



December 2021

Active Lives Children and Young People Survey

Academic Year 2020-21 (Year 4) Technical Report

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Introduction

1 Introduction

1.1 Survey Background

Sport England is an increasingly insight led organisation that is tasked with the behavioural challenge of getting more people active. To create the right conditions to increase participation, to decide who they invest in, and understand how sport can deliver wider objectives, they need both a broad and deep understanding of sports participation.

Through their commitment to the measurement of sports participation over the past two decades they have largely unparalleled participation data both internationally and amongst other sporting and cultural agencies in the UK. Through the Active Lives Survey, they have sought to strengthen this commitment whilst ensuring their data reflects the best available methods of data collection and aligns with their 2021-31 strategy '*Uniting the Movement*'. They initially developed the Active Lives Survey for adults which started in November 2015. For that survey they piloted new methods, consulted widely with the sector and sought advice from independent experts such as the Office for National Statistics and the Institute for Social and Economic Research in the development process.

The Sport England 2016-21 strategy '*Towards an Active Nation*' included an extension of Sport England's responsibilities to include children from age 5 and over, with a particular focus on building a positive attitude to sport and activity which has benefits in childhood as well as laying the foundations for being active through their adult lives. During Autumn 2016 they started the development of a new Active Lives survey for children and young people to run parallel to the adult survey, using a methodology and approach which is appropriate for those aged 5 to 16 years old. Sport England's new 2021-31 strategy '*Uniting the Movement*' also focuses on ensuring every child and young person can experience the enjoyment and benefits that being active can bring. The Active Lives Children and Young People Survey has been running for four years:

- Survey year 1: 2017-18 academic year
- Survey year 2: 2018-19 academic year
- Survey year 3: 2019-20 academic year
- Survey year 4: 2020-21 academic year.

The subject of this report is the Year 4 (20-21) survey. Throughout this report, academic years are referred to as the survey years 1-4 with the academic year in brackets, for example, academic year 2020-21 is referred to as Year 4 (20-21).

1.2 Summary of the survey

In this section, we provide a brief overview of the key points in relation to the questionnaire, sample design, fieldwork and data. Full details are provided in the main body of this report.

The fourth year of the Active Lives Children and Young People survey was conducted by Ipsos on behalf of Sport England, who commissioned the survey to inform both their own strategy and the strategies of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the Department for Education (DfE) and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). The online survey is school based with pupils selected to take part through their schools.

Academic year 2020-21 (Year 4) was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In the autumn term 2020, school sites were open to all pupils, but with pupils occasionally having to isolate for periods of time. For the majority of the spring term 2021, school sites were closed to most pupils due to the national lockdown from January to March. School sites reopened for pupils in March 2021, following government guidelines with adaptations such as staggered drop off and pick up times, bubbles of pupils and limited use of shared IT equipment. School sites remained open in the summer term 2021 with these adaptations continuing throughout.

In the summer term 2020 (during Year 3), when school sites were first closed to most pupils, the Active Lives Children and Young People survey was adapted to be completed from home. The adaptations made were continued during academic year 2020-21 (Year 4) to allow flexible completion of the survey at school or at home. The survey continued because it was important for Sport England to understand children and young people's participation in sport and physical activity and their attitudes and wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.2.1 Questionnaire

The survey employs three different online questionnaires: one for pupils in school years 1-2, one for pupils in school years 3-11 and parents of pupils in school years 1-2, and one for teachers. To ensure the content and language of questions is relevant, within the school year 3-11 and parent questionnaire, individual questions are routed based on whether the respondent is a parent, a pupil in school year 3-4 or 5-6 or a pupil in school year 7-11.

The questionnaire asked each pupil about the sports and activities they had taken part in over the previous week as well as some questions about swimming, riding a bike, volunteering, attitudes towards sport and physical activity, and wellbeing. The questionnaire also includes classification questions such as gender and disability or long-term health conditions.

Teachers were asked about the sports facilities and the PE offer within their school as well as about the PE and sport premium funding, supporting the transition of pupils between primary and secondary school, how the pupils travel to school and how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected their school. Teachers were also asked about food education, school food standards, participation in PE and active travel to school in order to provide schools with a Healthy Schools Rating¹.

The parent questionnaire asked questions about the activities that their children had done to supplement the answers that their child in school year 1-2 gave with more detailed information.

For comparability, the Year 4 (20-21) questionnaire was kept broadly the same as the Year 3 (19-20) version although there were some changes, described in Section 7.1.2. Amendments had been made to the questionnaire in the summer term of 2020 (during Year 3), but further amendments were made for Year 4 (20-21) to make further improvements for smartphone completion and because of the implications of the ongoing pandemic on activities schools could offer.

Tables in the Code Book and User Guide show which year groups were asked each question.

¹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/814914/Healthy_schools_rating_scheme.pdf

1.2.2 Sampling

The sampling was designed to achieve fixed numbers of returns from children within each local authority in order to permit local level analysis. For the majority of local authorities, this target was 300 returns. To achieve the required sample, the sampling was conducted in three stages.

First, a sample of 5,876 schools in England was selected from the January 2019 school census². This sample consisted of up to ten state primary schools in each local authority, up to ten state secondary schools in each local authority and 370 independent schools across the whole country. Each selected school was randomly allocated to one of the three terms in the school year with a larger number of schools in the Autumn and Spring terms and fewer in the Summer term³. Contact and other details for each school were then matched on from the current Get Information about Schools (GIAS) at the time of sampling.

Second, a sample of year groups was selected within each selected school. This selection was based on the actual available year groups in each school according to the school census in 2019, not on its classification as a primary, secondary or their type of school. Within each selected school, three year groups were selected. The only exceptions to this were in infant schools or other schools with fewer than three year groups.

Finally, a Kish grid (provided by Ipsos) was used to randomly select one mixed-ability class to be surveyed within each selected year group.

1.2.3 Fieldwork

Fieldwork was conducted from September 2020 to July 2021, in three phases, aligning with the Autumn, Spring and Summer school terms. Schools were invited to participate prior to the start of the term they were allocated to and had until the end of the term for parent, pupil and teacher completions to be submitted.

Active Partnerships (APs)⁴ played a crucial role in recruiting schools to take part in the survey and supporting them through the survey process. Each term, APs were responsible for providing selected schools with survey information packs (developed by Ipsos and Sport England), supporting participating schools through the process of selecting appropriate classes, and providing participating schools with school-specific survey URLs in advance of fieldwork. APs also monitored progress throughout each term and provided regular updates to Sport England.

Pupils in selected classes completed the online survey using computers, smartphones, or tablets either at school or at home. This was usually done during school time, but secondary schools had the option to set it as a homework task. Teachers and parents took part at school or on their own computers, smartphones, or tablets at home. Information about the survey was provided to schools, class teachers, pupils and parents in advance of taking part in the survey.

²https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/812539/Schools_Pupils_and_their_Characteristics_2019_Main_Text.pdf. This was published in June 2019 and was the latest census available at the time of sampling for 2020-21.

³ The sample was split unevenly between the terms with fewer in the Summer term because this is an exam term when it is difficult for some year groups with important external exams to take part in surveys. There were 2,052 schools in the Autumn term, 2,067 in the Spring term and 1,757 in the Summer term.

⁴ Active Partnerships were formerly referred to as County Sports Partnerships (CSP).

To incentivise schools and thank them for their participation Sport England offered participating schools credits which can be spent on a range of sporting and activity-based equipment, through ESPO (Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation).

Individual school-based feedback also incentivises schools to take part. Schools were eligible for a school-level report if at least 25 valid responses for the activity questions were received (for a full report) or 25 valid responses on attitudes or wellbeing only (for an infant only report).

1.2.4 Weighting

The aim of the weighting is to ensure that the analysis carried out using the achieved sample is representative of children in England from school year 1 to school year 11. The weighting takes account of a number of factors that could lead to bias in the results. The achieved sample was weighted to population level data about children in the relevant age groups. In addition, school-based weighting was carried out to take account of potential socio-demographic differences in the responding sample (compared with the sample frame which is the list of schools from which the sample was selected).

1.3 Signposting for the technical report

This report is organised broadly in the order in which survey processes were completed: questionnaire development, sampling, fieldwork, response, weighting, data editing and management.

1.4 Terminology used in the report

Those who respond to the survey are referred to as respondents. The reason for not using the conventional term participants is that, in the context of sports participation, participant has a different meaning.

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Questionnaire development and piloting

2 Questionnaire development and piloting

2.1 Overview

An extensive programme of development work was carried out between November 2016 and July 2017 in advance of Year 1 (17-18) of the survey to inform the feasibility and successful delivery of a school-based survey of 5-15 year olds in England. Specifically, it was undertaken to ensure that the proposed questions could be easily understood and accurately completed by this age group and that the survey design was appropriate.

Individual technical reports produced for each of the development phases provide extensive information. This chapter summarises the key aspects of the development work; further detail on each of the phases can be found in the [Year 1 \(17-18\) technical report](#) available on the Sport England website.

Further development work has been carried out since the initial stage. These are described in the technical reports for each year. During summer 2020, prior to the start of the 2020-21 fieldwork, development work was carried out to include some new questions in the questionnaire and to modify some existing questions. Changes that were made to the questionnaire for Year 4 (20-21) are summarised in section 7.1.2.

2.2 Questionnaire content requirements

The Government's Sporting Future Strategy⁵ includes some Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in relation to participation in sports and physical activity for children and young people. The Active Lives Children and Young People survey is designed to collect data to measure progress towards those indicators. The table below shows the KPIs which data have been collected to measure.

Table 2.1: KPIs built into the questionnaire design

KPI	Summary definition	Precise definition
1	Percentage of children undertaking an average of 60 minutes or more of physical activity a day across the week ⁶	Physically active with an average of 60 minutes or more per day across the week of moderate or vigorous intensity activity.
2	Percentage of children physically less active	Physically less active with less than an average of 30 minutes per day across the week of moderate or vigorous intensity.
3	Percentage of children taking part in sport and physical activity at least twice in the last 28 days ⁷	Participate in at least two sessions of physical activity at any intensity in the last 28 days.
5	Percentage of children achieving physical literacy standards (4 IPLA ⁸ components/measures)	Percentage of children reporting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • motivation (enjoyment) • confidence • perceived competence (whether find it easy)

⁵ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/486622/Sporting_Future_ACCESSIBLE.pdf

⁶ Note that in Year 1 (17-18) published results, the KPI 1 was slightly different and distinguished between undertaking 60 minutes every day of the week and taking part in an average of 60 minutes a day but not every day. This reflects the change to the Chief Medical Officer's (CMO's) guidelines for physical activity for children and young people. In the Year 4 (20-21) published report, data presented for all previous years also use the new definition of KPI 1.

⁷ This KPI was measured in Year 4 (20-21) of the survey but was not published in the data tables.

⁸ International Physical Literacy Association

KPI	Summary definition	Precise definition
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> knowledge and understanding (understand why good for me and how to get involved and improve skills)
6	Percentage of children achieving swimming proficiency (1st part on 25m 2nd part on confidence and capability)	Percentage of children who can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Swim 25m Tread water Self-rescue (from a lake)
8	Percentage of children with a positive attitude towards sport and being active	Percentage of children reporting positive motivation (enjoyment)
9	Number of children volunteering in sport at least twice in the last year	Percentage volunteering in activities to support the participation of others in sport and activity (excluding raising funds)
10	Demographics of child volunteers in sport to become more representative of society as a whole	Profile of pupils volunteering in activities to support the participation of others in sport and activity (excluding raising funds) by demographics such as gender, ethnicity, disability
11	Number of children who have attended a live sporting event more than once in the past year	Attended a live sporting event at least twice in the past year to include watching professional and amateur sport

The survey is carried out to inform the strategies of other government departments as well as Sport England's wider work and so there are some other key measures built into the design shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Other key measures built into the questionnaire design

Origin	Summary definition	Precise definition
DHSC⁹ Childhood Obesity Plan commitment	Number of children taking part in 30 minutes of physical activity inside school and 30 minutes of physical activity outside of school.	Physically active with 30 minutes or more per day of moderate or vigorous intensity at school and outside school.
DHSC/CMO¹⁰	Number of children taking part in vigorous activity for 10 mins, 3 times a week	Participate in vigorous activity at least 3 times per week.
DEFRA¹¹	Where children take part in sport i.e. indoors vs outdoors	Physically active with 30 minutes or more per day of moderate or vigorous intensity indoors/outdoors. Information on location of specific activities.
School Sport and Activity Action Plan (DfE, DCMS¹², DHSC)	Number of children taking part in 60 minutes or more of physical activity every day of the week.	Physically active every day of the week for 60 minutes or more.

⁹ DHSC: Department for Health and Social Care. Note that 'at school' and 'outside school' were changed to refer to 'during normal school hours' and 'outside school hours'.

¹⁰ CMO: Chief Medical Officer Guideline. This KPI was measured in Year 4 (20-21) of the survey but not published, as by the time of publication this was no longer a core element of the CMO guidelines for physical activity for children and young people.

¹¹ DEFRA: Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. This KPI was measured In Year 4 (20-21) of the survey but was not published in the data tables.

¹² DfE; Department for Education, DCMS: Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. This KPI was measured In Year 4 (20-21) of the survey but was not published in the data tables.

In addition, Sport England has a responsibility to collect data on participation in specific sports and disciplines, not just overall participation in activity.

To produce data for these measures, the questionnaire needed to ask questions to capture information on:

- which activities pupils take part in,
- when they take part,
- where they take part (during or outside normal school hours¹³, indoors or outdoors),
- how long they take part for, and
- the intensity of the activity.

Key demographic information was needed, such as school year group, age, sex, ethnicity, disability and socio-economic status.

The Sporting Future Strategy outlined five key outcomes. The Active Lives Children and Young People Survey is designed to measure four of these plus loneliness, which are shown in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Outcomes built into the questionnaire design

Outcome	Summary Definition	Precise Definition
1	Physical wellbeing	a. Percentage of children meeting CMO ¹⁴ physical activity guidelines b. Percentage of children doing less than an average of 30 minutes per day across the week
2	Mental Wellbeing	Percentage of children reporting positive subjective wellbeing (Happiness, life satisfaction, how worthwhile)
3	Individual development	Percentage of children reporting positive perceived self-efficacy (willingness to try difficult things)
4	Social/community development	Percentage of children reporting positive levels of social trust (trusting peers)

2.3 Survey mode and questionnaire design

This section outlines the key design features of the survey and the reasons for this. For evidence used to decide on this approach, please see the [Year 1 \(17-18\) technical report](#) available on the Sport England website.

¹³In Years 1 and 2 and the early part of Year 3 of the survey pupils were asked about activity at school and outside school. During the COVID-19 pandemic from March 2020 pupils have been asked about activity during and outside school hours to reflect the fact that pupils have been learning at home for some of this time.

¹⁴ CMO: Chief Medical Officer. The guidelines have changed since the survey started and now relate to average levels of activity across the week (60 minutes per day on average) rather than suggesting 60 minutes every day. The target of 10 minutes of vigorous activity on three days a week is no longer part of the guidelines.

1. **The survey is school based** with children completing the questionnaire during school hours, or set as school homework¹⁵. Whilst completion took place at home or at school throughout Year 4 (20-21), the survey is still school based as respondents were recruited through their school. This is known from other surveys to be an effective method. It is more cost-effective, and it is possible to generate a larger sample than approaching children through following up from households taking part in the Active Lives Adult Survey.
2. **The survey is online** to allow robust and cost-effective collection of complex activity data. There was a desire to future proof the survey rather than using an older method (pen and paper). Initial development work showed that online completion was feasible as schools have access to computers or tablets for pupil use and children were positive about an online survey. During the summer term 2020, the survey was adapted to ensure that completion was also possible on a smartphone, and this was continued throughout Year 4 (20-21).
3. **The age range of pupils is 5-15/16 years to align with Sport England's remit.** The design of questionnaire needed to reflect this age range so that the questionnaire was appropriate for each age group. The development work guided this and resulted in the following questionnaires:
 - Standalone simple questionnaire for school year 1-2 (age 5-7 years) – collecting some activity data but mainly attitudes and wellbeing.
 - Questionnaire for school year 3-11 (age 7-15/16) with variations by year group within it. Use of images for school year 3-6.
 - Questionnaire for parents of school year 1-2 to gather detailed information on their activities. Followed same approach as school year 3-11 questionnaire and was part of the same questionnaire program so in practice treated as one questionnaire with the school year 3-11 pupils.
 - Teacher questionnaire – one per school to gather key data about the school such as time spent doing PE, facilities, active travel and healthy eating/school food standards to reduce burden on pupils of answering questions about facilities at school.

2.4 Background to the development of the survey

As part of the development of the survey, Ipsos were commissioned to carry out an evidence review to look at the feasibility of Sport England collecting information from children aged 5-15 through a school-based survey. This research informed decisions made about the survey such as the sampling, length and mode. Focus groups were also carried out to inform the design of the questionnaire and survey implementation.

Questionnaires were tested using cognitive interviews with children and young people, parents and teachers. Cognitive interviews involve administering survey questions and exploring how respondents understand the questions, recall the information, make judgements about their responses and then respond to the questions.

Following the development stage of the project, a pilot test of the survey was conducted in June-July 2017. The purpose of the pilot was to test the survey methods ahead of the main survey; specifically, to

¹⁵Setting the survey as homework was only an option for secondary schools, however primary schools could set the survey as homework on request. Primary schools could also set the survey as homework when school sites were closed to most pupils due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

test engagement with schools and the quality and administration of the questionnaires and levels of response.

As a result of the pilot and earlier stages the survey was implemented in the following way:

- Selection of three classes per school and selection of one class per year group
- Three main questionnaires but with variants for school year 3-4, 5-6, 7-11 and parents within the main questionnaire
- Assumptions made about time spent doing activities at school
- Questions about whether indoors or outdoors but no detailed questions on location
- An audio option was included in the school year 1-2 questionnaire but not the school year 3-11 questionnaire
- Provision of a detailed information pack to schools in advance of taking part
- Provision of online practice questionnaires which do not collect data to allow teachers to review the content in advance
- Plans for imputation of missing or assumed data to maximise use of cases with don't know answers and where questions were not asked because the answer could be assumed

Owing to the wide age range covered by the survey, different questions were asked to different year groups. This reflected:

- whether questions are relevant (e.g. volunteering is not relevant for most school year 1-4 pupils),
- whether children could be expected to understand and answer questions on that topic (e.g. younger pupils were not expected to answer questions about life satisfaction),
- the time it took younger pupils to answer the questionnaire (questions were omitted for school year 3-4 pupils to reduce questionnaire length and burden),
- whether questions can be answered by parents on behalf of their child (e.g. parents were not asked about their child's wellbeing).

The User Guide includes a table showing which groups were asked each question.

An objective measurement study was carried out by researchers at Sheffield Hallam University during 2017-18 to look at responses from the Active Lives questionnaire against objective data from a waist worn accelerometer for pupils aged 5-16. This also included pupils in school years 1 and 2, where parents completed the questionnaire with their child in the objective measurement study. The study showed that self-reported data included both over and under measurement of activity level compared with the objective measurement. This could be due to some reported activity sessions including preparation or briefing time and, therefore, whilst the self-report data has not been adjusted exactly to match the activity measured by an accelerometer, they are adjusted to reflect the known over-reporting in self-report data where appropriate.

More detail on the development of the survey and the objective measurement study can be found in the [Year 1 \(17-18\) technical report](#).

Since Year 1 (17-18), further development work has been conducted to improve the survey. Prior to Year 3 (19-20) development work was carried out to design new questions about disability which would be accessible and inclusive but which could be the same for all age groups and identify children with long-term limiting conditions, rather than the rather broader definition used in Years 1 (17-18) and 2 (18-19) of the survey. These new questions were introduced in Year 3 (19-20) and continued to be used in Year 4 (20-21). More details about this can be found in the [Year 3 \(19-20\) technical report](#).

2.5 Cognitive testing of questions for 2020-21

For Year 4 (20-21) of the survey, some new questions were added to the questionnaire and some existing questions were modified. In advance of Year 4 (20-21), development work was carried out to design these questions so that they were appropriate. Cognitive testing was carried out with 12 children and four parents, including a mix of participant characteristics such as gender and age. Usually, cognitive interviews would be carried out face-to-face in the home of the participant, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, interviews were carried out using Microsoft Teams. Different questions were tested for understanding and acceptability.

Detailed reports were prepared for Sport England and recommendations made for the final new and modified questions to be included in the survey for Year 4 (20-21). Refer to section 7.1.2 to see which questions were added or modified in Year 4 (20-21).

Furthermore, cognitive testing was carried out to investigate use of materials to encourage participation of parents of school year 1-2 pupils. Findings from these interviews led to the development of the parent postcard and poster reminders that schools can send out to parents to encourage their participation in the survey with the intention of increasing the number of parents participating in the survey.

03

Sampling

3 Sampling

3.1 Sample design

The sampling for the Active Lives Children and Young People Survey 2020-21 was designed to achieve fixed numbers of returns from children within each local authority across the year of the survey, to permit local level analysis. For the majority of the local authorities the target number was 300 returns. For the purposes of the survey, schools within the two smallest local authorities (City of London and Isles of Scilly) were merged with their neighbouring local authorities (Hackney and Cornwall respectively).

To achieve the required sample, the sampling was conducted in three stages. First, a sample of schools in England was selected. Second, a sample of year groups were selected from within each selected school. Finally, Kish grids (provided by Ipsos) were used in individual schools to randomly select a class to be surveyed from within each selected year group. A Kish grid is a method originally designed for selecting members within a household to be interviewed. It uses a pre-assigned table of random numbers to find the person to be interviewed. It was developed by statistician Leslie Kish in 1949. It is a technique widely used in survey research and in this survey was used as a method for selecting classes within year groups. Classes in each year group were put in a numbered list and the Kish grid indicated which number class should be selected. There were ten Kish grids used for the project and each sampled school was assigned one of these grids.

Selected schools also had an option to include additional year groups or classes within year groups to take part in the survey. Schools which were not sampled could also opt-in to take part. Procedures for opt-in schools and classes are outlined at the end of the sampling section. Data from opt-in classes and schools are not included in the published survey data.

3.1.1 Drawing a sample of schools

The sample of schools for the Active Lives Children and Young People Survey was selected from the January 2019 School Census published in June 2019. This provided the detailed information on the number of pupils and year groups required for sampling. The sample for Year 4 (20-21) was drawn from 2019 data because the sample was selected during the previous academic year so that APs could contact schools in advance of the fieldwork term, and this was done before the 2020 census was published.

All schools are eligible for the survey regardless of whether they took part in all or some previous years. For secondary schools this is necessary as most local authorities have so few schools which were not sampled in previous years. There is more scope for selecting a 'fresh' sample of schools for primary schools, which are more prevalent, but removing the primary schools which were selected in a previous year would result in a sample that was not a true random sample. This is because we select the sample using probability proportional to size (PPS) and so the larger primary schools are more likely to be sampled each year and so would be disproportionately removed from the sampling frame for the following year.

The Department for Education provides an official register of educational establishments across England and Wales (Get Information about Schools (GIAS)) which is kept updated continuously and this was used to match on contact information and other school level information not included in the School Census data. The schools contained within the Schools Census and GIAS provide unparalleled coverage of children aged 5-15 in England. When the survey sample was selected in Year 4 (20-21) the

mid-year population estimate from 2018-19 for children aged 5-15 in England was 7,092,599 and the 23,939 schools in the Schools Census included 6,999,740 children aged 5-15 (99% of children aged 5-15).

The starting sample frame was all schools in England (independent and maintained). From this, 2,412 schools of specific types were removed from the sample frame. The following school types were removed from the sample frame prior to selection: state funded nurseries (391), pupil referral units (352), state funded special schools (986), non-maintained special schools (58), independent special schools (382), establishments attended only by pupils aged 16-19 (49), studio schools which are mainly school year 9-11 (27), technology colleges (3), university technology colleges (50) and schools containing fewer than two school years (114)¹⁶. These schools were removed from the sample frame for a variety of reasons including the survey not being adapted for pupils in special schools and pupil referral units having a changing pupil population over the course of a term. Schools which contain only or mainly nursery, reception or school year 12-13 pupils were excluded because most or all of the pupils would not have been eligible. Special schools were excluded because, while children with special needs in mainstream school can participate with their usual support, many pupils in special schools would not be able to take part and a different approach is needed to understand their participation in sport.¹⁷

Removing these schools reduced the sample frame of schools to 21,527 which contained 6,851,807 pupils aged 5-15 (98% of the 6,999,740 children aged 5-15 in the school census in 2019). It should be noted that some 5-year-olds are educated in reception classes which were not included in our sample frame. In addition, pupils turn 16 years old while they are in school year 11. The use of school year groups 1-11 for sampling means that the sample includes pupils who had turned 16 years old by the time they took part in the survey and excludes any pupils who were 5-year-olds within reception classes.

The sample of schools selected from GIAS for the whole year consisted of:

- Up to ten **state** primary schools in each local authority
- Up to ten **state** secondary schools in each local authority
- 370 **independent** schools across the whole country

In addition, up to five state primary and five state secondary schools were selected per local authority as a reserve sample. In the sample frame there was no local authority with fewer than 10 primary schools and there were 185 local authorities with fewer than 10 state secondary schools. In these local authorities every secondary school was selected.

Selection of state primary schools: For state primary schools up to 15 schools were selected in each local authority to form the main (10) and reserve (5) samples. The probability of selection was calculated for each school. Where schools had a probability of greater than 1, they were forced into the sample. After this, 342 state primary schools had been forced into the sample. Then the remaining schools were

¹⁶ In previous survey years there had been a requirement for schools to have at least 30 pupils to be included in the sample but this no longer applied in Year 4 (20-21).

¹⁷ During Year 4 (20-21), development work was carried out to explore how the survey could be adapted for pupils in special schools. This included interviews with key informants, cognitive testing with pupils and a small pilot. The conclusion from this was that further adaptation was needed for meaningful participation from special schools which did not place too great a burden on staff in those schools. Sport England are continuing to look at options to ensure that the voices of children in special schools are heard.

selected with a probability proportional to the size of the school. The sample was stratified by local authority, urban/rural indicator and pupil count. Once up to 15 schools had been selected per local authority, five of these were randomly selected to be in the reserve sample.

Selection of state secondary schools: For secondary schools the main and reserve samples were selected separately. As there were so many local authorities with fewer than 10 state secondary schools (where all secondary schools therefore had to be selected), it was not possible to make the reserve sample probability of selection proportional to size of school.

The main sample was selected in the same way as the primary sample, with schools with a probability of selection greater than 1 forced into the sample, with 1,538 schools forced into the sample. After this the remaining schools were selected with a probability proportional to size with up to 10 main sample schools being selected per local authority (fewer where there were fewer than 10 schools in the local authority).

The reserve sample was selected from among the schools remaining in the sample frame after the main sample selection with up to five schools in each local authority randomly selected with equal probability of selection. This is different from the primary approach which would not work for secondary schools. In secondary schools the priority is getting the main sample as close to equal probability as possible.

Selection of independent schools: The sample consists of 370 independent schools, in addition to the state schools. The sample was stratified by local authority and pupil count. 23 schools were forced into the sample because they had a probability of selection of greater than 1. All other schools were selected with a probability proportional to size. It is good practice to stratify by local authority to ensure we have a good spread of schools geographically.

3.1.2 Allocation of schools to term

The main sample schools were allocated to a term using systematic random sampling. As in Year 2 (18-19) and Year 3 (19-20), the sample was designed to include 35% of the schools in the Autumn term, 35% in the Spring term and 30% in the Summer term (in Year 1 (17-18) this was 30%/40%/30%; the adjustment in Year 2 was made in order to achieve equal numbers in the Autumn and Spring terms). The main issued sample of schools was 2,052 in the Autumn term, 2,067 in the Spring term and 1,757 in the Summer term. In the Spring term, 409 reserve schools in 160 local authorities were issued, of which 13 then deferred to the Summer term. In addition, one school intended for the Spring reserve sample had already asked to take part during the Autumn term. In the Summer term, 368 reserve schools in 159 local authorities were issued.

To allow some flexibility during the pandemic, if schools requested to take part in a different term to the one they were sampled for, or if reserve schools requested to take part earlier in the academic year, this was permitted, providing it did not imbalance the sample in the local authority or Active Partnership area.

3.1.3 Selection of year groups within schools

The selection of year groups within schools was based on the actual available years in each school according to the 2019 School Census, not on its classification as a primary, secondary or other type of school. This allowed for accurate representation of schools which had unusual combinations of year groups resulting from local education policies (e.g. secondary schools starting in school year 6 or school year 8) or from schools being in a development phase and only including a few year groups so far.

It should be noted however that the Schools Census was from the academic year 2018-19 but the survey took place in 2020-21. In most schools the school years available in a school were the same from year to year. However, schools which are in the process of growing from the bottom up will have year groups in 2020-21 which did not exist in 2018-19. For the purpose of sampling, these new higher years which emerged in 2020-21 were not included in the sample frame. Only year groups which existed in 2018-19 were selected.

Within each selected school, three year groups between school year 1 and school year 11 were selected. The only exceptions to this were in infant schools, school year 10-11 only schools, or other schools where there are only two year groups where both year groups were selected. Details on how year groups were selected for each school type are given below.

Selection of state primary years: All state primary schools were randomly assigned to one of two patterns of selection; school years 1, 3 and 5 or school years 2, 4 and 6. These patterns worked well for schools with 6 primary years 1-6. Where the primary schools were infant (1-2), junior (3-6) or another combination, the years were selected at random. At the end of this process approximately equal numbers of each year group had been selected and schools were only set to select year groups which actually exist in their school based on the latest GIAS data available at the time the sample was drawn.

Selection of state secondary years: All state secondary schools were randomly assigned to one of ten patterns of selection. Where the pattern assigned did not fit with the years available in the school, the school years were sampled at random. In a very small number of schools, which had both primary and secondary year groups, only secondary year groups were selected. For all through schools which already cover school year 1-11, the random selection of three year groups was done across all the years in the school. At the end, approximately equal numbers of each year group had been selected.

Selection of independent school years: In independent schools three year groups in each school were selected at random across all the years covered by the school.

3.1.4 Selection of classes within years

For any given school, only one class in each year group was included in the sample. Having been informed of which year groups had been selected, a Kish grid was used to select one class within each selected year. Either the Active Partnership or the school themselves carried out the selection of the class. The same 10 Kish grids were used as in Year 1 (17-18), Year 2 (18-19) and Year 3 (19-20) but reallocated to schools so if a school also took part in a previous year, they did not necessarily get the same grid in Year 4 (20-21). The classes from which the selections were made were mixed ability and were not set by gender or ability.

Where schools had a single class in the selected year group which also included children from another year group, this class was selected and the whole class was invited to complete the survey (despite some children being in another year group to that originally selected). Where schools had a mixture of classes; some with pupils from a single year group and some with pupils from a mixture of year groups, the selection depended on how the mixed classes were formed:

- If children are assigned randomly to the single and mixed classes, then one of the single year group classes should be selected using the Kish grid. In most cases this will just be a single class so the grid would not be required.
- If children are assigned to the mixed classes based on age or ability, the Kish grid should be used for all classes that include children of the year group of interest. If a mixed class is then randomly chosen, the whole class (all year groups) can complete the survey.

3.2 Sample size

The issued main Year 4 (20-21) sample contained 5,876 schools in total, which is 27% of those in the initial sample frame. The following table presents a breakdown of the Year 4 (20-21) sample by type of school. In addition, there were reserve schools in the sample, some of which were issued during the course of the year in response to shortfalls in particular local authorities. Only the issued reserve sample schools are shown in table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Selected sample issued for fieldwork by type of school

Type of school	Number of main sample schools	Number of issued reserve sample schools	Number of issued schools (total)
State Primary	3,120	609	3,729
State Secondary	2,386	169	2,555
Independent	370	-	370

The following table presents a breakdown of the issued main Year 4 (20-21) sample by year group and term. The number of year groups is uneven because independent schools include fewer infant year groups.

Table 3.2: Breakdown of selected year groups by school year and term (main sample only)

Year group	Autumn	Spring	Summer	Total
Year 1	569	544	490	1,603
Year 2	551	534	493	1,578
Year 3	567	553	463	1,583
Year 4	530	549	463	1,542
Year 5	610	614	513	1,737
Year 6	600	626	517	1,743
Year 7	493	521	517	1,531
Year 8	519	531	486	1,536
Year 9	525	518	472	1,515
Year 10	525	556	476	1,557
Year 11	615	599	319	1,533
Total	6,104	6,145	5,209	17,458

3.3 Opt-in schools and classes

Because participating schools were offered a school level report which is of value to schools, some schools which were not in the selected sample opted into the survey. In addition, schools which wanted to have a larger sample size and a wider range of year groups for their report could also opt-in additional classes or year groups. These cases were included in the data for school level reports but were not included in the national data for publication or in the archived data. Pupils from opt-in schools or classes were not given a weight in the dataset. Schools that opted in could complete the survey with any year groups and did not need to use the Kish grids for class selection.

04

Fieldwork

4 Fieldwork

This section outlines the approach used for fieldwork for the Active Lives Children and Young People survey.

4.1 Approach to recruitment

Sport England has strong links with Active Partnerships (APs) across the country. The APs liaise with schools, local authorities and school games organisers (SGOs) to encourage participation in sport and gather and use statistics at a local level. They are therefore very well placed to provide a link between Sport England and schools for the purpose of carrying out the survey. The benefits are two-fold: existing strong links can be used to encourage participation in the survey, and new stronger links can be established through APs and schools liaising about the survey. The APs were asked to recruit sampled schools to take part in the survey. When schools were happy to participate, the APs' role was to support the schools through the process of selecting appropriate classes (one class per year group from up to three year groups selected) using a Kish selection grid. It was also important that the selected classes were mixed-ability e.g. PSHE¹⁸ or registration groups. In small schools, for example in single-form entry schools, there was no class selection needed. APs were able to provide advice to schools on a case-by-case basis, for example, if a school did not have any mixed ability classes or only had mixed year group tutor groups. Where necessary, queries were referred back to Sport England and to Ipsos.

The APs were responsible for contacting schools and making them aware of the information and materials needed to take part, as well as following up with schools who said they would be happy to participate. The APs were able to access details about the schools and each school's unique URLs via secure online shared spreadsheets. The APs then provided the unique URLs (created by Ipsos) to the participating schools in advance of fieldwork. Whilst the survey was live, the APs managed timings and monitored progress in order to target non-responding schools. This information was then fed back by the APs to Sport England via secure online shared spreadsheets along with email contact details for each school for sending out school reports and contacting the school about their incentive (where applicable).

4.2 Information for schools

APs were directed to a Sport England maintained webpage from which they could download and send schools information relevant to the schools. This included:

- A brief guide for teachers about the survey including a simple list of what is required.
- A letter to parents (year group specific) which provided parents with the ability to opt out their child from participating in the research.
- An information sheet for students (year group specific) which explained what would be involved in participating in the research.
- Information sheets for both teachers of the classes chosen to take part (administering teachers) and those coordinating the schools' participation (lead teachers), outlining what would be involved and providing guidance on how to manage the completion of the survey.
- Information on class selection including examples for different scenarios.

¹⁸ Personal Social and Health Education

- Information on school reports including the requirements needed to receive one and examples of school report templates (school type specific).
- Information on incentives including a flowchart of the process and a copy of the latest ESPO incentive brochure.
- Privacy policies produced in light of GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) that came into force in May 2018 covering the data collected, teacher email addresses and a statement from ESPO about their use of the data provided to them.
- Practice links to the online questionnaires which do not collect data to allow teachers to review the content in advance.
- Questionnaire summaries of each questionnaire (pupil, parent and teacher) to allow teachers or parents to view the content of the survey before completion.
- Advice sheets were provided, both for pupils and parents. These were for support and advice if completing the survey without teachers present to offer support.
- Additional information sheets were also provided for schools if their pupils were completing from home with instructions and advice on how to complete the survey from home. These were provided for pupils in school years 3-11 and parents of children in school years 1-2.
- A text message template which schools could use to send links to the questionnaire to parents or pupils at home if this is their chosen method of communication.
- An email message template which schools could use to send survey invitations and reminders to parents if this is their chosen method of communication.
- A guide for schools about encouraging parents to take part in the survey. This was provided to schools with a school year 1-2 class selected to take part.
- A postcard for schools to send to parents of school year 1-2 pupils to encourage them to take part.
- A poster that schools could use to encourage parents of school year 1-2 pupils to take part.

4.3 Administration of survey

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the survey was completed either in schools or at home. Where pupils completed depended on the current government guidance, whether individual pupils were self-isolating (even if schools were fully open), and whether schools chose to administer the survey as homework rather than a school-based activity (this was only an option for secondary schools). Pupils in selected classes completed the survey using computers, smartphones, or tablets either at school or at home. Selected classes were not grouped by ability e.g. tutor time, PSHE or IT.

If pupils were completing at school, teachers were advised that they could help pupils with reading or understanding but not with answering the questions and as such, there should be someone present in the room who could assist children who normally need help with tasks. The survey was intended to be completed in one sitting under exam conditions so pupils could not see each other's responses. Teachers were advised to encourage secondary school pupils to have planners or timetables to hand to help with the answering the behavioural questions. Additionally, they were also advised to ensure school

year 1 to 2 pupils had headphones available whilst completing the survey, in case they wanted to use the audio feature (to have the questions read out to them instead of reading the questions themselves).

If pupils were completing at home, teachers were asked to send the survey links home to their pupils using email, Show my Homework, ParentMail, text or an alternative method. Pupils were able to use a laptop, desktop computer, tablet or smartphone to complete the survey. They were able to complete the survey at any time but it must be done in one sitting and preferably during school hours (though secondary schools had the option to set it as homework). Parents could help their child with reading and understanding the questions but not with answers.

Parents completed the survey at home on their computer, smartphone, or tablet or on school computers or tablets during parents' evenings or at other times when parents were in school. Teachers could complete the survey at home or at school using their own or a school computer, smartphone, or tablet. Parents and teachers could provide an email address which sent them their own unique link to the survey to allow them to come back to the questionnaire at another time if they were not able to complete it in one sitting.

A free technical helpline was available to enable parents, pupils, teachers or APs to deal with issues they may have completing the survey. This could be contacted via email. This was only used in a small number of cases.

4.4 Online questionnaire

The Active Lives Children and Young People survey was hosted using Ipsos' global Dimensions platform in Rackspace, a managed hosting facility. The security features offered by Rackspace, and Ipsos are listed below:

At Rackspace:

- The Rackspace Data centre is audited to comply with applicable UK compliance laws and regulations. A list of these certifications can be found here: <https://www.rackspace.com/en-gb/compliance>
- The servers and network infrastructure are physically located in England
- The servers and network components are fully redundant
- Rackspace guarantees recovery of hardware failures within one hour
- Strictly monitored access to all data centres using keycard protocols, biometric scanning protocols and continuous interior and exterior surveillance.
- Access limited to data centre personnel only without exception.
- All data centre employees undergo thorough background security checks before being employed.

At Ipsos:

- All access to Dimensions' questionnaires and data was password protected.
- Only a small number of online survey experts had access.

- Survey data and any respondent personal information were stored in separate databases.
- Penetration testing was carried out on our installation to check that there were no problems.

4.4.1 Survey URL

When deciding on the URL to use for the survey we considered how brevity might affect ease of participation. We decided to use short URLs, as we thought this would improve accessibility and would help maximise response rate. This was especially important for younger pupils, who needed to be able to type the URL into their computers during lesson time, or at home. Each URL therefore consisted of the domain ipsos.uk followed by a unique randomly generated five letter string e.g.: <https://ipsos.uk/XYZXF>. These URLs were the same length as in Year 2 (18-19) and Year 3 (19-20) but shorter than in Year 1 (17-18) (seven letters) to make their use easier and every URL had Z as the third letter to avoid short words featuring in the URLs. The survey was hosted on the Ipsos website, which ensured the legitimacy of the survey was immediately evident.

Each sampled school was provided with a series of unique URLs through which the survey could be completed:

- One URL was provided for each sampled year group within the school (in the majority of schools three year groups were sampled, and therefore three URLs were issued, but in a small number only two year groups were sampled and therefore two URLs were issued),
- One URL was provided for the parent survey,
- One URL was provided for the teacher survey.

Schools were able to opt-in to the survey. This could be schools which had not been sampled at all, or schools could request that additional classes took part in the survey, beyond the three chosen in that school. This could be additional classes within a selected year group or other year groups. Where requested, up to three URLs were provided for non-sampled classes (for use where the school asked additional classes to complete the survey or for schools not included in the sample at all). Schools were provided with URLs for classes in school years 1-2, school years 3-6 and/or school years 7-11 as appropriate.

Allocating unique URLs in this way meant that respondents saw only the questions that were appropriate to them given their role (pupil, parent, teacher) and, where applicable, year group (1-2, 3-6, 7-11). The unique URL also minimised error by ensuring that the data collected was automatically allocated to the correct school (which may not have been the case had respondents been required to identify their school and year group themselves).

4.5 Incentives

To incentivise schools and thank them for their participation Sport England offered participating schools credits which can be spent on a range of sporting, wellbeing, healthy eating and activity-based equipment, through ESPO (Eastern Shires Purchasing Organisation). Sampled schools which take part and have at least 30 pupil responses (or responses from at least half of the number of those in sampled classes if this totals less than 30) are given 10 credits (worth about £100). In schools where school year 1-2 parents are surveyed, schools earn an extra credit (worth about £10) for every parent response. Sport England work with ESPO in order to administer the incentive scheme. Sport England pass on details of qualifying schools to ESPO on a weekly basis (or at the end of term for schools with school

year 1-2 pupils) who then take over the administration of the incentives by contacting schools by both email and by post with a letter telling the school the number of credits they have achieved, a copy of the incentive brochure from which to select their item/s and information on how to redeem their credits.

Response reports provided by Ipsos were used to provide evidence of participation for the administration of the incentives by Sport England.

Schools were also eligible for a school-level report if at least 25 valid responses for the activity questions were received (for a full report) or 25 valid responses on attitudes or wellbeing only (for a shorter infant only report). The report covered key activity measures overall and for during and outside normal school hours and for boys and girls. Data on the most participated in activities at that school was also included as well as data on swimming. Findings on wellbeing, resilience, trust and attitudes formed part of the report. In Year 4 (20-21), a new section was added to the school report which provided comparison for the school against their previous results, if that school had previously taken part in the survey. If a school had previously taken part in the survey more than once, their current results were compared to their results from the most recent time they had previously taken part. A notes page highlighted the limitations of the data within a school, because it is based on small numbers and limited year groups.

The reports also contained a page covering the Healthy Schools Rating Scheme¹⁹. This is a scheme launched by the Department for Education (DfE)²⁰. The scheme draws on the school's responses to questions covering food education, school food standards, participation in PE and active travel to school taken from the teacher questionnaire. This rating scheme is designed to recognise the positive actions that schools are taking around healthy eating and physical activity and to encourage schools to reflect on useful next steps.

These reports were prepared by Ipsos and sent to schools individually by email. Schools which had opted into the survey received a school level report but were not eligible for the equipment-based incentive.

Small schools and those with low numbers of pupils who struggled to reach the number of responses required for a school-level report received amended versions of the school-level report. These were produced in-house at Sport England based on the same templates as those used for the school-level reports and were based on counts rather than rates. These reports were introduced from Autumn term 2018-19 onwards and are distributed to small schools later than the main school-level reports.

4.6 Accessibility

The Active Lives Children and Young People survey is designed to be as accessible as possible for all respondents. There were three types of questionnaire:

- Short simple questionnaire for pupils in school year 1-2 (age 5-7),
- Questionnaires for pupils in school year 3-11 (age 7-15/16) and parents of pupils in school year 1-2,

¹⁹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/814914/Healthy_schools_rating_scheme.pdf

²⁰ More information about the scheme can be obtained from the Department for Education. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/healthy-schools-rating-scheme>

- Questionnaire for one teacher in each school (most often the PE lead but could also be completed by heads, deputies and other teachers).

A simple child friendly font (comic sans) was used for the pupils in school year 1-2 as well the use of pictures and an audio feature to enable pupils to hear the questions being read out in case of difficulties with reading.

For the school year 3-11 questionnaire, the questionnaire content varied by year group with school year 3-4 pupils having fewer questions. School year 3-6 pupils had a questionnaire with images and icons and comic sans font to aid reading and understanding of the questionnaire content.

The questionnaires are all in English but it is recognised that for some parents English would not necessarily be their first language. Therefore, an option for the questionnaire to be translated over the phone was available on request by schools. During Year 4 (20-21) this was not requested by any schools. For pupils with English as an additional language the guidance to schools was that they should give the same support they would usually give the child to access the curriculum in English.

Whilst teachers were not permitted to help pupils answer the questions, they were advised to provide pupils with the level of support that they normally would at school. For example, helping a particular child to read if that was something they often required assistance with.

During the development phase in Year 1 (17-18), all the questionnaires were reviewed by a primary school teacher to ensure that the design and language would be age appropriate.

For the summer term of Year 3 (19-20) and Year 4 (20-21), the questionnaire was modified to allow for ease of completion on a smartphone. This was to ensure that the survey was accessible for respondents at home who may not have access to a computer or tablet. This change to the questionnaire to allow for completion on a smartphone will be taken forward permanently into future years of the survey.

05

Response rates

5 Response rates

5.1 Method and assumptions

The Active Lives Children and Young People survey was designed to achieve fixed numbers of returns from children within each local authority across each year of the survey. It is not possible to calculate pupil level response rates as we do not know the number of individuals in each class selected to participate (and hence the size of the eligible sample). However, we can calculate school response rates at local authority level, by dividing the number of schools invited within each local authority by the number of schools that participated within each local authority. Sport England has used the final data to analyse activity levels by local authority, so the survey method aimed to receive a minimum of 300 responses per local authority.

5.2 Responses

During fieldwork, Ipsos monitored the survey responses. In particular, we monitored the number of completes and partial completes by each Active Partnership (AP), Local Authority, individual school, year group and survey type. From this information we could determine whether the appropriate year groups and classes had been selected to participate. We also monitored the number of completes compared to the targets set for the term, and against the completion rates from previous terms. Furthermore, we monitored the number of completes by whether pupils were attending school or not – attending school every day, attending school some days of the week but not all or not attending school at the moment. We also monitored the device that respondents were completing on (desktop, smartphone, tablet, feature phone, console or unknown). This was to ensure that all devices that may be used to complete the survey at home or at school were compatible with the survey and to monitor drop-out rates by device type.

Ipsos produced weekly fieldwork updates for Sport England as well as more detailed summaries at four key points during the survey year.

Ipsos also produced a mid-term response review, to identify local authorities which might fall short of the completion target, based on a review of the number of schools which had agreed to take part and the number of completions. Where necessary, and possible, reserve sample for those local authorities was issued to the AP in the following term to try and mitigate any shortfall in numbers.

Information by school type is shown in the table below. Information by local authority and AP are shown in the appendices. The numbers in this table include all the main sample as well as issued reserve sample. The numbers include any partial or complete pupil, parent or teacher responses.

Table 5.1: Number of schools selected and responding by school type (sampled schools)

School type	Selected schools	Responding schools	% of selected schools responding
Primary	3,729	766	21%
Secondary	2,555	622	24%
Independent	370	31	8%

The school year 3-11 and parent questionnaire collected the key behavioural data required for the calculation of estimates for participation in physical activity. The school year 1-2 and school year 3-11 questionnaires provided the attitudinal and outcome data. This means that response was also monitored in terms of overall questionnaires completed, and behavioural and attitudinal questionnaires, by term and overall. This is shown in table 5.2 for complete questionnaires. Note that this only includes complete interviews; the dataset includes partial interviews.

Table 5.2: Completed questionnaires by term and type of data

Type	Total no. of completes: Autumn term	Total no. of completes: Spring term	Total no. of completes: Summer term	Total no. of completes	Target Year 4 (20-21)	Percentage of Year 4 (20-21) target
Total: school year 1-2, 3-6, 7-11 and parent	32,185	29,661	31,909	93,775	95,000	99%
Attitudinal: school year 1-2, 3-6 and 7-11	30,205	28,046	30,081	88,332	95,000	93%
Behavioural: school year 3-6, 7-11 and parents	27,624	25,906	26,673	80,203	95,000	84%
Teacher	363	371	386	1,120	N/A	N/A

The number of selected schools, responding schools and responding pupils in each AP and local authority are shown in the Appendices.

5.3 Break offs

A break off occurs when a respondent enters the online questionnaire but does not complete it. Software allows this abandoned survey data to be captured. Cases which had a break off near the end of the online questionnaire could be included in the dataset. The table below shows the point in each questionnaire that respondents must have reached in order for it to count as a partial complete and their answers to be included in the dataset. These points were chosen because in the case of school year 3-11 pupils and parents it means that they had completed all the participation in sport and activity questions which means that key survey estimates on respondents could be derived.

Questionnaire type	Variable that needs reaching in order to count as a partial complete
Pupils (school year 3-11)	PLEnjoy (first question after the activity grid)
Parents	SwmCan (first question after the activity grid)
Teachers	ACTTRAV (however all teacher responses are included in the dataset even if they do not qualify as a partial)

In the final dataset for school year 3-parent, 93.4% (81,091) of the valid cases for analysis are complete and 6.6% (5,737) are partials.

Responses were received from 1,166 teachers. There were 253 schools where pupils or parents responded but no teacher and 51 schools where a teacher response was received but no pupils or parent responses. The teacher questionnaire was intended to provide contextual school level information to supplement the pupil level data.

5.4 Profile of achieved sample

Table 5.3 shows the profile of the unweighted sample by key characteristics. As described in the weighting section, weighting was used to ensure that the profile of the weighted sample matched available population estimates as far as possible to ensure that published findings are representative.

Table 5.3: Profile of the achieved sample (unweighted) from school year 1-2, school year 3-11 and parent of school year 1-2 data (valid data only, excluding can't say, prefer not to say) (percentage)

	School year 1-2	School year 3-11/ parents of school year 1-2
Base	13,886	86,828
	%	%
Year group		
Year 1	47.3	3.3
Year 2	52.7	3.1
Year 3		7.1
Year 4		8.1
Year 5		10.1
Year 6		9.6
Year 7		14.5
Year 8		14.0
Year 9		11.7
Year 10		10.8
Year 11		7.7
Gender		
Male	50.6	47.8
Female	49.4	51.1
Other		1.1
Ethnicity		
White British		75.3
White Other		4.8
Asian		8.0
Black		3.2
Mixed		5.5
Other		3.2
Adjusted Family Affluence*		
Low		16.3
Medium		50.4
High		33.4

*In Year 4 (20-21), an adjusted Family Affluence (FAS) derived variable has been created and this variable is used in Table 5.3 above. In previous years, answers to the question 'How many times did you and your family travel out of England for a holiday last year?' fed into the creation of the FAS variable. However, as it was not possible or was difficult, regardless of social background, to travel out of England at some points over the previous 12 months for most of academic year 2020-21 due to COVID-19 restrictions, an adjusted FAS variable has been created, excluding answers to this question. It is important to note that the bands for the adjusted FAS variable are not comparable with the bands on the FAS variable that has been published in previous years. Please see section 7.5.6 for more details on FAS.

06

Weighting

6 Weighting

6.1 Design and purpose

Weighting is required to reduce the risk of bias in survey estimates. Weights are produced to make the weighted achieved sample match the population as closely as possible. For the Active Lives Children and Young People Survey the weights correct for non-response by schools.

6.1.1 Annual sample weights

The weighting was done separately for the following three sets of year groups: school years 1 and 2; school years 3 to 6; and school years 7 to 11. The parent and pupil returns for school years 1 and 2 were also weighted separately; as were state and independent schools. This therefore means that there were eight sets of weights in total that were generated separately:

- State schools: parent returns school years 1 and 2
- State schools: pupil returns school years 1 and 2
- State schools: pupil returns school years 3 to 6
- State schools: pupil returns school years 7 to 11
- Independent schools: parent returns school years 1 and 2
- Independent schools: pupil returns school years 1 and 2
- Independent schools: pupil returns school years 3 to 6
- Independent schools: pupil returns school years 7 to 11

Each of these eight groups were weighted up (i.e. grossed) to the corresponding population estimates from the January 2019 School Census.

There are no weights for teachers and any teacher analysis is carried out unweighted. Some of the data reported in the wellbeing tables involves analysis of matched school year 1-2 pupil data with parent data for those year groups. This is only done when an individual match can be made based on gender, date of birth, year group and school. For this analysis the parent weight was used. This is the weight provided on the matched dataset of parents and pupils.

6.1.2 Calibration weighting

For state schools the weighting involved calibrating to school year by gender, pupils in schools with more than 20% of pupils getting free school meals and pupils in schools in a rural area. This was done separately for each region based on the proportions (rather than the actual counts). It was not possible to adjust for local authority as the sample sizes for some local authorities were too small, indeed there were 19 local authorities in which no schools participated at all (there were an additional two local authorities where one teacher and no pupils responses were received). Instead counts of pupils in NUTS2 (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics) geographical areas were used as there was at least one responding school in each area. Independent schools were calibrated by counts of school year and gender. We explored the possibility of calibrating by region for independent schools but there were

several regions with no independent school pupils responding to the survey. It should be noted that results by region include pupils in independent schools but the data for independent school pupils has not been weighted by region.

The weighting for Year 4 (20-21) followed the same approach as for Year 3 (19-20) but with some modifications as the academic year was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Only pupils who completed on the designated sampled class survey links were included in the weighted data, which usually meant only the pupils from the two or three selected year groups and selected classes within them. The remaining pupils were treated as opt-ins. Reserve sample schools which asked to opt-in to the survey were treated as sampled for the selected year groups in the school and are included in the national data for Year 4 (20-21). Pupils in reserve schools which opted in who were not in the selected year groups were not included in the national data or weighted. Furthermore, some schools accidentally had their pupils completing on non-sampled opt-in URLs rather than the correct sampled URLs. In these cases, pupils in the selected year groups were weighted, with trimming if necessary,²¹ and included in the national data.

The weighting scheme does not take account of term because there are combinations of NUTS2, school type, gender, phase, rurality and free school meals where there are no cases in a term. The only way to weight by term would be to stop weighting by another factor. Since the other factors are important for the weighting and consistency should be maintained where possible, it was not possible to include term in the weighting. This should be considered when comparing results between terms and between years. The weighted sample within each term is not representative, whereas the weighted sample across the year is. Furthermore, the pandemic has had differential impacts on the unweighted sample size by term, with the summer term sample in Year 3 (19-20) being smaller than in other years and the autumn term sample in Year 4 (20-21) smaller than other years. This should be considered when analysing the results, for instance, because children tend to be more active in the summer, and the proportion of the sample in the summer term in Year 4 (20-21) is higher than in Year 3 (19-20), the overall figure for % active has declined only very slightly in Year 4 (20-21) compared with Year 3 (19-20), despite some children being less active in the autumn and spring of Year 4 (20-21) compared with Year 3 (19-20). For a full understanding of how activity has changed between Year 4 (20-21) and Years 2 (18-19) and 3 (19-20), analysis by term should be used, as well as the overall figures. Where possible, we advise also considering school phases (and key demographics) as part of this given weighting by term is not possible as detailed above.

Because the calibration weighting was carried out on proportions rather than actual counts, they were grossed up to regional counts when combined so that the total weighted sample count by region was the same as the population counts from the January 2019 school Census for the years covered.

The population estimates for weighting are produced from DfE pupil population estimates from Get Information About Schools (GIAS)²² (2019-20). The sample for Year 4 (20-21) was drawn from 2019-20 school data because the sample was selected during the previous academic year so that APs could contact schools in advance of the fieldwork term. For consistency, the weighting was carried out using the same data which had been used for sampling. The population counts include pupil counts from schools which have permanently closed. This is because schools that have just closed will have pupils

²¹ See final paragraph of this section for an explanation of trimming weights.

²² GIAS was previously referred to as 'Edubase'.

for the previous academic year that will not have been assigned to the new school yet and so removing them would underestimate the number of pupils in the education system.

As for Year 3 (19-20), in Year 4 (20-21), we noted that a number of schools had substantially more responding pupils than the selected 30 per up to three selected classes. In some cases, this appeared to be because schools which had opted in additional pupils had asked these opted-in pupils to complete using the URLs for sampled pupils only. Therefore, the weighting for Year 4 (20-21) was designed to trim the number of weighted pupils to 40 per class in the school, to avoid these additional pupils affecting the national results.

6.2 Technical information

6.2.1 State school population profiles

The control totals for the calibration consisted of DfE pupil population estimates from the January 2019 school Census. The following tables show the profiles by the calibration measures used for the weighting. Note that we have not included the control totals for NUTS2, given the number of data points.

Table 6.1: Gender and year group by region (by phase – school year 1-2, school year 3-6, school year 7-11)

Year group	Gender	NE	NW	Y&TH	EM	WM	EE	Lon	SE	SW	ALL
Year 1	Male	25.3%	25.2%	25.1%	24.9%	25.5%	25.2%	25.1%	25.2%	25.2%	25.2%
	Female	24.0%	24.3%	24.2%	24.2%	24.0%	24.2%	24.3%	24.0%	24.1%	24.2%
Year 2	Male	25.9%	25.7%	25.8%	26.1%	25.8%	25.7%	25.7%	26.0%	26.1%	25.8%
	Female	24.9%	24.8%	24.9%	24.7%	24.7%	24.9%	24.8%	24.8%	24.6%	24.8%
Year 3	Male	13.0%	12.9%	13.0%	13.0%	13.0%	13.1%	13.0%	13.2%	13.1%	13.0%
	Female	12.5%	12.5%	12.4%	12.5%	12.7%	12.5%	12.5%	12.6%	12.6%	12.5%
Year 4	Male	12.8%	12.8%	12.9%	12.7%	12.8%	12.8%	12.9%	12.8%	12.7%	12.8%
	Female	12.3%	12.3%	12.4%	12.4%	12.1%	12.3%	12.3%	12.3%	12.3%	12.3%
Year 5	Male	12.5%	12.6%	12.6%	12.6%	12.5%	12.5%	12.4%	12.5%	12.5%	12.5%
	Female	12.0%	12.2%	12.1%	12.1%	12.1%	12.2%	12.1%	12.0%	12.1%	12.1%
Year 6	Male	12.5%	12.6%	12.6%	12.7%	12.6%	12.6%	12.4%	12.5%	12.4%	12.5%
	Female	12.4%	12.2%	12.1%	12.1%	12.2%	12.1%	12.3%	12.1%	12.2%	12.2%
Year 7	Male	10.7%	10.7%	10.8%	10.8%	10.7%	10.8%	10.7%	10.8%	10.8%	10.8%
	Female	10.4%	10.4%	10.4%	10.4%	10.5%	10.5%	10.4%	10.5%	10.4%	10.5%
Year 8	Male	10.5%	10.5%	10.6%	10.4%	10.3%	10.4%	10.4%	10.4%	10.4%	10.4%
	Female	10.3%	10.2%	10.3%	10.2%	10.2%	10.0%	10.1%	10.1%	10.1%	10.2%
Year 9	Male	10.2%	10.3%	10.2%	10.1%	10.3%	10.1%	10.2%	10.1%	10.1%	10.2%
	Female	10.1%	10.0%	10.1%	9.9%	10.0%	9.9%	10.0%	9.9%	9.9%	9.9%
Year 10	Male	9.7%	9.8%	9.8%	9.8%	9.9%	9.9%	9.8%	9.9%	9.8%	9.8%
	Female	9.7%	9.7%	9.6%	9.6%	9.7%	9.7%	9.7%	9.6%	9.6%	9.6%
Year 11	Male	9.3%	9.3%	9.2%	9.5%	9.3%	9.4%	9.3%	9.4%	9.5%	9.4%
	Female	9.2%	9.2%	9.1%	9.2%	9.2%	9.2%	9.4%	9.3%	9.3%	9.2%

NE: North East

NW: North West

Y&TH: Yorkshire and the Humber

EM: East Midlands

WM: West Midlands

EE: East of England

Lon: London

SE: South East

SW: South West

Table 6.2: Urban rural and stage by region

Year group	Urban/Rural	NE	NW	Y&TH	EM	WM	EE	Lon	SE	SW	ALL
School year 1-2	Rural	16.1%	9.2%	14.9%	24.6%	12.4%	26.1%	0.2%	19.5%	30.5%	15.9%
	Urban	83.9%	90.8%	85.1%	75.4%	87.6%	73.9%	99.8%	80.5%	69.5%	84.1%
School year 3-6	Rural	15.7%	9.5%	15.2%	25.3%	12.1%	25.9%	0.2%	19.4%	30.6%	15.9%
	Urban	84.3%	90.5%	84.8%	74.7%	87.9%	74.1%	99.8%	80.6%	69.4%	84.1%
School year 7-11	Rural	10.9%	8.7%	12.3%	21.0%	10.3%	19.1%	0.4%	12.1%	23.6%	12.3%
	Urban	89.1%	91.3%	87.7%	79.0%	89.7%	80.9%	99.6%	87.9%	76.4%	87.7%

Table 6.3: Free school meals (percentage of pupils at school on FSM) and stage by region

Year group	% pupils on Free School Meals	NE	NW	Y&TH	EM	WM	EE	Lon	SE	SW	ALL
School year 1-2	<=20% FSM	48.1%	59.5%	60.4%	73.0%	56.2%	80.8%	67.1%	83.8%	79.2%	69.1%
	>20% FSM	51.9%	40.5%	39.6%	27.0%	43.8%	19.2%	32.9%	16.2%	20.8%	30.9%
School year 3-6	<=20% FSM	48.5%	59.3%	59.8%	72.9%	56.1%	80.4%	65.1%	83.6%	79.8%	68.7%
	>20% FSM	51.5%	40.7%	40.2%	27.1%	43.9%	19.6%	34.9%	16.4%	20.2%	31.3%
School year 7-11	<=20% FSM	55.5%	63.5%	65.5%	82.9%	62.1%	92.0%	64.3%	91.7%	89.4%	75.1%
	>20% FSM	44.5%	36.5%	34.5%	17.1%	37.9%	8.0%	35.7%	8.3%	10.6%	24.9%

Table 6.4: State school region counts

Region	School year 1-2	School year 3-6	School year 7-11
North East	59,882	119,492	131,619
North West	176,136	350,598	388,861
Yorkshire and the Humber	131,632	261,517	287,998
East Midlands	111,860	223,690	246,775
West Midlands	145,938	287,232	319,055
East of England	146,356	287,919	321,223
London	203,538	399,848	418,142
South East	208,077	408,310	449,310
South West	120,958	238,834	265,438
ALL	1,304,377	2,577,440	2,828,421

6.2.2 Independent school population profiles

Table 6.5: Year group and gender (Independent schools)

Year group	Gender	ALL
Year 1	Male	23.9%
	Female	24.3%
Year 2	Male	25.5%
	Female	26.3%
Year 3	Male	11.4%
	Female	11.5%
Year 4	Male	11.9%
	Female	12.1%
Year 5	Male	12.8%
	Female	12.8%
Year 6	Male	13.9%
	Female	13.6%
Year 7	Male	9.8%
	Female	9.7%
Year 8	Male	9.5%
	Female	9.7%
Year 9	Male	10.0%
	Female	9.9%
Year 10	Male	10.4%
	Female	10.3%
Year 11	Male	10.5%
	Female	10.3%

Table 6.6: Year group and region (Independent schools)

Region	School year 1-2	School year 3-6	School year 7-11
North East	1.4%	1.5%	2.3%
North West	7.8%	7.6%	8.9%
Yorkshire and the Humber	4.1%	4.6%	5.4%
East Midlands	4.7%	5.0%	5.6%
West Midlands	6.0%	6.5%	7.8%
East of England	11.6%	12.0%	12.1%
London	34.8%	28.8%	21.1%
South East	23.2%	25.9%	26.6%
South West	6.5%	8.0%	10.4%
TOTAL COUNT	46,893	120,374	205,274

07

Data editing and management

7 Data editing and management

7.1 Overview

7.1.1 Questionnaire versions

As mentioned previously, not all respondents were asked every question. This means that for some year groups information is missing. For example, data on watching live sporting events and volunteering is only available for pupils in school year 5 and over. For sports participation, where the pupil is routed past certain questions for different year groups or parents, assumptions have been made to allow for creation of the standard variables. For example, for school year 1-4, the location (indoors or outdoors) of activities taken part in has been assumed using a standard set of rules for each activity and whether it was during normal school hours or outside normal school hours. The User Guide and Code Book provide information on who was asked each question. In this section we describe some of the data editing and assumptions which were used in creating derived variables. Details on specific values and assumptions used can be found in the Code Book.

7.1.2 Summary of pupil questionnaire changes from Year 3 (19-20) to Year 4 (20-21)

As mentioned earlier in this note, changes needed to be made to the questionnaire for the summer term 2020 owing to the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on schools. Many of these changes were retained for Year 4 (20-21) of the survey – please refer to the Year 3 (19-20) technical report for the summary of changes made to questions for the summer term 2020.

Below is a list of changes made to questions for Year 4 (20-21) – some changes were to be appropriate for the COVID-19 pandemic situation and some were enhancements or new topics added to the questionnaire:

School year 1-2 questionnaire

Changed the question from 'Have you done any of these sports?' back to 'Have you done any of these sports in the last week?' (The same wording as the autumn and spring terms of Year 3 (19-20)).

Reinstated the question about how they got to school.

Added a response option to the question about how they got to school – 'I didn't go to school today'.

School year 3-11 pupils and parents of school year 1-2 questionnaire

Added additional wording to the question which asks whether the pupil has been to school in the last week to make it clear that attending school means in person, not online.

In the spring term, added a new question about where the survey is being completed – 'Where are you doing this survey?'. Answer options are 'At school', 'At home', 'Somewhere else' and 'Prefer not to say'.

Added tick and cross symbols to question explanations to provide clarity and make questions easier to view on a smartphone.

Added clarification to the 'Walking to get to school or other places' code to include 'such as friends' houses or a park'. This also applied to the 'riding a scooter' and 'cycling to get to school or other places' codes.

Added further emphasis to activity codes to include online activities. For example, 'Dancing (include online or TV led e.g., TikTok dances)'.

Reinstated the question asking whether pupils who had done no activities in the last week had done anything in the last four weeks.

Reinstated the question 'Would you like to swim more often?'. We also amended the explanation to the swimming questions: *"Swimming pools near you may or may not be open at the moment. It is still important to ask some questions about swimming."*

The follow up question of 'Is this how you usually feel?' after asking 'Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?' continued to be asked to school year 7-11 pupils as well as school year 3-6 pupils.

Reinstated the question about how they got to school, for pupils who were attending school on some or all days of the week. Also added new answer options to this question 'I did not go into school as I was learning from home'.

Added more attitudinal questions. Pupils were asked to respond on a scale with the following categories: strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, can't say. School year 7-11 pupils were asked all six and school year 3-6 pupils were asked the final question:

- I feel that I have the opportunity to be physically active
- I exercise to stay fit and healthy
- I exercise to help me relax and worry less about things
- I feel guilty when I don't exercise
- I exercise socially for fun with friends
- I exercise because someone tells me I have to

Added a question about whether children would like to do more or less activity – 'In the future would you like to do more, the same amount, or less exercise and sport than you do at the moment?'. This question was asked to pupils in school year 3-6 and school year 7-11. Answer options were 'More', 'The same amount' and 'Less'. Respondents that answered 'More' were then asked a follow up question – 'Thinking about doing more exercise or sport in the future, which statements apply to you?'. The statements were 'I want to do more of the exercise and sports I do now', 'I want to do different or new exercise or sports' and 'I don't mind whether I do more of the same or do different exercise or sports' with 'Don't know' and 'Prefer not to say' options as well.

Added a question about riding a bike – 'Can you ride a bike?'. This was only asked to pupils in school year 5 and 6. Answer options were 'Yes, without stabilisers', 'Yes, with stabilisers', 'Yes, an adaptive bike or adaptive trike for children with disabilities or special needs', 'No' and 'Don't know'.

The wording for the question about whether parents have to pay for school meals was changed – 'Thinking about school meals (food served by the school). Do your parents have to pay if you have school meals? If you don't normally have school meals, please tell us whether you think your parents would have to pay if you had a school meal.'

Amended the question about outdoor spaces that they can access. This was only asked to pupils in school year 7-11 and included more answer options than in summer term Year 3 (19-20) - 'A balcony', 'A garden or backyard', 'A park or field', 'Outdoor sports places such as pitches or tennis courts', 'A wood or countryside', 'Beach or seaside', 'In a lake, river, canal', 'A road or pavement where you can safely go for

a run or walk or ride your bike or scooter', 'Other place outside your house or flat (e.g. cycle way, path along river') or 'None of these'.

Teacher questionnaire

In Year 3 (19-20) summer term, some amendments were made to the teacher questionnaire, asking the teachers to report on the usual situation in relation to activities, facilities, swimming lessons and walking to school, rather than the situation as it was during the pandemic. By Year 4 (20-21), it was clear that the impacts of the pandemic would be long term and so the questions were amended to ask the situation during the 2020-21 academic year. Where appropriate, new categories were added to enable teachers to explain the usual situation, as well as the current situation. For example, for swimming lessons a category was added for not usually offered, not offered because of the COVID-19 pandemic or not knowing whether they would be offered because of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, a new question was added about the impacts of the pandemic on PE and other activities offered at the school.

7.2 Data editing

7.2.1 Online data

Online data need little editing in the office as the checks and edits are found within the questionnaire. Where multiple answers are selected on single code answer questions, respondents are asked to correct their answer and certain impossible answers cannot be accepted by the computer. After the data were received in the office, rules were set for defining missing values (to describe the reasons for the missing value) and a number of further edits and imputations were possible.

7.2.2 Missing values

In the survey data there are various reasons why a question may not have been answered. On an online survey, in order to allow respondents to proceed past questions which they may not know the answer to or do not wish to answer, codes are used for the answers which allow them to say, 'don't know' or 'prefer not to say'. There are also questions which may not be applicable because they were not asked for respondents in that group or were not asked during that data collection period. A respondent may also stop completing the survey part way through. A consistent series of missing values have been used in the data to denote where data is missing: these are described in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1: Missing values and codes used

Code	Description	Application
-99	Missing, should have been answered	Respondents who are eligible for a question but have not answered it
-98	Not applicable: Survey routing	Respondents who are not eligible for a question or measure
-97	Some information known but not enough for value	Used on impairment number variable where known to have disability but number not known
-96	Outlier on minutes of activity	Minutes of activity set to missing because of extreme number of minutes or activities
-95	Don't know/Cannot give estimate	Respondents who are unable to answer a question (but sometimes a question specific value is used and labelled as appropriate where the 'don't know' could be treated as valid data)
-94	Prefer not to say	Respondents who have explicitly said they do not wish to answer a particular question (but sometimes a question specific value is used and labelled as appropriate)
-93	Question not asked due to the COVID-19 pandemic	Questions skipped due to routing based on whether the respondent has been attending school or not
-92	Missing: question not asked in this survey year or term	Question not applicable during that data collection period
-91	Missing: reason unspecified	Used to replace system missing values in raw variables, unless otherwise recoded to -99 or -98
-1	Score/value not available in derived variable/no information	Used in derived variable or matched on where information used in creation is missing meaning value cannot be created

Wherever possible, the base for questions has been set to all respondents. However, for questions not asked at all for one group, missing values must be used.

For the main activity measures the base is all respondents. If there are missing data on one of the activities, this is just treated as not having done the activity. This is because there are so many different activities asked about and so many different variables which feed in (days activities have been done, minutes and two intensity questions) that if anyone with missing data on one or more of these variables were excluded, there would be a huge number of respondents for whom these key measures could not be calculated. Furthermore, the questionnaire was designed that the absence of an answer for having done the activity in the week is treated as not having it done the activity for the purpose of the main activity measures, so there are no missing data on whether the activity was done in the last week.

7.3 Back-coding of other sports

7.3.1 Capturing open data on other sports and activities

In the online questionnaire, respondents were offered a list of 39 different activities to choose from, many of which included several activities within them (e.g., water sports including canoeing, kayaking, sailing, rowing, surfing etc.). Nonetheless, there were still activities which pupils had participated in over the previous seven days which were not included in the list of activities, or which they failed to identify within the list.

Therefore, the online questionnaire offered a space for respondents to record other activities which they participated in over the previous seven days, and to provide details on the frequency, duration and intensity of each activity. For this data to feed into the main data set these needed to be coded into the

categories of activities. These categories included those provided on the questionnaire as well as additional categories for activities which were mentioned but not in the original list. Each respondent could mention up to four other activities.

7.3.2 Coding the 'other' activities

A coding scheme was created which included all answer codes from the online questionnaire, some additional generic answer codes (e.g., other active play) and all relevant new activities not included in the original scheme (e.g., Volleyball). In total, this coding scheme contained around 75 different activities. It also included a code for ineligible activities such as singing or Brownies to allow any time recorded against those to be excluded from the derived variables on participation.

All 'other' responses were manually coded against this code list and then checked for consistency. Where possible, comparability with the approach taken to the Active Lives Adult Survey coding was sought. At the end of the process all 'other' answers had been assigned an activity code, which could then be used in the derivation of the participation and composite variables. The coded data was then merged back into the main dataset. To do this, the data was pulled into an SPSS file, then matched back onto the core data by serial. The serial number was unique to each respondent, thereby ensuring that cases were matched back correctly.

The derived variables were only created once the coded other answers had been included back into the dataset. This means derived variables include all eligible activities, whether originally listed in the questionnaire or coded from other answers. The full list of activities is provided in the User Guide and Code Book which accompany the data set.

7.3.3 Coding non-activity data

Respondents were given the opportunity to describe other disabilities or long-term health conditions (school year 3-11 and parents of school year 1-2), other types of volunteering (school year 5-11 only), other ways in which they travelled to school (school year 3-11 and parents of school year 1-2) and other gender (school year 7-11 only). Responses to these other answers were reviewed and either back coded into the original categories, coded into a new valid category or coded into an invalid category which means their answers would be excluded from further analysis. For example, when asked about sports related volunteering, answers such as 'I helped my mother lay the table' were treated as invalid. For the gender question, answers which described their gender identity in a non-binary way were retained as other. Answers which clarified that boy or girl was the intended answer were back coded to boy or girl. In some cases, the description given did not appear to describe a genuine gender identity. Answers of inanimate objects, food items or animals were coded as 'uncodeable'.

7.3.4 Coding teacher data

The teacher questionnaire included questions with other answers on topics such as school facilities, activities offered at the school, types of pupils targeted for additional PE support, activities for the transition of pupils between primary and secondary and ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic affected the school. Other answers were back coded into existing categories, coded into new categories or left in other.

7.4 Checking of data

7.4.1 Checking raw data

Once the final data had been collated and all illegitimate responses removed (for example, insufficiently completed surveys), further checks were undertaken. All variables were checked to ensure that the number and patterns of response tallied with what was expected based on the survey routing. Once this was confirmed, further sense-checks were conducted to ensure that the broad pattern of responses made sense against what might be expected.

7.4.2 Checking final survey weights

After the survey weights had been created, checks were conducted to ensure that the weighted profile of respondents matched the weighting targets at school year, gender, and school year within gender, as closely as possible. All weighted counts were found to match the population distribution when rounded to the nearest whole number.

For measures not used in weighting (e.g. ethnicity, disability), the weighted counts do not match the population. However, checks were conducted to ensure that the weighted profile on these measures was broadly consistent with national data from the DfE pupil population statistics (January 2020). These checks found the following:

- When looking at state schools only, the weighting corrected for region well.
- The effect on ethnicity is good when looking at the distribution of white British and all other ethnic groups combined. However, our data show that within the non-White British ethnic groups, White other and Asian respondents are under-represented compared with Black, Mixed ethnicity and other respondents but this varies by year group. This may reflect how children classify themselves in a survey as well as the particular schools included in the sample by phase of education.
- Both the weighted and unweighted survey samples suggest that those with any disabilities were over-represented in the survey, particularly among school year 7-11 pupils. However, the weighted and unweighted survey samples for those with long-term limiting disabilities match the population well, with a closer match than the previous disability questions had (disability questions were updated in Year 3 (19-20). See the Year 3 (19-20) technical note for more details about the changes). Analysis by disability cannot be compared between Year 3 (19-20) and Year 4 (20-21) against Years 1 (17-18) and 2 (18-19) of the survey because of the change to the questions.

7.5 Creation of derived variables

7.5.1 Activity derived variables

During the processing of the final data, 'derived variables' were created. These variables combine data from multiple questions to create activity level measures of participation. These variables were created using SPSS syntax to calculate the duration, frequency and intensity with which people participate in activities. These variables were then used to create headline measures of activity, such as level of activity (whether does an average of 60 minutes of moderate plus activity a day across the week). Details of these variables and how they were created is provided in the User Guide and Code Book.

Data are presented for three categories for overall activity in the last week. The first category includes pupils who meet the Chief Medical Officer's (CMO) guidelines for young people of doing an average of 60 minutes of activity a day across the week. The second category includes children who do an average

of 30-59 minutes on average a day and the third category the children do less than 30 minutes a day. The categories are named:

- Active – Doing an average of 60 minutes or more a day across the week (420+ minutes a week)
- Fairly active – Doing an average of 30-59 minutes a day across the week (210-419 minutes a week)
- Less active – Doing less than an average of 30 minutes a day across the week (less than 210 minutes a week)

The categorisation has changed since the 2017-18 report which had 4 categories, bringing it in line with CMO guidelines. In Year 1 (17-18), the first category was split into Active every day (at least 60 minutes every day) and Active across the week (an average of 60 minutes or more a day but not every day).

Government policy aims that children and young people should get 30 minutes of their daily physical activity through the school day and 30 minutes outside of school. Data is collected on activity during normal school hours and outside normal school hours²³. Only activity of at least moderate intensity is included in the derived variables²⁴. For activity during normal school hours, every day is five days/150 minutes (weekdays), for activity outside normal school hours, every day is seven days/210 minutes. Where activity is in a specific location or setting, these categories are used:

- Doing an average of 30 minutes or more every day (210+ minutes a week outside normal school hours/150+ minutes a week during normal school hours)
- Doing less than an average of 30 minutes a day across the week (less than 210 minutes a week outside normal school hours/less than 150 minutes a week during normal school hours)

This differs slightly from the Year 1 (17-18) report where the first category was split into two to distinguish between those who were active every day and those who did 30 minutes on average per day across the week.

7.5.2 Imputation and cleaning of activity derived variables

Information on activities, time spent, intensity and location were combined and fed into the measures presented in the analysis (levels of activity and specific activities participated in). The following rules and edits were used in preparing the derived activity variables:

- The questionnaire was set up such that people selected the activities they did. Any activity which was not selected was assumed not to have been done.
- Where respondents provided duration information for an activity outside normal school hours, this was done as response groups (e.g., about half an hour, about three-quarters of an hour) and we allocated a set time for each for creating the derived activity variables (based on evidence from an

²³ During the summer term 2020, in school and outside school were referred to as 'during normal school hours' and 'outside school hours'. This continued throughout Year 4 (20-21) as the COVID-19 pandemic was still affecting the academic year and some pupils were learning from home rather than on the school site.

²⁴ All activity done by pupils in school year 1-2 was assumed to be moderate, pupils in school year 3-11 were asked about the intensity of activity outside normal school hours and standard assumptions about the intensity of activities during normal school hours were made based on year group and activity type.

objective measurement study²⁵, a standard duration falling within the band was applied). The data have been cleaned such that missing durations for outside normal school hours have been imputed using standard durations for that activity. Pupils were not asked about time spent on activities during normal school hours and so for all activities during normal school hours, durations have been imputed using a standard set of times related to the year group and type of activity based on data for outside normal school hours, information from teachers on PE and break time durations and the results of the objective measurement study. The standard values used are shown in the Code Book.

- Where information on duration, location or intensity was missing, standard rules were used to impute the data so that activity variables could be calculated for every case in the dataset. The standard values used are shown in the Code Book.
- Where pupils mentioned an excessive number of activities over the previous week the case was dropped from the data. Data were dropped for cases with more than 25 activities per day on average, resulting in 204 cases being dropped from the analysis and the dataset.

In Years 2 (18-19), 3 (19-20) and 4 (20-21), for a small number of activities the level of intensity was assumed rather than asked. This does not affect the comparison with Year 1 (17-18) because though intensity was asked for these activities in Year 1 (17-18), intensity was assumed in the creation of derived variables.

In addition to the key measures, a number of other activity and composite level variables were created to help measure participation in sport and as building blocks for creating the key measures. The building block measures are also contained in the Active Lives Children and Young People Survey datafile and details of these measures can be found in the User Guide and Code Book.

Note that in the dataset, where there are extreme values for the building block variables (used as the basis for creating final derived variables), these extreme values have been set to missing where the case had not been deleted. For these cases the final variables may have a valid value because the way in which final variables have been created effectively caps extremes in a way that the building block variables do not. This should be borne in mind when conducting analysis with the building block variables. Ungrouped minutes variables have been set to missing for all activities and overall when the respondent reported more than twelve hours of activity (of any intensity) on any week day or more than nine hours of activity (of any intensity) on any weekend day, or more than 40 activities on any one day. For these cases all building block minutes variables are set to missing.

7.5.3 Creation of composite sports

Once derived variables had been created at activity level, they were then aggregated up to create measures of participation spanning activity groups or broad activity groups. This was done by summing the minutes for each individual activity. Further detail about this is provided in the Code Book and User Guide.

²⁵ In the objective measurement study pupils used a waist worn accelerometer and completed the questionnaire so that their objective data could be compared with the data collected in the questionnaire. More detail is provided in the Year 1 (17-18) Technical Report.

7.5.4 Demographic derived variables

In addition to the activity and composite measures, demographic and geographic variables were created from the raw questionnaire data and from sample data. These included, for example, variables grouping year group, ethnicity, disability and family affluence. In addition, key variables such as whether watched live sports events, volunteering and swimming ability were rebased into versions with the population as the base, even when the key measure was only asked to a subgroup, based on responses to a previous question. The data also includes a number of school and geography-based variables which have been matched on based on the location and unique reference number of the school. Full details of the demographic, geographic and school-based variables are provided in the User Guide and Code Book.

7.5.5 Key definitions used for non-activity derived variables

Volunteering

This is defined as volunteering at least twice in the last 12 months to support sport and physical activity. Examples of volunteering activities include being a sports leader or ambassador, coaching, refereeing, umpiring and stewarding, helping with set up and clearing away, helping with refreshments and any other activities which support sport and physical activity. Activities which only help family members are not included. Activities which involve sport and activity to raise money for sport are not included in the measure, although pupils were asked about them.

These questions were asked to pupils in school year 5-11. Pupils in school year 5-6 and school year 7-11 were asked about a different range of activities (appropriate to their age) and so information on roles is presented in separate tables for these two year groups.

Pupils were asked whether they had 'volunteered or given your time to do any of the following activities'. The question for pupils in school years 5-6 included the clarification: 'Think only about when you do them to help with sports, exercise or dance'. Pupils could report on other activities not on the list. These were subsequently back coded and ineligible activities such as helping at Brownies or running cake sales were excluded. All pupils who had reported that they helped with at least one type of activity were asked whether they had given their time for these activities more than once in the last year. Only those who had done so more than once were included in the measure. Note that while 'coached or instructed' is a separate category for school year 7-11, for school year 5-6 any back coded answers for coaching are included in 'other'. Similarly, 'setting up or clearing away' is a separate category for school year 5-6 but for school year 7-11 any back coded answers of this type are included in 'other'. The results for school year 5-6 and 7-11 are presented separately because of the differences in codes.

Attitudes

There were five questions about attitudes included in the school year 3 to 11 questionnaire. These were based on the concept of physical literacy²⁶. School year 3-6 pupils were asked the first four and school year 7-11 pupils were asked all of them. Pupils were asked to respond on a scale with the following categories: strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, can't say. The data tables report on the percentage strongly agreeing to each statement.

- I enjoy taking part in exercise and sports (**enjoyment**)
- I feel confident when I exercise and play sports (**confidence**)

²⁶ 'Whitehead, M. (2016) Physical Literacy', *International Physical Literacy Association*

- I find exercise and sports easy (**competence**)
- I understand why exercise and sports are good for me (**understanding**)
- I know how to get involved and improve my skills in lots of different types of exercise and sport (**knowledge**)

School year 1-2 pupils were asked about their attitudes in a short questionnaire. They were asked:

- Do like playing sport? (I love, I like, I don't like, I hate... data tables report on the percentage saying I love) (**enjoyment**)
- Do you find sport easy? (yes, no, don't know... data tables report on the percentage saying yes) (**competence**)
- Do you like being active? This includes things like running games, riding a bike or scooter, walking, and dancing. (I love, I like, I don't like, I hate... data tables report on the percentage saying I love) (**enjoyment**)
- Do you like swimming? (I love, I like, I don't like, I hate, I don't know... data tables report on the percentage saying I love) (**enjoyment**) but included under swimming in reporting.

In the published data it is levels of strong agreement which are reported on (strongly agree or love doing).

Following cognitive testing, further attitudes questions were added to the school year 3-11 questionnaire in Year 4 (20-21). These were introduced to provide further details on motivations. More information about these questions can be found in section 7.1.2 covering questionnaire changes made in Year 4 (20-21). These attitudinal measures are not reported on in the data tables.

Wellbeing and individual and community development (Outcomes)

Three dimensions of mental wellbeing are presented: **happiness**, **life satisfaction** and the extent to which they feel the things they do in their life are **worthwhile**. For school year 1-2 a smiley face question was used which is expressed as three categories in the tables: happy, neither happy nor sad, sad. For school year 3-6 the standard ONS happiness yesterday question was used. For school year 7-11 the standard ONS happiness yesterday, life satisfaction and worthwhile questions were used.

Happiness: "How happy did you feel yesterday?" (school year 3-11)

Life Satisfaction: "How satisfied are you with life nowadays?" (school year 7-11)

Feeling your life is Worthwhile: "To what extent are the things you do in your life worthwhile" (school year 7-11)

These three questions are answered on an 11-point scale from 0 to 10 where 0 is not at all and 10 is completely. The results are presented as mean scores. The standard ONS wellbeing question about anxiety was not included as it is not recommended for use in children under 14 years old.

Individual and community development was captured from school year 3-11 pupils through a question about trying difficult things (positive perceived self-efficacy) and a question about trusting peers

(positive levels of social trust). Each question is asked on a 5-point scale from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). The questions asked were:

Individual Development: Using the resilience question "If I find something difficult, I keep trying until I can do it" (school year 3-11)

Community development: Using the trust question "How much do you feel you can trust people who are a similar age to you?" (school year 3-11)

As in Years 2 (18-19) and 3 (19-20), in Year 4 (20-21) the results for strongly agree are shown, which differs from the Year 1 (17-18) report when combined agree and strongly agree results were shown. The tables show the wellbeing and development indicators by demographic characteristics as well as split by level of activity and volunteering behaviour. See previous sections for activity and volunteering definitions. The findings for these variables can be found in Tables for Levels of Activity and Volunteering. In the Outcomes tables they are just used to look at levels of wellbeing and development split by level of activity and volunteering. The means for wellbeing tables are the mean calculated across the groups to which the answer relates from the scores of 0-10 which were used as answers to the questions.

Loneliness: In Year 3 (19-20), the harmonised ONS loneliness question was included for the first time for pupils in school years 7-11 and continued to be asked in Year 4 (20-21). This asked "How often do you feel lonely?" with answers of often/always, some of the time, occasionally, hardly ever, never. The data tables report on the full question as well as the percentage saying they often or always feel lonely.

Sports spectating

This is measured as having watched two or more live sports events, whether professional or amateur, over the previous 12 months.

Pupils were asked:

- Have you done this activity (attended a live sports event) in the past 12 months?
- How many live sporting events have you been to see since last year?

Additional information provided was: 'Include all matches and competitions, including professional sport as well as watching family and friends compete. Please do not include any events that you took part in yourself, or events you watched on TV'.

Answers of 'twice' or 'three or more' were included in this measure.

7.5.6 Key definitions used for demographic derived variables

Year group and gender

The report contains breakdowns by year group and gender. Gender includes the category 'other'. School year 7-11 pupils were asked to give more details. The details given were checked and a decision was made about whether to leave an answer as other or to back code to male or female because the detail indicated they were actually male or female. Where answers did not appear to indicate that they were male, female or other, they were coded as 'prefer not to say' or gender uncodeable.²⁷ Year group

²⁷ The gender uncodeable category was needed because some pupils used the other specify space to write irrelevant information which did not relate to their gender identity.

is the answer reported by the pupil or their parent. In some cases, this was inconsistent with the age given but we took the year group as given and did not recode.

A derived variable of gender and school year combined has been included. The year group breakdown for the gender category 'other' has not been shown because of small base sizes.

Ethnicity

Parents of school year 1-2 pupils were asked about their child's ethnicity using the full ONS standard question with a breakdown of ethnic groups. These have been grouped into broader categories for analysis. Ethnicity for school year 3-11 pupils was self-reported and used a simplified question which offered these categories: White (British or English), White (not British or English), Mixed race, Asian or British Asian, Black or Black British, Other, Prefer not to say (in Year 1 (17-18) of the survey 'none of these' was presented rather than other and prefer not to say). For school year 1-2 pupils, ethnicity was reported by the parents. In the parent questionnaire the full census list of ethnic groups was offered and answers of Chinese have been coded into other. In the pupil questionnaire Chinese was not offered so answers may be found in Asian or Other depending on the pupil's preference.

A derived variable of gender and ethnicity combined has been included. The ethnic breakdown for the gender category 'other' has not been shown in published report tables because of small base sizes.

Family Affluence Scale

This is a standard scale developed for the Health Behaviour in School Aged Children Survey (an international study of 11-15 year olds). Minor modifications were made to the questions to make them suitable for parents and for younger children for whom the scale was not originally designed. The updated version of the scale was used which asks the following questions.

- We would now like to ask you some questions about your home and your family. Does your family own a car, van or truck?
- Do you have your own bedroom for yourself?
- How many computers does your family own (including laptops and tablets/iPads, but NOT including game consoles and smartphones)?
- How many times did you and your family travel out of England for a holiday last year?
- How many bathrooms (room with a shower/bath or both) are in your home?

Answers to these questions were scored according to the answers given, resulting in an overall score between 0 and 13 for the standard Family Affluence Score measure. Scores of 0-6=low, 7-10=medium, 11-13=high. Note that in the autumn term of Year 1 (17-18), the car question only had yes/no categories when it should have had none, one, two or more. This means that scores in the autumn term have a maximum of 12. Adjustments have been made to the groupings to allow for this in the Year 1 (17-18) data. In Years 2 (18-19), 3 (19-20) and 4 (20-21), the correct question was asked throughout the survey year.

In Year 4 (20-21), an adjusted Family Affluence Scale (FAS) derived variable has been created and included in the data tables. In previous years, the FAS variable has been created from answers to all of the above questions. Owing to COVID-19 restrictions, it was not possible or was difficult, regardless of social background, to travel out of England at some points over the previous 12 months for most of

academic year 2020-21. Therefore, a second FAS variable has been created, excluding answers to this question. This means that an overall score would be between 0 and 10, so the groupings for the bands have been adjusted – scores of 0-5=low, 6-8=medium, 9-10=high. It is important to note that the bands for the adjusted FAS variable are not comparable with the bands on the standard FAS variable. The adjusted FAS variable has been created retrospectively for previous survey years for comparability and only this adjusted FAS variable has been included in the Year 4 (20-21) reporting.

Disabilities or long-term health conditions and number of impairments

The questions asked about disability or long-term health conditions were updated in Year 3 (19-20) and remained the same in Year 4 (20-21). In Years 1 (17-18) and 2 (18-19), the questions about disability or health conditions varied by age, but in Years 3 (19-20) and 4 (20-21), all school year 3-11 pupils and parents of school year 1-2 pupils were asked the same questions. Respondents were asked: “Do you²⁸ have a disability, special need or illness (e.g. autism, dyslexia, or asthma) which makes it difficult for you to do any of these things” and shown a list of tasks which included things like ‘moving around including walking and running’ and ‘concentrating and paying attention’. If the answer was ‘yes’ they were asked which of those things they have difficulty with. If they selected any of the things in the list, they were then asked: “Do any of these disabilities, special needs or illnesses have a big effect on your life?” (to identify whether the disability or health condition is limiting) and: “Do you think any of these disabilities, special needs or illnesses will last for a year or more?” (to identify whether the disability or health condition is long-term).

Those who said yes at the initial question and both the question about the disability or health condition having a big effect on their life and whether they think it will last for a year or more were defined as having a long-term limiting disability or health condition (reported in the data tables).

The number and type of impairment was derived from the information given about specific things they found difficult to do and whether that impairment is long-term limiting. It should be noted that this is the number of impairments from a set list.

Those in the no long-term limiting disability or health condition category are those who reported no to the initial disability or health condition question or no to the disability or health condition having a big effect on their life or whether they think it will last for a year or more. Note that because this was a new question for the Year 3 (19-20) survey, data on disability and impairments is not displayed in the tables for Year 1 (17-18) or, for trends tables, Year 2 (18-19).

7.5.7 Teacher data

The teacher data contains some key information about the length of PE lessons and break and lunchtime. This information also fed into decisions about imputation of during normal school hours session lengths for pupil activity derived variables, alongside evidence from the objective measurement study. For some questions, other answers given by the teachers were back coded into existing or new categories and incorporated into the data. In the teacher dataset some derived variables grouping different types of facilities and activities are included. Derivation has also been used to group year groups, roles and responsibilities and to set some ‘don’t know’ answers to missing. Teachers’ answers to questions about food education, school food standards, participation in PE and active travel to school were used to create a Healthy Schools rating for the school. This is not included in the published outputs but has been provided to schools in individual school level reports. In Year 4 (20-21), a new question was added about the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on PE and other activities offered at

²⁸ Or your son or your daughter in parent questionnaire

the school. This included an option to write free text for 'other' answers which were back coded into existing or new categories and incorporated into the data. Derived variables have also been created from this data on whether PE and use of facilities have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

7.6 The checks on the derived variables

Once the derived variables had been created, a variety of checks were performed to ensure that they had been calculated correctly.

7.6.1 Checking activity and sports measures

The main activity related derived variables are created for multiple composite activities (as described above). Initially, checks were carried out at the activity level. Firstly, the hard logic of the syntax used to derive each measure was checked against the specification. Next, selected activities were tested by cross-tabulating the raw (source) variables against the derived variables to confirm that the data matched as it should. Extensive checks were carried out on the derived variables, ensuring that the derived variables matched the specification at every step of the derivation. This was done by creating temporary 'checking variables' where syntax was written to match the specification. The temporary variable was then compared to the actual variable and any cases which did not match exactly would reveal where there may have been any problems with the derivation. These cases were investigated and dealt with appropriately.

This was done in steps to ensure that the relationship between raw and derived variables was built up correctly. Checks were used to ensure that:

- day of doing an activity was only recorded where the child reported an activity in the last week,
- minutes were only recorded for an activity reported on for at least one day in the last week,
- the derived intensity variables for each activity corresponded to the answers given to the survey questions,
- the minutes of activity in setting (during or outside normal school hours, indoors or outdoors) related to answers given to the questions
- the minutes of activity in derived variables corresponded to the time reported or the correct figure for imputation for that activity and year group.

In addition, checks were conducted to ensure that other answers were feeding into participation measures correctly.

The composite sports variables were only created once it was confirmed that the individual activity variables had been derived correctly. Checks were also carried out to ensure that the correct activities fed into each composite, which would then be used for multiple participation variables. Primarily, the SPSS syntax was checked against the specification (which was itself checked and signed off by the Sport England team) to ensure that composite variables were defined correctly for the key activity measures.

Comparisons were made between different participation measures to check that the way in which they related was consistent with how they had been defined.

Where problems were found, the syntax was corrected, the variables recreated and the checks repeated to ensure that the final data were correct. In a small number of cases inconsistencies in data were found for individual cases. These were investigated and found to relate to likely back tracking in the questionnaire leading to small inconsistencies. No cases were deleted as a result of these checks as the resulting data was not significantly affected.

7.6.2 Checking demographic variables

Demographic variables were checked primarily by cross tabulation of the raw variables against the derived variables. A sense check was applied to variables to ensure that the frequencies 'looked' right. Finally, the demographic variables were checked against each other to ensure that they were internally consistent. This included checking that age bands tallied across variables and that derived variables which used the same source data contained the same number of valid responses. Checks were also made by comparing the pattern of activity by demographic group for across all the survey years.

7.7 Confidence intervals

Confidence intervals for the measures presented in the report can be found in the linked report tables. Confidence intervals indicate that if repeated samples were taken and confidence intervals computed for each sample, 95% of the intervals would contain the true value. Confidence intervals vary for each measure and each demographic breakdown.

Confidence intervals have been calculated using the complex samples package in SPSS, which takes account of design effects. They are presented for rates (%) in the report tables. Confidence intervals would also apply to the population estimates presented in the report and report tables.

Sometimes confidence intervals cannot be provided, for example when the rate is 100%. In this case the symbol ^ is used. See the next section for more detail on the other circumstance in which confidence intervals cannot be calculated.

Confidence intervals vary for each measure and each demographic breakdown and will vary from year to year. Confidence intervals should be calculated using the complex survey package in SPSS, which takes account of design effects.

7.8 Design effects

In the Year 4 (20-21) tables, for analysis by demographic variables and large geography (region and Active Partnership) the calculation of confidence intervals takes account of strata (local authority) and clustering (school). Where there is only one school in a strata overall or for the demographic sub-groups being presented, confidence intervals cannot be calculated. The symbol ^ is used when confidence intervals cannot be calculated because only one school took part in each Active Partnership or local authority covered by the particular demographic or geographic category being shown. Where Active Partnerships, County Councils and Local Authorities have an unweighted base of less than 150, or only 1-2 responding schools overall (or for the school phase), results are suppressed as there are too few respondents and/or insufficient variance in the data to produce a reliable result. Caution is also taken when analysing by these three types of geographical variables, as there may be missing terms (e.g. no summer term responses) or missing school phases (e.g. no school year 3-6 responses) for the academic year; making the response profile differ slightly to previous years. The report tables use a highlight system and explanatory text, so it is clear for users to take caution. This is explained in more detail below.

7.9 Population estimates

These are estimates of the number of pupils in a particular group (for example, the number of pupils in the less active group, or the number of boys who have attended a live sports event at least twice in the last year).

The estimates have been calculated using the rate (%) and the 2020-21 DfE pupil population estimates, and therefore the true value would lie within a range around the estimates. The 2020-21 DfE pupil data was used so that the estimates would be based on the data for the academic year the survey took place. For sub-groups the population estimate is calculated from the share of the weighted responses for that category. The confidence intervals for the population estimates can be calculated by dividing the population estimate by the rate (%) and multiplying by the lower and upper confidence interval rates in the report tables. In some cases, a population estimate has not been provided. Note that in the report tables a single * is used to mean there are fewer than 30 cases in that cell so the population estimate cannot be presented. ** is used where a decision has been made not to publish population estimates. For example, for number of impairments (LT, limiting) because the categorisation in the data does not match those provided in population data.

On the tables presented by term, where the demographic split involves year group, the population estimates have been calculated using the rate multiplied by the population in the relevant school phase (school year 1-2, 3-6, 7-11) rather than using rates for school year 1-11 or 3-11 and shares for the sub-groups. This is because, as outlined earlier, the distribution of responding pupils by phase and term is not consistent across the years because of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on sample size. It was not possible to weight to correct for this, as explained in the weighting section, and so the share approach to calculating population estimates was not suitable. Within these phases (e.g., school years 7-8, 9-11 or by gender) the share approach was used. For annual analysis the weighting does take account of the varying distribution of phase by year and so the standard share measure was used to calculate population estimates.

7.10 Minimum base sizes

7.10.1 Data suppression

The data has been suppressed for certain cells in the data tables:

- Where the unweighted number of respondents responding to the question overall or to an individual category is less than 30, results are not presented. The symbol * is used to indicate this.
- Where the number of schools contributing to the results for an Active Partnership or local authority is 2 or fewer. The symbol ^ is used to indicate this.
- Where the unweighted base for an Active Partnership or local authority is less than 150. The symbol ^ is used to indicate this.

7.10.2 Flagged data

In the data tables, the absolute change in the significance table for Active Partnerships or local authorities may be highlighted in yellow. This indicates that the result is not based on all school year phases (a phase is defined as school years 1-2, school years 3-6 and school years 7-11). The highlight indicates at least one of these school phases is missing from the Active Partnership or local authority's result. Alternatively, the result may also be highlighted when there is missing data from a particular term for the Active Partnership or local authority (e.g., if there are no responses during the Autumn term). The

Absolute change is highlighted in yellow to indicate that this change needs to be interpreted with caution. Please refer to the lookup table which provides more detail on why that figure has been flagged, e.g., just school years 3-6 responses in Year 4 (20-21) (i.e., missing school phases 1-2 and 7-11) or missing Summer term data in Year 3 (19-20).

7.11 Significance testing

The report and accompanying tables show data for the first survey year, the previous survey year and the current survey year (academic year 2017-18, academic year 2019-20 and academic year 2020-21). This has allowed for analysis of the change in participation and activity levels over time.

Note that disability variables are different in Years 3 (19-20) and 4 (20-21) from Years 1 (17-18) and 2 (18-19) because of an improvement to the questions after cognitive testing with young people, therefore, figures are not shown in the data tables for Year 1 (17-18). The disability variables in Years 3 (19-20) and 4 (20-21) are all for long-term limiting disability and impairments. In Year 1 (17-18) and 2 (18-19) reports, data were shown for all disability whether or not long-term limiting.

To compare data across the three survey years, significance testing has been applied to the report tables. This indicates whether changes observed across survey years are likely to be 'true' changes in the population, rather than just observed by chance. Year 4 (20-21) is compared to Year 1 (17-18) and Year 3 (19-20).

Standard errors were generated using the complex samples module in SPSS: these were then applied to t-tests to assess statistical significance.

Only differences which are statistically significant are reported on as differences in the commentary in the published report²⁹. When results are reported as being the same for two groups, this means there is no statistically significant difference.

The accompanying tables also include data for the full time series. These tables are intended as summary statistics only, and so significance testing has not been applied to them.

²⁹ <https://www.sportengland.org/news/coronavirus-challenges-highlight-importance-physical-activity-and-sport-children>

08

Appendices

8 Appendices

Geographical breakdown of Year 4 (20-21) survey responses

These data include complete and partial responses from sampled schools, including school year 1-2, school year 3-11, parent and teacher responses.

Table 8.1: Number of schools by Active Partnership (school year 1-2, 3-11, parent or teacher)

Active Partnership	Selected schools	Responding schools	% of selected schools responding
Active Black Country	87	18	21%
Active Cheshire	81	15	19%
Active Cornwall	21	9	43%
Active Cumbria	100	30	30%
Active Devon	186	33	18%
Active Dorset	50	11	22%
Active Essex	262	84	32%
Active Gloucestershire	111	22	20%
Active Herefordshire & Worcestershire	134	54	40%
Active Humber	97	17	18%
Active Lancashire	247	112	45%
Active Lincolnshire	134	45	34%
Active Norfolk	132	16	12%
Active Oxfordshire	108	18	17%
Active Partners Trust (Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire)	348	48	14%
Active Suffolk	108	25	23%
Active Surrey	202	44	22%
Active Sussex	237	42	18%
Active Together - Leicestershire & Rutland Sport	168	39	23%
County Durham Sport	27	1	4%
Energise Me (Hampshire and IOW)	292	49	17%
Energize Shropshire Telford & Wrekin	47	21	45%

Active Partnership	Selected schools	Responding schools	% of selected schools responding
Get Berkshire Active	136	27	20%
Greater Sport (Manchester)	239	50	21%
Herts Sports Partnership	198	58	29%
Kent Sport	287	69	24%
Leap (Bucks & Milton Keynes)	54	13	24%
Living Sport (Cambridgeshire & Peterborough)	120	33	28%
London Sport	902	69	8%
Merseyside Sports Partnership	144	12	8%
North Yorkshire Sport	138	41	30%
Northamptonshire Sport	115	69	60%
Rise (Northumberland and Tyne & Wear)	137	31	23%
Somerset Activity & Sports Partnership	87	19	22%
Sport Birmingham	25	10	40%
Team Beds & Luton	67	38	57%
Tees Valley Sport	96	20	21%
Think Active (Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire)	154	15	10%
Together Active Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent	186	22	12%
Wesport (West of England)	89	10	11%
Wiltshire & Swindon Sport	49	9	18%
Yorkshire Sport Foundation	252	51	20%

Table 8.2: Number of schools and responses (school year 1-2, 3-11, parent or teacher) by Local Authority³⁰

Local Authority	Code	Selected schools	Responding schools	Responding pupils, parents, teachers
Adur	E07000223	14	0	0
Allerdale	E07000026	18	5	175
Amber Valley	E07000032	22	2	29
Arun	E07000224	18	4	178
Ashfield	E07000170	19	3	289
Ashford	E07000105	22	2	106
Babergh	E07000200	16	4	224
Barking and Dagenham	E09000002	26	2	33
Barnet	E09000003	33	0	0
Barnsley	E08000016	22	3	119
Barrow-in-Furness	E07000027	15	6	423
Basildon	E07000066	23	3	50
Basingstoke and Deane	E07000084	22	5	356
Bassetlaw	E07000171	20	3	82
Bath and North East Somerset	E06000022	22	3	263
Bedford	E06000055	25	14	1436
Bexley	E09000004	25	9	608
Birmingham	E08000025	25	10	974
Blaby	E07000129	14	1	1
Blackburn with Darwen	E06000008	24	7	485
Blackpool	E06000009	17	6	461
Bolsover	E07000033	19	1	95
Bolton	E08000001	27	3	106
Boston	E07000136	15	6	460
Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole	E06000028	24	6	591

³⁰ The local authorities shown in this table are the pre-April 2021 local authorities used for sampling. This shows the responses in each sampled local authority. In April 2021, Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering and Wellingborough District Councils merged to form a new single unitary council called 'North Northamptonshire'. Daventry, Northampton and South Northamptonshire District Councils merged to form a new single unitary council called 'West Northamptonshire'.

Local Authority	Code	Selected schools	Responding schools	Responding pupils, parents, teachers
Bracknell Forest	E06000036	20	3	154
Bradford	E08000032	30	4	411
Braintree	E07000067	19	10	778
Breckland	E07000143	20	3	253
Brent	E09000005	26	4	203
Brentwood	E07000068	17	4	235
Brighton and Hove	E06000043	25	8	380
Bristol	E06000023	27	0	0
Broadland	E07000144	19	1	70
Bromley	E09000006	31	0	0
Bromsgrove	E07000234	25	7	519
Broxbourne	E07000095	17	4	251
Broxtowe	E07000172	20	3	107
Buckinghamshire	E06000060	31	6	342
Burnley	E07000117	14	10	1116
Bury	E08000002	23	6	450
Calderdale	E08000033	26	9	613
Cambridge	E07000008	24	4	280
Camden	E09000007	28	7	463
Cannock Chase	E07000192	18	0	0
Canterbury	E07000106	25	1	138
Carlisle	E07000028	16	6	361
Castle Point	E07000069	14	7	451
Central Bedfordshire	E06000056	21	12	1181
Charnwood	E07000130	22	4	156
Chelmsford	E07000070	22	8	432
Cheltenham	E07000078	19	3	199
Cherwell	E07000177	21	4	355
Cheshire East	E06000049	26	5	568
Cheshire West and Chester	E06000050	29	6	266
Chesterfield	E07000034	19	6	320
Chichester	E07000225	20	2	102

Local Authority	Code	Selected schools	Responding schools	Responding pupils, parents, teachers
Chorley	E07000118	16	9	680
Colchester	E07000071	23	6	504
Copeland	E07000029	14	3	182
Corby	E07000150	17	6	226
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	E06000052	21	9	474
Cotswold	E07000079	19	3	146
County Durham	E06000047	27	1	22
Coventry	E08000026	26	4	137
Craven	E07000163	18	2	259
Crawley	E07000226	19	3	259
Croydon	E09000008	33	0	0
Dacorum	E07000096	24	9	591
Darlington	E06000005	20	10	421
Dartford	E07000107	19	8	668
Daventry	E07000151	14	8	623
Derby	E06000015	29	2	47
Derbyshire Dales	E07000035	19	2	111
Doncaster	E08000017	28	1	45
Dorset	E06000059	26	5	244
Dover	E07000108	23	8	489
Dudley	E08000027	22	6	532
Ealing	E09000009	32	2	140
East Cambridgeshire	E07000009	16	6	350
East Devon	E07000040	22	4	257
East Hampshire	E07000085	22	2	113
East Hertfordshire	E07000242	27	5	204
East Lindsey	E07000137	22	7	448
East Northamptonshire	E07000152	16	10	684
East Riding of Yorkshire	E06000011	29	1	41
East Staffordshire	E07000193	19	3	400

Local Authority	Code	Selected schools	Responding schools	Responding pupils, parents, teachers
East Suffolk	E07000244	28	3	172
Eastbourne	E07000061	17	2	85
Eastleigh	E07000086	20	1	108
Eden	E07000030	17	4	144
Elmbridge	E07000207	22	3	120
Enfield	E09000010	23	6	392
Epping Forest	E07000072	22	4	113
Epsom and Ewell	E07000208	18	4	376
Erewash	E07000036	19	7	661
Exeter	E07000041	18	4	262
Fareham	E07000087	18	3	214
Fenland	E07000010	19	4	214
Forest of Dean	E07000080	18	4	224
Fylde	E07000119	14	5	338
Gateshead	E08000037	19	7	769
Gedling	E07000173	21	2	60
Gloucester	E07000081	21	3	71
Gosport	E07000088	17	2	134
Gravesham	E07000109	23	4	195
Great Yarmouth	E07000145	18	1	1
Greenwich	E09000011	30	0	0
Guildford	E07000209	20	4	415
Hackney and City of London	E09000012	34	0	0
Halton	E06000006	21	0	0
Hambleton	E07000164	14	4	347
Hammersmith and Fulham	E09000013	30	0	0
Harborough	E07000131	18	8	486
Haringey	E09000014	28	3	84
Harlow	E07000073	19	1	2
Harrogate	E07000165	22	9	832
Harrow	E09000015	29	1	68

Local Authority	Code	Selected schools	Responding schools	Responding pupils, parents, teachers
Hart	E07000089	19	1	84
Hartlepool	E06000001	17	1	21
Hastings	E07000062	13	3	154
Havant	E07000090	18	4	207
Havering	E09000016	28	0	0
Herefordshire	E06000019	23	7	680
Hertsmere	E07000098	24	4	259
High Peak	E07000037	20	1	245
Hillingdon	E09000017	26	3	152
Hinckley and Bosworth	E07000132	24	4	299
Horsham	E07000227	20	1	82
Hounslow	E09000018	30	0	0
Huntingdonshire	E07000011	20	6	395
Hyndburn	E07000120	16	9	750
Ipswich	E07000202	21	5	291
Isle of Wight	E06000046	20	6	409
Islington	E09000019	22	5	400
Kensington and Chelsea	E09000020	25	0	0
Kettering	E07000153	17	14	1141
King's Lynn and West Norfolk	E07000146	18	3	445
Kingston upon Hull	E06000010	24	2	115
Kingston upon Thames	E09000021	28	0	0
Kirklees	E08000034	29	4	278
Knowsley	E08000011	20	3	110
Lambeth	E09000022	30	0	0
Lancaster	E07000121	16	5	342
Leeds	E08000035	31	8	476
Leicester	E06000016	25	6	404
Lewes	E07000063	16	4	173
Lewisham	E09000023	27	1	40

Local Authority	Code	Selected schools	Responding schools	Responding pupils, parents, teachers
Lichfield	E07000194	15	1	163
Lincoln	E07000138	19	6	493
Liverpool	E08000012	26	2	277
Luton	E06000032	21	12	813
Maidstone	E07000110	26	5	354
Maldon	E07000074	14	4	315
Malvern Hills	E07000235	16	4	386
Manchester	E08000003	27	4	144
Mansfield	E07000174	19	2	97
Medway	E06000035	25	10	625
Melton	E07000133	13	3	213
Mendip	E07000187	23	6	137
Merton	E09000024	25	1	74
Mid Devon	E07000042	15	4	367
Mid Suffolk	E07000203	19	3	64
Mid Sussex	E07000228	23	4	141
Middlesbrough	E06000002	17	6	355
Milton Keynes	E06000042	23	7	597
Mole Valley	E07000210	15	2	96
New Forest	E07000091	23	4	275
Newark and Sherwood	E07000175	19	1	115
Newcastle upon Tyne	E08000021	27	3	229
Newcastle-under-Lyme	E07000195	23	1	72
Newham	E09000025	21	3	205
North Devon	E07000043	19	3	201
North East Derbyshire	E07000038	17	0	0
North East Lincolnshire	E06000012	24	1	26
North Hertfordshire	E07000099	20	6	515
North Kesteven	E07000139	19	6	459
North Lincolnshire	E06000013	20	13	1172

Local Authority	Code	Selected schools	Responding schools	Responding pupils, parents, teachers
North Norfolk	E07000147	19	2	199
North Somerset	E06000024	20	2	129
North Tyneside	E08000022	26	4	230
North Warwickshire	E07000218	17	1	1
North West Leicestershire	E07000134	19	5	231
Northampton	E07000154	21	17	1676
Northumberland	E06000057	27	3	256
Norwich	E07000148	19	3	145
Nottingham	E06000018	30	2	223
Nuneaton and Bedworth	E07000219	21	1	39
Oadby and Wigston	E07000135	17	5	282
Oldham	E08000004	23	5	295
Oxford	E07000178	22	3	78
Pendle	E07000122	15	7	428
Peterborough	E06000031	22	3	96
Plymouth	E06000026	25	5	325
Portsmouth	E06000044	26	3	342
Preston	E07000123	20	9	851
Reading	E06000038	21	4	236
Redbridge	E09000026	31	1	24
Redcar and Cleveland	E06000003	19	0	0
Redditch	E07000236	20	11	735
Reigate and Banstead	E07000211	18	7	667
Ribble Valley	E07000124	17	11	932
Richmond upon Thames	E09000027	32	1	76
Richmondshire	E07000166	15	5	425
Rochdale	E08000005	22	3	224
Rochford	E07000075	14	8	458
Rossendale	E07000125	14	11	859
Rother	E07000064	16	5	339

Local Authority	Code	Selected schools	Responding schools	Responding pupils, parents, teachers
Rotherham	E08000018	28	8	466
Rugby	E07000220	20	5	375
Runnymede	E07000212	20	2	149
Rushcliffe	E07000176	21	5	636
Rushmoor	E07000092	19	4	274
Rutland	E06000017	16	3	144
Ryedale	E07000167	15	6	689
Salford	E08000006	27	3	122
Sandwell	E08000028	22	6	347
Scarborough	E07000168	16	5	630
Sedgemoor	E07000188	17	2	332
Sefton	E08000014	28	2	66
Selby	E07000169	15	4	687
Sevenoaks	E07000111	19	5	255
Sheffield	E08000019	26	8	277
Folkestone and Hythe	E07000112	17	3	277
Shropshire	E06000051	24	14	1235
Slough	E06000039	22	6	237
Solihull	E08000029	28	1	139
Somerset West and Taunton	E07000246	25	2	122
South Cambridgeshire	E07000012	19	10	1082
South Derbyshire	E07000039	15	6	583
South Gloucestershire	E06000025	20	5	373
South Hams	E07000044	18	2	208
South Holland	E07000140	17	2	211
South Kesteven	E07000141	22	13	905
South Lakeland	E07000031	20	6	451
South Norfolk	E07000149	19	3	150
South Northamptonshire	E07000155	17	10	899
South Oxfordshire	E07000179	23	3	232

Local Authority	Code	Selected schools	Responding schools	Responding pupils, parents, teachers
South Ribble	E07000126	24	9	451
South Somerset	E07000189	22	9	449
South Staffordshire	E07000196	25	2	259
South Tyneside	E08000023	18	7	405
Southampton	E06000045	27	6	443
Southend-on-Sea	E06000033	20	18	1736
Southwark	E09000028	32	1	54
Spelthorne	E07000213	18	3	248
St Albans	E07000240	23	11	643
St. Helens	E08000013	21	4	152
Stafford	E07000197	20	5	305
Staffordshire Moorlands	E07000198	25	3	138
Stevenage	E07000243	15	4	389
Stockport	E08000007	23	11	615
Stockton-on-Tees	E06000004	23	3	226
Stoke-on-Trent	E06000021	23	6	365
Stratford-on-Avon	E07000221	24	1	9
Stroud	E07000082	18	4	287
Sunderland	E08000024	20	7	322
Surrey Heath	E07000214	15	3	176
Sutton	E09000029	21	6	459
Swale	E07000113	20	6	569
Swindon	E06000030	23	3	236
Tameside	E08000008	24	5	153
Tamworth	E07000199	18	1	1
Tandridge	E07000215	18	4	400
Teignbridge	E07000045	17	2	237
Telford and Wrekin	E06000020	23	7	911
Tendring	E07000076	16	5	535
Test Valley	E07000093	21	6	390
Tewkesbury	E07000083	16	5	328
Thanet	E07000114	21	5	322

Local Authority	Code	Selected schools	Responding schools	Responding pupils, parents, teachers
Three Rivers	E07000102	19	5	177
Thurrock	E06000034	20	4	489
Tonbridge and Malling	E07000115	21	5	376
Torbay	E06000027	20	1	138
Torridge	E07000046	18	4	349
Tower Hamlets	E09000030	24	3	182
Trafford	E08000009	21	4	243
Tunbridge Wells	E07000116	26	7	641
Uttlesford	E07000077	19	2	76
Vale of White Horse	E07000180	20	6	285
Wakefield	E08000036	32	6	306
Walsall	E08000030	22	2	150
Waltham Forest	E09000031	30	3	201
Wandsworth	E09000032	32	6	302
Warrington	E06000007	26	4	207
Warwick	E07000222	18	2	152
Watford	E07000103	14	4	378
Waverley	E07000216	22	7	1269
Wealden	E07000065	18	3	201
Wellingborough	E07000156	13	4	490
Welwyn Hatfield	E07000241	15	6	315
West Berkshire	E06000037	22	7	367
West Devon	E07000047	14	4	315
West Lancashire	E07000127	18	11	596
West Lindsey	E07000142	20	5	386
West Oxfordshire	E07000181	22	2	49
West Suffolk	E07000245	24	10	562
Westminster	E09000033	30	1	39
Wigan	E08000010	22	6	463
Wiltshire	E06000054	26	6	729
Winchester	E07000094	20	2	69

Local Authority	Code	Selected schools	Responding schools	Responding pupils, parents, teachers
Windsor and Maidenhead	E06000040	26	5	480
Wirral	E08000015	28	1	2
Woking	E07000217	16	5	535
Wokingham	E06000041	25	2	429
Wolverhampton	E08000031	21	4	199
Worcester	E07000237	17	7	421
Worthing	E07000229	18	3	179
Wychavon	E07000238	17	9	541
Wyre	E07000128	22	3	184
Wyre Forest	E07000239	16	9	535
York	E06000014	23	6	492

Note that City of London is included with Hackney and the Isles of Scilly with Cornwall

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