



etbi

Education and Training
Boards Ireland
*Boird Oideachais agus
Oiliúna Éireann*

GMGY Survey Summary Report 2020



Introduction

In June 2020, a GMGY Survey was conducted as part of Phase 1 of the GMGY Implementation Plan. The survey aimed to gather baseline data on current perspectives and practices in GMGY from teachers working in Community National Schools. The information gathered through the survey, outlined below, will inform the continuum of supports available to CNSs from ETBI throughout the Implementation process as well enable a comprehensive evaluation of Phase 1 in June 2022.

Survey Respondent Information

The survey garnered 168 completed responses from 26 Community National Schools across 8 ETBs. 110 respondents were mainstream class teachers. 43 respondents were Special Education Teachers (SETs) working in both special class and general support settings. 18 principals completed the survey. 6 administrative and 12 teaching.

Interestingly, 63.7% (107) of teachers who completed the survey indicated that they had only been teaching in Community National Schools for 1-3 years. 19% (32) had been teaching in the model for 4-6 years. 12.5% (21) of respondents had been teaching in the model for 7-9 years. Only 4.8% (8) of respondents had been teaching in CNSs for 10 years or more at the time of the survey

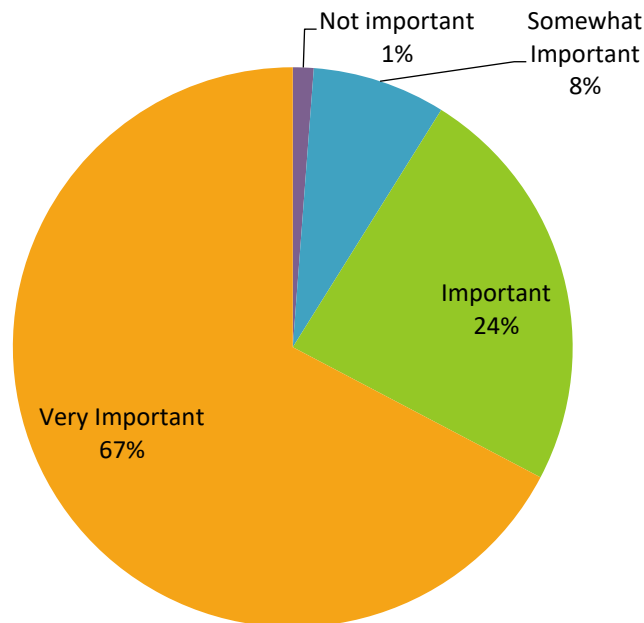
Survey Overview

The GMGY Survey covered a broad range of topics which were categorised into the following 4 sections:

- SECTION 1: GMGY and the Wider School Ethos
- SECTION 2: Teaching GMGY
- SECTION 3: Leading Out on GMGY Implementation

SECTION 1: GMGY and the Wider School Ethos

As a Patrons’ Curriculum, GMGY is intended to ‘support the characteristic spirit of Community National Schools’ (NCCA, 2018, p. 5). Subsequently, respondents were asked to indicate how important they considered the curriculum is in realising this objective. The table below outlines their responses.



Value	Percent	Count
Not important	1.2%	2
Somewhat Important	7.7%	13
Important	23.8%	40
Very Important	67.3%	113
	Totals	168

91% of respondents felt that GMGY was either “important” or “very important” to living out the ethos and of the model. That said, 7.7% of participants felt that the curriculum was only “somewhat important” and 1.2% felt that it was “not important” in supporting the ethos and core values of Community National Schools. Six major themes emerged from comments made by respondents on GMGY and school ethos, 3 positive and 3 neutral/negative.

Positive	Negative/Neutral
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GMGY underpins and informs the ethos of Community National Schools 2. GMGY provides an opportunity to make CNS ethos explicit for the school community 3. GMGY sets CNS apart from other school types and functions as a selling point for the model 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GMGY is only one of many elements supporting CNS ethos 2. Schools lack support, guidance and training on the Patrons’ Curriculum 3. Schools have experienced inconsistency and lack of sectoral clarity regarding the patrons’ curriculum

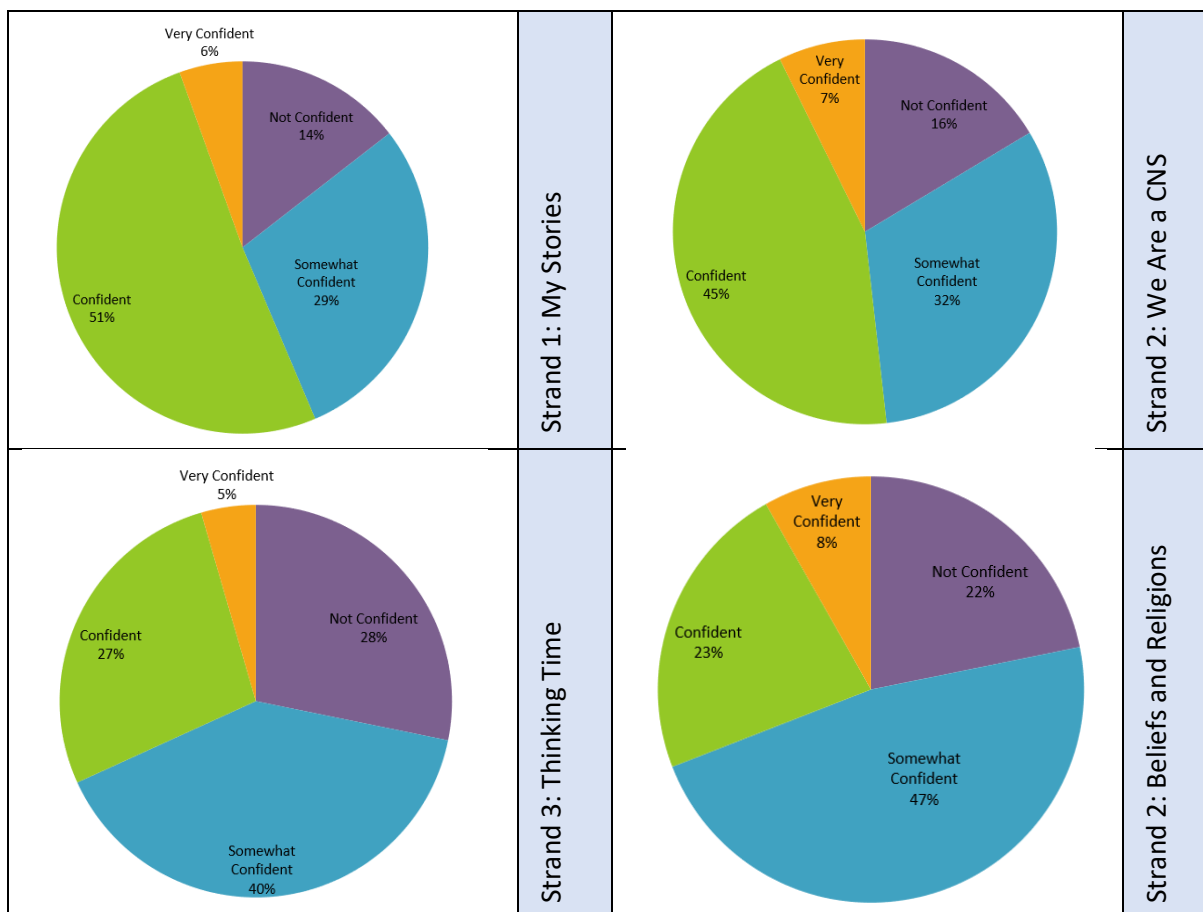
SECTION 2: Teaching Goodness Me, Goodness You

One of the primary objectives of the GMGY Survey was to gather data on participants' perspectives, confidence and practices teaching the Patrons' Curriculum.

Survey results revealed that teachers' level of confidence implementing GMGY in mainstream and special education settings is low with 71.6% of respondents indicating that they are only "somewhat confident" or "not confident" at all teaching the patrons' curriculum. Only 25.9% (42) of teachers indicated that they were "confident" teaching the GMGY. Additionally, a mere 2.5% (4) of all respondents stated that they are "very confident" in this area.

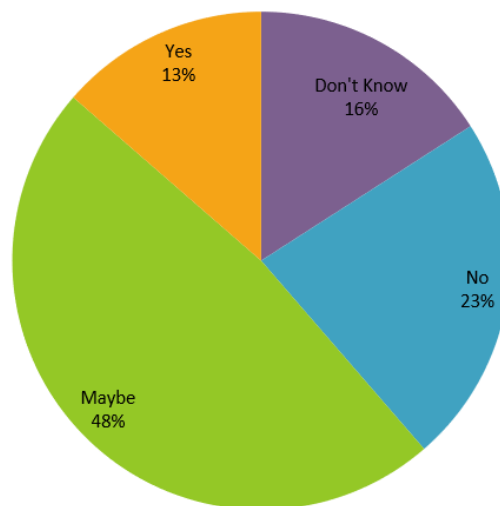
Teaching the Strands of GMGY in Mainstream Settings

There are four strands in the GMGY Curriculum; *My Stories* (Identity Education), *We Are A CNS* (Values Education), *Thinking Time* (Philosophy for/with Children) and *Beliefs and Religions* (Multi-denominational Religious Education). As the tables below indicate, mainstream class teachers are most confident teaching strand 1 *My Stories* (Identity Education). Teachers were almost equally as confident teaching strand 2 *We Are A CNS* (Values Education). Results indicate that CNS teachers' confidence in strand 3 *Thinking Time* (Philosophy for/with Children) is low and that strand 4, *Beliefs and Religions* (Multi-Denominational Religious Education), is the strand in which teachers feel they require the most support and input. Greater insight into the teachers' perspectives on the supports and barriers to teaching GMGY are outlined below.



Teaching GMGY in Special Classes/Integrating GMGY in other SET settings

43 special education teachers engaged with the GMGY survey. These teachers were surveyed on their confidence teaching GMGY in special classes as well as their confidence integrating the patrons' curriculum into their lessons during in-class support, small group work and one-on-one support. As the table below indicates, when asked if GMGY lends itself to integration in special education settings, a significant percentage of teachers were open to such opportunity. That said, 22.7% (10) SETs disagreed with the statement. An additional 15.9% were unsure as to whether this was possible.



Do you think GMGY! lends itself well to integration with Special Education Teaching?

SETs confidence teaching or integrating the strands of GMGY into their lessons is low. When asked, only a small percentage declared their “confidence” or “very high confidence” doing so; strand 1 *My Stories* (20.5%), strand 2 *We Are A CNS* (13.7%), strand 3 *Thinking Time* (18.1%) and strand 4 *Beliefs and Religions* (11.4%).

Supports and barriers to teaching GMGY

The GMGY survey gathered data on perceived supports and barriers in relation to GMGY implementation. Teachers' perspectives were organised into the following 5 categories:

1. Initial Teacher Education and Multi-denominational Education
2. Professional Development within the CNS Model
3. GMGY Website Resources
4. GMGY Resources in School
5. Other Supports and Barriers

Initial Teacher Education

When asked to indicate how significantly their initial teacher education prepared them to teach in a CNS or other similar setting, **76% (123) of teachers felt that they did not receive sufficient input on Multi-Denominational Education as part of their initial teacher education.** This figure highlights how heavily teachers in Community National Schools rely on Professional Development to teach in the Multi-Denominational sector. Teachers' perspectives on such opportunities, particularly training provided internally by the ETB sector, were a large focus of the survey.

Professional Development within the CNS Model

Respondents were asked to indicate whether they felt they had received sufficient professional development on *Goodness Me, Goodness You!* since joining the model. The majority, 59.8%, indicated that they had received adequate Professional Development to teach the patrons' curriculum. That said, a significant proportion of respondents, 41.1%, felt this was not the case.

When asked how many professional development sessions they had engaged in since GMGY was launched in 2018, 55.4% stated that had received between 1-2 training sessions on GMGY at the time of the survey, with 18.5% (31) receiving no training whatsoever. Only 26.2% (44) teachers engaged 3 or more professional development sessions during this time.

When asked if they had engaged in external professional development that would support teaching and learning in GMGY, only 22.6% (38) had. These external trainings included online trainings, summer courses, face-to-face sessions/workshops, visiting other Community National Schools, conferences, post-graduate certificates and Masters Programmes in areas such as inclusion, multiculturalism, intercultural education, LGBTQ+ inclusion, Philosophy for Children, Wellbeing, Conflict Resolution and Mindfulness.

Commenting on the need for increased professional development on GMGY, teachers stated that training in the patrons' curriculum would 'reassure teachers and introduce them to new ways of approaching topics/lessons' (R93), particularly given that the curriculum has evolved significantly over the last number of years. Teachers indicated that such professional development should include practical examples, where possible, to enable teachers to 'translate theory into practice' (R43).

Throughout the survey, teachers suggested professional development they would like to receive as part of GMGY implementation such as a summer course, classroom-based videos for the GMGY website, mechanisms for sharing resources across schools and induction for new teachers. Teachers requested professional development on each of the four strands of GMGY, with the Beliefs and Religions and Thinking Time emerging as areas requiring most input. In addition to the curriculum areas, teachers mentioned other areas requiring support including; planning, controversy in the classroom, information about beliefs and religions, GMGY in multi-grade settings, GMGY in special education settings, integrating GMGY across the curriculum, LGBTQ+ inclusion, anti-racism and ETB core values.

GMGY Website Resources

When asked to indicate whether or not the GMGY section of www.cns.ie contains sufficient materials for all strands of GMGY, 62.1% of respondents either "agreed" or "strongly agreed". 30.9% of respondents either "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" with same.

Commenting on support materials available on the website, teachers pointed to the difficulty they have experienced navigating the GMGY section of the CNS website. They also felt that the website was lacking in resources. One teacher explained the challenges posed to schools as a result of insufficient materials stating 'We certainly have some resources (e.g. lesson samples on the website, pooling of staff lesson plans for thinking time), but these are not plentiful and do offer much choice, unlike other subject areas. I feel that a lot of preparation is needed every time I teach GMGY, and I have to spend considerable time searching for my own resources, rather than having a sufficient bank to select from' (R71). Strand 1 "My Stories" and strand 2 "We Are A CNS" were particularly lacking in support materials, according to teachers. Insufficient resources as gaeilge was also an issue for one school. Respondents requested that additional sample lessons be added to the CNS website, along with posters and guidance for teachers on areas such as SET.

GMGY Resources in School

When asked whether they had sufficient resources within the school to teach GMGY, 56.2% of respondents “agreed”. 43% indicated otherwise. Sourcing resources such as books and artefacts as well as funding were raised as issues for a number of schools, particularly newly established and reconfigured Community National Schools. One respondent suggested the creation of “starter packs” for newly established and reconfigured schools as a support measure. Committed GMGY coordinators were mentioned as vital school-based resources for the patrons’ curriculum, as well as the GMGY Coordinators’ SharePoint.

Other Supports and Barriers to teaching GMGY

In addition to the above four areas, teachers were provided with the opportunity to indicate any other supports and barriers to teaching GMGY. The following is a summary of their responses.



1. **Time and Curriculum Overload:** CNS teachers expressed their challenges with curriculum overload and difficulties finding time to plan and teach the patrons’ curriculum as a result. Teachers also felt overwhelmed by the amount of curricular change they were experiencing at national and patron level.
2. **Confidence and Investment:** Teachers felt that lack of engagement to date in GMGY was due to a lack of confidence and investment at school level in the patrons’ curriculum. Teachers were fearful to engage with areas of GMGY that may give rise to controversy in the classroom and subsequently avoided teaching those areas.
3. **Support/Direction/Leadership:** A few respondents experienced a lack of support and direction from the patron as well as senior management within their schools. Additionally, teachers highlighted a lack of oversight on curriculum implementation.
4. **Parents/Guardians:** A few respondents felt the parent body lack confidence in the patrons’ programme or, in a very small number of cases, disagreed with the content of the curriculum altogether.
5. **Challenges for teachers in SET settings:** Some special education teachers expressed an openness to teach the patrons’ curriculum in special classes as well as integrate in general support settings, but also described their reluctance and confusion on the best approaches to teaching and learning in this space. Other teachers pointed to the practical challenges of drawing on GMGY in special class settings given the more abstract nature of some strands.

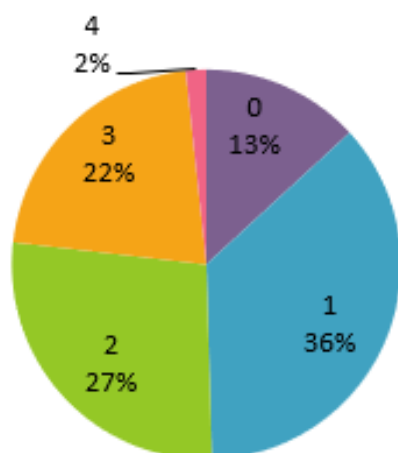
Planning for GMGY

As GMGY is a patrons’ curriculum, schools and teachers are required to plan lessons as opposed to following a set programme. The GMGY survey gathered data on mainstream, SET and teaching principals’ frequency of planning for this curricular area. The table below indicates **65.9% of teachers engage in some form of short-term planning, 54.8% engage in long term planning and 66.6% of teachers plan collaboratively with others for the patrons’ curriculum.** These percentages indicate that some positive approaches to planning have been established in Community National Schools, but also that this practice is not common across all schools.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	n/a (SET not in special class)
	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %	Row %
I engage in short term planning for GMGY!	5.3%	23.0%	41.4%	13.2%	17.1%
I engage in long term planning for GMGY!	5.9%	30.9%	31.6%	13.8%	17.8%
I plan collaboratively with others to support teaching and learning in GMGY!	3.9%	23.7%	40.1%	15.8%	16.4%

Time Teaching the Curriculum

As part of the GMGY survey, mainstream class teachers and special education teachers working in special class settings, totalling 121 teachers, were asked to indicate on average how many GMGY lessons they teach per week. The recommendation by the NCCA for the patrons’ curriculum is 2.5 hours, but 1.5 hours along with integration across other areas is expected. **As the table below indicates, 76.9% were teaching less than the recommended time allocation.** Only 23.2% of teachers were meeting or exceeding patron recommendations regarding GMGY time allocation.



Value	Percent	Count
0	13.2%	16
1	36.4%	44
2	27.3%	33
3	21.5%	26
4	1.7%	2
Totals		121

Interestingly, a higher number of teachers indicated that they integrate GMGY into other curricular areas more frequently than they do teach stand-alone GMGY lessons.

SECTION 3: Leading GMGY Implementation

The final section of the GMGY survey gathered data from principals and GMGY coordinators on their role in leading the implementation of GMGY. The results in this section indicate that GMGY coordinators are more confident leading the implementation of the patrons' curriculum than principals. **76.5% of GMGY coordinators are either "confident" or "very confident" leading GMGY implementation, in comparison to 44.5% of principals.** The GMGY coordinators' more direct involvement in the development of the implementation plan may account for this difference. Interestingly, principals indicated that only 33.4% of Boards of Management are either "familiar" or "very familiar" with the patrons' curriculum.

Principals were asked to highlight supports or barriers to their role leading implementation of the patrons' curriculum. In addition to echoing the areas already highlight by teachers above, principals also drew attention to the following:

Supports	Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the GMGY Coordinators' Network• Structure and support offered through the implementation plan• supportive staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• high levels of SEN• differentiation of GMGY in multi-grade• reduced involvement of principals in GMGY developments• high turnover of staff• overloading teachers with posts of responsibility• developing a whole school plan for GMGY

Additional Actions following Survey

Following the GMGY Survey, and over the course of Implementation, the following additional actions to support and enhance the work of schools in the patrons' curriculum will include:

- ensuring all CNS staff are fully aware of the GMGY implementation plan, taking opportunities to share this information through the *GMGY Implementation Plan Information for Teachers* booklet, during GMGY and other webinars, posters, on the www.cns.ie website and social media
- facilitating "pop-up" training using external providers to support teachers with additional support on areas of need
- establishing a reference group of teachers working in special classes to develop specific support materials and lesson samples for GMGY in special classes.
- planning for a summer course on ETB Ethos and GMGY for Summer 2022
- Restructuring the www.cns.ie website to make it more navigable for all users and increasing volume of resources available on the site
- commissioning the development of additional support materials, particularly for strands 1 and 2
- increasing communication with principals regarding developments in GMGY
- planning for oversight of implementation of GMGY curriculum
- developing an additional implementation webinar on differentiating GMGY for SET and multigrade settings for terms 2 and 3

Other supports requested by CNS teachers throughout the survey have already been addressed in the context of the GMGY Implementation Plan and/or other work currently underway through the CNS & ETB Patronage Directorate.

