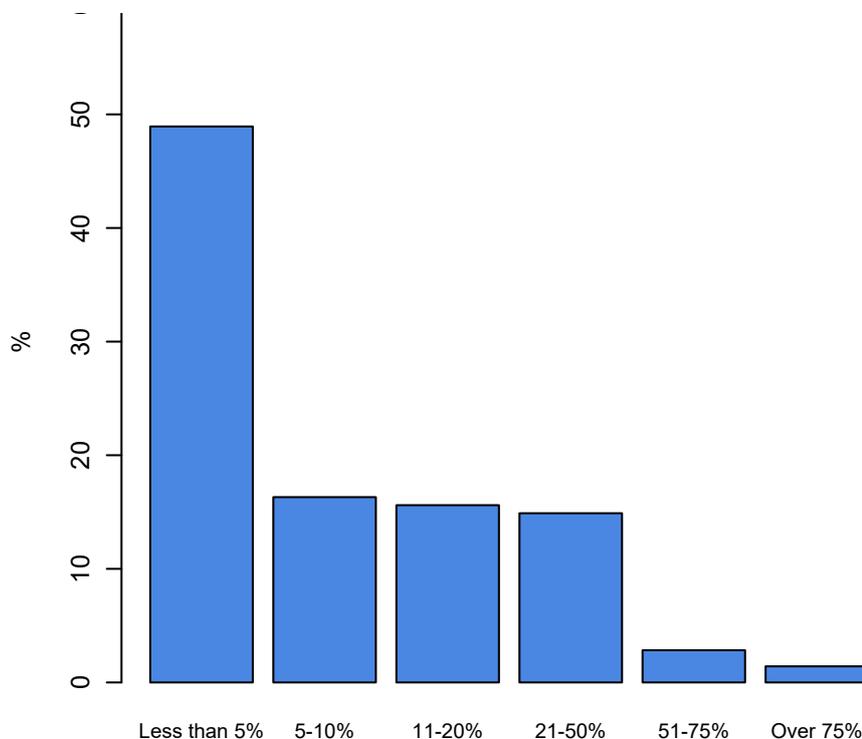

6. Providing for English language learners

Students who have English as a second or additional language have been a growing population in Aotearoa New Zealand schools. In 2019 there were around 49,000 primary and secondary students whose schools received some additional funding to provide them with ESOL (English for speakers of other languages), if their English proficiency was below the benchmark for their level.²¹ Online resources and guidance for teachers are also provided.²² We included questions about provision for English language learners in 2019 for the first time in the NZCER national surveys.

English language learners are unevenly distributed among schools. There is variation in the proportion of English language learners in a school. We asked principals approximately what proportion of students in their school had English as a second or additional language. These learners comprised less than 5% of the school roll for nearly half (48%) of the schools, and over half the school roll for 4% (see Figure 25).

FIGURE 25 English language learners as a proportion of primary school rolls (Principals $n = 145$)



21 <https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/publications/budget-2019/increased-resources-for-esol-in-schools/>

22 <http://esolonline.tki.org.nz/>

ESOL funding can be used to provide specialist ESOL support. Table 5 shows that half the principals reported having no specialist support for English language learners, in line with the almost half of schools with less than 5% of their roll who were English language learners. The support primary schools were most likely to have was ESOL-trained teaching assistants (30% had these).

TABLE 5 **Specialist ESOL support in primary schools**

	Principals (n = 145) %
No specialist ESOL support	50
ESOL-trained teaching assistants	30
Dedicated ESOL teacher	17
Bilingual teacher aides	14
Other support (including untrained teacher aides)	13

Thirty-nine percent of the principals thought they had access to sufficient support to help their English language learners, 21% were unsure, and 39% thought they did not.

Many teachers are confident about catering for English language learners but a third say they do not have access to sufficient support for them

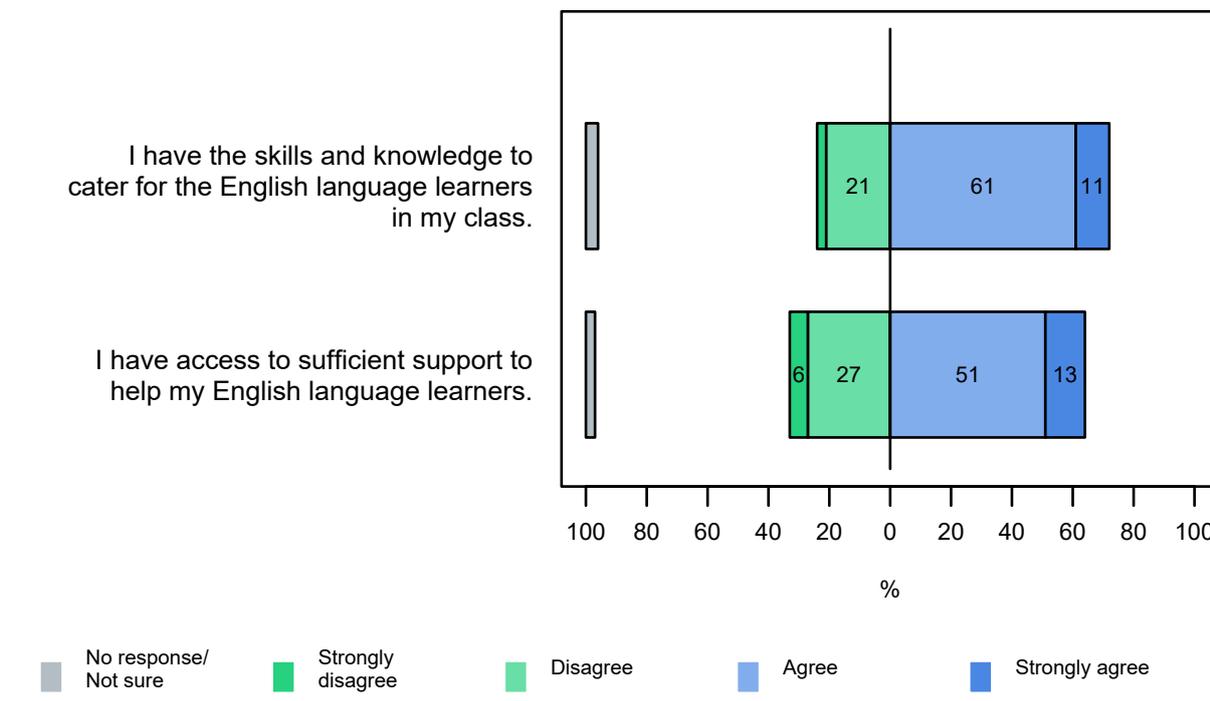
Most teachers who responded to the survey had students whose English was a second or additional language, and who needed additional support with English: 23% had many such students, and 47% had some. Twenty-nine percent had none of these students.

Decile 1 and 2 school teachers were more likely than teachers in decile 3–10 schools to report having ‘many’ students whose English was a second or additional language—38%.

The number of different first languages among English language learners reported by their teachers ranged from one to 30, with a median number of three different languages other than English in a teacher’s class.

Nearly three-quarters of the teachers with these students thought they had the skills and knowledge to cater for the English language learners in their class, but somewhat fewer thought they had access to sufficient support to help their English language learners, as shown in Figure 26. Few strongly agreed they had skills and knowledge or access to sufficient support.

FIGURE 26 Supporting English language learners in the classroom (Teachers, n = 436)



Parents and whānau responding were positive about the support their child had to learn English

Our survey was in English only, which means that it cannot provide a full picture of the views of parents and whānau whose child is an English language learner. Twenty-four percent of the parents and whānau taking part said their families spoke a language other than English at home, but only 12% of these (11 of 96) said their child needed support at school to learn English. All but one of these thought their child was getting the support they needed to do so.

Summary

Many teachers and schools have some English language learners, and a few schools have many. More than half have three or more students who are English language learners (in a class of 25, that means at least 10%).

Thirty-nine percent of principals did not think they had the access to sufficient support for these students. Most specialist support was in the form of teacher aides.

Many teachers show confidence that they have knowledge and skills to cater for English language learners in their class, though few strongly agreed that they did. A third did not think they had sufficient support for their English language students.