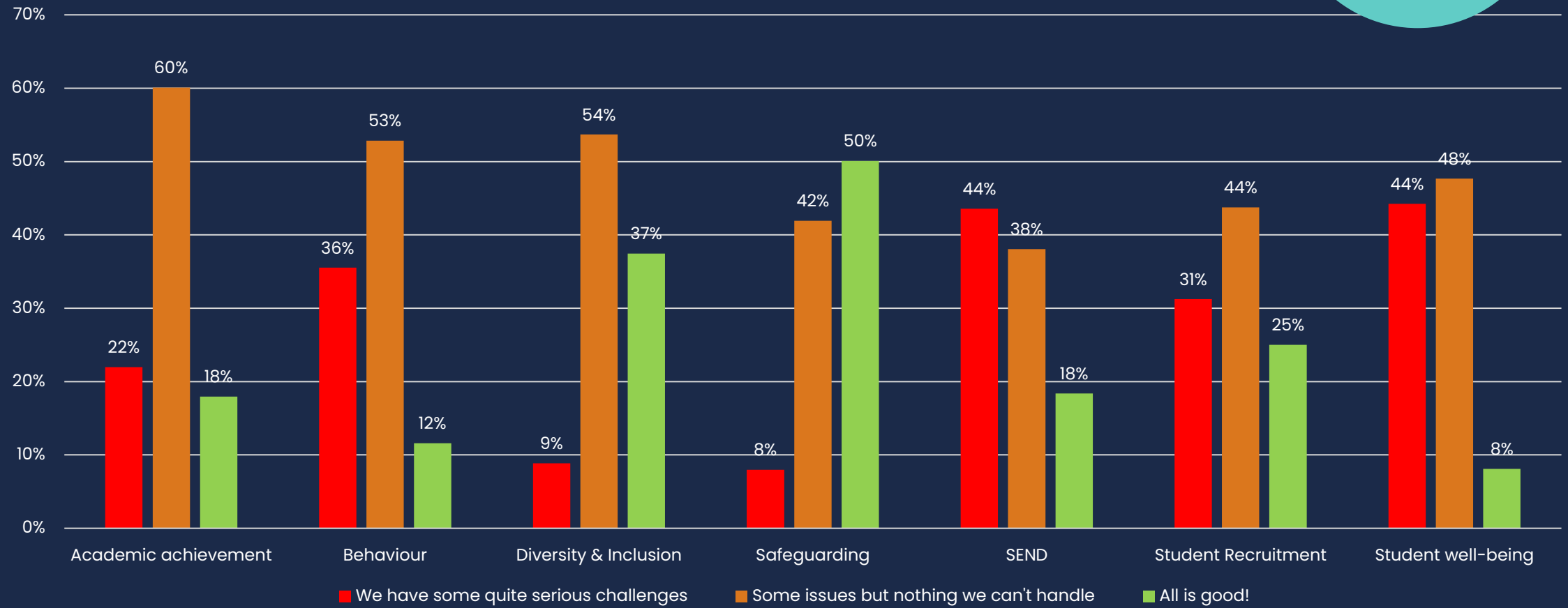
What challenges are schools facing?

Data Updated Oct 2024

Challenges.

What student challenges are schools dealing with?

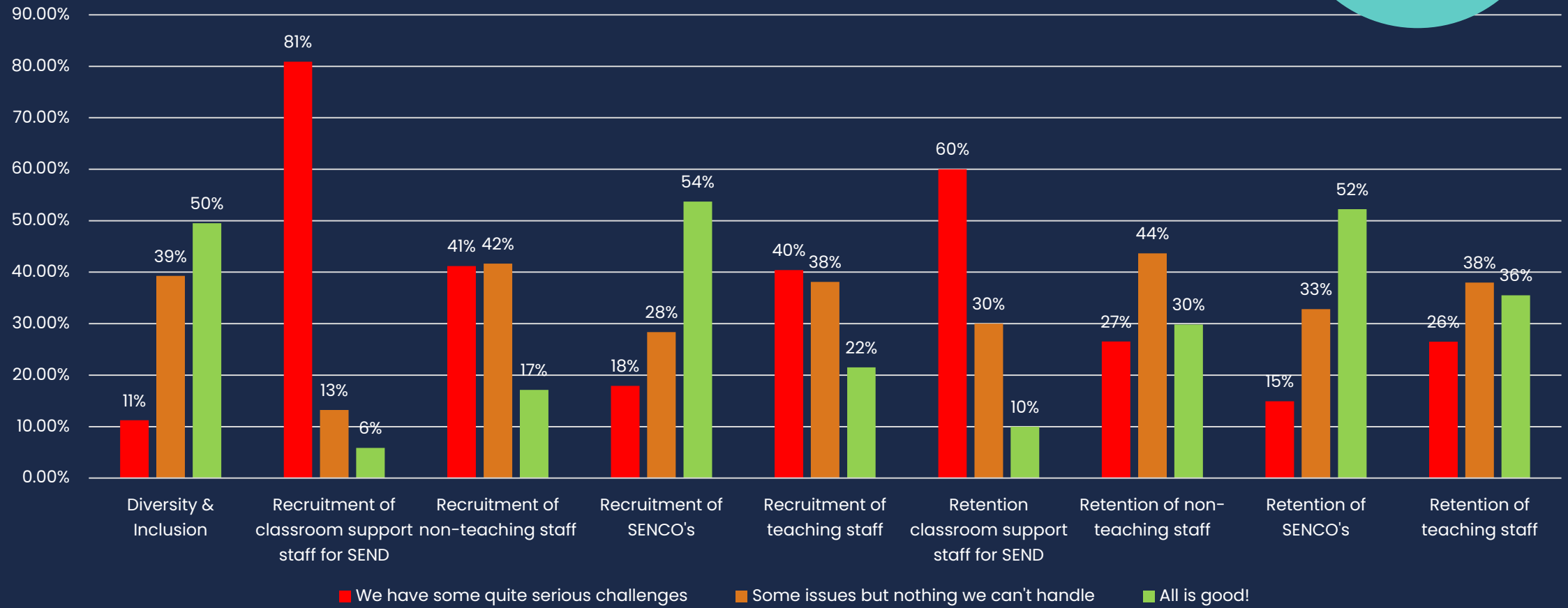
SEND & Student well-being are the biggest student challenge for schools



Challenges.

What staffing challenges are schools dealing with?

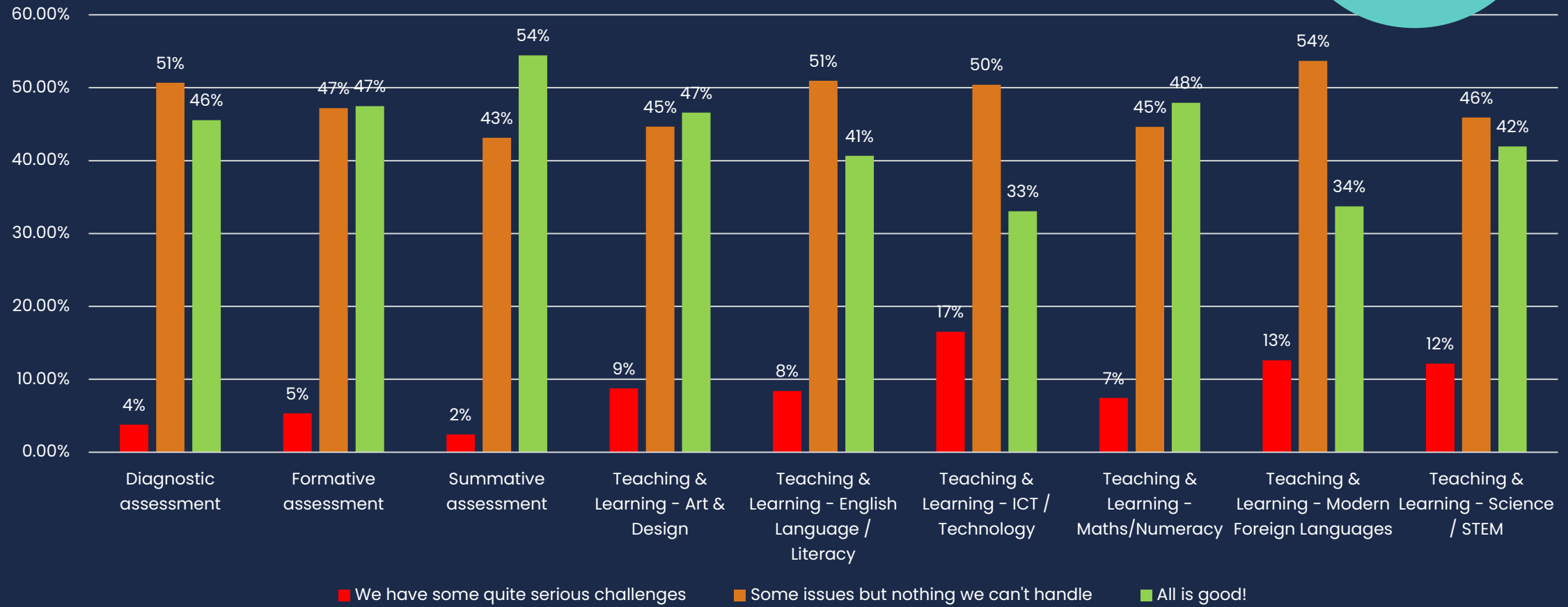
SEND
recruitment
and retention
is the biggest
staffing
challenge for
schools



Challenges.

What teaching challenges are schools dealing with?

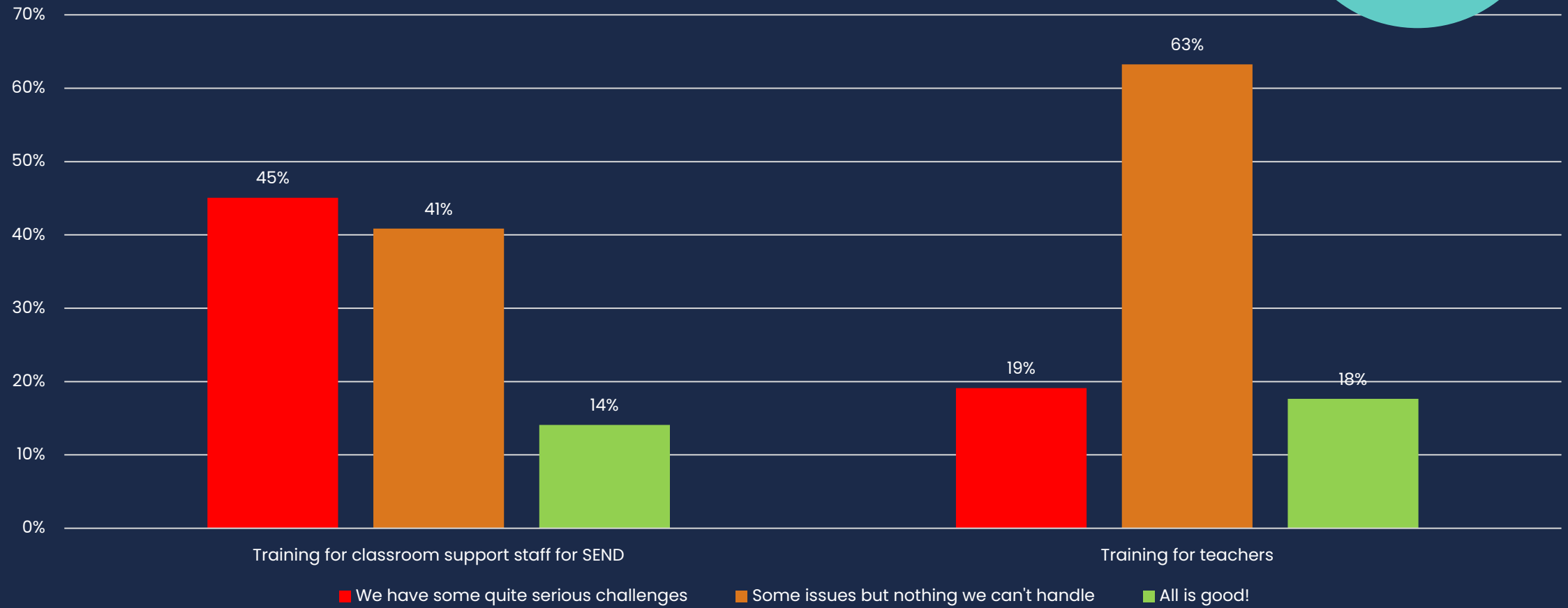
ICT & Technology is the biggest teaching challenge for schools



Challenges.

What teaching training challenges are schools dealing with?

Training support staff for SEND is a big problem for most schools





BUDGETS.

What is the state of school budgets?

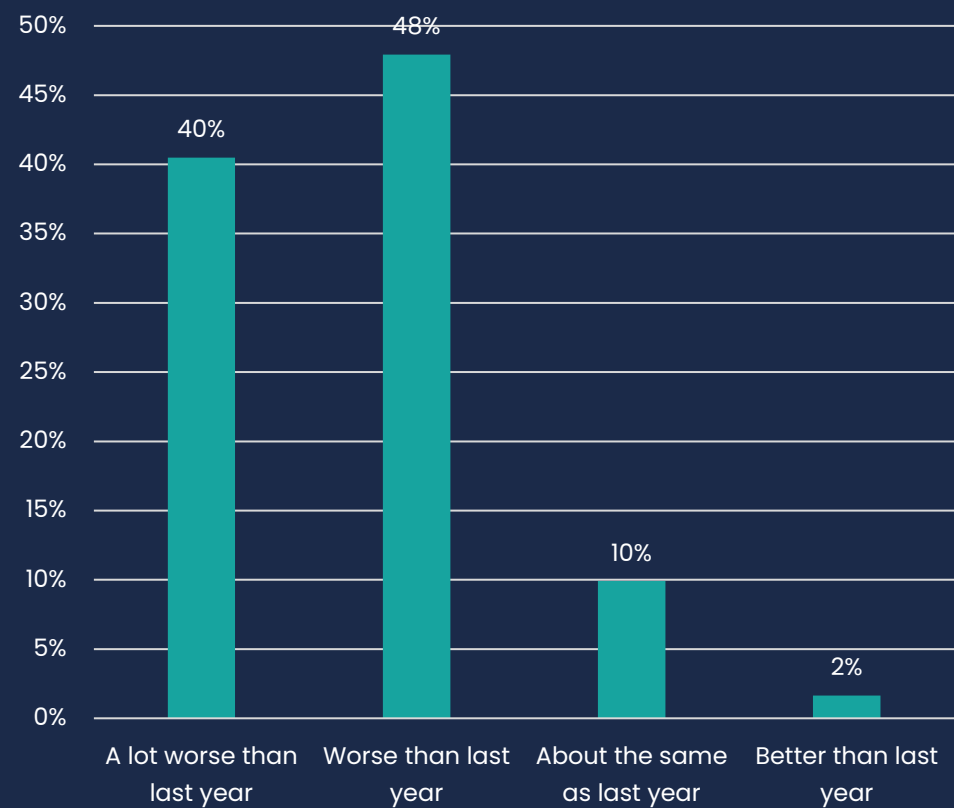
Data Updated Oct 2024

Budgets.

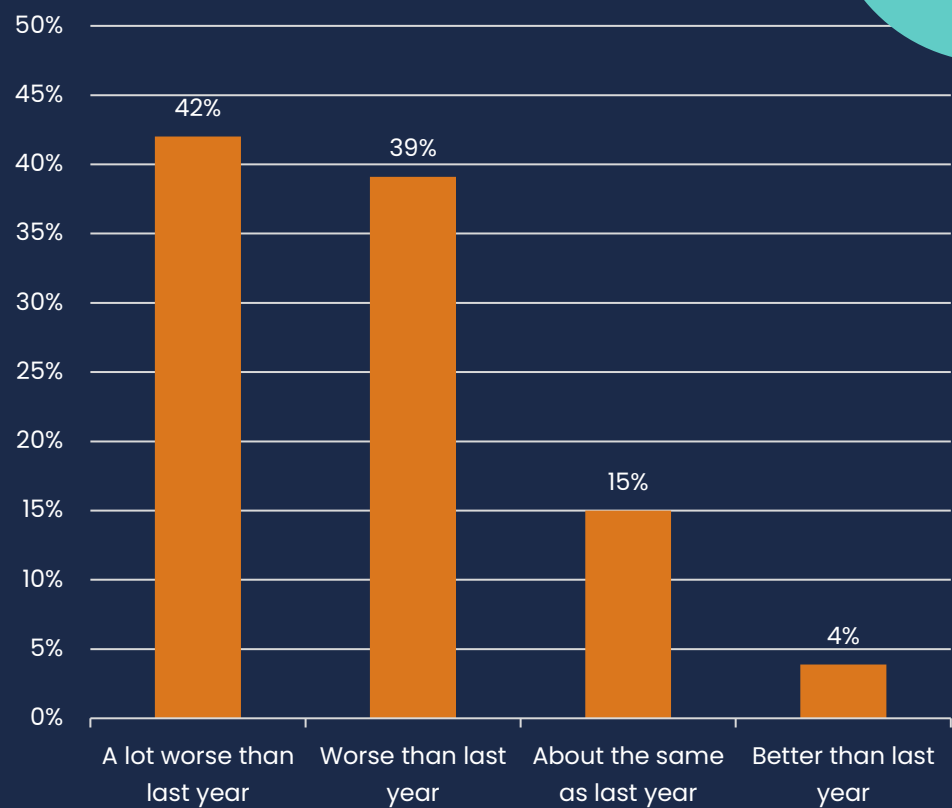
Which statement best describes your school budget?

Are we starting to see the green shoots of budgets stabilizing?

October 2023

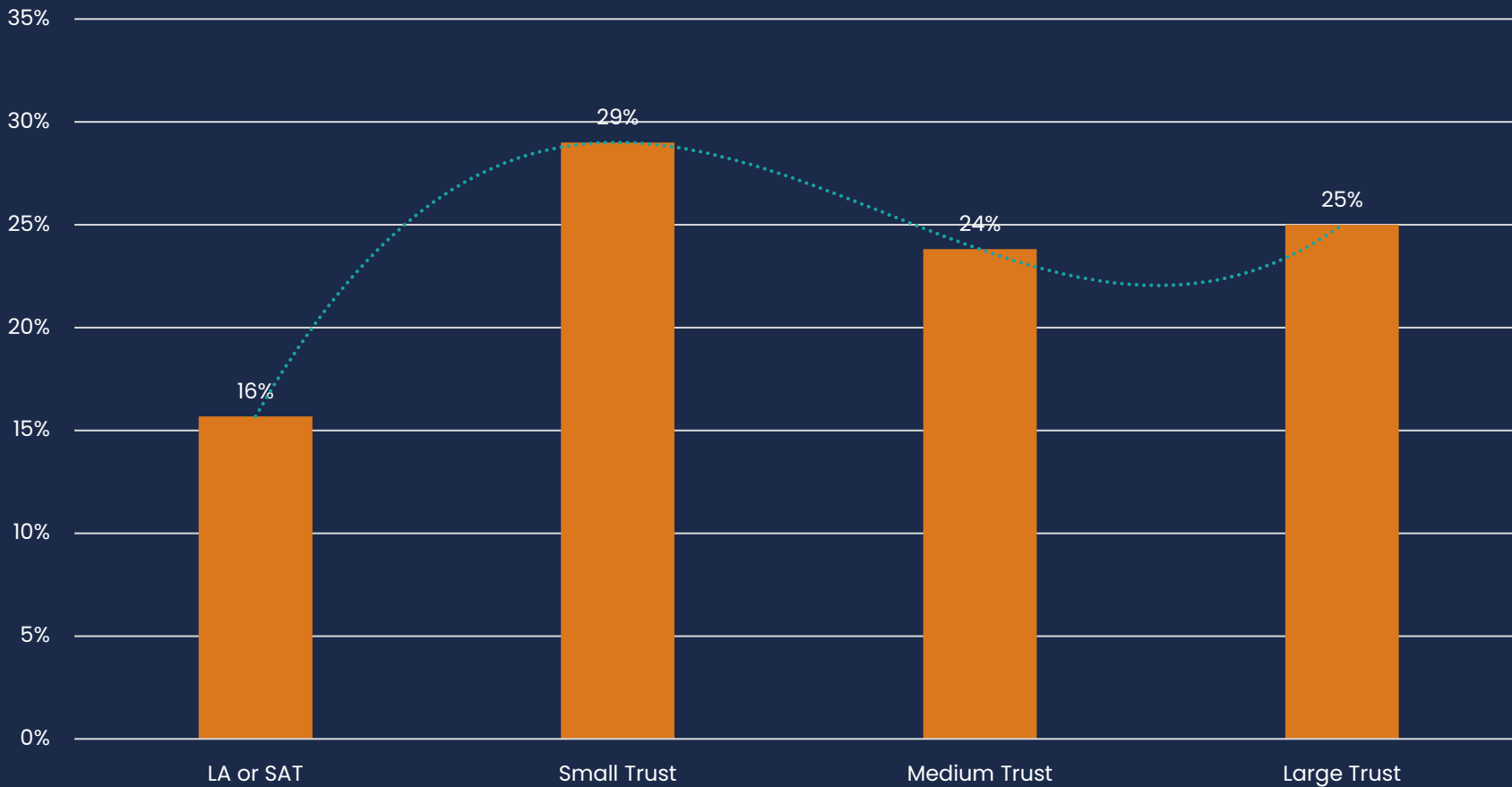


October 2024



State of the budget.

% of schools reporting stable or improving budgets by funding method



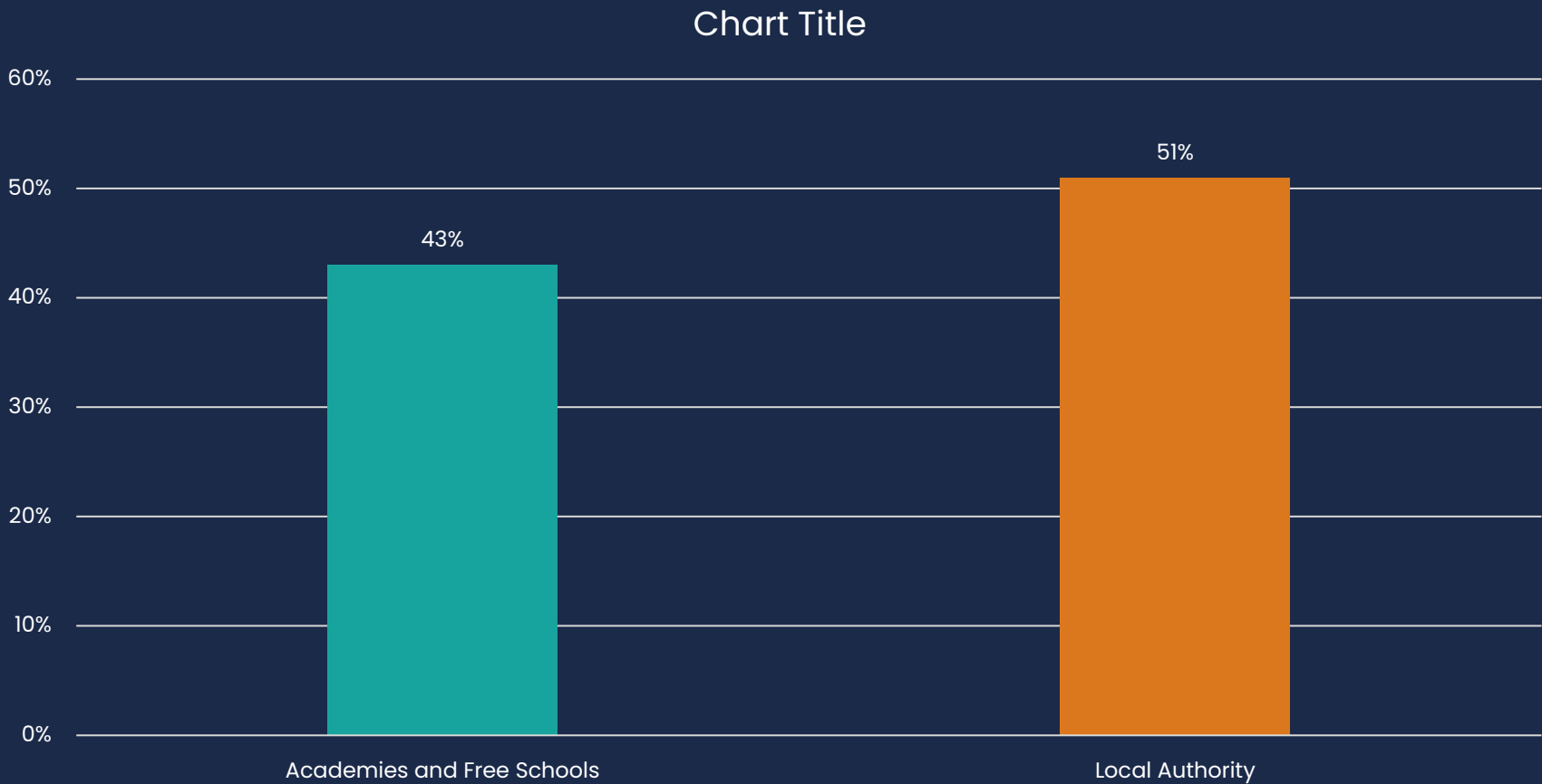
LA & SAT schools are much less likely to be enjoying a stable or improving budget



- LA – Local authority maintained
- SAT – Single academy trust
- Small Trust 2-3 schools
- Medium Trust 4 -12
- Large Trust plus 12

Balancing the books.

Academies vs Local Authority Maintained Schools – who is going into deficit?

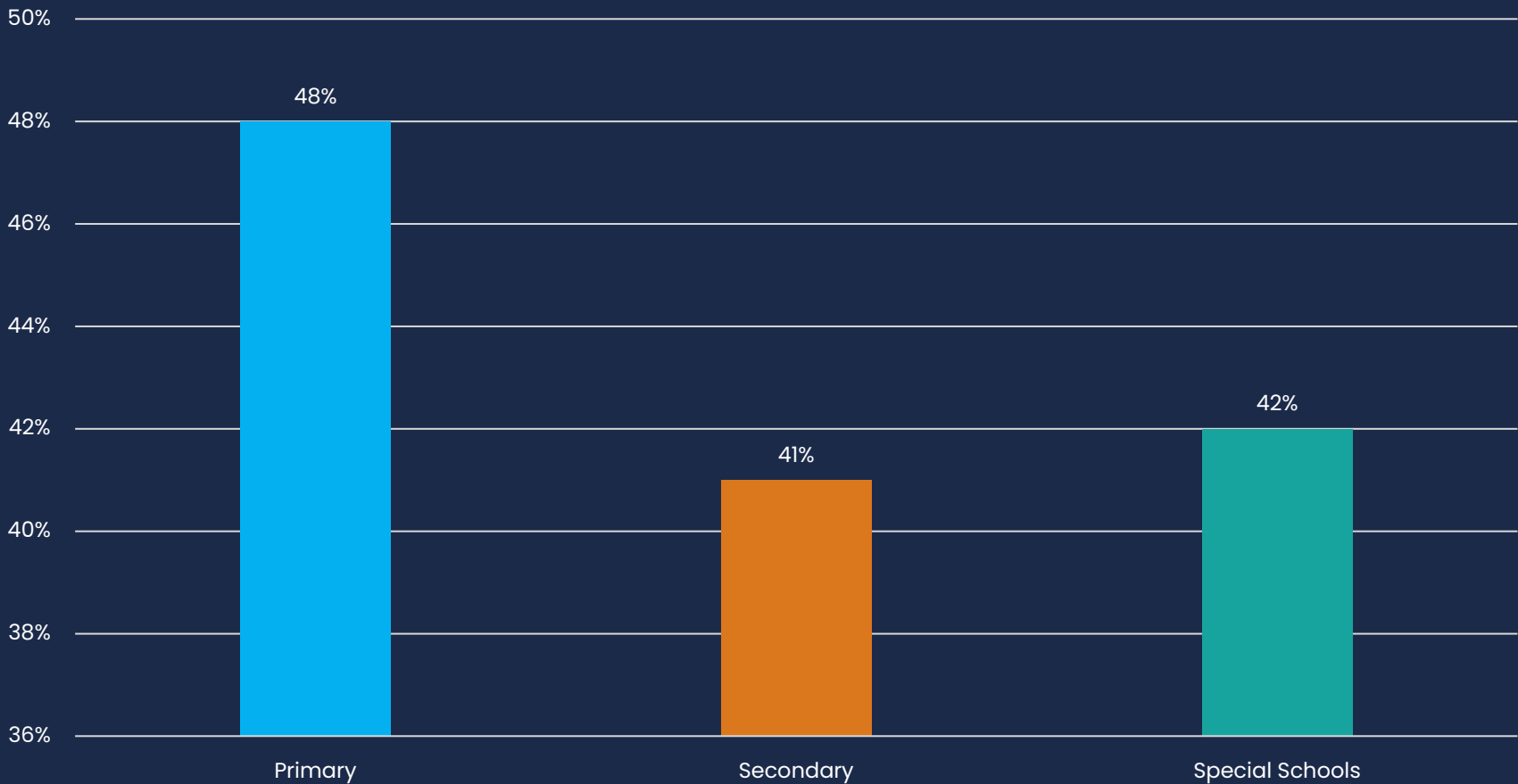


51%
of LA
maintained
schools
expect to go
into deficit

i 43% of academies are expecting to enter deficient this year. The gap still remains between LA funded and academy schools – with academies performing better than LA schools.,

Balancing the books.

What % of schools expect to go into deficit this year



48%
of primary
schools
expect to go
into deficit



The bad news continues for primary schools with almost half expecting to go into deficit.



SPENDING INTENTIONS.

What are the consequence of budget pressures?

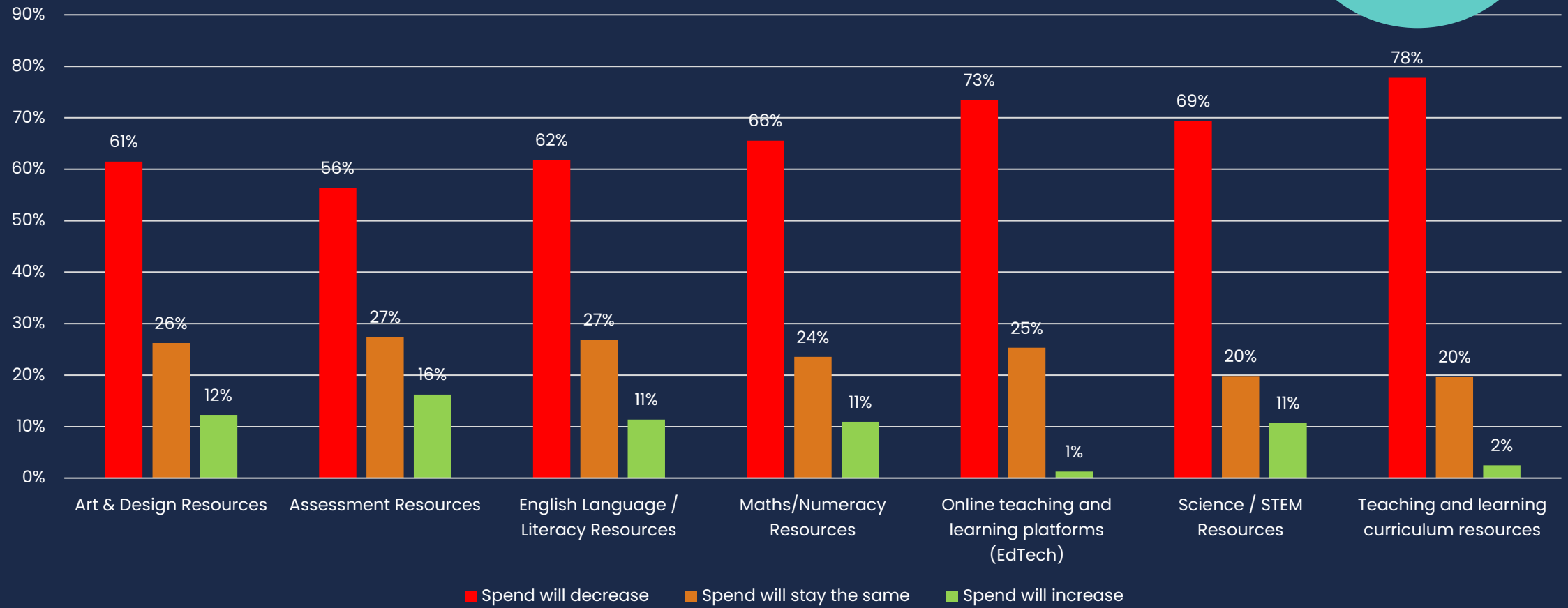
Data Updated Oct 2024

Spending Intentions.

Teaching Resources : **Primary schools.**

78%

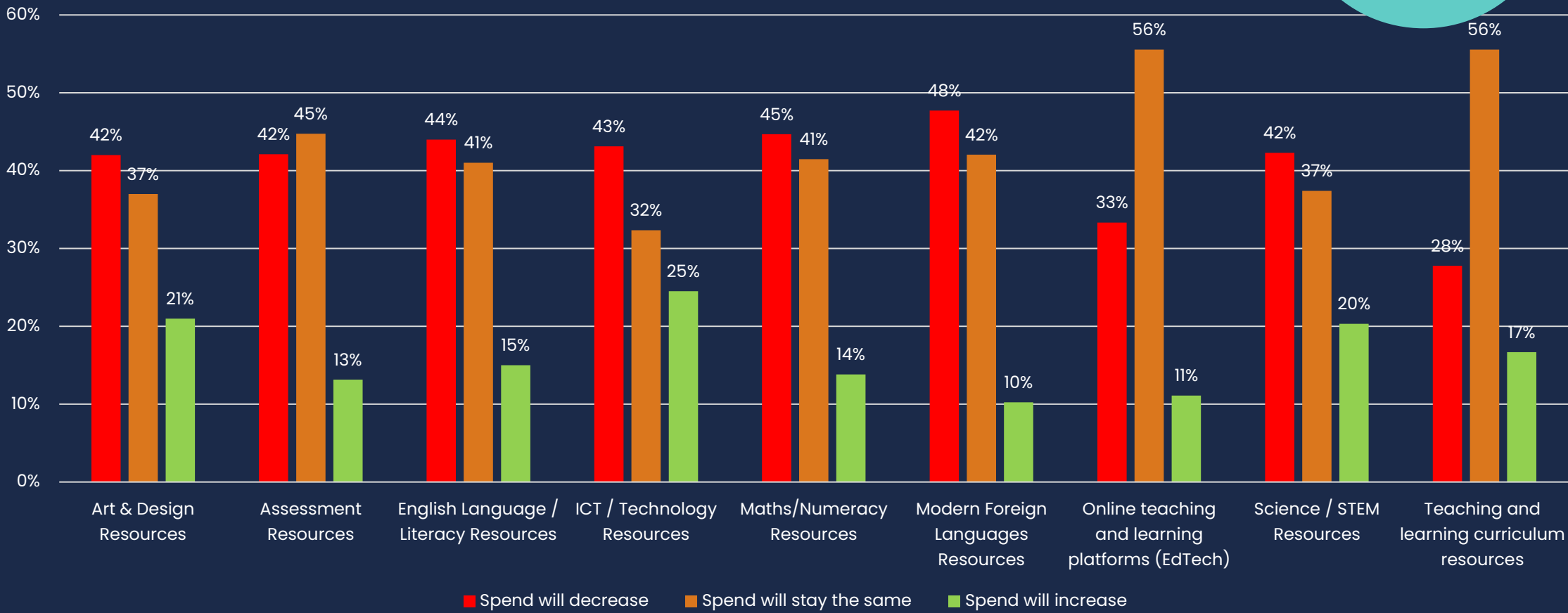
of primary schools plan to reduce resource spend



Spending Intentions.

Teaching Resources : **Secondary schools.**

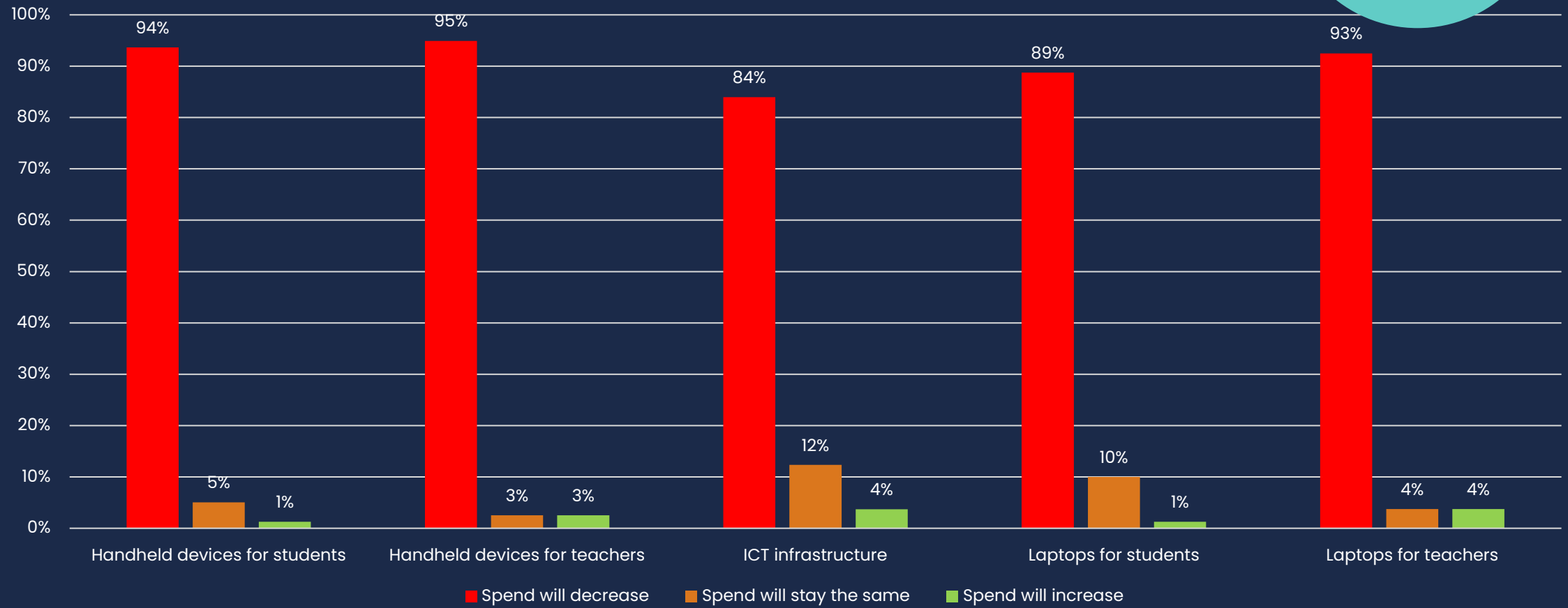
20% of secondary schools plan to increase SOME resource spending



Spending Intentions.

ICT equipment for teaching and learning : **Primary schools.**

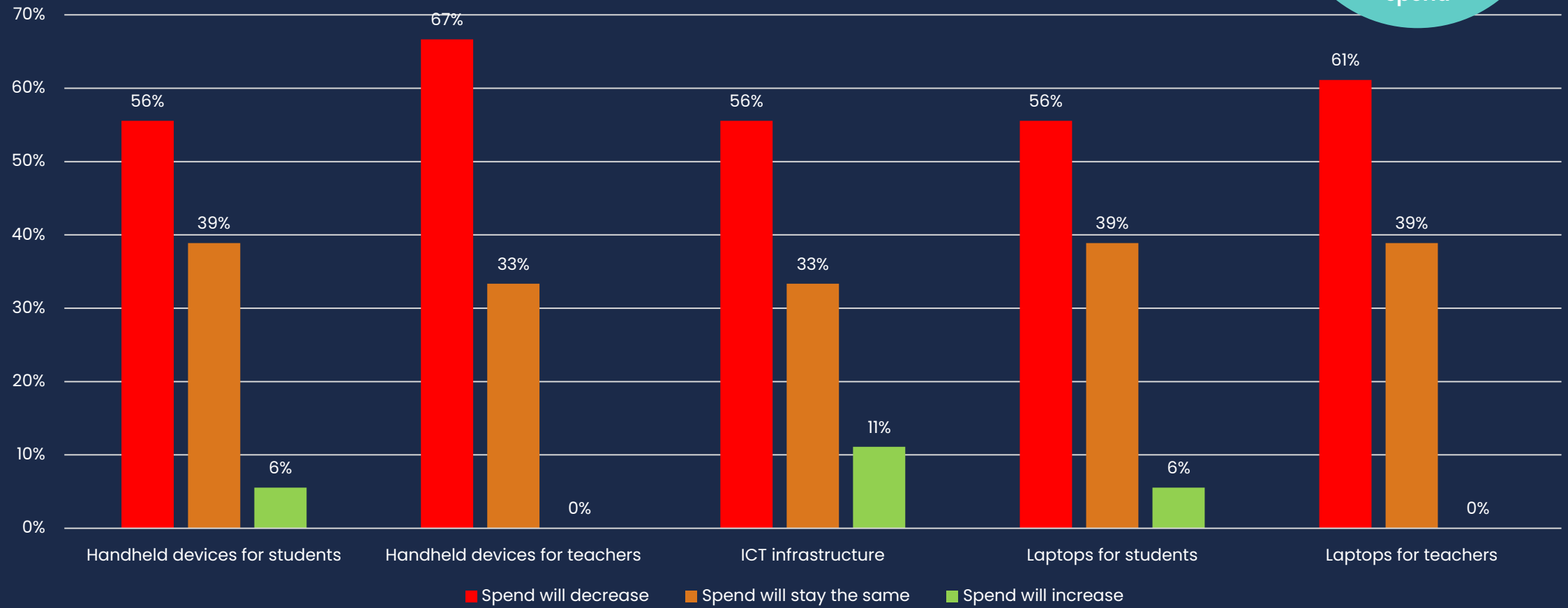
Spending intentions for ICT in primary schools is predictably dire



Spending Intentions.

ICT equipment for teaching and learning : **Secondary schools.**

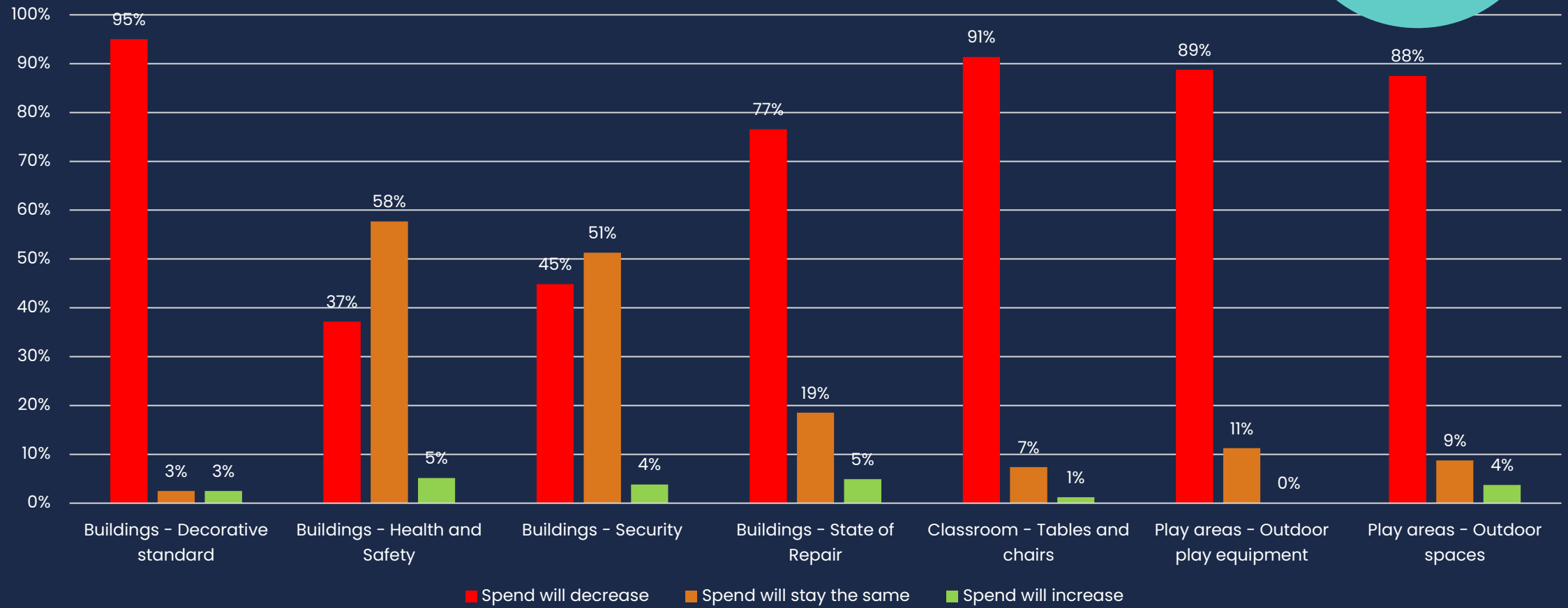
ICT spend in secondary schools is more stable than primary, however less than 50% are increasing spend



Spending Intentions.

Buildings fixtures & fittings : **Primary schools.**

Almost no
primary
schools are
maintaining
their spend
on school
buildings

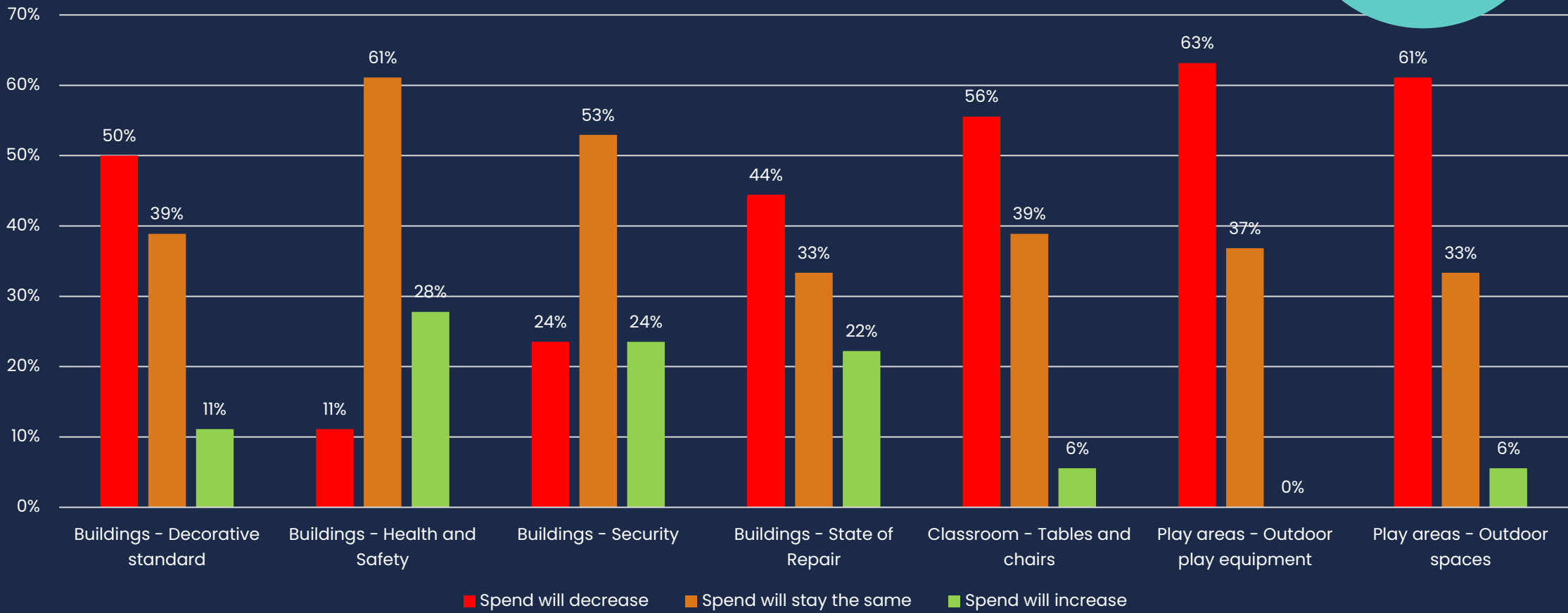


For more detailed insights into the physical estate in UK schools see 'BESA's State of the Estate' research report

Spending Intentions.

Buildings fixtures & fittings : **Secondary schools.**

Demonstrating once again the sector difference, almost half of secondary schools are maintaining the buildings budget

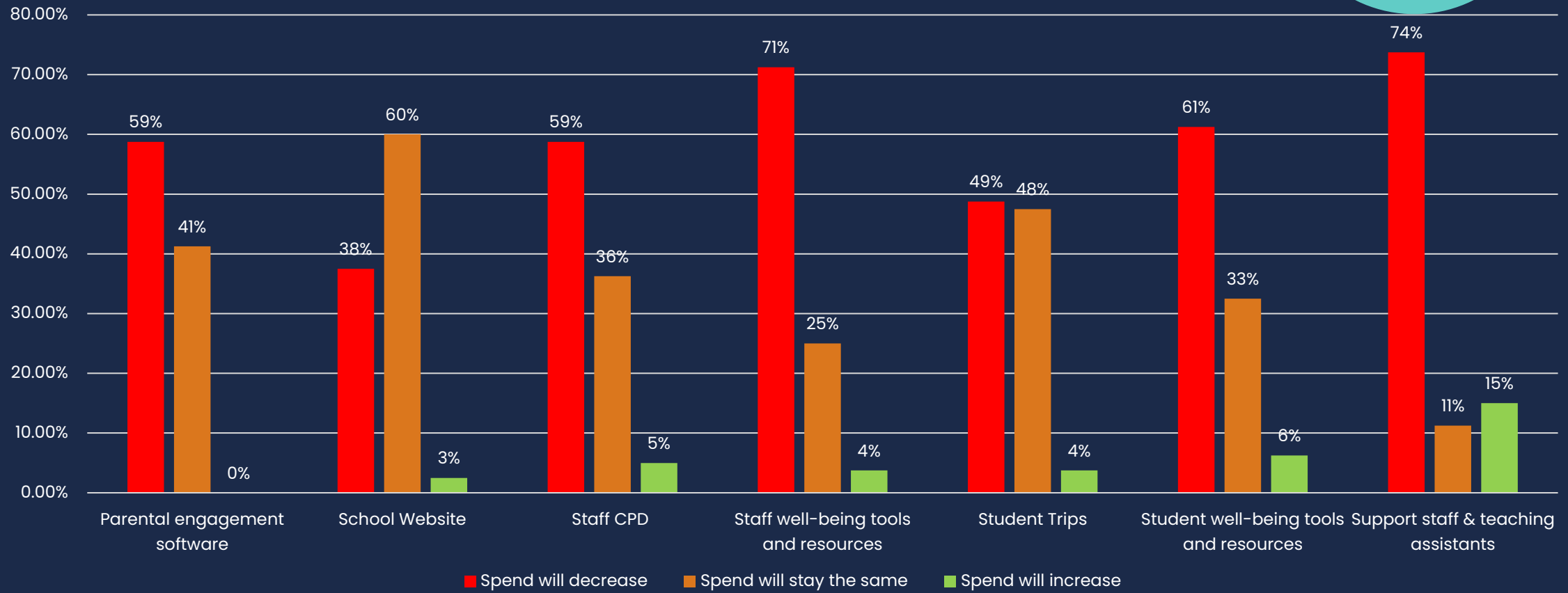


For more detailed insights into the physical estate in UK schools see 'BESA's State of the Estate' research report

Spending Intentions.

Other costs: **Primary schools.**

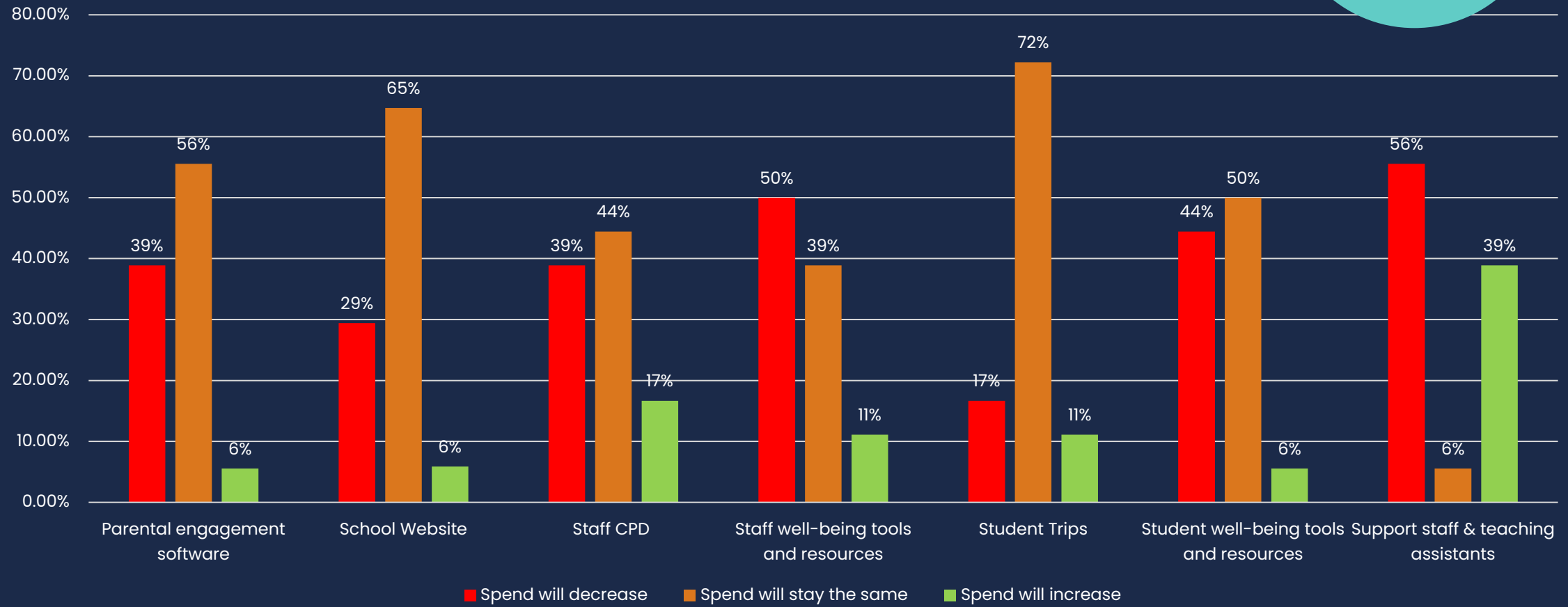
Primary schools are dramatically scaling back support staff and TA's



Spending Intentions.

Other costs : **Secondary schools.**

Well-being and support staff spend is under pressure in secondary schools

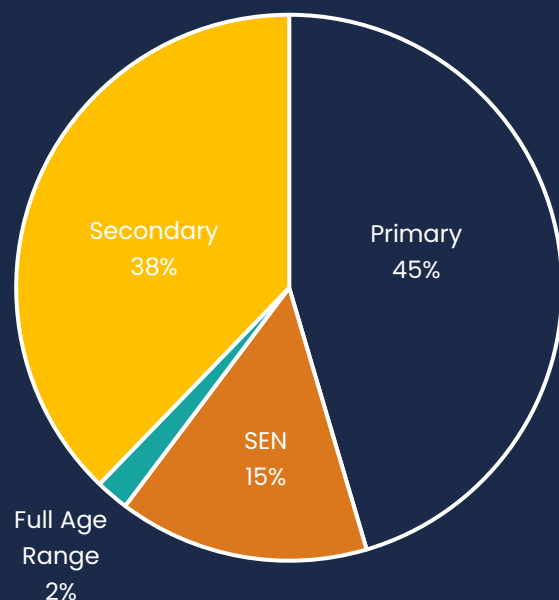


Summary of respondents.

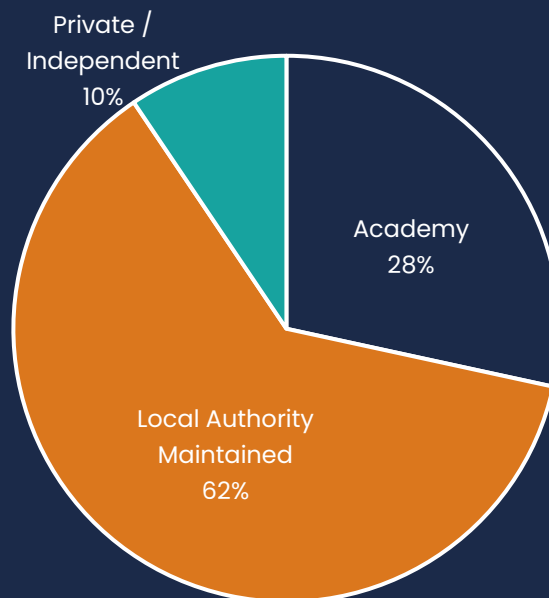
1527

educators have
contributed to
this edition of
COMPASS

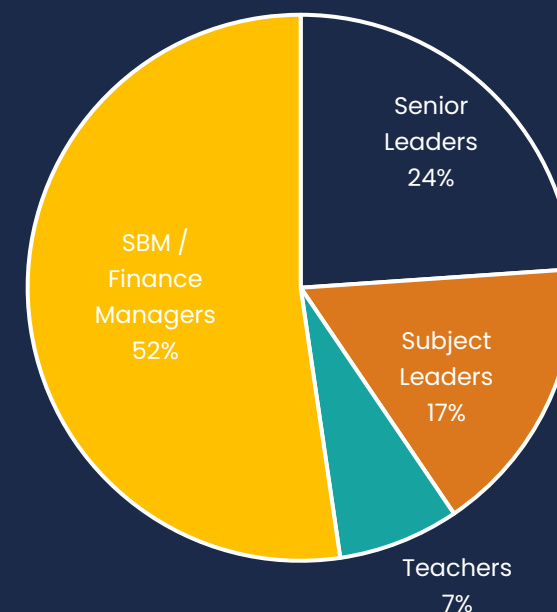
School Phase



Funding Method



Repondent Job Role





Thank you.

All of BESA's research reports can be accessed via our research archive on the website www.besa.org.uk

Get in touch

If you have any questions or comments regarding our research please contact besa@besa.org.uk

Research conducted by The Education Company on behalf of BESA

