

POLICY ● RESEARCH



UREAU

National Evaluation of On Track Phase Two

**Young people, risk and protection:
a major survey of primary schools in
On Track areas**

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Policy Research Bureau

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Executive summary

Introduction

On Track is a long-term multi-component initiative aimed at children and the families of children aged four to twelve who may be at risk of offending and antisocial behaviour. At the time of this study it was operational in twenty four¹ areas of particularly high crime and high deprivation. This report describes the findings from a survey of primary schools in *On Track* areas. It forms the first of two reports on the findings of two schools surveys carried out in *On Track* areas in 2004 in England and Wales by the independent Policy Research Bureau on behalf of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). The surveys – one of children of primary school age and one of young people of secondary school age – were carried out as part of the National Evaluation of *On Track*, Phase Two, which covers the period March 2003 to April 2006. They provide a second wave of data collection following two initial surveys conducted by Sheffield University during Phase One of *On Track*, which took place in 2001 (Armstrong, Hine, Hacking, Armaos, Jones, Klessinger and France, 2003).

In both Phase One and Phase Two of the national evaluation of *On Track*, the schools survey forms one of a number of strands of the evaluation design. As such, the surveys only give us part of the overall picture on how *On Track* is working. The aim of the schools survey strand was not to evaluate the specific impacts of *On Track*. Rather, it was to investigate the characteristics of the child population in *On Track* areas, in terms of a constellation of risk and protective factors. Risk factors included truancy, challenging behaviour, antisocial attitudes, antisocial peers, and protective factors included family factors such as family relationships, and school factors such as satisfaction with school.

Methods

Data were collected through paper self-completion methods in supervised sessions in schools. In the Wave Two primary schools survey reported here, data were collected using a questionnaire designed by Sheffield University. In total 7,433 children took part in the survey from forty-four primary schools and six middle schools (pupils in Year Five and Six only). Schools were sampled using a simple random stratified sample of all schools in *On Track* areas who had taken part in the earlier Wave of the survey, and within schools, all classes in all year groups were invited to take part. Overall, 86% of primary school pupils and 85% of middle school pupils who were eligible to take part in the survey completed a questionnaire. The sample of schools was verified as being representative of all schools in the *On Track* areas in terms of school make up and other demographic indicators.

¹ Initially (2000), twenty-four areas delivered the *On Track* programme. However, in 2004 one area opted out of the *On Track* programme and delivered all its services under the Children's Fund programme.

Key findings

Demographic characteristics of the young people

The sample was more or less equally split between girls and boys, ranging in age from seven to eleven. Almost seven out of ten pupils (68%) gave their ethnic group as White, 11% as Pakistani, 9% Black, 4% Mixed, 3% Bangladeshi, 1% Indian, and 1% Chinese. Eighty three percent of young people said English was the main language spoken at home. Two out of three pupils (66%) said they lived in a household with both birth parents, 22% were in lone parent households, and 10% in 'reconstituted' or step families. The remaining 2% said they lived in a different arrangement and this included living with grandparents, with older siblings, with other people (who could include foster carers or relatives) or in public care.

Family life

Overall, the primary school sample reported a positive relationship with their parents, and most also reported relatively high levels of parental warmth and involvement, and high levels of supervision and consistency of rules at home. For example, 87% of young people reported that their parents *always knew where they were when not at home*. Girls were more likely to be highly supervised than boys. Younger children, and those living in two parent households also reported higher levels of supervision and discipline than other groups.

Pupils were asked about how often parents read with them at home. Children's self-reports suggested a less than optimal picture. For example, half (49%) said their parents did not often read with them at home. The groups most likely to say that parents did not often read with them at home were boys, those in Year Six, children from Chinese backgrounds and those living in step (or 'reconstituted') families.

Children were asked questions about their older sibling's behaviour to ascertain whether problematic sibling behaviour was an issue amongst this sample. Problematic sibling behaviour was not widespread, but was reportedly highest amongst boys, pupils in Year Three, those from mixed heritage backgrounds and those living in step families.

School life

Most young people held positive impressions of school with the majority reporting good levels of satisfaction with school. For example, 88% of pupils said that their teachers were *kind to them* and 87% said they *felt safe in school*. However, around one third of children (32%) indicated they *did not like going to school*. Girls, pupils in Year Three, pupils of Indian origin and those from two birth parent households reported the highest levels of satisfaction with school.

Overall, bad or disruptive behaviour at school amongst this sample was not widespread. For example, nine out of ten pupils (92%) said that they had *never* been sent home from school for being naughty. Where bad behaviour at school was an issue it was highest amongst boys,

those studying in Year Six, pupils who described their ethnicity as Black, and those from step families.

Over half the sample indicated that they had experienced one or more recent incidents of bullying and victimisation. That is, over half the sample said that in the past week another pupil had either tried to kick them, hurt them, hit them, threatened to hit them, attempted to break something belonging to them or tried to make them give them money. These forms of victimisation were highest amongst boys, those in Year Three, and those from step families.

In the main, truancy was not an issue amongst most of the children who took part in the survey. Nine out of ten pupils (89%) said they had never taken time off school without their parents' or teachers' permission. However, where truancy was reported it was highest amongst boys and those from reconstituted families. The self-reported level of truancy was also considerably higher in the youngest year group in our sample – Year Three pupils, when compared to all other year groups. It is possible that the higher rates of truancy amongst this year group are associated with the high rates of bullying and victimisation amongst this group. However, further research is required to substantiate this.

Constructive use of leisure time

Pupils were asked what types of activities they engaged in after school. They were provided with a list of 15 activities ranging from watching television, to reading, to attending an after school club, to being a member of brownies, cubs, scouts or guides. A high proportion of the sample (92%) said that they watched television after school, 84% said they completed their homework and 13% said they were a member of brownies, cubs, scouts or guides. The mean (average) number of after school activities not including television viewing was seven. Constructive use of leisure time was highest amongst girls, those in Year Six, and children who described their ethnicity as Black.

Perceptions of the neighbourhood

Generally pupils were positive about their local neighbourhood. Four fifths said that they liked where they lived and three quarters said that they did not want to live anywhere other than their neighbourhood. Seven out of every ten pupils said they felt safe when they played out and a similar proportion believed there were safe places to play near their home. Pupils in Year Six, those who described their ethnicity as Indian, and those from two parent households were the groups most positive about their local neighbourhood.

Challenging behaviour, antisocial attitudes and peer groups

The primary schools sample was presented with a group of statements to ascertain whether they displayed challenging behaviour at home, school or in general. For example, pupils were asked whether they got angry easily at home or school. They were also asked whether they liked to have their own way, even if it got them in trouble or whether their friends thought that they were naughty. Almost four fifths of the sample reported 'yes' to at least

one of these forms of challenging behaviour, probably reflecting a normal level of immature behaviour in a sample of this age. Challenging behaviour was highest amongst boys, pupils in Year Three, pupils from mixed heritage backgrounds, and those from step families.

To measure the extent of attitudes condoning antisocial behaviour, pupils were asked for their views on how wrong they felt it would be for others their age to smoke cigarettes, steal from somebody, steal from a shop or start a fight. Almost all (97%) of the sample believed it would be wrong for someone their age to smoke cigarettes or steal items. However, somewhat worryingly, one in ten children did not feel it was wrong for someone their age to start a fight. On a composite measure of attitudes tolerant of antisocial behaviour, scores were highest amongst boys, those in Years Five and Six, pupils from mixed heritage backgrounds, and those from step families.

Pupils were also asked questions about their best friends' behaviour, such as whether their friends had been sent home from school due to bad behaviour, attempted to steal something, smoked cigarettes or been in trouble with the police. Overall, problematic peer behaviour was not an issue amongst this sample. Where it was an issue it was highest amongst boys, those in Year Six, those from mixed heritage backgrounds, and those from step families.

The presence of an active On Track service in primary schools

The schools surveys were not able to ascertain whether children (or their family members) had personal experience of an On Track service. However, from background information provided by the On Track projects we were able to count the number of On Track activities based at each primary or middle school to get a simple measure of the level of On Track activity across the sample. The types of On Track services being offered ranged from breakfast clubs and after-school clubs, to group work with children aimed at building children's confidence and self-esteem, to one-to-one counselling. Primary schools offered services on both a universal (i.e. anyone could attend) as well as a targeted basis (i.e. pupils identified and invited on the basis of need), and the mean average number of services per school was four with a range from none (no services) to thirteen. Amongst the Wave Two sample just over a quarter (26%) of children attended a school with a lower than average number of active On Track services, (that is one or no services); three fifths attended a school with an average number of services (between two and seven); and one in eight (13%) attended a school with a high number of active On Track services (between eight and thirteen). Overall, it was found that those who attended a school with a higher than average number of On Track services reported higher levels of satisfaction with school and greater constructive use of leisure time. On the other risk and protective factors there was no difference according to number of On Track services offered on the school site.

Children at risk of offending and antisocial behaviour

By combining pupils' responses to the different risk factors measured – disruptive behaviour at school, truancy, antisocial attitudes and challenging behaviour at home and elsewhere – we were able to identify a high-risk group, who were children who reported a greater than average number of risk factors. Around one in eight primary school pupils fell into the high risk group. Those most likely to fall into this category were boys, pupils in Year Six, those from 'other' household types (including those living with their grandparents or those in residential care), and those who described their background as White or of mixed heritage. The weaker the level of 'protective' factors in a child's life the more likely the child was to fall into the high-risk group. Put another way, those who reported low levels of parental supervision and consistency in discipline, low levels of parental warmth and involvement, and low levels of satisfaction with school were the groups most likely to fall into the high-risk group.

Overall conclusions

Most of the findings from the Wave Two primary schools survey were encouraging. However, some specific groups consistently appeared to be doing worse, whether risk or protective factors were examined.

Sex: Boys consistently reported lower levels of protective factors and higher levels of risk factors than girls. This is not an unusual survey finding, and indicates that boys continue to require heightened levels of support at home, in the community and at school. However, it was noticeable when comparing the results in Wave One with Wave Two that girls' challenging behaviour and truancy levels had slightly increased since 2001. Thus, although we deduce that interventions should rightly concentrate on boys' behaviour, it is important that this is not at the expense of girls. If present trends were to continue, we might in future find girls' behaviour presenting much more of a cause for concern.

Year group: A clear relationship was noted between certain factors and age. Generally, things got worse as children got older. For example, satisfaction with school was highest amongst Year Three pupils (those aged seven years old), decreased slightly for Year Four pupils, decreased again amongst Year Five pupils and was lowest amongst Year Six pupils (ten and eleven year olds). Similarly disruptive behaviour at school, attitudes to antisocial behaviour and reported levels of associating with antisocial peers increased steadily with age. As children moved up a year they were also more likely to find themselves in the high risk group. However, some positive points were also noted amongst the older age groups. For example, involvement in after school activities (constructive use of leisure time) increased with age. Reported rates of challenging behaviour at school and in general, bullying and victimisation and truancy were also lowest amongst the older year groups. Furthermore, it was found that marked improvements had occurred for Year Five and Six pupils since the first wave of the schools survey. However, it is of some concern that bullying and victimisation and truancy levels were highest amongst those in Year Three.

Family structure: Young people in reconstituted (step) families showed a consistent tendency to do worse than other groups. Those in two birth parent families always did best, whilst those in lone parent households came between the two extremes.

Ethnicity: South Asian young people tended to report the highest levels of protective factors and the lowest levels of risk factors in all domains: home, school and wider community. On the other hand, young people from Black or mixed heritage groups were consistently over represented in the ranks of young people reporting high levels of risk factors.

Changes over time: Overall, the changes between the two waves of the survey were broadly encouraging, in that almost all protective factors increased, and two risk factors showed clear improvements. Less positive results related to levels of bullying (remaining unchanged), and truancy, which apparently increased over time. We cannot be certain of the role that On Track itself has played in these changes, as the surveys alone do not provide all the background contextual information, or the information on 'exposure' to On Track services at the

individual level that we would need to be able to assess this. Later strands of the national evaluation will however provide more context, and in time we may be better able to understand whether On Track or other unrelated factors are implicated in the positive changes visible amongst the primary school population. However, though we cannot be entirely certain of On Track's role in these changes, it is clear that in many ways things are improving for children in schools in these On Track areas and, with the important exception of truancy from school, even where they are not improving measurably they are in general not getting worse. Given the generally poor outcomes for children living in high crime, high deprivation areas, we conclude that this survey gives us a number of reasons to feel encouraged, as well as helping us pinpoint the aspects of risk in children's lives – both at home and at school – that may need more intensely preventative efforts to help improve outcomes in the future.

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Section One: Introduction

This report is the first part of a report on the findings of a survey of schools in twenty-four On Track areas. The survey was carried out by the Policy Research Bureau on behalf of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) as part of the National Evaluation of On Track Phase Two. The Phase Two evaluation is concerned with evaluating the implementation and impact of On Track, a major Area Based Initiative (ABI), in its second phase of development, spanning the period April 2003 to March 2006. Phase One, April 2000 to March 2003, was evaluated by researchers at Sheffield University and the results are published elsewhere (Armstrong et al, 2005).

This first report presents findings from a large scale survey of primary and middle schools in the twenty four areas of England and Wales in which On Track operates. A second report (Bhabra, Dinos and Ghate, 2005b forthcoming) covers a survey of secondary schools. The primary schools survey, for which fieldwork was carried out between January and May 2004, is the second of two surveys of primary schools in On Track areas, and is referred to as the 'Wave Two' survey throughout this report. The 'Wave One' survey took place between May and July 2001. The two surveys are cross sectional rather than longitudinal, as they involved different, independently drawn samples of school pupils (rather than re-surveying the same children in Wave Two that had been interviewed in Wave One). They therefore allow us to examine changes amongst the school populations generally in schools in On Track areas, but they do not allow us to explore changes at the level of individual children within those populations. The Wave One survey was designed as a census of all school children in all schools in the On Track areas. Overall, in Wave One 13,365 children returned completed questionnaires as part of the primary school survey. In Wave Two, which used a sample rather than a census design, 7,433 primary school aged children took part. In both surveys the method of data collection was by self-completion of paper questionnaires by children, in school hours and in supervised sessions, using a questionnaire designed by the Phase One evaluation team (see Appendix 1). The surveys were intended to investigate the characteristics of the school aged population in On Track areas, and to measure the extent of 'need' amongst this population in relation to a constellation of risk and protective factors associated with the incidence of antisocial behaviour amongst young people.

The On Track programme

On Track is a long-term multi-component initiative aimed at children and the families of children aged four to twelve who may be at risk of offending and antisocial behaviour in England and Wales. It was originally devised by the Home Office in 1999 as a pilot or demonstration programme, funded through the national Crime Reduction Programme. The aims, objectives and shape of the initiative have roots in the US programme *Fast Track*. A preventative intervention, targeting high risk school-age children, *Fast Track* aims to intervene in early onset conduct problems, and research has shown that the programme can be effective in reducing later

conduct problems amongst children and adolescents and improving educational and social outcomes for adolescents. Recent evaluations in the US report effectiveness in a number of specific areas, for example in increased emotional and social coping skills, improved reading skills, better peer relations, better school grades and fewer behavioural difficulties (Conduct Problems Research Prevention Group 1999, 2002).

On Track was launched in December 1999 and since April 2001 it has been incorporated into the Government's £960m Children's Fund programme. There are twenty four local On Track projects in England and Wales in areas of high social deprivation², each covering an average population of around 2,000 school aged children. The towns, cities and boroughs in which On Track was operating at the time of the schools survey are shown below in Box 1.2.

Box 1.2 Areas in which On Track was operating at the time of the survey

Bradford	Easington (Co Durham)	Luton	Rhondda (South Wales)	Solihull
Brent (London Borough)	Greenwich (London Borough)	Manchester	Rochdale	Southwark (London Borough)
Bridgend (S Wales)	Haringey (London Borough)	Northampton	Sandwell	Sunderland
Brighton	Haverhill (Suffolk)	Oldham	Scarborough	Wirral
Bristol	Kerrier (Cornwall)	Portsmouth	Sheffield	

Central to the ethos of On Track is co-operation and joint working between relevant agencies in order that children at risk of offending are identified early and that they and their families are provided with consistent services extending through the period of transition to school and to early adolescence. The services delivered, which like Fast Track in the USA include both universal and targeted approaches and are both school and home-based, are supposed to utilise 'evidence-based' methods. That is, they are supposed to use methods of delivery shown by research to be effective (or at least 'promising' in this regard) in reducing antisocial behaviour and offending. Local On Track projects are also expected to shape educational and health outcomes to varying degrees, and so each project is managed by a local partnership comprising some or all of the main health, educational and social service providers, and including youth offending teams, the police and relevant voluntary sector organisations. The projects generally build on and link together existing services and initiatives for children and families.

This type of integrative, 'multidimensional' approach is very much in keeping with the model of service design and delivery that has been advocated in successive Green Papers produced by the British Government on services for children and families (*Supporting Families*, 1998; *Every Child*

² Bristol On Track was absorbed into the Children's Fund during 2004, but is included in the sample for the schools survey as it was still operative as an On Track project at the time of fieldwork.

Matters, 2003). The development of On Track can be seen in the context of the general evolution in policy and practice in children's services in the UK over the last decade. These include, for example, the larger *Sure Start* initiative, another multi-component programme launched in 1998 as part of the child poverty reduction strategy, targeted at infants and pre-school children aged birth to four and aimed at improving children's readiness to learn by means of locally organised services delivering a range of support in early education, childcare, health advice and family support for young children and their parents. Since its inception, over 500 local Sure Start programmes have been established, initially targeting children within the 20% most deprived wards in England, but more recently expanded to cover all areas of the country. Other more recent developments in this 'family' of initiatives aimed at reducing poverty, reducing crime and antisocial behaviour, and enhancing positive outcomes for children include the establishment of multi-agency *Children's Trust Pathfinders*, bringing together health, education and social care services for children under one umbrella; the gradual introduction of information-sharing systems and protocols known as *Information Sharing and Assessment (ISA)*; initiatives such as *Extended Schools* and the *Safer Schools Partnership Programme*; and of course the establishment of funding streams such as the *Children's Fund* and the *Parenting Fund* and the *Family Support Grant Fund* that have made it possible for wide range of innovative new services to be set up and trialled across Britain.

Risk and protective factors in the development of antisocial behaviour in young people

If we can reduce risks while increasing protection throughout the course of young people's development, we can prevent problems behaviors and promote healthy behaviors and lifestyle choices.
[Communities that Care, 1994]

It is now widely accepted that the likelihood of embarking on or persisting in a criminal career is strongly influenced by a combination of risk and protective factors in children's individual, family and community ecology (Farrington 2000; Rutter, Giller and Hagell 1998). By *risk factor* we mean characteristics or attributes of an individual, family, social group, or community that increase the probability of certain disorders or behaviours arising at a later point in time. *Protective factors*, on the other hand, 'inoculate' or in some way mitigate risk factors. They promote *resilience*, which is the process by which individuals maintain positive functioning in the face of adverse circumstances (see for example Luthar, Cicchetti and Becker 2000). Critically, protective factors should be more than just the mirror-image or absence of a risk factor: they should add something to our understanding of the causal pathways to different outcomes.

The precise nature of the causal relationships between risk and protective factors and various types of negative and positive outcomes remains, however, unproven (Rutter, Giller and Hagell, 1998). The relative contributions of 'nature' (genetics) and 'nurture' (environment) remain in debate, and in respect of the pathway to antisocial behaviour in young people, there are questions about whether some risk factors are more influential than others, and whether certain

combinations of factors may have greater impact on future behaviour than others. In addition, relatively more is known about risk than protective factors: protective factors have been identified as playing a significant role in preventing criminal behaviour but as yet, much of the 'theory of protection' remains at an early stage of development.

Risk and protective factors are helpfully thought of in terms of the 'ecological' model of human development (Bronfenbrenner 1977, 1979), which takes a systems perspective and provides a framework for understanding how factors that impinge on children and families nest together within a hierarchy of four interconnected levels – the level of the individual, the family, the community or neighbourhood, and at the level of the wider society or culture. For example, in terms of risk factors for violent behaviour, an individual level risk factor might be a low threshold for the tolerance of stress and problems with impulse-control; a family level risk factor might be family poverty, or inter-familial violence; a community level risk factor might be growing up in a community characterised by a concentration of peers also engaged in forms of antisocial and violent behaviour combined with low levels of community surveillance; and a social or cultural risk factor might be the tolerance or even endorsement of violence as a means to an end by the wider society (for example, a proliferation of glamorised depictions of interpersonal violence in the media). The ecological perspective reminds us that children do not develop in a vacuum but within a complex web of interacting, interdependent factors. It reminds us that we cannot understand factors associated with one level of the model without also exploring those at other levels.

The prevention research literature over the last several decades has drawn attention to a number of specific risk and protective factors that have been shown to be 'predictive' of the likelihood of future types of behaviour (Rutter, Giller and Hagell 1998). At the level of the individual child, commonly accepted risk factors (or precursors) for youth offending include: early onset behaviour disorders such as hyperactivity; difficulties with learning, poor verbal and planning skills and poor educational attainment; problems with impulse-control; and a tendency to misinterpret social interactions and circumstances as more negative or threatening than they really are. Engaging in other related forms of antisocial behaviour including truancy and substance misuse is also a strong marker for offending at the level of the individual. At the family level, having a family that includes criminal offenders; family violence and discord; and poor parenting (including use of harsh or erratic discipline, low levels of parental monitoring and supervision, and poor parent-child communication) have all been shown to be associated with poor adolescent outcomes in general and youth offending in particular. At the community level, associating with antisocial peers is a major risk factor, as is growing up in a poor, crime-ridden neighbourhood where opportunities for crime are abundant and there is little else constructive for young people to do. In terms of protective factors, certain temperaments seem to help young people avoid becoming involved in crime, and children who engage well with school and make strong peer relationships with those who are not themselves inclined to antisocial behaviour also seem more resistant to becoming involved in antisocial behaviour. Within the family, at least one strong and reliable relationship with an adult who takes a warm interest in the child's development can be protective, and within the community, opportunities to engage in constructive leisure activities and develop talents, and a community that takes an active interest in the well being of its younger members may be especially protective.

Risk and protective factors share a number of common characteristics. They tend to be:

- Overlapping (for example, poor mental health is a risk factor for a host of problems, from substance misuse to unemployment)
- Often occurring in multiples (people tend to be subject to several related factors, rather than just one at a time)
- Cumulative in effect (the higher the 'dose' of factors the greater the likelihood of certain outcomes)
- Not static; they change over the life course (what may be a protective factor at one stage of a child's development – for example, high levels of parental supervision – may become a risk factor in later stages, as children grow into adolescence and need more independence)
- Not deterministic (factors do not 'inevitably' lead to certain outcomes, though they may nevertheless be 'predictive' in a statistical sense)
- Differential in effect (the same factors may impact differentially on individuals depending on other characteristics present in the individual's ecology)

Official statistics show that young people are responsible for between a third and quarter of all crime in Britain. As tackling crime – and especially youth crime – has risen up the policy agenda, so has interest grown in exploring effective models of prevention, and in understanding not just how to 'treat' the problem but also in how to prevent it arising in the first place. However, all of the characteristics listed above combine to make intervention to avert poor outcomes and foster good ones much more complex. Because theoretically, the more risk factors to which an individual is exposed, the greater the likelihood that the individual will engage in problem behaviour, intervention must necessarily function at several levels simultaneously. Certainly, interventions at the 'treatment' end of the scale (ie, responding to young people once they have become known as offenders) have to be complex and relatively intensive to make much of a difference. The most successful interventions (such as Multi-Systemic Therapy [MST], for example; Henggeler et al 1998; Borduin et al 2000) 'wrap around' young people's lives, operating at all levels of the young person's ecology. However, the interconnected and complex nature of risk and protective factors also - theoretically at least - offers great promise for preventive intervention (ie, 'getting in early' before children begin to engage in outright antisocial behaviours). If risk factors are interconnected, so too are protective ones, and if we can both reduce the risks in young people's lives and at the same time counter risk by nurturing protective factors, the chances of preventing problems should be greatly increased. The more risk factors that are tackled and protective factors that are boosted, the greater the pay-off should be. Further, since many different forms of problem behaviour share common risk factors, reducing common risk factors is likely to reduce multiple problem behaviours and poor outcomes – not just those directly connected with crime and antisocial behaviour.

Intervening in antisocial behaviour: On Track interventions

Intervention programmes like On Track make three key basic theoretical assumptions:

- Antisocial behaviour is multiply determined;
- The main risk factors which place children at increased likelihood of future offending can be reliably identified at an early stage;
- Certain types of intervention have been shown to be effective in terms of reducing the likelihood of future offending.

Although primarily concerned with longer-term crime prevention, the On Track programme was also devised in order to impact directly upon more immediate social and community problems – that is, the precursors to youth antisocial behaviour - such as under-achievement in school, poor school attendance, poor ‘readiness to learn’ on entry to primary school, and poor parenting. The movement of policy responsibility for On Track from the Home Office to the Department for Education and Skills via the Children and Young People’s Unit has undoubtedly enhanced the family support aspect of On Track’s identity. Moreover, broader child and family welfare outcomes may well be the most immediate concern of both the service providers and the users of On Track themselves, rather than the risk of long-term criminal behaviour. Thus, although On Track is a ‘crime prevention’ initiative, its outward form has much in common with initiatives more frequently described in the UK as about ‘family support’.

The central feature of On Track is the use of five ‘core’ interventions – many of them based on (primarily American) research that indicates effectiveness. The five core interventions, specified by the Home Office at On Track’s inception were:

- Home visitation
- Parent support and education
- Family therapy
- Home/school partnerships
- Pre-school education

In addition, to allow for local flexibility and innovation, another ‘specialist’ category of intervention was allowed to develop alongside these five, covering a multitude of different services (not all of which are, however, evidence-based as robustly as the five core interventions). Many of the school-based elements of On Track projects fall into this group.

Note however that no formal guidance was issued to projects to specify how these labels might translate into models of service delivery. Thus, projects were left free to interpret the brief in widely varying ways. In addition, very few projects produced manuals documenting in detail how services were to be delivered. For these reasons, the extent to which the actual models of service delivery employed by On Track projects conformed to the interventions shown in the literature to be effective is unknown.

The development of the On Track pilot programme, especially in relation to the five core interventions, has in general reflected well the attributes of risk and protective factors outlined above and have been designed to be both targeted and universal, and to be multi-dimensional, and ongoing. Thus key assumptions underlying the On Track programme design are that:

- The concepts of risk and protection can be used appropriately by a wide range of service providers, in order to identify those groups of children who are most at risk of criminal or antisocial behaviour
- Having identified those most at risk, providers work with children and families in ways that ensure that they positively engage in particular interventions on a voluntary basis, and are not stigmatised
- The provision of two or more core interventions, at critical points through the child's life, is likely to be more effective than the provision of only one type of core intervention
- There would be a focused 'continuum of care' in which children are tracked through their development and where agencies would cooperate in providing appropriate services as and when they need it.

Below we outline the two groups of On Track services that are most pertinent to the schools survey.

Home/school partnerships

In recognition of the importance of school experiences and relationships in the pathway to antisocial behaviour, it is a key objective of On Track to formulate a strong partnership between parents and schools by enhancing co-operation, communication and understanding between the parties.

The efficacy of strong and effective home/school partnerships is made evident by research which has shown that family and school are two institutions which can have a substantial influence on a future career in crime (Graham and Utting, 1996). "*One of the most significant protective factors found in the backgrounds of children from disadvantaged homes whose attainment is above average is having a parent who displays a keen interest in their education*" (Utting, 1996). Parents who support and actively engage with children's learning at school can strengthen children's satisfaction with school and foster a greater commitment to learning by the child. In addition, for some precursors to offending (such as persistent truanting) the key to effective prevention is generally through parents. Examples of successful interventions that include components focused on building home-school partnerships include, in the US, the Adolescent Transitions Program (ATP; Dishion and Kavanagh 2000); the LIFT programme in Oregon (Linking Interests of Families and Teachers, a short-term, low-intensity programme in schools; Reid and Eddy 1997); and Fast Track (see below, school-based initiatives). In LIFT, links were established in the early years between schools and parents. This relationship was sustained and improved upon over time, and parents were given practical advice on how to encourage learning by setting up a

structured environment for their children. Communication between the school and parent is fostered, along with the maintenance of a positive relationship between the parents and the children. Parents are also provided with a family co-ordinator who is capable of assisting them with any personal problems they may be experiencing.

Home/school partnership projects in the On Track context have taken a variety of forms. These include both group-based and one-to-one sessions for parents in schools (for example, surgeries and advice sessions), and the appointment of specialist home-school liaison workers to work directly with families. For example, in Kerrier where there is a community of traveller families, the On Track project supports a liaison worker who specifically addresses issues of school attendance and attainment with these families. Other Home/School partnership activities within On Track include events to engage parents in the life of the school, for example encouraging parents to participate in trips, activities or help out in special lessons at school.

School-based initiatives

Working with schools is a core feature of the On Track programme, even though school-based work other than home/school partnership work was not specified as part of the core set of intervention models. Indeed, in some areas many of the elements of the local On Track project are school-based. Although '*the empirical evidence for a causal role for schools (in antisocial behaviour) is limited*' (Rutter, Giller and Hagell 1998) the qualities of schools as social institutions (in terms of ethos, management, teacher-pupil relationships etc) and as places in which to interact with peers and form social relationships are thought to be influential in shaping future attitudes and behaviours of young people. School-based risk factors include low attainment; exposure to bullying and disruptive behaviour; persistent truancy; and exclusion. Interventions developed in the US and being gradually implemented in the UK include those that concentrate on individual pupils, involving either adult or peer support, and those that work on the overall school culture and organisation (for example, anti-bullying programmes, substance misuse education). Many of the best interventions include both of these elements. In the US, the LIFT programme in Oregon provided an intervention containing three components; a group-based parent training course; classroom sessions on social and problem-solving skills; and a peer-group intervention at school involving a game (the 'Good Behaviour Game') that encourages pro-social behaviour by rewarding groups of children who keep negative behaviours to a minimum. A randomised trial used to evaluate the success of the programme showed that children who received the intervention exhibited significant decreases in aggressive and other antisocial behaviours when compared with children who did not take part (Reid and Eddy, 1997). Also in the US, Fast Track (also multi-component, including parent training, home visits and classroom components, and delivered on a more intensive basis than LIFT) has been identified as having an immediate impact in reducing aggression and anti-social behaviour following implementation of the programme, as well as improvements in reading skills: ...'*findings suggest that after one year, the experimental groups are showing signs of improvements in cognitive skills, problem behaviour and parental involvement in the child's education*' (Dodge, 1993; see also Reid and Eddy 1997; Graham, 1998). Other examples of successful school-based interventions include the Seattle Social Development Programme in the USA (Hawkins et al 1992), which has also reported positive results in reducing aggression and delinquent behaviours amongst pupils. Studies by Olweus in

Norway of results from school-based anti-bullying programmes have demonstrated that these kinds of initiatives can cut bullying by as much as half (Olweus 1993).

Research has shown that the relative success of school-based interventions are however chiefly reliant on the school's aptitude for beginning and sustaining novel initiatives. When programmes are located in economically depressed communities and weak infrastructure for supporting the initiatives, positive outcomes are less likely. Moreover, the extent to which schools themselves can influence how children's behaviour develops may be eclipsed by criminogenic elements in the community context, and may be '*crippled by the lack of parental support for learning and the breakdown of order in the classrooms*' (Sherman et al 1997). Additionally, the peer-group element of many school-based programmes (either pairing a child at risk of antisocial behaviour with a child not showing negative behaviours; or delivering interventions to groups of antisocial peers together) comes with something of a health warning; the former seems to be effective, but the latter has been reported to have 'iatrogenic' effects (ie, negative impact resulting from treatment). An example of the former approach is the 'St Louis Experiment' (Feldman 1992), which showed that experienced peer-group leaders could have a positive effect on the antisocial behaviour of the peer group as a whole, and that this in turn had a positive impact on individuals within that group. The operative word here is 'experienced', however. It appears, that 'bad' peer-based initiatives may even be counterproductive; for example, Dishion and Andrews (1995) report that an intervention involving delivering training to groups of at risk young people together in school actually *increased* levels of antisocial behaviour, and it is now generally thought that these types of approaches may unintentionally result in reinforcing peer-influenced antisocial behaviour by providing antisocial young people with a way of increasing their networks of other at risk children (Reid and Eddy 1997).

In the On Track context, school-based initiatives take a wide variety of forms. They focus both on social skills and functioning, and more directly on key skills necessary for better education attainment (ie literacy, and numeracy). They include for example peer-mentoring projects (where specially trained pupils befriend and support other more vulnerable children); school counselling and advice surgeries; After-school and Breakfast clubs; work by community police officers within schools running sessions on drug and alcohol education; anti-truancy initiatives and patrols; art and drama therapy; and various clubs and holiday play schemes to engage children in constructive activities and develop special talents in their out of school time. Special work either in groups or on a one-to-one basis helping children prepare for and negotiate key transitions in school life (starting primary school, going on from primary to secondary school) is also a feature of a number of On Track projects.

The aims and objectives of the schools survey

In both Phase One and Phase Two of the national evaluation of On Track the schools surveys formed one of a number of strands of the evaluation design. As such, the surveys only form part of the overall picture of how On Track is working, (see McKeown and Ghatge 2004 for further detail about the evaluation design).

Though as time has gone on it has become more and more clear that On Track is more and more a 'schools-based' programme (e.g Parsons, 2005) the aim of the school survey strand of the evaluation, as specified by the commissioners, was not to evaluate the specific impacts of the schools based work. Rather, the aim of the schools survey strand was to investigate the characteristics of the child population in On Track areas, in terms of a constellation of risk and protective factors as outlined above. Thus the questionnaires asked children to self-report on attitudes to and involvement in antisocial behaviour of various kinds (secondary schools only), exposure to drugs, tobacco and alcohol (in secondary schools only), victimisation experiences (bullying etc); and truancy. The questionnaire also sought children's views on school, and information on family activities and out-of-school interests.

Though not all children who took part in the surveys were direct 'users' of On Track (in the sense that they had been exposed to a specific intervention run under the On Track banner), all of the children can be thought of as 'indirect' users in the sense that they are attending schools in the On Track areas. Some will also have been direct users, either of interventions run at their school or of interventions run elsewhere, but it was not possible for us to identify such children and disaggregate them from other children in the sample. For this reason, what the schools surveys were **not** intended to do was provide evidence of the 'impact' of On Track on individual children. Rather, they shed light on the degree of 'need' for On Track amongst a representative sample of school-aged children in each area, and in this second phase of data collection they also shed light on whether things are improving, getting worse or staying the same for schools in On Track areas. Comparison with other national datasets drawn from surveys of school children may also illuminate ways in which school children in On Track areas are different from or similar to others, and we will return to this question in the final overarching report on On Track as a whole, as it was not possible to tackle this question within the parameters of the present report. It is a reasonable hypothesis that if On Track were efficacious in reducing the likelihood of youth antisocial behaviour, we should be able to see changes in whole community trends beginning a few years after On Track had begun to deliver services (providing, of course, that external criminogenic factors such as poverty had not got worse during this period). This is because we assume that given the peer-element of youth offending (most young people offend in groups, not alone; Rutter, Giller and Hagell 1998), some of the positive effect of On Track on children using the services should be rubbing off on their friends and peers. It is also an assumption underlying all ABIs that the communities as a whole should benefit from the presence of these kinds of initiatives in their midst (McGregor et al, 2003), and it is therefore a key hypothesis of the research in Phase Two of the national evaluation that communities, including the communities of children within schools, should begin to show diminishing incidence of risk factors and increasing incidence of protective factors as time goes on.

Thus, where possible, this report will provide evidence of what, if anything, is changing for primary school aged children, for better or worse, within On Track areas. However, the stand-alone school surveys cannot tell us whether the On Track initiative itself is *responsible* for any changes amongst children over the two waves; to do this we would need to control for a range of competing factors at the individual, family and community level that might equally well have a causal role in stability or change, and we would also need to know which children were directly or only indirectly exposed to the programme. Unfortunately this was

not possible to determine, since it would have required the linking of two separate datasets (the schools data and the Tracking Study data collected by On Track projects), which posed a host of complex practical and ethical problems that were not soluble in the time available before starting the schools survey. In addition, to provide 'gold standard' evidence of change, we should ideally have compared the results at both Wave One and Wave Two with results drawn from a comparison or 'control' sample of children in schools in non-On Track areas. However, other strands of the evaluation will explore individual-level impacts, and ultimately we hope to be able to integrate the findings from the different strands within a single integrated report that will give a truly multidimensional picture of the initiative and its processes and outcomes.

Structure of the report

This is the first of two reports focusing on the schools surveys. This report concentrates on the primary schools sample (and Year Five and Six pupils from six middle schools) and reports the results from those who completed the questionnaire designed by the Phase One On Track evaluation team. The second report (part two, Bhabra, Dinos and Ghate 2006b) concentrates on the secondary schools sample (and Year Seven and Eight in six middle schools) and reports on the results from those who completed the questionnaire designed by Communities that Care.

This report includes findings from 7,433 Key Stage Two pupils – those studying in Years Three to Six, aged seven to eleven years old – who took part in the primary schools survey. Here it should be noted that amongst the primary schools sample there is slight over-representation of pupils in Years Five and Six. This is because six middle schools were included in the study. Middle schools have pupils on the school roll that are aged nine (Year Five) to 13 (Year Eight), covering Key Stages Two and Three. Given this overlap, pupils in Years Five and Six were administered the same questionnaire as their primary school counterparts. Those in Years Seven and Eight were administered the same questionnaire as their secondary school counterparts and are included in Part Two (the secondary school sample). The rest of this report is structured as follows.

In **Section Two** we explain the methodology applied to conducting the survey and discuss the data analysis methods, in **Section Three** we focus on the demographic characteristics of the children who took part in the primary schools survey. In the following chapters we explore various aspects of the children's lives and experiences, as follows. **Section Four** looks at family relationships, **Section Five**, school life, behaviour and experiences and **Section Six** focuses on pupils' constructive use of leisure time and perceptions of the local neighbourhood.

In **Section Seven** we concentrate on the at risk sample, in **Section Eight** we look at On Track services in schools. In **Section Nine** we explore change between Wave One to Wave Two. It should be noted that the published report on the Wave One study (Armstrong et al 2005)

concentrated predominantly on the secondary school sample, and little other data beyond the demographic profile of the primary school sample was presented. Therefore, in order to assess change in key variables between the two waves of the survey most of the data from the Wave One primary school sample were analysed afresh by the Wave Two team.

Section Two: Methodology

The schools survey reported here replicates the schools survey conducted in Phase One of the evaluation in most respects. In that Phase, the team attempted to carry out a 'census' of all children in all schools in On Track areas (primary and middle). In total, there were 140 (134 primary and six middle) schools across the twenty-four On Track areas, of which 95 primary and six middle schools participated in the first wave of the schools survey, involving a total of some 13,365 children. In Phase Two however, due to budgetary and methodological considerations³, a more streamlined sample design was implemented. This involved randomly selecting two primary schools and including all middle schools in each On Track area. In all schools, all children in all classes from Years Three to Six were invited to take part. In the interests of obtaining robust trend data, the exact same questionnaire (paper self-completion, to be administered in schools under 'exam' type conditions) was used as in Phase One; a short and relatively simple questionnaire designed by the Phase One national evaluation team. Further detail about the methodology used in the Wave Two survey is given below. Readers who wish to skip straight to the findings of the survey will find these in Section Three.

Sampling for the Wave Two survey of primary school-aged children

Differences and similarities in sampling design between Wave One and Wave Two

Sampling for the Wave Two survey followed a more streamlined design than the methods used in Phase One. The main difference between the two waves was that in Wave One, all schools in the twenty-four On Track areas were invited to participate in the study, and all children in all year groups were included in the survey. That is, the Wave One survey used a census approach. For Wave Two, a simple random selection procedure was applied, where a sample of schools were selected from those that had participated in Wave One. Rather than sample all primary schools in each area, a random sample of two per area was selected. As in Wave One however, all six middle schools were included (youngest two years only). In Wave Two as in Wave One, all pupils in all year groups in the selected schools were invited to take part in the schools survey. Pupils were then given the opportunity to opt out of the study (ie to decline to take part) at the start of the data collection sessions, and in some cases, schools also approached parents by letter in advance notifying them that the survey was to take place and indicating that those who did not wish their child to participate should let the school know.

³ For example, we deemed it unnecessary to replicate the large sample of 31,000 children surveyed in Phase One as in terms of statistical power, such large numbers are not required to demonstrate differences between groups or over time, and smaller numbers will suffice.

Representativeness of the sample of Wave One and Wave Two Primary schools

Characteristics of sampled schools

Of the 134 primary schools in the On Track areas, 95 took part in Wave One, equivalent to a 71% primary schools response rate. All six middle schools in the areas took part in the study (100% response rate at the middle school level). An examination of background data on the schools in the areas, carried out before Phase Two analysis took place, including ethnic makeup, age, levels of special educational needs and free school meal take-up confirmed that the Wave One achieved sample of schools was broadly representative of all the schools in the On Track area (that is, there were no systematic differences between schools who took part in Wave One and schools who declined).

For Wave Two we sampled all middle schools and selected a sample of primary schools from the list of 134 schools in the On Track areas. From these, two primary schools in each area that had participated in the Wave One survey were selected and invited to participate. The total number of primary schools in each of the twenty-four areas ranged from two to 13. Where there were only two schools, both were included. Where there were more than two primary schools, two were randomly selected. Again, a check of background data on all schools in these areas compared to data on the schools that took part in the Wave Two survey confirmed that there were no systematic differences between those schools that took part and others in the area. Thus, we are confident that schools that took part at both Wave One and Wave Two survey are representative of all primary schools and all middle schools in the On Track areas.

The Wave Two survey was administered to 7,433 pupils from 50 schools. The response rates at the level of the schools, the year groups and at the level of the individual pupils was very high and is discussed in more detail below.

School level response rate at Wave Two

In total 47 primary and six middle schools (53 schools) were invited to take part in the schools survey in Wave Two of which 44 primary and six middle schools (50 schools) actually took part, equivalent to a 94% response rate at the school level. Prime reasons for non-participation included difficulty for schools in organising the survey administration around curriculum requirements. Also, some schools had recently participated in other research studies and did not want to over burden pupils by committing them to another survey. The table below shows a breakdown of the primary and middle schools approached and the final response rates.

Table 2.1 School level response rate, by type of school			
	Invited (n)	Participated (n)	Response rate (%)
Primary schools	47	44	94
Middle schools	6	6	100
All schools	53	50	94

Pupil level response rate at Wave Two

Generally speaking, pupil participation rates across each year group were high. For example, 85% of all pupils in Years Three and Four took part in the survey; whilst 89% of pupils in Years Five and Six took part in the survey (this includes Year Five and Six pupils from the six middle schools). Overall then, around one in seven eligible pupils did not take part in the survey. This was either because the child (or a parent on their behalf) had opted out of the study, or because the child was absent on the day of the survey. In the 50 schools that took part in the primary schools survey the number of pupils eligible to complete a questionnaire (i.e. the total number of pupils on the school roll across all primary schools and Year Five and Six in six middle schools) was 8,650 pupils. The number of pupils who completed a questionnaire was 7,433; an 86% achieved response rate. The table below shows the breakdown by type of school.

Table 2.2 Pupil level response rate across the 50 participating schools that took part in the primary schools survey			
	Eligible (n)	Achieved (n)	Response rate (%)
Primary schools (n44)	7,760	6,672	86
Middle schools (pupils in Year Five and Six only) (n6)	890	761	86
All schools (n50)	8,650	7,433	86

Item level response rate

Missing data (ie, where children had omitted to answer a particular question) were not a major problem in the primary schools survey in Wave One or Wave Two. In the Wave One dataset the item non response ranged from less than one percent to four percent. Proportions for item non-response in the Wave Two survey ranged from less than one percent to three per cent. This is probably because the questions were read out to children (by researchers or teachers) at the start of the data collection sessions. Researchers/teachers were also available to floor-walk and to help children who were having difficulties reading or understanding the questions (without, of course, attempting influencing their answers in any way). In addition, the completed questionnaires were submitted to a rigorous manual data cleaning and editing process before data entry, whereby individual item responses were checked for data quality.

As a result of incorporating these features, there was relatively little item non-response and we are confident that the quality of the data is sound and a true reflection of the primary schools children's circumstances.

Data collection methods

The mode of data collection varied to some degree in each of the different types of schools, although the basic principles remained the same.

The primary school questionnaire was designed by the Wave One team at Sheffield University [see Appendix 1] and covered home life, older sibling behaviour, perceptions of the local neighbourhood, school life and after-school activities. Data were collected by means of self-completed questionnaires administered in supervised classroom sessions by researchers. Most of the questions followed a simple binary (yes/no) format or a simple three-point scale (never, once or more than once) format. Typically, each data collection session began with a brief introduction given by the researcher, covering the aims of the study, instructions on filling out the form and assurances of confidentiality. Questionnaires were completed under 'exam' conditions (ie, children were requested not to confer with one another) and pupils were asked to be as honest as possible.

On average, researchers supervising the sessions estimated that the primary school questionnaire took between 30 to 50 minutes to complete, with older groups (pupils in Years Five and Six, aged nine and ten years old) completing the questionnaire in less time than those in the two younger year groups (Years Three and Four). In all sessions at primary schools researchers read each question aloud. In most of the sessions, class teachers were not present when the pupils completed their form. Where teachers were present they were asked to be careful not to influence pupils' answers and only provide support if required. In the main most children were able to complete the questionnaire without assistance. However, a few pupils did request one-to-one support, especially those with language or learning difficulties. These pupils were generally identified before the survey was administered.

Ethics, confidentiality and data protection

The Policy Research Bureau adheres to strict ethical guidelines in studies that involve primary data collection from research subjects (see Appendix 2). In general, a standard protocol is tailored to the specific needs of the study in question, and in this study, there were a number of special considerations including the need for informed consent from young people to take part in the study; the need for parental (or school, if acting on behalf of parents) approval for each child to take part; the importance of offering confidentiality to participants given the sensitivity of some of the questions; and data protection procedures to safeguard young people's information.

First, prior to data collection, all schools were provided with a letter to send to parents explaining the aims of the study and giving them the opportunity to opt their child out of the survey (ie, to refuse permission for their child to participate). [See Appendix 3]. In some

cases, schools felt able to make the decision as to whether pupils should participate in the study without consulting parents. Second, pupils themselves were also given the opportunity to opt out of the survey before each session. They were also told that if there were any questions they did not feel comfortable answering they could leave them blank and move on to another question on the form. All pupils were provided with an envelope in which to seal and return their completed questionnaire, and instructed not to write their name or other identifying information on the questionnaires, (which were pre-numbered with a unique identifying serial number, the key to which was held only by the research team). At the end of the survey, in case the survey raised issues for children that they might want to discuss further, all pupils were given a specially designed information leaflet with details of useful organisations, such as ChildLine. (see Appendix 4).

Data analysis

Analysis involved a range of descriptive and inferential statistical techniques to explore the data, from simple frequency counts, cross-tabulations and comparisons of means, to more complex multivariate techniques (that is, involving more than two variables). Percentages in tables are shown in whole numbers and therefore may not always add up due to rounding. Bases (the number of cases on which the percentage is calculated) are given within tables where results for sub-groups are presented, or underneath tables for single groups. Where bases do not add to the full number of achieved interviews this usually reflects the fact that cases with missing data have been excluded. For the sake of brevity, where we compare two or more groups, only p-values (the level of significance) and not test statistics are given in the text and tables. Differences of proportion were tested using a chi-square. Unless otherwise stated in the text, where tests are for differences between two means the procedure used was a t-test for independent samples; where differences of means for three or more groups were being compared, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used. Because the overall test statistic for the ANOVA procedure masks the fact that differences between some sub-groups rather than others may be driving the overall result, Bonferroni tests in ANOVA procedures were also applied. This enabled us to isolate differences between specific sub groups, and where significant differences were attributable to differences between some sub-groups rather than others, this is highlighted in the text. Notation in the tables also reflects this. Means (average scores) and standard deviations ('sd') are given throughout, as well as p-values. In general, only results that were statistically significant are reported. The level of confidence used for all significance testing in the analysis was set at $p < .05$, often referred to as the 'ninety five percent confidence level'. This means that if a given test result has a p-value of less than 0.05, the result is taken to be meaningful, in that it shows that there is less than a five in a hundred possibility that this result could have occurred by chance. Put another way, if 'p' is less than 0.05, we can be 95% certain that the result is not simply a result of random variation, but reflects 'real' differences within the sample (in technical terms, the 'null' hypothesis is rejected).

Much of the analysis revolves around the concepts of 'risk' and 'protection', since as discussed earlier it is On Track's stated aim to intervene to boost protective factors in children's lives and reduce risk factors. Whilst we have analysed data at the level of

individual questions where this seemed interesting and appropriate, much of the analysis uses composite scales measuring different ‘constructs’ or dimensions of risk or protection, created by combining related questions. This enables us to capture the ‘bigger picture’, allowing us to explore differences between sub groups without (we hope) getting too lost in the minutiae of the data. Due to the simplicity of most of the questions in the primary school questionnaire, it should be noted that for the purposes of this report, composite scales were created on an exclusively ‘rational basis’ rather than an empirically-driven basis. That is, the research team decided which items should be combined into overarching constructs or scales (e.g ‘parental supervision and discipline’) on the basis of our knowledge of the research literature and the conventions generally used in this area of study, rather than performing empirical tests (factor analyses, for example) a priori to verify which items loaded or clustered together on a statistical or mathematical basis.

Due to low levels of item non-response we elected not to impute values for missing data, but in general simply removed cases with missing values from the base. This is clearly indicated in the tables, where relevant.

The last point to note regarding analysis for this report is that although the Wave Two team were provided with a data set for the Wave One survey, no detailed information about the procedures used for editing and cleaning of this data set was available. Furthermore, no detailed analysis of the Wave One data had previously been published. For these reasons, the analysis presented in Section Nine where Wave One and Wave Two data sets are compared was carried out specifically for this report, using methods that were standardised for both data sets. It may not, therefore, exactly replicate findings reported elsewhere by other authors.

Section Three: Demographic profile of the primary school sample

In this section we describe the characteristics of the primary school pupils who took part in the survey.

Overall, 7,433⁴ pupils provided data for the primary schools survey. The sample was more or less equally split between boys and girls. The number of pupils in each year group within the sample was distributed as expected, but with slightly more pupils in Years Five and Six due to the inclusion of pupils from six middle schools. In terms of ethnic background, the majority (68%) described themselves as White. The next largest ethnic group was Pakistani followed by Black. A small proportion of the sample said that they did not understand this question (2%)⁵.

The table below gives details of the responding sample.

Table 3.1 Characteristics of the primary schools sample		
	%	n
Sex		
Male	51	3771
Female	49	3640
Not stated	<1	22
Age		
7 years	11	815
8 years	22	1667
9 years	24	1767
10 years	28	2079
11 years	15	1092
(Not stated)	<1	13
Year group		
Year 3	22	1647
Year 4	22	1600
Year 5	27	2034
Year 6	30	2150
(Not stated)	<1	18
Ethnicity		
White	68	5069
Pakistani	11	780
Black	9	676
Bangladeshi	3	204
Mixed	4	258
Indian	1	92
Chinese	1	44
Other	2	166
(I do not understand this question)	2	120
(Not stated)	<1	24

Base = 7,433

⁴ 90% (n6,688) were from a primary school and 10% (n745) were from a middle school.

⁵ Pupils who were unsure about their ethnicity were asked to tick 'I do not understand this question'.

Given the geographical location of the schools that took part in the survey – i.e. situated in one of the twenty-four On Track areas – we would not expect the demographic characteristics of the children to be representative of primary school pupils in England. On Track is an initiative that is based in particularly deprived high-crime areas where the makeup is predominantly families on a low income. Therefore, if we compare these demographics to the national statistics for all primary school children we would expect to find substantial differences. For example, according to the National Statistics of Education (2003, DfES), based exclusively on primary schools in England, 82% of all primary school children were white. This is much higher than the 68% who were white in the Wave Two primary school sample. With regards to Pakistani origins, four percent of all primary school pupils in England belonged to this ethnic group. In comparison to this national figure, the primary school sample had almost three times as many pupils of Pakistani origin (11%).

The primary school questionnaire also explored the main language pupils spoke at home, to determine how many pupils had English as a second or other language ('ESOL'). Responses to this question would give an indication of the levels of need amongst this sample educationally speaking and the possible stretch on resources in schools in these areas. Not surprisingly, given the location of the schools and ethnic composition of the sample, a slightly higher proportion of pupils in the primary schools sample had English as a second or other language when compared to the national figure. This information is presented in the table below.

	On Track Schools Survey Wave Two		DfES National Statistics (2003)	
	%	n	%	n
English	83	6,169	89	3,104,819
Other language	15	915	11	3,64,937
Not stated	2	116	<1	2,229
All	100	7,433	100	3,471,985

Base: for the primary schools sample = 7,433; base for all primary schools in England = 3,471,985

Household structure and living circumstances

The primary schools survey explored the number of people living in a household. However, the wording of the question meant that we were unable to determine the total number of family members living in a house. For example, pupils were simply asked whether they were living with brothers or sisters as opposed to the total numbers of siblings in a household. With regard to household size and composition, pupils were asked '*Who are the people who live with you?*' Almost all the pupils (96%) said they lived with their mother and 70% said they lived with their father, meaning that nearly one in three children were living in households from which their birth father was absent. One in 10 pupils (10%) said they had a grandparent living with them. A small minority of pupils (1%) were living in public care when they took part in the research. This information is displayed in the table below.

Table 3.3 Household composition – who children lived with		
	%	n
Mother	96	7174
Father	70	5232
Brother(s)	64	4779
Sister(s)	61	4563
Grandparent	10	723
Other people	10	691
Stepfather	9	632
Stepmother	2	159
Living in residential care	1	104

Base: 7,433 Note: Percentages do not sum to 100% as pupils could give more than one response.

Further analysis of these data show that two thirds of pupils lived in two birth parent households (66%, n4,938) and 10% (n720) lived in so-called reconstituted or ‘step’ families. A fifth (22%, n1,652) of all pupils lived in a lone parent household (mainly headed by the birth mother). These figures are in fact not very dissimilar to the figures for all dependent children cited in the Census 2001 (65% two parent households, 23% lone parent households, 10% step families and 2% other). However, since we would expect the figures for all dependent children to show higher levels of lone parent and reconstituted households than our sample (because of the older age range of the children included), what this demonstrates is that, as expected, the primary schools sample contained greater proportions of lone parent and reconstituted households than the general population. The remaining 2% (n123) of the primary schools sample reported living in another arrangement. This included those who lived with older siblings, grandparents or were in residential care at the time of the survey. This information is displayed in table 3.4 .

Table 3.4 Household structure – key family types		
	%	n
Two birth parent household	66	4,938
Lone parent household	22	1,652
Reconstituted family	10	720
Other	2	123

Base: 7,433

Amongst the primary schools sample, there was a statistically significant difference in the ethnic background of children living in different types of households. Children of South Asian origin were much less likely to be living in lone parent households, whilst children from Black or mixed heritage backgrounds were much more likely to do so. Conversely, South Asian children were far more likely to live in two birth parent households, and Black and mixed heritage children were least likely to do so; (see table 3.5). These findings are

consistent with the findings reported in the 2001 census that also showed that children of Black origin were more likely, and those from all types of Asian backgrounds were least likely, to live in lone parent households.

Ethnicity	Two birth parents		Lone parent household		Reconstituted family	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
Indian (n91)	87	80	11	10	1	1
Bangladeshi (n201)	86	175	8	16	5	10
Pakistani (n766)	85	661	10	76	4	29
Chinese (n42)	73	32	23	10	*	0
White (n4,985)	64	3,229	23	1,166	12	590
Black (n665)	60	407	32	216	6	42
Mixed (n255)	53	136	34	88	12	31

Base = 7,005 (others and not stated excluded) χ^2 ; ***p<.001

Pupils were asked 'Where do you live now?' to explore the types of accommodation the sample lived in. The majority said they lived in a house (89%). A small proportion of pupils reported that they lived in a flat (8%) whilst two per cent reported living somewhere other than the listed options (this would include those living in residential care).

	%	n
House	89	6641
Flat	8	609
Hostel	1	35
Caravan	<1	32
Somewhere else	2	101
Not stated	<1	15

Base = 7,433

Pupils were also asked how many bedrooms were in their house. The table overleaf shows that just over half (57%) of the primary school pupils had three bedrooms in their home. This was followed by a fifth (19%) saying they had four bedrooms in the home. Around one in every ten pupils said that there were five or more bedrooms in their home, whilst a very small minority said they lived in one-bedroomed accommodation. Exactly half the sample reported sharing their bedroom (50%).

Table 3.7 Number of bedrooms in the home		
	%	n
1	1	65
2	15	1107
3	57	4248
4	19	1412
5 or more	8	566
Not stated	1	35

Base = 7,433

In recent research a strong link between moving homes frequently and social disadvantage has emerged. In 2004 the Social Exclusion Unit reported that “*moving frequently can be linked to poor outcomes in areas such as education, housing and health*”. To determine mobility levels the primary schools pupils were asked how many times they had moved home since they were five years old. Of course, children of this age may not have remembered the numbers of times they had moved; however, according to children’s reports, just over a third of all primary school pupils said they had not moved home since they were five and slightly more than a quarter had moved more than once.

Table 8 Number of times children had moved house since five year old		
	%	n
Never	35	2,594
Once	23	1,732
More than once	26	1,912
Don't know	16	1,167
Not stated	<1	28

Base = 7,433

Limitations to the study: demographic profile of the sample

Overall, the demographic section of the questionnaire included a number of questions that help build a profile of the primary school sample. Based on these demographics we go on to explore differences between groups (e.g. differences between pupils in different year and ethnic groups). However, there are a few limitations to our ability to describe the sample.

Firstly, the questionnaire did not include any measure of socio-economic status, as it is not possible to obtain the required data (occupational status of parents, household income, etc) from children of this age. Secondly, the question that determined the ethnic group to which the child belonged was limited in that it differentiated between different groups of South Asian origin, but not between different groups of Black children. Thus, we can disaggregate between children of Pakistani or Indian origin, but not between children of Black African as opposed to Black Caribbean origin. It should be noted that the secondary schools survey results (Bhabra et al, 2005b) revealed substantial differences between Black Caribbean and Black African children on a range of indicators, and that the aggregation of these two groups

in the primary school data analysis could be obscuring important differences between these two groups.

Given these limitations, analysis of the primary schools data will focus on differences within groups including analysis by:

- Sex of the child
- Household type – those living with two birth parents, reconstituted or ‘step’ parents, those from lone parent households and those from ‘other’ household structures (including living with grandparents or living in residential care)
- Ethnic backgrounds – White, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Indian, Black, Chinese and mixed heritage
- Year group at school – Year Three, Year Four, Year Five and Year Six
- Presence or absence of ‘risk’ or ‘protective’ factors in children’s circumstances
- Wave of the survey - Wave One (carried out by Sheffield University, 2001) and Wave Two (carried out by the Policy Research Bureau, 2004)

Section Four: Children's family life

The primary schools survey included several questions that focused on pupils' relationships with their families. These questions focused on levels of parental supervision, discipline, family conflict and parents' involvement in children's lives.

Warmth and involvement

The literature on risk and protective factors in outcomes for children suggests that the strength of a child's relationship with their parents, often conceptualised as warmth and involvement, is a key protective factor in preventing involvement in antisocial behaviour as well as promoting a host of desirable psychosocial outcomes including readiness to learn, better education attainment, and better adult adjustment (eg Rutter, Giller and Hagell 1998).

In this study, a small group of four simple questions determined the degree of warmth and involvement as perceived by the child. In response to a set of statements introduced as '*Can you tell us a bit about your family?*', the response was mainly one of a positive relationship between children and their parents. The vast majority of children said they were often praised by their parents, and just over three quarters said that their parents did '*fun things*' with them. 72% of children felt that adults in their house *chatted* to them a lot. The least positive response was received to the statement '*grown ups in my home often read with me*', where only half of all pupils agreed with this statement.

	Yes		No	
	%	n	%	n
Grown ups in my home often tell me they are proud of me (n7,356)	84	6,232	15	1,124
The grown ups in my home do lots of fun things with me (n7,358)	77	5,690	22	1,668
Grown ups in my home chat with me a lot (n7,282)	73	5,313	27	1,969
Grown ups in my home often read with me (n7,243)	51	3,571	49	3,672

Bases exclude missing responses

Sex and age

Girls tended to report more positive relationships at home: more participation in *fun* activities with parents, more praise from parents, and parents *chatting* to them and reading with them. For example, 87% (3,137) of all girls who answered the question said that their parents often praised them, compared with 82% of boys (n3,040). Similarly, 80% of girls who answered the question (2,882) said their parents participated in fun activities with them compared to 75% of

boys (n2,789), and 76% (n2,721) of girls reported that adults chatted with them often, compared to 70% of boys (n2,549) ⁶.

At the Year group level, there were also noticeable differences in responses to the statements on home life. Older pupils were statistically significantly more likely to report that the adults in their home talked and participated in *fun* activities with them when compared to those in the lower year groups. For example, 77% of Year Six pupils said an adult in their home *chatted* with them, compared to 64% of the Year Three pupils giving this response. The results are displayed in the table below.

Table 4.2 Parental involvement and relationships at home by year group				
	Yes		No	
	%	n	%	n
Grown ups in my home chat with me a lot				
Year 6 (n2,120)	78^{***}	1,659	22	461
Year 5 (n1,989)	75	1,487	25	502
Year 4 (n1,575)	70	1,101	30	474
Year 3 (n1,580)	67	1,050	34	530
All (n7,282)	73	5,313	27	1,969
The grown ups in my home do lots of fun things with me				
Year 6 (n2,122)	80^{***}	1,696	20	426
Year 5 (n2,007)	79	1,584	21	423
Year 4 (n1,591)	76	1,210	24	381
Year 3 (n1,620)	73	1,183	27	437
All (n7,340)	77	5,673	22	1,667

Bases exclude missing responses; χ^2 ; ***p<.001

Ethnicity

There were also significant differences in the responses of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. Although most of the pupils reported similar responses there were noticeable differences between those from Chinese and other backgrounds⁷. Whereas around three quarters of children from other ethnic groups reported that their parents did *fun* things with them, only 59% of Chinese children reported this (although note that the base for this group was small, so caution is needed in interpreting these results). Chinese pupils were also statistically significantly less likely to report receiving praise from their parents than other groups. They were also less likely to report that the adults in their home talked to them or read with them. In contrast, pupils of Pakistani origin reported the opposite – they were most likely of all groups to say parents participated in *fun* activities with them, talked to them, and

⁶ All χ^2 ; p<.001

⁷ χ^2 ; p<.001

praised them. This finding suggests that there may be cultural differences in parenting styles between ethnic groups, with Chinese pupils living in families that exhibit less outward signs of warmth and involvement than those from other ethnic backgrounds. Recently, other research studies have highlighted similar findings (Francis and Archer, 2005).

Household structure

With regards to household structure, there were noticeable differences in responses to three of the statements, which though substantively small were nevertheless statistically significant. For example, 74% of pupils from reconstituted families (n529) and a similar proportion from lone parent households (74%, n1,214) who answered the question said adults in the home *did fun things* with them compared to 79% (n3,858) from two birth parent households⁸. And whilst 86% of children with two birth parents at home (n4,206) said that their parents often praised them, the figures for lone parent households were 84% (n1,361) and 81% (n580) for those from reconstituted families.

Although individually these statements tell us a lot about the primary schools sample, by combining similar items (statements) we can create a composite construct or scale, which we labelled 'warmth and involvement', and which can show more concisely how differences between groups may be distributed. Positive ('yes') responses to the four statements were counted to create the scale. Thus, a pupil with a score of zero was one who did not say *yes* to any of the statements and a pupil with a score of four was one who said *yes* to all four statements. We have already found that on the whole pupils reported high levels of participating in *fun* activities, *chatting* and receiving praise from parents. The only real exception was agreement with the statement on adults reading with the child and we return to this issue later. Therefore, not surprisingly, on the parental warmth and involvement scale (of zero to four) the majority of children had said *yes* to around three out of the four statements. The mean average score on the scale was 2.7⁹. Looked at another way, we could say that a child who reported *yes* to between two and all four statements had average (or 'normal') levels of parental warmth and involvement (for this sample) and those who reported below two had below average levels of parental warmth and involvement. Amongst this sample, just over four fifths (85%) of the sample reported average levels of parental warmth and involvement, and 15% fell below this level.

There were significant group differences on the combined scale. Girls, those in two birth parent households and those of Pakistani origin reported high levels of parental warmth and involvement. In contrast, boys, those in reconstituted families or 'other' households and Chinese pupils reported lower levels. The significant findings are displayed in the table below.

⁸ χ^2 ; $p < .001$

⁹ $sd = 1$

Table 4.3 Parental warmth and involvement; mean scores on a scale, by various sub-groups		
	Mean (average) score	sd
Sex		
Boys (n3771)	2.67	1.16
Girls (n3640)	2.93***	1.09
Ethnicity		
Chinese (n44)	2.36	1.31
Indian (n92)	2.67	1.17
Black (n676)	2.67	1.78
Mixed (n258)	2.72	1.22
Bangladeshi (n204)	2.76	1.12
White (n5069)	2.80	1.13
Pakistani (n780)	2.93***	1.09
Other (n166)	2.86	1.00
Household type		
Reconstituted family (n720)	2.64	1.19
Lone parent household (n1652)	2.74	1.17
Two birth parents (n4938)	2.85***	1.10
Other (n123)	2.57	1.39
All	2.80	1.13

T-test (2 groups) ANOVA (more than two groups) * p<.05; ** p<.01; ***p<.001

Supervision and discipline at home

Many studies conducted in the recent past have explored a link between antisocial behaviour and parental supervision, discipline and attitudes (Rutter, Giller and Hagell 1998), and it is now generally accepted that there is a positive correlation between poor parental supervision and young people's self-reports of offending¹⁰. That is, self-reported offending rates are highest amongst those with low levels of parental supervision and where consistency of discipline is low (often coupled with harsh methods of discipline). As Farrington (1996) put it, in *Understanding and Preventing Youth Crime* (1996):

Poor parental child-rearing behaviour – a combination of discipline, attitude and conflict – and poor parental supervision predicted both self-reported as well as official offending.

Certainly, at the primary school age we would generally expect children to report high levels of parental supervision, and this was broadly the case in this survey. Overall, high numbers of children reported that a parent 'always knows where I am' when they were not at home (87%, almost nine in ten). Just under three quarters (73%) said that the rules at home were consistent ('When grown ups in my home say no, they mean it').

¹⁰ Note however that in relation to the relationship between antisocial behaviour and supervision of adolescents some authors have claimed that what most studies measure is not *supervision* per se but rather parents' *knowledge* of young people's whereabouts and activities, which is in turn predicted by levels of *disclosure* by adolescents.

Table 4.4 Discipline and supervision at home				
	Yes		No	
	%	n	%	n
When I'm not at home a grown up always knows where I am	87	6439	13	934
When the grown ups in my home say no, they mean it	74	5434	25	1881

Base = 7,373 and excludes missing responses

Responses to the statements showed statistically significant differences between some groups, however.

Sex and age

As has been found in many other studies, girls tended to report greater levels of supervision when compared to boys (Rutter, Giller and Hagell 1998). In this study too, girls were more likely to report that their parents always knew where they were when not at home, with 91% of girls who answered the question saying this (n3,279) compared to 84% of boys (n3,105)¹¹.

At the Year group level, younger pupils tended to report statistically significant higher levels of consistency in discipline. For example, when asked to respond *yes* or *no* to the statement 'When the grown ups in my home say no they mean it', 77% (n1,246) of Year Three pupils said yes compared to 70% (n1,481) of Year Six pupils¹².

Ethnicity

There were no substantial differences in the responses of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds in regards to supervision, although children of Pakistani and Indian origin were somewhat less likely than other groups to report that adults in the home didn't always mean 'No' when they said it (68% compared to 75% on average in other groups)¹³. However, this is a somewhat puzzling result, in that it is inconsistent with other results for ethnicity and parenting. We suspect there may have been a degree of measurement error in that children may have misunderstood the question due to the negative introduced by a 'no' response.

Household structure

With regards to household structure, pupils from reconstituted households reported statistically significantly lower levels of adults at home knowing where they were when not at home. For example, 88% of pupils from both parent (n4,323) and 87% from lone parent households (n1,430) who answered the question reported that their parents *always knew where*

¹¹ χ^2 ; $p < .001$

¹² χ^2 ; $p < .001$

¹³ χ^2 ; $p < .001$

they were when not at home. In comparison, 82% (n585) of pupils from reconstituted households gave this response¹⁴.

Consistency of discipline did not however statistically significantly vary between the different household types.

Relationships and conflict between adults in the home

The statement *grown ups in my home are nice to each other* was asked in order to explore whether children were living in 'happy' households or not. In the main the responses to this statement were positive with just over four fifths (85%) of the sample reporting that adults in their home were nice to each other. However, around one in eight pupils (15%) said 'no', implying a level of conflict in their homes. This was statistically significantly higher amongst boys, Chinese pupils, and pupils in the lower year groups. In addition, pupils from lone parent households reported significantly higher levels of conflict in the home when compared to the other household structures, perhaps reflecting conflict between the parent with whom they lived and a non resident parent (whom children might think of as 'adults at home'); or alternatively between their parent and other adult household members. Another group of interest was pupils from reconstituted families. In the previous sections, and many of the sections to follow, the children from reconstituted families reported significantly lower levels of parental warmth and involvement and scored high on a number of risk factors (that we discuss in detail later). However, they reported similar levels of conflict in their home as those from two birth parent families. The table below displays the responses.

¹⁴ χ^2 ; $p < .001$

Table 4.5 Conflict between adults in the home: whether adults in the home are 'nice to each other', by sex, year group, ethnicity and household structure					
		Yes		No	
		%	n	%	n
Sex					
Boys (n3,669)		84	3,065	17	604
Girls (n3,563)		86	3,051	14	512
Year group					
Year 3 (n1,591)		79 ^{***}	1,260	21	331
Year 4 (n1,566)		83	1,298	17	268
Year 5 (n1,973)		87	1,722	13	251
Year 6 (n2,105)		88	1,842	13	263
Ethnicity					
Chinese (n43)		77 ^{**}	33	23	10
Indian (n 90)		82	74	18	16
White (n 4,952)		84	4,152	16	800
Bangladeshi (n201)		84	168	16	33
Black (n654)		85	556	15	98
Mixed (n248)		85	211	15	37
Pakistani (n760)		90	680	11	80
Other (n166)		87	145	13	21
Household structure					
Lone parent household (n1581)		80 ^{***}	1259	20	322
Reconstituted family (n704)		85	597	15	107
Two birth parents (n4850)		86	4,182	14	668
Other (n118)		83	98	17	20
All (n7,253)		85	6136	15	1117

Bases exclude missing responses χ^2 ; * p<.05; ** p<.01; ***p<.001

Reading at home with parents

Only one question in the survey of primary school children directly addressed parents' involvement with children's learning; the question on frequency of reading together (*'grown ups in my home often read with me'*). Wragg et al (1998) conducted a study on how achievement in literacy could be improved in primary schools. The suggested solution was simple – encouraging parents to read to their children and listen to their children read at home. With the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy (1998) a greater emphasis has been placed on reading both in school and at home. Part of the strategy called for parents of primary aged children to listen to their child read for around 20 minutes each day. The National Literacy Trust found that:

...If parents read to their children, have books in the home, and hear their children read, children's reading standards improve.

[National Literacy Trust, 1999]

The proportions of children that reported an adult often read, or did often not read, with them at home were evenly split amongst this sample. That is, around half of the sample reported that adults at home did not often read with them. When broken down by ethnicity, household structure, year group and sex we found statistically significant differences. Pupils that were studying in the two lower year groups - Years Three and Four - reported significantly higher levels of parents reading with them when compared to those in Years Five and Six. For instance, 61% of Year Three pupils and 55% of Year Four pupils indicated that adults in their home often read with them compared to 48% of Year Five and 38% of Year Six pupils (see table 4.6 below). This shows that parents are less likely to read with children as children get older. Though levels of regular reading together are not high even in Year Three (just over three fifths of the sample), by the time children are nearing the transition to secondary school the level has dropped to just less than two fifths.

Table 4.6 Extent to which adult often reads with child at home, by sex, year group, ethnicity and household structure				
	Yes		No	
	%	n	%	n
Sex				
Girls (n3639)	54 ^{***}	1904	45	1657
Boys (n3771)	47	1652	55	2010
Year group				
Year 3 (n1,559)	61 ^{***}	952	39	607
Year 4 (n1,69)	55	860	45	709
Year 5 (n1,981)	48	944	52	1037
Year 6 (n2,116)	38	805	62	1311
Ethnicity				
Pakistani (n748)	58 ^{***}	430	43	318
Bangladeshi (n199)	56	111	44	88
White (n4,958)	48	2382	52	2576
Black (n658)	47	311	53	347
Mixed (n249)	47	118	53	131
Indian (n89)	44	39	56	50
Chinese (n44)	41	18	59	26
Other (n166)	46	76	54	90
Household structure				
Two birth parents (n4812)	51	2,453	49	2,359
Lone parent household (n1612)	48	769	52	843
Reconstituted family (n702)	41	286	59	416
Other (n117)	54 ^{***}	63	46	54
All (n7,243)	51	3,571	49	3,672

Bases exclude missing responses (up to 5% for some sub groups); χ^2 : * p<.05; ** p<.01; ***p<.001

Problematic sibling behaviour

Recent research has suggested a link between children engaging in antisocial activities and living in households with troublesome siblings (Farrington 2000). Thus the primary school survey included a series of questions about older siblings to measure the extent of problematic behaviour in the family. Pupils were presented with six statements exploring whether their

older siblings had been in trouble with the police, stolen property, been sent home from school due to bad behaviour or smoked cigarettes. On the more positive side, children were also asked if older brothers or sisters had been helpful to others or had been awarded a prize. Almost a third (30%, n2,228) of the sample did not have any older brothers or sisters and so were excluded from further analysis on sibling behaviour. Of those that did have older siblings the picture was mainly positive, with the majority of the sample reporting that their older siblings did not engage in problematic behaviours. Nearly three quarters of siblings were described as having '*been helpful to other people*', and just under two thirds had won a prize at school. However, a minority of pupils did report that an older sibling was troublesome. For example, a fifth of pupils said that their older sibling had been '*sent home from school because they were naughty*' and 16% said that their older sibling had '*tried to steal something*'. A fifth said that their older siblings had '*been in trouble with the police*'. It should also be noted that these responses could be underestimates as in many cases pupils may not have known about certain aspects of their siblings' behaviour. This is supported by the fact that one in ten pupils said that they *did not know* about their siblings' behaviour to each of the statements.

Table 4.7 Older sibling behaviour			
Have any of your older brothers and sisters...		%	n
....been helpful to other people?			
Yes		73	3,818
No		13	659
I don't know		12	616
Not stated		2	112
....been given a prize for being good or doing good school work ?			
Yes		60	3,130
No		15	778
I don't know		24	1,229
Not stated		1	68
....smoked cigarettes?			
Yes		24	1,227
No		68	3,527
I don't know		7	341
Not stated		2	110
....been sent home from school because they were naughty?			
Yes		21	1,089
No		66	3,421
I don't know		11	579
Not stated		2	116
... .been in trouble with the police?			
Yes		20	1,049
No		69	3,584
I don't know		8	403
Not stated		3	169
....tried to steal something?			
Yes		16	834
No		71	3,673
I don't know		10	524
Not stated		3	174

Base = 5,205

To explore differences amongst groups, and in preparation for later analysis of the relationship between antisocial siblings and antisocial behaviour and attitudes, we created a scale measuring problematic sibling behaviour. Pupils' responses to three of the six statements about sibling behaviour were combined¹⁵. The statements were: whether older siblings had attempted to steal property not belonging to them, been sent home from school due to their behaviour or been in trouble with the police, and scoring followed the same principle as described above in relation to the scale measuring warmth and involvement.

Three quarters of the sample (75%, n5539) indicated no problematic sibling behaviour (score = zero), whilst a quarter (25%, n1,894) reported somewhat troublesome siblings. Of the 1,894 that said they had troublesome siblings, 58% (n1,089) said that their older siblings had engaged in one of the three problematic behaviours, 28% (n532) said yes to their siblings engaging in two, and 14% (n273) said their older siblings had done all three.

A number of key differences on problematic sibling behaviour emerged between different groups of children. For instance, there were marked differences in the responses given according to sex, ethnicity and household structure. However, there were no significant differences in the responses given by each of the four Year groups (ie, by age). The significant differences are presented below.

Sex

Boys were significantly more likely than girls to report that they had troublesome older siblings, as table 4.8 overleaf shows. For example, just under a quarter of all girls with older siblings (23%) reported problematic sibling behaviours. In comparison, almost three out of every ten boys with older siblings reported problematic behaviour by older siblings. Since we would not expect the siblings of boys, in aggregate, to present different characteristics from the siblings of girls, the suggestion here is that boys are more likely to *perceive* siblings as badly behaved (or else, that girls know much less about their siblings' misbehaviour than boys).

Ethnicity

In terms of ethnicity, pupils of mixed heritage backgrounds reported the highest levels of older sibling problematic behaviour (31%). Pupils of Chinese origin were least likely to report problematic behaviour amongst their siblings, with only one out of every ten pupils saying this was an issue. Overall, the lowest levels of problematic sibling behaviour were reported amongst pupils from each of the three Asian backgrounds when compared to the other ethnic groups.

¹⁵ As we do not know the age of the older siblings we did not include smoking cigarettes on our 'problematic sibling' scale as it is legal for those aged 16 plus to smoke.

Household structure

Around one in three pupils living in step families (34%) reported problematic behaviour by siblings compared to pupils living in lone (29%) or two birth parent (23%) households.

All the significant differences are presented in the table below.

		Yes		No	
		%	n	%	n
Sex	Boys (n3771)	28 ^{***}	1,054	72	2,717
	Girls (n3640)	23	833	77	2,807
Ethnicity	Mixed (n258)	31 ^{***}	80	69	178
	White (n5069)	28	1,399	72	3,670
	Black (n676)	25	168	75	508
	Pakistani (n780)	19	148	81	632
	Indian (n92)	13	12	87	80
	Bangladeshi (n204)	12	24	88	180
	Chinese (n44)	9	4	91	40
	Other (n166)	17	28	83	138
Household structure	Reconstituted family (n720)	34 ^{***}	243	66	477
	Lone parent household (n1,652)	29	471	71	1,181
	Two birth parent household (n4,938)	23	1,140	77	3,798
	Other (n123)	33	40	68	83
	All	25	1,894	75	5,539

Bases vary due to missing responses; χ^2 ; * p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Summary

In this section we have discussed children's reports of some aspects of family life and highlighted differences between certain groups. We can see that the sample on the whole reported a positive relationship with their parents. Most children reported high levels of warmth and involvement, and also reasonably high levels of supervision and consistency in rules at home. Overall, only the levels of parents and children reading together suggest a less than optimal picture, with many of even the youngest children reporting they did not 'often' read together. Wragg et al (1998) found that one of the main problems underlying low levels of reading with children was that most parents did not know how to help their children read at home. Seven years on, our study suggests that the issues still remain.

However, a few group differences were identified. Girls reported being better supervised than boys and also reported warmer and more involved relationships with parents than boys. Children living in reconstituted or 'step' families reported living in households with less supervision, and also with less parental warmth and involvement (but lower levels of conflict). Children in lone parent households reported most conflict between adults at home.

In addition to children's family life we also explored the prevalence of problematic sibling behaviour. Overall, higher levels of problematic sibling behaviour were reported amongst boys, those living in reconstituted families and those of mixed heritage backgrounds. The fact that a higher proportion of boys than girls reported problematic sibling behaviour may suggest that boys are more prone to over estimating or perceiving sibling behaviour as antisocial, especially as we would not expect the siblings of boys to present different characteristics from the siblings of girls. Interestingly children from reconstituted families reported higher levels of problematic sibling behaviour when compared to the other household types. This may suggest that older siblings may also have difficulty settling into 'step' families and thus 'act out' more than any other group. We can speculate that the higher level of problematic sibling behaviour may also be a consequence of the lower levels of parental supervision, warmth and involvement in this group.

Section Five: School life, behaviour and experiences

The primary schools questionnaire included a number of questions that explored pupils' life, experiences and behaviour at school. The questions focused on views of school, disruptive and challenging behaviour and covered truancy and bullying and victimisation. In this section we discuss the key findings and explore group differences.

Satisfaction with school

Schools can play a positive role in integrating children into society and equipping them with a sense of achievement. According to Graham (1988) children who feel alienated from school are at increased risk of involvement in crime and other antisocial behaviours. For example, research evidence from the United States suggests that children who are not committed to school are at greater risk of behavioural problems in adolescence (e.g. Johnston, 1991). Research in primary schools has demonstrated that the quality of teaching and organisation within individual schools is more significant as an explanation of differences in pupils' educational progress than their intake characteristics such as social background, sex and age (Mortimer et al, 1988). According to Rutter et al (1998), the overall organisation, morale and ethos of a school must play a part in protecting its pupils, or else schools could be increasing pupils' exposure to risk. However, although the evidence suggests that satisfaction with school and perceptions of school do exert an influence over antisocial behaviour, more research is needed in order to unveil the ways and particular circumstances in which this occurs.

The questionnaire administered in primary schools measured satisfaction with school by means of a number of questions (see table 5.1). In general, pupils held positive views about school, especially towards teachers. Around nine in ten children said that they felt safe in school and a similar proportion said that their teachers praised them for doing well in lessons and believed that their teachers were kind to them. Almost all the pupils considered themselves to be helpful towards other people and four fifths had been given a prize for being good or doing good work. Nine in ten indicated that discipline in school was reliable and consistent, believing they would get into trouble if they broke school rules. However, although the majority of pupils gave positive responses to most of the statements about views of school, there were some areas of concern. For instance, around one in three pupils indicated they did not like attending school and around the same proportion said they would not always tell the teacher if something went wrong in school.

Table 5.1 Attitudes to school				
	Yes		No	
	%	n	%	n
If I break school rules, I'll get into trouble (n7,323)	91	6,678	9	645
My teacher tells me when I'm doing well in my lessons (n7,354)	89	6,575	11	779
My teachers are kind to me (n7,352)	88	6,465	12	887
I feel safe in my school (n7,365)	87	6,382	13	983
I like going to school (n7,377)	68	5,041	32	2,336
When something goes wrong in school, I always tell the teacher (n7,347)	64	4,694	36	2,653

Bases vary due to missing responses

In order to explore satisfaction with school in more detail, we created a new scaled variable ranging from zero (pupil responded no to all six statements) to six (pupil responded yes to all six statements). High scores implied high levels of satisfaction with school. The average (mean) score was 4.8¹⁶ - the top end of the scale. The majority of the sample said yes to between four and all six statements (85%, n6319) whilst 15% (n1,114) fell within the bottom end of the scale, scoring between zero and three.

With the exception of ethnic group, there were significant differences in levels of satisfaction with school within the key demographic groups. These are discussed below, and tabulated in table 5.2.

Sex and year group

Girls reported statistically significantly higher levels of satisfaction with school than boys. With regards to the different year groups, the tendency was that the higher the year group the lower the reported levels of satisfaction with school.

Household structure

Pupils from two birth and lone parent households reported the highest levels of satisfaction with school whilst those from reconstituted families reported the lowest¹⁷.

All these significant findings are presented in the table below.

¹⁶ Standard deviation, 1.3

¹⁷ Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) using pair-wise comparisons in cases with more than two groups; p<.001

Table 5.2 Satisfaction with school, by sex, year group, ethnicity and household structure; mean scores on a scale, by various sub-groups		
	Mean	sd
Sex		
Girls (n3,640)	5.11***	1.14
Boys (n 3,771)	4.54	1.41
Year groups		
Year 3 (n1,641)	5.02***	1.31
Year 4 (n1,599)	4.98	1.27
Year 5 (n2,026)	4.73	1.31
Year 6 (n2,149)	4.62	1.32
Ethnic group		
Indian (n92)	5.07*	1.27
Bangladeshi (n204)	4.96	1.28
Pakistani (n780)	4.92	1.23
White (n5069)	4.82	
Black (n676)	4.73	1.30
Chinese (n44)	4.68	1.34
Mixed (n258)	4.62	1.41
Other (n166)	4.78	1.28
Household structure		
Two birth parents (n4,938)	4.86***	1.29
Lone parent household (n1,652)	4.80	1.30
Reconstituted family (n720)	4.58	1.48
Other (n123)	4.80	1.60
All (n7,411)	4.80	1.30

T-test (2 groups) ANOVA (more than two groups) * p<.05; ** p<.01; ***p<.001

Truancy and disruptive behaviour at school

High levels of truancy and disruptive behaviour have been shown in many studies to be risk factors for antisocial behaviour. As discussed in the previous section, research has shown that children who feel alienated from school are at increased risk of involvement in crime and other antisocial behaviour (Graham, 1988). Truancy is an obvious and measurable indicator of pupil alienation that is strongly associated with juvenile crime and delinquency (Youth Justice Board, 2001). However, the association between truancy and delinquency is not a straightforward matter of cause and effect. While truancy can lead to delinquency, it is likely that delinquency can lead to truancy as well (Graham, 1988). As with truancy, disruptive behaviour at school is especially visible in the school environment. In the *Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development*, children's disruptive behaviour at ages 8 to 10 (primary school years), as rated by teachers and classmates, was the strongest individual 'predictor' of later delinquency (West 1982).

In the present study, pupils were presented with two items related to bad or disruptive behaviour at school and one item related to truancy in the past year (statements and responses are shown in table 5.3). As the table shows, 89% of the pupils reported that they

had never truanted. However, 5% (one in twenty pupils) had truanted from school once in the past year and the same proportion had truanted from school more than once in the past year. Given that we are talking about primary school children (those aged between seven and eleven) it is worrying that one in ten pupils reported that they had managed to truant from school one or more times without either a parent or teacher knowing. Further research is needed to find out how this is possible, where these children go, why these pupils choose not to go to school and what these young children do when missing from school. We already know that the likelihood of involvement in antisocial behaviour is higher amongst those who display problematic behaviour early on and miss parts of their education.

The vast majority of the sample (92%) reported that they had never been sent home from school as a result of bad behaviour. In comparison, sixteen percent of the pupils reported that a 'grown up from home' had been called to school once or more than once on account of bad behaviour at school by the child. Further research is needed to highlight what types of bad behaviour merit parents being called into primary schools.

	Never		Once		More than once	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
Sent home from school for being naughty (n7,355)	92	6810	5	334	3	211
Taken time off school without notifying a grown up at home or a teacher (n7,128)	89	6637	5	376	5	339
Had a grown up from home called to school for being naughty (n6,238)	82	6114	9	679	7	115

Bases vary due to missing responses

Using the self-reported frequency of truanting we created a scale to enable us to explore differences between groups more easily. Scores on the scale ranged from zero (never truanted in the past year) to two (truanted more than once in the past year). The mean average score on the scale for all children was just above zero (0.14). There were significant differences on this scale by sex of the child, age and household structure but not by ethnic group for rates of truanting. These are discussed below.

Sex and year group

Boys reported significantly higher levels of truancy rates than girls. Truancy is strongly associated with disruptive behaviour, which as we shall see later was also highest amongst boys. For example, Graham (1988) provided evidence of a significant overlap between pupils who regularly truant and those whose behaviour is rated disruptive by teachers. It is not surprising therefore that in this study, boys reported higher levels of truancy than girls.

However, self-reported rates of truanting were highest amongst Year Three pupils, which on the face of it seems surprising. The finding that truancy was highest amongst this group seems inconsistent with the finding reported earlier that younger children are more highly supervised by parents than older children. There are two possible explanations for this finding. The first is that younger pupils could have misunderstood the question (which was comparatively long and complex). However, as we shall show later, though in general most risk factors were lowest for younger pupils and highest for older ones, one risk factor – being bullied – reached its highest level amongst the Year Three pupils. It is therefore plausible that the high figures for truancy may be accurate, and that they reflect younger children’s tendency to avoid school because of fear of victimisation.

Household structure

Pupils living in reconstituted households reported statistically significantly higher levels of truancy than pupils from two and lone parent households. This result may be associated with family supervision, in that children from step families also reported lower levels of supervision at home.

	Mean	sd
Sex		
Boys (n3,724)	0.20***	0.53
Girls (n3,608)	0.09	0.36
Year group		
Year 3 (n1,613)	0.23*	0.58
Year 4 (n1,588)	0.14	0.45
Year 5 (n2,014)	0.13	0.43
Year 6 (n2,119)	0.10	0.38
Household structure		
Reconstituted family (n716)	0.21**	0.56
Two birth parents (n4,882)	0.13	0.45
Lone parent household (n1,634)	0.14	0.45
Other (n120)	0.18	0.49
All (7,332)	0.14	0.46

T-test (2 groups) ANOVA (more than two groups) * p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Disruptive behaviour at school: differences between sub groups

Based on pupils’ responses to the two items related to bad behaviour at school¹⁸ we created a new scaled variable for ‘disruptive behaviour’. Responses were scored as follows: *Never* = zero, *once* = 1 and *more than once* = 2, so that higher scores indicated more disruptive behaviour. The sample mean was 0.24 – just above zero. Over four fifths (82%) of the pupils answered *never* to both statements; 13% of the pupils were disruptive to some extent (said yes to one of the statements); and five percent said *yes* to both statements.

¹⁸ ‘Sent home from school for being naughty’ and ‘had a grown up from home called at school’.

Sex and year group

Boys reported statistically significantly higher levels of disruptive behaviour at school than girls. Supportive of these findings is evidence coming from studies that have found that early and persistent disruptive behaviour at school is particularly related to sex, with boys reporting or engaging in significantly more disruptive behaviour at school than girls (e.g. Youth Justice Board, 2002). Looking at the school year of the pupils, the general tendency found was that as age increased (year group) so did levels of disruptive behaviour, which again is consistent with a large body of previous research.

Ethnicity

Black pupils reported the highest levels of disruptive behaviour when compared to all other ethnic groups.

Household structure

With regards to household type, pupils living in reconstituted households reported statistically significantly higher levels of disruptive behaviour than pupils living in lone parent and two parent households.

Table 5.5 Disruptive behaviour at school; mean scores on a scale, by various sub-groups		
Sex	Mean	sd
Boys (n3,771)	0.37***	0.64
Girls (n3,640)	0.09	0.34
Year group		
Year 6 (n2,149)	0.29***	0.59
Year 5 (n2,026)	0.25	0.55
Year 4 (n1,599)	0.20	0.49
Year 3 (n1,641)	0.16	0.43
Ethnic group		
Black (n676)	0.31***	0.57
Mixed (n258)	0.28	0.57
White (n5069)	0.24	0.54
Pakistani (n780)	0.21	0.50
Chinese (n44)	0.20	0.55
Indian (n92)	0.12	0.42
Bangladeshi (n204)	0.11	0.37
Other (n166)	0.17	0.45
Household structure		
Reconstituted family (n720)	0.34***	0.62
Two birth parents (n4,938)	0.20	0.50
Lone parent household (n1,652)	0.28	0.58
Other (n123)	0.31	0.62
All (n7,433)	0.24	0.53

T-test (2 groups) ANOVA (more than two groups) * p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Bullying and victimisation

Bullying, defined by Farrington (1993a) as ‘the repeated oppression of a less powerful person by a more powerful one’, is a common problem that also indicates an increased risk of offending and violent behaviour in later life. For example, Olweus (1991) found that 60% of known school bullies in Norway had been convicted of criminal offences by age 24 and that bullies were four times more likely to become repeat offenders than non-bullies. The *Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development* found boys who were bullies as teenagers also tended to be bullies as adults. Childhood factors that distinguished them from non-bullies included low achievement in primary school, having criminal parents, physical and emotional neglect, and having low levels of father involvement. It has also been found that while boys tend to be bullied by other boys, girls are as likely to be bullied by boys as other girls.

As a means of establishing the extent of bullying and other sorts of victimisation in the primary schools we asked pupils six questions about different forms of bullying that they may have experienced in the last week (table 5.7). The responses showed that although 87% had said they felt ‘safe’ in school (table 5.1), a high proportion had fallen victim to one or more incidences of bullying in the recent past. The most common reported forms of bullying were physical in nature with slightly more than one in every three pupils reporting that another pupil had attempted to *kick, hurt* or *hit* them in the past week. Over a quarter had been threatened with physical violence (*‘said they’d beat me up’*), over one in seven had said another pupil had tried to damage their possessions, and one in ten said another pupil had tried to force them to hand over money. The results are displayed in the table below.

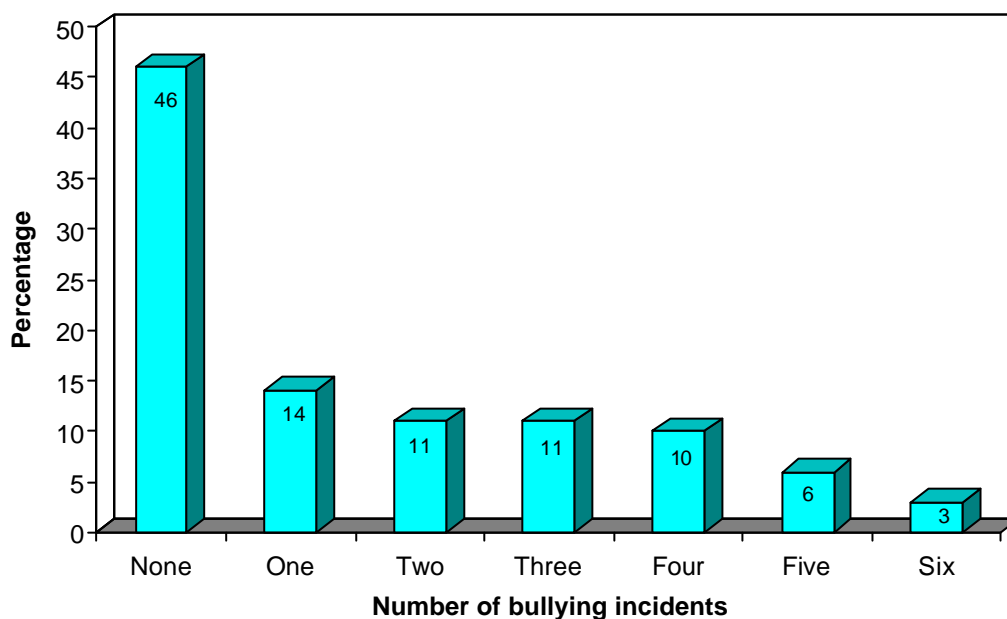
Another pupil.....	Once or more		Never	
	%	n	%	n
Tried to kick me (n7,381)	36	2665	64	4716
Tried to hurt me (n7,353)	34	2511	65	4842
Tried to hit me (n7,299)	34	2456	66	4843
Said they’d beat me up (n7,338)	28	2074	72	5264
Tried to break something of mine (n7,278)	15	1085	85	6193
Tried to make me give them money (n7,345)	11	787	89	6558

Bases vary due to missing responses

Based on the responses to all six statements about being bullied in the past week we created a new scaled variable to measure bullying and victimisation, scaled as follows: *Never* = zero,

and *once or more than once* = 1, so that scores could range from zero (never experienced any of the types of bullying) to 6 (experienced each type at least once in the past week). The sample mean was 1.56, so that on average pupils reported experiencing between one and two of the six forms of bullying in the last week. The chart below shows the proportion of pupils who said that they had not experienced any of the six forms of bullying in the last week. It also shows the pupils who said they had experienced one, two, three, four, five or all six forms of bullying in the last week at least once.

Chart 5.1 **Bullying and victimisation experienced in last week**



Base = 7,433

Sex and year group

Further analysis showed that boys reported higher levels of being bullied and victimised than girls. The fact that more boys are bullies than girls and that boys tend to be mostly bullied by other boys (e.g. Farrington, 1978) may help to explain this finding.

Looking at the different school year groups, it was found that bullying and victimisation was more prevalent in the lower than in the higher year groups. In particular, Year Six pupils reported significantly lower levels of bullying and victimisation than all other year groups whilst pupils in Year Three reported the highest levels. It is plausible that high rates of bullying and victimisation amongst Year Three pupils could be an explanation for the unexpectedly high rates of truancy amongst this year group. If there is found to be a link between high rates of bullying and victimisation and truanting from school then schools, families and the government need to address this issue.

No statistically significant differences were noted according to ethnicity.

Household structure

Moving on to pupils from different types of households, an important finding was that pupils from two parent households reported the lowest levels of bullying and victimisation compared to pupils from lone parent and reconstituted households.

	Mean	sd
Sex		
Boys (n3,771)	1.78***	1.88
Girls (n3,640)	1.32	1.70
Year group		
Year 3 (n1,641)	1.78***	1.89
Year 4 (n1,599)	1.69	1.83
Year 5 (n2,026)	1.56	1.81
Year 6 (n2,149)	1.28	1.69
Household structure		
Reconstituted family (n720)	1.91***	1.96
Lone parent household (n1,652)	1.64	1.85
Two birth parents (n4,938)	1.47	1.77
Other (n123)	1.70	1.22
All (n7,411)	1.56	1.81

T-test (2 groups) A NOVA (more than two groups) * p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Problem and challenging behaviour

Primary school pupils in this study were presented with a group of statements to ascertain whether they displayed what we might term 'challenging' behaviour at home, at school and in general (table 5.9 below). Of course, the questions used in the survey may be more indicative of young age rather than seriously deviant or abnormal behaviour, but they perhaps give an indication of children's proneness to more hostile and aggressive or antisocial behaviour in the future.

The questions posed to children included whether they were generally sociable, with good peer relationships; the extent to which they '*got angry easily*' at home or at school; the extent to which they liked to have their own way whatever the consequences; and the extent to which they thought friends perceived them as badly behaved. In the main the pupils indicated that they enjoyed being with their friends (95%, n7014), though five percent (n340) indicated they did not. Three fifths of the sample described themselves as being prone to angry outbursts, by reporting that they got angry easily *at home* and *at school*. Almost one in every three pupils indicated that they liked having their own way even if it they knew it would get them into trouble. Furthermore, one fifth of young people said that their friends thought they were naughty.

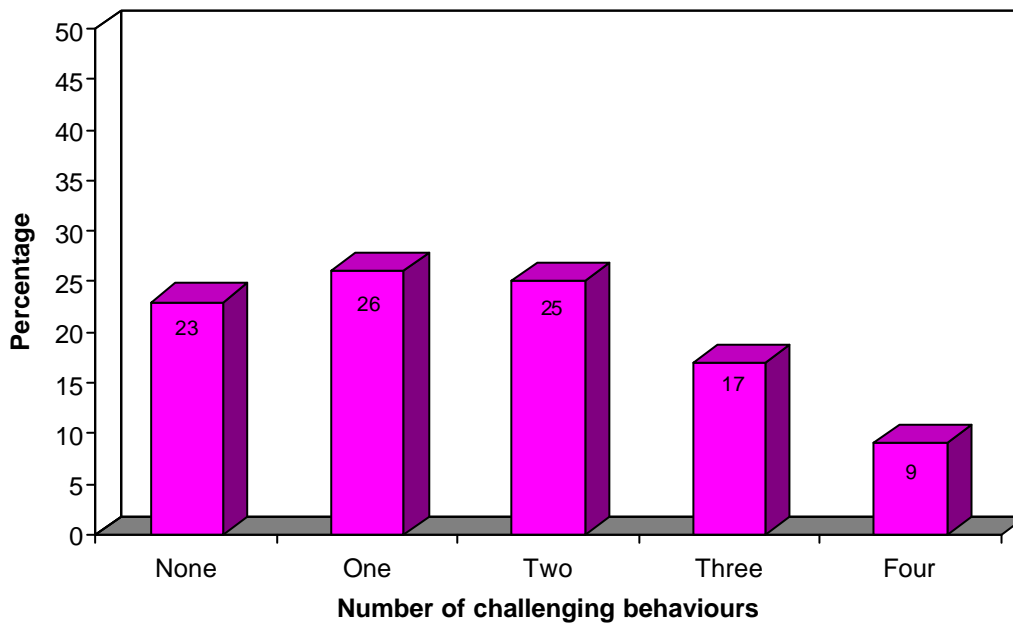
These results are presented in the table below.

Table 5.8 Challenging behaviour				
	Yes		No	
	%	n	%	n
I get angry easily at home (n 7,381)	61	4476	39	2905
I get angry easily at school (n 7,395)	46	3401	54	3994
I like to have my own way, even if it gets me into trouble (n 7,363)	34	2520	66	4843
My friends think I am naughty (n 7,291)	22	1653	76	5638

Bases vary due to missing responses

In order to create a composite scale reflecting challenging behaviour, we combined the *yes* responses to the four statements shown above. Scores on the scale ranged from zero to four, with high scores indicating higher rates of challenging behaviour. The mean score on the scale was 1.6 (sd1.3). The results are displayed in the chart below.

Chart 5.2 Problematic and challenging behaviour



Base = 7,433

Sex and year group

Boys reported significantly higher levels of challenging behaviour than girls, just as they did on our measure of disruptive behaviour in school.

In the main, pupils from each year groups reported similar levels of challenging behaviour, with the exception of pupils in Year Three whose levels of challenging behaviour were substantially higher than those for Year Six pupils. The fact that these results run in the opposite direction to those reported for disruptive behaviour in school tends to support our suggestion that these items were probably measuring 'immature behaviour' rather than anything more worrying.

Ethnicity

In general, pupils from an Indian background reported moderately lower levels of challenging behaviour than the rest of the groups. On the other hand, pupils from 'mixed' backgrounds reported the highest; the only statistically significant difference.

Household structure

Key differences were apparent when type of household was concerned. Pupils from reconstituted families had the most challenging behaviour and those from two birth parent households had the least. Pupils from lone parent households scored somewhere in the middle and reported statistically significantly higher levels of challenging behaviour than pupils from two parent households and statistically significantly lower than pupils from reconstituted households. These results suggest that living in a non-conventional household (e.g. reconstituted, single parent household or 'other' type) may be a risk factor of challenging behaviour.

Table 5.9 Challenging behaviour; mean scores on a scale, by various sub-groups			
Sex		Mean	sd
	Boys (n 3,771)	1.83***	1.29
	Girls (n 3,640)	1.40	1.18
Year group			1.26
	Year 3 (n 1,641)	1.68*	
	Year 4 (n 1,599)	1.65	1.26
	Year 5 (n 2,026)	1.61	1.23
	Year 6 (n 2,149)	1.55	1.28
Ethnic group			
	Mixed (n258)	1.77*	1.27
	Black (n676)	1.72	1.26
	White (n5069)	1.62	1.26
	Pakistani (n780)	1.62	1.27
	Bangladeshi (n204)	1.43	1.18
	Chinese (n44)	1.32	1.14
	Indian (n92)	1.27	1.12
	Other (n166)	1.54	1.26
Household structure			
	Reconstituted family (n 720)	1.89***	1.28
	Lone parent household (n 1,652)	1.70	1.27
	Two birth parents (n 4,938)	1.55	1.25
	Other (n123)	1.88	1.28
	All (n7,411)	1.62	1.26

T-test (2 groups) ANOVA (more than two groups) * p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Antisocial attitudes

In this study, primary school pupils were asked four questions to explore whether they held antisocial attitudes. This was measured by asking pupils how wrong they felt it would be for others of the same age to engage in three different types of antisocial behaviours: underage smoking, stealing (from home or from a shop) or fighting. Almost all the pupils regarded the aforementioned activities amongst others of the same age as wrong. However, a moderately high proportion of pupils (11%, one in ten) reported that they did not feel it was wrong to *start a fight*, and 29% (one in three) said it was only a bit wrong to *start a fight*, suggesting that amongst primary school children fighting is seen as considerably more acceptable than either smoking or stealing. The results are displayed in table 5.11.

Table 5.10 Antisocial attitudes						
How wrong is it for someone your age to...	Not wrong		A bit wrong		Very wrong	
	%	n	%	n	%	n
... smoke cigarettes (n 7,384)	3	226	4	298	93	6860
...steal something from somebody (n 7,377)	3	206	11	795	86	6376
... steal something from a shop (n 7,367)	3	227	6	447	91	6693
... start a fight (n 7,320)	11	778	29	2152	60	4390

Bases very due to missing responses

Based on these four attitude items we created a new scaled variable to measure antisocial attitudes, counting all 'very wrong' responses as a score of zero on each item, 'a bit wrong' as a score of one, and 'not wrong' as a score of two on each item. Thus the higher the score overall, the more antisocial the attitudes, and the lower the score, the less antisocial the attitudes. The maximum score on the new scale was eight (all four items 'not wrong') and the lowest score was zero (all four items 'very wrong'). Overall, the mean (average) score was 0.89 (sd1.44) and 55% of the sample as a whole (n4,093) scored zero on the scale (ie, they rated all items as 'very wrong'). Amongst the primary schools sample, only 76 children (under 1% of the sample overall) scored eight on the new scale.

Sex and year group

Looking at group differences according to sex, boys reported more antisocial attitudes than girls. In terms of age, it was found that the higher the year group the more antisocial the attitudes. All year groups differed statistically significantly from each other in terms of antisocial attitudes suggesting that antisocial attitudes are also strongly a function of age. These results are supportive of previous studies who found that boys are more likely to express antisocial attitudes and that the move from primary to secondary education will be accompanied by more antisocial attitudes (e.g. Huizinga et al, 1994).

Ethnicity

With regards to ethnic background, Bangladeshi pupils reported the least antisocial attitudes, whereas pupils from mixed heritage backgrounds reported the most. In particular, Bangladeshi pupils scored significantly lower on the antisocial attitudes scale than those who described their ethnicity as of mixed heritage, White and Black.

Household structure

Pupils living in reconstituted households reported the highest levels of antisocial attitudes whilst those from two parent households reported the lowest.

Table 5.11 Antisocial attitudes; mean scores on a scale, by various sub-groups			
Sex		Mean	sd
	Boys (n 3,746)	1.16***	1.64
	Girls (n 3,627)	0.61	1.13
Year group			
	Year 6 (n 2,144)	0.98***	1.37
	Year 5 (n 2,022)	0.97	1.46
	Year 4 (n 1,599)	0.84	1.47
	Year 3 (n 1,611)	0.72	1.48
Ethnic group			.75
	Mixed (n256)	1.10***	1.58
	White (n5061)	0.93	1.48
	Black (n672)	0.85	1.50
	Chinese (n44)	0.82	1.77
	Pakistani (n770)	0.69	1.31
	Indian (n91)	0.69	1.18
	Bangladeshi (n193)	0.58	1.03
	Other (n164)	0.84	1.36
Household structure			
	Reconstituted family (n716)	1.07**	1.56
	Two birth parents (n4,910)	0.85	1.40
	Lone parent household (n1,652)	0.90	1.49
	Other (n123)	1.02	1.66
	All (n7,373)	0.89	1.44

T-test (2 groups) ANOVA (more than two groups) * p<.05; ** p<.01; ***p<.001

Antisocial peers

A number of questions in the questionnaire asked children about their peers, with the aim of establishing the extent to which children were associating with antisocial peers (a known risk factor for later offending, see e.g. Rutter, Giller and Hagell 1998) as opposed to well-behaved or pro-social friends.

Table 5.13 shows the results for the sample, overall, excluding those children who (perhaps quite reasonably) responded they 'did not know' to the questions as well as those whose responses were missing altogether.

Table 5.12 Peer behaviour				
Have any of your best friends:	Yes		No	
	%	n	%	n
Been helpful to other people (n6,846)	90	6,183	10	663
Been given a prize at school for being good (n6,374)	89	5,673	11	701
Been sent home from school because they were naughty (n6,553)	24	1,537	77	5,016
Tried to steal something (n6,306)	23	1,413	78	4,893
Smoked cigarettes (n6,562)	18	1,178	82	5,384
Been in trouble with the police (n6,103)	20	1,206	80	4,897

Bases vary due to missing responses

Combining *yes* responses to the reports on the four antisocial behaviour items enabled us to create new composite measure of ‘antisocial peers’, where higher scores implied peers with more antisocial behaviours. Overall, the mean (average) score on the new scale was just less than one (0.74¹⁹), with most children who answered the questions scoring zero (no antisocial peers, 59%, n4,303). Just less than four percent of children (n283) who answered all the questions scored four, indicating that they had peers who engaged in all four bad behaviours.

Sex and year group

Consistent with the results in earlier section of this report, boys reported significantly greater numbers of antisocial peers than girls. Similarly, scores on the scale rose with increasing age of children, with Year Six pupils reporting the highest scores.

Ethnic group

Ethnic group variations on the scale were substantial, with mixed heritage pupils reporting the greatest levels of antisocial peers, and Chinese, Bangladeshi and Indian children reporting the lowest.

Household structure

Once again, children from reconstituted families scored highest on this risk factor scale, followed by those from lone parent households. Those from two birth parents households had the lowest levels of antisocial peers.

¹⁹ Sd 1.09

Table 5.13 Antisocial peer behaviour; mean scores on a scale, by various sub-groups			
Sex		Mean	sd
	Boys (n 3,654)	0.99***	1.21
	Girls (n 3,570)	0.47	0.89
Year group			1.26
	Year 6 (n 2,104)	0.86***	1.18
	Year 5 (n 1,967)	0.71	1.09
	Year 4 (n 1,562)	0.66	1.04
	Year 3 (n 1,596)	0.67	1.02
Ethnic group			
	Mixed (n251)	0.94***	1.16
	White (n4,941)	0.77	1.13
	Black (n676)	0.73	1.02
	Pakistani (n763)	0.61	1.02
	Indian (n92)	0.54	0.95
	Bangladeshi (n196)	0.45	0.90
	Chinese (n44)	0.34	0.71
	Other (n161)	0.71	1.10
Household structure			
	Reconstituted family (n720)	0.95***	1.24
	Two birth parents (n4,938)	0.66	1.04
	Lone parent household (n1,652)	0.79	1.12
	Other (n123)	0.74	1.09
	All (7,224)	0.72	1.09

T-test (2 groups) ANOVA (more than two groups) * p<.05; ** p<.01; ***p<.001

Summary

In this section we have explored various aspects of children's life, behaviour and experiences at school. As in the previous section the picture was mainly positive in nature with the majority of the sample reporting high levels of satisfaction with school and low levels of truancy, disruptive and challenging behaviour. The majority of the sample also held positive attitudes. For example, when asked to comment on how *wrong* they felt it would be for others their age to engage in a number of antisocial acts, such as stealing and smoking – most said it would be *very wrong*. Most of the sample also considered their peers to be pro-social.

Despite this overall positive picture, some statistically significant group differences did emerge. Firstly, girls reported higher levels of satisfaction with school than boys, whilst boys reported higher levels of both challenging and disruptive behaviour, higher rates of truancy and held more antisocial attitudes than the girls. Furthermore, boys reported higher levels of antisocial peers, when compared to girls.

With regards to year group, there were particular differences between those from the lowest (Year three, aged seven) and highest (Year six, aged eleven) year groups. We found that pupils in Year three reported higher levels of satisfaction with school but also greater incidences of bullying and victimisation and levels of truancy from school than those in

Year six. Conversely, those in Year six reported higher levels of disruptive and challenging behaviour, antisocial attitudes and antisocial peers when compared to those in Year three.

Differences between the responses of those from various ethnic backgrounds also became apparent. Of all the ethnic groups, pupils who described themselves as Black reported higher levels of disruptive behaviour at school. Pupils who described themselves as of mixed heritage background were the group most likely, when compared to the other ethnic groups, to report challenging behaviour and antisocial peers. Moreover, mixed heritage pupils reported higher levels of antisocial attitudes, when compared to all other ethnic groups.

Finally, analysis by household structure in relation to school life, experiences and behaviours highlighted a number of differences. The most notable differences were between the responses of pupils from reconstituted or 'step' families and those from two birth parent households. For example, pupils from two birth parent households reported greater levels of satisfaction with school, when compared to the other household types. In contrast, pupils from reconstituted families reported higher levels of disruptive and challenging behaviour and higher rates of truancy. Those from reconstituted families also reported higher levels of antisocial attitudes and antisocial peers, when compared to the other household types. This finding shows that pupils from reconstituted or 'step' families may be substantially more at risk than children from other types of households for problems that may hinder their involvement and enjoyment in school life.

Section Six: Constructive use of leisure time and perceptions of the local neighbourhood

Constructive use of leisure time

When the Labour government came into power in 1997, reducing youth crime was at the forefront of their agenda. In 2001, analysis based on data collected by the Metropolitan Police (Communities that care, 2001) found that a large proportion of youth crime was committed immediately after school finishes, and that 30% of offences committed by youths happened between 3:30 and 6pm. The types of offences included shoplifting, criminal damage, possession of cannabis and robbery. Although the majority of these offences were committed by secondary school aged young people, a proportion of primary aged children were also involved. One explanation for the worrying number of young children engaging in criminal offences and antisocial acts may be boredom and a lack of inexpensive activities to engage in after school. For example, recently McKeganey (2004) found that a significant proportion of 10-12 year olds smoked cannabis after school. When the young people were asked why, most claimed they had few other options for spending their leisure time.

The primary schools survey explored pupils' use of leisure time, focusing on what types of activities pupils generally engaged in during the evenings after school. Pupils were asked '*what sort of things do you do in the evenings after school?*' out of a list of fifteen activities.

	Yes		No	
	%	n	%	n
Watching television (n7,354)	92	6800	8	554
Homework (n7,318)	84	6130	16	1188
Helping around the house (n7,310)	76	5544	24	1766
Playing on computer at home (n7,315)	77	5603	23	1712
Reading (n7,319)	72	5270	28	2049
Visiting a friend's home (n7,275)	70	5070	30	2205
Playing a sport (n7,311)	57	4190	43	3121
Swimming (n7,269)	49	3559	51	3710
Attending an after school club (n7,334)	40	2926	60	4408
Visiting a library (other than school library) (n7,318)	36	2623	64	4631
Baby-sitting (n7,178)	25	1796	75	5382
Work (e.g. paper round, helping in a shop) (n7,318)	20	1431	80	5797
Attending a junior youth club (n7,228)	15	1129	83	6141
Member of a brownies, cubs, scouts, guides (n7,234)	13	960	87	6274
Other (n6,101)	44	2678	56	3423

Bases vary due to missing responses.

The table shows that by far the most common after school activity amongst the primary school sample was watching television (92%), an activity that has steadily increased amongst this age group in the last decade and has become an issue of concern for policy makers and practitioners. In 2003 the Broadcasting Standards Commission conducted an analysis of children's viewing habits, according to BARB figures. They found that children aged between four and 14 averaged around two hours of television per day, and those with multi-channels (satellite or cable television) averaged around two and a half hours per day.

The second most common activity was completing homework (84%). The least common after school activities were attending brownies, cubs, scouts, guides or junior youth club. However, the low participation rates could be a reflection of what was available in the areas.

To explore differences amongst groups we created a simple scaled variable that counted the number of different activities reported by children. Of course, this is a crude measure and a purely quantitative one, and more is not necessarily better. Also, since the list of the activities in the questionnaire was diverse, the simple summative scale combines activities of qualitatively different types (for example, paid work and playing on a computer). Note that we excluded the item 'watching TV' since almost all children reported doing this (and it is also the case that arguably, television watching may not necessarily be 'constructive' in the way that most of the other activities on the list are).

Overall, not including television watching, the average (mean) number of different activities engaged in during the evenings after school by children was 6.58²⁰. Scores on a cumulative scale ranged from zero (under 2% of children, who reported no activities apart from watching television), to 14 (under 1% who reported engaging in all the activities on the list).

Analysis of each of the items by group membership showed significant differences between the groups²¹. These are discussed below.

Sex and year group

Girls reported engaging in a wider range of activities than boys, as table 6.2 shows. There were also statistically significant differences on some of the item responses given by girls and boys, revealing some perhaps surprisingly 'traditional' gender differences. For example, boys were significantly more likely than girls to report that they would attend a junior youth club, use a computer and participate in sports. Girls, on the other hand were more likely to report attending an after school club, brownies (or guides), going to the library, reading, helping around their house and baby-sitting.

With regards to Year group, pupils in Year Six were more likely (and statistically significantly more likely than Year Three pupils) to report attending an after school club and junior youth club, play a sport, watch television, do homework, help at home and go to their friends house.

²⁰ Sd 2.57

²¹ χ^2 ; ***p<.001

In contrast, Year Three pupils were more likely to attend brownies or cubs. Of the four primary school year groups those in Year Four were significantly more likely to report reading or visiting a library.

Ethnicity

Amongst the different ethnic groups there were a range of statistically significant findings. Overall, Black and mixed heritage children reported the widest range of activities of all groups, and Indian and Bangladeshi children reported the least. Indian pupils were the group most likely to report that they did their homework after school, whilst Pakistani pupils were the group most likely to report visiting a library after school. Pupils who described themselves as Black were significantly more likely to report helping around the home and babysitting. Also, pupils who described themselves as Black and those who described themselves as White were more likely than the other ethnic groups to say that they played a sport after school. White pupils were also more likely to report attending an after school or junior youth club, brownies, cubs, scouts or guides, swimming, use of computer and going to a friend's house.

There were no significant differences between the groups in the range of activities undertaken with regards to household structure.

Table 6.2 Out of school activities; mean scores on a scale, by various sub-groups		
Sex	Mean	sd
Girls (n3,640)	6.73***	2.50
Boys (n3,771)	6.43	2.62
Year group		
Year 6 (n2,149)	6.77***	2.30
Year 5 (n2,026)	6.60	2.54
Year 4 (n1,599)	6.59	2.61
Year 3 (n1,641)	6.27	3.87
Ethnic group		
Black (n676)	6.83***	2.71
Mixed (n258)	6.65	2.70
White (n5069)	6.59	2.49
Pakistani (n780)	6.61	2.85
Chinese (n44)	6.02	2.88
Indian (n91)	5.93	2.34
Bangladeshi (n204)	5.85	2.83
Other (n166)	6.80	2.28
All (n7,411)	6.58	2.57

T-test (2 groups) ANOVA (more than two groups) * p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Local neighbourhood

Neighbourhoods provide the places and the context for children to develop. Low ‘neighbourhood attachment’ for example has been seen as a risk factor in that where there is little sense of community, low parent participation in schools, lack of trust between neighbours and low informal social control rates of crime, child maltreatment and other social problems tend to be higher (see Ghate and Hazel 2002 for a discussion). Children’s negative perceptions of their local neighbourhood may place them at increased risk of involvement in crime, including violence (e.g. Farrington, 1991). According to Farrington (1996), an interaction of neighbourhood, individual, family and peer factors may help to explain the higher proportion of youth offenders found in some disadvantaged areas. Supportive of this argument is evidence from a longitudinal study conducted by Brooks-Gunn et al (1997) who found a significant neighbourhood effect on youth offending after controlling for other influences. The study suggested that locality was most influential on children’s behaviour around the time they enter school and then in late adolescence. In addition, a longitudinal study conducted by Sampson et al (1997) also found a strong association between criminality and living in areas that lacked social cohesion and informal social control.

Although the primary schools survey was not able to measure ‘social cohesion’ as such, pupils were presented with a number of statements associated with perceptions of their neighbourhood. Items were related to safety, cleanliness, play spaces and neighbours. As shown in the table below, four out of five pupils (81%) reported that they *liked living where they live* and that grown ups in the neighbourhood were *friendly* to them. Almost three quarters of the pupils reported that they felt safe when they played in the neighbourhood (72%) and that the play areas near them were safe (72%). However, a substantial number of pupils – around a quarter – indicated that they did not feel safe when they played out and a similar number felt that there were no safe places to play near them in their local area. Views on the cleanliness of the streets in the locals areas were split, with 50% reported that the surrounding streets were not clean and 50% saying they were. Finally, a quarter of the pupils (25%) reported that they *wanted to live somewhere else*.

	Yes		No	
	%	n	%	n
I have lots of friends (n7,293)	85	6169	15	1124
I like living where I live (n7,344)	81	5951	19	1393
The grown ups who live near me are friendly (n7,301)	81	5934	19	1367
I feel safe when I play out (n7,293)	72	5323	26	1955
There are safe places to play near my home (n7,278)	72	5273	28	2024
The streets near me are clean and tidy (n7,295)	50	3649	50	3646
I want to live somewhere else (n7,228)	25	1840	75	5388

Bases vary due to missing responses

Leaving out the item *I have lots of friends* (which strictly speaking may not necessarily reflect perceptions of the local neighbourhood), we combined the other six 'neighbourhood quality' statements in a new scaled variable. The *yes* responses to five of the six remaining items were counted. The final item was reverse scored (*I want to live somewhere else*) so that those who said no were given a score of one to indicate a positive view. Higher scores on the scale meant pupils were more positive about where they lived. Pupils with a score of zero responded negatively to all six items and therefore reported extremely negative perceptions of local neighbourhood. Pupils with a score of six responded positively to all six items and therefore reported the most positive perceptions of their local neighbourhood.

In general, pupils fell within the top (positive) end of the scale. The mean average score on the scale was 4.23 (sd 1.6). Overall, only 3% (n223) of the children in the survey scored zero (had no positive views of the local neighbourhood), and over a quarter (27%, n1,978) scored six (were positive in all respects about the local neighbourhood).

Perceptions of local neighbourhood according to group membership

We also analysed perceptions of local neighbourhood according to sex, school year, ethnicity, type of household. Significant group differences are presented below.

Sex and year group

Girls were significantly more positive about the local neighbourhood than boys, and there was a clear trend for perceptions of the neighbourhood to increase in a positive direction with age. Thus, children in Year Six were more positive about their local area than the younger children.

Ethnic group

Results by ethnic group showed that Indian children were the most positive about their local area, and mixed heritage, Black and Chinese children the least positive.

Household structure

Pupils in two birth parent households appeared statistically significantly more positive about their local neighbourhood than pupils living in lone parent or from reconstituted families²².

²² χ^2 ; $p < .001$

Table 6.4 Perceptions of local neighbourhood; mean scores on a scale, by various sub-groups			
Sex		Mean	sd
	Girls (n 3,640)	4.29*	2.61
	Boys (n 3,771)	4.20	1.62
Year group			
	Year 6 (n2,149)	4.35*	1.67
	Year 5 (n2,026)	4.25	1.61
	Year 4 (n1,599)	4.23	1.59
	Year 3 (n1,641)	4.13	1.58
Ethnic group			
	Indian (n91)	4.54***	1.47
	White (n5069)	4.32	1.60
	Pakistani (n780)	4.24	1.56
	Bangladeshi (n204)	4.13	1.60
	Mixed (n258)	4.03	1.73
	Black (n676)	4.01	1.64
	Chinese (n44)	3.68	1.59
	Other (n166)	3.76	1.62
Household structure			
	Two birth parents (n4,938)	4.34***	1.58
	Reconstituted family (n720)	4.06	1.71
	Lone parent household (n1,652)	4.07	1.67
	Other (n123)	4.15	1.82
	All	4.23	1.16

T-test (2 groups) ANOVA (more than two groups) * p<.05; ** p<.01; ***p<.001

Summary

In this section we have highlighted how children spend their leisure time after school hours and explored children's perceptions of their local neighbourhood. On average children reported engaging in between six and seven different types of activities after school, not including television watching (done by more than nine in ten children). Eight in ten children did homework after school, and three quarters helped round the house. Most pupils also held positive images of their local neighbourhood.

Nonetheless, group differences were apparent. For example, we found that girls, those in Year Six and those who described their ethnicity as Black reported higher levels of constructive leisure time than all other groups. That is, these pupils reported engaging in a greater number of after school activities when compared to their counterparts. In terms of perceptions of the local neighbourhood, positive views were considerably higher amongst those of Indian backgrounds, and those from two birth parent households, and increased with age.

Section Seven: Children at risk of offending and antisocial behaviour

As has been highlighted throughout this report, the overwhelming majority of the children in the sample gave positive responses on most of the dimensions we measured. However, there was a significant minority who gave cause for concern. In this section we identify these pupils and refer to them as the 'at risk' group. These pupils were identified by looking at the scaled responses to four of the most well-established risk factors for poor outcomes in later life. The scales used were:

- Disruptive behaviour at school
- Truancy
- Antisocial attitudes
- Challenging behaviour at home and elsewhere

By looking at the mean average scores of children on these four scales, and taking account of the standard deviation, we selected a 'high risk' group to be those who were high scorers on all of these four scales. For example, earlier we reported that for 18% of the sample bad behaviour was an issue. That is, 18% had either been *sent home from school for being naughty*, or *had a grown up from home called to school because of bad behaviour*, or both. The mean average score on the 'disruptive behaviour at school' scale was 0.24 with a standard deviation of 0.53. Therefore, those who scored above 0.77 were considered, within the terms of this sample, to have a significantly higher than average levels of bad behaviour at school. For the other three constructs an 'at risk' group was identified in a similar manner. We then divided the final combined 'at risk' group into two sub-groups – they are referred to as the *intermediate risk*, and *high risk* groups.

Characteristics of the 'at risk' group

Overall, around two in five of the primary schools sample fell within the at risk group (36%, n2,725). That is, pupils scored above the mean on one, two, three or all four risk factors. The table below displays the results.

Table 7.1 The at risk group: number of risk factors on which child scored above the mean and one standard deviation		
	%	n
One	64	1,755
Two	25	671
Three	9	233
Four	2	66

Base = 2,725

The table shows that almost two thirds (64%, n1,755) of the at risk group (equivalent to a quarter of the total primary schools sample) scored above the mean on at least one of the four risk factors. We can further sub-divide the at risk pupils into two groups, indicating degree of risk. The mean average number of factors on which children scored highly in this group was one. Thus, pupils who scored one on the scale could be considered at *intermediate risk*, and those with scores between two and four on the scale therefore could be said to be at *high risk*. Almost two out of three pupils (64%, 1,755) in the total at risk group fell into the intermediate risk group. Around one out of three pupils in the total at risk group (36%, n970) were categorised in the high risk group (those who scored above between two and four on the at risk scale). This is equivalent to one in eight of the total primary schools sample. Analysis by sub-groups highlighted some statistically significant findings, which can be seen in the table below.

Table 7.2 Children at intermediate and high levels of risk				
	Intermediate risk group		High risk group	
	%	n	%	n
Sex				
Girls (n945)	77	726	23	219
Boys (n1769)	58	1022	42	747
Year group				
Year 3 (n638)	68	432	32	206
Year 4 (n595)	68	405	32	190
Year 5 (n747)	64	474	37	273
Year 6 (735)	60	440	40	295
Ethnic group				
Bangladeshi (n63)	81	51	19	12
Indian (n20)	80	16	20	4
Black (n283)	68	193	32	90
Pakistani (n295)	68	201	32	94
White (n1836)	63	1152	37	684
Chinese (n10)	60	6	40	4
Mixed (n108)	58	63	42	45
Other (n56)	75	42	25	14
Household structure				
Two birth parents (n1689)	66	1,117	34	572
Lone parent household (n650)	63	411	37	239
Reconstituted family (n333)	57	195	41	138
Other (n53)	60	32	40	21
All (n2,725)	64	1755	36	970

χ^2 tests; * p<.05; ** p<.01; ***p<.001

The table shows that boys were statistically significantly more likely to fall into the high risk group rather than the intermediate group, when compared to girls. The older pupils, those in Year Six (aged between ten and eleven), were more likely than Year Three pupils (those aged between seven and eight) to fall in the high risk group. This finding shows that pupils in the final year of primary school, at the transitional stage to secondary school, are more at risk of engaging in antisocial activities than the younger primary school year groups. A number of services and interventions in primary schools focus on this older year group and this finding shows that the resources invested in this year group are well placed, but more may still need

to be done to ensure that those embarking on the transition to secondary school are less at risk. In terms of household structure, pupils living in reconstituted or 'step' families were more likely to fall in to the high risk group than those from two birth parent households. With regards to ethnicity, most pupils who described their ethnicity as Bangladeshi or Indian did not fall into the high risk group. Of the groups that did, a statistically significant higher proportion of pupils from mixed heritage backgrounds fell into the high risk group.

The literature on risk and protective factors leads us to expect that children who report one risk factor are likely to report others, as risk factors tend to come in multiples. Conversely, we would predict that these children would report lower levels of 'protective' factors - i.e. those factors thought to mitigate the effect of risk in children's lives - than other children. In this study, factors which could be thought of as protective included high levels of parental supervision and consistency of discipline, high parental warmth and involvement, high satisfaction with school, and positive perception of the local neighbourhood. Broadly speaking this is exactly what we found in the study. There was a clear trend for risk factors to increase and protective factors to decrease on all variables with increasing 'risk' status, with the sole exception of out of school activities (where there were no significant differences between risk groups).

The results are presented in the table below.

Table 7.3 Risk and protective factors by 'at risk' status				
	Intermediate risk group		High risk group	
	Mean	sd	Mean	sd
Risk factors				
Problematic sibling behaviour	0.51	0.85	0.88^{***}	1.05
Bullying and victimisation	7.90	1.74	8.38^{***}	2.04
Antisocial peers	0.96	1.19	1.74^{***}	1.36
Protective factors				
Parental supervision and consistency in discipline	1.56^{***}	0.61	1.34	0.67
Parental warmth and involvement	2.71^{***}	1.17	2.38	1.21
Satisfaction with school	4.61^{***}	1.34	3.71	1.55
Positive perceptions of the local neighbourhood	4.01^{***}	1.65	3.68	1.73

Base = 2,725 ; T-Test; * p<.05; ** p<.01; ***p<.001

Summary

In this section we have identified a high risk group based on the sample's responses to four risk factors measured. Overall, we found that two in five primary school pupils fell into an at risk group, either intermediate or high risk. The groups that fell within the high risk group (the most extreme cases) were more likely to be boys, those in year six and pupils from mixed heritage backgrounds. This suggests that if interventions focus on these groups a difference could be achieved amongst those at-risk of future antisocial behaviours.

Section Eight: On Track services in schools - do they make a difference?

As mentioned elsewhere, the aims and objectives of the schools survey did not include looking at the impact of the On Track initiative on pupils participating in the survey, since we were not able to identify which children in the sample were and were not direct 'users' of On Track services. Also, no comparison group of schools in non-On Track areas was available for us to test differences between schools in On Track areas and schools elsewhere.

Nevertheless, although we cannot identify which pupils accessed an On Track service directly we were able to explore, to a limited extent, the impact at the school level of having an 'active' On Track service based at the school. This was possible because although all schools sampled were in On Track areas, the extent to which local On Track projects had active intervention partnerships with schools in the sample varied. Therefore, in this section we discuss the types of On Track services based or offered at the schools and look at the association, if any, of levels of On Track activity within the schools and various risk and protective factors as reported by the children.

The types of On Track services based or offered at the schools included a range of open access universal (ie any pupil could attend) and targeted services (ie, pupils are identified and invited to attend on the basis of need). Examples of services offered included breakfast clubs, mediation, emotional literacy interventions, counselling and advice services, transition support and self-esteem groups. From background data provided by the local On Track project staff, we were able to list the On Track services offered in each On Track area, and subsequently list the number of services that were based or offered by each of the schools that took part in the survey. This enabled us to do a simple count of 'number of active On Track services in the school' for each school at the time of the survey. At the time of the survey, 37 primary schools (out of 44 participating primary schools) and three middle schools (out of six) had at least one active On Track service based or offered at the school. Seven primary schools and three middle schools did not have an On Track service based at the school. The total numbers of On Track services amongst the schools sample ranged from none to thirteen. The mean average number of On Track services per school was four (with a standard deviation of three). This information tells us that schools with between one and seven On Track services had an 'average' number of services (i.e. fell within the range that was typical for this sample), and those with eight or more On Track services had a higher than average number of On Track services. Amongst this sample 26% of children (n1,937) attended a school with lower than the average number²³ of On Track services. The majority of pupils - just over three fifths (61%, n4509) - attended a school with an average²⁴ number of services

²³ Thirteen schools had lower than the average number of On Track services (six schools had no On Track services and seven schools had one On Track service).

²⁴ Thirty schools had an average number of On Track services (that is between two and seven On Track services based or offered at the school).

and 13% (n987) attended a school with a higher²⁵ than average number of On Track services. It might perhaps be hypothesised that schools in the poorest areas within the sample might be most likely to have greater levels of On Track activity. However, a check of the relationship between area-level characteristics as indicated by score on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and levels of On Track activity in schools showed no clear relationship. Thus within areas sharing the same IMD score there was substantial between-school variation, with some schools having high levels of On Track activity and others having low levels. We concluded from this simple but powerful check that levels of On Track activity were not simply a proxy measure of deprivation, but rather that they reflected some other genuine difference between individual schools in the sample.

It would be naïve to expect that simply attending a school with an On Track service – or even a higher than average level of On Track services - would result in marked difference between individual pupils on many of the risk and protective factors that we measured. For one thing, even if we know that a school has a high level of On Track provision within it, we cannot accurately determine the level of exposure to children within that school, and whilst some children will be involved directly in receiving the On Track service, for example by attending a self-esteem group, many will be only tangentially ‘exposed’ to the intervention. In technical terms, we have no way to measure the ‘dosage’ that children receive, and so cannot meaningfully attribute any differences we find within the sample as a whole to the presence or absence of On Track in school. Secondly, some factors are more likely to be directly associated with the presence of school-based interventions than others, and it would be unlikely that some of the factors would be associated at all with the presence of an On Track intervention. For example, theoretically speaking, parenting style variables that are attributes of home life (e.g family conflict, supervision) should be far less likely to be associated with services offered to children in school than variables that measure attributes of school life – for example, how children feel about school, or how they behave in school. So we would not expect to see a direct relationship between On Track services in school and varying levels of family conflict (for example), but it would seem reasonable to hypothesise that ‘school satisfaction’ and pupils’ views of their school might vary with the presence and intensity of On Track services within school.

Thus, we tested whether having a low, average or high number of active On Track services at school was associated with pupils’ satisfaction with school. A statistically significant finding emerged, in the expected direction. Pupils who attended a school with a high number of active On Track services reported statistically significantly higher levels of satisfaction with school (mean 4.93, sd 1.27) than those who attended a school with average (mean 4.82, sd 1.31) or a lower than average (mean 4.77, sd 1.37) number of services at the school²⁶. The mean number of out of school activities (excluding watching television) engaged in by children was also higher in schools with a high number of On Track services, suggesting that the presence of On Track services within schools (as we might hope) functions to increase the

²⁵ Seven schools had a higher than average number of On Track services (that is between eight and thirteen On Track services).

²⁶ Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) using pair-wise comparisons in cases with more than two groups; $p < .05$

levels of opportunities for out of school activities. Interestingly however, perceptions of the local neighbourhood got less positive with increasing level of On Track provision within schools, perhaps because On Track services acted to sensitise children to the negative aspects of their local neighbourhood, and there were no significant differences by intensity of On Track activities within school for other variables, including levels of disruptive behaviour in school, truancy or bullying for example.

Table 8.1 Satisfaction with school, Out of school activities, and Perceptions of the local neighbourhood – mean scores on scales, by level of On Track service provision in school				
	No or Low On Track provision less than eight services, n6,446		High On Track provision eight or more services, n987	
	Mean	sd	Mean	sd
Satisfaction with school	4.80	1.33	4.93**	1.27
Out of school activities	6.52	2.58	7.00***	2.53
Perceptions of local neighbourhood	4.29***	1.60	4.01	1.74

T-test for independent samples; * p<.05; ** p<.01; ***p<.001

Sex and Year group

Further analysis of differences between demographic groups on these variables revealed similar patterns for boys and girls, with the exception of satisfaction with school, where boys' school attachment increased with level of On Track provision in the school, but that of the girls was proportionately greater. Analysis by year group suggested that the relationship between the level of On Track service provision and age was statistically significantly stronger in the older two year groups, and weaker in Year Three. Whilst there were no significant changes in satisfaction with school, out of school activities or perceptions of the local neighbourhood for Year Three children, the improvements (or in the case of perceptions of the local area, the increasing negativity) were more substantial in the older year groups, especially in Years Five and Six.

Ethnicity and household structure

The picture with regard to ethnic groups is more complex analytically speaking due to the unevenness in the size of the groups, but overall the results suggested that White and Black pupils attending a school with a higher than average number of On Track services reported higher levels of participation in out of school activities and greater satisfaction with school than any other groups. These groups also reported the greatest increases in negative perceptions of the local area. Analysis by household structure suggested however that children in all three main groups (two birth parents, lone parent households and reconstituted families) all showed similar degrees of change.

Summary

Of course, the analysis presented here is necessarily crude. Simply counting numbers of services available treats all services as equal and gives no indication of the type or intensity of service provision. Nevertheless, the results are interesting, in that they suggest that by the time of the Wave Two survey, levels of On Track services in primary schools do seem to be related to higher levels of satisfaction with school and participation by children in a wider range of activities after school. The fact that levels of bad behaviour in school show no relationship to level of On Track activity may perhaps be seen as disappointing, but we cannot know what this lack of relationship really means. Our relatively simple measure may be masking other more complex relationships between services and child characteristics, for example. As we build a more comprehensive picture of what was happening in the On Track areas during this period when data from other strands of the evaluation becomes available, it may be possible to probe further beneath the surface of these intriguing results.

In the following, final, section we discuss the changes in trends that have occurred between the two waves of the primary schools surveys.

Section Nine: Changes in key variables between Wave Two and Wave One

This section explores the changes in key variables across the two waves of the On Track schools survey. The purpose of the second wave of the survey was to provide a 'snapshot' picture of those living in the twenty four On Track areas and compare this group to their Wave One counterparts. Changes between Waves would indicate changes in the pattern of need in the On Track areas over time. With the introduction and settlement of the large Area Based Initiatives such as On Track, Sure Start and the Children's Fund, we would generally hope to see a positive change in pupils' attitudes, behaviour and experiences (particularly, in the case of On Track, in factors related to school life and experiences) over the years that the initiatives have been in place. The caveat that we placed at the beginning of the previous section (that we cannot identify which particular pupils accessed an On Track service directly, and therefore cannot draw conclusion about the direct relationship between On Track and 'outcomes' for individual children) also stands here.

Sampling considerations

We explained in Section Two (Methodology) that the method of selecting schools and pupils to take part in the surveys varied between Wave One and Wave Two. Wave One aimed for (though did not quite achieve) a census design: that is the population of all children in all schools in all On Track areas. Wave Two chose a sampled design, partly for reasons of cost and partly with design considerations in mind. It should be noted that this is not a cohort (longitudinal) survey but a cross sectional survey that involves two independent samples. Of course, since in Wave Two we sampled a sub-group of schools who participated in the Wave One survey, in some cases the pupils, particularly those in Year Six, may have participated in both Waves. Thus for example, some of the pupils who were in Year Six at Wave Two would have been in Year Three during the first wave of the survey.

As a result of these features of the two survey designs, before attempting to explore whether there was any change in key variables between Wave One and Wave Two, it is important to check the demographic structure of each sample. If there were substantial differences between the proportions of children in different groups (e.g. sex, Year group), then we would need to take account of these in subsequent analyses, by weighting the sample in Wave Two to match the Wave One profile. Sampling theory tells us that the demographic make-up of the two samples should be very similar given that the two surveys (Wave One and Wave Two) were conducted in the same twenty four areas. However, it is important that this be independently verified at the outset.

Table 9.1 displays the characteristics of the pupils who participated in the Wave One and Wave Two surveys. In the main, the table shows that the Wave One and Wave Two samples were similar in terms of sex, ethnic background and household structure. The only substantial difference was the age profile of the two primary school samples. The Wave One survey had a lower proportion of pupils aged seven and a higher proportion of pupils aged

eleven when compared to the Wave Two sample. For example, at Wave One, four per cent of the sample was aged seven compared to eleven percent that was aged seven at Wave Two. At Wave One, almost a quarter of the sample (24%) was aged eleven compared to 15% aged eleven at Wave Two. However, if we look at the distribution across the Year groups this difference in age evens out, with a similar spread across each Year group. We deduce therefore that the reason for the difference in age in years (as opposed to Year group at school) is due to the timing of fieldwork for the study: the Wave One fieldwork was carried at an earlier point in the school year than the Wave Two fieldwork. Apart from this slight difference, overall we can say with confidence that the Wave Two sample was sufficiently similar to the Wave One sample not to require corrective weighting.

Table 9.1 Characteristics of the Wave One and Wave Two primary schools sample					
		Wave One		Wave Two	
		%	n	%	n
Sex	Male	50	6702	51	3771
	Female	49	6534	49	3640
	Not stated	1	129	*	22
Age	7 years	4	465	11	815
	8 years	19	2543	22	1667
	9 years	21	2917	24	1767
	10 years	30	4017	28	2079
	11 years	24	3171	15	1092
	Not stated	2	252	*	13
Year group	Year 3	19	2553	22	1647
	Year 4	20	2647	22	1600
	Year 5	30	4013	27	2034
	Year 6	30	3941	30	2150
	Not stated	2	211	*	18
Ethnicity	White	65	8621	68	5069
	Pakistani	9	1237	11	780
	Black	9	1195	9	676
	Bangladeshi	3	383	3	204
	Mixed	5	641	4	258
	Indian	2	272	1	92
	Other	3	371	2	166
	Chinese	*	46	1	44
	(I do not understand this question)	2	204	2	120
	Not stated	3	395	*	24
Household structure	Two birth parents	66	8801	66	4938
	Lone parent household	22	2869	22	1652
	Reconstituted family	10	1377	10	720
	Other	2	318	2	123

Wave One base = 13,365 Wave Two base = 7,433 (* = trace, ie <1%)

The number of pupils who completed the questionnaire in Wave Two (n7,433) was almost half the number of pupils who completed the questionnaire in Wave One (n13,365). This could potentially impact on the statistical analyses. For example, unequal sample sizes could undermine the power of statistical tests based on average scores. In order to control for unequal sample sizes, statistical analyses were performed twice. Initially, independent-sample t-tests were carried out using all pupils from Wave One and Wave Two. Then, the same t-tests were carried out using two equal sample sizes. This was performed by selecting a random sub-sample of 7,500 pupils from Wave One²⁷. Having performed the analysis twice for equal and unequal sample sizes, we compared the results and verified that there were no differences between the two analyses. Statistical outputs for equal samples were similar to statistical outputs for unequal samples. Having found no differences between the two procedures, we decided to include all pupils from Wave One in subsequent analyses, as reported below, in order to have larger number of cases when performing group-specific analyses.

The constructs that were discussed in the previous sections of this report and which were generally operationalised by means of combining questions about specific 'risk' and 'protective' factors were compared with the Wave One data in order to test any changes in trends over time. For these analyses, the methods used to derive scaled variables by combining individual questions on related themes were exactly as in the previous section of this report. We have mainly restricted the analysis to comparison of means on the scales, rather than analysis of differences on specific items, as we took the view that the scaled variables give a better overall picture of change in trends or stability in the two samples. Note that in the tables in this section, the asterisk notation (*) which appears next to the group label ('boys', 'girls' etc) indicates statistically significant change between those two groups from Wave One to Wave Two. In general, only findings in which statistically significant changes were noted over the two waves are reported.

Note that one effect of having large sample sizes is that even substantively small changes between waves result in statistically significant results. Also, as we discussed earlier, the stand-alone schools surveys cannot tell us whether the On Track initiative itself is *responsible* for any changes amongst children over the two waves. However, because the samples at both waves appear robustly representative of the wider school population in the local areas both at the school level and at the level of individual pupils, we can be reasonably confident that any changes between the two waves do provide an fair indication of genuine shifts in risk and protective factors as they appear in the community of school children in On Track areas.

²⁷ Random sample selection was performed using the random selection function in SPSS.

Children's family life

In previous sections we noted that the Wave Two sample children on the whole reported warm relationships with their family members and high levels of parental supervision and discipline. The only issue of serious concern was around adults reading at home with their children. In this section we explore whether the same pattern was true at Wave One and assess whether any changes in views and behaviour had occurred since 2001²⁸.

Parental warmth and involvement

Analysis of the two waves of data indicated that parental warmth and involvement had statistically significantly increased between Wave One and Wave Two. That is, children at Wave Two reported higher levels of parental warmth and involvement than their Wave One counterparts. Further group specific analysis was conducted in order to test whether the change was more apparent in some groups than in others. Table 9.2 displays the statistically significant findings.

Sex and year group

Both girls and boys reported higher levels of parental warmth and involvement at Wave Two than their Wave One counterparts. Earlier we reported that in Wave Two, girls reported higher levels of parental warmth and involvement than boys. This pattern also held true for the Wave One sample. However, the comparative data suggests that since Wave One the level of parental warmth and involvement has increased for both boys and girls.

There was also a statistically significant shift in reported levels of parental warmth and involvement amongst pupils in Year Six (but not in other Year groups) At Wave Two this group reported higher levels of parental warmth and involvement than their Wave One counterparts.

Ethnicity

The reported level of parental warmth and involvement also increased amongst pupils from White and Bangladeshi backgrounds. However, they significantly *decreased* amongst pupils who described their ethnicity as Black. Analysis of the data shows that the mean score on the parental warmth and involvement scale amongst Black children was 2.8 at Wave One (a mean score that was slightly higher than the sample's mean score as a whole) but at Wave Two their mean score was 2.7 (a mean score that was slightly lower than the sample's mean score as a whole). It could be argued that this substantively small decrease, although statistically significant, is not a key cause of concern. However, it is important to note this decrease and assess whether anything is changing amongst this group in terms of their relationships at home.

²⁸ Note that here we are concerned with overall shifts between Wave One and Wave Two, not the relationship between these variables and attributes of On Track provision, as analysed in Section Eight.

Household structure

In terms of household structure there was a statistically significant increase in the reported levels of parental warmth and involvement amongst children from two birth parent households, but not in other groups.

	Wave One			Wave Two		
	Mean	n	sd	Mean	n	sd
Sex						
Girls *	2.85	6,534	1.09	2.93	3,640	1.09
Boys ***	2.62	6,702	1.15	2.67	3,771	1.15
Year group						
Year 6 *	2.64	3,941	1.10	2.78	2,149	1.09
Ethnicity						
White *	2.73	8,621	1.12	2.80	5,069	1.13
Bangladeshi *	2.44	371	1.13	2.76	204	1.12
Black ***	2.80	1,195	1.10	2.70	676	1.18
Household structure						
Two birth parents *	2.78	8,801	1.10	2.85	4,938	1.10
All*	2.72	13,365	1.13	2.80	7,433	1.13

Base = 7,433 for Wave One sample; and 13,365 for Wave Two sample; T-test, * p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Supervision and discipline

Earlier we reported that amongst the Wave Two primary schools sample there was a generally high level of parental supervision and consistency of discipline²⁹, but with certain sub-groups reporting higher levels than others. Here we explore whether the same picture was apparent at Wave One. Overall, reported levels of parental supervision and discipline were higher at Wave Two than at Wave One.

Sex and year group

Levels of parental supervision and discipline were highest amongst girls than boys at both Waves. However, table 9.3 shows that since Wave One, reported levels of parental supervision and discipline had statistically significantly increased for both boys and girls. Similarly, pupils in Year Five and Six reported statistically significantly higher levels of parental supervision and discipline at Wave Two than their Wave One counterparts.

²⁹ Responses to the questions *When I'm not at home a grown up always knows where I am* and *When the grown ups in my home say no, they mean it* were combined to create a new supervision and consistency in discipline scale.

Ethnicity

Children from White backgrounds reported statistically significantly increased levels of parental supervision and consistency in discipline between Wave One and Wave Two, but children who described their ethnicity as Black reported statistically significantly *lower* levels of parental supervision and consistency in discipline at Wave Two than at Wave One.

Household structure

Positive changes were noted amongst children from both lone and two birth parent households. Reported levels of supervision and consistency in discipline increased statistically significantly amongst children from these two groups from Wave One to Wave Two.

Table 9.3 Changes in parental supervision and consistency in discipline between Wave One and Two; mean scores on a scale, by various sub-groups						
	Wave One			Wave Two		
	Mean	n	sd	Mean	n	sd
Sex						
Girls ***	1.62	6,534	0.57	1.65	3,640	0.54
Boys **	1.51	6,702	0.64	1.55	3,771	0.61
Year group						
Year 5 *	1.56	4,013	0.60	1.63	2,026	0.57
Year 6 **	1.52	3,941	0.64	1.57	2,149	0.58
Ethnicity						
White *	1.56	8,621	0.62	1.6	5,069	0.57
Black *	1.64	1,195	0.55	1.5	676	0.61
Household structure						
Lone parent household *	1.54	2,869	0.63	1.60	1,652	0.58
Two birth parents ***	1.59	8,801	0.59	1.61	4,938	0.57
All*	1.56	13,365	0.61	1.60	7,433	0.58

Base = 7,433 for Wave One sample; and 13,365 for Wave Two sample; T-test, * p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

We also explored change over time in reported levels of conflict at home and problematic sibling behaviour (that is troublesome behaviour amongst older brothers and sisters).

Conflict at home

The average scores on the scale measuring conflict at home in Wave One and Two were identical for the two Waves, indicating that there was no statistically significant changes in reported levels of conflict at home from Wave One to Wave Two for the sample as a whole or amongst specific sub-groups.

Problematic sibling behaviour

Overall there was a slight but not quite statistically significant change in reported levels of problematic sibling behaviour from Wave One to Wave Two. In addition, certain sub-group differences did emerge as reporting an increase over time.

Year group

In terms of Year group, there was a statistically significant increase from Wave One to Wave Two in reported levels of problematic sibling behaviour amongst Year Three pupils.

Ethnicity

A statistically significant increase was found in reported levels of problematic sibling behaviour amongst Black pupils. It is possible that other changes in this group's home life (ie, lower levels of parental warmth and involvement and lower levels of parental supervision and discipline) were associated with this finding. Exactly the reverse picture was found for Bangladeshi pupils, where reports of problematic sibling behaviour had statistically significantly reduced. At the beginning of this section we noted that there had been a statistically significant increase in this group's reported levels of parental warmth and involvement. It is therefore possible that increases in child-reported parental warmth and involvement could be associated with the decrease in problematic sibling behaviour.

Household structure

Pupils from reconstituted families reported a statistically significant increase in levels of problematic sibling behaviour from Wave One to Wave Two.

	Wave One			Wave Two		
	Mean	n	sd	Mean	n	sd
Year group						
Year 3***	0.36	2,553	0.72	0.42	1,641	0.79
Ethnicity						
Black***	0.32	1,195	1.69	0.40	676	0.81
Bangladeshi*	0.32	371	0.69	0.13	204	0.38
Household composition						
Reconstituted family***	0.49	1377	0.87	0.59	720	0.94
All (non-significant)	0.38	13,365	0.76	0.40	7,433	0.78

Base = 7,433 for Wave One sample; and 13,365 for Wave Two sample; T-test, * p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

School life, behaviour and experiences

During the discussion of the Wave Two data we reported high levels of satisfaction with school amongst the sample as a whole. Here we discuss whether the pattern was similar at Wave One or whether reported levels were higher or lower at Wave One than Wave Two.

Satisfaction with school

Results revealed that average scores for satisfaction with school statistically significantly increased from Wave One to Wave Two. A number of statistically significant differences between sub-groups were also visible.

Sex and year group

In both Wave One and Wave Two girls reported higher levels of satisfaction with school than boys. Nevertheless, there was a statistically significant shift in boys' levels of satisfaction with school from Wave One to Two, suggesting that a positive change had occurred for boys since the first wave of the survey in 2001.

There were also statistically significant changes for pupils in all years, except Year Three, between Wave One and Two.

Ethnicity

Pupils who described their ethnicity as White, Bangladeshi and Pakistani reported higher levels of satisfaction with school in Wave Two than in Wave One.

Household structure

Pupils who were living in both lone and two birth parent households reported statistically significantly higher levels of satisfaction with school than their Wave One counterparts. Interestingly, pupils from 'other' household structures (including those living with their grandparents or living in public care) reported much higher levels of satisfaction with school at Wave Two than at Wave One.

Table 9.5 Changes in satisfaction with school between Wave One and Two; mean scores on a scale, by various sub-groups						
	Wave One			Wave Two		
	Mean	n	sd	Mean	n	sd
Sex						
Girls *	5.00	6,534	1.17	5.11	3,640	1.14
Boys*	4.44	6,702	1.40	4.54	3,771	1.42
Year group						
Year 4 **	4.88	2,647	1.28	4.99	1,599	1.28
Year 5 *	4.62	4013	1.34	4.73	2026	1.31
Year 6**	4.52	3,941	1.29	4.63	2149	1.33
Ethnicity						
White *	4.73	8,621	1.30	4.82	5,069	1.32
Pakistani *	4.71	1,237	1.39	4.92	780	1.26
Bangladeshi *	4.59	371	1.34	4.96	204	1.28
Household structure						
Two birth parents *	4.76	8,033	1.30	4.86	4,499	1.29
Lone parent household *	4.61	2,614	1.34	4.80	1,500	1.30
Other***	4.18	936	1.87	4.80	539	1.60
All*	4.70	13,365	1.34	4.82	7,433	1.32

Base = 7,433 for Wave One sample; and 13,365 for Wave Two sample; T-test, * p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Truancy and disruptive behaviour at school

Truancy and bad behaviour at school were analysed separately. Truancy was assessed by a single item³⁰, whereas disruptive behaviour at school consisted of two items³¹. Overall, annual rates of self-reported truancy from school had statistically significantly increased from Wave One to Wave Two. Analysis by sub-groups showed that levels of truancy had also increased for particular groups.

Sex and year group

Girls reported higher levels of truancy at Wave Two than they did at Wave One. Although the mean score for girls was still lower than boys at both Waves (boys had a mean score of 0.19 at both Waves) this statistically significant increase is worrying.

Analysis by year group also revealed a statistically significant increase in truancy levels from Wave One to Wave Two, but for Year Three pupils only.

³⁰ Pupil has taken time off school without notifying a grown up at home or teacher at school.

³¹ Pupil has had a grown up from home called to school and pupil has been sent home from school for being naughty.

Ethnicity

Exploring further whether an increase in truancy levels was particularly evident in some groups, results revealed that amongst different ethnic groups, White, Pakistani and Black pupils in Wave Two reported statistically significantly higher levels of truancy than their Wave One counterparts.

Type of household

Changes in truancy levels according to household type between the two waves were apparent amongst children from two birth parent households and from reconstituted families. Pupils from these two types of households reported statistically significantly higher levels of truancy at Wave Two than at Wave One.

Table 9.6 Changes in annual rates of self-reported truancy between Wave One and Two; mean scores on a scale, by various sub-groups						
	Wave One			Wave Two		
	Mean	n	sd	Mean	n	sd
Sex						
Girls *	0.05	6,446	0.29	0.08	3,608	0.36
Year group						
Year 3 *	0.15	2,479	0.46	0.22	1,613	0.58
Ethnicity						
White ***	0.11	8,493	0.41	0.13	5,018	0.45
Pakistani ***	0.13	1,220	0.43	0.17	770	0.50
Black ***	0.10	1,168	0.38	0.15	672	0.49
Household structure						
Reconstituted family **	0.10	975	0.39	0.17	553	0.52
Two birth parents **	0.10	7,942	0.39	0.12	4,447	0.43
All*	0.12	13,124	0.42	0.14	7,352	0.46

Base = 7,433 for Wave One sample; and 13,365 for Wave Two sample; T-test, * p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

With regards to disruptive behaviour at school, however, overall there was a significant reduction in reported levels for the sample as a whole. That is, at Wave Two fewer pupils reported that a parent had been called to school for children's bad behaviour, and fewer pupils reported that they had been sent home from school due to bad behaviour; see table 9.7.

Table 9.7 Changes in disruptive behaviour at school between Wave One and Two; mean scores on a scale, by various sub-groups						
	Wave One			Wave Two		
	Mean	n	sd	Mean	n	sd
Sex						
Boys *	0.41	6,702	0.65	0.37	3,771	0.64
Year group						
Year 3 ***	0.18	2,553	0.45	0.16	1,641	0.43
Year 4 ***	0.24	2,647	0.51	0.20	1,599	0.49
Year 6 ***	0.33	3,941	0.62	0.29	2,149	0.59
Ethnicity						
White ***	0.25	8,621	0.54	0.23	5,069	0.54
Other***	0.27	587	0.54	0.19	286	0.46
Household structure						
Lone parent household ***	0.31	2,614	0.59	0.27	1,500	0.57
Two birth parents *	0.23	8,033	0.51	0.20	4,499	0.49
Other***	0.27	936	0.56	0.21	539	0.51
All*	0.26	13,365	0.54	0.23	7,433	0.53

Base = 7,433 for Wave One sample; and 13,365 for Wave Two sample; T-test, * p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Bullying and victimisation

As with truancy and disruptive behaviour at school we were interested in exploring any changes from Wave One to Wave Two in terms of reported levels of bullying and victimisation. Analysis highlighted that pupils' self-reports of bullying and victimisation in the recent past (past week) had remained at the same level at both waves (mean average score 1.5). Analysis by sub-groups highlighted one statistically significant change. Children from reconstituted families reported statistically significantly higher levels of bullying and victimisation at Wave Two (mean 1.7) than at Wave One (mean 1.4). This finding is particularly worrying given that at Wave One levels of bullying and victimisation amongst this group were slightly *lower* than the rate for the sample as a whole. However, by Wave Two the reported levels had not only increased since Wave One but had increased above the mean average score for the sample as a whole.

Challenging behaviour

At both waves of the primary schools survey pupils were asked a series of questions to explore the extent of 'challenging' behaviour amongst the sample. Pupils were asked to respond *Yes* or *No* to four statements looking at whether they rated themselves as someone who *gets angry easily* at (1) school or (2) home, is (3) stubborn or difficult (defined as *I like to have my own way even if it gets me into trouble*) or who has (4) friends that think they are *naughty*. Overall, analysis showed that the Wave Two sample reported statistically significantly higher levels of challenging behaviour than their Wave One counterparts. Furthermore, a number of group differences emerged, see table 9.8.

Sex and year group

At both waves boys reported higher levels of challenging behaviour than girls. The levels of challenging behaviour amongst boys had also increased statistically significantly from Wave One to Wave Two. Similarly, challenging behaviour amongst girls had statistically significantly increased from Wave One to Wave Two.

With regard to year groups, there were statistically significant increases from Wave One to Two in reported levels of challenging behaviours amongst pupils in Years Three, Four and Five.

Ethnicity

Since Wave One, challenging behaviour statistically significantly increased amongst pupils from White, Pakistani and Chinese backgrounds.

Household structure

Since Wave One, challenging behaviour had statistically significantly increased amongst all household types.

Table 9.8 Changes in challenging behaviour between Wave One and Two; mean scores on a scale, by various sub-groups						
	Wave One			Wave Two		
	Mean	n	sd	Mean	n	sd
Sex						
Boys *	1.71	6,702	1.28	1.83	3,771	1.30
Girls *	1.27	6,534	1.14	1.41	3,640	1.18
Year group						
Year 3 *	1.53	2,553	1.24	1.68	1,641	1.27
Year 4 *	1.46	2,647	1.22	1.67	1,599	1.26
Year 5 *	1.45	4,013	1.22	1.61	2,026	1.23
Ethnicity						
White *	1.51	8,621	1.24	1.62	5,069	1.26
Pakistani *	1.44	1,237	1.18	1.62	780	1.27
Chinese ***	0.83	46	1.12	1.32	44	1.14
Household structure						
Reconstituted family *	1.64	992	1.27	1.89	555	1.28
Lone parent household *	1.53	2,614	1.26	1.70	1,500	1.28
Two birth parents *	1.45	8,033	1.22	1.55	4,499	1.25
Other***	1.33	936	1.23	1.67	539	1.30
All*	1.48	13,365	1.23	1.62	7,433	1.26

Base = 7,433 for Wave One sample; and 13,365 for Wave Two sample; T-test, * p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Attitudes to antisocial behaviour

Another risk factor that the primary schools survey measured was attitudes to antisocial behaviour. Pupils were asked to comment on how wrong they believed it would be for someone of their own age to engage in a number of antisocial acts, including smoking, stealing and starting a fight. At Wave Two we had found that with the exception of starting a fight the majority of the sample (97%) said it was wrong for others their age to engage in antisocial activities. Comparisons with the Wave One data showed that overall pupils' tolerance of antisocial behaviour had decreased significantly by Wave Two. Put another way, pupils at Wave Two condoned involvement in antisocial acts less than their Wave One counterparts. This change was apparent in certain groups more than others; see table 9.9.

Sex and year group

Both boys and girls reported lower levels of antisocial attitudes at Wave Two than at Wave One. Similarly, pupils in Year six reported lower levels of antisocial attitudes than the Year six pupils that participated in the Wave One survey.

Household structure

Pupils from lone parent households and those who lived in unconventional household structures – the 'other' group (including those living with their grandparents or those living in public care) – reported views that were less tolerant of antisocial behaviour at Wave Two than at Wave One. This finding is particularly noteworthy because those who lived in 'other' household structures at Wave One had attitudes that were considerably more tolerant of antisocial behaviour than the sample as a whole. At Wave Two, although this group still held comparatively more tolerant attitudes, this was at a level more in line with the sample as a whole.

	Wave One			Wave Two		
	Mean	n	sd	Mean	n	sd
Sex						
Boys ***	0.37	6,702	0.87	0.33	3,771	0.81
Girls *	0.17	6,534	0.60	0.12	3,640	0.51
Year group						
Year 6 *	0.25	3,941	0.73	0.18	2,149	0.58
Ethnicity						
White *	0.27	8,621	0.74	0.22	5,069	0.67
Household structure						
Lone parent household ***	0.29	2,614	0.80	0.23	1,500	0.68
Other***	0.37	936	0.90	0.26	539	0.75
All*	0.28	13,365	0.78	0.23	7,433	0.69

Base = 7,433 for Wave One sample; and 13,365 for Wave Two sample; T-test, * p<.05; ** p<.01; ***p<.001

Antisocial peers

As with attitudes to antisocial behaviour we wanted to explore any changes in levels of associating with antisocial peers between Wave One and Two. For the sample as a whole there was no statistically significant change. However, changes for certain groups were observed. Boys, pupils in Year Six and those who described their ethnicity as White reported lower levels of associating with antisocial peers at Wave Two than at Wave One³². This suggests that a positive reduction in association with antisocial peers has occurred since 2001 and is consistent with the apparent drop in problem and disruptive behaviour over time.

Perceptions of the local neighbourhood and constructive use of leisure time

Perceptions of the local neighbourhood

In general, it was found that at both waves pupils appeared quite positive about their local neighbourhood. Nevertheless, it was found that at Wave Two pupils were statistically significantly more positive about their local neighbourhood than their Wave One counterparts. Certain sub-group differences emerged with certain groups driving the increase in positive perceptions of the local neighbourhood from Wave One to Wave Two more than others.

Sex and year group

Girls and pupils in Year six were statistically significantly more positive about their local neighbourhood at Wave Two than at Wave One.

Household structure

Pupils living in two parent households and those living in 'other' arrangements were statistically significantly more positive about their local neighbourhood at Wave Two than at Wave One.

	Wave One			Wave Two		
	Mean	n	sd	Mean	n	sd
Sex						
Girls ***	4.22	6,534	1.64	4.30	3,640	1.61
Year group						
Year 6 *	4.15	3,941	1.67	4.35	2,149	1.67
Household structure						
Two birth parents **	4.27	8,801	1.61	4.34	4,938	1.58
Other***	3.72	318	2.03	4.15	123	1.82
All***	4.19	13,365	1.64	4.25	7,433	1.62

Base = 7,433 for Wave One sample; and 13,365 for Wave Two sample; T-test, * p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

³² T-tests p<.05

Constructive use of leisure time – participation in out of school activities

The general direction of change between Wave One and Two was that pupils in Wave Two reported that they engaged in fewer activities (as listed in the questionnaire) than pupils in the first wave. Overall, this reduction in out of school activities was statistically significant. However, this significant change was more evident in some groups than others.

Before we discuss the changes that occurred between the two waves for certain groups we need to re-iterate that the list of activities included activities such as completing homework, reading, attending an after school club as well as activities such as helping at home and babysitting. The mean scores that we have reported only provide an indication of the numbers of activities that children of primary school age engage in after school, and not the quality or type of activity.

Sex and year

Boys reported statistically significantly less involvement in out of school activities in Wave Two than boys in Wave One. Similarly at Wave Two pupils in year five reported statistically significant lower levels of involvement in out of school activities than year five pupils in Wave One.

Ethnicity

Pupils from Indian and Mixed heritage background reported statistically significant lower levels of participation in out of school activities in Wave Two than in Wave One.

Household structure

The only statistically significant change according to household structure was that pupils from two birth parent households reported engaging in fewer activities in Wave Two than they had in Wave One.

	Wave One			Wave Two		
	Mean	N	Sd	Mean	N	Sd
Sex						
Boys**	6.3	6,671	2.3	6.1	3,742	2.4
Year group						
Year 5*	6.4	4,003	2.2	6.2	2,021	2.4
Ethnicity						
Mixed***	6.6	641	2.2	6.3	257	2.5
Indian*	6.3	270	2.2	5.6	91	2.2
Household structure						
Two birth parent household **	6.3	8,011	2.2	6.2	4,471	2.4
All***	6.3	1,3277	2.3	6.2	7,388	2.4

Base = 7,433 for Wave One sample; and 13,365 for Wave Two sample; T-test, * p<.05; ** p<.01; *** p<.001

Children at risk of offending and antisocial behaviour: the 'high risk' group

Earlier in this report we identified a particularly high-risk group of children. Children were identified as part of this group on the basis of their scores on four scales measuring problem and challenging behaviour, bad behaviour at school, truancy, and antisocial attitudes.

Analysis of change over time revealed that the proportions of pupils identified as high risk was the same at Wave One as at Wave Two, with the demographic profile of the particularly high-risk group unchanged.

Summary

In this section we have explored changes that have occurred since the first wave of the survey. Overall, the results suggest a mixed picture but especially in regards to protective factors, one with more positive changes than negative ones. Most protective factors increased from Wave One to Wave Two. Thus, there were positive increases in parental warmth and involvement, supervision and consistency in discipline, satisfaction with school and perceptions of the local neighbourhood. We also noted that the reports of certain sub-groups were more positive at Wave Two than at Wave One.

The picture in regards to risk factors was somewhat less encouraging. We found a definite positive change in two of the eight risk factors we measured, and a partially positive change on a third. Thus, we found that in the second wave of the survey pupils' attitudes towards involvement in antisocial behaviour was less tolerant than those who took part in the first wave of the survey. We also found that overall disruptive behaviour at school had decreased. For boys, older children and white children, less association with antisocial peers was reported by Wave Two. However on three of the eight risk factors we observed no statistically significant change over time and on two, a shift in the negative direction. Worryingly, we found that pupils reported higher levels of truancy from school at Wave Two. We also found that 'challenging' behaviour had statistically significantly increased from Wave One to Wave Two. Levels of reported bullying had not shifted, and overall, the proportions of pupils falling into our especially 'high risk' category had also not changed over time. Moreover, on some factors we noted a proportionally greater contribution from girls to these increases, suggesting that their behaviour is getting worse.

Table 9.12 overleaf summarises the changes in risk and protective factors since Wave One to Wave Two.

Table 9.12 Summary of changes in risk and protection between Wave One and Two			
	Positive change*	No change	Negative change*
Risk factors			
Attitudes to antisocial behaviour	v		
Antisocial siblings		v	
Antisocial peers	v (some groups only)	v (sample as a whole)	
Disruptive behaviour at school	v		
Conflict at home		v	
Bullying and victimisation		v	
Truancy			v
Challenging behaviour			v
Protective factors			
Parental warmth and involvement	v		
Parental supervision and consistency in discipline	v		
Perceptions of the local neighbourhood	v		
Satisfaction with school	v		
Constructive use of leisure time			v

* Changes were statistically significant

Overall then, over the four year period since On Track began the picture seems to be one of general improvement in the aspects of children's lives that we have labelled 'protective' factors, but mixed results for 'risk' factors. We are of course limited by three critical factors in our ability to draw conclusions in this report about what these changes mean, especially in relation to On Track's role in influencing change. One is that we cannot know which children were directly exposed to On Track and which were not. The second is that we have no control group with which to compare the results, and so cannot be sure that changes we have identified would not have happened anyway, irrespective of the presence of On Track in the local areas. A third limitation is that at this stage we do not know enough about other interventions in the local areas (e.g Sure Start, BIP etc) that might also have been influencing children's development (though the Community Profiling strand of the National Evaluation should help shed light on this). However, it is especially encouraging that satisfaction with school rose during the period, and it seems certainly possible that children's more positive views of school may well have been influenced by the presence of On Track³³. This is especially so, given the finding for Wave Two that schools with higher than average levels of On Track activity within them had children with higher levels of pupil satisfaction and school attachment. The same could perhaps be said of disruptive behaviour in school, which showed a small but encouraging reduction over the period between Wave One and Wave Two, although it should also be noted that we found no association between disruptive behaviour in school and intensity of On Track provision, using our simple measure of On

³³ It is worth noting that a finding from the first wave of the cohort study (Finch et al forthcoming) – namely that parents in On Track areas reported more involvement in their children's schools than parents in non-On Track areas – also suggests that families' relationships to schools may well be improved by the presence of On Track. It will be interesting to see how this finding holds up as more evidence emerges.

Track activity in schools. However, other school-related variables such as bullying and victimisation, and truancy did not improve, despite the presence of On Track in the areas. Truancy is perhaps the main area of concern here: children truanting at such a young age are at very high risk for poor outcomes continuing in to secondary school and beyond, and it is clear that effective interventions to address truancy are still very much needed in the On Track areas, focused on the small minority of children for whom this is an issue.

Last, it is interesting that the 'parenting' variables (as reported by children) – warmth and involvement, supervision and discipline also showed positive changes over time. This may perhaps be an early sign of improving relationships between children and their parents in On Track areas, though we cannot be sure. Further elements of the National Evaluation (the cohort study and qualitative research amongst users for example) should help shed light on this.

Section Ten: Conclusions

On Track is a long-term multi-component initiative aimed at children and the families of children aged four to twelve who may be at risk of offending and antisocial behaviour in England and Wales. The aim of *On Track* is to reduce youth crime by identifying the risk and protective factors associated with children's future offending and to minimise or enhance these through multi-agency working. The first Phase of the initiative (2000-2003) was evaluated and is reported elsewhere (Armstrong et al 2005); this report relates to the second Phase (2003-2006) and assesses whether there have been changes over time since *On Track* was first launched.

Throughout this report we have reiterated that the aim of the schools surveys was not to measure directly the success of the *On Track* initiative in reducing offending and antisocial behaviour. Rather, the aim of the schools surveys has been to provide a snapshot picture of 'need' - and changes over time in this picture - amongst those living in and attending a school in one of the twenty-four *On Track* areas. This report has described the characteristics of pupils who took part in the primary schools survey and explored the changes on key dimensions of risk and protection in children's lives between the first and second Waves of the survey.

In summary, we have shown that at Wave Two, the picture was generally positive overall, in that the sample provided positive responses to most of the topics covered in the primary schools questionnaire. Most of the children reported positive family relationships, high levels of satisfaction with school and positive perceptions of the local neighbourhood. Thus, we can conclude that the majority of children and young people (those aged between seven and eleven) attending the sample of schools in these twenty four *On Track* areas do not give us significant cause for concern. However, visible differences between certain groups were apparent and these groups may require further support. In the following sections we focus on these groups.

Sex: The key differences between boys and girls who took part in the survey

In almost all research studies on offending and antisocial behaviour, and this one is no exception, being a boy has been identified as a risk factor. For example, a recent report on Youth at Risk (Beinart et al 2002) describes a national survey of school-aged children that explored problem behaviour and associated risks. The study found that primary school aged boys reported higher incidences of criminal acts than girls. In response to the overwhelming literature on risk factors and boys, the government has introduced many provisions that focus on and work with this group. The initiatives have been introduced in both school and community venues. Our study suggests that these initiatives and provisions are well founded, but that work still needs to be done to support boys to steer them away from engaging in offending or antisocial behaviour. It is of course plausible that boys are more likely to over-report deviant behaviours. It may be that boys perceive some of their behaviour, as well as their siblings' and friends' behaviour, as more antisocial when compared to girls' perceptions. Boys' thresholds for what constitutes involvement in deviant

acts may be lower than that of girls, or, perhaps more likely, they may feel invested in describing behaviour as ‘bad’ or rebellious as a sign of emergent masculine identity. On the other hand, they may genuinely be more likely to engage in more antisocial behaviour. The wider literature leads us to suspect that the explanation may lie somewhere between the two. Certainly, in this study, boys do appear to be of particular concern.

Box 10.1 below highlights the key differences in the responses given by boys and girls. The box shows that boys are more likely to admit or report negative behaviour, whilst girls are substantially more likely to report positive views.

Box 10.1 **Key differences between boys and girls (risk factors in bold; protective factors in italics)**

Boys	Girls
<p>Higher levels of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • truancy • bad behaviour at school • bullying and victimisation • challenging behaviour • antisocial attitudes • antisocial siblings <p>Lower levels of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>satisfaction with school</i> • <i>parental supervision and consistency in discipline</i> • <i>parental warmth and involvement</i> <p>More likely to fall into the high risk group</p>	<p>Higher levels of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>satisfaction with school</i> • <i>parental supervision and consistency in discipline</i> • <i>parental warmth and involvement</i> <p>Lower levels of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • truancy • bad behaviour at school • bullying and victimisation • challenging behaviour • antisocial attitudes • antisocial siblings <p>Less likely to fall into the high risk group</p>

Year Groups: the key differences between pupils in Year Three and Year Six

In respect of the distribution of risk and protective factors according to age a general linear pattern was noticed, in general with things getting worse as children get older. For example, self reports of challenging behaviour were lowest amongst children in Year three, increased slightly amongst those in Year four, and increased again amongst those in Year five. The most extreme increases were apparent when comparing responses of those in Year six to those in Year three – in Year six children were reporting significantly higher levels of challenging behaviour than those in Year three. The same pattern emerged in responses to many of the other topics covered in the primary school questionnaire. The general direction of responses, between the different Year groups, was that the higher the Year group the more risky, challenging and problematic the behaviour and the lower the levels of protective factors such as parental supervision and satisfaction with school. There were however exceptions to this pattern. In particular, it was concerning that Year three children self reported much higher levels of truanting than older groups (despite also reporting high levels

of parental supervision and high rates of satisfaction with school), and also reported greater levels of being bullied. Assuming that the truancy rates are not being over-reported in error (for example, because the younger children misunderstood the question), it is plausible that the two findings are related, and that younger children may be truanting in response to fears about bullying.

We conclude from these findings that Year six pupils – those at the transition stage to Year seven (secondary school) – are a group that merits additional support on most dimensions of risk. To address this need many schemes have already been introduced in both primary and secondary schools including linking Year six pupils with mentors and befrienders (or allocating a ‘buddy’) from secondary schools. Some secondary schools also offer provisions such as summer schools to help ease the transition from primary to secondary schools. The summer schools are designed to help Year six pupils become familiar with their future surroundings and used to working with pupils from different schools (Mason et al, 1999). Our findings, however, indicate that there is still a need for more focused work with pupils in the older primary school year groups. Maybe the link-up between primary and secondary schools should begin earlier, possibly even in Year five, to ensure a smoother transition from Year six to seven.

It is also important to explore further the apparently high rates of self-reported truanting amongst the youngest children in the survey. We need to understand more clearly what explains these findings. Bullying is also at its peak in Year three and the survey suggests schools need to work more effectively with this Year group to bring the rates down. High rates of bullying of young children may perhaps explain the higher rates of truanting from school.

Box 10.2 **Key differences between pupils in Year Three and Year Six (risk factors in bold; protective factors in italics)**

Year Three	Year Six
<p>Higher levels of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>parental supervision and discipline</i> • <i>satisfaction with school</i> • being bullied • challenging behaviour • truancy <p>Lower levels of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>parental warmth and involvement</i> • disruptive behaviour at school • antisocial attitudes • antisocial peers • <i>constructive use of leisure time</i> <p>Less likely to fall into the high risk group</p>	<p>Higher levels of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>parental warmth and involvement</i> • disruptive behaviour at school • antisocial attitudes • antisocial peers • <i>constructive use of leisure time</i> <p>Lower levels of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>parental supervision and discipline</i> • <i>satisfaction with school</i> • being bullied • challenging behaviour • truancy <p>More likely to fall into the high risk group</p>

Ethnicity: the key differences between pupils from different ethnic groups

The survey question designed to determine children's ethnic group did not allow us to disaggregate Black African from Black Caribbean young people, though it did differentiate between groups of South Asian Origin. South Asian young people tended to report the highest levels of protective factors and the lowest levels of risk factors in all domains: home, school and wider community. On the other hand, young people from Black or mixed heritage groups were consistently over represented in the ranks of young people reporting high levels of risk factors.

Household Structure: the key differences between pupils from different household types

Another key group of concern that emerged from our analysis was children from reconstituted or 'step' families. On many of the risk dimensions we measured (truancy, antisocial attitudes, challenging and disruptive behaviour) children from reconstituted families scored high – that is they gave the most negative responses when compared to children from all other household types (two birth parents, lone parent households and those from 'other' types of household structure). They were also identified as a group with lower levels of protective factors - lower levels of parental supervision, warmth and involvement and the lowest levels of satisfaction with school.

To date, little work has been done with young people living in reconstituted families and little is known about services that work directly with this group. This is primarily because working with children in 'step' families is not an issue for schools. Indeed, most schools may not even be aware of the pupil's personal circumstances or background status. Nevertheless, this report has highlighted children from reconstituted families as a group at risk of engaging in antisocial activities. Box 3 below shows the key differences from those in step families and those in two birth parent households. This report concludes that interventions that focus on children from reconstituted families may be needed, to ensure that they are settled at both school and home. For example, an intervention that works with the family together (parent and step parent) may help address some of the issues that impact on children's education, behaviour and experiences.

Box 10.3 Key differences between household structure (risk factors in bold; *protective factors in italics*)

Two birth parents	Reconstituted families
<p>Higher levels of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>parental supervision and parental consistency in discipline</i> • <i>parental warmth and involvement</i> • <i>satisfaction with school</i> 	<p>Higher levels of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bullying and victimisation • truancy • challenging behaviour • disruptive behaviour at school • antisocial attitudes • antisocial siblings
<p>Lower levels of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bullying and victimisation • truancy • challenging behaviour • disruptive behaviour at school • antisocial attitudes • antisocial siblings 	<p>Lower levels of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>parental supervision and parental consistency in discipline</i> • <i>parental warmth and involvement</i> • <i>satisfaction with school</i>
<p>Less likely to fall into the high risk group</p>	<p>More likely to fall into the high risk group</p>

On Track services in schools

We have also explored in a simple way the association between having an ‘active’ On Track service based or offered at the school and various school-related dimensions of risk or protection. Our measure of ‘activity’ was relatively crude, being limited to counting the number of services offered in schools, and giving no indication of type or intensity. Nevertheless the findings are interesting. Overall, the number of ‘active’ On Track services varied from school to school. Some schools had no On Track services, whilst others had up to thirteen On Track services active in the school. In the main, we found that pupils who attended a school with a high number of On Track services (defined as eight or more) reported higher levels of satisfaction with school than those who attended a school with a lower level of On Track services (less than eight). Similarly, pupils who attended a school with a high number of On Track services also reported greater involvement in out of school activities than those at schools with a comparatively lower number of On Track services. However, these findings should be treated with a note of caution, as we are unable to infer that attending a school with a high number of On Track services is responsible for enhancing pupils’ views on school, or involvement in out of school activities. For example, the schools that took part in the survey may also have been involved in other initiatives (such as the Behaviour Improvement Programme) and the areas may have been involved in other area based initiatives. Unless we know more about the other ‘live’ initiatives in and around the school we cannot identify the specific impact of On Track. It is also important to note that there were no measurable differences between schools with a high level of On Track activity and other schools on any key risk factors connected with pupils’ behaviour (such as bullying, truancy, and proportions of children falling into the high risk groups).

Another point of interest is that pupils' perception of their local neighbourhood was more positive amongst those attending schools with a low number of services when compared to those at schools with a high number of On Track services. It is difficult to determine why this should be, especially since as we discussed in Section Eight, we found no association between number of services and externally validated measures of disadvantage, such as IMD scores. One reason why people rate their neighbourhoods as of poor quality is that the neighbourhood is objectively worse than other areas (e.g, higher crime, more poverty etc, see for example Ghate and Hazel 2002), but this does not seem to be the explanation in this case. Other possible explanations could be that those attending schools with a high number of services are more aware and sensitive of their surroundings and come to regard their local neighbourhoods as areas of great need (ie, that they infer this from the provision of services aimed at 'tackling problems').

Changes in key dimensions of risk and protection from Wave One to Wave Two

Part of the Phase Two National Evaluation of On Track remit was to investigate whether there had been any changes in key variables measuring risk and protective factors in children's lives over time since the first Phase of the evaluation. In order to do this we repeated the questionnaire designed and administered by the Wave One team for Wave Two and where possible mirrored their mode of delivery³⁴. The picture was mixed, though on balance probably more positive than neutral or negative. There were statistically significant positive increases in most protective factors measured (e.g parental supervision, warmth and involvement, satisfaction with school and perceptions of the local neighbourhood) between Wave One and Wave Two. Likewise there had been significant decreases, from Wave One to Wave Two, on two of the risk factors measured (antisocial attitudes and disruptive behaviour). However, there were also less positive changes between Wave One and Wave Two. Bullying levels remained unchanged, as did the level of antisocial peer behaviour. Both self-reported levels of truancy and challenging behaviour had also increased from Wave One to Wave Two, and most surprisingly perhaps, given On Track's particular focus on working directly with children, self-reported levels of participation in out of school activities declined.

Overall, we can say that statistically significant and encouraging changes have occurred since On Track was first introduced in the twenty-four areas, although the picture is not consistently positive across all dimensions of risk and protection. It is very encouraging to see that protective factors appear to be rising over time in the primary school aged population, both at home, and at school. It is on the other hand discouraging that bullying levels appear not to have reduced, and downright worrying that self-reported truancy by these young children has increased. Whilst our data cannot tell us what role On Track itself may be playing, the data do at least provide a picture of the kind of challenges initiatives like On Track are up against. It is also encouraging that during the period On Track has been active,

³⁴ Except that the Wave Two schools survey was administered to a sample of schools that took part in Wave One.

by Wave Two those schools with the greatest levels of activity were also those where children were reporting two important positive differences in attitudes and behaviours, compared to schools with lower levels of activity. Thus, in schools with high levels of activity, children reported greater satisfaction with school, and greater participation in constructive leisure time activities.

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