Department for Education

Omnibus survey of pupils and their parents or carers: wave 6

Research report

Summer 2019

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Contents

Contents 3

Executive Summary 6

- Exam reform 6
- Subject and qualifications choice 6
- Character, mental health and wellbeing 7
- Special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) 7
- Bullying in school/college 8
- Mobile phones in school/college 8
- Careers and aspirations 8

Methodology 10

- Sample 10
- Survey design 11
- Response 11
- Report findings 11
  - How reliable are these findings? 12

1. Exam reform 13

- 1.1 Progress measures 13
  - Awareness and understanding of Progress 8 13
- 1.2 Data sources parents/carers use to choose schools 14
- 1.3 GCSE Reforms 17
  - Awareness of new GCSE grading system 18
- 1.4 English and maths GCSE re-take requirement 21
- 1.5. Awareness of Core Maths 22

2. Subject and qualifications choice 24

- 2.1. The English Baccalaureate (EBacc) 24
  - Awareness of the EBacc 25
  - Parent/carer perceptions of the EBacc 26
  - Information from schools on the EBacc 27
- 2.2. Subject choices 28

Reasons for GCSE subject choices 31
Parent/carer recommendations and pupil subject take up 35
2.3. Skills and knowledge parents/carers wanted to have learned more about at school 39
3. Character, mental health and wellbeing 40
3.1. Character 40
Skills and qualities developed at school/college 41
3.2. Extracurricular activities 43
3.3. Relationships, Sex and Health Education 44
3.4. Mental health 47
Looking after mental health 49
Where to go for mental health support 53
4. Special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) 56
4.1. SEN information reports 58
5. Bullying in school/college 60
5.1. Bullying in secondary schools and colleges 60
Comparing parents/carers responses with their child's self-reported bullying 65
Parents'/carers' perceptions of school response to bullying 66
6. Mobile phones in school/college 70
6.1. Prevalence and use of mobile phones 70
Proportion of young people who take their phone to school/college 70
Young people using a mobile phone when they're not supposed to 72
7. Careers and aspirations 73
7.1. Career opportunities and guidance 73
Career activities 73
Career aspirations 75
Awareness of skills and qualifications needed for future jobs/careers 76
Awareness of where to go for more information 79
Parental advice on job or career options 81
7.2. Jobs or careers in STEM 83
Knowledge of jobs or careers utilising STEM subjects 83

Parents/carers discussing STEM careers with their child 89
Opportunities to talk about a career in STEM at school/college 91
Young peoples' interest in a STEM job or career 93
7.3. The Baker Clause 97
Awareness of T Levels 97
Information provided by schools about non-academic routes 98
Pupils' plans for post-16 education 101
Appendix: Glossary 104
School pupils and their parents/carers 104
College students and their parents/carers 105
Survey waves 105

Executive Summary

This wave of the omnibus survey of pupils and their parents/carers surveyed a nationally representative sample of young people at secondary schools and colleges in England in July-August 2019. The headline findings are discussed below.

Exam reform

- Before this survey, only 21% of parents/carers of pupils in years 7-11 had heard of Progress 8. However, most parents/carers (89%) who were aware of Progress 8 felt that they knew at least somewhat about what it tells you about a school's performance.
- Parents/carers of pupils in years 7-9 most commonly used Ofsted reports (54%) when choosing their child's secondary school, though over a third of parents/carers (36%) reported using none of the sources listed.
- Most school pupils and parents/carers felt they understood the new GCSE grading system somewhat or very well, with greater levels of understanding reported among those in key stage 4.
- 72% of school pupils in years 7-11 were aware that they have to re-take English and maths at GCSE if they don't achieve a grade 4. For parents/carers, only 58% were aware of this.
- Awareness of Core Maths was generally low, especially among parents/carers where just 1 in 5 were aware of the qualification.

Subject and qualifications choice

- Awareness of the EBacc was higher among parents/carers, with 37% of school pupils and 52% of parents/carers saying they had heard of the EBacc before this survey.
- Of those who had heard of the EBacc, 53% of pupils and 38% of parents/carers had received information from their school.
- Overall, 41% of parents/carers said they would recommend the EBacc, 13% said they would not, and 42% did not know.
- School pupils were most commonly taking or planning to take a GCSE in humanities (74%), followed by a foreign language (54%), arts (41%), design and technology (27%) and computer science (23%). Notably around 1 in 10 pupils said they didn't know or had not decided whether they were going to take GCSEs in these subjects.
- The most commonly reported reason for taking a subject was enjoyment, varying between arts (83%) and foreign languages (37%). They also reported having to take a subject, most commonly a foreign language (53%) and humanities (40%).

- Pupils also report taking a subject because it would help them in their career, most commonly computer science (48%), and because they expected to do well in it, though there was far less variation between subjects (20% to 27%).
- Parents/carers were most likely to advise their child to take a GCSE in humanities (79%), which reflects pupils' GCSE choices. However, this was followed by 67% of parents/carers advising their child to take a GCSE in computer science, which was the least popular subject choice among pupils. A similar proportion of parents/carers would advise their child to take a GCSE in a foreign language (65%). This was followed by just over half advising their child to take a GCSE in design and technology (57%) or arts (54%).
- Parents/carers were also asked what skills and knowledge would have been valuable to have learned more about when they were at school; the most common response to this open question was managing money (mentioned by 43% of parents/carers).

Character, mental health and wellbeing

- Almost all parents/carers reported that it is essential or very important for their child's school to develop personal qualities such as character or resilience (94%), skills and knowledge that will help them get a good job (93%), and qualifications and certificates of achievement (86%).
- Pupils reported taking part in a wide range of extracurricular activities.
- Pupils agreed that their school teaches them important information about physical and mental health (69%), developing and maintaining positive relationships with other people (60%), and about intimate relationships and sex (57%).
- 68% of pupils agreed that they know enough about how to look after their mental health, and 73% agreed that they know where to go if they need help with their mental health. For both statements, greater levels of agreement were reported among male pupils and younger pupils.

Special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)

- Based on parents'/carers' understanding of SEND, 16% considered their child to have SEND.
- 40% of parents/carers who identified their child as having SEND said their child has an EHC plan, while 8% said their child was currently being assessed or planning to be assessed for a plan.
- 36% of parents/carers who considered their child to have SEND don't know if their child's school has a SEN information report.
- Less than a third of parents/carers (29%) who say their child's school has a SEN information report say they were invited to help produce the report, which suggests that schools have more to do to secure the wider co-production culture that was envisaged by the 2014 SEND reforms.

Bullying in school/college

- Around 2 in 5 school pupils (43%) and parents/carers (40%) report that they/their child has been a victim of bullying in the past year. For colleges, this was lower, with around 1 in 4 college students (28%) and parents/carers (26%) reporting the same.
- School pupils most commonly reported being bullied in the past year based on other pupils' attitudes or assumptions towards their nationality (13%), with this type of bullying being more prevalent among certain BAME[1] groups.
- This was closely followed by gender/sexist bullying, with 12% of school pupils reporting that they had been a victim of this during the past year. Notably, female pupils were more likely than male pupils to report experiencing this.
- The majority of parents/carers thought their child's school would probably or definitely do something about the types of bullying listed. However, parents/carers who reported that their child *had* ever experienced a type of bullying were more likely to say teachers would definitely not or probably not take action about this type of bullying.

Mobile phones in school/college

- Most young people reported taking their mobile phone to school at least some of the time, with 92% of secondary school pupils and 99% of college students reporting this.
- Among school pupils who took their mobile phone to school, 50% reported using it when they were not supposed to (at least some of the time). This was higher among female pupils and pupils in key stages 4 and 5.

Careers and aspirations

- Many young people surveyed had engaged with career activities, with 70% of secondary school pupils and 88% of college students taking part in at least one of the career activities listed in the past year.
- Nearly a quarter of school pupils (22%) reported that they did not know what type of career or job they might want after they finish their education.
- Pupils who had taken part in career activities were more likely to agree that they know what kinds of skills and qualifications they might need for their future job/careers and that they know where to go for more information.
- Parents/carers of pupils with SEND felt less equipped to advise their child on their future job/career options.

[1] BAME is used to refer to participants who identified as 'Black/African/Caribbean/Black British' 'Asian/Asian British' or being from an 'other' ethnic group (including mixed/multiple ethnic groups).

- Young people and parents/carers were less likely to know about STEM[2] jobs/careers that utilised design and technology or computer science, compared with the more traditional subjects of maths and science.
- Pupils whose parents/carers had discussed the possibility of a career in the STEM subjects were more likely to know a great deal/fair amount about jobs/careers utilising these subjects.
- Parents/carers of male pupils were more likely than parents/carers of female pupils to talk to their child about careers in technology, engineering, maths and computer science. science was the only subject where the opposite was true.
- Pupils who had the opportunity to discuss STEM careers in lessons over the past 12 months were also more likely to know a great deal/fair amount about jobs/careers utilising STEM subjects.
- Awareness of T Levels was low, with just 1 in 10 young people and parents/carers reporting that they had heard of this qualification.
- The proportion of pupils and parents/carers who reported receiving information about apprenticeships has significantly increased since the Winter 2017 survey.
- After year 11, pupils most commonly planned to continue their academic learning. However, around one-third of pupils (30%) did not know what they would like to do.

[2] STEM refers to science, computer science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Design and technology is not considered to be a STEM subject but has been included as it falls under the wider STEM umbrella.

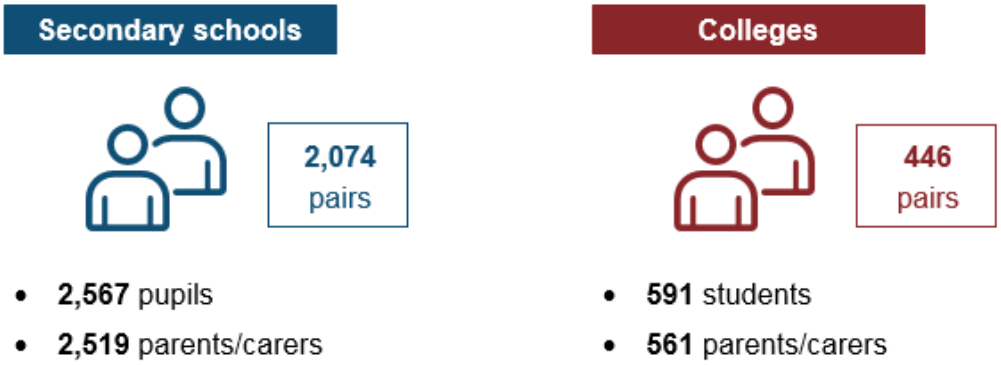
Methodology

This chapter briefly outlines the methodology for the Summer 2019 wave of the omnibus survey of pupils and their parents/carers, which was conducted by Ipsos MORI on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE). A detailed methodology can be found in the separate technical report.

Sample

This wave surveyed a nationally representative sample of young people at secondary state schools and colleges in England, as well as their parents/carers. A postal push-to-web approach was used, using the National Pupil Database (NPD) as a sampling frame for secondary school pupils, and the Individualised Learner Records (ILR) as a sampling frame for college students (excluding apprenticeships[3]).

In total, this report includes data from:



The research report conveys findings in two ways:

1. **Overall response** – this is based on the total number of respondents who answered the question (i.e. the bullet-pointed figures above).
2. **Paired response** – this is based on households where both the pupil/college student and one of their parents/carers have answered the survey (i.e. the number of pairs displayed above).

For definitions of the subgroups of interest, please see the Glossary.

[3] Those studying an apprenticeship were not invited to take part in the survey because an apprentice's learning takes place primarily in the workplace, not in a school or college setting.

Survey design

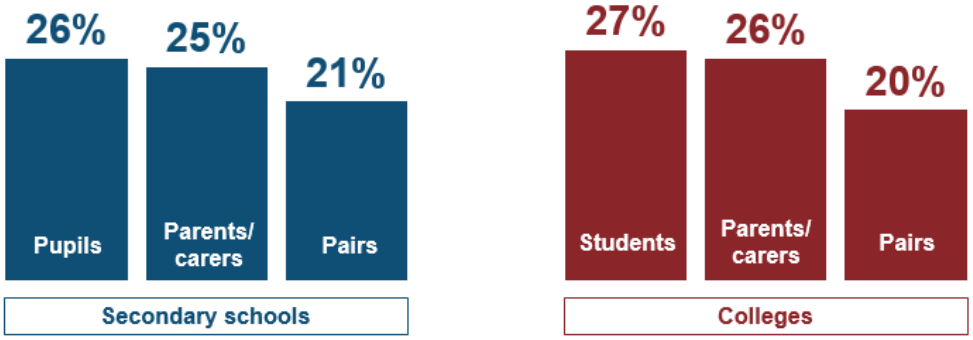
Respondents were contacted by post and asked to take part in the survey online. In total, an invitation and up to four reminders were sent to respondents who did not complete the online survey; with the second reminder, a paper questionnaire was provided as an alternative mode of data collection.

In each household, two separate questionnaires were administered: one to the school pupil or college student, and one to their parent/carer. All respondents self-completed the questionnaire either online or by paper.

The content of the questionnaires was developed by the policy teams across DfE and covered key priorities such as subject and qualification choice, mental health and wellbeing, SEND, bullying, and careers and aspirations.

Response

Fieldwork took place between 11 July - 1 September 2019. The final response rate can be summarised as follows:



For information regarding the data cleaning process and a full breakdown of the response for this wave, please see the separate technical report.

Report findings

In most places, the overall response is reported. The exceptions to this are:

- **Paired analysis:** This is where both the young person and their parent/carer were asked the same survey question, and the analysis looks at whether the young person and their parent/carer provide the same answer to this question.
- **Trend analysis:** previous waves of the survey have reported the findings for paired responses only. For comparability, where the same question has been

asked to the same audience, the findings are based on paired responses only. For a summary of the fieldwork dates by wave, please see the Glossary.

How reliable are these findings?

Overall, only a proportion of the total population of young people attending secondary schools or colleges in England and their parents/carers took part in this wave of the survey. As such, we cannot be certain that the figures obtained are the same as those we would have obtained if the total population completed the survey. We can, however, predict the variation between these results. The confidence with which we can make this prediction is usually set at 95% - that is, if we ran this survey 100 times, each time with a different sample of people, the survey results would be similar to the total population results 95 out of 100 times.

1. Exam reform

This chapter explores awareness of exam reform, including the Core Maths qualification, the introduction of Progress 8, new grading for GCSEs, and the requirement to re-take English and maths at GCSE if pupils do not achieve at least a grade 4. In addition, the types of information parents/carers used when choosing their child's secondary school is also explored.

1.1 Progress measures

From 2016, Progress 8 was introduced as a new headline measure of secondary school performance. Progress 8 measures the progress that pupils make from the end of key stage 2 (KS2) to the end of key stage 4 (KS4). Progress 8 is designed to encourage schools to teach a broad and balanced curriculum, with a strong academic core. It captures the progress made by pupils in a school compared to other pupils nationally with similar prior attainment. Progress 8 rewards schools for the attainment made by all pupils, rather than those at a particular grade boundary. Each school is given a traffic light banding in performance tables to help show whether a school's Progress 8 score is above or below average compared to other schools.

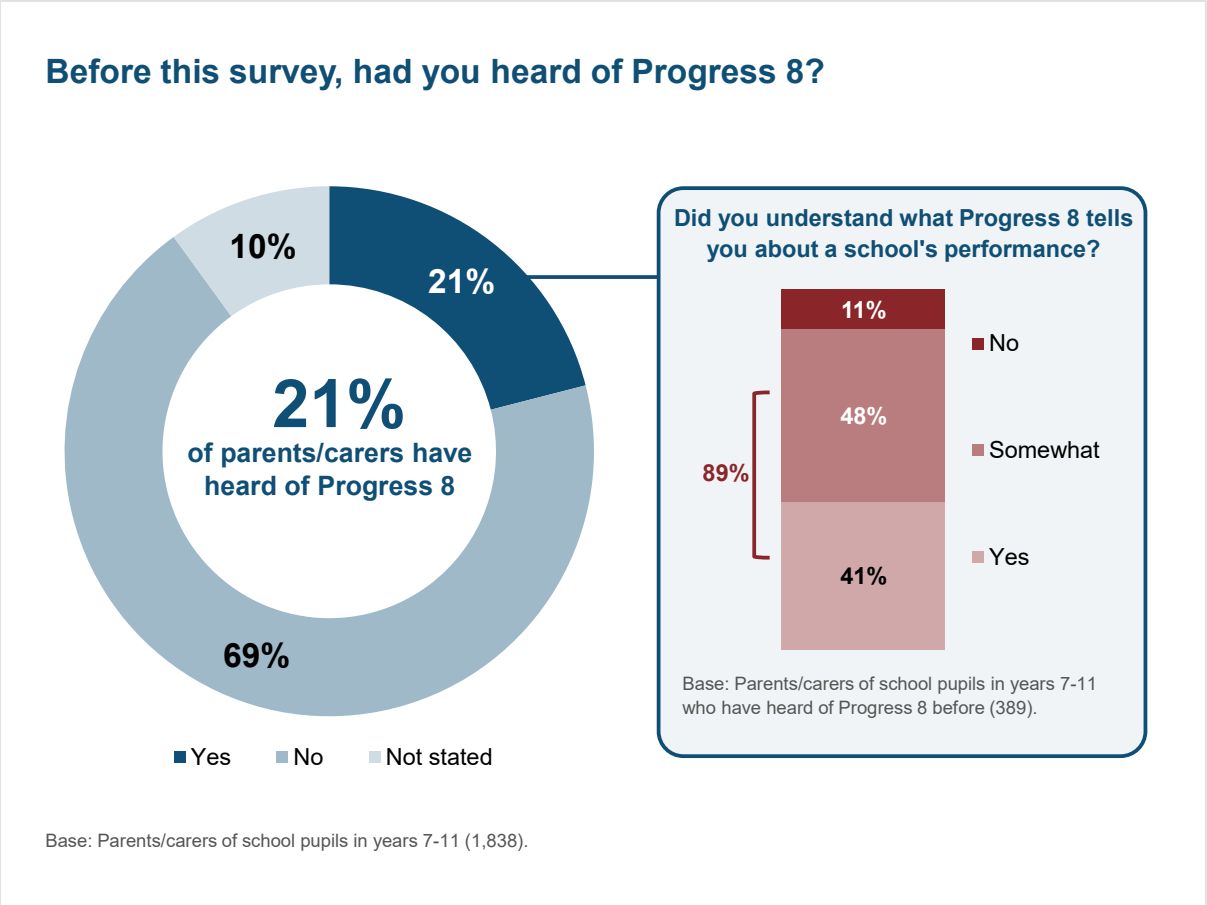
Awareness and understanding of Progress 8

To explore awareness of Progress 8, parents/carers of pupils in years 7-11 were presented with the following description: 'From 2016, Progress 8 was introduced as a new headline measure of secondary school performance. Progress 8 measures the progress that pupils make from the end of key stage 2 (KS2) to the end of key stage 4 (KS4).' Parents/carers were then asked if they had heard of Progress 8 before this survey.

As Figure 1 illustrates, 69% of parents/carers had not heard of Progress 8 before the survey; just 1 in 5 (21%) were aware of the measure. Those who had heard of Progress 8, were asked about the extent to which they felt they understood the measure. Most of those who were aware (89%), also reported understanding, at least somewhat, what Progress 8 tells them about a school's performance.

Notably, parents/carers of pupils who were eligible for free school meals (FSM) were less likely to have heard of Progress 8 (12%), compared with parents/carers of pupils who were not eligible for FSM (23%).

Figure 1: Awareness and understanding of Progress 8



Base: Parents/carers of school pupils in years 7-11 (1,838).

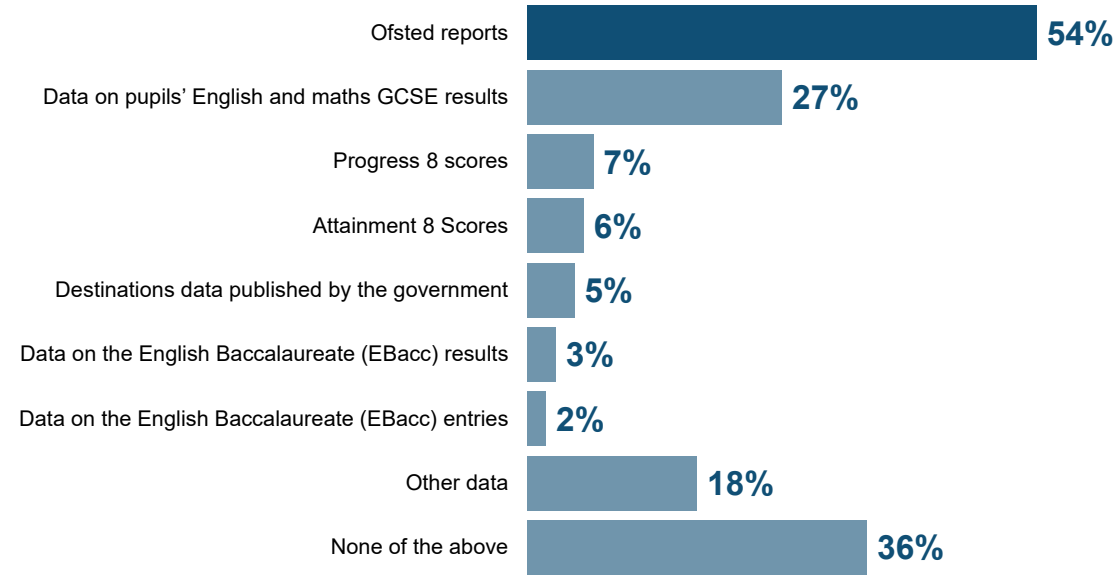
1.2 Data sources parents/carers use to choose schools

Parents/carers of pupils in years 7-9 were asked whether they had used any of the sources listed in Figure 2 when choosing their child's secondary school. Parents/carers were most likely to report using Ofsted reports (54%) when choosing their child's secondary school. This was followed by data on pupils' English and maths GCSE results, with just over a quarter of parents/carers (27%) using this source of information.

These findings suggest that a slightly higher proportion of parents/carers of pupils in years 7-9 were using Ofsted reports as a source of information, compared with those who responded in Summer 2018 (48% in Summer 2018, compared with 54% in Summer 2019). However, the findings are fairly consistent for use of data on pupils' English and maths GCSE results (25% in Summer 2018, compared with 27% in Summer 2019).

Figure 2: Data sources parents/carers used when choosing their child's secondary school

Which of the following, if any, did you use when choosing your child's secondary school?



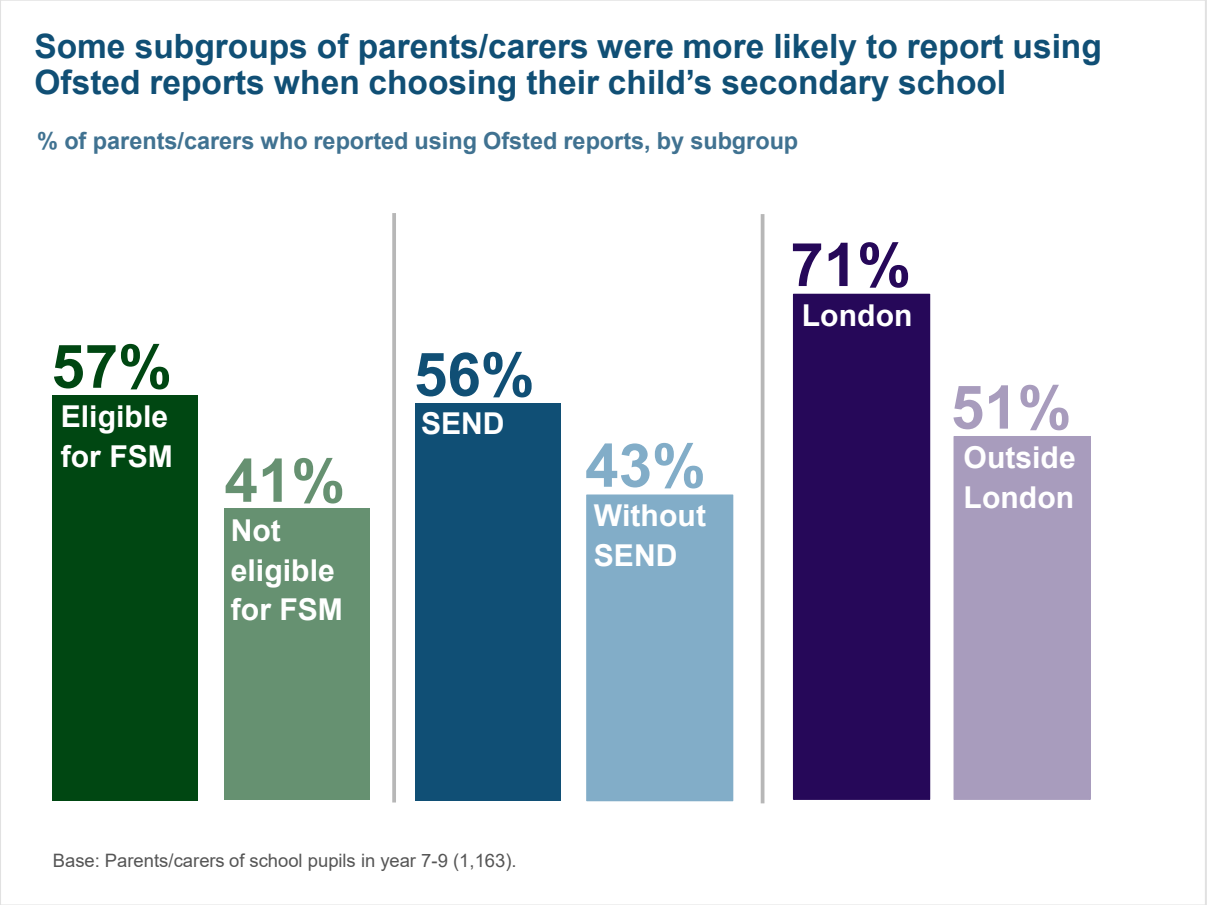
Base: Parents/carers of school pupils in year 7-9 (1,163).
Note: 1% of parents/carers of school pupils in years 7-9 did not provide an answer to this question.

Parents/carers who were more likely to report using Ofsted reports

As illustrated on Figure 3 below, some subgroups of parents/carers were more likely to report using Ofsted reports when choosing their child's secondary school. This includes:

- **Parents/carers of pupils who were not eligible for FSM** (57%, compared with 41% of parents/carers of pupils who were eligible for FSM);
- **Parents/carers of pupils without SEND** (56%, compared with 43% of parents/carers of pupils with SEND); and
- **Parents/carers of pupils in London** (71%, compared with 51% of parents/carers of pupils outside of London).

Figure 3: Subgroup differences in use of Ofsted reports for choosing children's secondary schools



Parents/carers who reported not using any of the sources of information listed

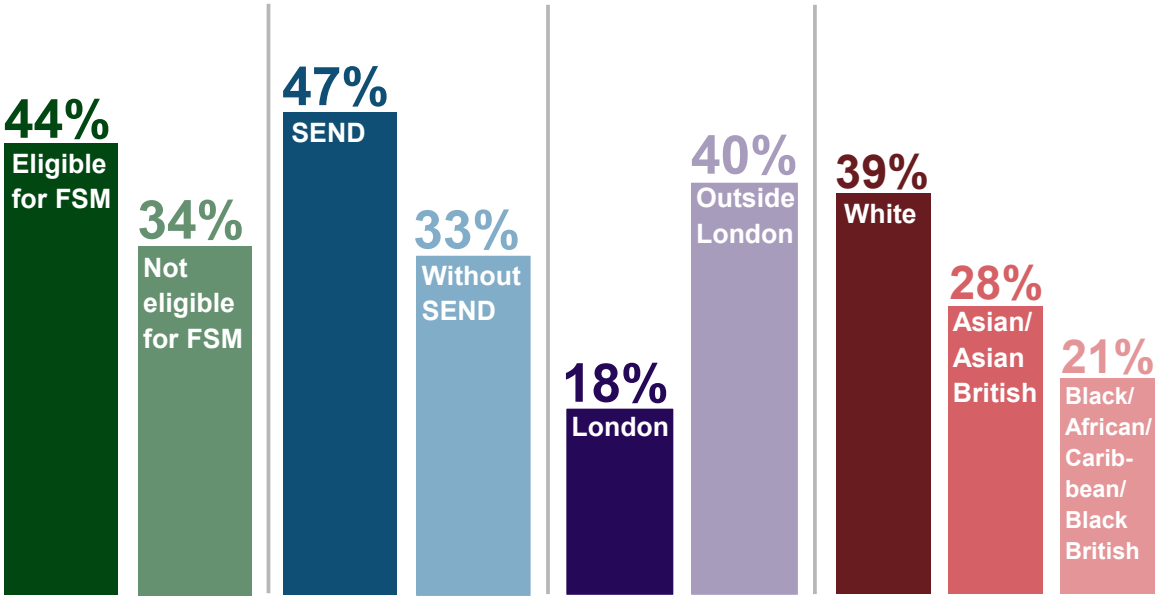
Overall, 36% of parents/carers of pupils in years 7-9 reported not using any of the listed sources. As shown on Figure 4 below, subgroups of parents/carers who were most likely to say they had not used any of the listed sources included:

- **Parents/carers of pupils who were eligible for FSM** (44%, compared with 34% of parents/carers of school pupils who were not eligible for FSM);
- **Parents/carers of pupils with SEND** (47%, compared with 33% of parents/carers of pupils without SEND);
- **Parents/carers of pupils outside of London** (40%, compared with 18% of parents/carers of pupils in London); and
- **Parents/carers of White pupils** (39%, compared with 28% of parents/carers of Asian/Asian British pupils and 21% of parents/carers of Black/African/Caribbean/Black British pupils).

Figure 4: Subgroups of parents/carers more likely not to use any of the listed sources

Some subgroups of parents/carers were more likely to not use any of the listed sources when choosing their child's secondary school

% of parents/carers who reported not using any of the listed sources, by subgroup



Base: Parents/carers of school pupils in year 7-9 (1,163).

1.3 GCSE Reforms

Reformed GCSEs in all subjects are the result of a process of reform that the government started in January 2011, with the announcement of a review of the national curriculum in England. In the years that followed, the government consulted widely with schools, colleges, universities and employers, both on the principles for reform and the detail of the content of individual subjects, to help them prepare for their introduction. The reformed GCSEs assess the knowledge and skills acquired by pupils during key stage 4 and are in line with expected standards in countries with high performing education systems.

The reforms also introduced a new 9 to 1 grading scale for GCSEs in England, with 9 the highest grade, to differentiate better between the highest performing pupils and distinguish clearly between the new and old exams.

A grade 4 is a "standard pass" in all subjects. This marks a similar achievement to the old grade C or above – previously known as a "good pass". All grades from 1 to 9 represent a pass. Under the old grading system there were 3 grades above a grade C, and in the reformed grading scale there are 5 grades above a grade 4.

In English language and maths GCSEs, but in no others, a grade 5 or above is recognised as a “strong pass” for the purposes of school accountability only. This is one of the government’s headline measures for school performance.

Awareness of new GCSE grading system

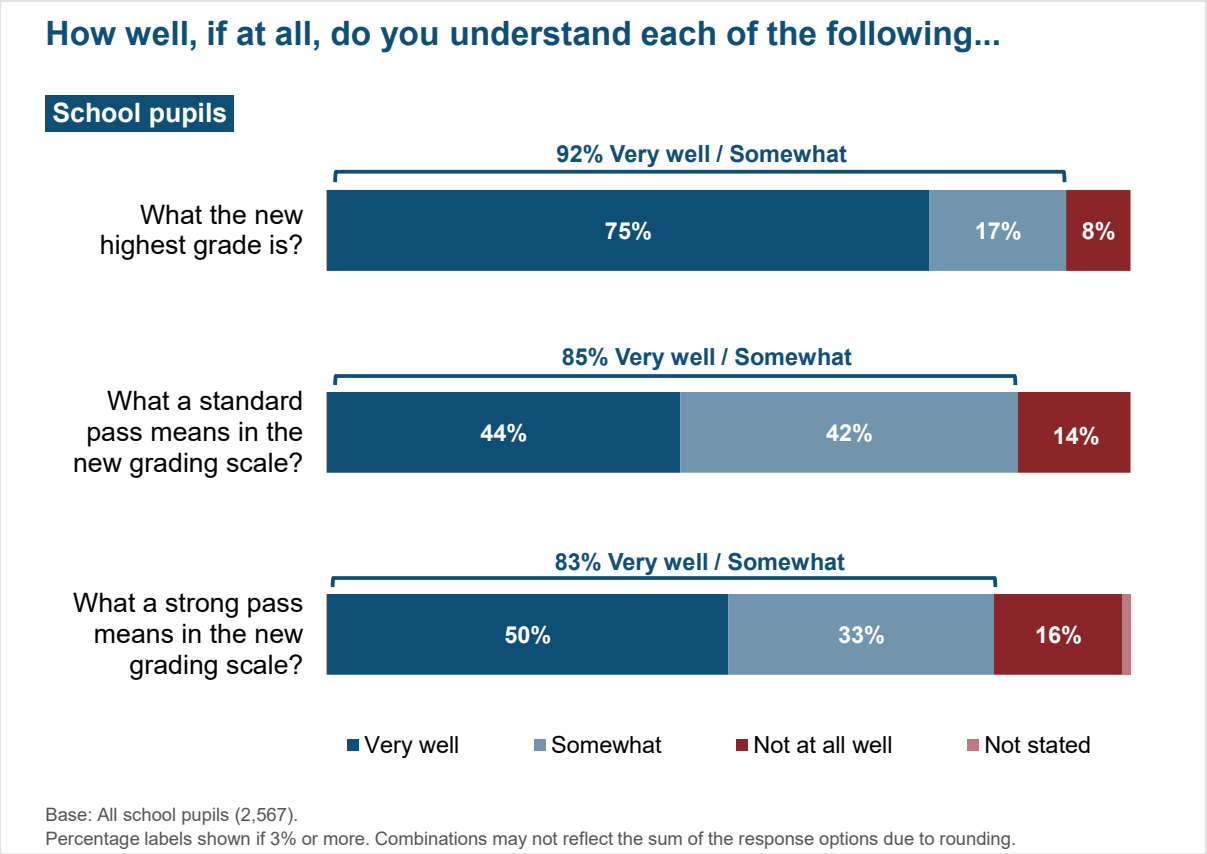
To explore the understanding of the new GCSE grading system, pupils and parents/carers were asked how well they understand what the new highest grade is, what a standard pass means in the new grading scale, and what a strong pass means in the new grading scale.

As shown below (Figures 5 and 6), most pupils and parents/carers reported that they understand each aspect of the new grading system somewhat or very well. For all 3 aspects of the new grading system, the proportion of pupils who reported understanding these at least somewhat well was higher than the proportion of parents/carers who reported understanding the new system at least somewhat well.

Both pupils and parents/carers were more likely to know what the new highest grade is, compared with other aspects of the new system:

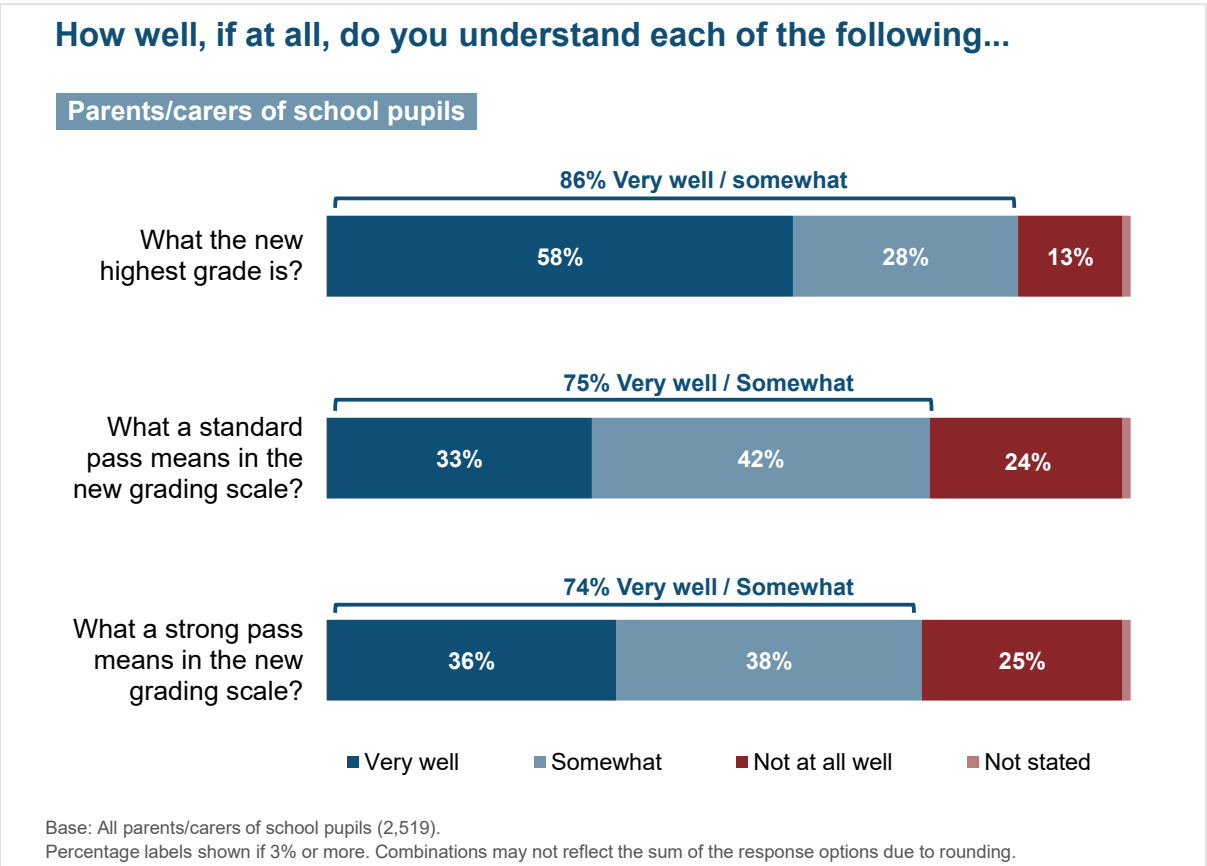
- Three-quarters of pupils reported understanding what the new highest grade is very well (75%), whilst half (50%) understand what a strong pass means very well, and only 44% of pupils understand what a standard pass means very well.
- 3 in 5 parents/carers (58%) reported that they understand very well what the new highest grade is, compared with just 36% who understand what a strong pass means very well, and 33% who understand what a standard pass means very well.

Figure 5: Understanding of the new GCSE grading system - school pupils



Base: All school pupils (2,567).
Percentage labels shown if 3% or more. Combinations may not reflect the sum of the response options due to rounding.

Figure 6: Understanding of the new GCSE grading system - parents/carers of school pupils



Base: All parents/carers of school pupils (2,519).
Percentage labels shown if 3% or more. Combinations may not reflect the sum of the response options due to rounding.

Notably, **understanding of the new grading system was higher in key stage 4**, compared with key stage 3:

- 49% of pupils in key stage 4 reported they understood all 3 statements very well, compared with 23% of pupils in key stage 3: and
- 33% of parents/carers of pupils in key stage 4 reported they understood all 3 statements very well, compared with 22% of parents/carers of pupils in key stage 3.

The following subgroups were more likely to report not understanding the new GCSE grading at all well for all 3 statements:

- **Pupils with SEND** (19%, compared with 3% of pupils without SEND). The same trend was evident among parents/carers of pupils with SEND (21%, compared with 7% of parents/carers of pupils without SEND).
- **Pupils who were eligible for FSM** (11%, compared with 5% of pupils who were not eligible for FSM). Similarly, this trend was apparent among parents/carers of pupils who were eligible for FSM (15%, compared with 10% of parents/carers of pupils who were not eligible for FSM).
- **White pupils** (6%, compared with 2% of Asian/Asian British pupils). This finding is also seen among parents/carers of White pupils (12%, compared with 3% of parents/carers of Asian/Asian British pupils).

Paired responses

As pupils and parents/carers were both asked about their understanding of the new GCSE grading system, it is possible to compare responses of pupils and parents/carers living in the same household.

Across all 3 statements, there was a larger proportion of households where the pupil reported understanding the new grading system (while their parent/carer did not), compared to households where the parent/carer reported understanding the new grading system (while their child did not).

- **New highest grade:** In 11% of households, pupils reported understanding what the new highest grade is while their parents/carers did not, compared with 5% of households where the pupils did not understand but the parents/carers did.
- **Standard pass:** In 18% of households, pupils reported understanding what a standard pass means while their parents/carers did not, compared with 9% of households where the pupils did not understand but the parents/carers did.

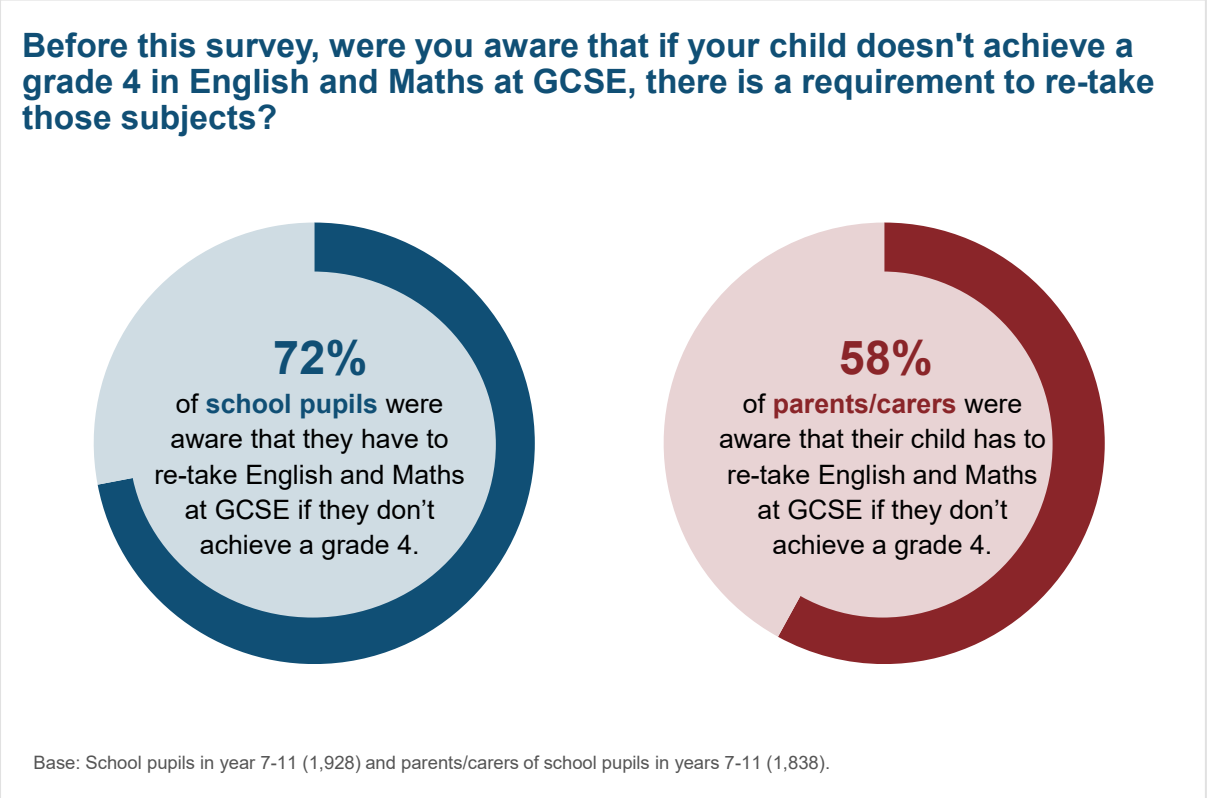
- **Strong pass:** In 18% of households, pupils reported understanding what a strong pass means while their parents/carers did not, compared with 10% of households where the pupils did not understand but the parents/carers did.

1.4 English and maths GCSE re-take requirement

Pupils in years 7-11 and parents/carers of pupils in years 7-11 were asked if they were aware of the requirement to re-take English and maths at GCSE if pupils do not achieve at least a grade 4.

As Figure 7 illustrates, school pupils were more likely to report being aware of this requirement (72%), compared to parents/carers (55%).

Figure 7: Awareness of the requirement to re-take English and maths at GCSE



Subgroup differences

The following subgroups were more likely to be aware of the requirement to re-take maths and English at GCSE:

- **Pupils in key stage 4** (88%, compared with 62% of pupils in key stage 3). The same trend was evident among parents/carers of pupils in key stage 4 (64%, compared with 50% of parents/carers of pupils in key stage 3).

- **Pupils without SEND (**73%, compared with 62% of pupils with SEND). The same trend was evident among parents/carers of pupils without SEND **(**58%, compared with 49% of parents/carers of pupils with SEND).
- **Parents/carers of pupils in London (**62%, compared with 53% of parents/carers of pupils outside of London); and
- **Parents/carers of Asian/Asian British pupils (**62%, compared with 54% of parents/carers of White pupils and 51% of parents/carers from an 'other' ethnic group).

Paired responses

There were some gaps in awareness between pupils and parents/carers living in the same household:

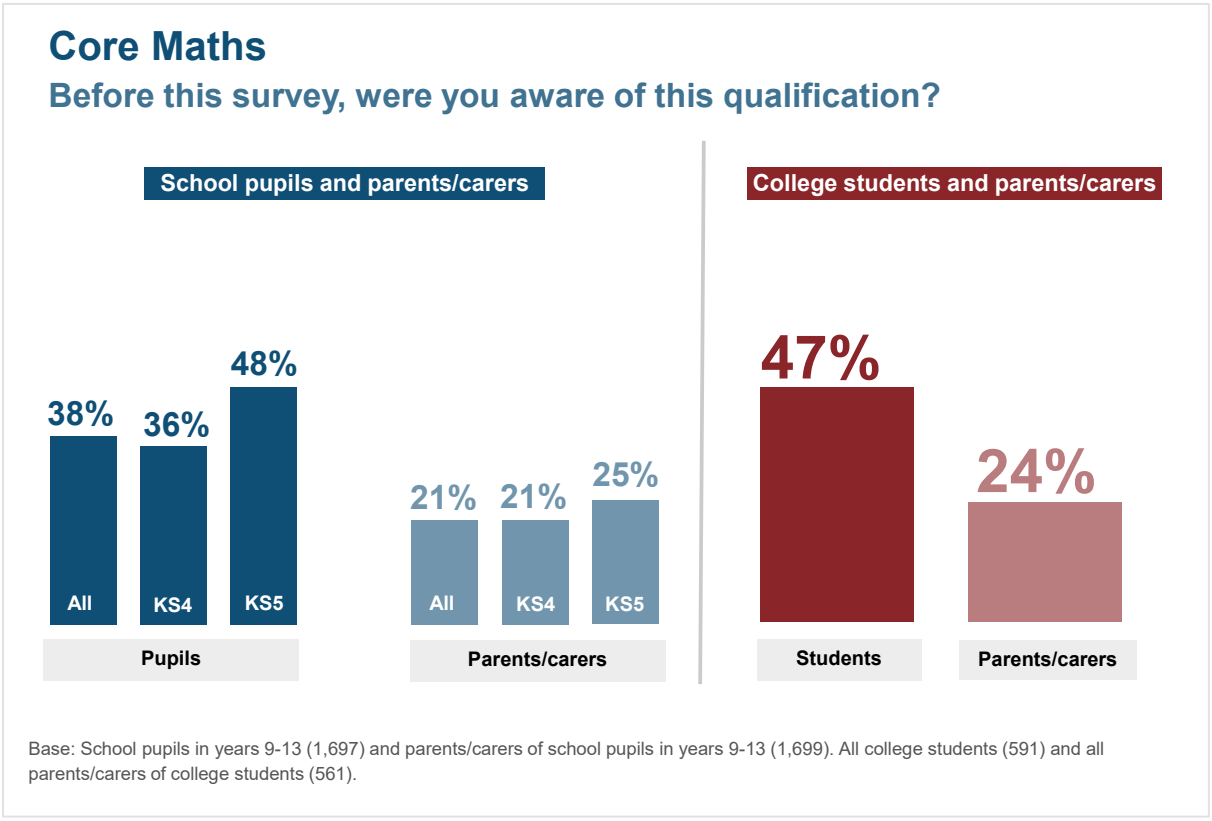
- In 25% of households, the pupil reported that they were aware of the requirement to re-take English and maths, while their parent/carer said that they were not aware.
- In 9% of households, the parent/carer reported that they were aware of this requirement, while their child reported that they were not.

1.5. Awareness of Core Maths

To measure awareness of the Core Maths qualification, young people and parents/carers were presented with the following description: 'Core Maths is a level 3 qualification that aims to strengthen the application of mathematics in real life scenarios. It is available to those who got grade 4 or above at GCSE. Whilst it is not a full A Level, it can be studied alongside A Levels'. Young people and parents/carers were then asked if they had heard of Core Maths before this survey.

As Figure 8 illustrates, awareness of Core Maths was generally low, especially among parents/carers where just 1 in 5 parents/carers were aware of the qualification. Overall, awareness appeared to increase with age, with pupils in key stage 5 expressing a similar level of awareness to college students.

Figure 8: Awareness of Core Maths



Base: School pupils in years 9-13 (1,697) and parents/carers of school pupils in years 9-13 (1,699). All college students (591) and all parents/carers of college students (561).

2. Subject and qualifications choice

This chapter focuses on the English Baccalaureate (EBacc). The chapter covers the process of deciding which GCSE subjects to take, awareness of the EBacc among school pupils and their parents/carers, and their attitudes towards it. This chapter also covers the reasons why pupils took/plan to take different subjects pupils at GCSE, and whether parents/carers would advise their child to take each of the subjects.

2.1. The English Baccalaureate (EBacc)

The English Baccalaureate (EBacc) was first introduced in 2010 and is a set of subjects that pupils can choose to study at GCSE. Subjects include:

- English – pupils must take both English language and English literature
- Maths
- Science – pupils can either take GCSE combined science (two GCSEs that cover biology, chemistry and physics) or three single sciences at GCSE (three subjects from biology, chemistry, physics and computer science)
- Humanities – pupils can take either history or geography
- Language – pupils can take a modern or an ancient language

These subjects are considered essential for many degrees and provide a sound basis for a variety of careers beyond the age of 16. They can also enrich pupils' studies and give them a broad general knowledge that will enable them to participate in and contribute to society.

The EBacc is a performance measure, which means that secondary schools are measured on the number of pupils that take GCSEs in these core subjects. Schools are also measured on how well pupils do in these subjects.

In 2019, EBacc uptake was 40%, the highest level since 2010.[4] The government's ambition is that, by 2025, 90% of year 10 pupils in state-funded mainstream schools will be studying GCSEs in the EBacc subjects. As a stepping stone towards this, an interim goal of 75% of year 10 pupils by September 2022 has been set.

[4] For more information on the EBacc, please visit: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-baccalaureate-ebacc/english-baccalaureate-ebacc

Awareness of the EBacc

To measure awareness of the EBacc, school pupils and parents/carers were presented with the following description: 'The full English Baccalaureate (EBacc) includes GCSEs in English Literature and Language, maths, the sciences (which includes computer science), a language, and History or Geography'. Pupils and parents/carers were then asked if they had heard of the EBacc before taking part in the survey.

Overall, 37% of pupils and 52% of parents/carers said they had heard of the EBacc prior to taking the survey.

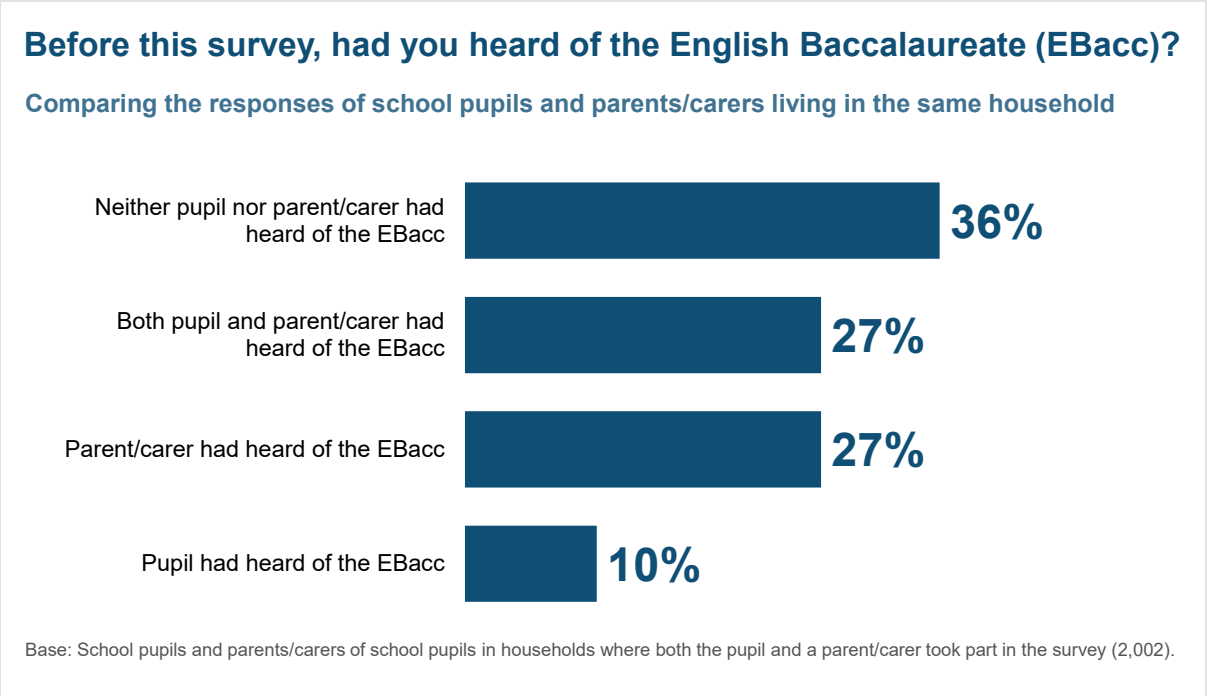
Some subgroups were more likely to be aware of the EBacc, including:

- **Pupils who were not eligible for FSM** (38%, compared with 29% of pupils who were eligible for FSM). The same trend was evident among parents/carers; 57% of parents/carers of pupils who were not eligible for FSM had heard of the EBacc, compared with 31% of parents/carers of pupils who were eligible for FSM.
- **Pupils without SEND** (40%, compared with 24% of pupils with SEND).
- **Pupils living in the least deprived areas** (43%, compared with 32% of pupils living in the most deprived areas). This difference was starker among parents/carers, where 67% of parents/carers living in the least deprived areas had heard of the EBacc, compared with 33% of parents/carers living in the most deprived areas.
- **Parents/carers of White pupils** (57%, compared with 45% of parents/carers of pupils from an 'other' ethnic group, 42% of parents/carers of Black/African/Caribbean/Black British pupils and 36% of parents/carers of Asian/Asian British pupils).

Paired response

When comparing the responses of pupils and parents/carers living in the same household, it is evident that there are some gaps in awareness of the EBacc. As Figure 1 illustrates, in just over a quarter (27%) of households both the pupil and their parent/carer said that they had heard of the EBacc before this survey. This means that in around three-quarters of households, either the pupil, their parent/carer or both reported that they were unaware of the EBacc.

Figure 9: Comparing school pupils' and their parents'/carers' awareness of the EBacc



Parent/carer perceptions of the EBacc

All parents/carers were then asked whether they would advise their children to take the GCSEs that make up the EBacc, if they had the choice. Parents/carers were asked this question regardless of whether they had heard of the EBacc before taking part in the survey.

Overall, 41% of parents/carers said they would recommend the EBacc, 13% said they would not, and 42% did not know.

Certain subgroups of parents/carers were more likely to say they would advise their children to take the EBacc route:

- **Parents/carers of pupils without SEND** (44%, compared with 32% of parents/carers of pupils with SEND).
- **Parents/carers of Black/African/Caribbean/Black British pupils** (55%, compared with 38% of parents/carers of White pupils (38%). Parents/carers of Black/African/Caribbean/Black British pupils (55%) were also more likely to advise their children to take the EBacc than parents/carers of pupils from an 'other' ethnic group (41%).
- **Parents/carers of Asian/Asian British pupils** (49%, compared with 38% of parents/carers of White pupils).

It should be noted that parents/carers of pupils who were eligible for FSM (39%) were just as likely to advise their children to take the EBacc as parents/carers of pupils who were not eligible for FSM (41%).

Perceptions among parents/carers who had heard of the EBacc

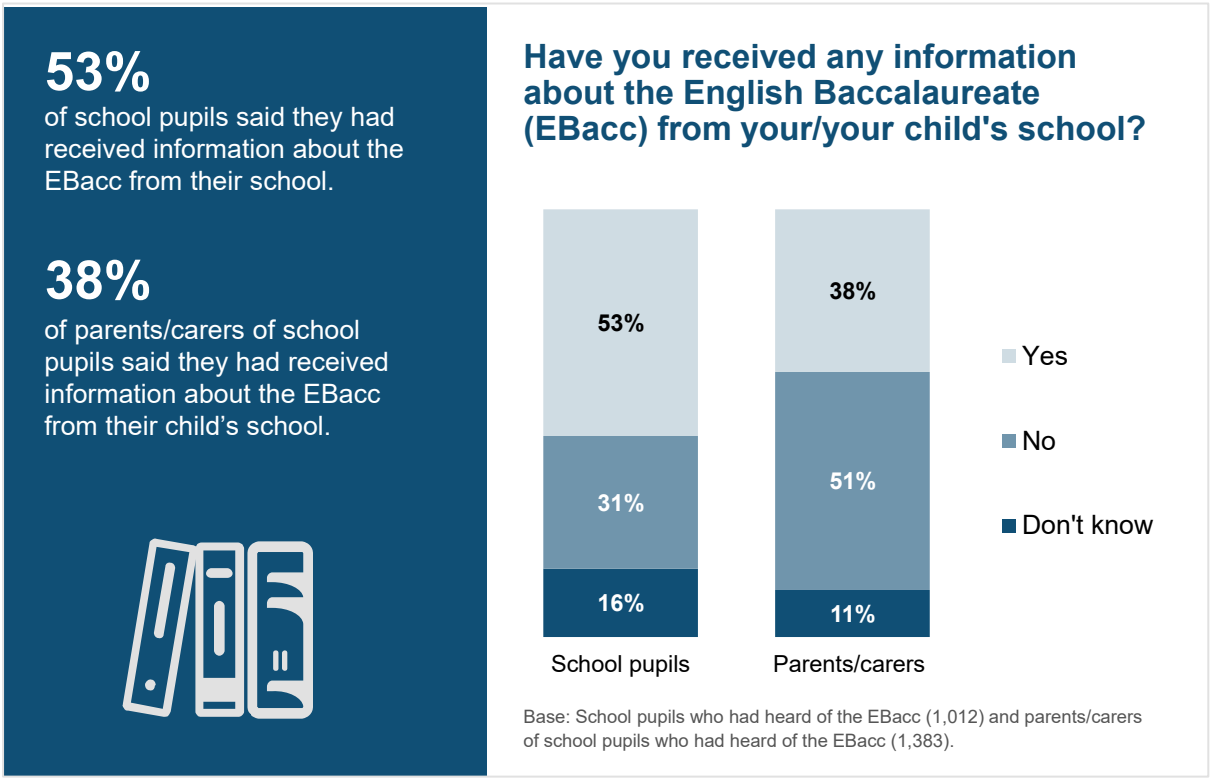
Parents/carers who had heard of the EBacc before taking part in the survey were more likely to recommend it; 46% of parents/carers who were aware of the EBacc would recommend their child take it, compared with 37% of parents/carers of school pupils who had not heard of it. Notably, 20% of parents/carers of school pupils who had heard of the EBacc would not advise their children to take it and a large proportion of parents/carers did not know (32%).

Differences were more pronounced between parents/carers of school pupils with and without SEND: among those who had heard of the EBacc, half (49%) of parents/carers of pupils without SEND would recommend it, compared with just 36% of parents/carers of pupils with SEND.

Information from schools on the EBacc

School pupils and parents/carers who had heard of the EBacc were asked whether they had received any information about it from their school. Overall, 53% of pupils and 38% of parents/carers said they had received information about the EBacc.

Figure 10: Information received from schools on the EBacc



In terms of who had received information about it from their school, there were no differences by pupil characteristics, such as eligibility for FSM, gender, ethnicity, or area.

Paired response

The analysis of paired responses showed that in 48% of cases, both the parent/carer and the school pupil had received information about the EBacc from their school. However, in 21% of cases, neither the parent/carer nor the school pupil had received any information. In 13% of cases, only the parent/carer had received information about the EBacc and in 19% of cases, only the school pupil had received information about the EBacc.

2.2. Subject choices

The government set an ambition to achieve 75% of pupils taking the EBacc by 2022, and 90% by 2025. The EBacc subjects offer a broad curriculum and open a lot of doors beyond the age of 16. Therefore, knowing which subjects pupils intend to take, in addition to understanding why they took certain decisions, is essential for developing government programmes and communications strategies.

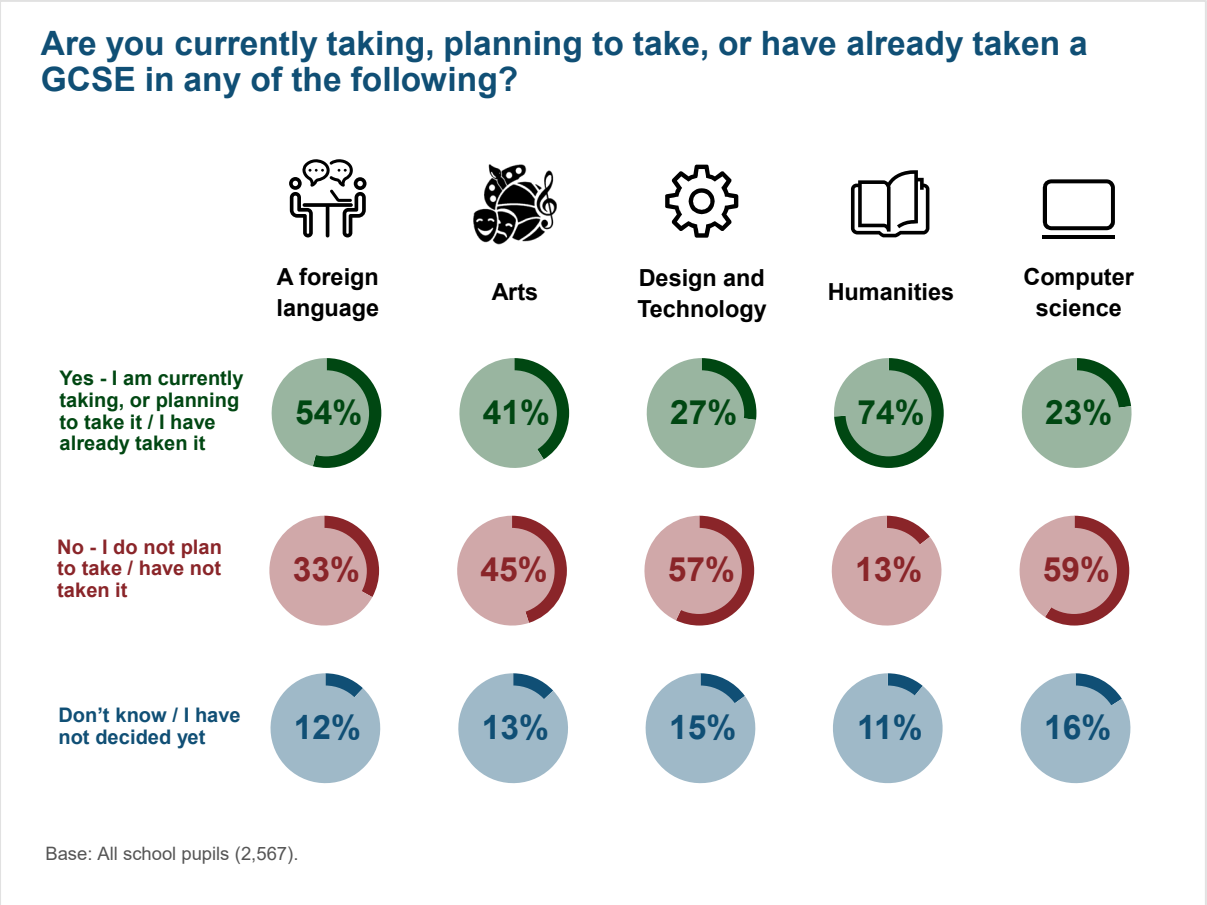
Pupils were asked which of the following GCSE subject areas or subjects they were currently taking, planning to take, or had already taken at the time of the survey:

- A foreign language
- Arts
- Design and technology
- Humanities
- Computer science

Overall, a humanities subject was the most popular choice (74%) while computer science was the least popular, with just 23% of pupils choosing to take the subject.

Notably, pupils were most likely to be undecided about computer science (16%) and design and technology (15%).

Figure 11: School pupils' GCSE subject choices

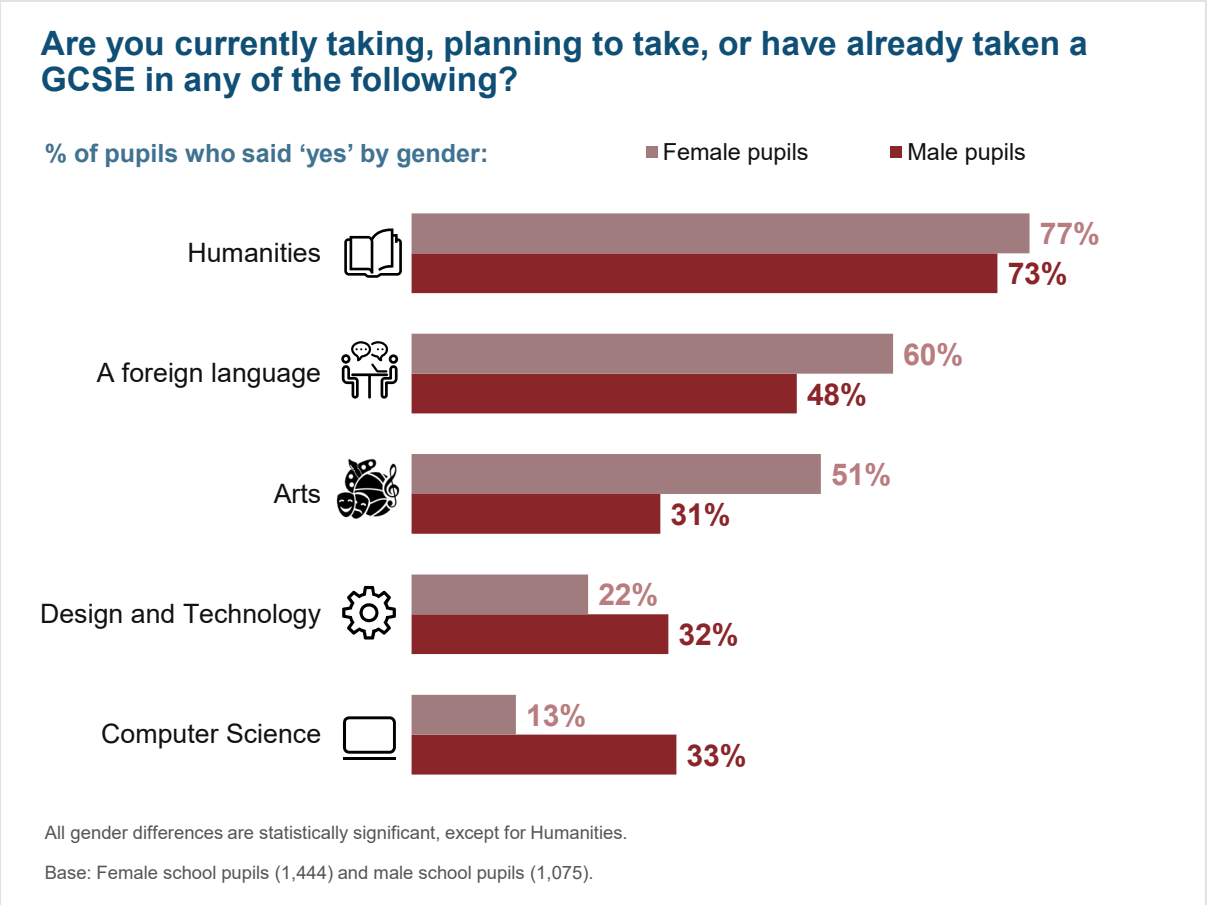


Some subgroups of pupils were more likely to report that they plan to take or were currently taking the listed subject choices at GCSE.

Pupil gender

As shown on Figure 4, female pupils were more likely than male pupils to choose to study a foreign language and an arts subject. In contrast, male students were more likely to choose computer science and design and technology.

Figure 4: School pupils' GCSE subject choices, by gender



Pupil eligibility by FSM status

Pupils who were not eligible for FSM were more likely to be currently taking, planning to take or have already taken:

- **A humanities** (75%, compared with 67% of pupils who were eligible for FSM); and
- **A foreign language** (56%, compared with 37% of pupils who were eligible for FSM).

Pupil SEND status

Pupils without SEND were more likely to choose to be currently taking, planning to take or have already taken:

- **A humanities** (78%, compared with 52% of pupils with SEND); and
- **A foreign language** (60%, compared with 28% of pupils with SEND).

Conversely, pupils with SEND were more likely to choose an arts subject (49%, compared with 40% of pupils without SEND).

Pupil ethnicity

Pupils from some BAME[5] backgrounds were more likely to choose GCSEs in:

- **A humanities** (chosen by 80% of Asian/Asian British pupils, compared with 73% of White pupils).
- **A foreign language** (chosen by 62% of Black/African/Caribbean/Black British pupils and 60% of Asian/Asian British pupils, compared with 51% of White pupils).
- **Computer science** (chosen by 29% of Asian/Asian British pupils, compared with 22% of White pupils).

The opposite trend was apparent for an arts subject, with 42% of White pupils choosing to study an arts, compared with 34% of Asian/Asian British pupils.

Reasons for GCSE subject choices

As summarised on Figure 5, for each GCSE subject choice, pupils were then presented with a list of reasons to indicate why they took or planned to take that subject at GCSE. Similarly, as shown on Figure 6, pupils who reported that they did not take or plan to take the subject at GCSE were presented with a list of reasons to indicate why they chose not to study this subject.

Overall, enjoyment of the subject appeared to play a key role in pupils' subject choices. It should also be noted that the subject helping their future career/job was more commonly cited for computer science, compared with the other subject choices.

As discussed in more detail below, the reasons for pupils' GCSE subject choices varied between different subgroups of pupils.

[5] BAME is used to refer to participants who identified as 'Black/African/Caribbean/Black British' 'Asian/Asian British' or being from an 'other' ethnic group (including mixed/multiple ethnic groups).

Figure 5: School pupils' reasons for taking subjects at GCSE

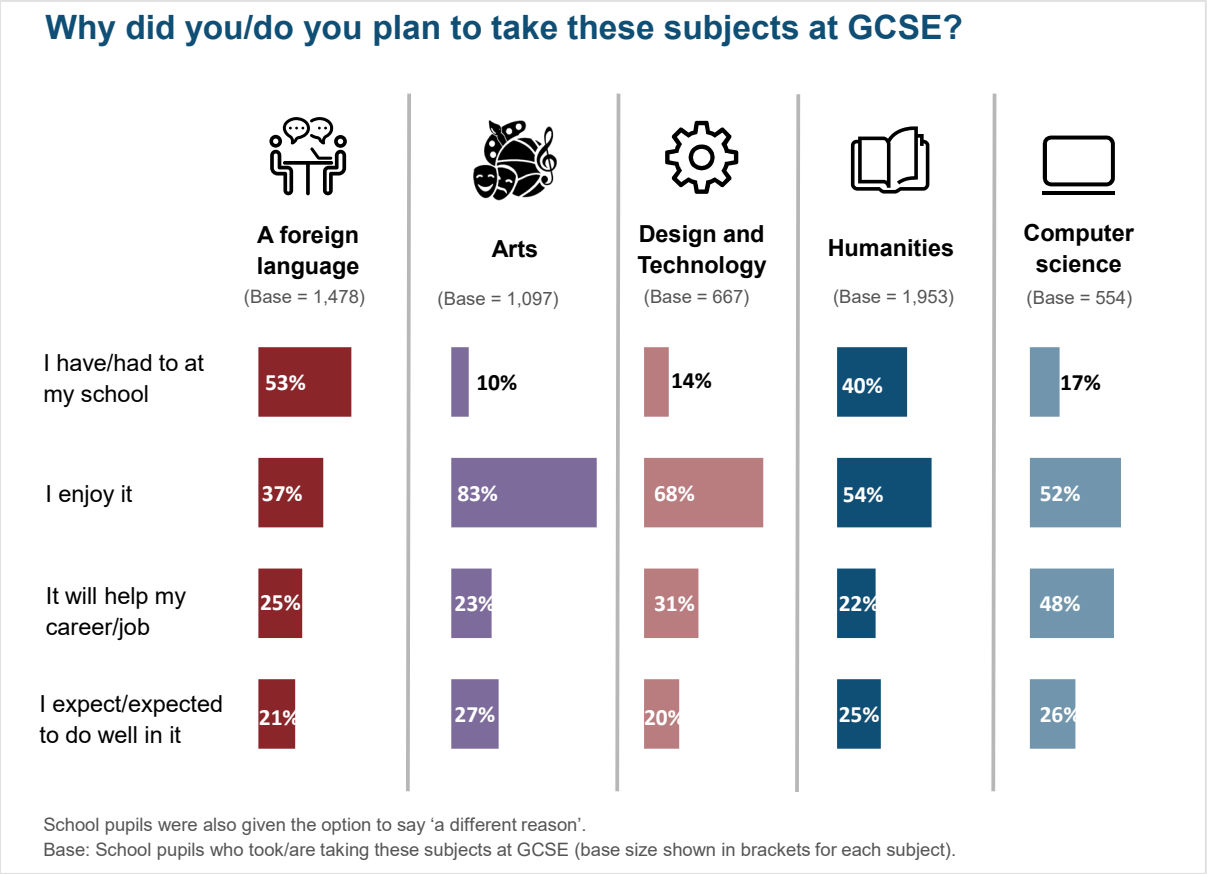
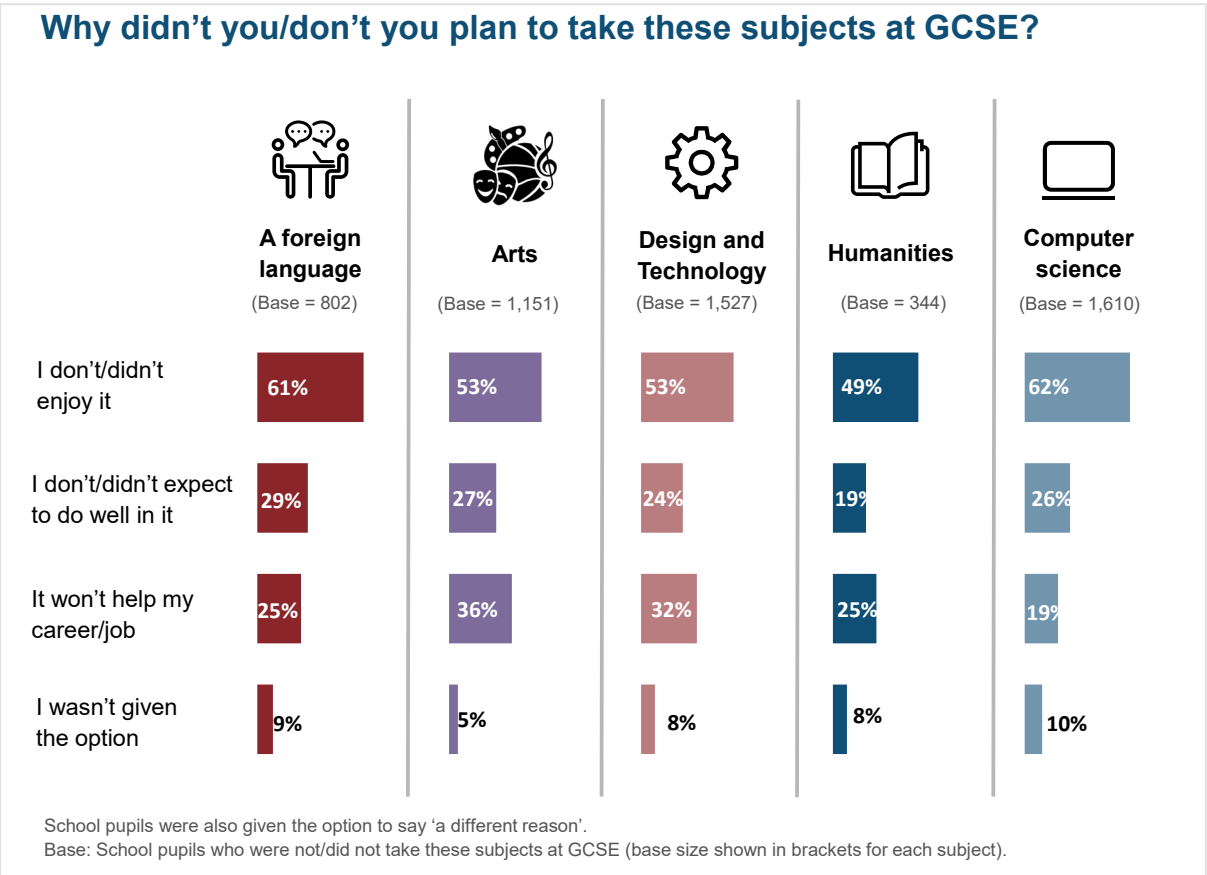


Figure 6: School pupils' reasons for not taking subjects at GCSE



A foreign language

Overall, 54% of pupils chose to study a foreign language at GCSE and the most common reason for this choice was because they had to take this subject at GCSE in their school (chosen by 53% of those who took this subject).

On the other hand, 33% of pupils chose not to study a foreign language at GCSE and the most common reason for this was that they did not enjoy this subject (chosen by 61% of those who did not take this subject).

As noted, pupils with SEND (28%) were less likely than pupils without SEND (60%) to take a foreign language at GCSE. Among pupils who chose not to take this subject, pupils with SEND were more likely to give the following reasons:

- **Lack of enjoyment for the subject** (68%, compared with 50% of pupils without SEND);
- **It would not help with their career/job** (29%, compared with 16% of pupils without SEND); and
- **They were not given the option to take a foreign language** (18%, compared with 4% of pupils without SEND).

Arts subjects

Overall, 41% of pupils chose to study an arts subject at GCSE, and the most common reason for this choice was because they enjoyed the subject (chosen by 83% of those who took this subject).

A larger proportion of pupils (45%) chose not to study an arts subject at GCSE, and the most common reason for this was that they did not enjoy the subject (chosen by 53% of those who did not take this subject). This was followed by the perception that an arts subject will not help their future career/job (chosen by 36% of those who did not take this subject).

Notably, male pupils (31%) were less likely than female pupils (51%) to study an arts subject. Among those who did not take this subject at GCSE, male pupils (57%) were more likely than female pupils (48%) to cite lack of enjoyment for the subject as the reason they did not take it.

In addition, pupils without SEND (40%) were less likely than pupils with SEND (49%) to study an arts subject. Among those who did not take this subject at GCSE, pupils without SEND (39%) were more likely than pupils with SEND (19%) to cite the subject not helping their future career/job as the reason they did not take it.

It should also be noted that the reasons given for not taking an arts subject at GCSE varied by pupil ethnicity. Pupils from an 'other' ethnic group (68%) and White pupils (55%) were most likely to cite that they did not enjoy the subject as the reason for not taking an arts at GCSE. For Black/African/Caribbean/Black British pupils (51%) and Asian/Asian British pupils (42%), their most popular reason for not taking the subject was that this subject would not help their career/job.

Design and technology

Overall, 27% of pupils chose to study design and technology at GCSE, and the most common reason for this choice was because they enjoyed the subject (chosen by 68% of those who took this subject). Male pupils (32%) were more likely than female pupils (22%) to choose studying this subject at GCSE. Although the most common reason for studying design and technology was enjoyment among both genders, male pupils (37%) were more likely than female pupils (21%) to cite that they took this subject as it will help their career/job.

On the other hand, nearly 3 in 5 pupils (57%) chose not to study design and technology at GCSE. The most common reason for this was that they did not enjoy the subject (chosen by 53% of those who did not take this subject).

Although similar proportions of pupils with and without SEND chose to study design and technology, the reasons for not taking this subject at GCSE varied. Pupils without SEND were more likely to cite the following reasons:

- **Lack of enjoyment for the subject** (56%, compared with 39% of pupils with SEND); and
- **It would not help with their career/job** (34%, compared with 22% of pupils with SEND).

Conversely, pupils with SEND were more likely to say they were not given the option to take this subject at their school (14%), compared with pupils without SEND (7%).

Humanities subjects

Based on the subjects listed, a humanities was the most popular subject choice for GCSE. Overall, 74% of pupils chose to study a humanities at GCSE, and the most common reason for this choice was because they enjoyed the subject (chosen by 54% of those who took this subject). Notably, 2 in 5 pupils (40%) reported that they had to take a humanities at their school, with this choice being more commonly reported among female pupils (43%) than male pupils (38%). On the other hand, male pupils (27%) were more likely than female pupils (23%) to report taking this subject because they expected to do well in it.

While only 13% of pupils chose not to study a humanities at GCSE, the most common reason for this was because they did not enjoy the subject (chosen by 49% of those who did not take this subject).

Computer science

Based on the subject choices listed, computer science was the least popular choice. Overall, 23% of pupils chose to study computer science at GCSE, and the most common reasons for this choice was because they enjoyed the subject (chosen by 52% of those who took this subject) and they thought it will help their career/job (chosen by 48% of those who took this subject).

As noted, male pupils (33%) were more likely than female pupils (13%) to choose to study computer science at GCSE. Among those who made this subject choice, male pupils (56%) were more likely than female pupils (43%) to report enjoyment as their reason for taking the subject at GCSE. Conversely, female pupils (24%) were more likely than male pupils (15%) to report taking this subject as they had to at their school.

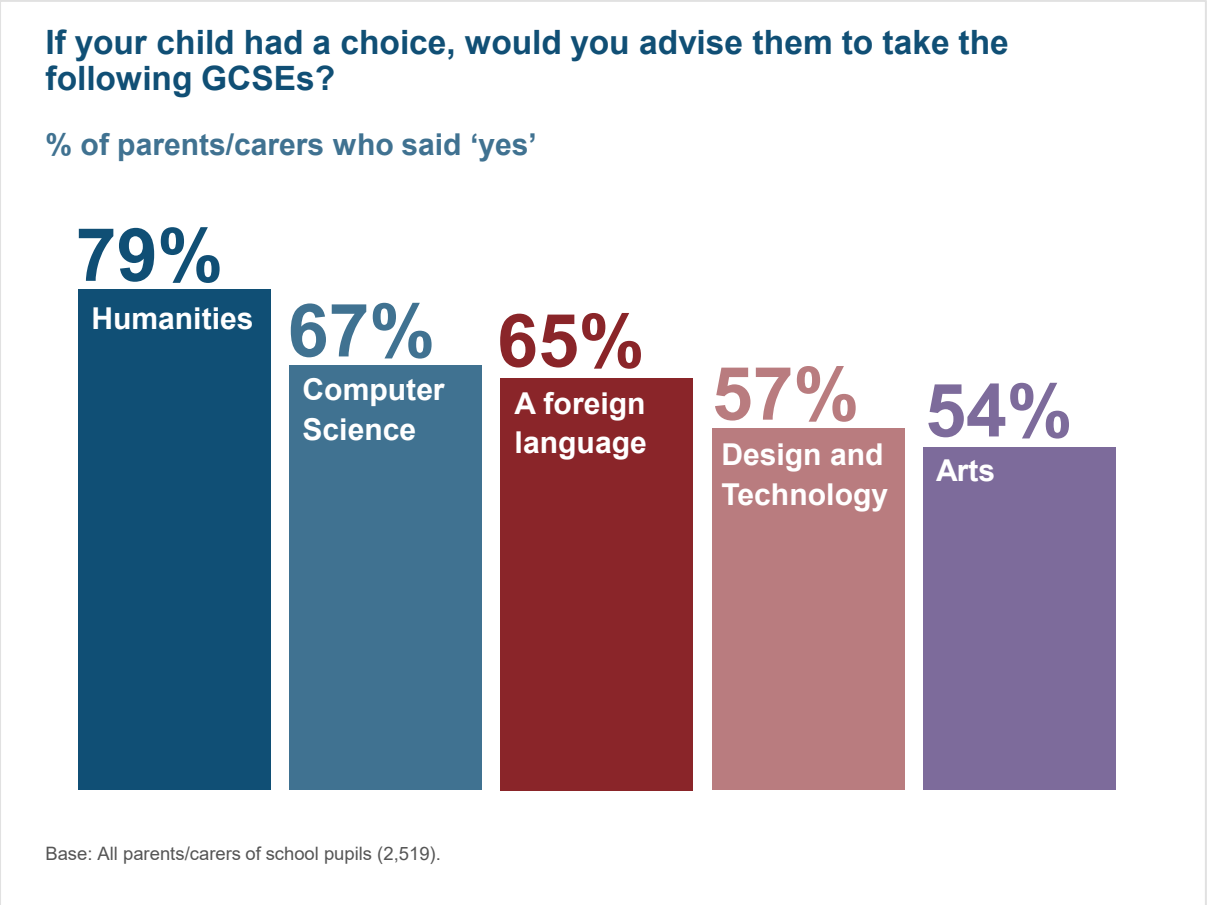
A much larger proportion of pupils (59%) chose not to study computer science at GCSE, and the most common reason for this was that they did not enjoy the subject (chosen by 62% of those who did not take this subject).

Parent/carer recommendations and pupil subject take up

Parents/carers of school pupils were asked whether they would advise their child to take the following GCSEs: a humanities subject, computer science, a foreign language, design and technology, and an arts subject.

Figure 7 highlights that parents/carers of pupils were more likely to recommend their child take a humanities (79%) than an arts subject (54%).

Figure 7: Parent/carer recommendations of GCSE subjects to take



Broadly speaking, there appears to be a pattern between parents/carers reporting that they would advise their child to take a specific GCSE, and pupils' subject choices[6]. Each of the subject choices are discussed in turn, below.

A foreign language

Just over half of pupils (54%) had taken or planned to take a foreign language at GCSE, while 65% of parents/carers said they would advise their child to take it.

Certain subgroups of parents/carers were more likely to advise their child to take a foreign language at GCSE, including:

- **Parents/carers of Black/African/Caribbean/Black British pupils** (79%, compared with 63% of parents/carers of White children);
- **Parents/carers of Asian/Asian British pupils** (71%, compared with 63% of parents/carers of White children);

[6] Please note that we are unable to determine the direction of this relationship from the data. This means that we cannot say whether school pupils were generally influenced by parental/carer recommendations, or if parents/carers recommended subjects that school pupils planned to take.

- **Parents/carers of pupils without SEND** (69%, compared with 46% of parents/carers of pupils with SEND);
- **Parents/carers of female pupils** (70%, compared with 61% of parents/carers of male pupils);
- **Parents/carers living in the most deprived areas** (71%, compared with 64% of parents/carers living in the least deprived areas, though this pattern was not seen in terms of pupils' reported GCSE choices); and
- **Parents/carers of pupils who were not eligible for FSM** (68%, compared with 49% of parents/carers of pupils who were eligible for FSM).

Arts subjects

Around 2 in 5 pupils (41%) had taken or planned to take an arts subject at GCSE, while 54% of parents/carers said they would advise their child to take it.

Certain subgroups of parents/carers were more likely to advise their child to take an arts subject at GCSE, including:

- **Parents/carers of Black/African/Caribbean/Black British pupils** (60%, compared with 46% of Asian/Asian British pupils, though this pattern was not seen in terms of pupils' reported GCSE choices);
- **Parents/carers of White pupils** (55%, compared with 46% of Asian/Asian British pupils);
- **Parents/carers of pupils with SEND** (63%, compared with 53% of parents/carers of pupils without SEND);
- **Parents/carers of female pupils** (61%, compared with 48% of parents/carers of male pupils); and
- **Parents/carers of pupils who were eligible for FSM** (61%, compared with 53% of parents/carers of pupils who were not eligible for FSM, though this pattern was not seen in terms of pupils' reported GCSE choices).

Humanities subjects

74% of pupils had taken or planned to take a humanities subject at GCSE, while 79% of parents/carers said they would advise their child to take it.

Certain subgroups of parents/carers were more likely to advise their child to take a humanities at GCSE, including:

- **Parents/carers of pupils without SEND** (83%, compared with 70% of parents/carers of pupils with SEND);

- **Parents/carers of pupils who were not eligible for FSM** (80%, compared with 75% of parents/carers of pupils who were eligible for FSM); and
- **Parents/carers living in the most deprived areas** (84%, compared with 74% of parents/carers living in the least deprived areas, though this pattern was not seen in terms of pupils' reported GCSE choices).

Whilst Asian/Asian British pupils were more likely to choose a humanities subject than White pupils, this pattern was not evident when looking at parent/carers' likelihood to advise their child to take the subject.

Computer science

Around a quarter of pupils (23%) had taken or planned to take computer science at GCSE, while 67% of parents/carers said they would advise their child to take it.

Certain subgroups of parents/carers were more likely to advise their child to take computer science at GCSE, including:

- **Parents/carers of male pupils** (73%, compared with 61% of parents/carers of female pupils); and
- **Parents/carers of Asian and Asian British pupils** (76%, compared with 65% of parents/carers of White pupils, though this pattern was not seen in terms of pupils' reported GCSE choices);
- **Parents/carers of Black/African/Caribbean/Black British pupils** (76%, compared with 65% of parents/carers of White pupils, though this pattern was not seen in terms of pupils' reported GCSE choices); and
- **Parents/carers living in the most deprived areas** (71%, compared with 63% of parents/carers living in the least deprived areas, though this pattern was not seen in terms of pupils' reported GCSE choices).

Design and technology

Around a quarter of pupils (27%) had taken or planned to take design and technology at GCSE, while 57% of parents/carers reported that they would advise their child to take it.

Certain subgroups of parents/carers were more likely to advise their child to take design and technology at GCSE, including:

- **Parents/carers of male pupils** (64%, compared with 51% of female pupils);
- **Parents/carers of Black/African/Caribbean/Black British pupils** (65%, compared with 55% of parents/carers of White pupils, though this pattern was not seen in terms of pupils' reported GCSE choices); and

- **Parents/carers of Asian/Asian British pupils** (64%, compared with 55% of parents/carers of White pupils, though this pattern was not seen in terms of pupils' reported GCSE choices).

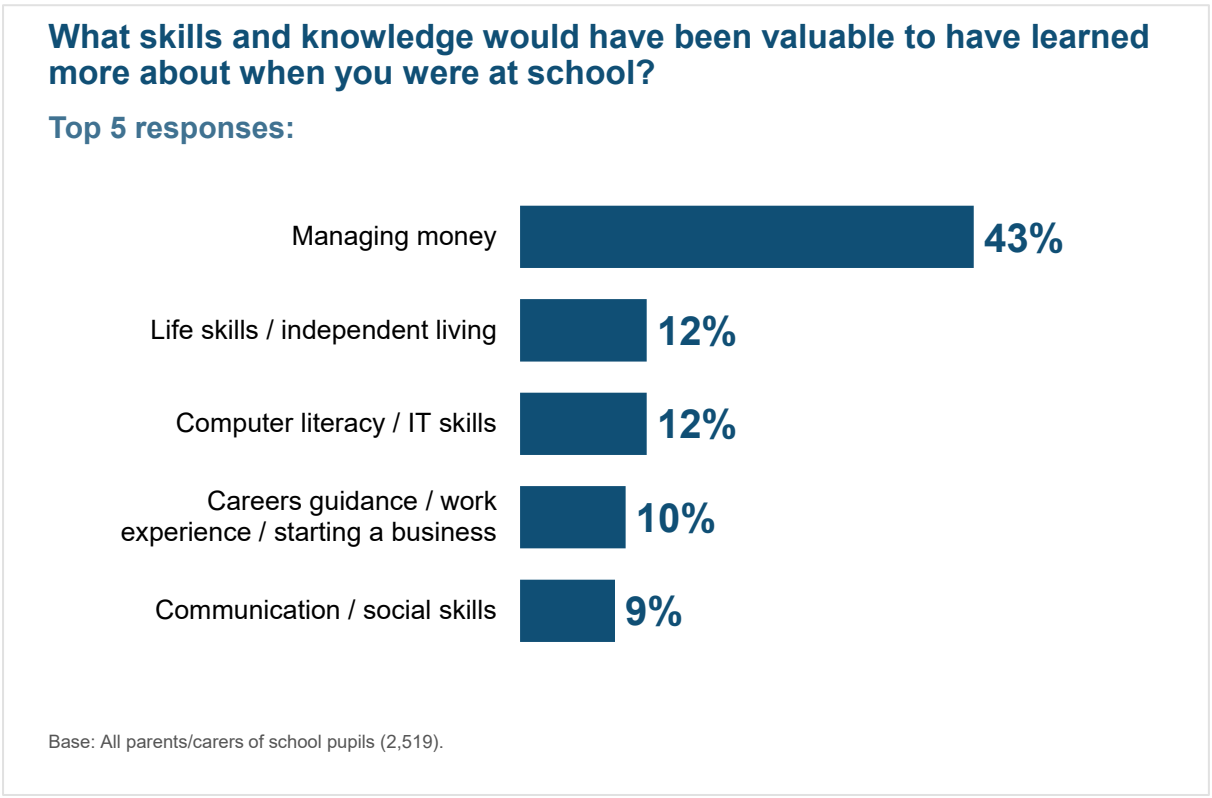
2.3. Skills and knowledge parents/carers wanted to have learned more about at school

Parents/carers of school pupils were asked the following question about which skills they wished they had learned when they were at school:

> *"Now we want you to think about skills and knowledge that are important for adulthood and everyday life. What skills and knowledge would have been valuable to have learned more about when you were at school?"*

Parents/carers could list up to three options in an open text response. The most common skill, mentioned by 43% of parents/carers, was 'managing money'.

Figure 8: Skills parents/carers would have found valuable to learn at school



3. Character, mental health and wellbeing

This chapter explores a range of topics related to the character, mental health and wellbeing of young people, including parents/carers views on the importance of developing character skills and qualities at school and college, young people's participation in extra-curricular activities, and their views on the extent to which their school has taught them important information about Relationships, Sex and Health Education topics. This chapter also explores young people and parents/carers understanding of how to look after their/their child's mental health, and the extent to which they know where to go for information if they/their child needed help with their mental health.

3.1. Character

Schools have a statutory duty, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum, to promote the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils and prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life[7]. Character education contributes to this duty to promote SMSC. The duty applies to academies and free schools through the Independent School Standards.

The Relationships, Sex and Health Education Statutory Guidance (which applies to all state funded schools) makes clear that this is most effective when schools also actively promote good behaviour and positive character traits, including for example courtesy, respect, truthfulness, courage and generosity.

Schools have an important role in the fostering of good mental wellbeing among young people so that they can fulfil their potential at school and are well prepared for adult life. Schools with clear expectations on behaviour and with well-planned provision for character and personal development can help promote good mental wellbeing.

There is no single, simple definition of character; it is a complex concept with a number of overlapping facets. Character education aims to support four important aspects of an individual's life:

- Being motivated by long-term goals and learning from setbacks;
- Learning and practising positive moral values;
- Social confidence and good behaviour; and
- Developing long-term commitments.

[7] Section 78 of the Education Act 2002.

The questions in this survey were designed to explore the relative importance of providing character education compared to academic education among parents/carers and school pupils. As character education can be delivered through co- and extra-curricular activities, pupils were also asked about their participation in extra-curricular activities provided by their school.

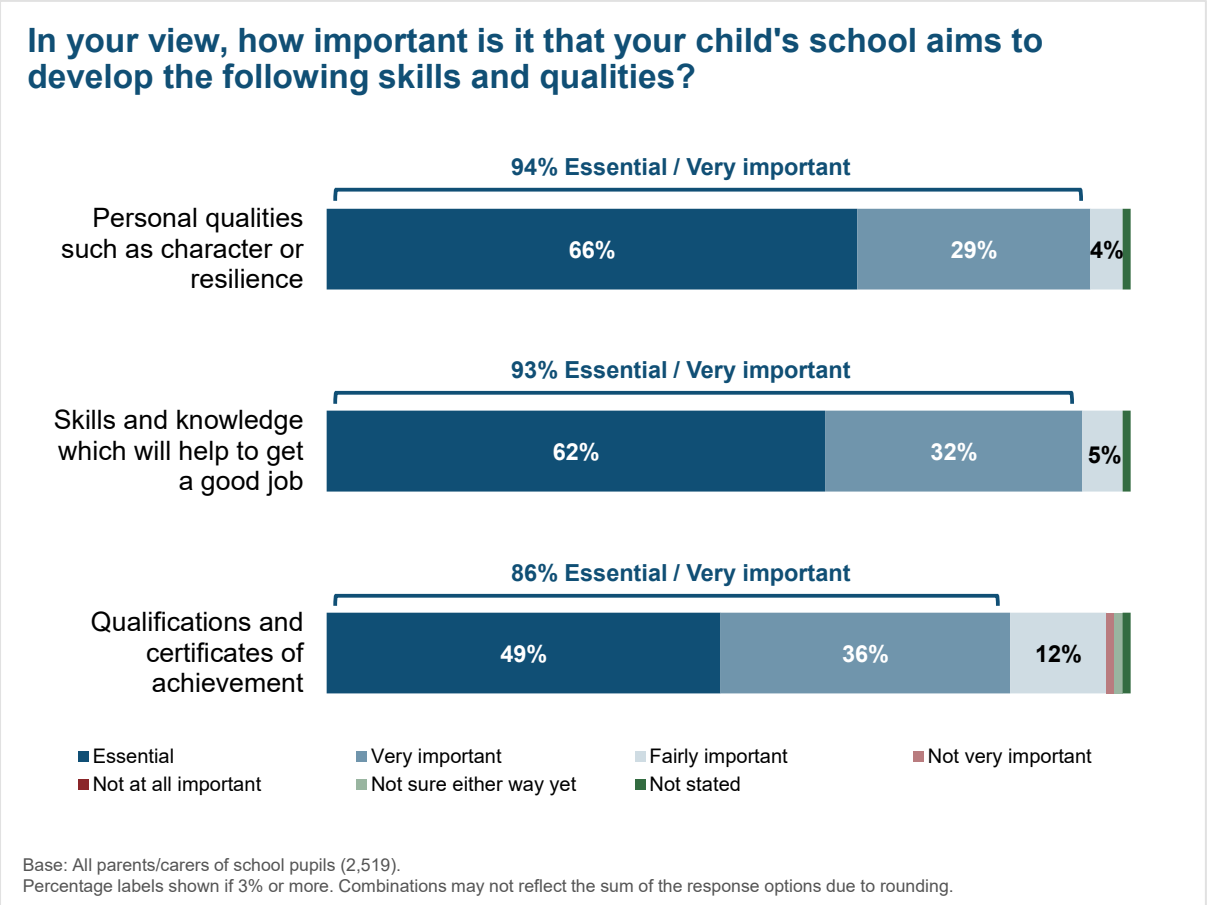
Skills and qualities developed at school/college

Parents/carers were asked how important they think it is that their child's school or college aims to develop the following skills and qualities:

- Qualifications and certificates of achievement;
- Personal qualities such as character or resilience (e.g. perseverance or the ability to cope with set-backs); and
- Skills and knowledge which will help to get a good job.

As shown in Figure 1, almost all parents/carers of school pupils said it is essential/very important for their child's school to develop personal qualities such as character or resilience (94%). A similarly high proportion of these parents/carers thought it was essential/very important for schools to develop skills and knowledge which will help to get a good job (93%), whilst slightly fewer rated qualifications and certificates of achievement as essential/very important (86%).

Figure 12: Perceived importance of schools aiming to develop character skills and qualities



There were variations between subgroups of parents/carers of school pupils in terms of their attitudes to the school's role in developing these skills and qualities, as highlighted below.

Pupil SEND status

Parents/carers of pupils with SEND and without SEND were equally likely to see developing personal qualities such as character or resilience at school as important.

Parents/carers of pupils with SEND were less likely than parents/carers of pupils without SEND to say it is essential/very important for their child's school to develop:

- **Skills and knowledge which will help to get a good job** (89% of parents/carers of school pupils with SEND, compared with 95% of parents/carers of pupils without SEND); and
- **Qualifications and certificates of achievement** (70% of parents/carers of school pupils with SEND, compared with 90% of parents/carers of pupils without SEND).

Pupil ethnicity

Parents/carers of White pupils (96%) were more likely to think that personal qualities such as character or resilience were essential/very important than parents/carers of Asian/Asian British pupils (90%).

In contrast, parents/carers of Asian/Asian British pupils (90%) were more likely to view qualifications and certificates of achievement as essential/very important than parents/carers of White pupils (85%).

Comparing secondary schools and colleges

There was no difference between parents/carers of college students and parents/carers of school pupils of the same age (school pupils in years 12 and 13). Almost all parents/carers of college students felt personal qualities such as character or resilience (96%), and skills and knowledge which will help to get a good job (96%) were essential/very important. Slightly fewer parents/carers of college students felt qualifications and certificates of achievement (90%) were essential/very important.

For parents/carers of college students, views were consistent across subgroups.

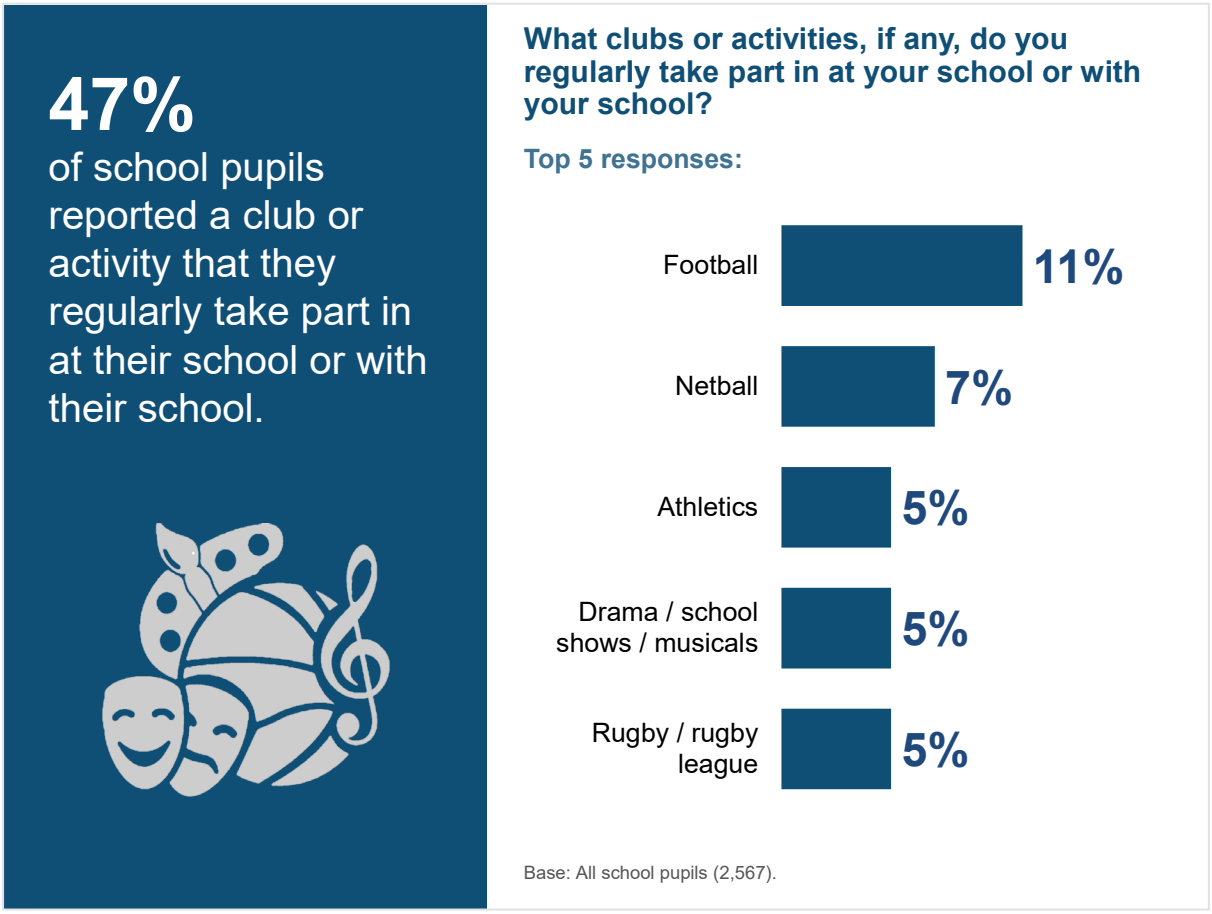
3.2. Extracurricular activities

Extra-curricular activities in schools can contribute to personal development and an education that builds resilience, character and skills that are valuable for learning and future employment. Schools can give their pupils opportunities to be challenged and build expertise if they offer a broad range of high quality, extra-curricular activities, and if barriers to participation are minimised.

Young people were asked an open question about what clubs or activities, if any, they regularly take part in at or with their school. At this question, 47% of school pupils reported at least one club or activity, including a wide range of more than 100 different types of clubs or activities[8]. Figure 2 highlights the 5 most stated activities.

[8] Full list of clubs and activities coded from open response text included in additional data tables.

Figure 13: Top 5 clubs or activities school pupils reported regularly taking part in at or with school



3.3. Relationships, Sex and Health Education

The DfE want to support all young people to be happy, healthy and safe, as well as to equip them for adult life and to make a positive contribution to society. From September 2020, Relationships Education will be compulsory for all primary age pupils, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) will be compulsory for all secondary age pupils, and Health Education compulsory in all state-funded schools.

In light of the circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and following engagement with the sector, the Department is reassuring schools that although the subjects will still be compulsory from 1 September 2020, schools have flexibility over how they discharge their duty within the first year of compulsory teaching.

In primary schools, through Relationships Education, children will be taught about what healthy relationships are and their importance, as well as how to develop mutually respectful relationships in all contexts, including online. This will then provide a foundation for RSE at secondary school.

In secondary schools, this will broaden to become Relationships and Sex Education and will include factual knowledge around sex, sexual health and sexuality, set firmly within the context of relationships.

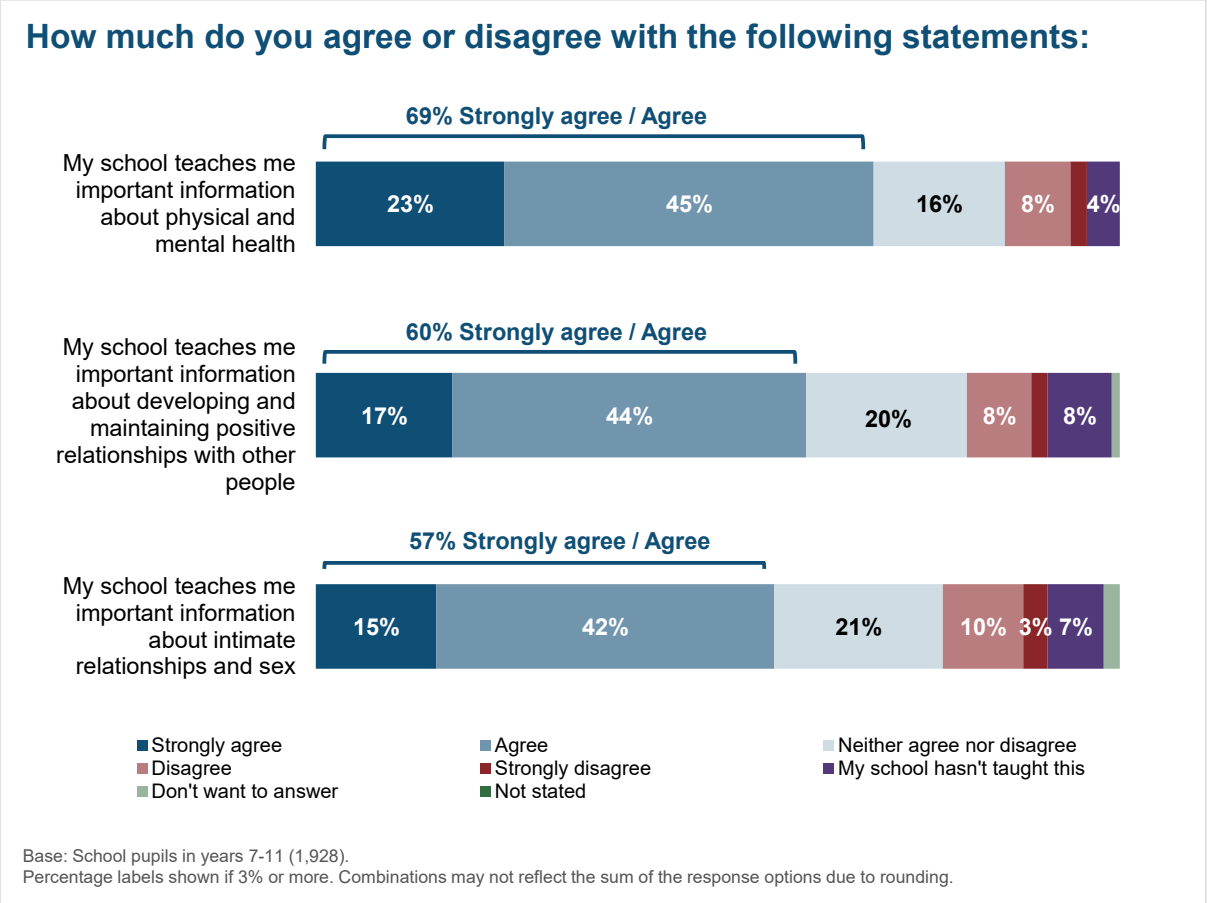
In Health Education, there is a strong focus on mental wellbeing, including a recognition that mental wellbeing and physical health are linked.

Many schools currently teach aspects of the content covered by these subjects through their PSHE curriculum. PSHE is currently only compulsory in independent schools, although state-funded schools are encouraged by the department to teach it.

School pupils in years 7-11 were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed that their school teaches them important information about three RSE and Health Education topics. These questions were asked to provide insight into the current perception on how aspects of the subjects are perceived by pupils, and to provide a baseline before the subjects become compulsory in September 2020.

As shown in Figure 3, school pupils were most likely to agree that their school teaches them important information about physical and mental health (69%). The majority of school pupils also agreed that their school teaches them important information about developing and maintaining positive relationships with other people (60%) and about intimate relationships and sex (57%).

Figure 14: Extent to which school pupils agreed or disagreed that their school teaches them important information about Relationships, Sex and Health Education topics



Base: School pupils in years 7-11 (1,928).
Percentage labels shown if 3% or more. Combinations may not reflect the sum of the response options due to rounding.

My school teaches me important information about physical and mental health

Overall, 69% of school pupils in years 7-11 agreed or strongly agreed that their school teaches them important information about physical and mental health.

Agreement with this statement was more common among certain subgroups of pupils, including:

- **Younger pupils** (73% of pupils in key stage 3, compared with 61% in key stage 4);
- **Male pupils** (74%, compared with 64% of female pupils);
- **Pupils who are not eligible for FSM** (71%, compared with 63% of pupils who were eligible for FSM); and
- **Pupils in London** (77%, compared with 69% of pupils outside of London).

My school teaches me important information about developing and maintaining positive relationships with other people (e.g. family, friends and peers)

Overall, 60% of school pupils in years 7-11 agreed or strongly agreed that their school teaches them important information about developing and maintaining positive relationships with other people.

Perceptions varied according to age and gender:

- **Younger pupils were more likely to agree than older pupils** (66% of pupils in key stage 3 agreed, compared with 52% of pupils in key stage 4); and
- **Male pupils were more likely to agree than female pupils** (64% of male pupils, compared with 58% of female pupils).

My school teaches me important information about intimate relationships and sex (e.g. boyfriend, girlfriend, partner)

Overall, 57% of school pupils in years 7-11 agreed that their school teaches them important information about intimate relationships and sex.

Younger pupils were more likely to agree with this statement, with 59% of pupils in key stage 3 who agreed, compared with 54% in key stage 4.

Pupils who say their school hasn't taught them these Relationships, Sex and Health Education topics

Around 1 in 10 school pupils in years 7-11 said that their school hadn't taught them 1 of the 3 Relationships, Sex and Health Education topics. 2% of pupils said their school hadn't taught them 2 of the topics, and 1% reported that their school hadn't taught them any of the 3 topics.

3.4. Mental health

Schools and colleges have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people. Many schools and colleges already promote their pupils' mental health and wellbeing, for instance, through whole school/college approaches tailored to the specific needs of their pupils and students[9].

It is important that people are aware of what support is available in schools and colleges. The Winter 2017 wave of the omnibus survey of pupils and their

[9] Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing (2015). https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-children-and-young-peoples-emotional-health-and-wellbeing.

parents/carers[10] found that a large proportion of pupils and parents/carers were not aware of the mental health support available in their school: depending on the type of support, between 10% and 40% of pupils and college students said they did not know whether the type of support was available in their school or college, compared with 50% to 60% of parents/carers. Many parents/carers indicate that the information on what the school or college provides is one of the most useful resources to support their child's mental health (68% of parents/carers of school pupils and 72% of parents/carers of college students said this would be one of the top 3 most useful resources).

In addition, parents/carers of school pupils (41%) and parents/carers of college students (51%) further indicated that written or online information about how to support their child at home would be most useful, as well as information about other organisations that can provide help and support (34% of parents/carers of school pupils and 34% of parents/carers of college students).

The department supports schools and colleges in their approach to mental health in a number of ways. As described above, from September 2020 there is a new requirement that all pupils will be taught about mental health as part of compulsory health education in state-funded schools.

The Government has recently announced the Wellbeing for Education Return: training and resources for teachers and staff to respond to the wellbeing and mental health needs of children and young people as a result of Covid-19. It will support schools and colleges to build capacity to promote the wellbeing of all children and young people whilst preventing the onset of mental health problems and ensuring those with pre-existing or emerging difficulties access the right support.

The department has also published advice for schools and colleges on supporting mental health, which includes information on how to work with parents/carers[11]. It has also published pen portraits of approaches to mental health in schools and colleges[12], and different approaches to setting up peer support programmes for mental health and wellbeing in educational settings[13]. Advice and information from

[10] Omnibus survey of pupils and their parents/carers: wave 4 / Winter 2017 (published 2018). https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/738445/Omnibus_survey_of_pupils_and_their_parents_or_carers-wave_4.pdf.
[11] Mental health and behaviour in schools (2018). https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2.
[12] Supporting mental health in schools and colleges (2018). https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-mental-health-in-schools-and-colleges
[13] Peer support for mental health pilots: an evaluation (2020). https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/peer-support-for-mental-health-pilots-an-evaluation

trusted experts, such as MindEd[14] for Families, also help improve understanding of mental health problems, and how parents/carers can best support their families.

As outlined in the cross-government 'Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision: A Green Paper', the government is introducing new Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs), who will deliver interventions in or close to schools and colleges for children and young people with mild to moderate mental health issues, support schools and colleges to build the knowledge and confidence to introduce or develop their own whole school or college approach to mental health, and to help children and young people with more severe needs access the right specialist services locally. The department also plans to offer all state-funded schools and colleges free training for their senior mental health leads.

In this wave (Summer 2019) of the omnibus survey of pupils and their parents/carers, young people were asked whether they feel they know enough about how to look after their mental health, and if they know where to go for help with their mental health. Parents/carers were also asked these questions, in relation to their child's mental health. While some groups of students were more likely to indicate they know how to look after their mental health or know where to go for help with their mental health, this is not a direct measure of pupils' abilities to look after their mental health.

Looking after mental health

Pupils were asked to consider the extent to which they agree or disagree that "I know enough about how to look after my mental health". Parents/carers were asked whether they know enough about how to look after their child's mental health.

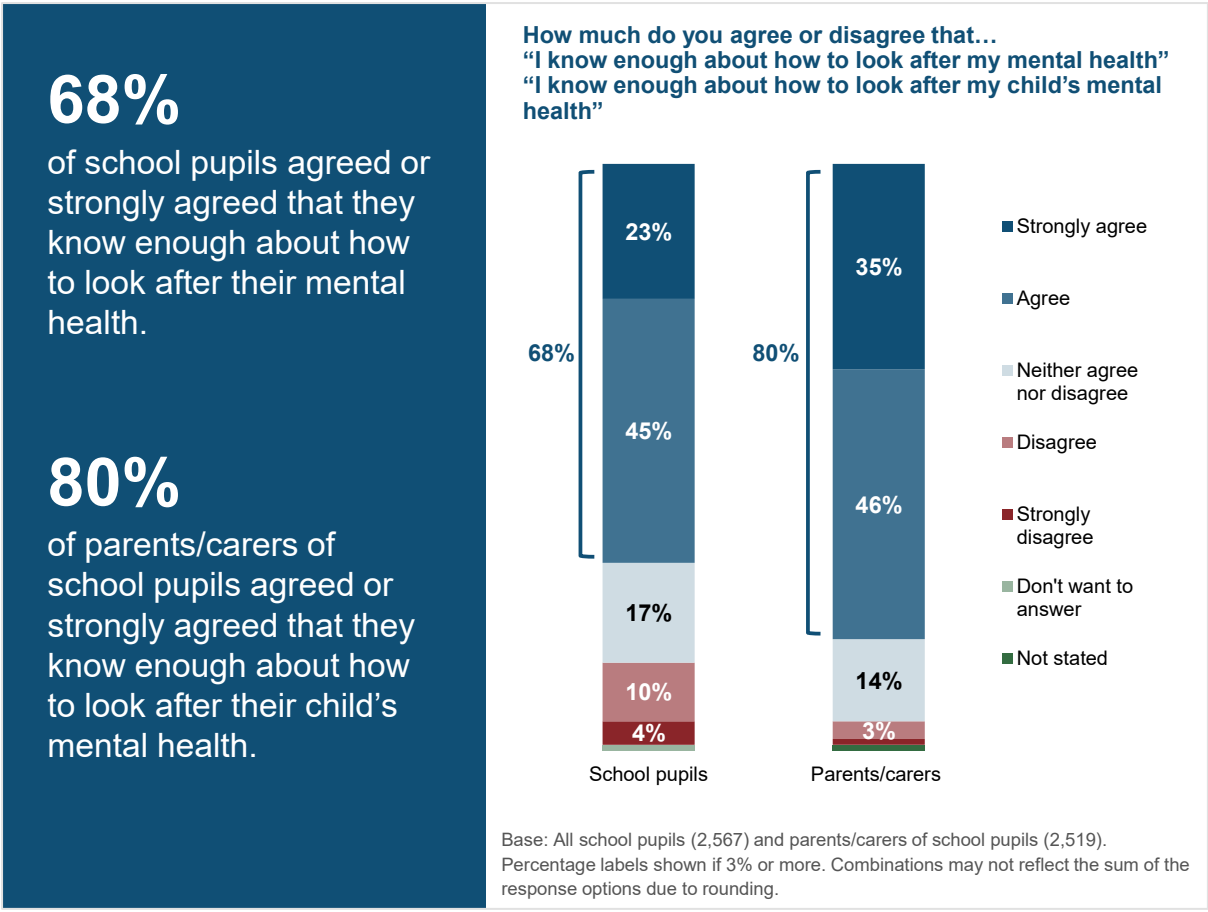
As shown in Figure 4, 68% of school pupils agreed or strongly agreed that they know enough about how to look after their mental health. However, a significant minority (13%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. This is a similar proportion to those reported in the Summer 2017 wave of the survey[15], where 71% of pupils agreed or strongly agreed that they knew enough about how to look after their mental health.

80% of parents/carers agreed or strongly agreed that they know enough about how to look after their child's mental health, and 4% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This is a similar proportion to those reported in the Summer 2017 wave of the

[14] MindEd for Families. https://mindedforfamilies.org.uk/
[15] Please note that these are not like-for-like comparisons: the Summer 2017 wave is based on paired responses only (i.e. households where both the pupil and their parent/carer took part) and a 'Don't know' response option was available. The results for this wave are based on all responses and a 'Don't know' option was not available.

survey[16], where 83% of parents/carers agreed or strongly agreed that they know enough about how to look after a child's mental health.

Figure 15: Extent to which school pupils and parents/carers agreed that they know enough about how to look after their/their child's mental health



Agreement with this statement differed between certain subgroups.

Pupil year group

Younger pupils (key stage 3) were more likely to agree or strongly agree that they know enough about how to look after their mental health (71%), compared with pupils in key stage 4 (66%) and pupils in key stage 5 (62%).

There were no differences in how parents/carers of pupils across key stages answered.

[16] Please note that these are not like-for-like comparisons: the Summer 2017 wave is based on paired responses only (i.e. households where both the pupil and their parent/carer took part) and a 'Don't know' response option was available. The results for this wave are based on all responses and a 'Don't know' option was not available.

Similarly, there was no difference in levels of agreement between college students and school pupils of the same age (year 12 and 13), or between parents/carers of college students and parents/carers of school pupils in years 12 and 13.

Pupil gender

The NHS' Mental Health of Children and Young People in England survey[17] provides data on trends in child mental health. The NHS findings in 2017 uncovered gender differences within age groups: for 11-16 year olds, there was no difference between boys and girls in the prevalence of mental health disorders (14.3% of boys and 14.4% of girls have any disorder), whilst for 17-19 year olds there was a significant gender difference (10.3% of boys and 23.9% of girls have any disorder). The difference in this older age group was mainly due to a higher prevalence of emotional disorders in girls.

Findings from this wave (Summer 2019) of the omnibus survey of pupils and their parents/carers show that overall, male school pupils were more likely to agree that they know enough about how to look after their mental health than female pupils (74% of male pupils agreed or strongly agreed, compared with 63% of female pupils).

However, when looking at gender differences within age groups, the difference in levels of agreement is only present for school pupils in years 7-11 (equivalent to ages 11-16; 75% of boys, compared with 64% of girls), and there is no difference for school pupils in years 12 and 13 (16-18 year olds). There was also no difference in agreement with this statement between parents/carers of male and parents/carers of female pupils.

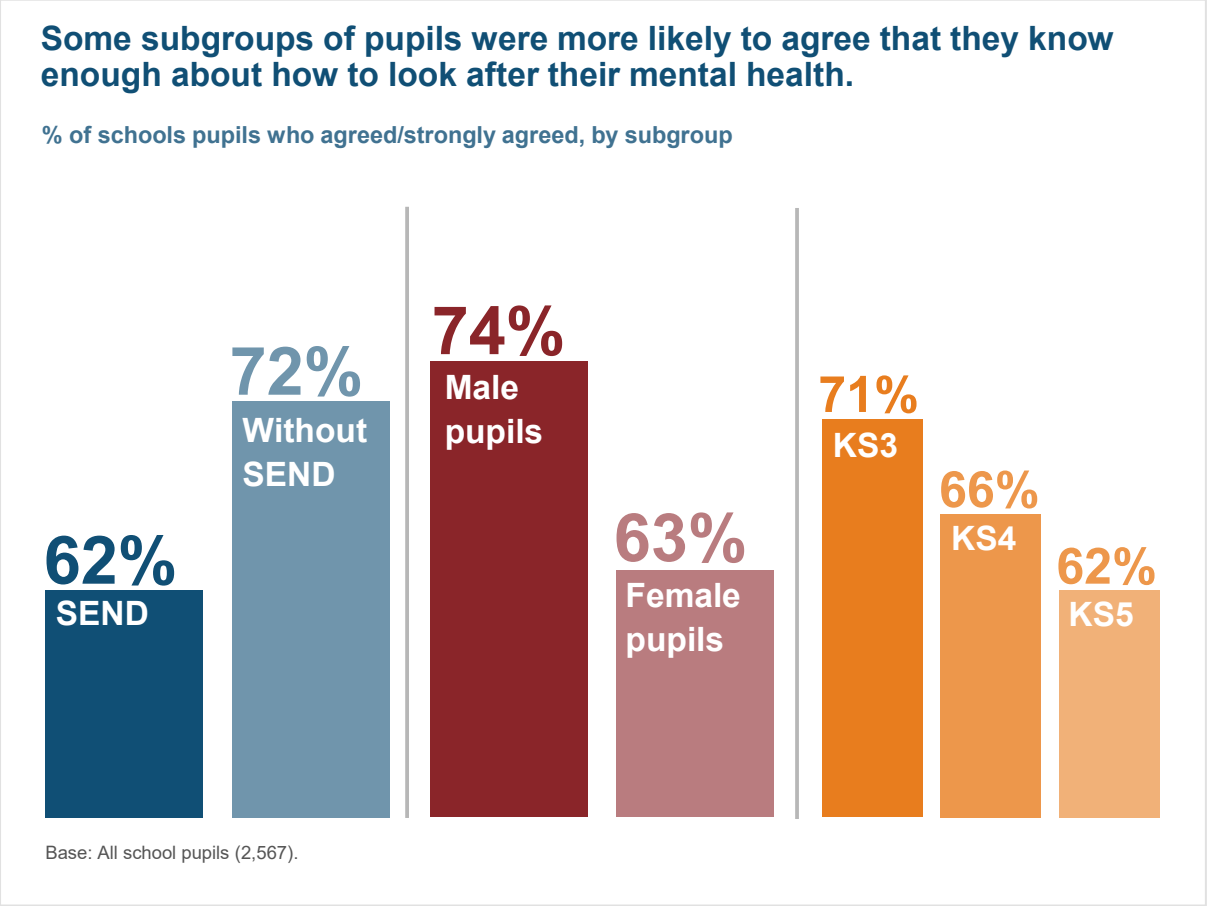
Pupil SEND status

According to the NHS' Mental Health of Children and Young People in England survey, a larger proportion of 5 to 19 year olds with SEND have any mental health disorder (47%), compared with those without SEND (9%). This association is also stronger for boys than girls.

Findings from this omnibus survey of pupils and their parents/carers show that school pupils with SEND (62%) were less likely to agree that they know enough about how to look after their mental health than pupils without SEND (72%). The same pattern was true for parents/carers of pupils with and without SEND (77% of parents/carers of pupils with SEND, compared with 84% of parents/carers of pupils without SEND).

[17] The NHS' Mental Health of Children and Young People in England survey (2017). https://files.digital.nhs.uk/A6/EA7D58/MHCYP%202017%20Summary.pdf

Figure 16: Subgroup differences in school pupils who agreed that they know enough about how to look after their mental health



Comparing parents/carers and pupils within households

As both school pupils and parents/carers were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with this mental health statement, responses within households where both a pupil and a parent/carer responded to the survey can be compared.

In the majority of households, both the school pupil and their parent/carer gave the same answer:

- In 56% of households, both the pupil and their parent/carer agreed that they know enough about how to look after their/their child's mental health.
- In 2% of households, both disagreed that they know enough.

Comparing responses within households also highlighted differences in agreement between pupils and their parents/carers:

- 3% of pupils agreed that they know enough about how to look after their mental health while their parent/carer disagreed they know enough about how to look after their child's mental health.
- 8% of parents/carers agreed with the statement while their child disagreed.

Where to go for mental health support

Pupils were asked to consider the extent to which they agree or disagree that "I know where to go if I need help with my mental health". Parents/carers were asked whether they know enough about where to go if their child needs help with their mental health.

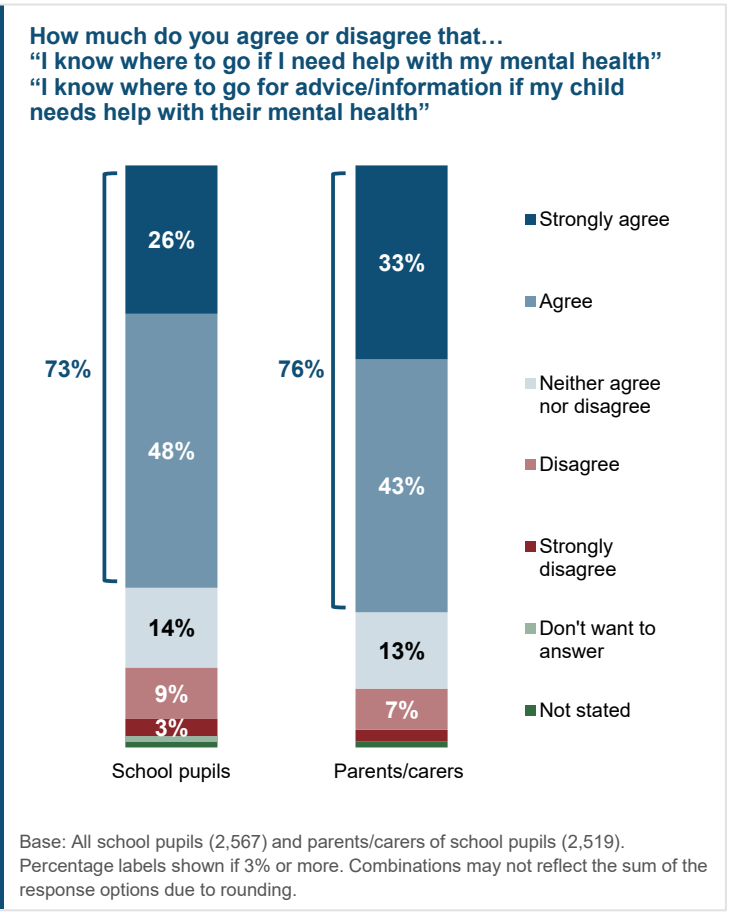
Figure 17: Extent to which school pupils and parents/carers agreed that they know where to go if they/their child needs help with their mental health

73%

of school pupils agreed or strongly agreed that they know where to go if they need help with their mental health.

76%

of parents/carers of school pupils agreed or strongly agreed that they know where to go for advice/information if their child needs help with their mental health.



Base: All school pupils (2,567) and parents/carers of school pupils (2,519). Percentage labels shown if 3% or more. Combinations may not reflect the sum of the response options due to rounding.

As shown in Figure 6, 73% of pupils strongly agreed or agreed that they know where to go if they need help with their mental health, while 11% disagreed. A similar proportion (76%) of parents/carers strongly agreed or agreed that they knew enough about where to go if their child needed help with their mental health, and 9% strongly disagreed or disagreed. These proportions are very similar to those reported in Summer 2017 wave of the survey[18], where 70% of pupils strongly agreed or agreed that they know where to go if they need help with their mental health, and 76% of

[18] Please note that these are not like-for-like comparisons: the Summer 2017 wave is based on paired responses only (i.e. households where both the pupil and their parent/carer took part) and a 'Don't know' response option was available. The results for this wave are based on all responses and a 'Don't know' option was not available.

parents/carers strongly agreed or agreed that they knew enough about where to go if their child needed help with their mental health.

Agreement with this statement differed between certain subgroups.

Pupil year group

Agreement among school pupils decreased with age, with older pupils less likely to report that they know where to go if they needed help with their mental health (77% of pupils in key stage 3 agreed/strongly agreed, followed by 71% of pupils in key stage 4 and 63% of pupils in key stage 5).

There was no difference in levels of agreement among college students and school pupils of the same age (years 12 and 13). There was also no difference for parents/carers of school pupils by key stage of pupil.

Pupil gender

Reflecting the finding that male pupils were more likely than female pupils to say they know enough about how to look after their mental health, male pupils were more likely than female pupils to strongly agree or agree that they know where to go if they needed help with their mental health (77% of male pupils agreed or strongly agreed, compared with 71% of female pupils).

As with the previous statement, when comparing agreement among male pupils and female pupils within age groups, the difference was only present for school pupils in years 7-11 (equivalent to ages 11-16; 78% of male pupils, compared with 72% of male pupils), and not for those in years 12 and 13 (16-18 year olds).

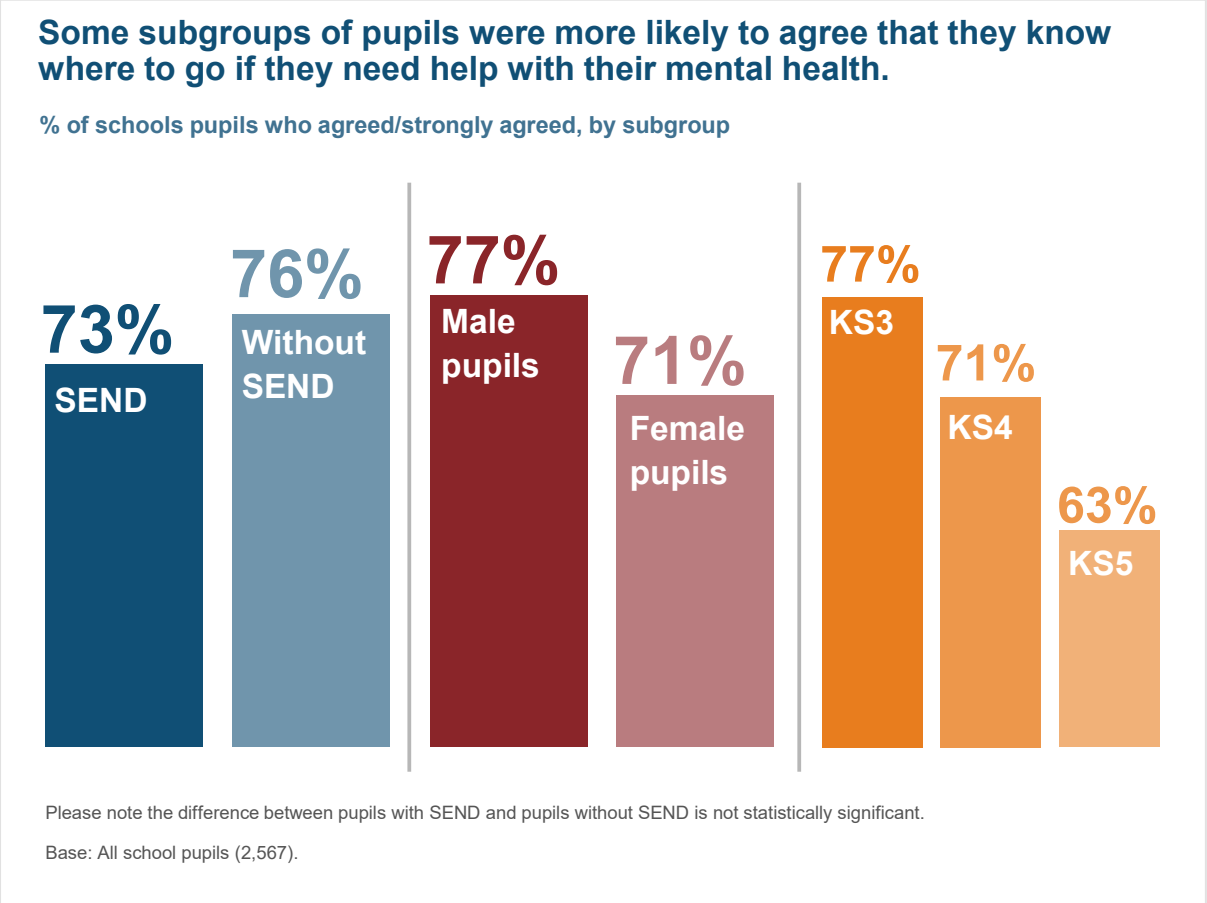
There was no difference in response between parents/carers of male pupils and parents/carers of female pupils.

Pupil SEND status

For this statement, pupils with SEND (73%) and pupils without SEND (76%) were just as likely to know where to go for advice/information if they needed help with their mental health.

Similarly, there was no difference in response between parents/carers of pupils with SEND and parents/carers of pupils without SEND.

Figure 18: Subgroup differences in school pupils who agreed that they know where to go if they need help with their mental health



Comparing parents/carers and pupils within households

As both school pupils and parents/carers were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with this mental health statement, responses within households where both a pupil and a parent/carer responded to the survey can be compared.

In the majority of households, both the school pupil and their parent/carer gave the same answer:

- In 55% of households, both the pupil and their parent/carer agreed that they know enough about how to look after their/their child's mental health.
- In 4% of households, both disagreed that they know enough.

Comparing responses within households also highlighted differences in agreement between pupils and their parents/carers:

- 5% of pupils agreed that they know enough about how to look after their mental health while their parent/carer disagreed they know enough about how to look after their child's mental health.
- 8% of parents/carers agreed with the statement while their child disagreed.

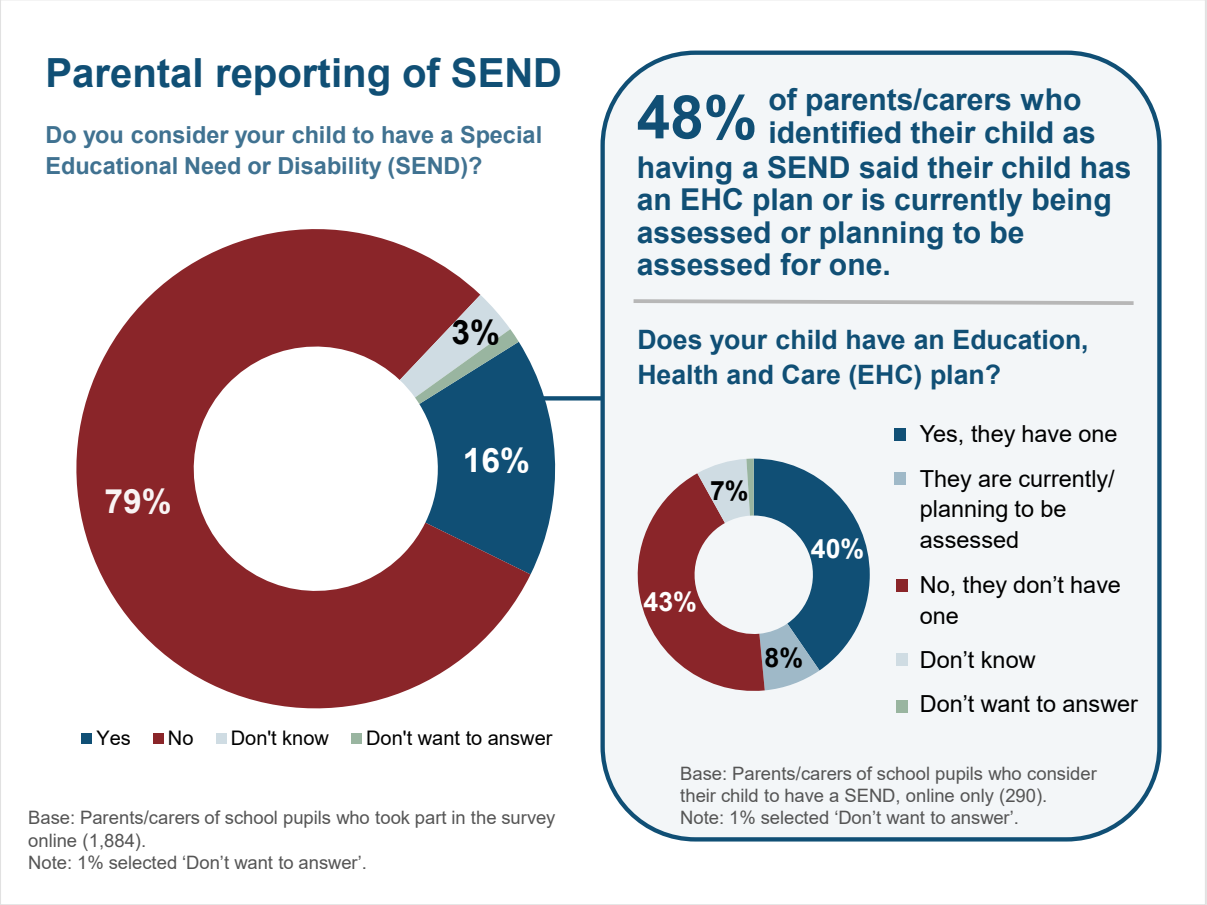
4. Special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)

This chapter looks at parental reporting of children's SEND and explores parental awareness of school SEN information reports. For parents/carers who were aware of and had read their child's school's SEN information report, this chapter also looks at whether these reports were useful and easy to understand.

Parental reporting of SEND

Parents/carers were asked whether they consider their child to have a special educational need or disability. Parents/carers who reported that their child had SEND were then asked whether their child has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan[19].

Figure 19: Parental reporting of SEND and whether their child has an EHC plan



As shown in Figure 1, 16% of parents/carers said that they consider their child to have SEND and 3% said that they don't know. It is important to note that this assessment is based on parents'/carers' understanding of SEND and not whether the child is registered as having SEND at school.

[19] Questions about SEND were only asked to parents/carers who responded to the survey online only.

40% of parents/carers who identified their child as having SEND said that their child has an EHC plan, and 8% said their child was currently being assessed or planning to be assessed for a plan.

There were subgroup differences in the proportion of parents/carers who identified their child as having SEND, but it is important to note that these may be due to higher levels of SEND in certain subgroups; some subgroups being more likely to consider their child to have SEND than others; or differences in our sample of survey respondents.

Parents/carers of school pupils who were more likely to consider their child to have SEND included:

- **Parents/carers of younger pupils** (18% of parents/carers of pupils in key stage 3 and 16% of parents/carers of pupils in key stage 4, compared with 10% of parents/carers of pupils in key stage 5);
- **Parents/carers of pupils who were eligible for FSM** (23%, compared with 15% of those who are not eligible); and
- **Parents/carers of male pupils** (19%, compared with 13% of parents/carers of female pupils).

12% of parents/carers of college students considered their child to have SEND, with no difference between parents/carers of college students and parents/carers of school pupils of the same age (year 12 and 13 pupils at school).

Comparing parental reporting of SEND with SEN provision in the National Pupil Database (NPD)[20]

The National Pupil Database (NPD) includes data on whether children are identified as needing additional support for special educational needs (SEN) in the school's Management Information Systems (MIS).

Of the children identified as having SEND by their parents/carers in response to this survey, nearly two thirds (64%) are identified as having SEN according to the NPD. However, 36% of children identified as having SEND by parents/carers in the survey are not marked as needing SEN provision in the NPD[21].

[20] Comparisons between survey responses and NPD data are only made for pupils and parents/carers of school pupils in households where both took part in the survey and gave consent for data linkage.
[21] It is important to note that information recorded in the NPD refers specifically to whether children require additional support for special educational needs. Some of these children, but not all, will also have disabilities as defined under the Equality Act 2010 – that is, *'…a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'*. In this survey, meanwhile, parents/carers were asked about whether they considered their child to have special educational needs *or* a disability. NPD data on SEN and self-reported data on SEND from this survey are not therefore directly comparable.

Of the parents/carers who identified their child as not having SEND in the survey, the NPD highlights that 4% are identified as needing SEN provision.

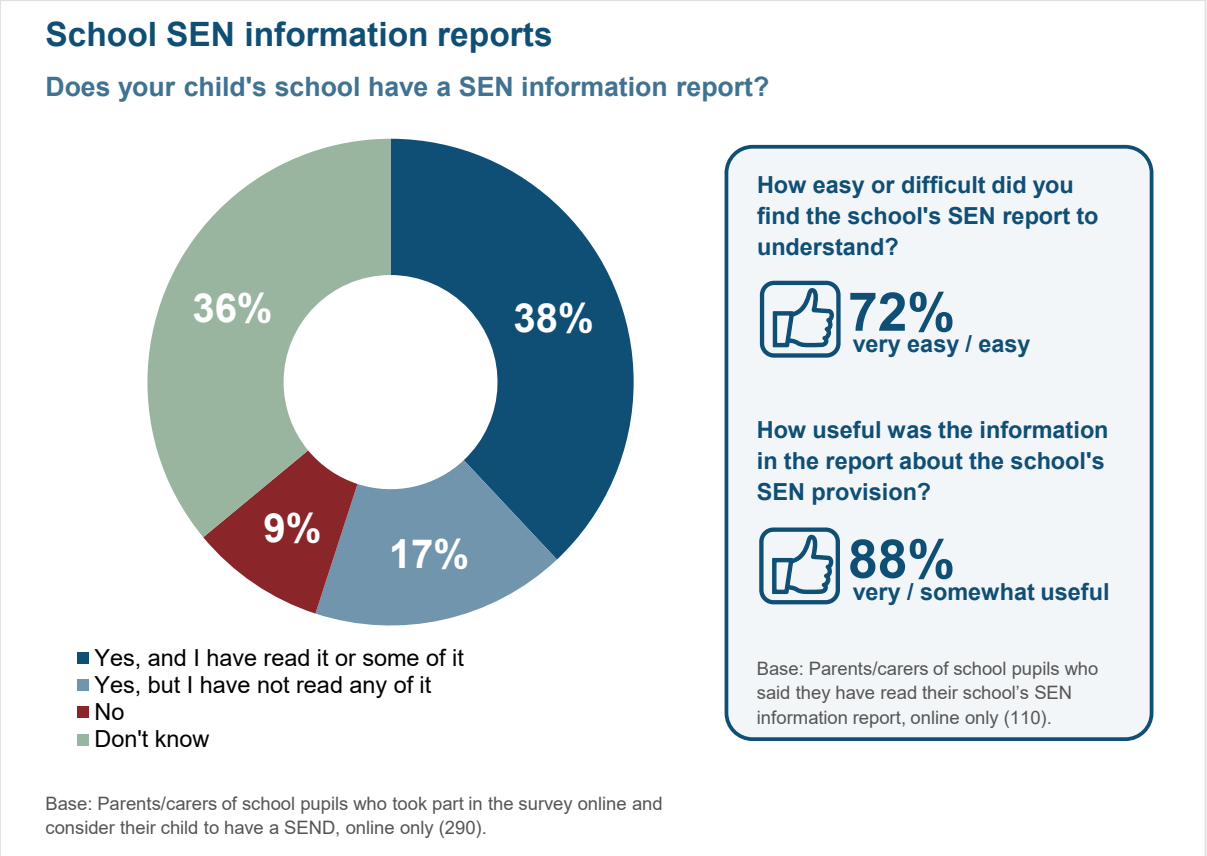
All children receiving SEN provision and with an EHC plan according to the NPD were identified as having SEND by their parent/carer in the survey.

4.1. SEN information reports

The SEND Code of Practice[22] states that the governing bodies of maintained schools and maintained nursery schools and the proprietors of academy schools must publish information on their websites about the implementation of the governing body's or the proprietor's policy for pupils with SEN. The information published should be updated annually and any changes to the information occurring during the year should be updated as soon as possible.

Parents/carers who identified their child as having SEND were asked about their school's SEN information report.

Figure 20: Parental awareness and views on their child's school's SEN information report



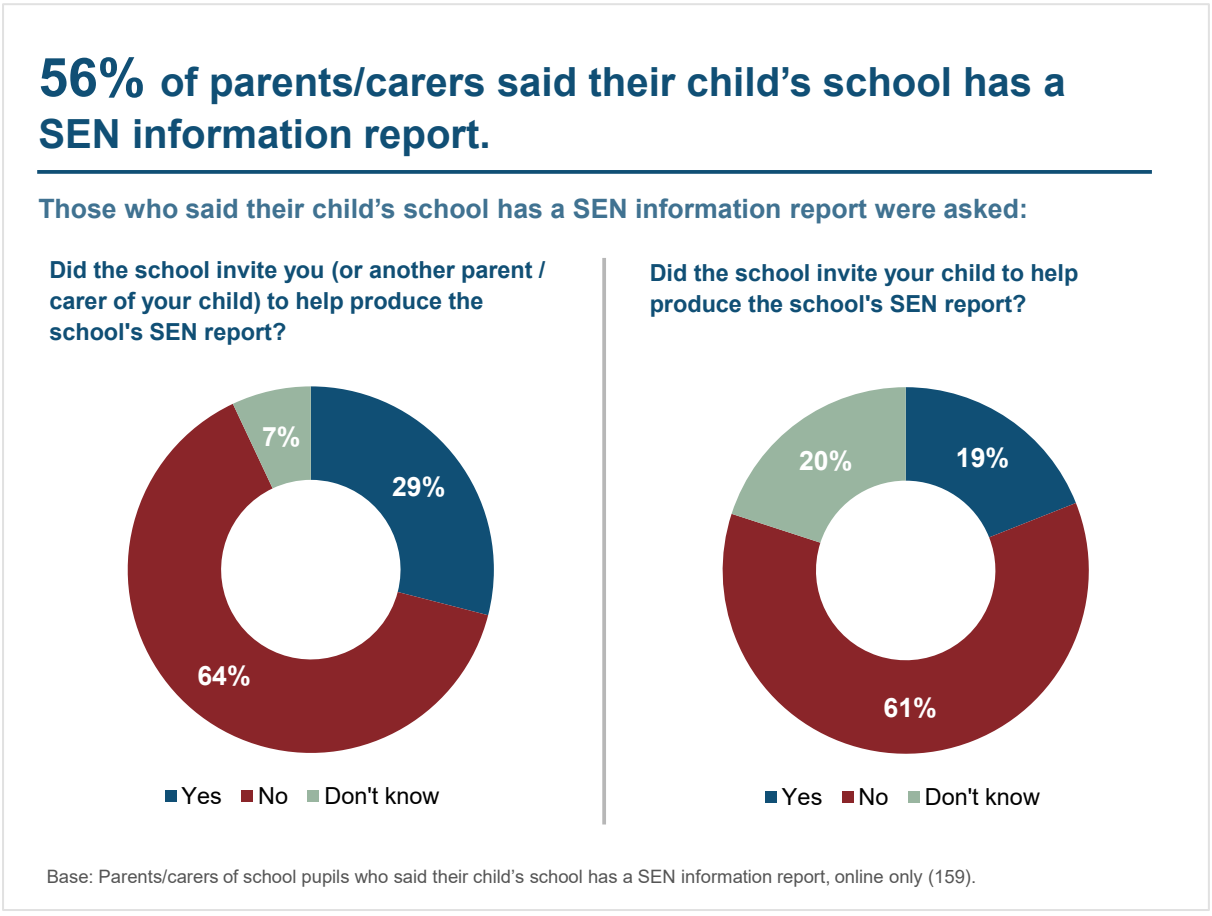
[22]Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years (2015). https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf

As shown in Figure 2, around half (56%) of these parents/carers reported that their child's school does have a SEN information report, with 36% saying they have read some or all of it. Nearly 2 in 5 (36%) parents/carers who consider their child to have SEND don't know if their child's school has a SEN information report.

Of parents/carers who had read the SEN information report, nearly three-quarters (72%) found it easy to understand and the majority (88%) found it very or somewhat useful.

In addition, as shown in Figure 3 below, less than a third of parents/carers (29%) who say their child's school has a SEN information report say they were invited to help produce the report, while 19% of parents/carers who say their child's school has a SEN information report say that their child was invited to help produce the report. This suggests that schools have more to do to secure the wider co-production culture that was envisaged by the 2014 SEND reforms.

Figure 21: School invitations to help produce the SEN information report



Base: Parents/carers of school pupils who said their child's school has a SEN information report, online only (159).

5. Bullying in school/college

This chapter explores the prevalence of self-reported bullying among young people and their parents/carers.

5.1. Bullying in secondary schools and colleges

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or gender identity. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

Schools should be safe places where children are taught to respect each other and staff. School pupils should understand the value of education and appreciate the impact their actions can have on others. This culture should extend beyond the classroom to the corridors, dining hall and playground, as well as beyond the school gates.

As described above, from September 2020 Relationships Education will be compulsory for all primary school-aged pupils, Relationships and Sex Education will be compulsory for all secondary school-aged pupils, and Health Education will be compulsory for pupils in all state-funded schools, in England. Schools have the flexibility to start teaching the new subjects by at least the start of the summer term 2021, to enable them to engage effectively with parents. Under the content for respectful relationships, the guidance sets out that pupils should know about the different types of bullying, the impact it has, the responsibility of bystanders and how to get help.

By law, every school must have a behaviour policy in place that includes measures to prevent all forms of bullying among school pupils. The government has published guidance to help schools take action to prevent and respond to bullying as part of their overall behaviour policy. Overall prevalence of bullying

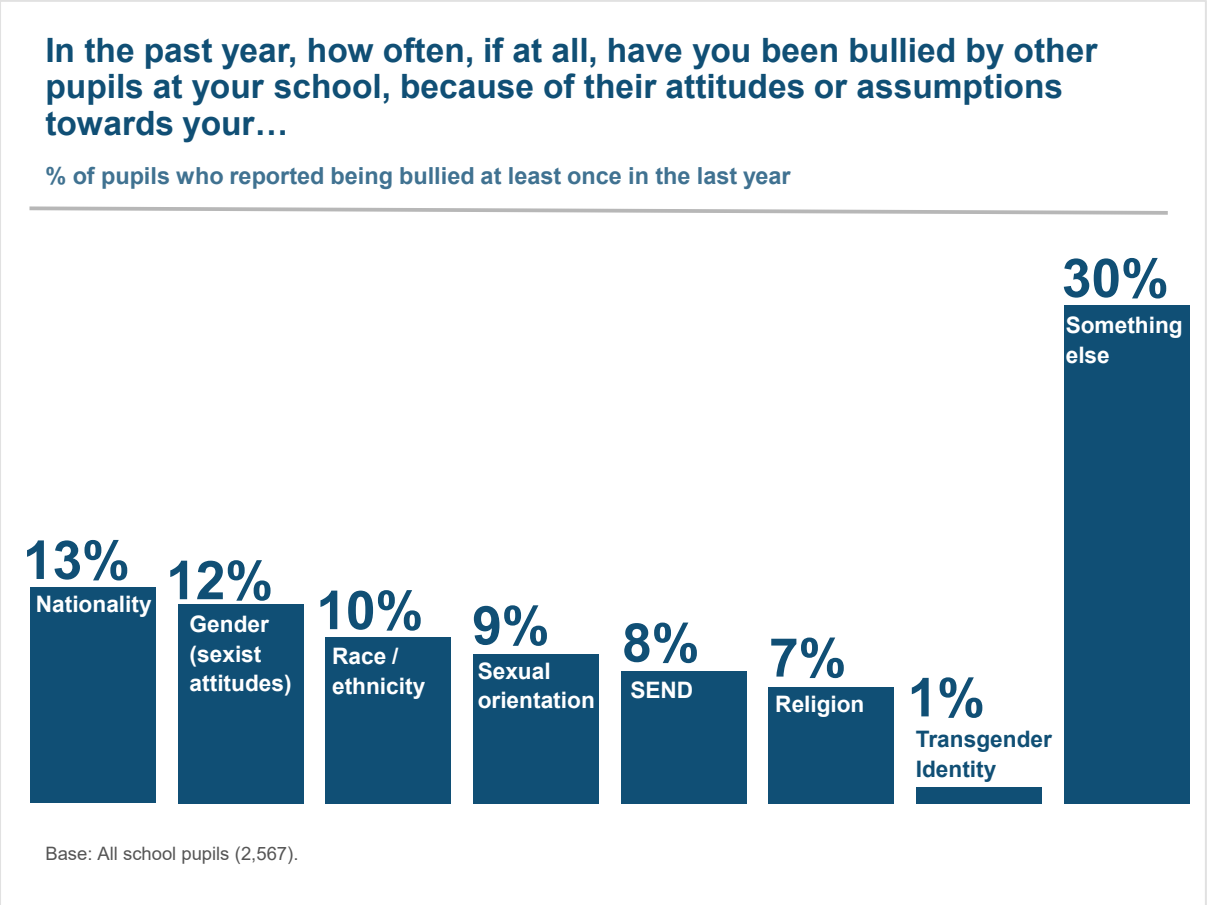
To explore the prevalence of bullying, young people were asked how often in the past year, if at all, they had been bullied by other young people at their school/college because of attitudes or assumptions towards their nationality, race/ethnicity, religion, gender, special educational need or disability, sexual orientation, transgender identity or something else. Young people were asked to think about any bullying on school/college grounds, on the way to and from school/college, or cyberbullying by young people at their school/college. Parents/carers were asked the same question about their child. These questions

were amended from different waves, and therefore cross-wave comparison is not available.

Referring to the past year, 43% of school pupils reported being a victim of bullying at least once, and 40% of parents/carers of pupils said their child had been a victim of bullying. In colleges, the prevalence of bullying over the past year was reported to be lower; 28% of students reported being a victim of bullying and 26% of parents/carers said that their child had been a victim of bullying. When comparing the responses of college students and school pupils of the same age (those in years 12 and 13), there were no significant differences across any type of bullying.

Figure 1 illustrates the proportion of school pupils who reported that they had been bullied at least once in the past year for each of the reasons listed.

Figure 22: Prevalence of self-reported bullying in secondary school



As detailed below, some subgroups of school pupils were more likely to report being bullied for the listed reasons.

Nationality

Overall, 13% of pupils reported being bullied based on other pupils' attitudes or assumptions towards their nationality at least once in the past year. Subgroups of pupils that were more likely to report this type of bullying included:

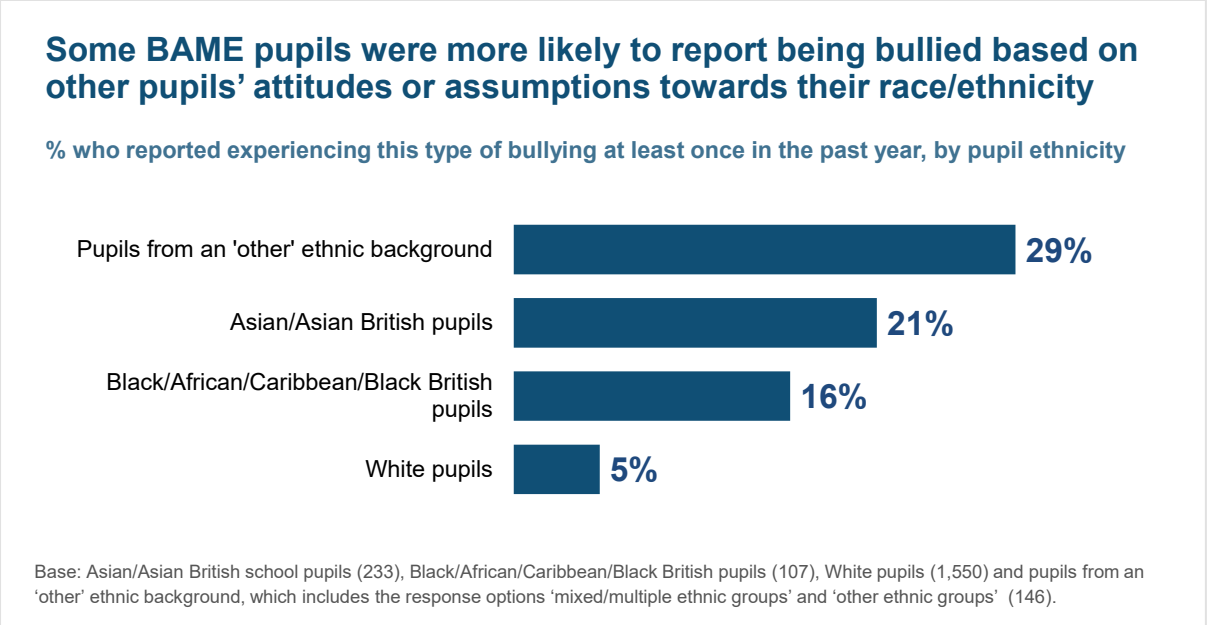
- **Some BAME pupils** (20% of Asian/Asian British pupils and 23% of pupils from an 'other' ethnic group, compared with 9% of White school pupils); and
- **Pupils who were eligible for FSM** (22%, compared with 10% of pupils who are not eligible for FSM).

Race/ethnicity

Overall, 10% of pupils reported being bullied based on other pupils' attitudes or assumptions towards their race/ethnicity at least once in the past year.

Pupils from some BAME backgrounds were more likely than White pupils to report being bullied based on other pupils' attitudes or assumptions towards their race/ethnicity, as shown on Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Prevalence of self-reported bullying based on race/ethnicity, by pupil ethnicity

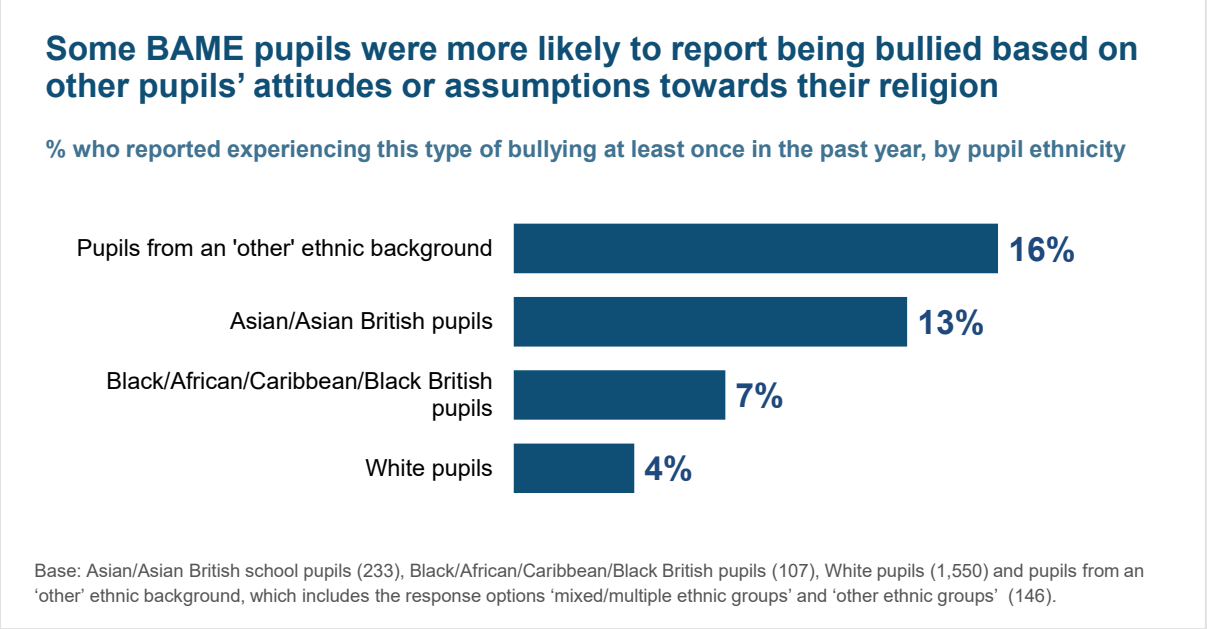


Religion

Overall, 7% of pupils reported being bullied based on other pupils' attitudes or assumptions towards their religion at least once in the last year. This includes both religious and non-religious school pupils.

As Figure 3 shows, Asian/Asian British pupils and pupils from an 'other' ethnic group were more likely than White pupils to report this type of bullying.

Figure 3: Prevalence of self-reported bullying based on religion, by pupil ethnicity



Independently of asking young people if they had been bullied about attitudes or assumptions towards their religion, the survey asked young people what religion they were, if any[23]. When looking at bullying about religion between pupils of different religions, **Muslim pupils were more likely than Christian pupils to report that they had been bullied for this reason** (21% of Muslim pupils, compared with 7% of Christian pupils).

Gender (sexist attitudes)

Overall, 12% of pupils reported sexist bullying – that is, being bullied based on other pupils' attitudes or assumptions towards their gender at least once in the past year. Certain subgroups of school pupils were more likely to report this type of bullying:

- **Female pupils** (17%, compared with 5% of male pupils); and
- **Pupils who were eligible for FSM (**17%, compared with 10% of pupils who were not eligible for FSM).

Special educational need or disability (SEND)

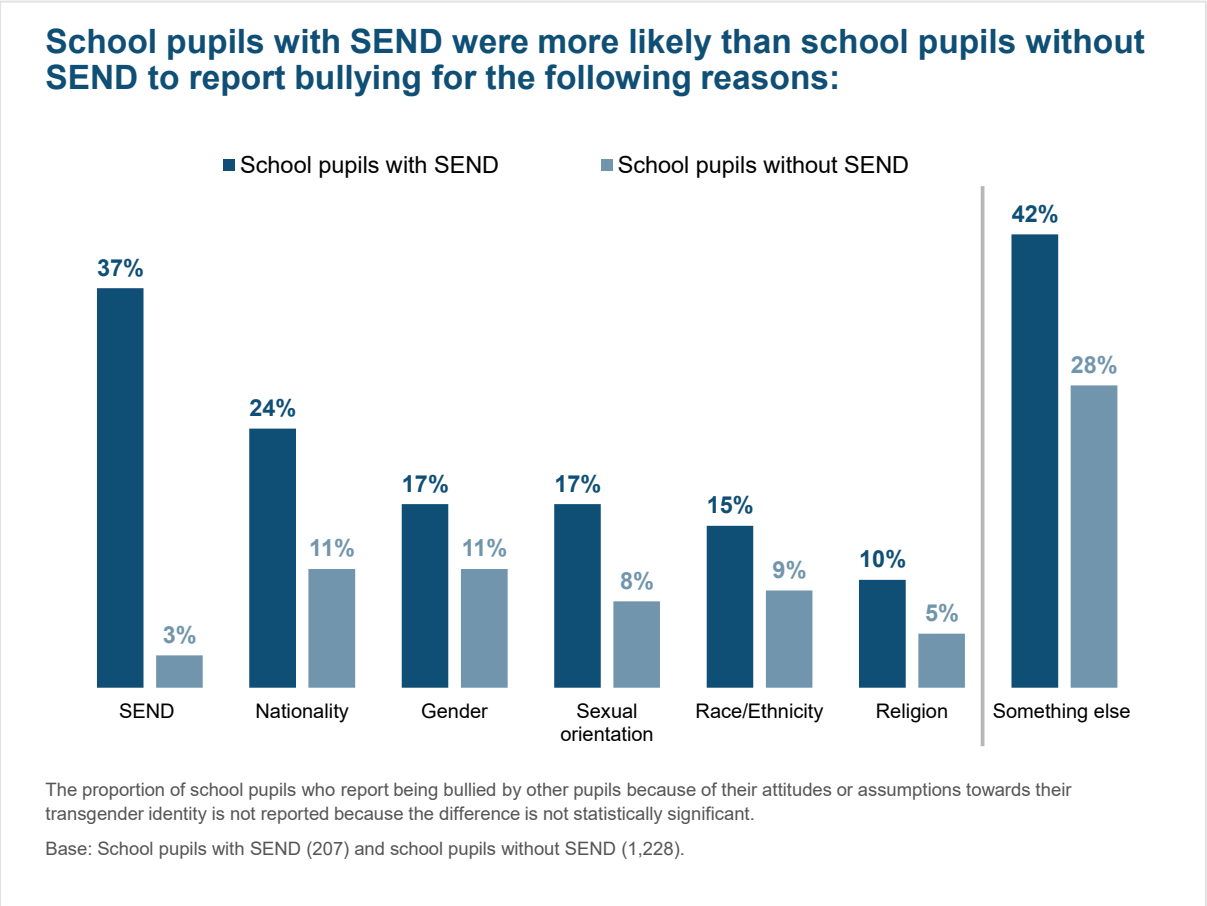
Overall, 8% of all pupils reported being bullied based on other pupils' attitudes or assumptions towards their SEND at least once in the past year. However, **pupils with SEND[24] were significantly more likely to report this type of bullying than**

[23] The number size of subgroups for other religions was too small to compare.
[24] Based on parents/carers identifying that their child has SEND as part of this survey.

those without SEND (37% of pupils with SEND, compared with 3% of pupils without SEND).

As illustrated in Figure 4, SEND pupils were also more likely to say they have experienced other forms of bullying, except for bullying based on attitudes or assumptions towards transgender identity, where there was no significant difference.

Figure 4: Prevalence of bullying across categories – comparing school pupils with SEND and school pupils without SEND



The proportion of school pupils who report being bullied by other pupils because of their attitudes or assumptions towards their transgender identity is not reported because the difference is not statistically significant.

Base: School pupils with SEND (207) and school pupils without SEND (1,228).

Sexual orientation

Overall, 9% of pupils, regardless of their sexuality, reported being bullied based on other pupils' attitudes or assumptions towards their sexual orientation at least once in the past year. It is important to note that we cannot report the proportion of LBG students who reported being bullied because of their sexuality as we did not ask pupils to disclose their sexual orientation.

White pupils were more likely to report this type of bullying (10% of White pupils, compared with 4% of Asian/Asian British pupils and 4% of Black/African/Caribbean/Black British pupils).

Transgender identity

Overall, 1% of pupils, regardless of their gender identity, reported being bullied at least once in the past year based on other pupils' attitudes or assumptions towards their transgender identity. It is not possible to report the proportion of transgender and/or non-binary pupils that reported being bullied because of their gender identity, as we did not ask pupils to disclose whether they identified as trans/non-binary.

Pupils who were eligible for FSM were more likely to report this type of bullying (4%), compared with pupils who were not eligible for FSM (1%).

Bullying for another reason

Overall, 30% of pupils reported being bullied at least once in the past year for another reason. Those who said they had been bullied for another reason were asked to specify what other reasons they had been bullied for[25]. Responses included bullying based on appearance, academic performance/grades, and personality/attitudes/opinions.

Comparing parents/carers responses with their child's self-reported bullying

As pupils and their parents/carers were both asked whether the young person had experienced these types of bullying in the past year, it is possible to compare whether pupils and parents/carers living in the same household responded in the same or a different way. Differences in reported bullying between pupils and their parent/carer could be due to pupils not telling their parents, or it may be that perceptions of 'bullying' differ between pupils and parents.

There were differences in reported bullying between pupils and their parents/carers based on attitudes or assumptions towards SEND:

- In 2% of households, pupils reported that they had been bullied based on attitudes or assumptions towards their SEND, while their parents/carers reported that their child had not been bullied for this reason.
- In 5% of households, parents/carers said their child had been bullied based on attitudes or assumptions towards their SEND, while their child reported that they had not.

Focussing on households where the young person has SEND (as reported by their parent/carer), these differences were more pronounced:

[25] The open-ended response option was presented as a write in box in the paper questionnaire and as a follow up question in the online questionnaire.

- In 5% of households where the child has SEND, the pupils with SEND reported that they had been bullied based on attitudes or assumptions towards their SEND, while their parent/carer reported that they had not been bullied for this reason.
- In 21% of households where the child has SEND, the parent/carer of pupils with SEND said their child had been bullied based on attitudes or assumptions towards their SEND, while the pupil reported that they had not been bullied for this reason.

There was also a discrepancy in reported bullying between pupils and their parents/carers based on the pupil's gender (i.e. sexist bullying), with parents/carers being less likely to report that their child had experienced this than the child themselves. In 7% of households, the pupil reported being bullied for this reason, while their parent/carer reported that they had not.

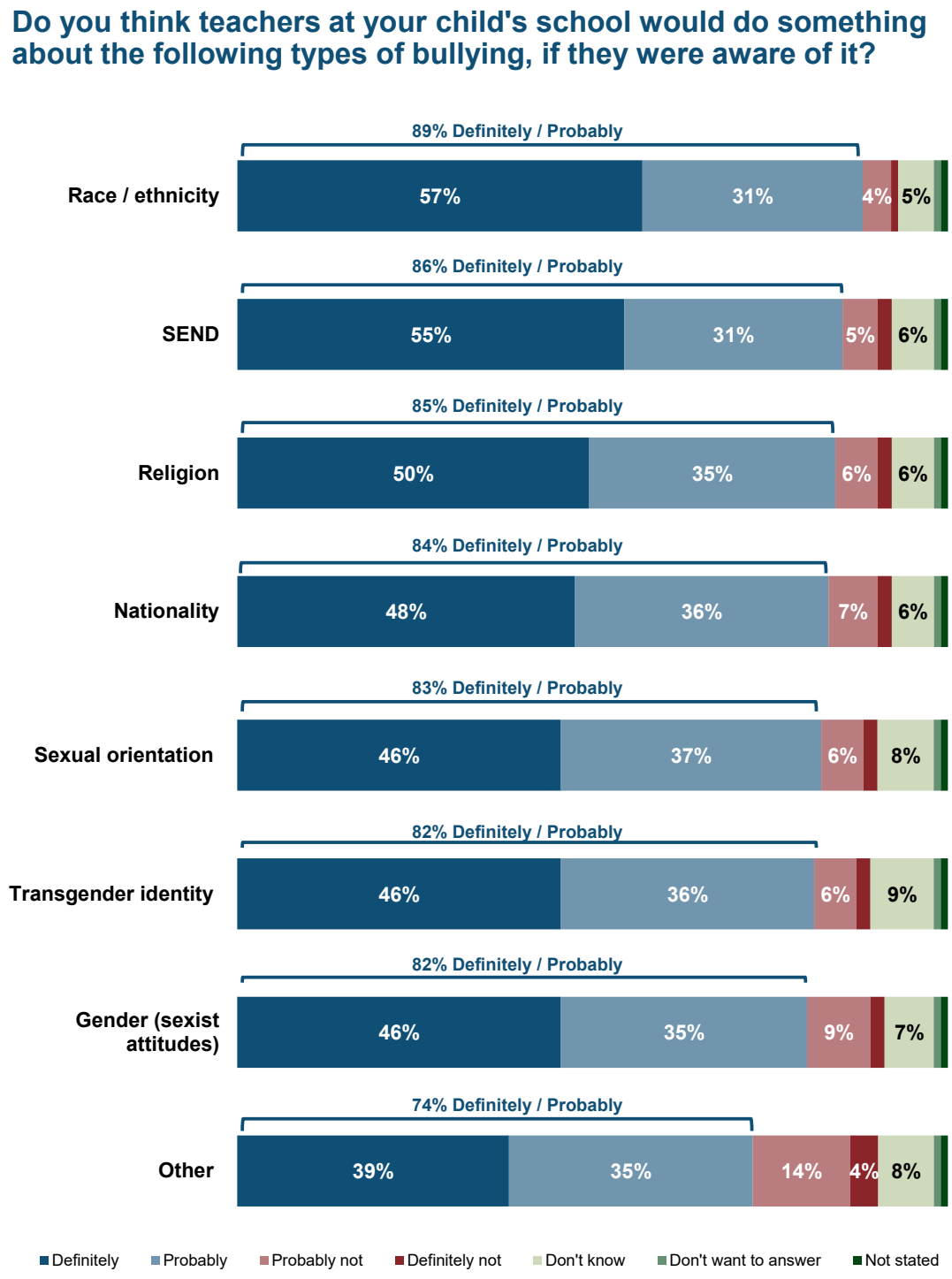
Furthermore, this discrepancy appeared to be more pronounced for female pupils. Looking at cases where female pupils reported sexist bullying, 10% of their parents/carers did not respond that their child was bullied for this reason. For male pupils and their parents, this was 3%.

Parents'/carers' perceptions of school response to bullying

Parents/carers were asked whether they thought teachers at their child's school would do something about the types of bullying listed, if they were aware of it.

The majority of parents/carers thought their child's school would probably or definitely do something about the types of bullying shown on Figure 5. Based on the types of bullying listed in the survey, parents/carers of school pupils were most likely to think teachers at their child's school would definitely or probably do something about bullying based on race/ethnicity (89%). Parents/carers were least likely to think teachers would do something about bullying based on gender/sexist attitudes (82%) or transgender identity (82%).

Figure 5: Parents'/carers' perceptions of school response to bullying

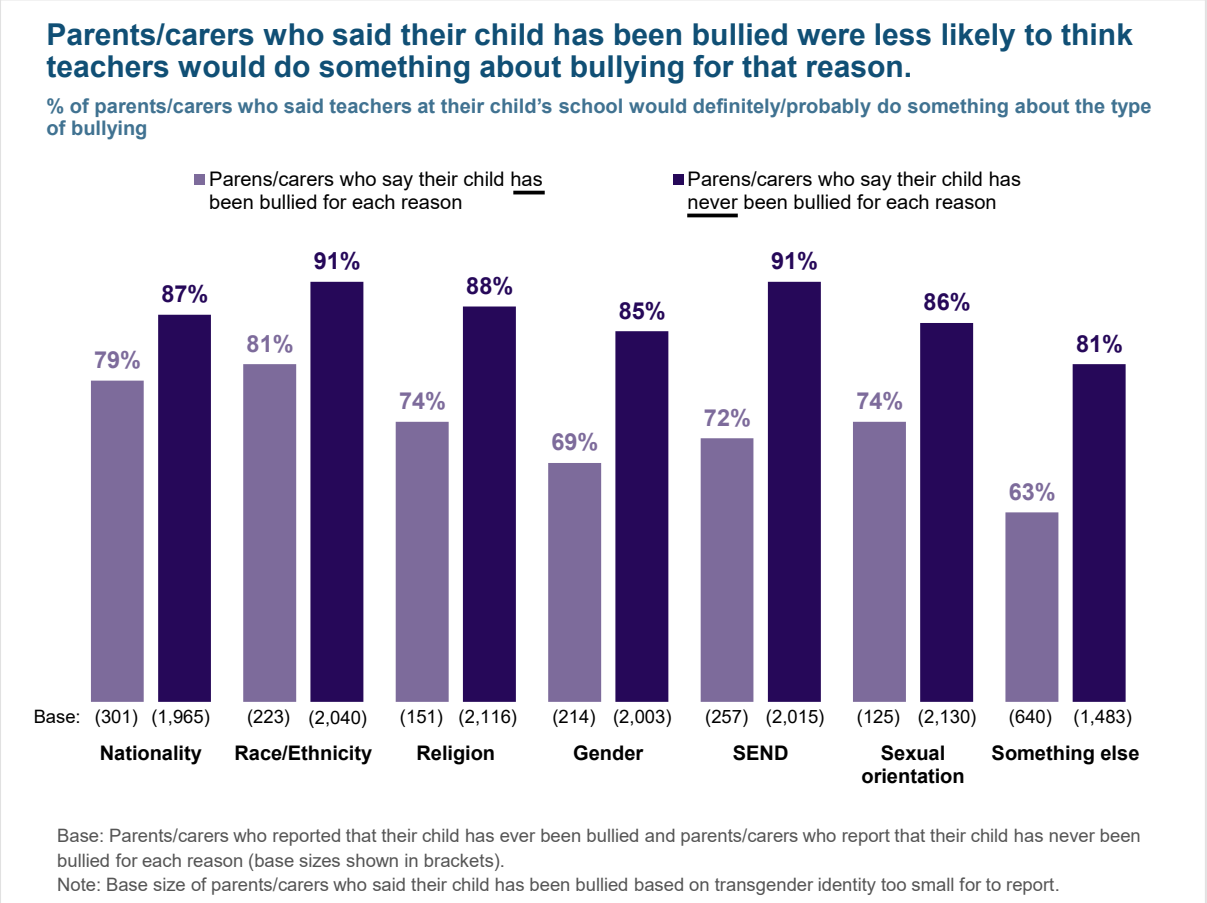


Base: All parents/carers of school pupils (2,519).
Percentage labels shown if 3% or more. Combinations may not reflect the sum of the response options due to rounding.

Notably, as shown on Figure 6, parents/carers who reported that their child has *not* been bullied were more likely to think teachers at their child's school would do

something about bullying, if they were aware of it. Conversely, across all types of bullying, parents/carers who reported that their child *had* ever experienced a type of bullying were more likely to say teachers would definitely not or probably not take action about this type of bullying.

Figure 6: Proportion of parents/carers who think their child's school would do something about each type of bullying, by whether their child has been bullied for that reason



Base: Parents/carers who reported that their child has ever been bullied and parents/carers who report that their child has never been bullied for each reason (base sizes shown in brackets).
Note: Base size of parents/carers who said their child has been bullied based on transgender identity too small for to report.

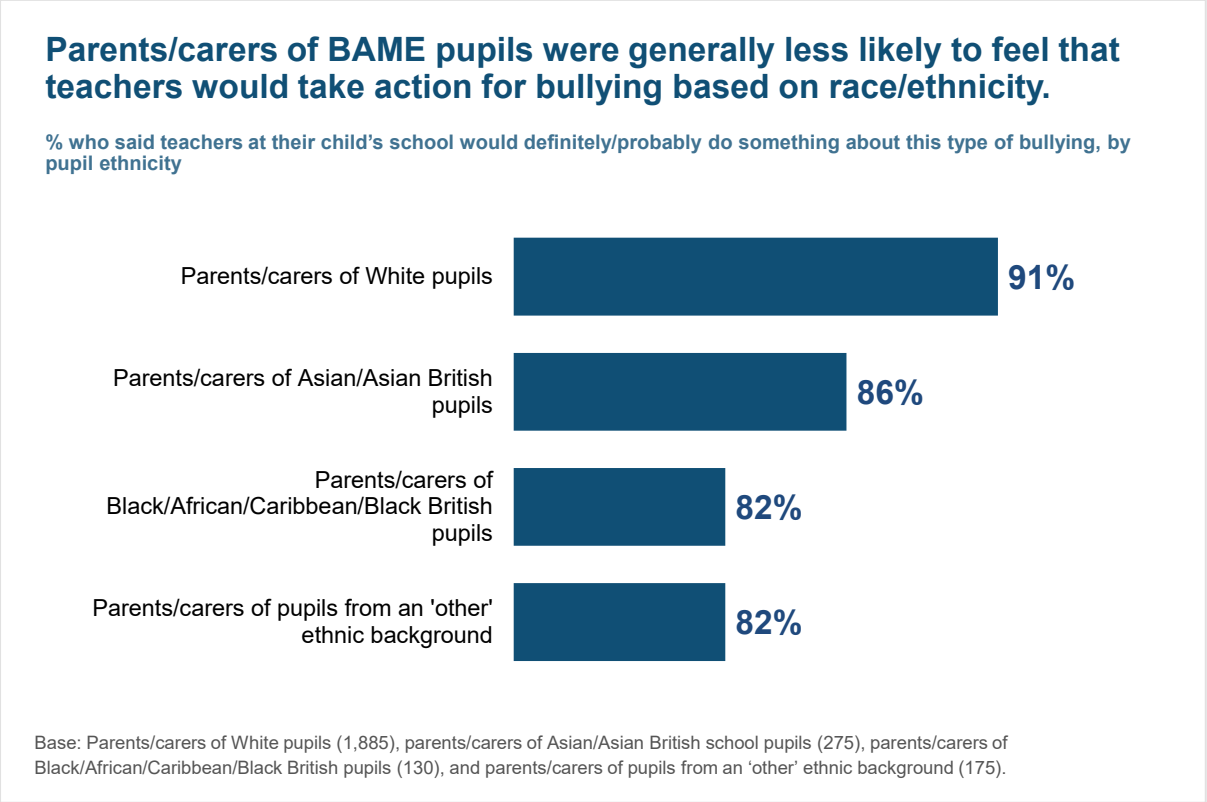
Subgroup differences

For some types of bullying, there were subgroups of parents/carers that were less likely to think teachers at their child's school would take action.

For bullying based on SEND, parents/carers of pupils with SEND (78%) were less likely to say that teachers at their child's school would do something about this type of bullying than parents/carers of pupils without SEND (91%).

For bullying based on race/ethnicity, parents/carers of pupils from some BAME backgrounds were generally less likely to feel that teachers would take action about this type of bullying than parents/carers of White pupils (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Parents'/carers' perceptions of school response to bullying based on race/ethnicity, by pupil ethnicity



Across all types of bullying, parents/carers of pupils living outside of London were more likely than parents/carers of pupils in London to think that teachers at their child's school would definitely or probably do something.

6. Mobile phones in school/college

This chapter explores the prevalence of mobile phone use in secondary schools and colleges.

6.1. Prevalence and use of mobile phones

Schools and colleges are best placed to decide what mobile phone policies and strategies work best for them given their respective educational contexts.

DfE's EdTech Strategy (published April 2019), Realising the potential for technology in education, aims to support schools and colleges to make informed decisions on technology and how to use it effectively. It highlights a series of commitments to improve awareness, capability and infrastructure within schools to support teacher workload reductions, increased efficiencies, and improved student outcomes. This includes exploring whether technology, such as mobile phones, can be used to support teaching practice in and outside of the classroom.

DfE has also published guidance for education providers who want to increase their use of EdTech[26], including how to use mobile technologies safely and securely[27].

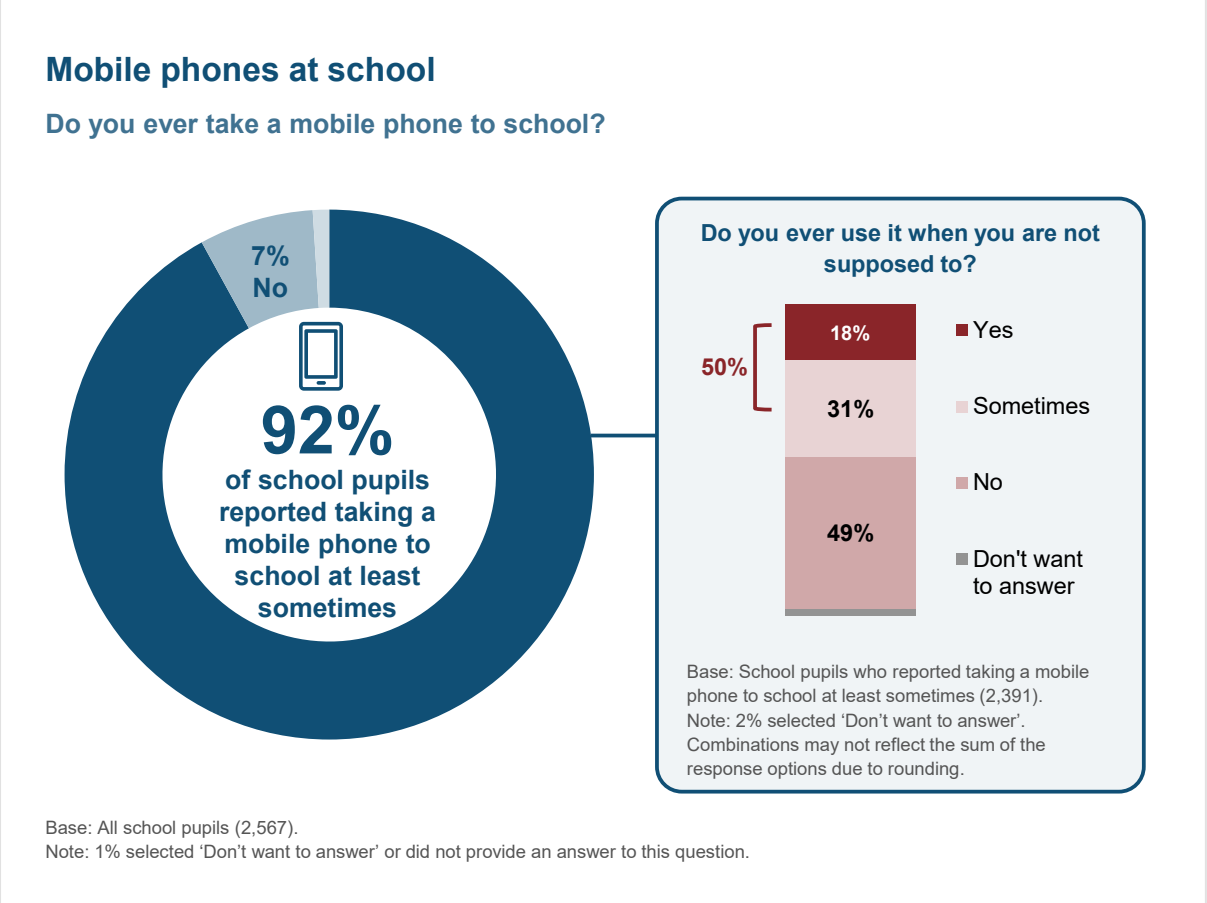
Proportion of young people who take their phone to school/college

Young people were asked whether they ever take a mobile phone to school or college. As illustrated by Figure 1 below, 92% of school pupils reported that they take a mobile phone to school at least some of the time.

[26] Using technology in education collection. https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/using-technology-in-education

[27] Keeping children safe in education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges (2019). https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/835733/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2019.pdf

Figure 1: Prevalence and use of mobile phones at school



The following subgroups were more likely to say they take a mobile phone to school at least sometimes:

- **Female pupils** (89%, compared with 80% of male pupils);
- **Pupils living outside of London** (86%, compared with 80% of pupils living in London); and
- **School pupils in key stage 5** (96%, compared with 87% of pupils in key stage 4 and 81% of pupils in key stage 3).

The following subgroups were more likely to report they do not take a mobile phone to school:

- **Asian/Asian British pupils** (21%, compared with 4% of White pupils, 8% of Black/African/Caribbean/Black British pupils, and 9% from an 'other' ethnic group); and
- **Pupils who were eligible for FSM** (11%, compared with 6% of pupils who are not eligible for FSM).

When comparing secondary schools and colleges, there were no significant differences between the proportion of school pupils in years 12 and 13 (98%) and

college students (99%) who reported taking their mobile phone to school/college at least some of the time.

Young people using a mobile phone when they're not supposed to

As shown in Figure 1 above, among pupils who reported taking a mobile phone to school, 50% reported using it when they were not supposed to (at least some of the time). This was more likely among female pupils (53%) than male pupils (45%). In addition, pupils in key stage 4 (59%) and key stage 5 (64%) reported that they were more likely to use their phone when they were not supposed to, compared with pupils in key stage 3 (40%).

When comparing secondary schools and colleges, there were no significant differences between the proportion of school pupils in years 12 and 13 (64%) and college students (60%) who reported using their mobile phone when they were not supposed to.

7. Careers and aspirations

This chapter explores a range of topics related to the careers and aspirations of young people in education, including the career opportunities and guidance they've received, their knowledge about jobs or careers in STEM (science, computer science, technology, engineering and Mathematics), and their awareness of non-academic routes.

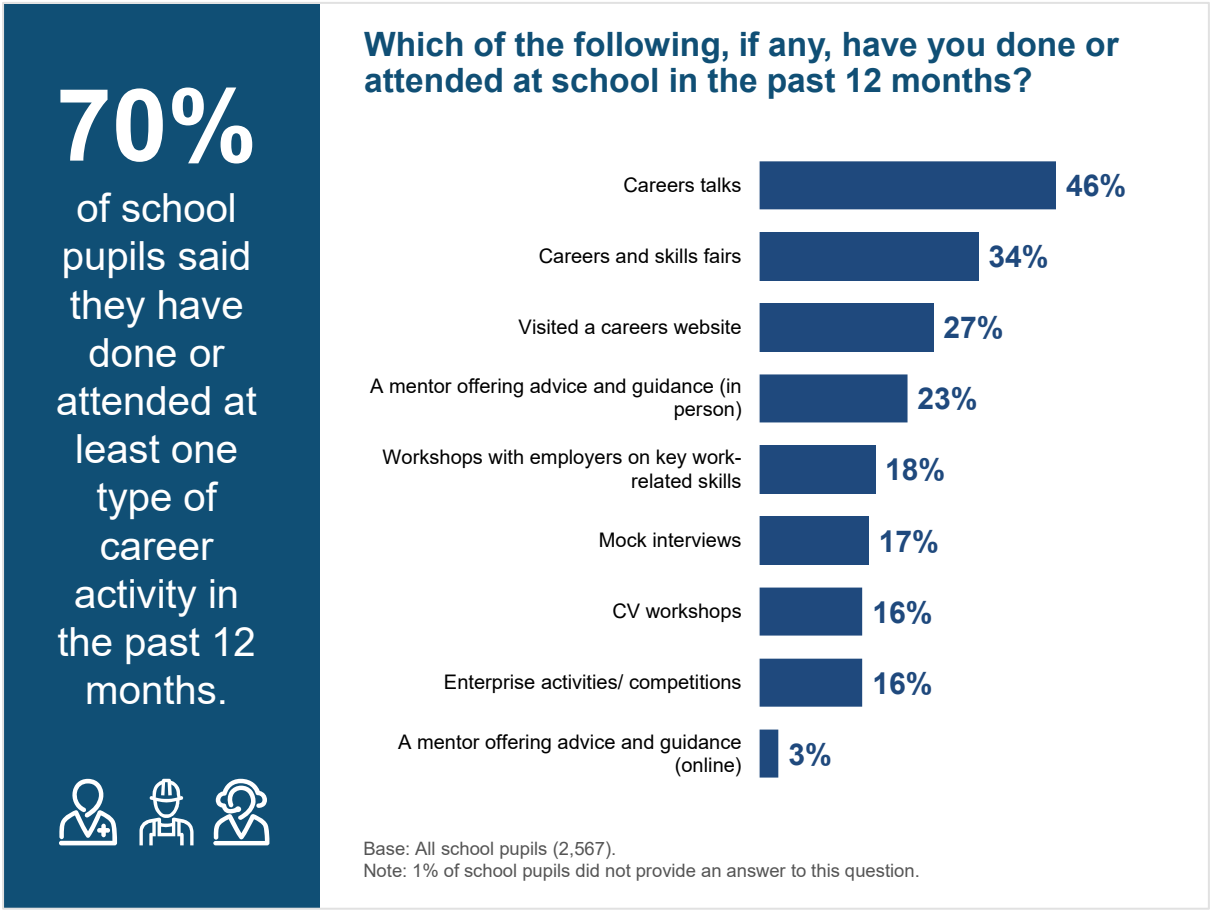
7.1. Career opportunities and guidance

Good careers guidance is essential if young people are to raise their aspirations and capitalise on opportunities available to them. Young people need information on the range of jobs and careers, and encounters with employers to inspire them about what they can achieve. In December 2017, the government published its careers strategy, setting out proposals to improve the quality and coverage of careers advice in schools and colleges, and give more aspirational careers advice for young people. The strategy identifies how the worlds of work and education can come together to support young people, using the Gatsby Benchmarks of Good Career Guidance. The Gatsby Benchmarks are a set of eight benchmarks, which schools in England should use as a framework for developing a programme of high-quality careers advice to improve their careers provision.

Career activities

As shown in Figure 1, young people were asked whether they had taken part in a range of career activities. Overall, 70% of secondary school pupils had taken part in at least one of the career activities listed within the past 12 months.

Figure 23: Career activities attended in the past 12 months



Participation in careers activities was more common among certain subgroups of secondary school pupils, including:

- **Pupils living in London** (77%, compared with 70% of pupils living outside London);
- **Female pupils** (73%, compared with 68% of male pupils);
- **Pupils who were not eligible for FSM** (71%, compared with 61% of pupils who were eligible for FSM);
- **Pupils without SEND** (71%, compared with 58% who did have SEND); and
- **Older pupils** (increasing from 56% in key stage 3, to 87% in key stage 4 and 92% in key stage 5).

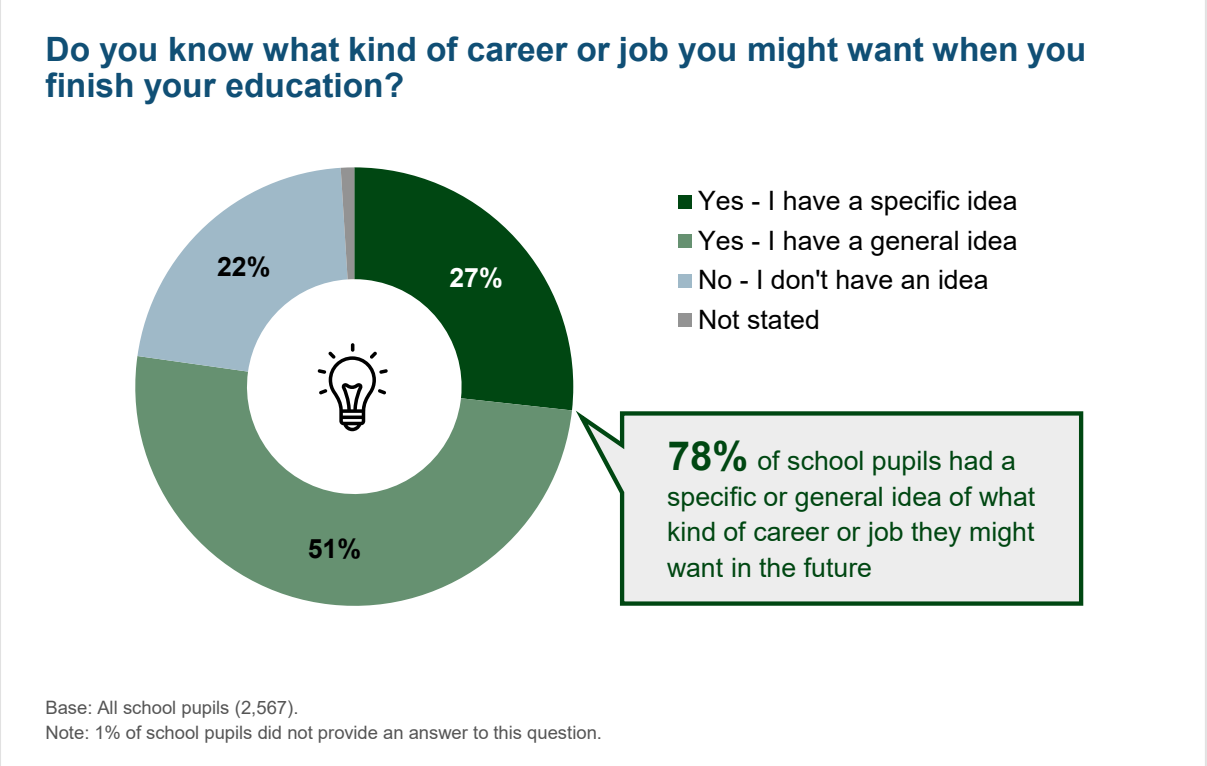
In total, 88% of college students had taken part in at least one of the career activities listed within the past 12 months. When comparing key stage 5 (KS5) students in sixth forms and colleges, those attending secondary schools with sixth forms were more likely to attend:

- **Career talks** (68% of sixth form students, compared with 58% of college students);
- **Mock interviews** (29% of sixth form students, compared with 14% of college students); and
- **CV workshops** (33% of sixth form students, compared with 25% of college students).

Career aspirations

Overall, 78% of secondary school pupils reported that they had a specific or general idea of the career or job they might want after they finish their education. Figure 2 provides a more detailed breakdown.

Figure 24: Career aspirations of secondary school pupils



Older pupils were more likely to have a specific idea of the career or job they might want in the future, compared with younger pupils: 31% of pupils in key stage 5 said they had a specific idea of their future career or job, compared with 26% of pupils in key stage 3. By key stage 5, secondary school pupils in sixth forms (31%) were just as likely to have a specific idea as those studying in college (32%).

Awareness of skills and qualifications needed for future jobs/careers

To measure awareness of the skills and qualifications needed for future job/careers, young people were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statement:

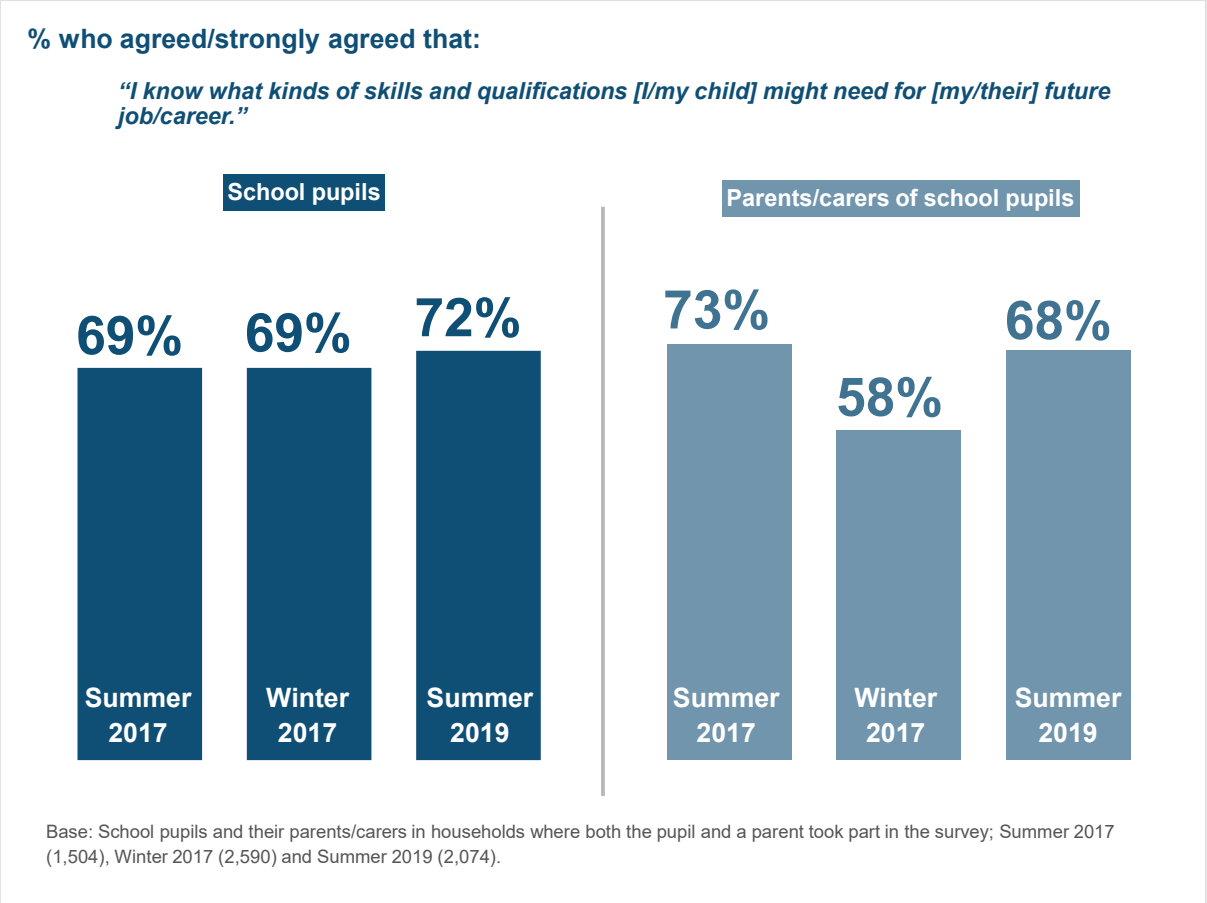
> *"I know what kinds of skills and qualifications I might need for my future job/career."*

Parents/carers were asked the same question about their child.

As Figure 3 shows, awareness among school pupils has significantly increased since previous waves, with 72% now agreeing that they know what kinds of skills and qualifications they might need for their future job/career (compared with 69% at both the Summer 2017 wave and Winter 2017 wave).

For parents/carers, awareness has also increased since Winter 2017 (58%), but current levels of awareness (68%) are still significantly lower than those reported at Summer 2017 (73%).

Figure 25: Awareness of skills and qualifications needed for future jobs/careers – by wave



Base: School pupils and their parents/carers in households where both the pupil and a parent took part in the survey; Summer 2017 (1,504), Winter 2017 (2,590) and Summer 2019 (2,074).

In general, the majority of school pupils and parents/carers living in the same household reported similar levels of agreement or disagreement:

- In 59% of households, both the pupil and their parent/carer agreed that they know what kinds of skills and qualifications the pupil might need for their future job/career;
- In 4% of households, both the pupil and their parent/carer said they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement; and
- In 2% of households, both the pupil and their parent/carer disagreed.

Subgroup differences

Some subgroups were more likely to know what kinds of skills and qualifications young people might need for their future jobs/careers:

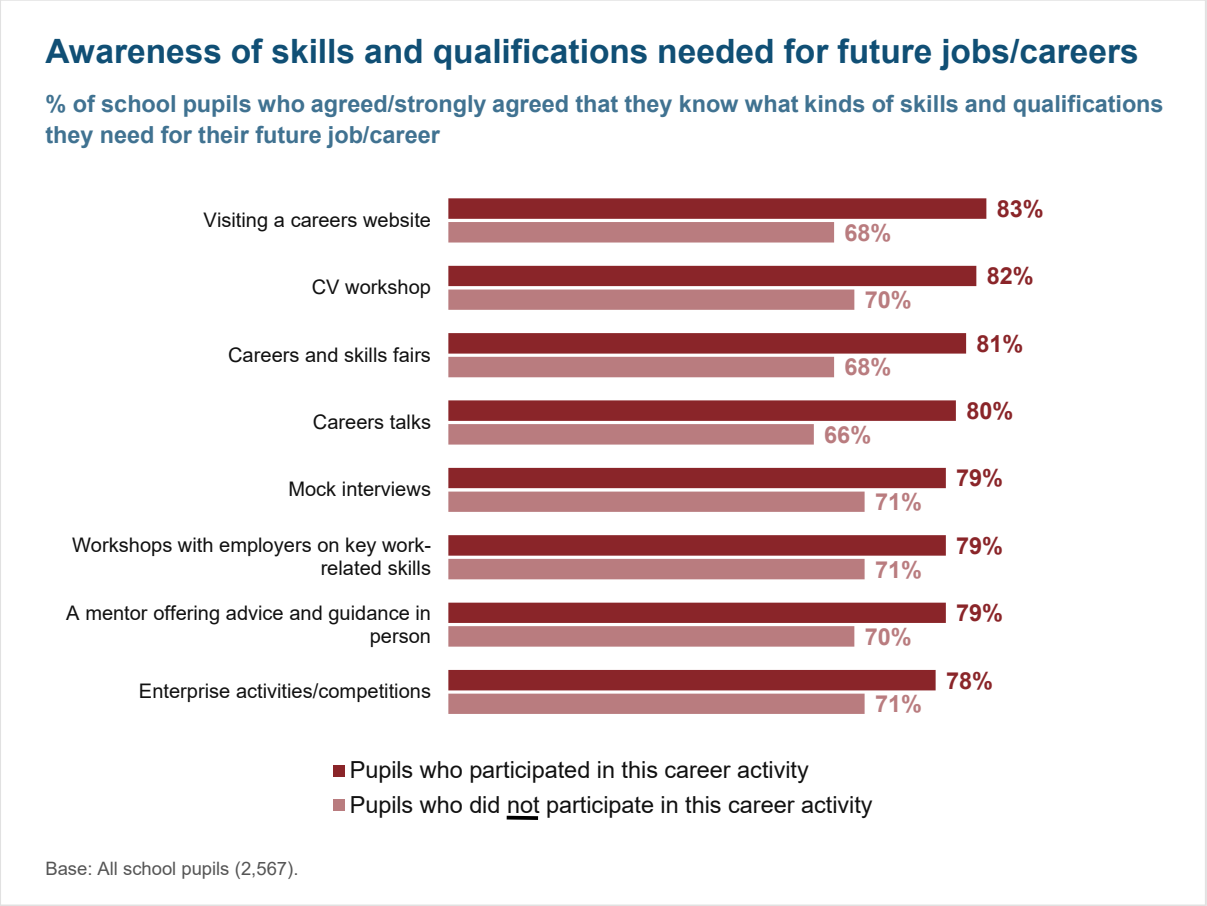
- **Awareness was higher among pupils without SEND** (76%, compared with 60% of pupils with SEND). A similar trend is seen among parents/carers of pupils without SEND (71%, compared with 62% of parents/carers of pupils with SEND).
- **Among school pupils, awareness increased with age** (from 68% in key stage 3, to 76% in key stage 4 and 82% in key stage 5).

Participation in career activities

In addition, pupils who had taken part in certain career activities were more likely to agree that they know what kinds of skills and qualifications they might need for their future job/careers, compared with those who had not taken part. Although this is a distinct pattern, it is important to note that it is not possible to conclude whether this is a cause and effect relationship.

This pattern was reported when participating in the career activities outlined in Figure 4 below.

Figure 26: Pupils' awareness of skills and qualifications needed for future jobs/carers and their participation in career activities



College students and their parents/carers

For college students (and their parents/carers), there has been no significant change since the previous wave in terms of knowing what skills and qualifications might be needed for their future job/career:

- 81% of college students agreed that they know what skills they will need, compared with 80% at the Winter 2017 wave.
- 69% of parents/carers of college students know what skills their child will need, compared with 68% at the Winter 2017 wave.

There were no significant differences between school pupils studying at sixth forms and those studying at college.

Awareness of where to go for more information

To explore whether young people were aware of where to go for more information about skills and qualifications needed for a future job/career, young people were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statement:

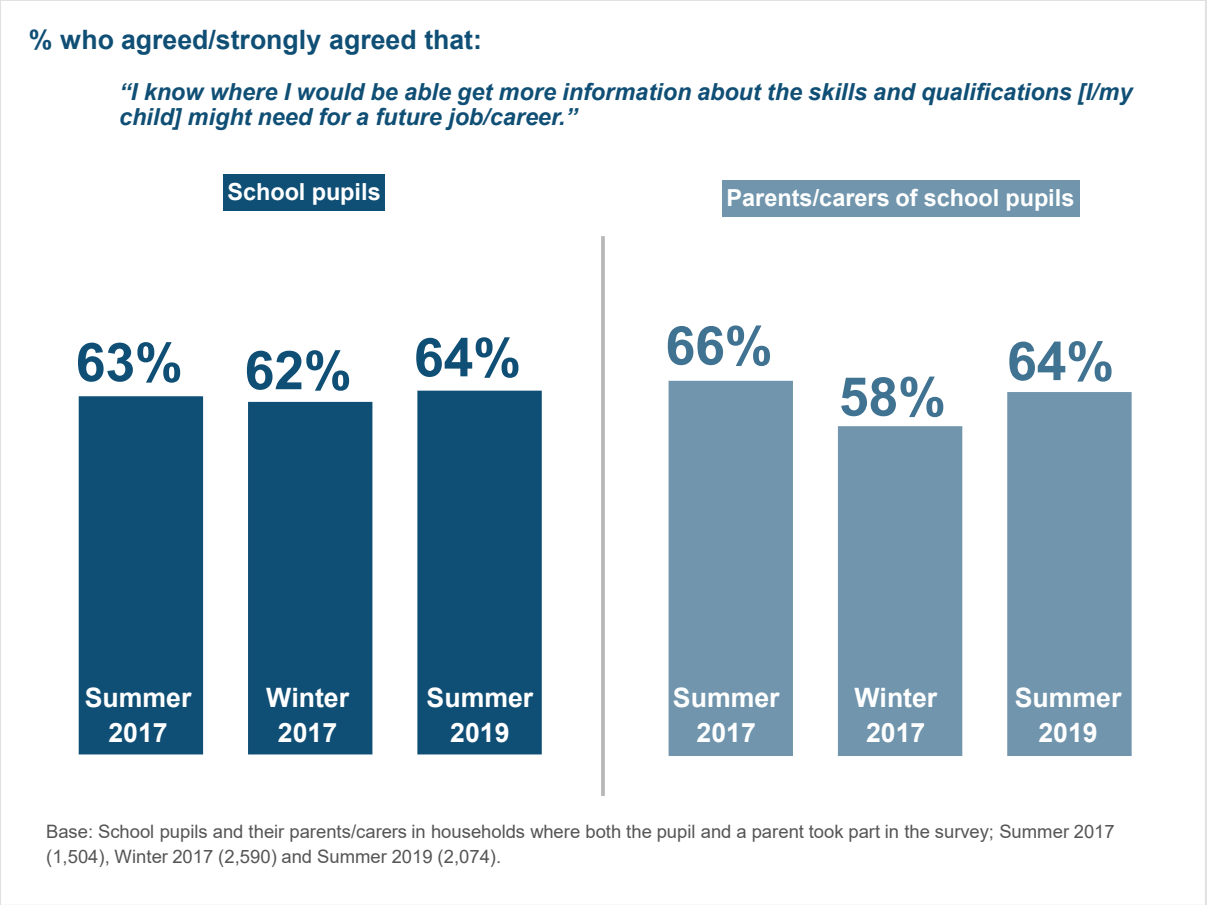
> *"I know where I would be able to get more information about the skills and qualifications I might need for a future job/career."*

Parents/carers were also asked the same question about their child.

As Figure 5 highlights, awareness of where to go for more information has remained consistent among school pupils, with just under two-thirds agreeing with this statement across the survey waves.

For parents/carers, awareness has significantly increased since Winter 2017 (from 58%, to 64% at Summer 2019), which is a similar level of awareness as Summer 2017 (66%).

Figure 27: Awareness of where to go for more information – by wave



Base: School pupils and their parents/carers in households where both the pupil and a parent took part in the survey; Summer 2017 (1,504), Winter 2017 (2,590) and Summer 2019 (2,074).

Like the previous statement, school pupils and parents/carers living in the same household often reported similar levels of agreement or disagreement:

- In 49% of households, both the pupil and their parent/carer agreed that they know where to get information about skills and qualifications the pupil might need for their future job/career;
- In 5% of households, both the pupil and their parent/carer said they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement; and
- In 3% of households, both the pupil and their parent/carer disagreed.

Comparing responses within households also highlighted differences in agreement and disagreement between pupils and their parents/carers:

- 8% of pupils agreed that they know where to go for information while their parent/carer disagreed; and
- 7% of parents/carers agreed while their child disagreed.

Subgroup differences

In addition, some subgroups of young people were more likely to know where to go for information about skills and qualifications for their future job/career:

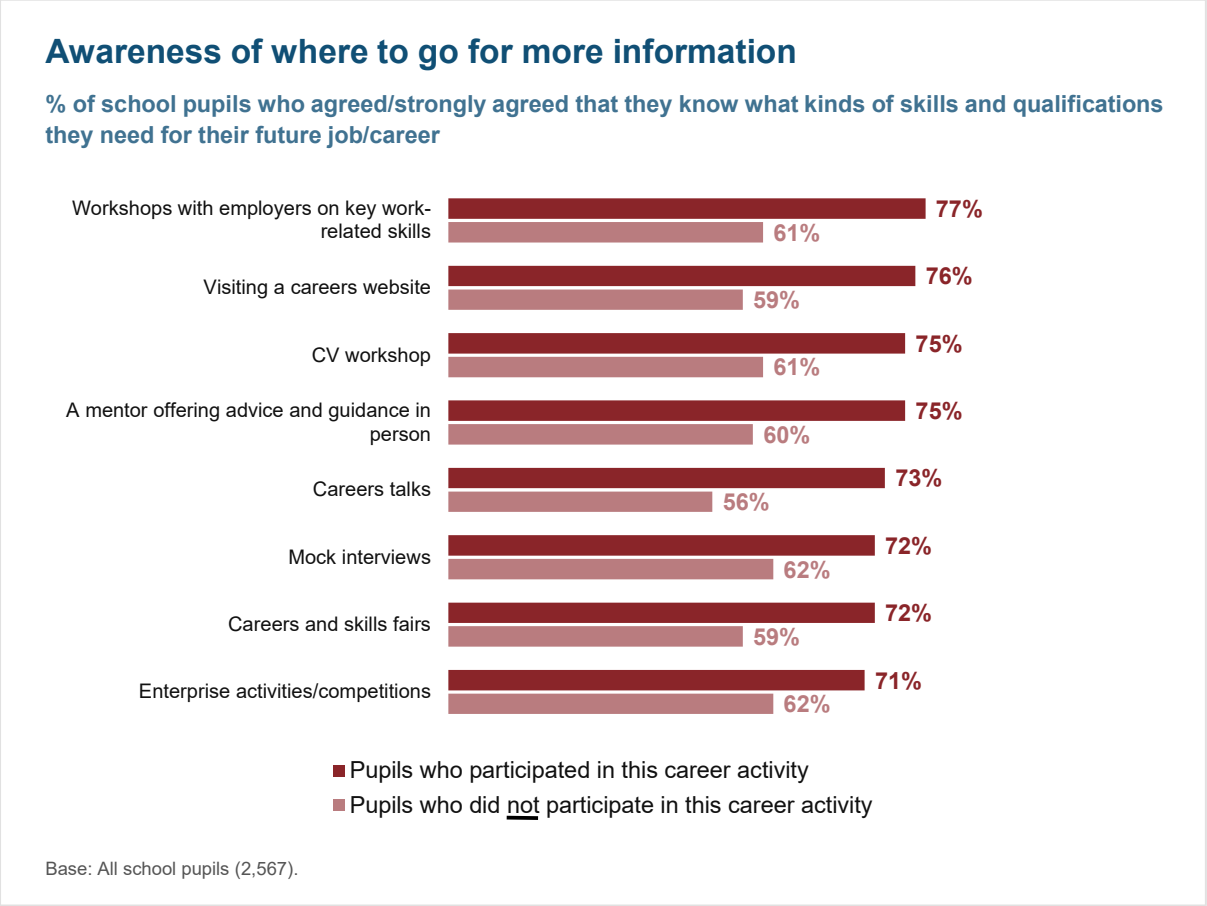
- **Awareness was higher among some BAME pupils** (75% of Black/African/Caribbean/Black British pupils and 70% of Asian/Asian British pupils, compared with 62% of White pupils).
- **Awareness was higher among pupils without SEND** (68%, compared with 54% of pupils with SEND. A similar trend is seen among parents/carers of pupils without SEND (69%, compared with 55% of parents/carers of pupils with SEND).
- **Among school pupils, awareness increased with age** (from 60% of pupils in key stage 3, to 67% of pupils in key stage 4 and 71% of those in key stage 5).

Participation in career activities

Furthermore, pupils who had taken part in certain career activities were more likely to agree that they know where to go for more information about the skills and qualifications they might need for a future job/career, compared with those who had not taken part. As mentioned, although this is a distinct pattern, it is important to note that it is not possible to conclude whether this is a cause and effect relationship.

This pattern was reported when participating in the same career activities as the previous statement.

Figure 28: Pupils' awareness of skills and qualifications needed for future jobs/careers and their participation in career activities



College students and their parents/carers

For college students (and their parents/carers), there has been no significant change since the previous waves in terms of knowing where to go for more information about the skills and qualifications they might need for their future job/career:

- 74% of college students agreed that they know where to go for more information, compared with 75% at the Winter 2017 wave.
- 68% of parents/carers of college students know where to go for more information, compared with 66% at the Winter 2017 wave.

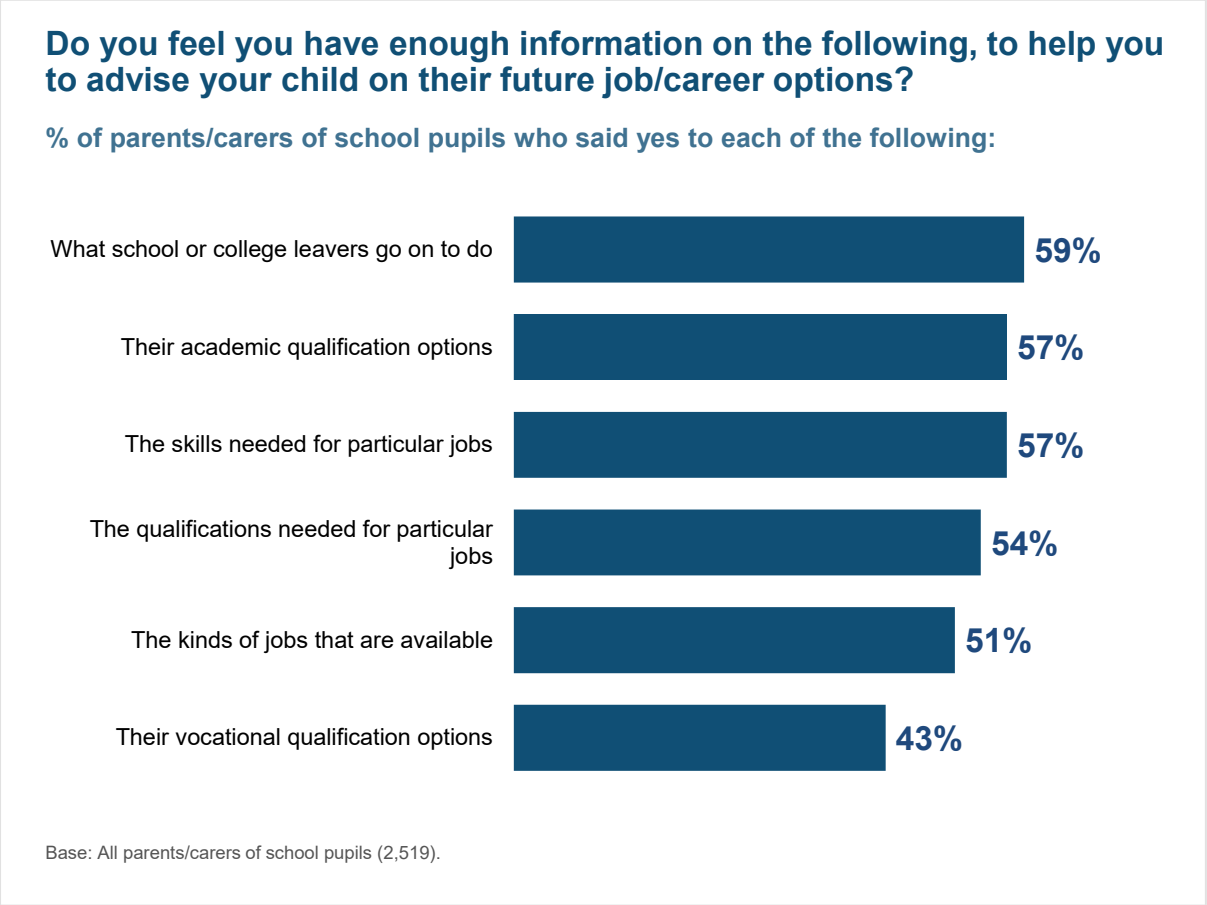
There were no significant differences between school pupils studying at sixth forms and those studying at college.

Parental advice on job or career options

Parents/carers were also asked whether they felt they had enough information to help advise their child on their future job/career options.

Figure 7 highlights that parents/carers of school pupils most commonly felt they had enough information to advise their child about what school leavers go on to do (59%). On the other hand, parents/carers of school pupils were least confident advising their child about vocational qualification options, with only 43% expressing they had enough information on this topic.

Figure 29: Parents/carers of school pupils advising their child on job/career options



Some subgroups of parents/carers of school pupils were more likely to feel they had enough information to advise their child about their future job/career options:

- **Across all statements, parents/carers of pupils with SEND were less likely to say they felt they had enough information**, compared with parents/carers of pupils without SEND.
- **Across all statements, parents/carers of pupils in key stage 5 were more likely to say they felt they had enough information**, compared with parents/carers of pupils in key stage 3. This implies their child's age plays a role in whether they feel they have enough information about careers.

In addition, depending on whether their child studied at a school sixth form or college, parents/carers had different levels of confidence related to advising their child about academic qualification options; parents/carers of sixth form students

(71%) were more likely than parents/carers of college students (63%) to report having enough information about academic options.

7.2. Jobs or careers in STEM

The demand for STEM and computing skills is growing, particularly for sectors such as technology, engineering, construction and manufacturing. These skills will be increasingly required in the future, not just for traditional STEM routes, but for a wide range of future careers.

Following the launch of the careers strategy, Gatsby Benchmarks are being adopted by schools and colleges, giving young people exposure to industry role models and work experience. The Careers & Enterprise Company has funded over 170,000 encounters between young people and STEM employers since it was established, and is working with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to support those areas with lowest uptake of STEM qualifications to make sure that STEM encounters are built into careers and enterprise plans. They are investing in a STEM Toolkit to improve teacher awareness, resources and understanding about careers utilising STEM subjects so that teachers can share up-to-date information on the range of occupations, and the different progression pathways.

Knowledge of jobs or careers utilising STEM subjects

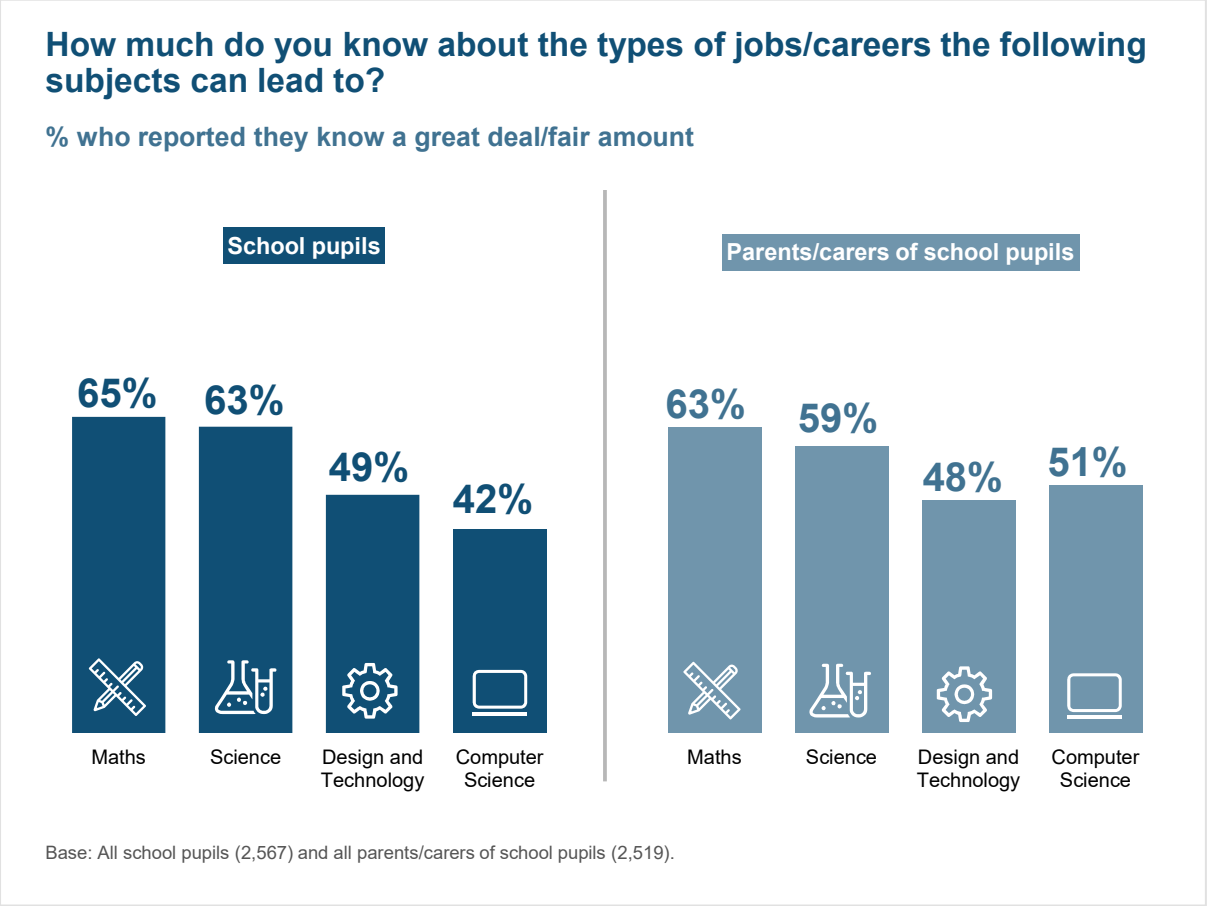
Young people and parents/carers were asked how much they know about the jobs/careers that STEM subjects[28] could lead to.

Broadly, knowledge of jobs or careers utilising STEM subjects were similar across both pupils and parents/carers. Around 6 in 10 school pupils and parents/carers reported that they know a great deal/fair amount about jobs/careers utilising maths and science.

For computer science, however, the difference in knowledge between pupils and parents/carers is more pronounced. Parents/carers (51%) were more likely than school pupils (42%) to report that they know a great deal/fair amount about jobs/careers utilising this STEM subject.

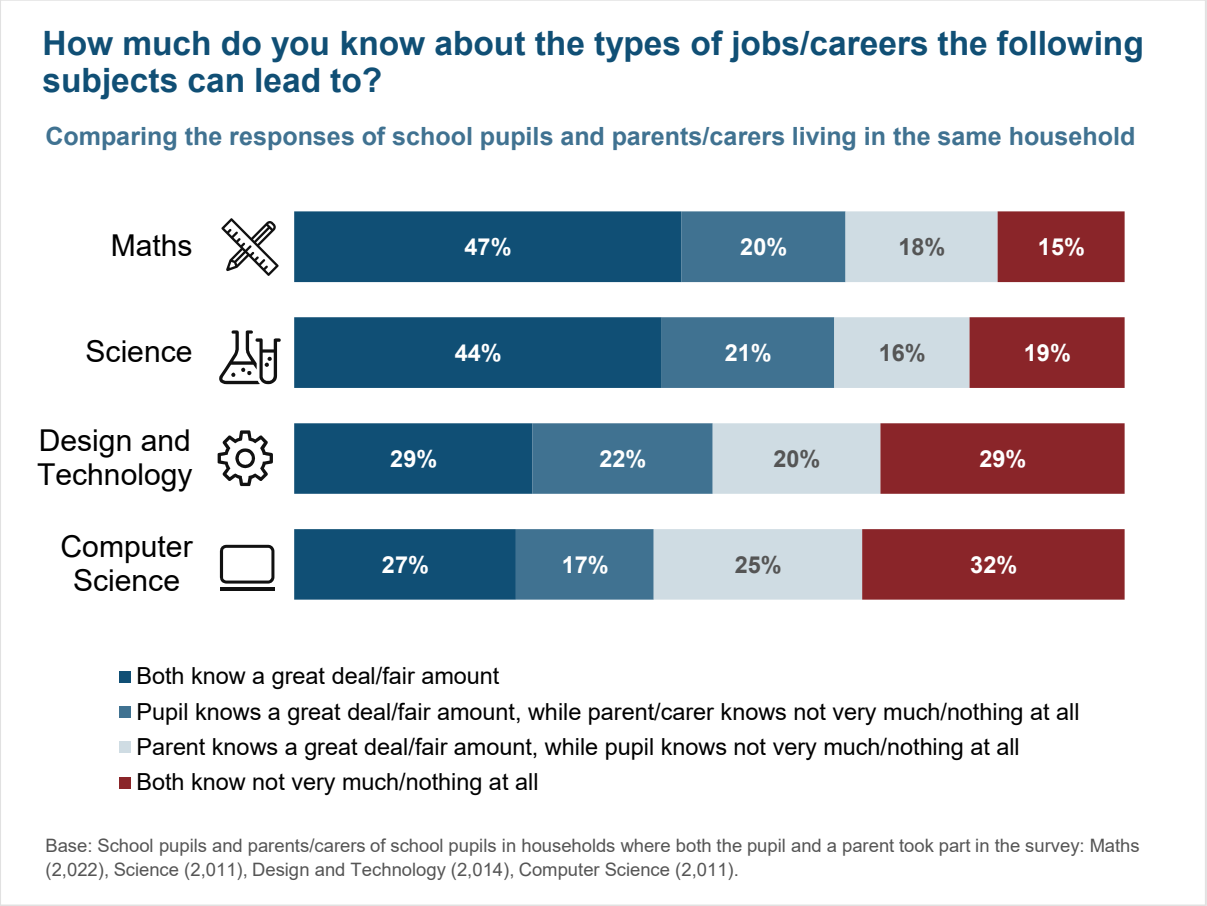
[28] STEM includes science, computer science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Design and technology is not considered to be a STEM subject but has been included as it falls under the wider STEM umbrella and we were interested to see the full picture of subjects that may feed into the STEM pipeline.

Figure 30: School pupils' and parents'/carers' knowledge of jobs/careers utilising STEM subjects



When comparing the responses of school pupils and parents/carers living in the same household, it is evident that there are some gaps in knowledge in terms of the types of jobs/careers specific subjects can lead to. As Figure 9 illustrates, in just under half of households both the pupil and their parent/carer reported knowing a great deal/fair amount about jobs/careers related to maths and science. This means, in around half the households surveyed, either the pupil, their parent/carer or both felt that they knew not very much/nothing at all about jobs/careers utilising maths or science. This gap in knowledge is more pronounced for design and technology and computer science. Just over a quarter of households reported that both the pupil and their parent/carer know a great deal/fair amount about jobs/careers utilising these subjects, which means in around three-quarters of the households surveyed, either the pupil, their parent/carer or both felt that they knew not very much/nothing at all about jobs/careers utilising design and technology or computer science. As noted, computer science was the only subject where parents/carers were significantly more likely than pupils to report knowing a great deal/fair amount about the jobs/careers utilising this subject.

Figure 31: Comparing school pupils' and their parents'/carers' knowledge of jobs/careers utilising STEM subjects



For each subject, specific subgroups of pupils and parents/carers were more likely to report knowing a great deal/fair amount about the jobs/careers each subject could lead to.

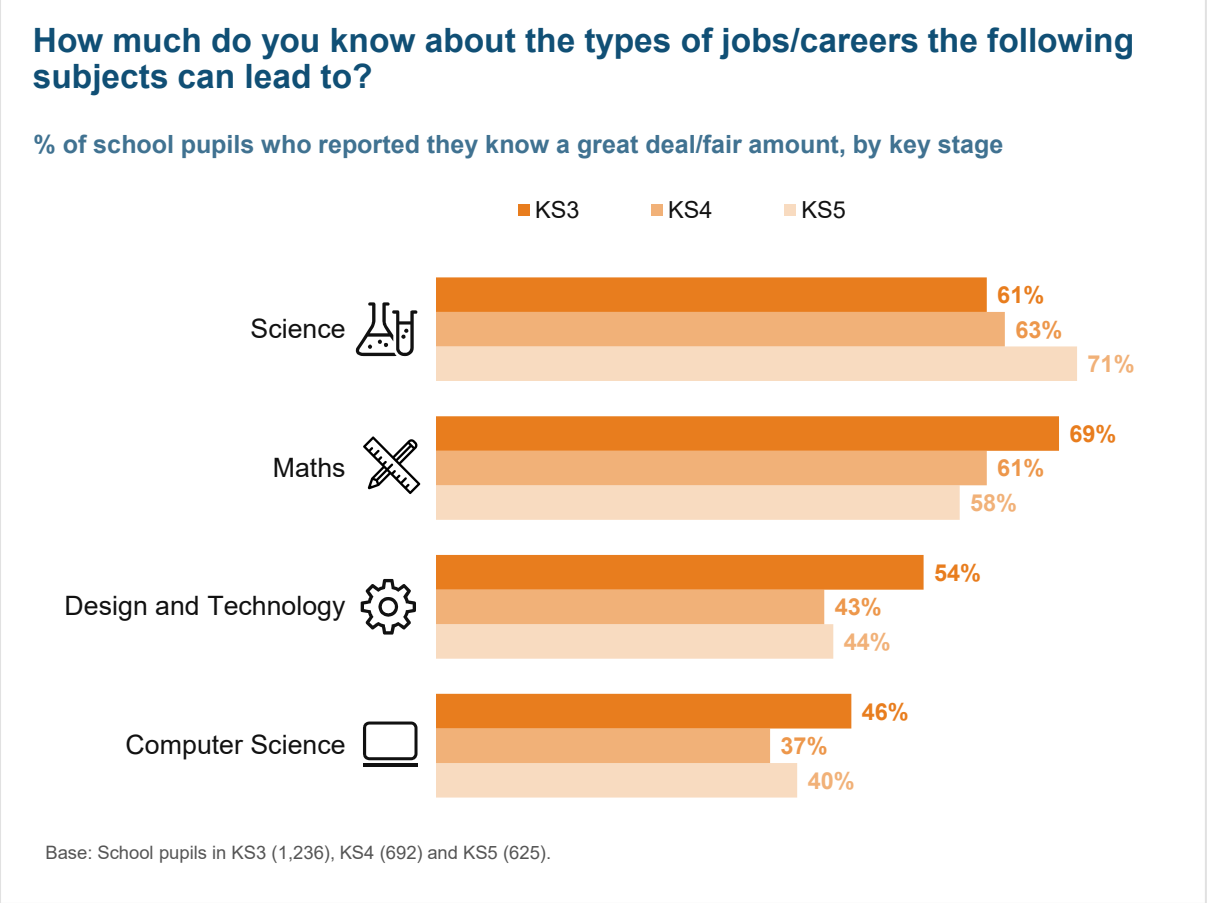
Pupil key stage

Pupils in key stage 5 were more likely to report that they know a great deal/fair amount about jobs/careers utilising science (71%), compared with pupils in key stage 3 (61%) and key stage 4 (63%). The same trend is evident among parents/carers of school pupils.

For the other subjects, the opposite trend is seen. As shown in Figure 10, pupils in key stage 3 were more likely than pupils in key stage 4 and key stage 5 to report that they know a great deal/fair amount about jobs/careers utilising maths, Design and technology and computer science[29].

[29] Computer science was introduced to the curriculum in September 2014, so younger pupils may have been taught this subject earlier in their education and therefore have greater familiarity/conversance with the subject and its uses.

Figure 32: School pupils' knowledge of jobs/careers utilising STEM subjects – by key stage



Pupil gender

Male pupils were more likely than female pupils to report that they know a great deal/fair amount about jobs/careers utilising:

- **Maths** (69% of male pupils, compared with 61% of female pupils);
- **Design and technology** (55% of male pupils, compared with 43% of female pupils); and
- **Computer science** (51% of male pupils, compared with 33% of female pupils). Notably, the gender difference is most pronounced for this subject.

For science, there was no significant gender difference, with 64% of male pupils and 62% of female pupils reporting that they know a great deal/fair amount about jobs/careers utilising this STEM subject.

Among parents/carers, a gender difference was only evident for design and technology.

Pupil eligibility for FSM

Pupils who were eligible for FSM were less likely to say they know a great deal/fair amount about jobs/careers utilising:

- **Science** (50% of pupils who were eligible for FSM, compared with 66% of pupils who were not eligible for FSM);
- **Design and technology** (40% of pupils who were eligible for FSM, compared with 52% of pupils who were not eligible for FSM);
- **Computer science** (36% of pupils who were eligible for FSM, compared with 44% of pupils who were not eligible for FSM).

For maths, there was no significant difference, with 61% of pupils who were eligible for FSM and 66% of pupils who were not eligible for FSM reporting that they know a great deal/fair amount about jobs/careers utilising this STEM subject.

Among parents/carers, a significant difference was only evident for science.

Pupil SEND status

Pupils with SEND were less likely to report knowing a great deal/fair amount about jobs/careers utilising:

- **Maths** (46% of pupils with SEND, compared with 68% of pupils who do not have SEND); and
- **Science** (42% of pupils with SEND, compared with 66% of pupils who do not have SEND).

Parents/carers of pupils with SEND were less likely than parents/carers of pupils without SEND to report knowing a great deal/fair amount about jobs/careers utilising all STEM subjects, not just science and maths.

Region

Pupils in London were more likely to report knowing a great deal/fair amount about jobs/careers utilising maths (70%), compared with pupils living outside London (63%). This trend is also evident among parents/carers of school pupils.

Pupil ethnicity

In general, some BAME pupils were more likely to report knowing a great deal/fair amount about jobs/careers utilising:

- **Maths** (75% of Asian/Asian British pupils and 80% of Black/African/Caribbean/Black British pupils, compared with 63% of White pupils); and
- **Science** (74% of Asian/Asian British pupils, compared with 62% of White pupils);
- **Computer science** (52% of Asian/Asian British pupils and 51% of Black/African/Caribbean/Black British pupils, compared with 40% of White pupils).

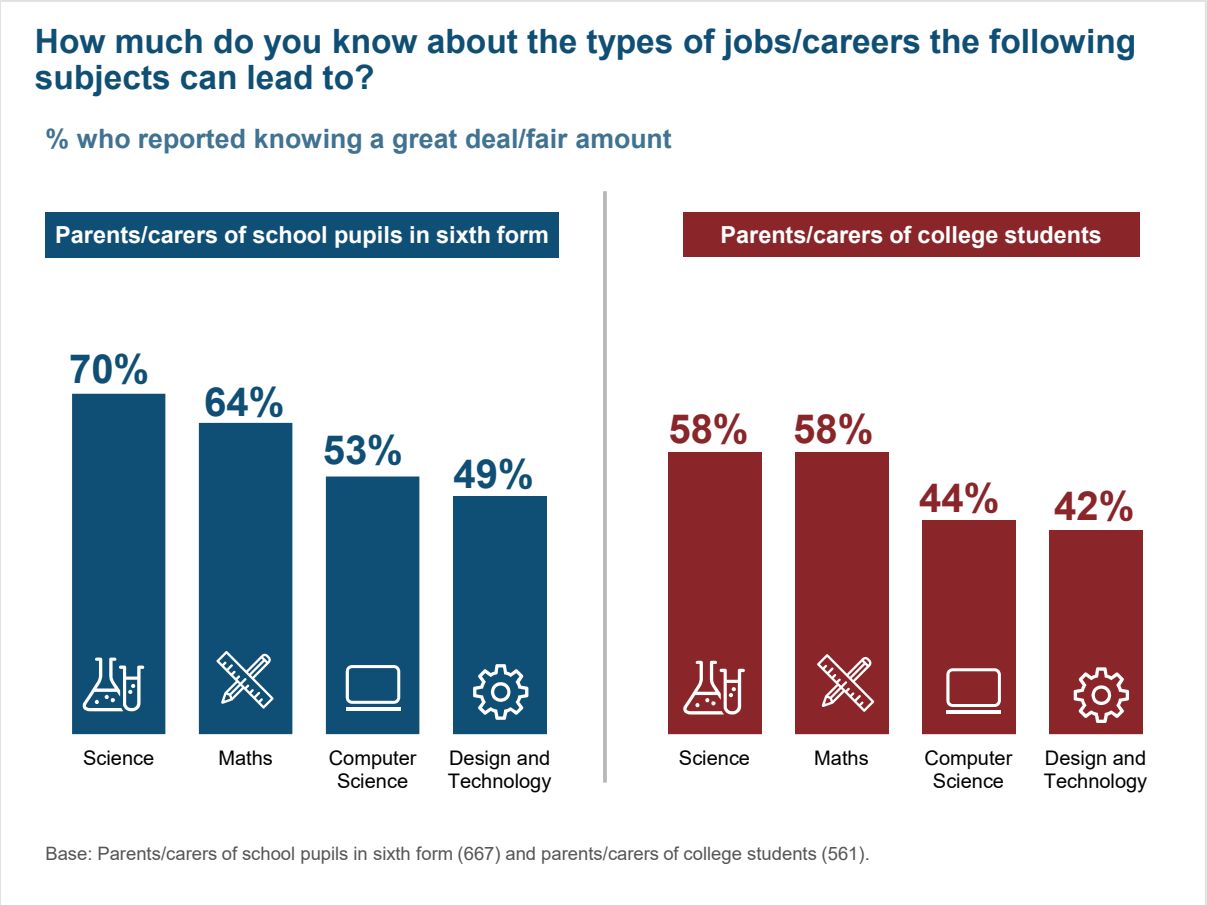
Similarly, for these subjects, parents/carers of Asian/Asian British pupils and parents/carers of Black/African/Caribbean/Black British pupils were more likely than parents/carers of White pupils to report knowing a great deal/fair amount.

Comparing secondary schools and colleges

School students studying at sixth forms and those studying at college reported similar levels of knowledge about jobs/careers utilising maths, computer science, and design and technology. science was an exception; sixth form students (71%) were more likely than college students (62%) to know a great deal/fair amount about jobs/careers utilising this subject.

As Figure 11 shows, a different trend was evident among parents/carers. Those who were parents/carers of sixth form students were significantly more likely than parents/carers of college students to know a great deal/fair amount about jobs/careers utilising science, computer science and design and technology.

Figure 33: Parents'/carers' knowledge of jobs/careers in STEM subjects



Parents/carers discussing STEM careers with their child

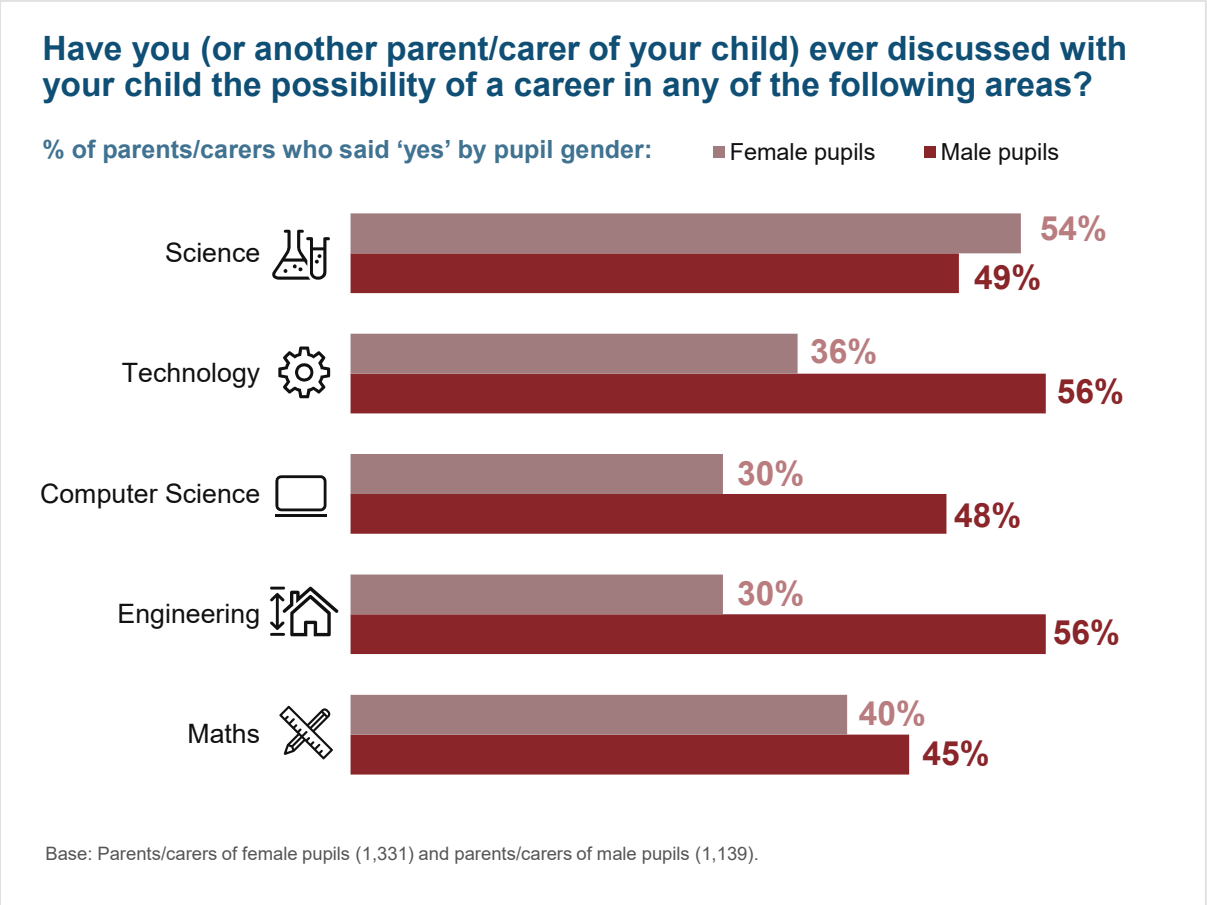
Parents/carers were asked whether they (or another parent/carer) ever discussed the possibility of a career in science, technology, computer science, engineering or maths with their child.

Of all the subjects discussed, parents/carers of secondary school pupils were most likely to talk about the possibility of a career in science with their child (51%), followed by technology (46%), engineering (43%), maths (42%) and computer science (39%).

Subgroup differences

As Figure 12 illustrates, parents/carers of male pupils were more likely than parents/carers of female pupils to talk to their child about careers in technology, engineering, maths and computer science. science was the only subject where parents/carers of females were more likely than parents/carers of males to discuss this with their child.

Figure 34: Parents/carers discussing STEM careers with their child – by pupil gender



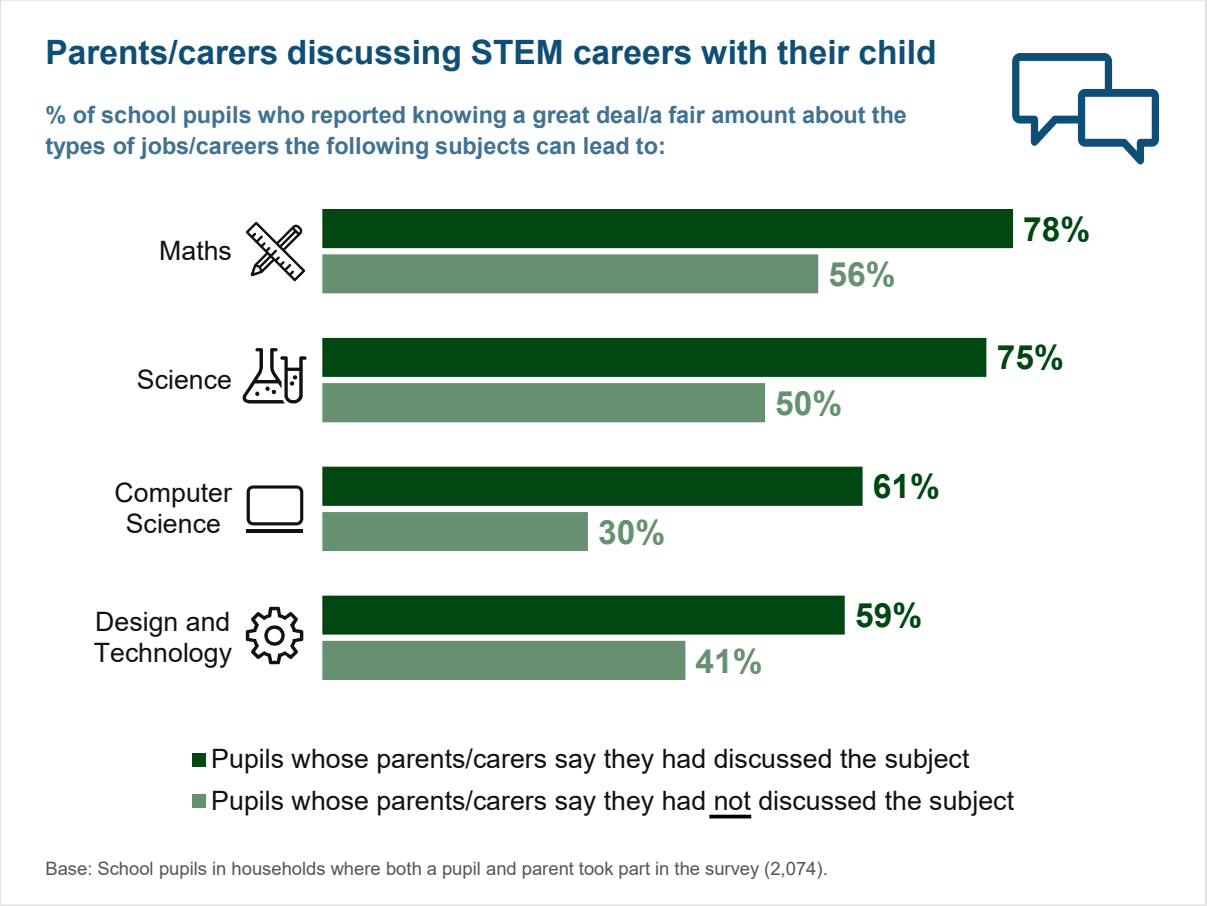
Overall, parents/carers were most likely to talk about careers utilising science with their child. However, parents/carers of pupils who were eligible for FSM (40%) were less likely than parents/carers of pupils who were not eligible for FSM (53%) to discuss a career in science with their child.

Parents/carers discussing STEM careers with their child and pupils' knowledge of STEM careers

It is important to note that there appears to be a clear pattern between parents/carers discussing STEM careers, and pupils' knowledge of STEM careers (although this does not imply cause and effect)[30]. As Figure 13 shows, pupils whose parents/carers had discussed the possibility of a career in the STEM subjects were more likely to know a great deal/fair amount about jobs/careers utilising these subjects, compared with pupils whose parents/carers had not discussed STEM careers.

[30] Please note – parents/carers were asked whether they had ever discussed the possibility of a career in 'Technology', while pupils were asked how much they knew about jobs/careers related to 'Design and Technology'.

Figure 35: Association between parents/carers discussing STEM careers and pupils' knowledge



When comparing secondary schools and colleges, parents/carers of sixth form students were significantly more likely than parents/carers of college students to discuss careers in maths (42% of parents/carers of sixth form students, compared with 34% of parents/carers of college students) and science (57% of parents/carers of sixth form students, compared with 49% of parents/carers of college students) with their children.

Opportunities to talk about a career in STEM at school/college

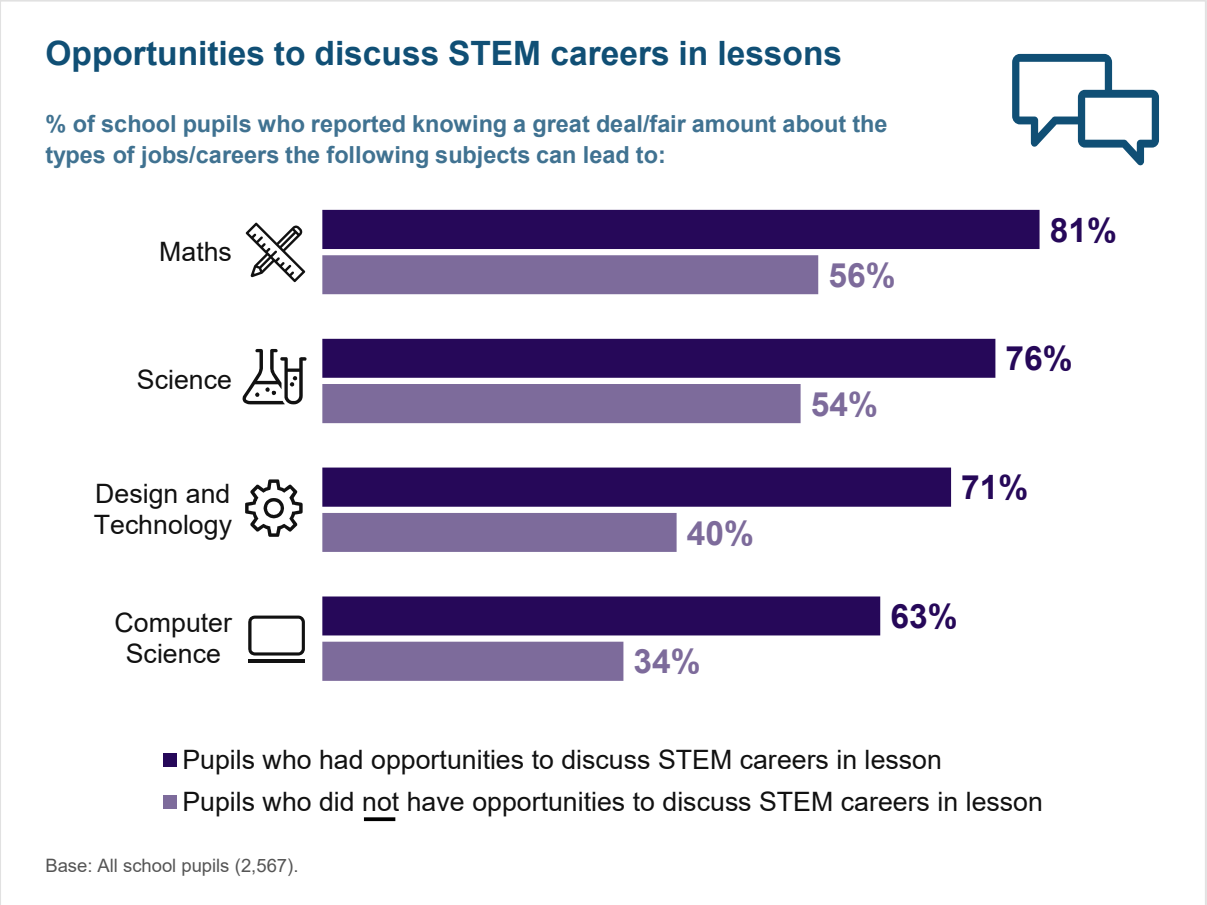
Young people were asked whether their school or college had provided opportunities to talk about a career in STEM in their science, maths, design and technology, or Computing or computer science lessons over the past 12 months.

Overall, secondary school pupils reported that they were most likely to have had the opportunity to talk about STEM careers in science lessons (42%), followed by maths lessons (38%), design and technology lessons (31%) and then Computing lessons (29%).

It is important to note that there appears to be a clear pattern between pupils discussing STEM careers in lessons and their knowledge of careers utilising STEM

subjects (although this does not imply cause and effect). As shown in Figure 14, pupils who had the opportunity to discuss STEM careers in lessons over the past 12 months were more likely to know a great deal/fair amount about jobs/careers utilising STEM subjects, compared with pupils who had not had the opportunity to discuss STEM careers in lessons.

Figure 36: Association between pupils discussing STEM careers in lessons and knowledge about jobs/careers utilising STEM subjects



Looking at subgroup differences, pupils who were eligible for FSM were more likely to discuss STEM careers in:

- **Maths lessons** (44% of pupils who were eligible for FSM, compared with 35% of pupils who were not eligible for FSM); and
- **Computing or computer science lessons** (37% of pupils who were eligible for FSM, compared with 27% of pupils who were not eligible for FSM).

Pupils living in the most deprived areas were more likely than pupils living in the least deprived areas to discuss STEM careers across all types of lessons, including:

- **Science lessons** (51% of pupils living in the most deprived areas, compared with 43% of pupils living in the least deprived areas);

- **Maths lessons** (48% of pupils living in the most deprived areas, compared with 33% of pupils living in the least deprived areas);
- **Design and technology lessons** (39% of pupils living in the most deprived areas, compared with 27% of pupils living in the least deprived areas); and
- **Computing or computer science lessons** (38% of pupils living in the most deprived areas, compared with 26% of pupils living in the least deprived areas).

A gender difference was also evident, with male pupils being more likely to report discussing STEM careers in:

- **Design and technology lessons** (35%, compared with 27% of female pupils); and
- **Computing or computer science lessons** (35%, compared with 23% of female pupils).

Overall, science lessons provided the most opportunities to discuss STEM careers at both school and college. However, sixth form students were significantly more likely to have had the opportunity to talk about STEM careers in science (39%), compared with college students (30%).

Young peoples' interest in a STEM job or career

Young people were also asked whether they had considered a job or career in science, technology, engineering, maths or computer science when they leave education.

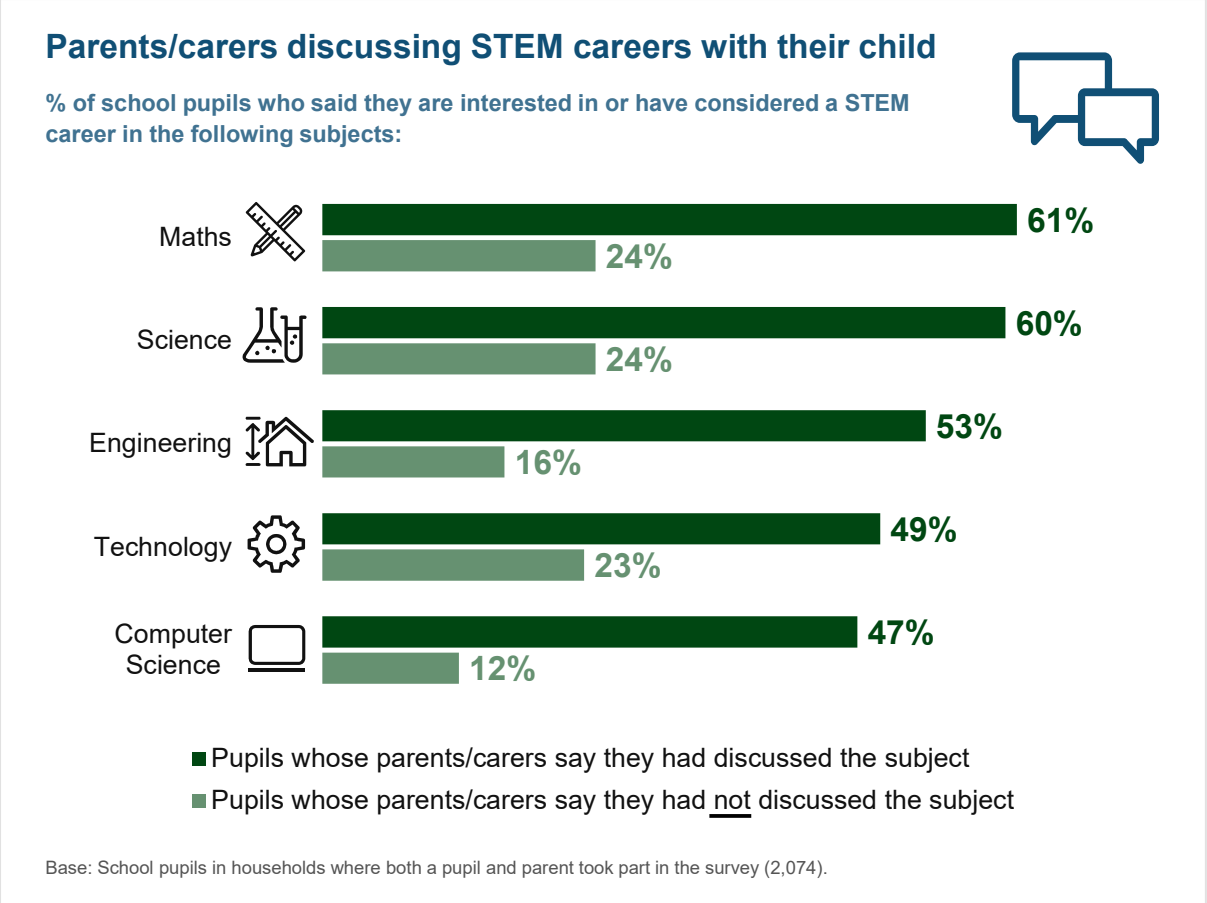
Overall, 72% of secondary school pupils said they were interested in a STEM job/career in at least one of the subjects listed. Pupils were most likely to have considered a job/career in science (43%) or maths (40%), followed by technology (36%) and engineering (32%). computer science was the least popular STEM job/career, with just over a quarter (26%) of pupils considering this option.

Like pupils' knowledge about jobs/careers in STEM, there is a clear pattern between parents/carers discussing the possibility of a career in STEM and pupils' interest in a job/career in STEM (although this does not imply cause and effect)[31]. As Figure 15 illustrates, pupils whose parents/carers had discussed the possibility of a career in

[31] Please note – parents/carers were asked whether they had ever discussed the possibility of a career in 'Design and Technology', while pupils were asked whether they had considered a job/career in 'Technology'.

STEM were significantly more likely to consider a job/career in STEM, compared with pupils whose parents/carers had not discussed STEM careers.

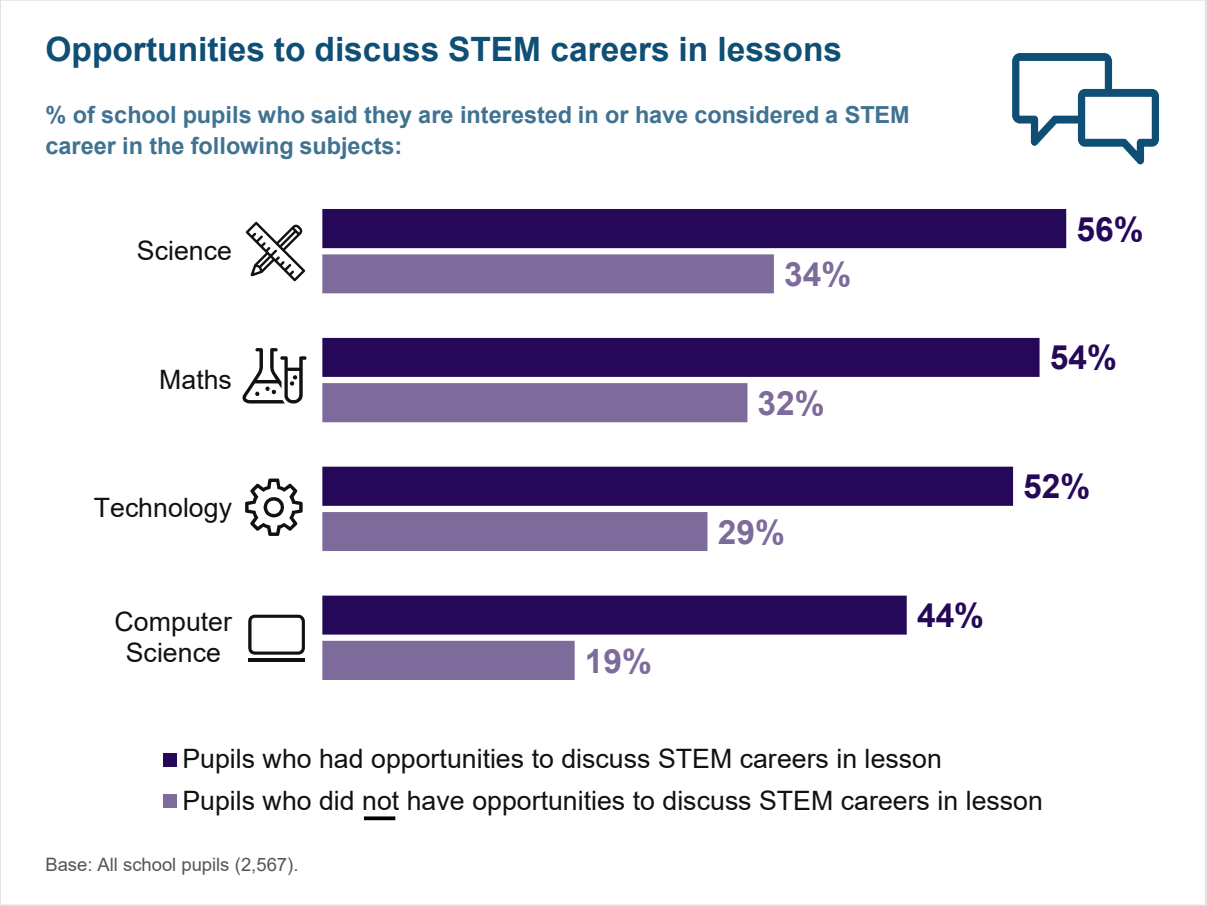
Figure 37: Association between parents/carers discussing STEM careers and pupils' interest in a job/career in STEM



Like pupils' knowledge about jobs/careers in STEM, again, there appears to be a distinct pattern between pupils having opportunities to discuss STEM careers in lessons and their interest in a job/career in STEM (although this does not imply cause and effect)[32]. As Figure 16 shows, pupils who had the opportunity to discuss STEM careers in lessons over the past 12 months were more likely to consider a job/career in STEM, compared with pupils who had not had the opportunity to discuss STEM careers in lessons.

[32] Please note – pupils were asked whether they had the opportunity to discuss a STEM career in 'Design and Technology' and whether they had considered a job/career in 'Technology'.

Figure 38: Association between pupils discussing STEM careers in lessons and interest in a job/career in STEM



For each subject, some subgroups of pupils were more likely to report being interested in or considering a career in STEM.

Pupil key stage

In general, younger pupils were more likely to be considering a career in STEM. The exception to this was science, where pupils in key stage 4 (46%) were more likely than pupils in key stage 3 (42%) to be considering a job or career in science.

Pupil gender

Male pupils were more likely than female pupils to be considering a career in:

- **Technology** (47% of male pupils, compared with 25% of female pupils);
- **Engineering** (47% of male pupils, compared with 18% of female pupils);
- **Maths** (45% of male pupils, compared with 36% of female pupils); and
- **Computer science** (38% of male pupils, compared with 14% of female pupils).

For science, there was no significant gender difference, with 43% of male pupils and 44% of female pupils considering a career in this subject.

Pupil eligibility for FSM

Pupils who were eligible for FSM were less likely to report considering a career in science (36%), compared with pupils who were not eligible for FSM (44%).

The opposite trend was reported for maths, where pupils who were eligible for FSM were more likely to report considering a career in this subject (47%), compared with pupils who were not eligible for FSM (39%).

Pupil SEND status

Pupils with SEND were less likely than pupils without SEND to report considering a career in:

- **Maths** (44%, compared with 30% of pupils without SEND); and
- **Science** (31%, compared with 48% of pupils without SEND).

Region

Pupils in London were more likely than other regions to report considering a career in:

- **Science** (51%, compared with 42% of pupils living outside London);
- **Maths** (50%, compared with 38% of pupils living outside London);
- **Technology** (41%, compared with 35% of pupils living outside London); and
- **Engineering** (37%, compared with 30% of pupils living in the South).

Pupil ethnicity

In general, some BAME pupils were more likely to be considering a career in STEM. Differences were found across each STEM subject:

- **Maths** (62% of Asian/Asian British pupils and 59% of Black/African/Caribbean/ Black British pupils, compared with 36% of White pupils and 36% of pupils from an ‘other’ ethnic group);
- **Science** (59% of Asian/Asian British pupils and 55% of Black/African/Caribbean/ Black British pupils, compared with 40% of White pupils and 34% of pupils from an ‘other’ ethnic group);
- **Engineering** (48% of Black/African/Caribbean/ Black British pupils, compared with 34% of Asian/Asian British pupils and 30% of White pupils);

- **Technology** (46% of Black/African/Caribbean/ Black British pupils, compared with 35% of White pupils and 32% of pupils from an 'other' ethnic group); and
- **Computer science** (36% of Asian/Asian British pupils, compared with 24% of White pupils).

Comparing secondary schools and colleges

When comparing secondary schools and colleges, there were no significant differences. Overall, 61% of college students said they were interested in a STEM job or career in at least one of the subjects listed, compared with 63% of sixth form students. Similar levels of interest were found for each type of STEM career.

7.3. The Baker Clause

Introduced in January 2018, the Baker Clause requires all maintained schools and academies to allow providers of technical education and apprenticeships access to every student in years 8-13 to discuss non-academic routes that are available to them. It is expected that by doing so, this will help address productivity challenges and skills shortages in England experienced across several sectors of the economy.

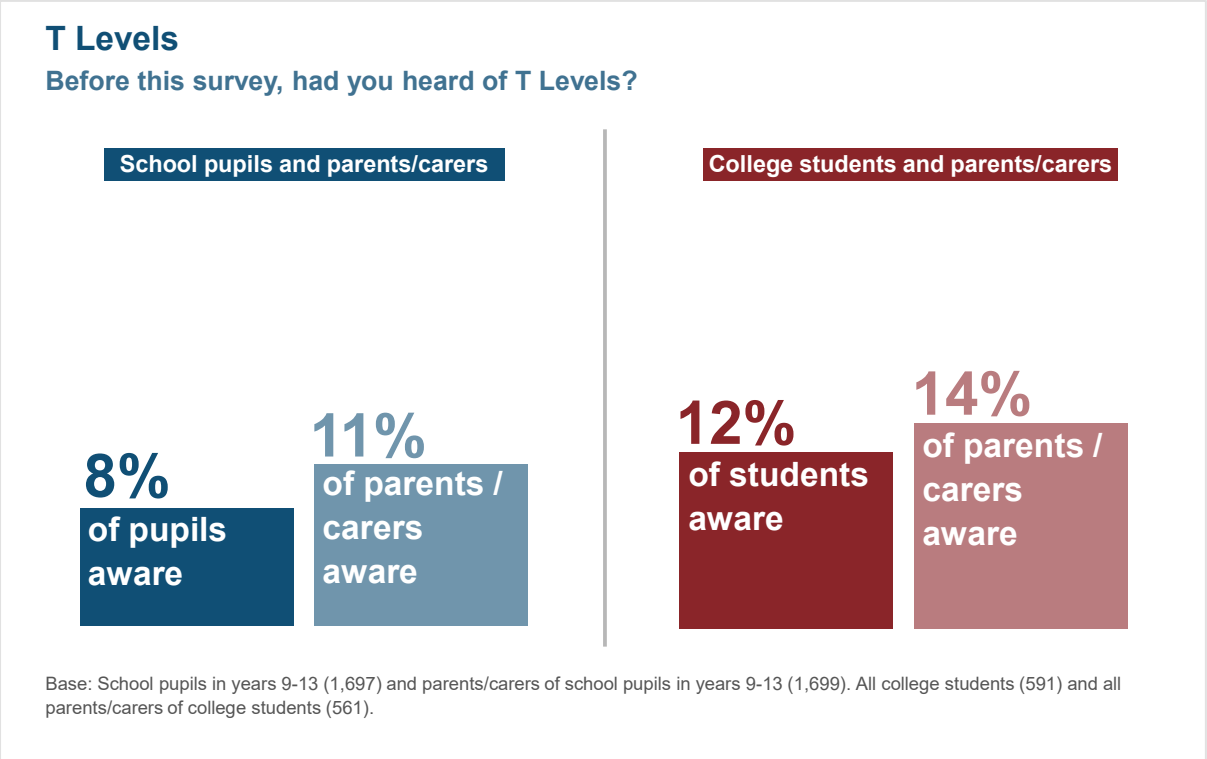
This survey explored several educational and training options: T Levels, apprenticeships and technical/vocational qualifications.

Awareness of T Levels

To measure awareness of T Levels, young people and parents/carers were presented with the following description: 'T (technical) Levels are new 2-year courses that will be introduced from September 2020. Each T Level qualification will be equivalent to 3 A Levels. T Levels will offer students a mixture of classroom learning and work experience to prepare learners for employment'. Young people and parents/carers were then asked if they had heard of T Levels before this survey.

As Figure 17 shows, awareness of T Levels was particularly low among young people and parents/carers, with around 1 in 10 respondents reporting that they had heard of the qualification before this survey.

Figure 39: Awareness of T Levels



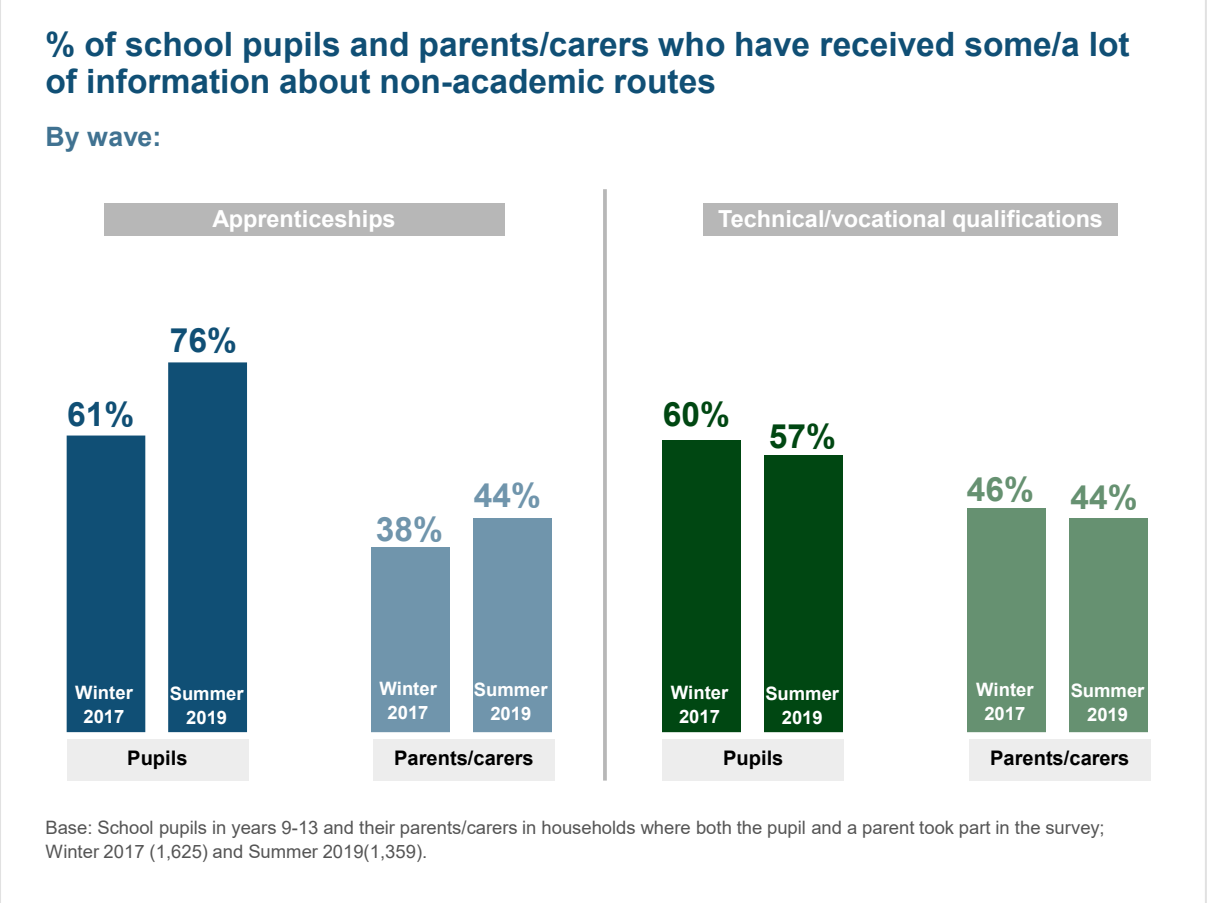
Information provided by schools about non-academic routes

Pupils (in years 9-13) and parents/carers were asked how much information they had received from their school about two different types of non-academic routes:

> *'**An apprenticeship** is a paid job for young people aged 16 and over, with structured on-and off-the-job training leading to a nationally recognised qualification'.*
>
> *'**Technical and vocational qualifications** develop occupational and technical skills, for example, construction, hair and beauty, accounting. This includes qualifications like BTEC, NVQ and Tech Levels'.*

Overall, the proportion of pupils and parents/carers who reported receiving some or a lot of information about apprenticeships has significantly increased since Winter 2017. On the other hand, there have been no significant changes for technical/vocational qualifications. Wave-on-wave trends are summarised in Figure 18, below.

Figure 40: Information provided by schools about non-academic routes (wave-on-wave trends)



Base: School pupils in years 9-13 and their parents/carers in households where both the pupil and a parent took part in the survey; Winter 2017 (1,625) and Summer 2019(1,359).

For both types of post-16 qualifications, pupils were more likely than parents/carers to report receiving information. However, pupils and parents/carers living in the same household often reported receiving the same level of information:

- 48% of pupils and their parents/carers reported receiving the same level of information about apprenticeships, with 3% receiving a lot of information, 28% receiving some information and 17% receiving none.
- 56% of pupils and their parents/carers reported receiving the same level of information about technical/vocational qualifications, with 3% receiving a lot of information, 26% receiving some information and 27% receiving none.

Comparing responses within households also highlighted a gap in knowledge, especially among parents/carers:

- In 36% of households, the pupil received some/a lot of information about apprenticeships, while their parent/carer received none.
- In 25% of households, the pupil received some/a lot of information about technical/vocational qualifications, while their parent/carer received none.

In addition, some subgroups of pupils and parents/carers were more likely to report receiving information about these two types of post-16 qualifications.

For apprenticeships, the subgroups of pupils and parents/carers who were more likely to receive some or a lot of information included:

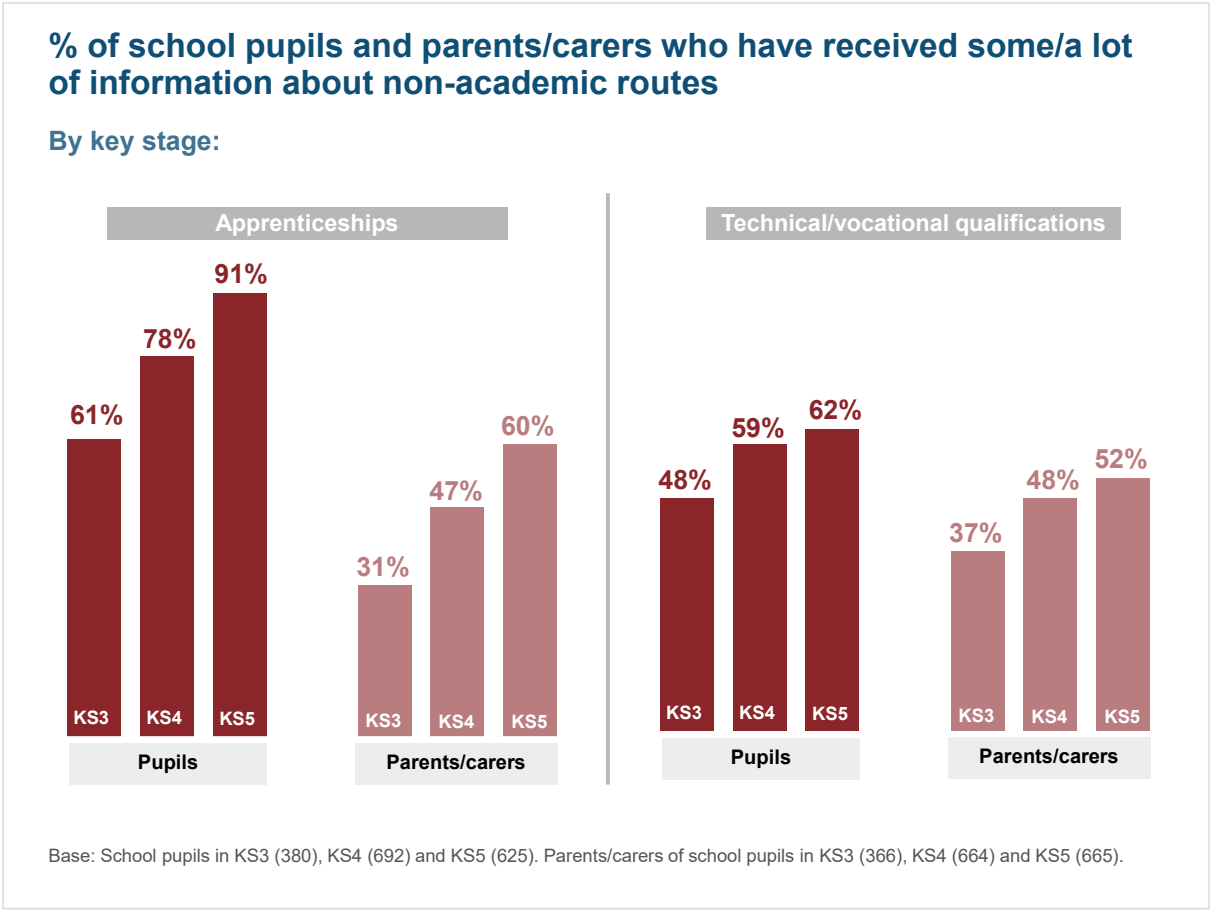
- **Pupils who were not eligible for FSM** (78%, compared with 67% of pupils who were eligible for FSM);
- **Pupils without SEND** (78%, compared with 62% of pupils with SEND);
- **Parents/carers of male pupils** (48%, compared with 41% of parents/carers of female pupils);
- **Parents/carers of pupils living in the least deprived areas** (47%, compared with 37% of parents/carers of pupils living in the most deprived areas); and
- **Parents/carers of pupils living in urban areas** (46%, compared with 38% of parents/carers of pupils living in rural areas). Notably, parents/carers of pupils living in the North (48%) and South (46%) were more likely to know about apprenticeships than parents/carers of pupils living in the Midlands (38%).

For technical/vocational qualifications, the subgroups of pupils and parents/carers who were more likely to receive some or a lot of information included:

- **Male pupils** (60%, compared with 54% of female pupils);
- **Pupils living outside London** (60%, compared with 49% of pupils living in London); and
- **Parents/carers of pupils living in the least deprived areas** (49%, compared with 36% parents/carers of pupils living in the most deprived areas).

As highlighted above, the subgroups of pupils and parents/carers who were more likely to receive some or a lot of information varied depending on the type of post-16 qualification. The exception to this was age. As Figure 19 shows, older pupils, as well as parents/carers of older pupils, were more likely to receive information about both apprenticeships and technical/vocational qualifications.

Figure 41: Information provided by schools about non-academic routes – by key stage



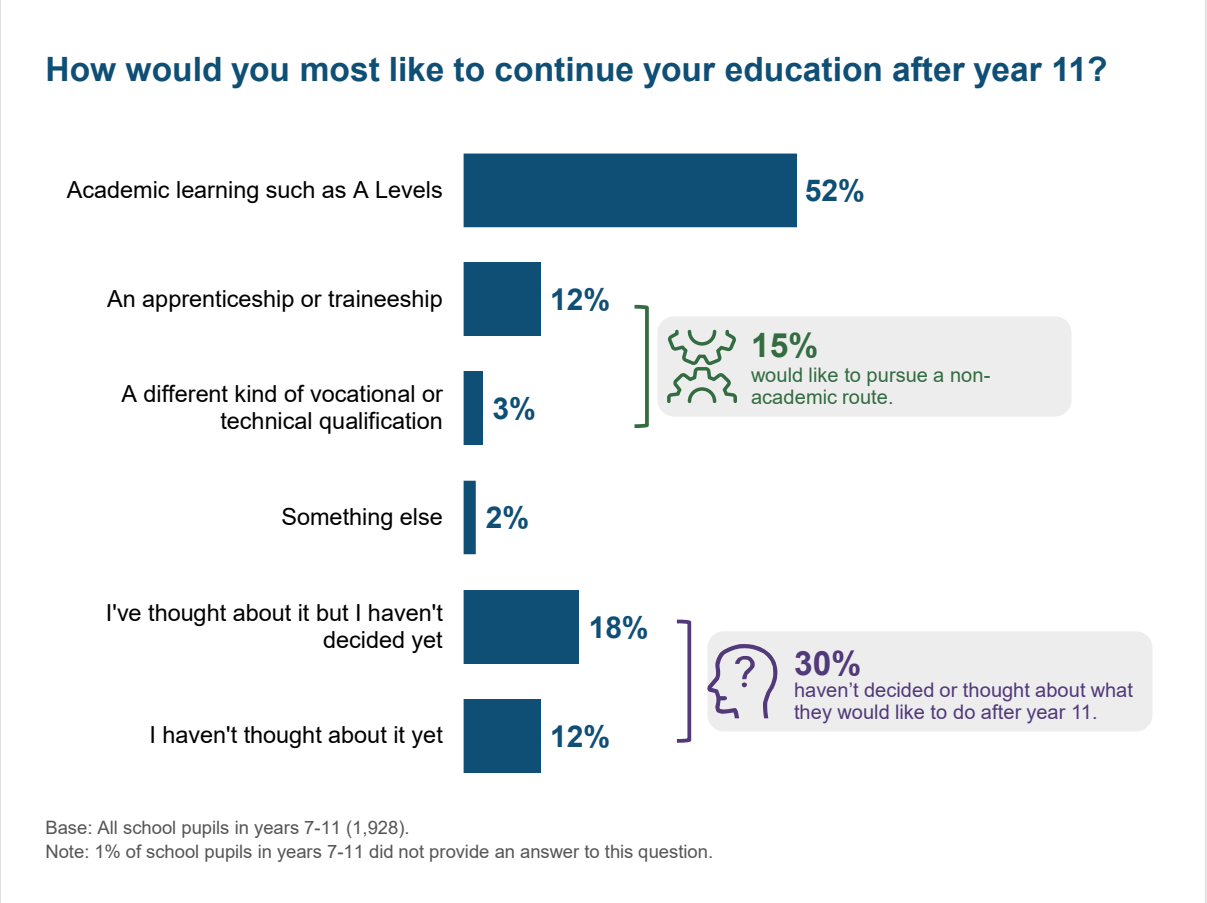
Base: School pupils in KS3 (380), KS4 (692) and KS5 (625). Parents/carers of school pupils in KS3 (366), KS4 (664) and KS5 (665).

Pupils' plans for post-16 education

Pupils in years 7-11 were asked how they would most like to continue their education after year 11; their responses are shown in Figure 20 below.

Overall, the most popular plan for post-16 education was to continue academic learning, with just over half of pupils (52%) planning to undertake this option. However, it is important to note that around one-third of pupils (30%) did not know what they would like to do following year 11.

Figure 42: Pupils' plans for post-16 education



Certain subgroups of pupils were less likely to have thought about their options, including:

- **Pupils with SEND** (19%, compared with 10% of pupils without SEND);
- **Younger pupils** (17% of pupils in key stage 3, compared with 3% of pupils in key stage 4); and
- **Pupils living in the most deprived areas** (16%, compared with 9% of those living in the least deprived areas).

As mentioned, over half (52%) of pupils plan to continue their academic learning. This option was more popular among:

- **Some BAME pupils** (63% of Asian/Asian British pupils and 63% of Black/African/Caribbean/Black British pupils, compared with 50% of White pupils);
- **Pupils living in London** (62%, compared with 51% of those living outside London);
- **Female pupils** (55%, compared with 49% of male pupils);

- **Pupils living in the least deprived areas** (57%, compared with 48% of those living in the most deprived);
- **Pupils without SEND** (57%, compared with 34% of those with SEND); and
- **Pupils who were not eligible for FSM** (56%, compared with 36% of those who were eligible for FSM).

Just 15% of pupils planned on pursuing a non-academic route, including completing apprenticeships or traineeships (12%) or a vocational and technical qualification (3%). Apprenticeships and traineeships were more popular among:

- **Pupils with SEND** (19%, compared with 12% of pupils without SEND); and
- **Male pupils** (19%, compared with 11% of female pupils).

Notably, pupils who had received some or a lot of information about technical/vocational qualifications (6%) were more likely to want to pursue a vocational and technical qualification, compared with pupils who had received no information (2%). However, pupils who had received some or a lot of information about apprenticeships (13%) were no more likely than pupils who had received no information (11%) to want to pursue an apprenticeship or traineeship.

Appendix: Glossary

Throughout the report, the following subgroups are reported. Subgroups are based on survey responses (except for IDACI and region, which are based on postcode).

School pupils and their parents/carers

Subgroup	Description
Free school meal (FSM) entitlement	Free school meal (FSM) entitlement refers to school pupils who are eligible for free school meals. These pupils come from families that are entitled to one or more of a range of benefits which aim to support those on low incomes. As such, FSM entitlement is used as a proxy measure for disadvantage.
IDACI	IDACI is an abbreviation for the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index. This measure ranks areas based on the proportion of children under the age of 16 that live in low income households. Households are allocated to 1 of 5 quintiles, where the first IDACI quintile represents the 20% most deprived areas and the fifth IDACI quintile represents the 20% least deprived areas.
Pupil's ethnicity	Although ethnicity is broad and groups are not homogenous, for the purpose of this survey the following subgroups were defined: 'Asian/Asian British' pupils, 'Black/African/Caribbean/Black British' pupils, 'White' pupils, and pupils from an 'other' ethnic group (which includes the response options 'mixed/multiple ethnic groups' and 'other ethnic groups'). The subgroups could not be more granular as the sample sizes would be too small to detect meaningful statistically significant differences.
Pupil's gender	Subgroups include female and male. Respondents who identified 'in some other way' in the survey are not included as a separate subgroup as the sample size is too small to detect meaningful statistically significant differences.
Pupil's year group and key stage	Key stages are used to categorise different phases of pupils' educational journey. This report has categorised key stages 3, 4 and 5 as follows (although it is recognised that some pupils will start components of KS4 in year 9): • Key stage 3 (KS3) is comprised of years 7, 8 and 9 • Key stage 4 (KS4) is comprised of years 10 and 11 (GCSEs) • Key stage 5 (KS5) is comprised of years 12 and 13 (A-levels)
Region	Regional comparisons have been made between the North, the Midlands, the South (excluding London), and London.

Subgroup	Description
Special educational needs (SEN)	A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if they: • have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or • have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions. For more detail, please see the SEND Code of Practice.

College students and their parents/carers

Subgroup	Description
Student's gender	Subgroups include female and male. Respondents who identified 'in some other way' in the survey are not included as a separate subgroup as the sample size is too small to detect meaningful statistically significant differences.
Student's year of learning	Subgroups include whether the student is in their first or second year of learning.
Student's qualification type	Subgroups include whether the student reported spending the majority of their time at college studying A-levels or a technical/vocational course.

Survey waves

	Fieldwork dates
1. Summer 2016	4th July – 22nd August 2016
2. Winter 2016	23rd November 2016 – 16th January 2017
3. Summer 2017	11th July – 30th August 2017
4. Winter 2017	27th November 2017 - 31st January 2018
5. Summer 2018	2nd July – 28th August 2018
6. Summer 2019	11th July – 1st September 2019

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