



Department
for Education

Bullying: Evidence from LSYPE2, wave 3

Research brief

June 2018

Department for Education



Social Science in Government

Contents

List of figures	4
List of tables	5
Summary	6
Main findings	6
Overall	6
Types of bullying	6
GCSE results and bullying	7
Location and truancy	7
Bullying by characteristics	7
Why do young people think bullying is happening	8
Parental awareness of bullying	8
Introduction	9
Aims	9
Background	9
The Longitudinal Study of Young People in England	9
Methodology	10
Sampling	10
Attrition	10
Questions not responded to	10
Statistical testing	11
Findings	12
Year 11 in 2015 (LSYPE2, wave 3)	12
Trends in bullying	13
Year 10 (2014) to year 11 (2015) – LSYPE2: waves 2 and 3	13
Year 11 (2006) to year 11 (2015) – LSYPE1: wave 3 & LSYPE2: wave 3	14
Is there a link between bullying and GCSE results?	16
Location and truancy	18
Where does bullying take place?	18
Bullying and truancy	19

Bullying by characteristics	21
Gender	21
Disability	22
Special Educational Needs	23
Deprivation	24
Religion	25
Ethnicity	27
Why do young people think bullying is happening?	28
Parental awareness of bullying	30
Conclusions	31

List of figures

Figure 1: Proportion of young people reporting each type of bullying in LSYPE2, year 10 (2014) and year 11 (2015)	13
Figure 2: Proportion of young people reporting each type of bullying in year 11, LSYPE1 (2006) and LSYPE2 (2015)	14
Figure 3: Proportion of males and females reporting each type of bullying in year 11, LSYPE1 (2006) and LSYPE2 (2015)	15
Figure 4: Proportion of young people achieving at least each threshold for GCSE capped points score, split by whether the student reported being bullied	17
Figure 5: Whether reported bullying occurred within school	18
Figure 6: Proportion of young people that had truanted in last 12 months, split by whether the student was bullied or not.	19
Figure 7: Proportion of young people experiencing each type of bullying, split by gender	21
Figure 8: Proportion of young people reporting being bullied, split by whether or not they have a disability	22
Figure 9: Proportion of young people reporting being bullied, split by the degree of Special Educational Needs	23
Figure 10: Proportion of young people reporting being bullied, split by the deprivation of the area where they live	24
Figure 11: Proportion of young people identifying with each religion that reported being bullied	25
Figure 12: Proportion of young people who report being bullied, given their response to the question, 'How important is religion to the way you live your life?'	26
Figure 13: Bullying rates of Christian and Muslim young people who said religion was 'very important' to the way they live their lives	26
Figure 14: Proportion of young people of each ethnicity that report being bullied	27
Figure 15: Reasons young people gave for being bullied	28
Figure 16: Reasons why ethnic minority and white young people feel they are bullied	29
Figure 17: Proportion of parents that reported their child had been bullied in the last 12 months, split by whether the young person reported being bullied themselves	30

List of tables

Table 1: Percentage of young people reporting each type of bullying in year 11	12
Table 2: Reasons young people that reported bullying gave for decision to truant	20
Table 3: Bullying by Characteristics in LSYPE2 Wave 3 Sample - Summary	33

Summary

This research brief examines the prevalence and nature of bullying. It is based on data from the second Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE2).

In 2015, LSYPE2 interviewed 10,010 young people in year 11. This was an important year for these young people, with the vast majority sitting their GCSEs. Here, their responses to questions about bullying are compared with the answers they gave the previous year when they were in year 10. Their responses are also compared with those of an earlier cohort of young people who were in year 11 in 2006 (those interviewed as part of LSYPE1).

This report is largely based on bivariate analyses describing the level of reported bullying when looking at different groups. This does not show whether belonging to a group is one of the main causes of higher or lower levels of bullying - this would require multi-variate analysis, an approach that may be undertaken in the future.

Main findings

Overall

A significantly smaller proportion of year 11 pupils in 2015 reported having been bullied in the last 12 months than the same pupils did the year before, when they were in year 10. The overall bullying rate fell from 37% in year 10 to 30% in year 11.

There was also a fall in reported bullying rates for this cohort, relative to the year 11 cohort from 2006. Excluding cyberbullying to allow for direct comparison between the cohorts, bullying fell from 29.1% to 28.6%. This reduction is relatively small but is statistically significant.

Types of bullying

Name calling remains the most common type of bullying (15%), although social exclusion, such as being excluded from a group of friends or activities, is experienced by almost as many young people (14%). Violent bullying has reduced between 2006 and 2015, with a smaller proportion of young people reporting threats of violence (14% to 10%) and actual violence (10% to 6%). However, social exclusion has increased (11% to 14%) and there has been a small rise in name calling (by close to 1 percentage point). Cyberbullying was reported by 10% of young people in 2015 but was not asked about in 2006.

The proportion of females reporting bullying has increased over the period since 2006 and is driven by a rise in name calling and social exclusion. Males, on the other hand,

have seen overall rates of bullying decrease since 2006, driven by reductions in the proportion experiencing violent bullying. As a result, females have gone from being almost equally likely as males to be bullied in 2006, to being significantly more likely than males to be bullied in 2015 (26% compared to 35%).

GCSE results and bullying

Year 11 attainment (measured by mean GCSE capped points score¹), was slightly lower for young people who reported being bullied than their non-bullied peers. The difference was equivalent to two grades in one GCSE qualification. However, the direction of any causality in this relationship is unclear.

Location and truancy

Bullying continues to take place mainly at school, with the exception of cyberbullying. As reported in the wave 2 briefing², a link between bullying and truancy seems to exist, with bullied young people being more likely to truant (24% vs. 12% for non-bullied young people). However, just 4% of those who truant say that being bullied is the main reason.

Bullying by characteristics

Females are significantly more likely to report being bullied than males overall (35% vs. 26%), though males are more likely to experience violent bullying. Females are more likely than males to report name calling (21% vs. 10%), social exclusion (19% vs. 9%) and cyberbullying (13% vs. 6%). In contrast, males are more likely than females to report threats of violence (12% vs. 9%) and actual violence (9% vs. 4%).

Young people with disabilities are more likely to report being bullied (36%) than their peers (29%). Similarly, young people with Special Educational Needs are more likely to report being bullied (36%) than their peers (29%).

Young people resident in the most deprived quarter of areas in the country are slightly less likely (28%) to report being bullied than their peers living in less deprived areas (31%). However, only the difference between the most and least deprived quarter of areas was statistically significant.

¹ GCSE capped points score is calculated as the sum of a student's 8 best GCSE grades. Each grade is converted into points on the scale A*=58, A=52, B=46, C=40, D=34, E=28, F=22, G=16. For example, if a student achieved 2Bs, 4Cs, 3Ds and an F, we would include the 2Bs, 4Cs and 2 of the Ds as the best 8 results. The capped points score would be (2*46)+(4*40)+(2*34)=320.

² [Bullying: Evidence from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England 2, wave 2](#)

Young people of Asian and African ethnicities are least likely to report being bullied (as low as 16% for Pakistani participants). Reported rates of bullying are also lower for young people that associate themselves with a religion, particularly those who feel that their religion is very important to the way they live their lives (19% vs. 32% for those not identifying with a religion).

Why do young people think bullying is happening

'Looks' continue to be the most commonly cited reason for why young people feel that they are bullied (22%), though over 50% of young people said that none of the wide range of options (including 'don't know') offered in the questionnaire were the reason they had been bullied.

Parental awareness of bullying

For young people that reported being bullied, fewer than half of parents separately reported that their child had been bullied. This ratio is largely unchanged since 2006.

Introduction

Aims

This research is based on the latest available data from the second Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE2).

This report looks at young people's responses to questions about bullying in:

- year 11 in 2015 (LSYPE2, wave 3)
- year 11 in 2006 compared to year 11 in 2015 (two different cohorts: LSYPE1, wave 3 and LSYPE2, wave 3)
- year 10 in 2014 compared to year 11 in 2015 (the same cohort: LSYPE2, wave 2 and LSYPE2, wave 3)

Results are presented for different types of bullying and by selected subgroups. The research also looks at statistical associations between bullying, attainment and truancy.

Some of the analyses in this report have been replicated from a previous bullying report also based on LSYPE2 wave 2 data³.

Background

The Longitudinal Study of Young People in England

LSYPE2 is a large study of young people, managed by the Department for Education (DfE). It is also known as the 'Our Future' study. It builds upon the first LSYPE (also known as 'Next Steps'), which DfE ran from 2004 to 2010, and is now being continued by the UCL Institute of Education (IoE). LSYPE2 started in 2013 and is following young people from the age of 13/14 to 19/20. During the third wave of interviews in 2015, 10,010 young people were interviewed. At this point they were in year 11 (age 15/16) so most will have been completing their GCSEs. The previous cohort of year 11 students was interviewed in 2006.

The aims of LSYPE2 are:

- to follow a sample of young people through the final years of compulsory education;

³ [Bullying: Evidence from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England 2, wave 2](#)

- to follow their transition from compulsory education to other forms of training, employment and other activities;
- to collect information about their career paths and the factors affecting them;
- to provide a strategic evidence base about the lives and experiences of young people.

Bullying

Tackling bullying remains a priority for DfE. By law, every school must have a behaviour policy, which needs to include steps taken to prevent all types of bullying. DfE produce guidance for schools on preventing and responding to bullying, which outlines:

- the Government's approach to bullying;
- the legal obligations and powers schools have to tackle bullying; and
- the principles that underpin the most effective anti-bullying strategies in schools.

[Guidance can be found on the GOV.UK website.](#)

Methodology

Sampling

The young people in LSYPE2 were sampled through a two-stage process. Schools were sampled first, followed by the pupils within those schools. The sample includes young people in local authority (LA) maintained schools, academies and independent schools, but for practical reasons excludes small schools and overseas students. It includes special schools as well as mainstream provision. This sample was designed to ensure the widest feasible perspective on young people's experiences.

Attrition

Response rates for wave 3 were high at 90%. The data analysed for this report are weighted to compensate for the impact of sample attrition between waves. While this optimises comparability, a by-product is that the characteristics of the sample taking part in both waves 2 and 3 are slightly different from the sample only taking part in wave 2. As such there are minor inconsistencies between figures in this report, which is based on the former, and the wave 2 research brief, which is based on the latter.

Questions not responded to

All proportions in this report, unless explicitly stated otherwise, are based on those who answered 'yes' or 'no' to each question. This means that young people who decide not to

answer a question, or said they didn't know the answer, are excluded from the analyses. Whilst these two responses are perfectly valid, they are very difficult to interpret. If these values were included in the base from which we calculate percentages, the proportion reporting bullying would be lower than the proportions given in this report. We decided against this approach as it would likely underrepresent the scale of the problem. Note that the exclusion of these data may result in different statistical base sizes for analysis of different forms of bullying.

Not all questions were asked of all participants because answers to initial questions often meant that follow-up questions were unnecessary. This has also resulted in variable base sizes for different analyses.

Statistical testing

All differences that are commented on have been statistically tested at the 5% significance level.⁴

⁴ McNemar's test was used for paired proportions (comparing between wave 2 and wave 3 of the same cohort) and a two-proportion z-test, adjusted for non-random sampling when comparing independent proportions (comparing cohort 1 to cohort 2 and within wave comparisons of different groups, e.g. males vs. females). The difference between GCSE scores for bullied and non-bullied young people was evaluated with an independent samples t-test.

Findings

Year 11 in 2015 (LSYPE2, wave 3)

In the third wave of LSYPE2 (2015), the young people were in year 11. They were asked whether or not they had experienced each of 6 types of bullying in the last 12 months: being called hurtful names, including by text or email; being excluded from a group of friends or from joining in activities; being made to give away money or personal possessions; being threatened with violence; being hit, kicked or experiencing any other form of physical violence against them; and being harassed or having hurtful words, pictures or videos spread about them, using the internet or a mobile phone. They were able to say 'yes' to as many types of bullying as were applicable.

Overall, 30% of young people reported some form of bullying in the last 12 months, with the figure falling slightly if we exclude cyberbullying.

As was the case in the previous wave 2 report⁵, name calling was the most commonly reported type of bullying, though the number experiencing it has dropped from 1 in 5 to less than 1 in 6. Violence, both threatened and actual, has also reduced since last year.

Table 1: Percentage of young people reporting each type of bullying asked about, in year 11.

Type of bullying	Percentage of young people	Base (weighted)	Base (unweighted)
Name calling	15.3%	9403	9375
Social exclusion	13.9%	9334	9313
Robbery	0.8%	9563	9536
Threats of violence	10.3%	9474	9445
Actual violence	6.4%	9550	9523
Cyberbullying	9.6%	9383	9364
Any of the above	30.2%	9223	9196
Any of the above (excluding cyberbullying)	28.6%	9258	9232

Source: Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: cohort 2, wave 3

⁵ [Bullying: Evidence from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England 2, wave 2](#)

Trends in bullying

When we discuss *overall* bullying, we are referring to young people who say they've experienced one or more of the following six types of bullying in the last 12 months: name calling; social exclusion; robbery; threats of violence; actual violence; and cyberbullying.

We also include an overall measure excluding cyberbullying, to allow comparison to LSYPE1 (2006), when young people were not asked specifically about this type of bullying.

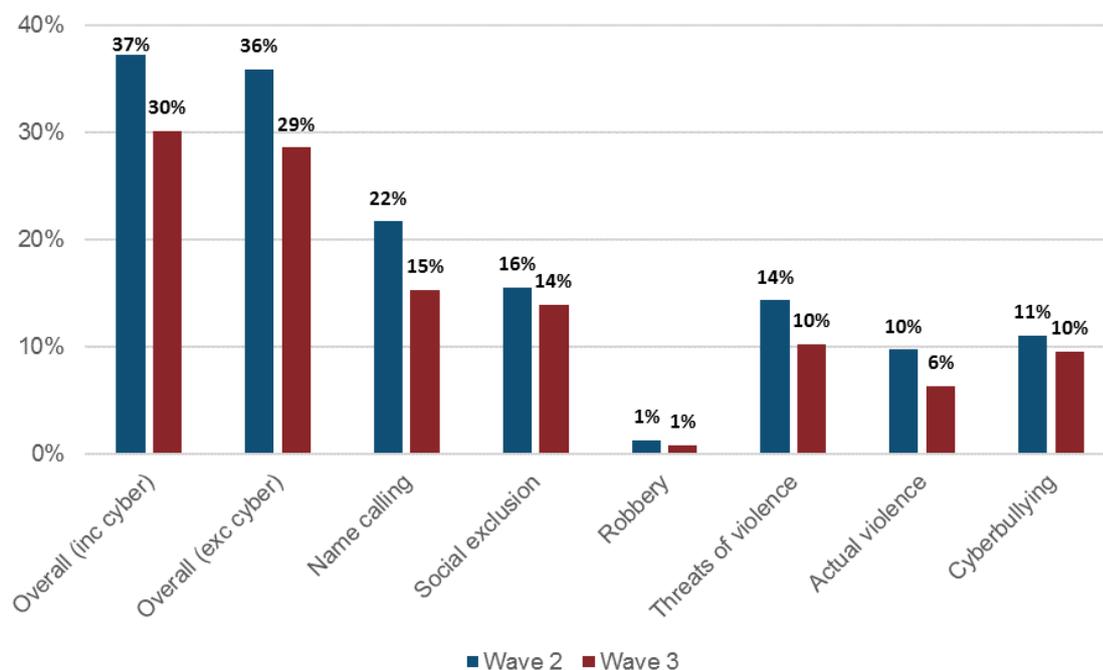
Year 10 (2014) to year 11 (2015) – LSYPE2: waves 2 and 3

First, we consider the rates of various forms of bullying reported by young people in year 11 and compare this with bullying rates for this same cohort in year 10.

Overall, rates of bullying have decreased: 30% of young people in year 11 said that they had experienced one or more types of bullying (including cyberbullying) compared with 37% in year 10.

Name calling, despite remaining the most common form of bullying, shows a significant reduction from the previous year, falling by almost a third.

Figure 1: Proportion of young people reporting each type of bullying in LSYPE2, year 10 (2014) and year 11 (2015).



Source:
Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: cohort 2, waves 2 and 3

Year 11 (2006) to year 11 (2015) – LSYPE1: wave 3 & LSYPE2: wave 3

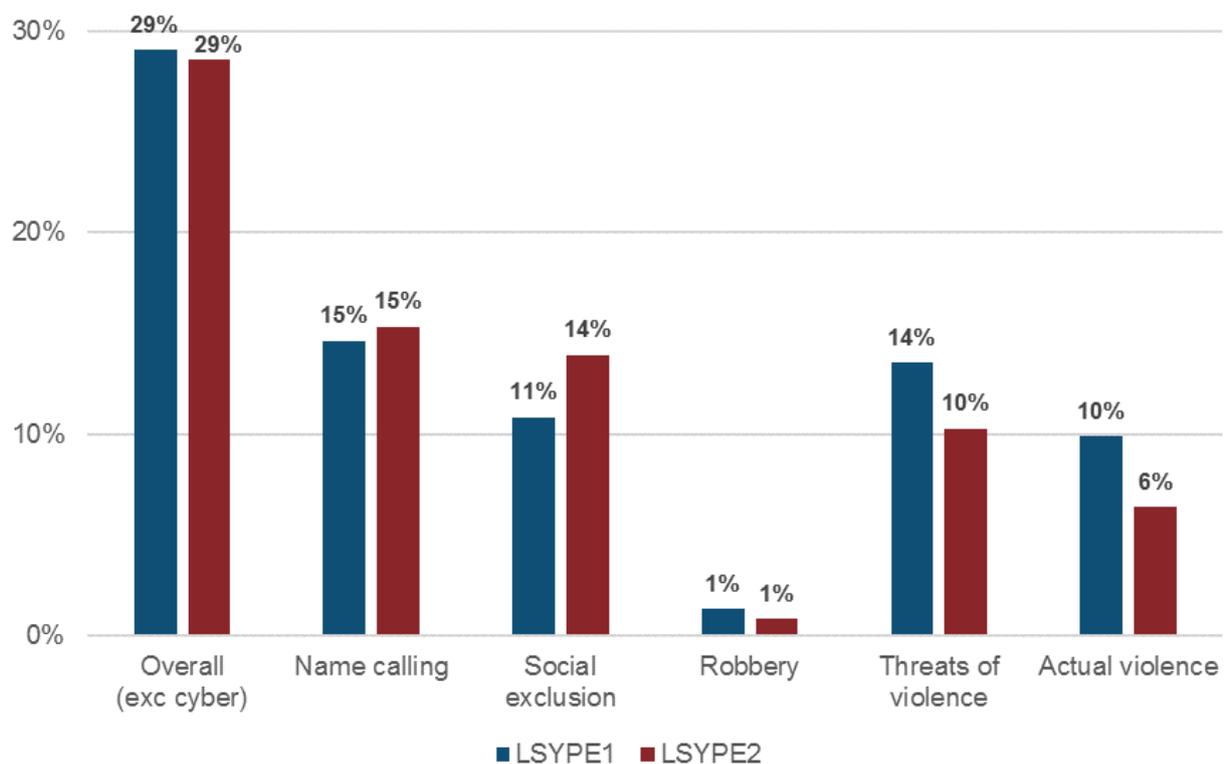
Next, we analyse how bullying in year 11 has changed over the decade since LSYPE1.

The proportion of young people reporting at least one form of bullying (excluding cyberbullying, to allow a like-for-like comparison to LSYPE1) in the previous 12 months has declined slightly, from 29.1% in 2006 to 28.6% 2015. This is a relatively small but statistically significant change.

The result is driven mainly by sharp reductions in violent bullying, both threats and actual. These categories recorded falls of 3.2 and 3.5 percentage points, respectively.

Contrary to the overall trend, social exclusion increased significantly – almost a third more year 11s experienced this in 2015 than had in 2006. Name calling also increased slightly but significantly.

Figure 2: Proportion of young people reporting each type of bullying in year 11, LSYPE1 (2006) and LSYPE2 (2015).



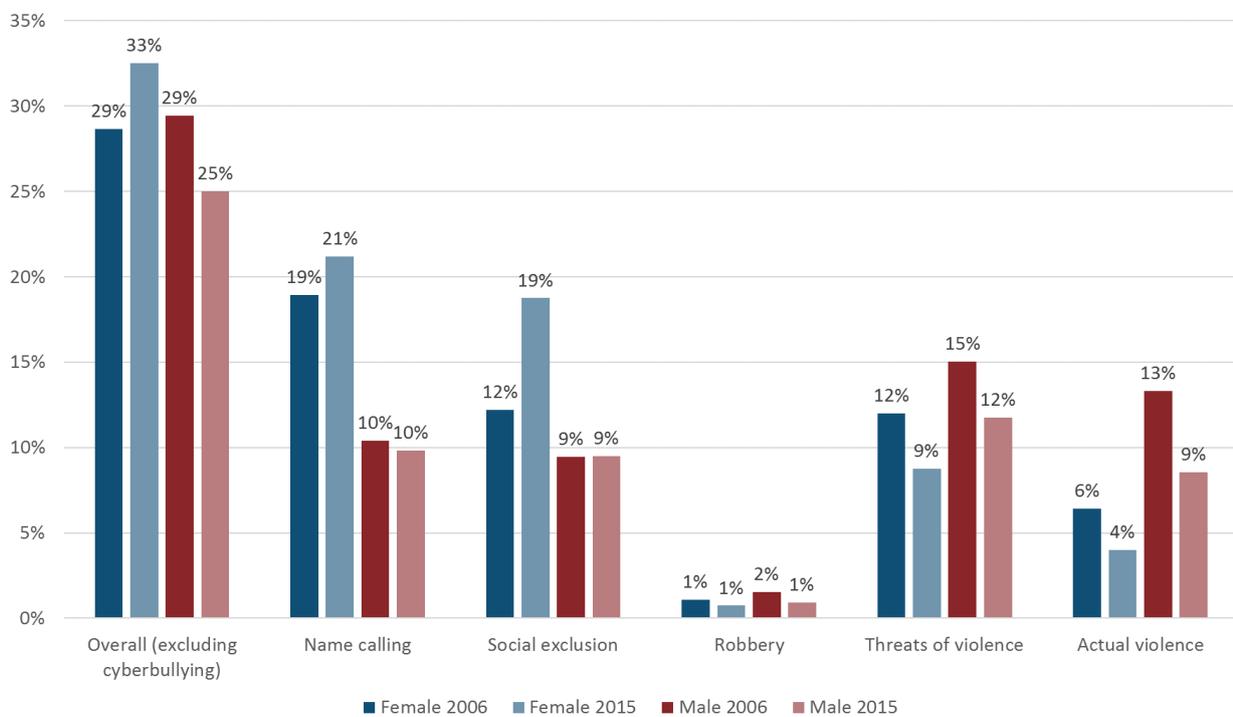
Source: Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: cohorts 1 and 2, wave 3

The relatively stable overall picture can mask variations between different groups. Disaggregating the data further shows that rates of bullying for males and females have moved in opposite directions since 2006.

Overall rates of bullying for young men have fallen by 15 percent, driven by declines in threats of violence and actual violence, which are more commonly experienced by males (see: bullying by characteristics, page 18). Young women, on the other hand, have seen overall bullying rates increase by a similar amount, driven by rises in name calling and social exclusion, which are more commonly experienced by females.

Interestingly, while both males and females have seen violent bullying fall, the rise in social exclusion and name calling has occurred entirely for females, with males showing no increased reporting of these types of bullying.

Figure 3: Proportion of males and females reporting each type of bullying in year 11, LSYPE1 (2006) and LSYPE2 (2015).



Source: Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: cohorts 1 and 2, wave 3

Is there a link between bullying and GCSE results?

The vast majority of young people surveyed in LSYPE2 gave permission to link their responses with data available on the National Pupil Database (NPD), allowing us to investigate how being bullied correlates with students' exam results.

We used the GCSE capped points score⁶, including equivalent qualifications, for the attainment measure in this analysis. The mean capped points score achieved by bullied young people was 318, 12 points lower than that of their non-bullied peers. With each grade worth 6 points, this estimated attainment gap is equivalent to 2 grades in one GCSE qualification.

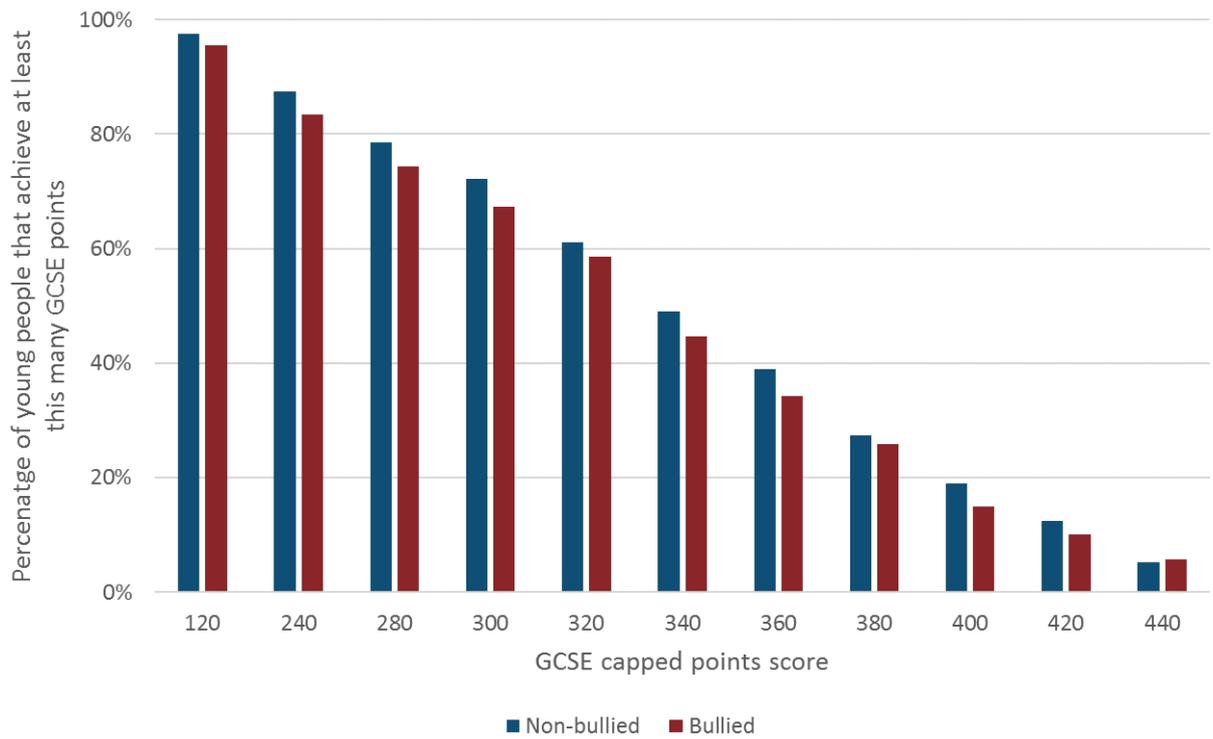
This does not mean that being bullied causes students to perform worse – there are many interplaying factors that may be influencing a bullied student's results one way or another, and indeed the direction of the relationship could be the other way around, with lower academic ability being a reason for being bullied. Indeed, there is likely to be a great deal of variation with regard to explanatory factors given many bullied students perform to a very high standard.

Complexity aside, the findings are consistent with the idea that bullying and lower attainment are interrelated.

In figure 4, we can see that a smaller proportion of bullied students reach each GCSE capped point score threshold, compared to their non-bullied peers (other than for a statistically insignificant exception in the final category of 440-plus points scored). For example, the proportion of bullied students achieving at least 300 points is 67 percent, compared to 72 percent for non-bullied students.

⁶ GCSE capped points score is calculated as the sum of a student's 8 best GCSE grades. Each grade is converted into points on the scale A*=58, A=52, B=46, C=40, D=34, E=28, F=22, G=16. For example, if a student achieved 2Bs, 4Cs, 3Ds and an F, we would include the 2Bs, 4Cs and 2 of the Ds as the best 8 results. The capped points score would be $(2*46)+(4*40)+(2*34)=320$. The maximum score is 464.

Figure 4: Proportion of young people achieving at least each threshold for GCSE capped points score, split by whether the student reported being bullied.



Sources: Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: cohort 2, wave 3

& National Pupil Database

Location and truancy

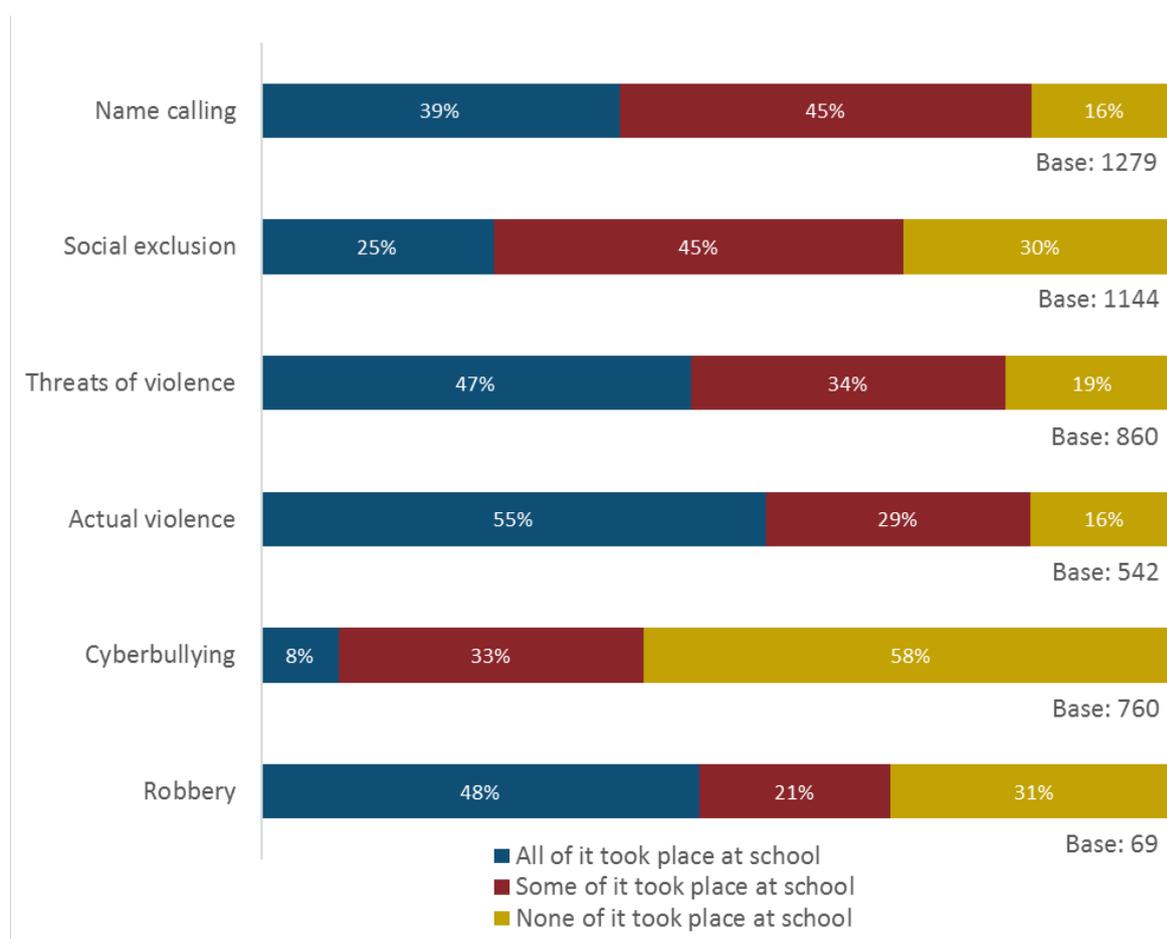
Where does bullying take place?

Bullying can of course happen both within and outside of school. That said, it is important to understand which types of bullying are most likely to happen in school, and which types are most likely to happen outside of school.

As was the case in the wave 2 report, cyberbullying was the only form of bullying where the majority took place completely outside of school; only 8% of young people that experienced cyberbullying said all of it took place at school. This may be because young people are likely to spend more time online and on their phones outside of school.

The majority of young people that experienced bullying reported that it took place at least partly in school. This is perhaps a reflection of the large proportion of young people's time that is spent there, as well as the fact that schools bring young people into contact with individuals or groups they might otherwise avoid outside of school.

Figure 5: Whether reported bullying occurred within school



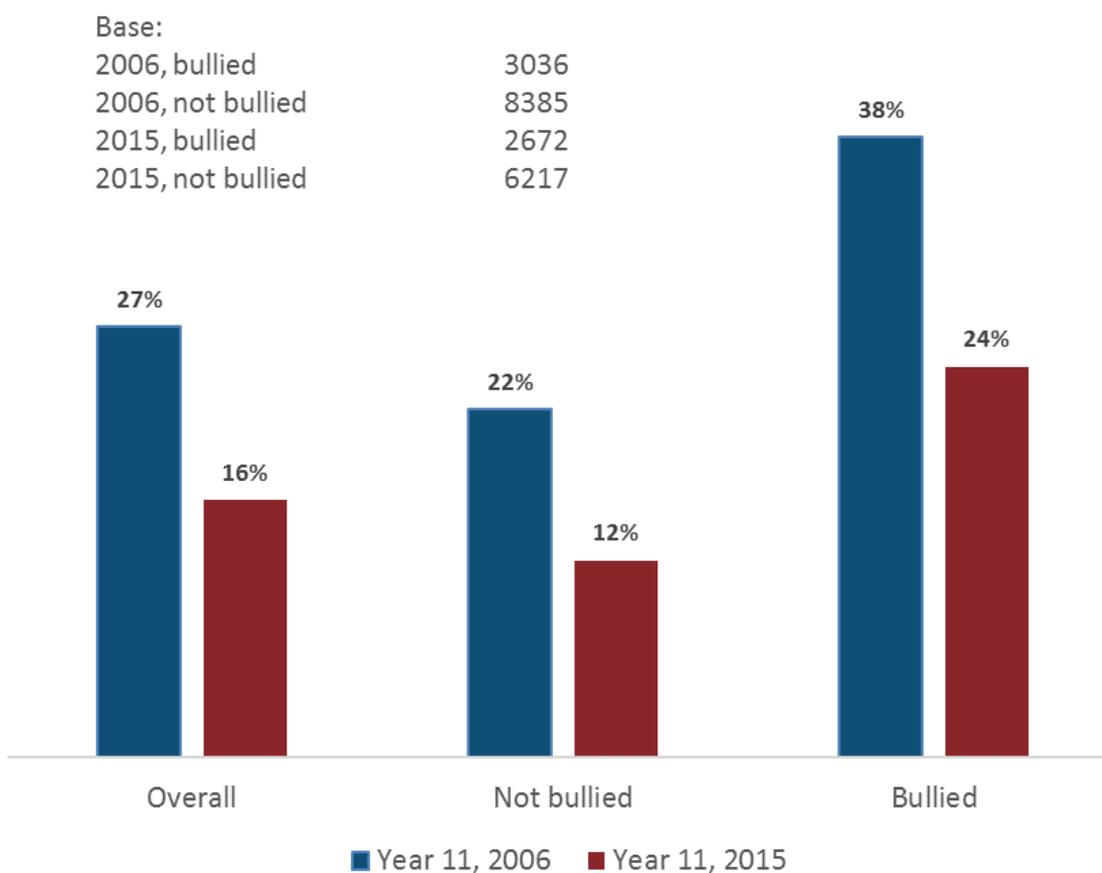
Source: Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: cohort 2, wave 3

Bullying and truancy

Truancy rates among year 11 students in 2015 were 10 percentage points lower than in 2006, falling to 16%. For young people that are bullied, the truancy rate has seen an even larger reduction, dropping 14 points from 38% in 2006 to 24% in 2015.

However, although truancy rates for bullied young people are significantly lower than a decade earlier, bullied individuals were twice as likely to truant as their non-bullied peers in 2015.

Figure 6: Proportion of young people that had truanted in last 12 months, split by whether the student was bullied or not.



Source: Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: cohorts 1 and 2, wave 3

Despite this strong correlation between bullying and truancy, just 4% of bullied young people that had also truanted stated bullying as the reason they had done so (see table 2). Bullying, of course, is a complex issue and young people who are bullied may experience a range of other issues that cause them to truant.

Table 2: Reasons young people that reported bullying gave for decision to truant.

Reason for truanting	Percentage of the subset of young people that reported bullying
Bullying	4%
Don't like particular teacher(s)	11%
Just don't like school	13%
Bored	16%
Don't like particular subject	22%
Something else	29%
Don't know	5%

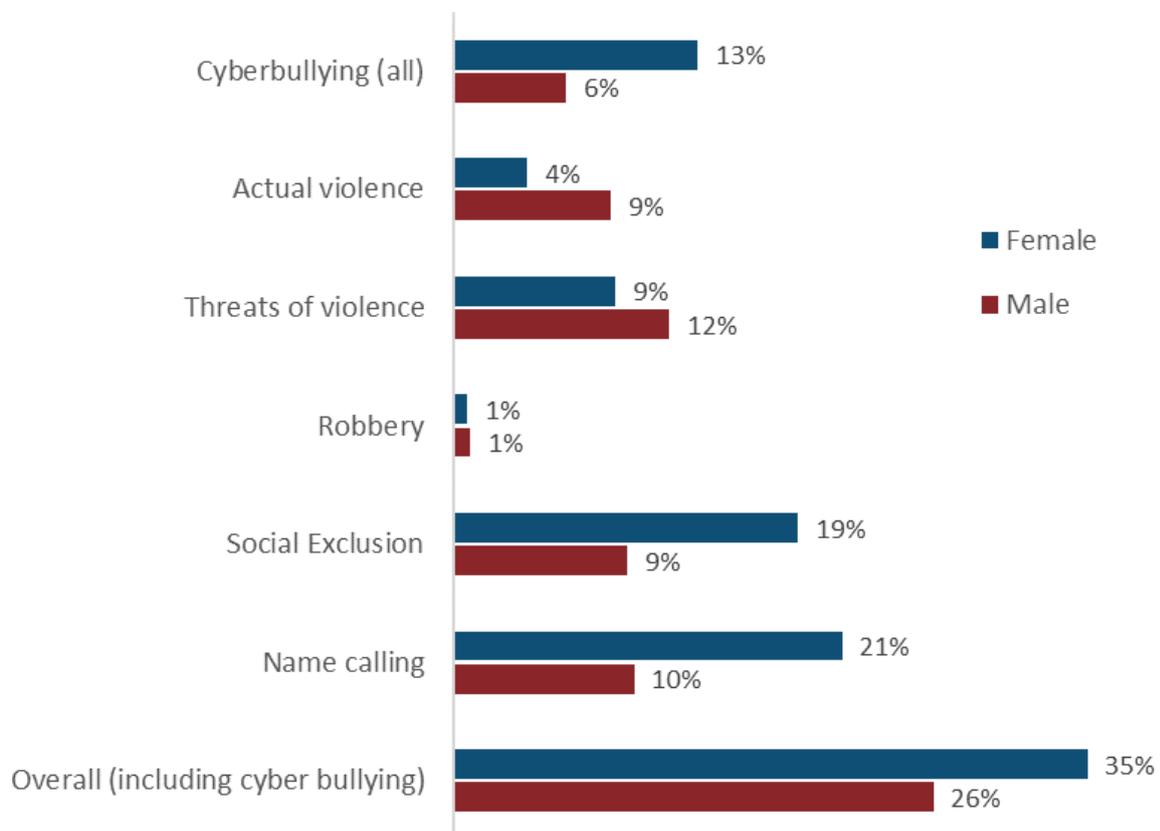
Bullying by characteristics

We now break down the year 11 (2015) bullying data from LSYPE2 by a variety of pupil characteristics that might affect risk of bullying. All of the following figures and percentages include cyberbullying in the overall measure of bullying.

Gender

Overall, a third more females reported bullying than males (35% and 26% respectively). If we look at each type of bullying separately, we can see that more than twice as many females report experiencing of name calling, cyberbullying and social exclusion. However, a higher proportion of males than females reported threats of and actual violence.

Figure 7: Proportion of young people experiencing each type of bullying, split by gender



Source: Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: cohort 2, wave 3

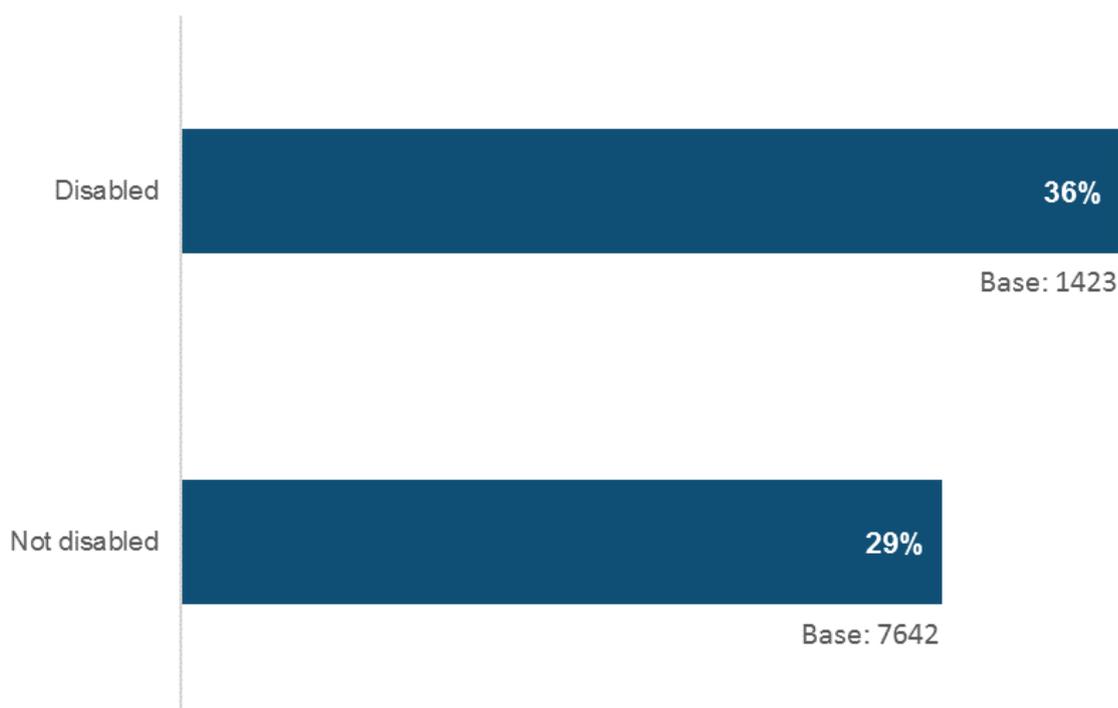
Disability

According to the Equality Act 2010, a disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on a person's ability to do normal daily activities.

Disabled young people were more likely to report being bullied than all young people: 36% report experiencing at least one form of bullying, compared to 29%.

A significant minority (9%) of these young people reported that their disability was one of the reasons they were bullied.

Figure 8: Proportion of young people reporting being bullied, split by whether or not they have a disability



Source: Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: cohort 2, wave 3

Special Educational Needs

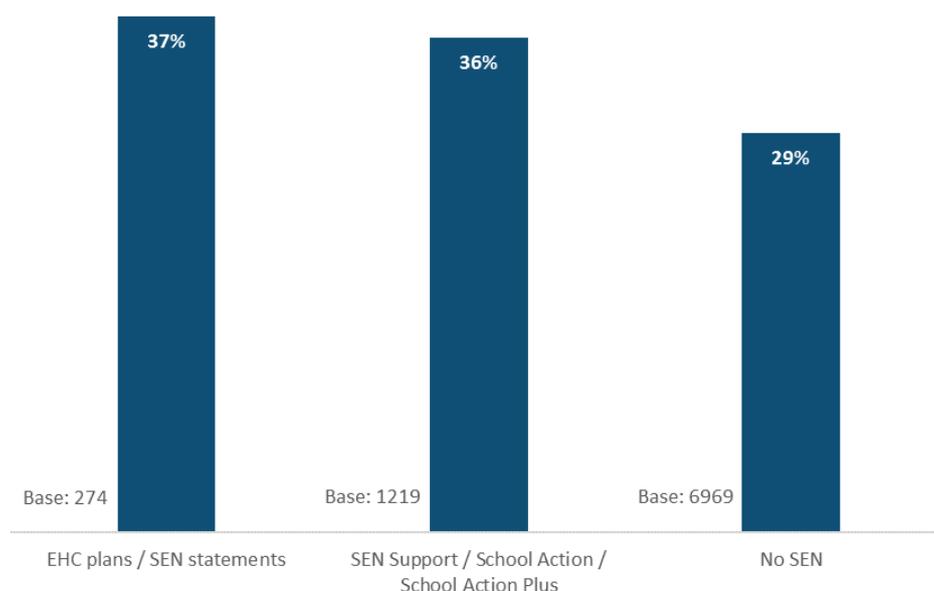
A child has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A child of school age has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools.

Where a pupil is identified as having SEN, schools should take action to remove barriers to learning and put effective special educational provision in place (broadly speaking, this was known as school action before 2014 reforms and SEN support thereafter).

SEN support should be adapted or replaced depending on how effective it has been in achieving the agreed outcomes. Sometimes, despite the school having taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the SEN of the child, he or she will not make expected progress. In these circumstances, an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan can be put in place following an assessment to address these more complex needs (EHC plans replaced SEN statements following the 2014 reforms).

Young people with SEN reported higher rates of bullying than those with no SEN: 36% compared to 29%. These results (also presented in figure 9 below) relate to those young people in state funded schools only.

Figure 9: Proportion of young people reporting being bullied, split by the degree of Special Educational Needs



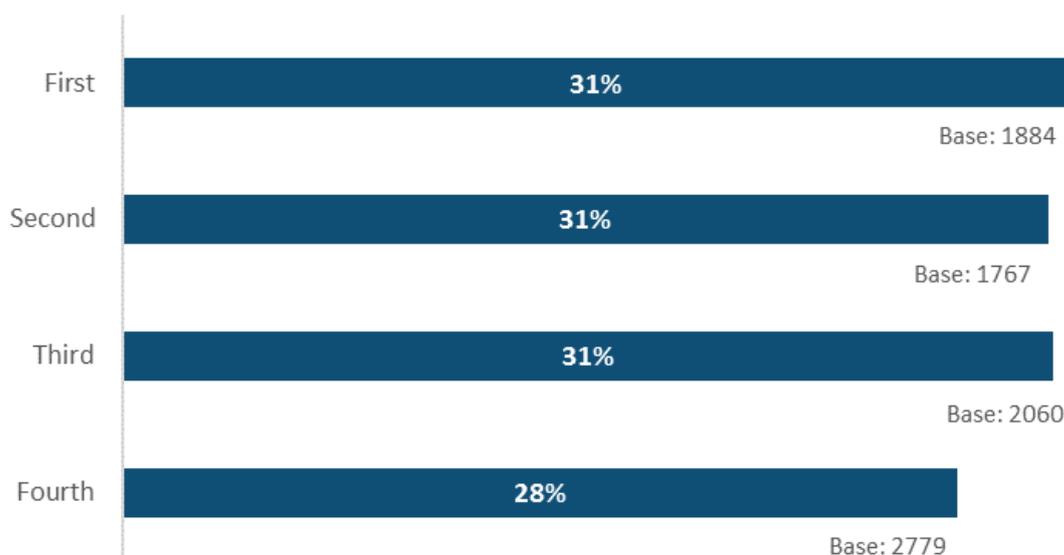
Source: Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: cohort 2, wave 3 & National Pupil Database

Deprivation

The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) is a measure of deprivation, calculated for Lower Super Output Areas. These areas are relatively small, usually containing around 1,000 people. IDACI measures the proportion of children aged 0-15 in an area that are living in income deprived households. These are defined as those in receipt of income support, income based jobseeker's allowance or pension credit, or those not in receipt of these benefits but in receipt of Child Tax Credit with an income below 60% of the national median.

Splitting the respondents into IDACI quartiles (with the first quartile being least deprived and the fourth the most deprived), we can see in figure 10 that the reported rates of bullying are similar across the groupings. However, the rate of bullying reported by young people in the fourth IDACI quartile – the most deprived – is lower than the rate reported in the first quartile (28% compared to 31%).

Figure 10: Proportion of young people reporting being bullied, split by the deprivation of the area where they live



Source: Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: cohort 2, wave 3 & National Pupil Database

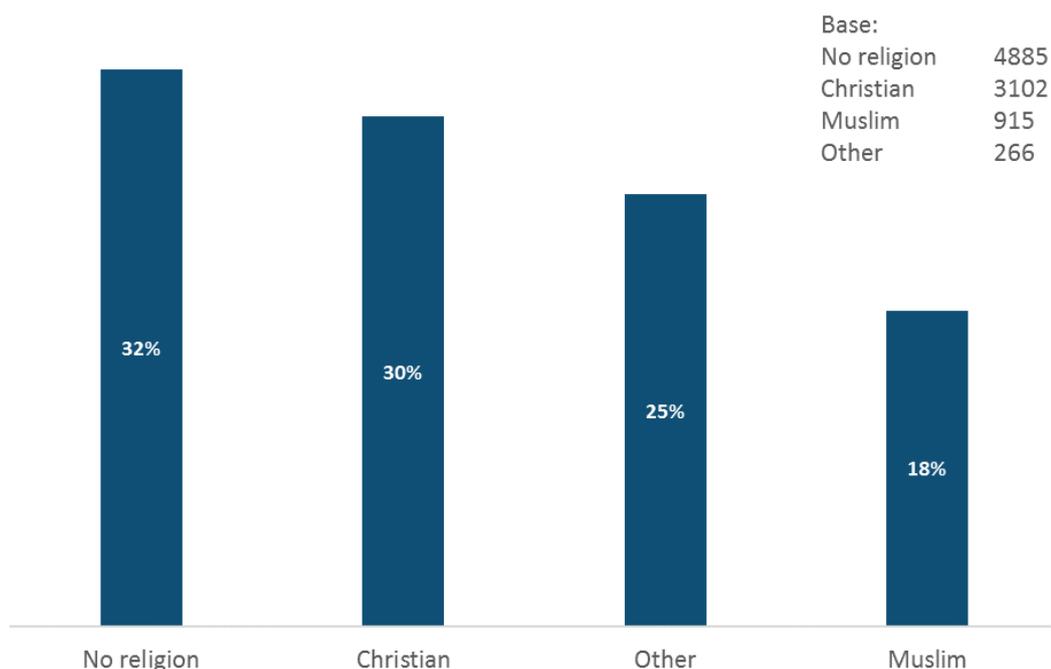
There was a small but significant difference in level of reported bullying when comparing pupils who had received free school meals (33%) and those who had not (30%).

Religion

Young people were asked about whether they have a religion.

A higher proportion of young people who say that they *do not* have a religion reported bullying when compared to those who say that they do. For instance, 32% of young people who said that they did not identify with a religion reported being bullied compared to 18% of those who identified as Muslim.

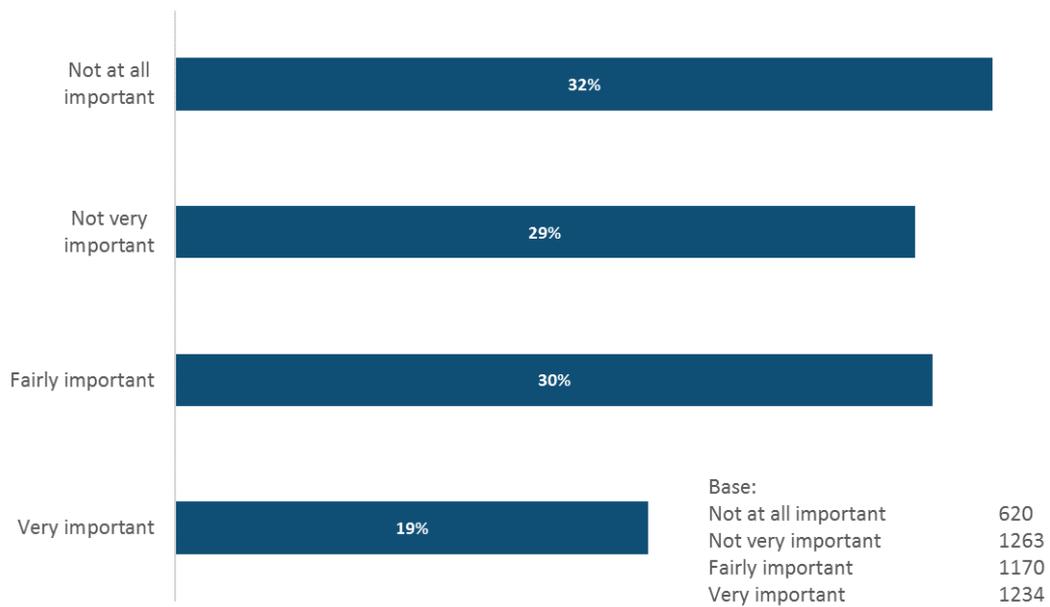
Figure 11: Proportion of young people identifying with each religion that reported being bullied



Source: Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: cohort 2, wave 3

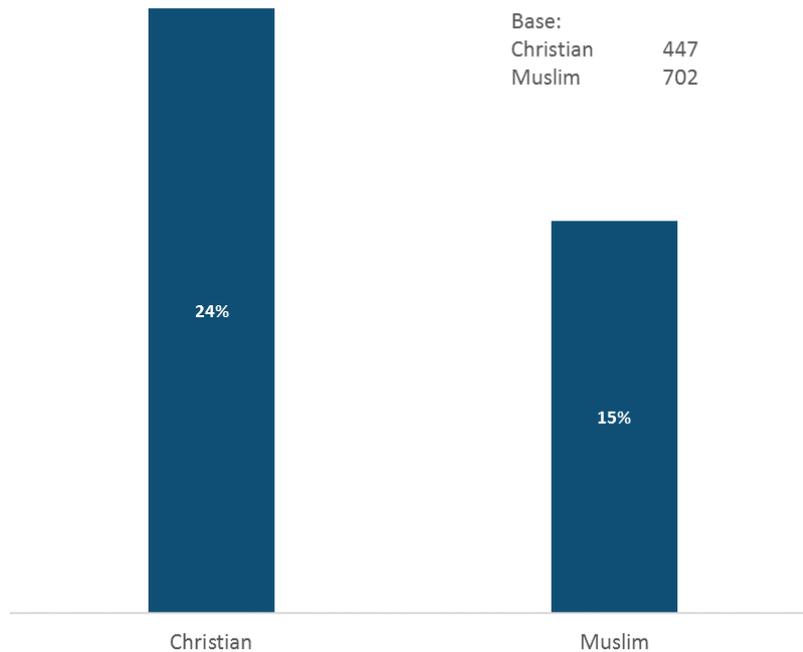
Young people whose religion is very important to them report lower rates of bullying in particular (figure 12). Looking at the two most common religions in this group, Christians that see their religion as very important still report higher rates of bullying than Muslims (figure 13). The analyses here do not necessarily show that different types of religion attract different rates of bullying. There may be a number of causal factors (acting independently or in combination with a young person's religion) that explain the differences, including variations in willingness to report bullying.

Figure 12: Proportion of young people who report being bullied, given their response to the question, 'How important is religion to the way you live your life?'



Source: Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: cohort 2, wave 3

Figure 13: Bullying rates of Christian and Muslim young people who said religion was 'very important' to the way they live their lives.



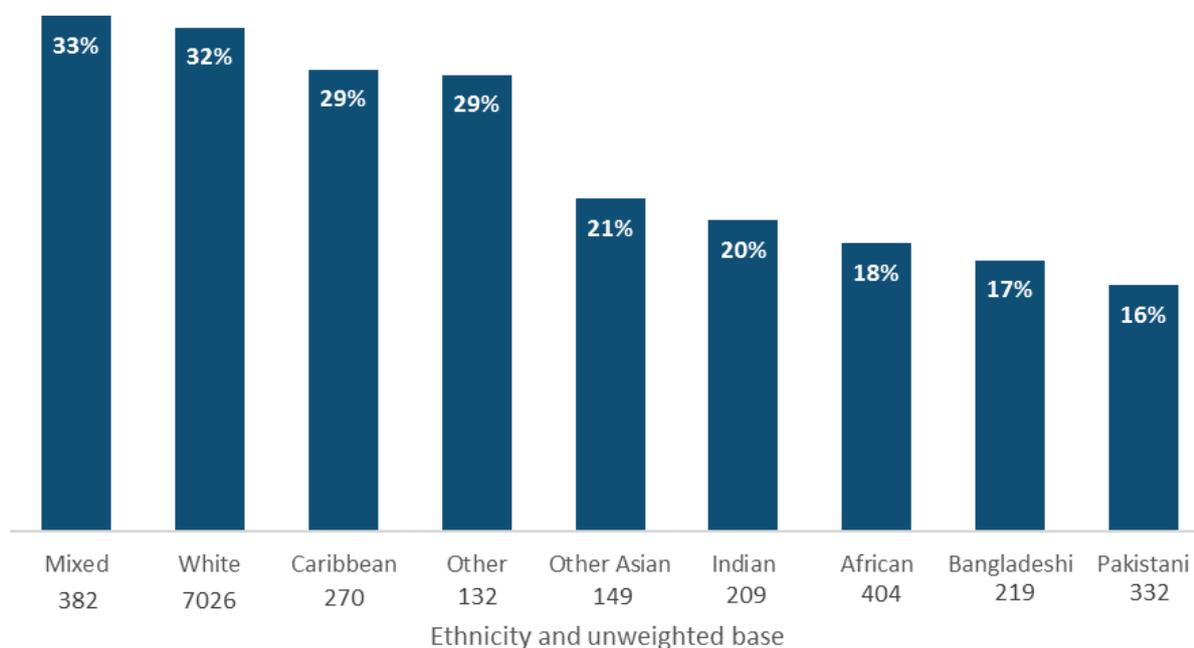
Source: Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: cohort 2, wave 3

Ethnicity

Young people from African, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Indian and other Asian backgrounds were significantly less likely to report being bullied than white and mixed ethnicity students. This follows the pattern seen in previous LSYPE2 waves, when the young people were in years 9 and 10⁷.

There could be a number of reasons behind this. For example, cultural differences may exist, perhaps in terms of what is classified as bullying, or whether young people from various ethnicities are as likely to acknowledge and report it. There may also be complex relationships between ethnicity and other characteristics of young people and the places in which they live which influence the prevalence of bullying in different ethnic groups.

Figure 14: Proportion of young people of each ethnicity that report being bullied.



Source: Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: cohort 2, wave 3

⁷ [Bullying: Evidence from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England 2, wave 2](#)

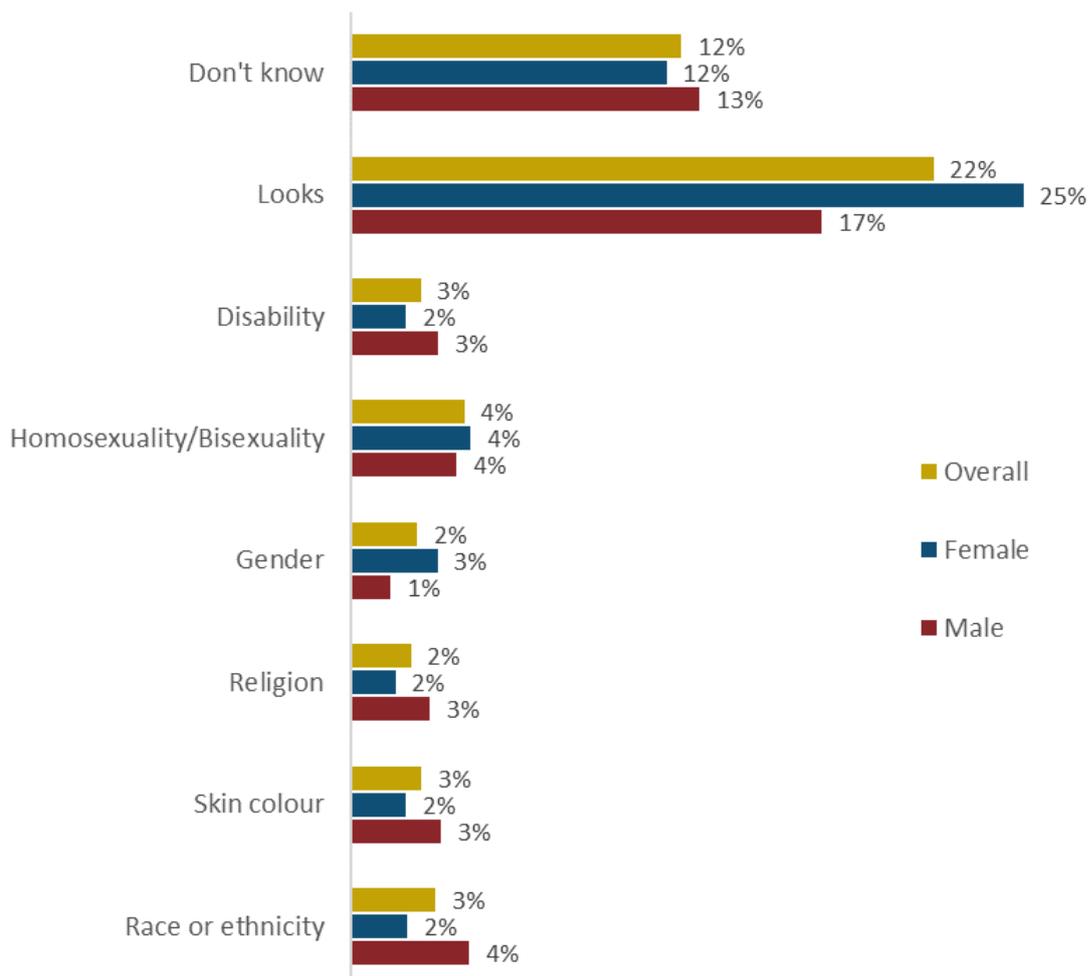
Why do young people think bullying is happening?

If a young person reported being bullied, they were asked why they thought the bullying had occurred. By far the most common reason cited for being bullied was the young person's looks. While this was true for both males and females, girls were significantly more likely than boys to say their looks were a reason for being bullied (figure 15).

Boys were more likely than girls to report their race or ethnicity being a reason they experienced bullying.

A large proportion – over 50% – of respondents said that none of the reasons offered in the questionnaire were why they were bullied. They were not asked to specify any other reasons they felt were more applicable. This group is not included in figure 15 below, which provides results by reasons given and also for those who replied 'don't know'.

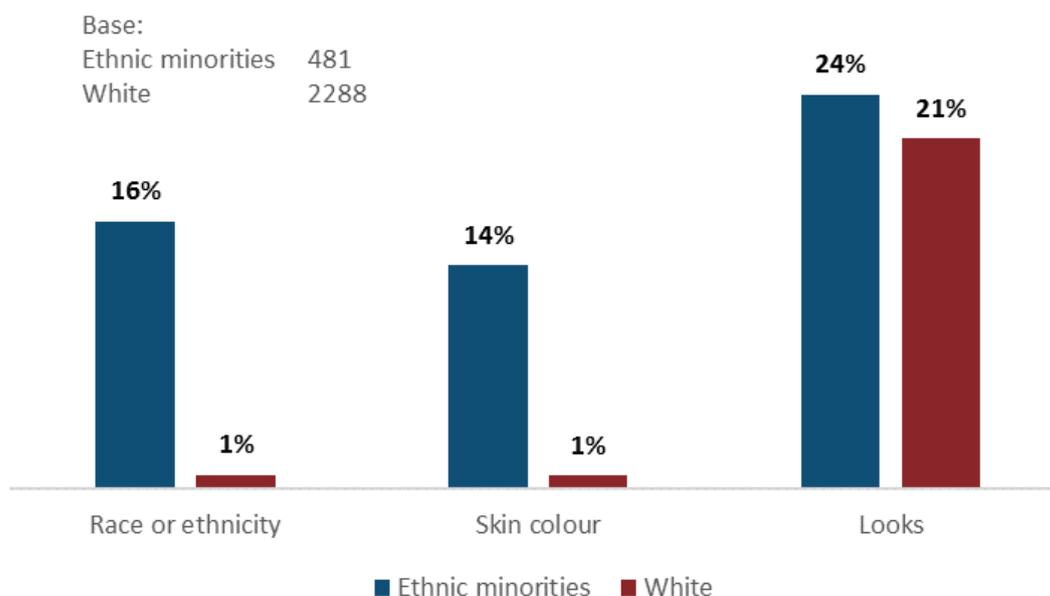
Figure 15: Reasons young people gave for being bullied



Source: Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: cohort 2, wave 3

The relatively low overall proportions of young people who report race, ethnicity and skin colour as reasons for being bullied reflects the fact that most of the young people in our representative sample are white. For example, we see (in figure 16 below) that ethnicity and skin colour are much more prevalent reasons given by young people from minority ethnic backgrounds compared to white young people. Looks however are almost equally reported as a reason for being bullied in both groups.

Figure 16: Reasons why ethnic minority and white young people feel they are bullied.



Source: Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: cohort 2, wave 3

Similarly, 13% of bullied young people that identify with non-Christian religions report that their religion was the reason they were bullied, compared to just 3% of Christians. Among bullied young people who have a disability, 9% reported their disability as the reason for being bullied. It is reasonable to expect that we would find a similar situation with LGBT⁸ young people reporting higher rates of being bullied for their sexuality. As we did not ask young people about their sexuality at this point in the study, we are unable to confirm this in this briefing, although other research has addressed this topic⁹.

⁸ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender.

⁹ Kantar Public (2017), *Omnibus Survey of Pupils and their Parents/Carers: Research report wave 2, July 2017, p.69.*

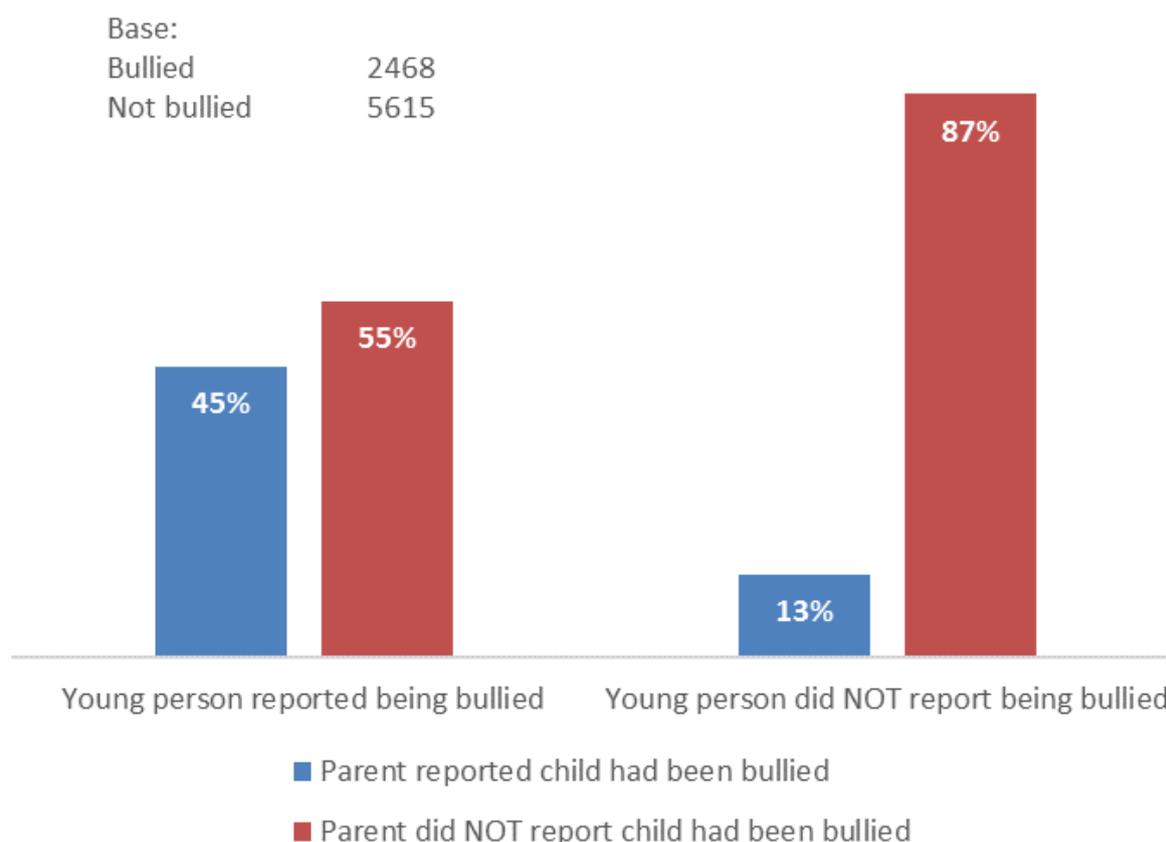
Parental awareness of bullying

In both 2006 and 2015, parents were asked if their child had been bullied in the previous 12 months. For young people that reported being bullied in 2015, the majority of parents were unaware. The proportion of these parents that said their child had been bullied was just 45% (figure 17). This ratio was unchanged from 2006 (not shown in the figure below).

Of young people that reported no bullying themselves, more than 1 in 10 parents had a different opinion, believing their child had suffered bullying.

While these discrepancies in parental and student reporting may be down simply to lack of awareness, another explanation could be that they reflect differences in what some young people and their parents interpret as 'bullying'.

Figure 17: Proportion of parents that reported their child had been bullied in the last 12 months, split by whether the young person reported being bullied themselves (left) or did not (right)



Source: Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: cohorts 1 and 2, wave 3

Conclusions

The overall trends reported in this study are broadly positive. The rate of bullying has fallen to 30% from 37% since these young people were in year 10, while the overall rate is also lower for this year 11 cohort than it was for the 2006 year 11 cohort. This reduction is relatively small at half a percentage point but is statistically significant.

Beneath the overall reduction between 2006 and 2015 there is a more varied picture. While violent forms of bullying have declined significantly, name calling and social exclusion have increased since 2006. The success in reducing violent bullying shows what can be achieved; the challenge is to replicate this success across all forms of bullying.

For the first time, we have been able to look at the relationship between reported rates of bullying in LSYPE and GCSE exam results. The mean GCSE capped points score of those young people that had been bullied in year 11 was lower than the mean score of their non-bullied peers, by the equivalent of two grades in one GCSE. However, it is important to note that this simple correlation does not demonstrate causation between bullying and lower GCSE performance; there are likely to be many other factors involved.

Males' and females' experiences of bullying vary by type, with girls twice as likely to report name calling, cyberbullying and social exclusion, and boys are more likely to report threats of and actual violence.

In terms of trends, females reported higher rates of bullying overall in 2015 than in 2006, with the increase entirely caused by name calling and social exclusion, while the rate of bullying for males fell over the period. These diverging trends led to females reporting significantly higher rates of bullying overall in 2015 than males, despite reporting similar rates in 2006.

Experiences of bullying vary by other characteristics too. Young people that identify with a religion reported a lower rate of bullying than those without a religion; and the reported rate of bullying was particularly low for those young people that feel their religion is very important to how they live their lives.

Bullying also varied significantly by ethnicity, with young people of African and Asian ethnicity generally being less likely to report bullying.

Young people with disabilities and SEN were more likely to report being bullied than their peers; almost one in ten disabled young people who were bullied said that they believe their disability was one of the reasons the bullying happened.

Young people from the most deprived quartile of areas in the country were slightly less likely to report being bullied than their peers from the least deprived areas. None of the

differences between the other quartiles were statistically significant. It is unclear whether this suggests that bullying is equally an issue for affluent areas as it is for deprived areas or whether perceptions of bullying and reporting thresholds may differ by area.

Bullying remains an important issue for schools, with an estimated 30% of those in year 11 having experienced it in the last 12 months. With the exception of cyberbullying, most bullying takes place at least partly in school. Although truancy rates among bullied young people have followed the declining trend in the population as a whole since 2006, these young people remain significantly more likely to truant than their peers.

Parental awareness of bullying is mixed, with more than half the parents of bullied young people being unaware of it. This picture is largely unchanged since 2006. Coupled with the finding that most bullying takes place at school, this reinforces the need for schools to involve parents, including talking to them about their anti-bullying policy and ensuring they are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe their child is being bullied. This is outlined in bullying prevention guidance as being a feature of schools that successfully prevent and tackle bullying.

Table 3: Bullying by Characteristics in LSYPE2 Wave 3 Sample - Summary

Characteristics		Percentage of young people reporting bullying	Base (Unweighted)
Gender	Male	26%	4590
	Female	34%	4606
Disability	Has disability	36%	1423
	No disability	29%	7642
SEN	No SEN	29%	6969
	SEN Support/School Action (Plus)	36%	1219
	SEN - EHC/Statement	37%	274
IDACI	First IDACI quartile	31%	1884
	Second IDACI quartile	31%	1767
	Third IDACI quartile	31%	2060
	Fourth IDACI quartile (most deprived)	28%	2779
Religion	No religion	32%	4885
	Christian	30%	3102
	Muslim	18%	266
	Other	25%	915
Ethnicity	Mixed	33%	382
	White	32%	7026
	Caribbean	29%	270
	Other	29%	132
	Other Asian	21%	149
	Indian	20%	209
	African	18%	404
	Bangladeshi	17%	219
	Pakistani	16%	332

Source: Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: cohort 2, wave 3



Department
for Education

© Department for Education

This publication (not including logos) is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

To view this licence:

visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3

email psi@nationalarchives.gov.uk

write to Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London, TW9 4DU

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

Reference: DFE-RB755

ISBN: 978-1-78105-828-2

The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at:

Team.LONGITUDINAL@education.gov.uk or www.education.gov.uk/contactus

This document is available for download at www.gov.uk/government/publications