

# Children's Worlds National Report: England

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## Contents

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Sampling strategy and outcomes .....	4
Note on statistical analysis .....	5
The participants .....	5
Age and gender .....	5
Country of birth .....	6
Ethnicity .....	6
Religion .....	7
Disability .....	7
<b>2. Results .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Economic circumstances .....	8
Deprivation .....	8
Family affluence .....	9
Subjective perceptions .....	10
Family and home .....	12
Family type .....	12
Satisfaction with people lived with .....	13
Views about family relationships .....	13
Sibling relationships .....	14
Family relationships outside the household .....	14
The house you live in .....	15
Friendships .....	17
School .....	19
Local area .....	23
Time use .....	24
Living in England .....	26
Child rights .....	26
Overall well-being .....	27
Life satisfaction .....	27
Positive and negative affect .....	29
Psychological well-being .....	30
Variations by gender and deprivation .....	32
<b>3. Conclusions .....</b>	<b>33</b>
Key points .....	33

## List of tables

Table 1: Achieved and weighted samples .....	5
Table 2: Age and gender (numbers) .....	5
Table 3: Country of birth .....	6
Table 4: Ethnicity .....	6
Table 5: Religion .....	7
Table 6: Disability .....	7
Table 7: Children who had each item in the child deprivation measure .....	8
Table 8: Child deprivation measure .....	8
Table 9: Family type .....	12
Table 10: Parents working away from home in the last year (percentages) .....	12
Table 11: Home and family (percentages) .....	13
Table 12: Variation in questions about home and the people you live with by gender and deprivation .....	14
Table 13: Relationships with siblings: How often in the last month have you been .....	14
Table 14: How often do you see other people in your family who don't live with you .....	15
Table 15: Elements of the home (percentages) .....	16
Table 16: Friendships .....	17
Table 17: Views about friendships by gender and deprivation .....	18
Table 18: Frequency of seeing friends (excluding when in school) .....	18
Table 19: Agreement with aspects of schooling (percentages) .....	20
Table 20: Mean school scores by gender and deprivation .....	21
Table 21: Bullying (in the last month) and violence at school .....	22
Table 22: Bullying by gender and deprivation .....	22
Table 23: Attitudes to the local area .....	23
Table 24: Variations in views about local area by gender and deprivation .....	23
Table 25: How often do you spend time? .....	25
Table 26: Attitudes to England .....	26
Table 27: How often do you worry about things you hear about .....	26
Table 28: Overall life satisfaction .....	27
Table 29: Components of SWBS .....	27
Table 30: How often in the last two weeks have you felt .....	30
Table 31: Aspects of psychological well-being .....	30
Table 32: Variations in measures of overall well-being by gender and deprivation .....	32
Table 33: Satisfaction with different aspects of life (mean, SD and % scoring 6 or lower) .....	34

## List of figures

Figure 1: Distribution of scores on the Family Affluence scale.....	9
Figure 2: Satisfaction with things you have (percentages) .....	10
Figure 3: How often children worried about how much money their family had .....	10
Figure 4: How often children had enough food to eat .....	11
Figure 5: Satisfaction with the people you live with.....	13
Figure 6: Satisfaction with: Other people in your family .....	15
Figure 7: Satisfaction with the house or flat where you live .....	16
Figure 8: Satisfaction with your friends .....	17
Figure 9: Satisfaction with: Your life as a student.....	19
Figure 10: Satisfaction with: Things you have learned .....	19
Figure 11: Satisfaction with: Other children in your class .....	20
Figure 12: Satisfaction with: How you use your time .....	24
Figure 13: Satisfaction with: How much free time you have .....	24
Figure 14: Distributions of scores for cognitive subjective well-being .....	29
Figure 15: Distribution of scores for psychological well-being .....	31

# 1. Introduction

This is the final report of the results from the Children's Worlds survey third wave conducted in England in 2019 and early 2020. The aim of the report is to give a brief descriptive overview of the content and conduct of the survey and of the key findings. It will be followed by analysis comparing the results in England with those from the other 34 countries participating in this international project.

## Sampling strategy and outcomes

The England sample was designed to achieve a nationally representative sample of 1,000 children in school year 6 (aged 10 to 11 years old). First a complete list of primary schools in England was stratified into five groups (quintiles taking account school size) by the proportion of children receiving free school meals (a rough indicator of economic prosperity). Within each stratum schools were selected randomly with probabilities proportional to the number of pupils in the year group. One class (in schools with more than one class) was then randomly selected within each participating school.

Schools who agreed to participate were sent a link to an on-line questionnaire. As pupils completed the questionnaires their responses were added to the data base automatically, with the school but not the individual identified. The approaches to the school and the questionnaire were adaptations of the methods developed in previous waves and the survey design and methods were approved by the Departmental Ethics Committee at the University of York.

The schools proved very difficult to recruit. The Children's Society undertook an initial phase of recruitment at the start of the term in September 2019 and, despite reminder letters and repeated replacement samples, by December they had recruited only 21 schools – a small minority of those approached. We tried to recruit commercial agencies to help us but none we could find had the capacity or expertise. So, we took over the recruitment operation sending letters from the University of York and offering a reward to the school of £100<sup>3</sup> if they agreed to participate. Again, despite reminders and drawing replacement samples of new schools, we only obtained a sample of six additional schools out of well over 300 approached. In the end we had recruited 27 schools. At February 2020 half-term we had to call a halt to school recruitment, if we were going to be included in the Children's Worlds comparative data base. We ended up with a sample of 717 children. This was well short of the 1000 we aspired to survey and on the cusp of the number required to be included in the Children's Worlds international data set. There are lessons to be learned here. We did not have this difficulty getting a sample in the previous waves and using the same recruitment methods. It seems that since 2014 English schools are less willing to co-operate with bona fide academic research. This may be to do with new pressures to perform, but we suspect it is also down to the process of academisation that has rolled out in recent years. Perhaps schools are increasingly seeing themselves detached from the public interest and control, part of the private sector with no civic responsibilities. If this is the case in the future it will be necessary to recruit samples of children using other methods, probably through household surveys. Even on-line these will be much more difficult and expensive to carry out. Table 1 summarises the final sample obtained. One reason to be

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<sup>3</sup> Generously paid for by the Children's Society.

reasonably confident about the representativeness of the sample is that there is coverage of pupils across each of the school meals strata, although there are approximately twice as many in strata 3 as in strata 5. Weights have been applied to the sample used in the analysis so that the proportion of children in the data set in each stratum is equivalent to the proportion of children in that stratum in the population.

**Table 1: Achieved and weighted samples**

	Stratum					
	1	2	3	4	5	All
Achieved	132	121	215	151	98	717
Weighted	143	143	144	143	143	716

### Note on statistical analysis

All the differences referred to in the document have been subject to statistical testing. Where differences are noted as significant, they relate to a p-value below 0.01. Differences described as marginally significant refer to p-values between 0.01 and 0.049.

However, although the data has been weighted, the analysis does not take into account the design effect of clustering in the sample due to children being surveyed in class groups in schools<sup>4</sup>. Taking this factor into account will not affect the descriptive statistics but it is likely to affect the significance levels for statistical test.

### The participants

#### *Age and gender*

The children's ages ranged from 9 to 11. Year 6 was mainly 10- and 11-year olds although three children were aged 12. 48.4% were boys and 48.8% were girls and 2.6% preferred not to say.

**Table 2: Age and gender (numbers)**

	10-year-old	11-year-old	12-yearold	Total
<b>Boy</b>	211	143	1	355
<b>Girl</b>	200	137	2	339
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	6	12	0	18
<b>Total</b>	417	292	3	712

<sup>4</sup> The number of responding pupils per school varied from 4 to 79.

### *Country of birth*

Eighty-eight percent of the children were born in England but only 64.5% of their mothers and 63% of their fathers were – though in each case 7% were not sure where they were born.

**Table 3: Country of birth**

	Were you born in this country?	Was your mother born in this country?	Was your father born in this country?
<b>Yes</b>	88.4	64.5	63.2
<b>No</b>	10.1	28.2	29.0
<b>Not sure</b>	1.5	7.4	7.7
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0	100.0

### *Ethnicity*

Fifty-six percent of children classified themselves as White British and 16.4% as Asian. 11% preferred not to say.

**Table 4: Ethnicity**

	What would you say your ethnic origin is?
<b>White British</b>	56.2
<b>White Other</b>	7.1
<b>Mixed</b>	3.8
<b>Asian/Asian British</b>	16.4
<b>Black African-Caribbean/Black British</b>	3.5
<b>Chinese</b>	0.3
<b>Other</b>	1.8
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	10.9
<b>Total</b>	100.0

### Religion

Thirty-six percent said that they had no religion and 9% were not sure, 26% were Christian and 18% were Muslim.

**Table 5: Religion**

What would you say your religion is?	
<b>Buddhist</b>	1.0
<b>Christian</b>	25.5
<b>Hindu</b>	5.3
<b>Jewish</b>	3.8
<b>Muslim</b>	17.5
<b>Sikh</b>	0.1
<b>Other</b>	2.5
<b>None</b>	35.5
<b>Not sure</b>	8.8
<b>Total</b>	100.0

### Disability

Four percent of children said that they were disabled and 10.1% said they were not sure.

**Table 6: Disability**

Would you say that you are disabled?	
<b>Yes</b>	4.0
<b>No</b>	85.9
<b>Not sure</b>	10.1
<b>Total</b>	100.0



## 2. Results

### Economic circumstances

#### *Deprivation*

The survey asked questions that allowed us to create two scales of deprivation. The first is a child deprivation measure developed and piloted for this wave of the Children's Worlds survey. The second was the Family Affluence Scale developed for the Health Behaviour of School-aged Children (HBSC) surveys, with one modification<sup>5</sup>.

The child deprivation measure is based on an eight-item index as shown in Table 7, which also shows the percentage of children who said that they had each item.

**Table 7: Children who had each item in the child deprivation measure**

	%
<b>Clothes in good condition to go to school in</b>	98.7
<b>Enough money for school trips and activities</b>	96.6
<b>Access to the Internet</b>	97.4
<b>Equipment/things for sports and hobbies</b>	93.5
<b>Pocket money/money to spend on yourself</b>	81.4
<b>Two pairs of shoes in good condition</b>	97.1
<b>Mobile phone</b>	72.7
<b>Equipment/things you need for school</b>	97.5

Table 8 summarises scores on the index.

**Table 8: Child deprivation measure**

Number of items lacking	%
<b>None</b>	57.3
<b>One</b>	28.7
<b>Two</b>	9.0
<b>Three</b>	2.9
<b>Four</b>	1.7
<b>Five</b>	0.1
<b>Eight</b>	0.2
<b>Total</b>	100.0

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<sup>5</sup> For the Children's Worlds survey the item asking about a dishwasher in the home was replaced with one about a washing machine as dishwashers are not necessarily a sign of affluence in all countries.

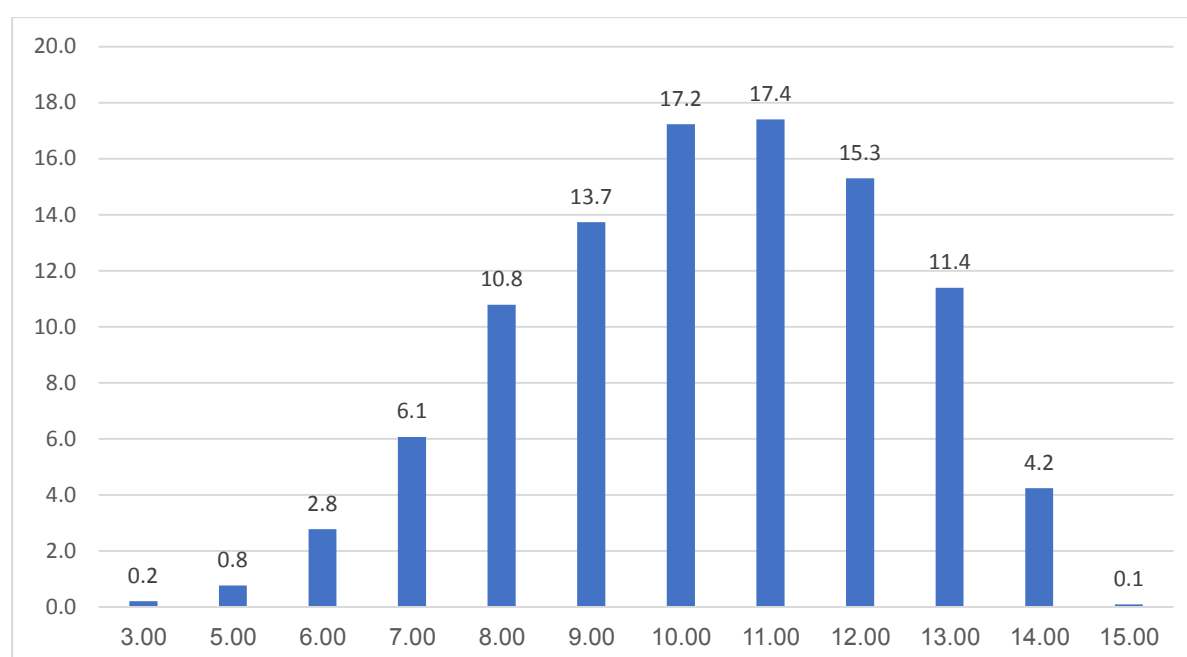
For the purpose of statistical testing those lacking two or more items were treated as deprived and the rest non-deprived.

### *Family affluence*

The Family Affluence scale was developed for the Health Behaviour of School Aged Children survey and over time has undergone a number of adaptations. In this study we have used the following elements to create FASIII:

1. Does your family own a car, van or truck? (No = 0; Yes, one = 1; Yes, two = 2): Yes, three or more=3.
2. Do you have your own room? (No = 0; Yes = 1).
3. How many computers do your family own? (None = 0, One = 1; Two = 2; More than two = 3).
4. How many bathrooms do you have in your home? (None = 0; One = 1; Two = 2; More than two = 3).
5. Does your home have a washing machine<sup>6</sup>? (No = 0; Yes = 1).
6. In the last 12 months, how many times did you travel away on holiday<sup>7</sup> with your family? (Never = 0; Once = 1; Twice = 2; More than twice = 3).

**Figure 1: Distribution of scores on the Family Affluence scale**



We found in practice that the child deprivation measure was much more closely related to child well-being, so we have used that rather than the FAS for exploring variations.

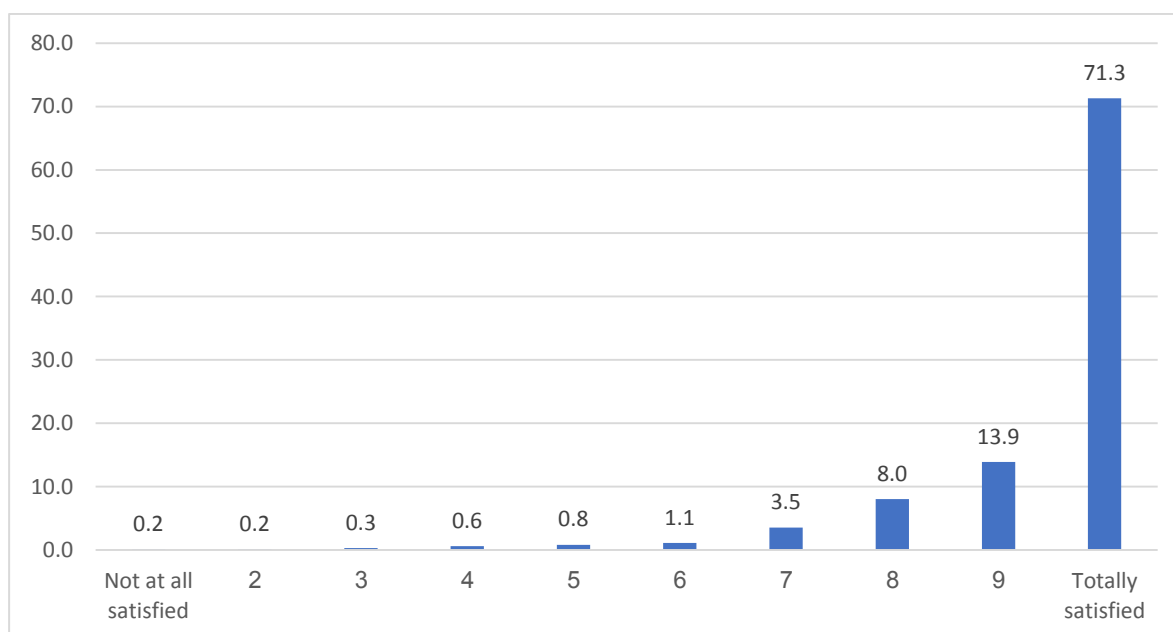
<sup>6</sup> In the original versions of FASIII this item asks about a dishwasher but this is not a cross-culturally comparable item outside Europe.

<sup>7</sup> In some versions this is a holiday abroad.

### *Subjective perceptions*

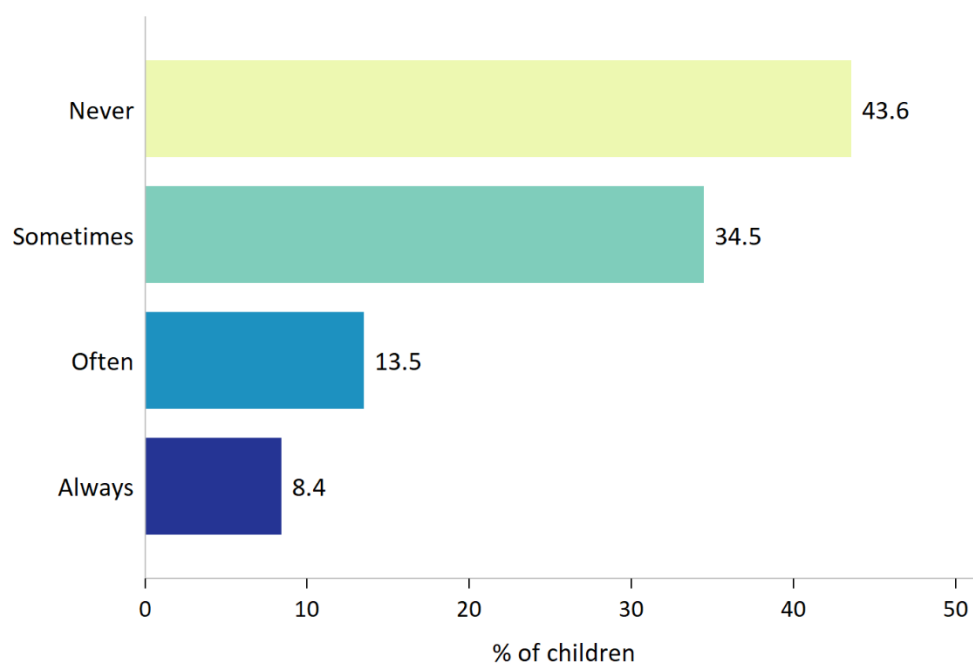
It can be seen in Figure 2 there is a very high degree of satisfaction with the things you have.

**Figure 2: Satisfaction with things you have (percentages)**



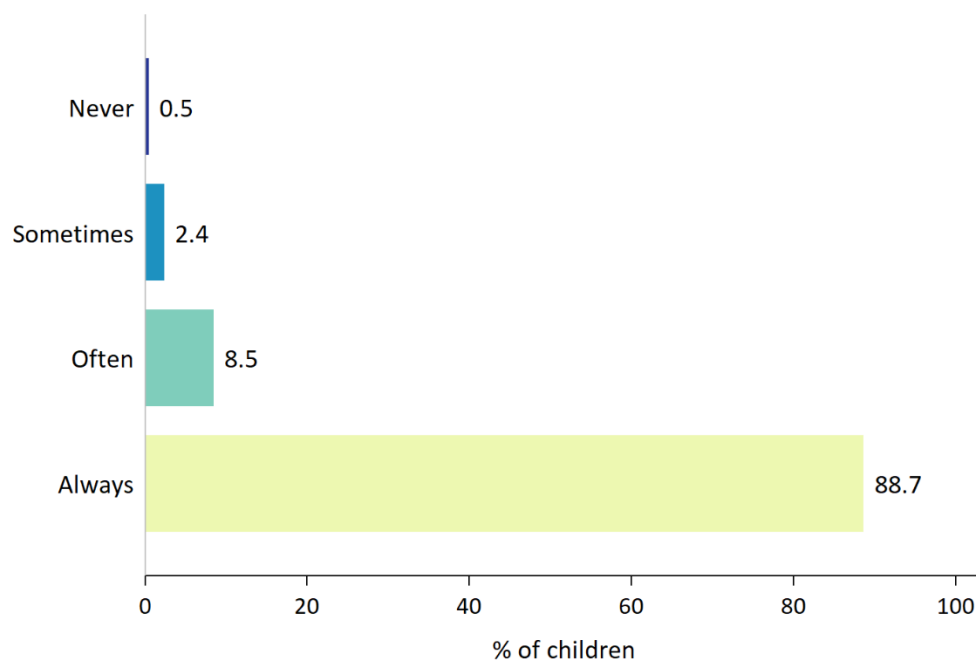
Twenty two percent of children often or always worry about money (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: How often children worried about how much money their family had**



The large majority (89%) of children said that they always had enough food to eat, but around 3% either never or only sometimes did (**Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference.**).

**Figure 4: How often children had enough food to eat**



## Family and home

### *Family type*

The survey contained a detailed set of questions on family type designed to take account of the complexity of modern family form. From these we derived the following simplified classification: 72% of children were living with both their parents in a single home and 9% were living in a lone parent in one home. A further 4% were living with a stepparent in one home. 13% had separated parents and lived in both their parent's homes. The rest were living outside their families - two children were in foster homes and eight children were in other types of home which might include living with non-related adults in the community.

**Table 9: Family type**

	%
<b>One home - both parents</b>	71.9
<b>One home – lone-parent</b>	9.0
<b>One home - stepfamily</b>	4.1
<b>Two homes</b>	12.5
<b>Other family</b>	1.1
<b>Non-family</b>	1.4
<b>Total</b>	100.0

Children were asked whether their parents had worked away from home in the last year. Table 10 shows that more fathers had worked away than mothers.

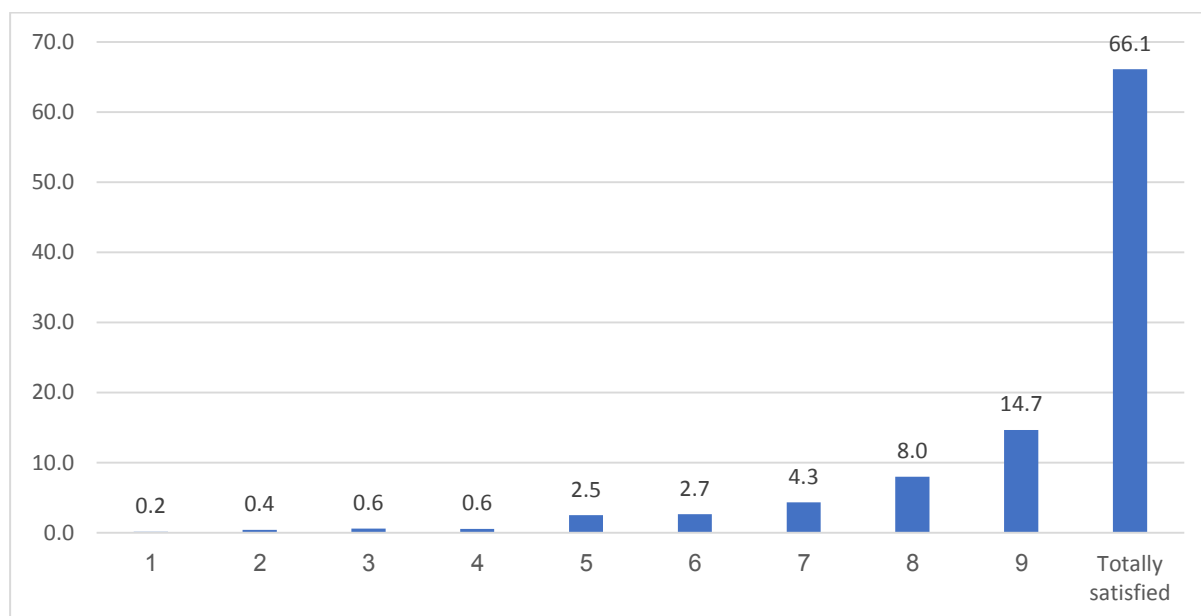
**Table 10: Parents working away from home in the last year (percentages)**

	<b>Mother</b>	<b>Father</b>
<b>No</b>	94.5	81.9
<b>Yes, in this country</b>	3.7	10.3
<b>Yes, in another country</b>	1.8	7.8

### *Satisfaction with people lived with*

There was a single 10-point scale to assess overall satisfaction with the people you live with. The results summarised in Figure 5 show a high degree of satisfaction with 66% totally satisfied.

**Figure 5: Satisfaction with the people you live with**



### *Views about family relationships*

A more nuanced picture is provided by the responses to five questions about children's views on the home and people they live with in Table 11. Children were most in agreement with the statement "I feel safe at home" and "There are people in my family who care for me". They were much less likely to totally agree with "My parents/carers listen to me and take what I say into account" and "My parents and I make decisions about my life together".

**Table 11: Home and family (percentages)**

	I do not agree	Agree a little	Agree somewhat	Agree a lot	Totally agree
<b>There are people in my family who care about me</b>	1.6	2.6	3.2	12.0	80.6
<b>We have a good time together in my family</b>	1.0	3.8	7.9	16.7	70.6
<b>I feel safe at home</b>	0.5	2.2	3.9	11.7	81.7
<b>My parents/carers listen to me and take what I say into account</b>	1.9	5.2	10.1	23.1	59.7
<b>My parents and I make decisions about my life together</b>	5.0	5.6	9.1	20.5	59.7

Table 12 summarises variations in responses to these questions by gender and deprivation. Girls have slightly higher scores on most indicators but only scored significantly higher for the question about making joint decisions with parents. Deprived children have lower scores on all seven indicators and the difference is statistically significant for five of them.

**Table 12: Variation in questions about home and the people you live with by gender and deprivation**

	Gender		Deprivation	
	Girl	Boy	No	Yes
<i>Mean (out of 10)</i>				
Satisfaction with: The people you live with	9.26	9.19	9.31	8.68*
<i>% Totally agree</i>				
There are people in my family who care about me	80%	83%	83%	66%**
If I have a problem, people in my family will help me	73%	68%	73%	59%*
We have a good time together in my family	73%	69%	72%	62%
I feel safe at home	83%	80%	84%	69%**
My parents listen to me and take what I say into account	63%	56%	62%	44%**
My parents and I make decisions about my life together	63%	56%*	62%	49%

Asterisks indicate a statistically significant difference (\* =  $p < 0.05$ . \*\* =  $p < 0.01$ ) between girls and boys and between children who were and were not deprived.

### *Sibling relationships*

Seventy-six percent of the sample had siblings. They were asked How often in the last month have you been: Hit by your brothers or sisters and How often in the last month have you been: Called unkind names by your brothers or sisters. The answers are given in Table 13. It is clear that hitting and unkindness are fairly common in families. Less than half the children had never been hit or called unkind names in the last month and a quarter had these experiences more than three times in the last month. We explored the variation by gender, deprivation, ethnic group and family type but found no significant variation by either.

**Table 13: Relationships with siblings: How often in the last month have you been**

	Hit by your brothers or sisters	Called unkind names by your brothers or sisters
<b>Never</b>	47.1	45.1
<b>Once</b>	15.8	15.6
<b>Two to three times</b>	12.2	11.3
<b>More than three times</b>	24.8	28.0
<b>Total</b>	100.0	100.0

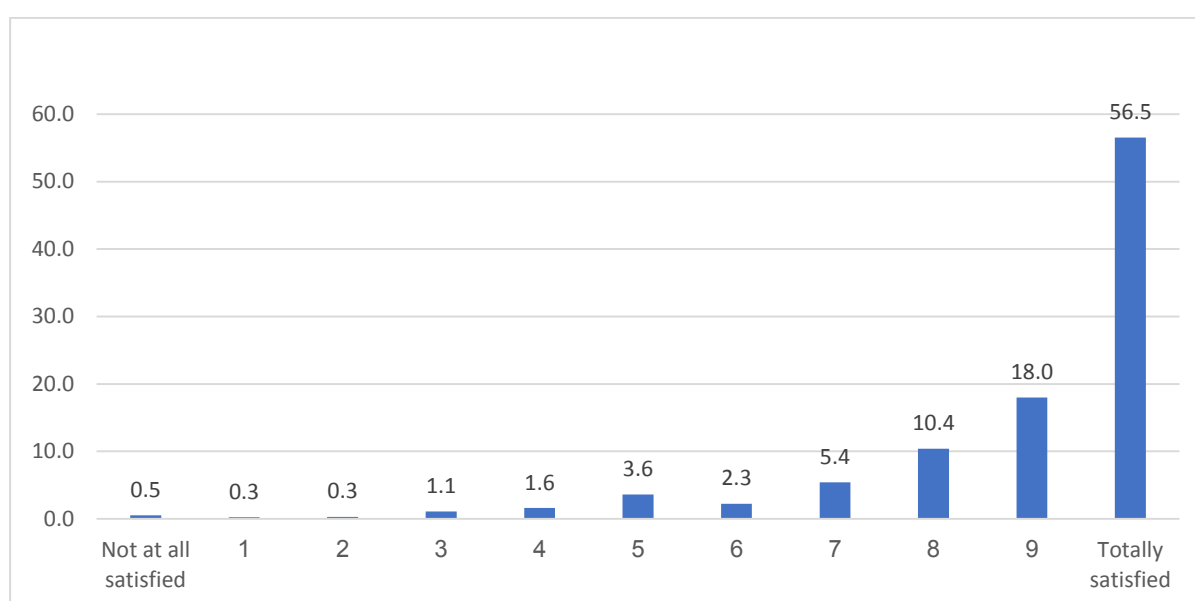
### *Family relationships outside the household*

Children's contact with relatives that don't live with them is pretty common. Less than 10% never see a relative outside the household and more than a quarter see someone more than three days a week. Figure 6 shows that satisfaction with those relationships is pretty high. There were no significant differences in satisfaction according to gender or deprivation

**Table 14: How often do you see other people in your family who don't live with you**

Frequency	Percentage
Never	9.0
Less than one day a week	29.1
Once or twice a week	33.2
Three or four times a week	10.7
Five or six times a week	7.8
Every day	10.2
Total	100.0

**Figure 6: Satisfaction with: Other people in your family**



### *The house you live in*

There are very high levels of satisfaction with the house or flat the children live in. There were no gender differences but children who are deprived are significantly less satisfied (8.47) with their housing than children who were not deprived (9.33).



**Figure 7: Satisfaction with the house or flat where you live**

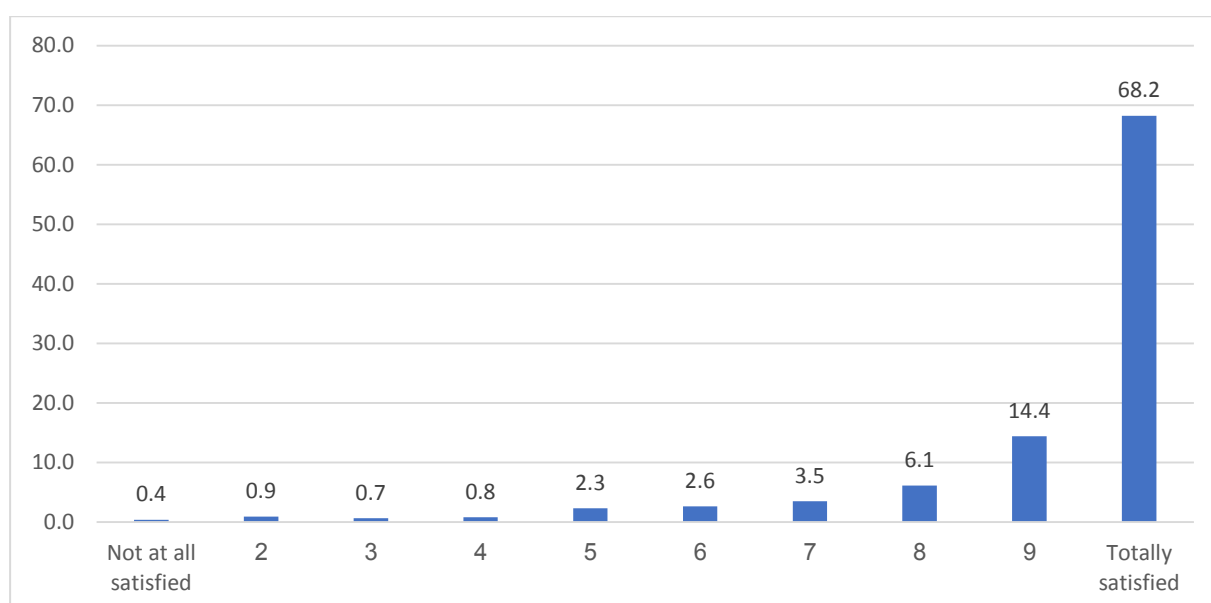


Table 15 tells us more about aspects of the house. Remarkably 22% had more than two bathrooms. Nearly a third shared a bedroom with another person. 91.5% had a bed of their own but two children had no bed at all. Eighty percent had a place that they could study.

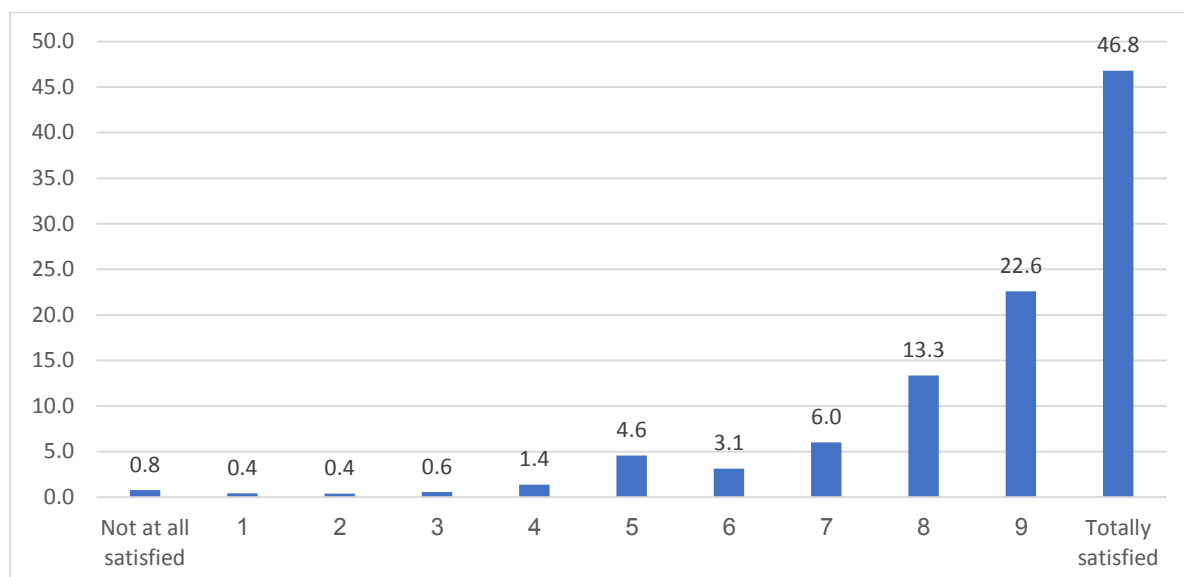
**Table 15: Elements of the home (percentages)**

How many bathrooms are in your home?	
One	40.6
Two	37.1
More than two	22.3
Total	100
Do you sleep in your own room or do you share a room?	
I sleep in a room on my own	67.9
I sleep in a room that I share with other people	32.1
Total	100
Do you have your own bed?	
Yes, I have my own bed	91.5
No, I share a bed	8.2
No, I don't have a bed	0.3
Total	100
Is there a place in your home where you can study?	
Yes	80.3
No	6.9
Not sure	12.9
Total	100

## Friendships

Children are slightly less satisfied with their friendship. In Figure 8 only 47% are completely satisfied and there are slightly more in the tail – scoring less than 7.

**Figure 8: Satisfaction with your friends**



This is also revealed responses to the questions on aspects of friendship. Although over 70% agree a lot or totally agree, 5% don't agree that they have enough friends and 3% don't have a friend who could support them if they have a problem.

**Table 16: Friendships**

	I do not agree	Agree a little	Agree somewhat	Agree a lot	Totally agree	Total
<b>I have enough friends</b>	5.2	7.0	9.9	17.8	60.1	100.0
<b>My friends are usually nice to me</b>	1.5	8.0	12.0	28.0	50.5	100.0
<b>Me and my friends get along well together</b>	1.1	6.9	10.8	26.3	54.8	100.0
<b>If I have a problem, I have a friend who will support me</b>	3.4	5.7	9.5	18.6	62.9	100.0

Boys were rather more positive about their friendships than girls. They were significantly more likely to say that had enough friends. There was only one significant difference in friendship scores by deprivation – children who were deprived were less likely to totally agree that “If I have a problem, I have a friend who will support me”.

**Table 17: Views about friendships by gender and deprivation**

	Gender		Deprivation	
	Girl	Boy	No	Yes
<i>Mean (out of 10)</i>				
Satisfaction with: Your friends	8.58	8.88	8.75	8.40
<i>% Totally agree</i>				
I have enough friends	53%**	68%	61%	55%
My friends are usually nice to me	48%	53%	51%	47%
Me and my friends get along well together	51%	59%	55%	50%
If I have a problem, I have a friend who will support me	63%	63%	65%	50%**

Asterisks indicate a statistically significant difference (\* =  $p < 0.05$ . \*\* =  $p < 0.01$ ) between girls and boys and between children who were and were not deprived.

Only 11% see friends every day outside school and 14% never see a friend outside school.

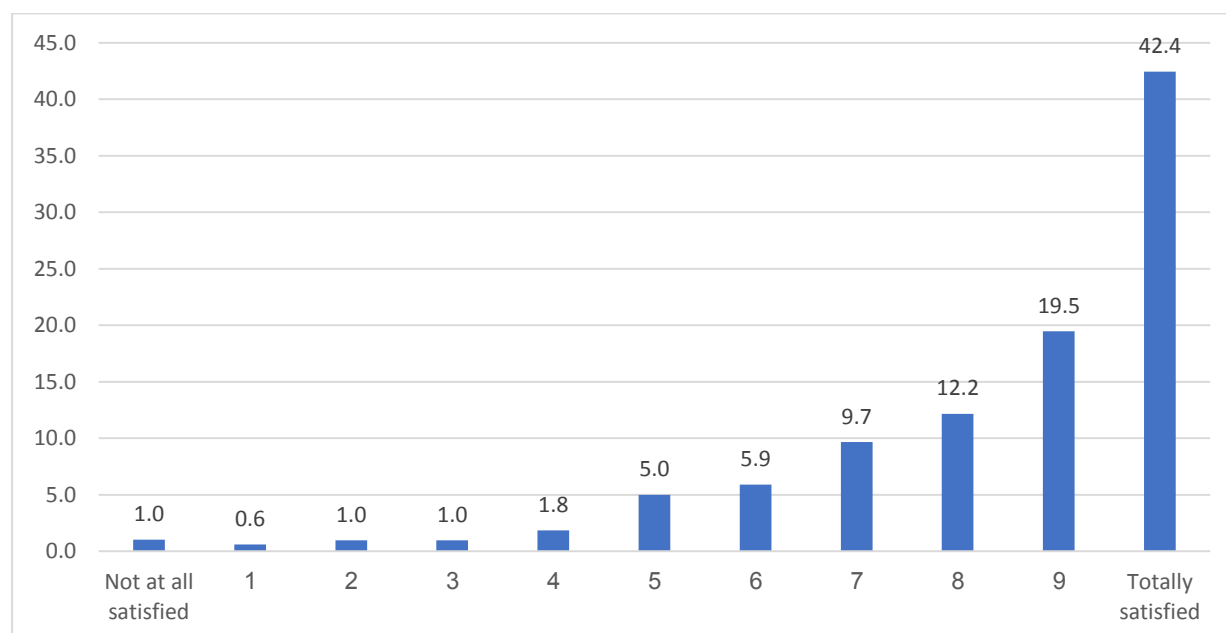
**Table 18: Frequency of seeing friends (excluding when in school)**

	%
Never	14.3
Less than once a week	28.7
Once or twice a week	27.4
Three or four days a week	10.8
Five or six days a week	8
Every day	10.9
Total	100

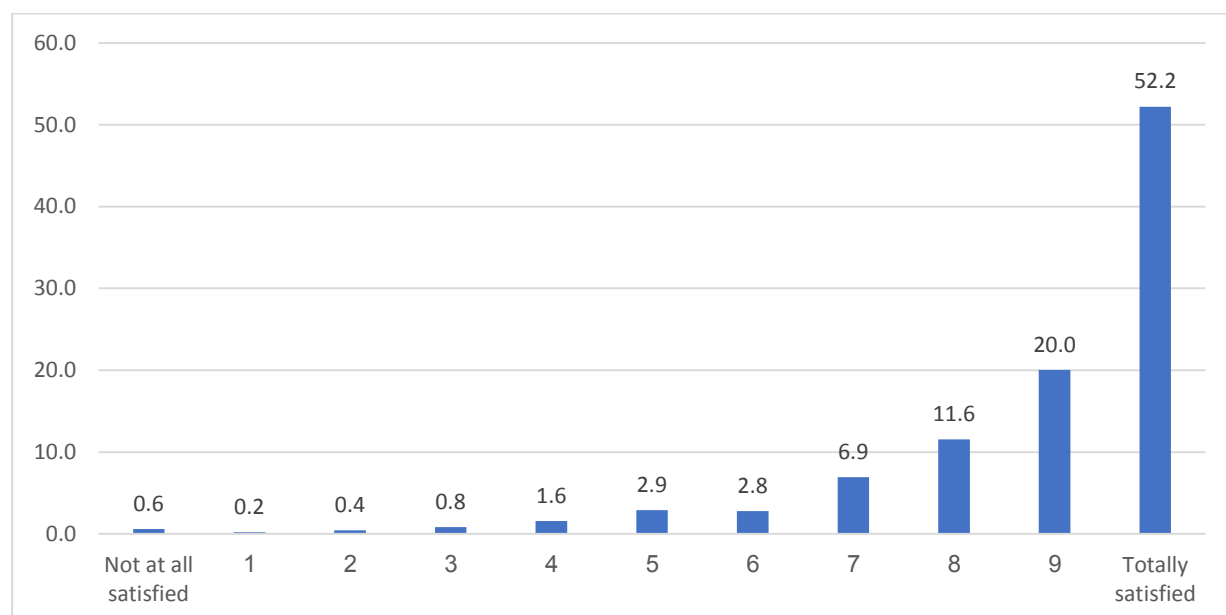
## School

The next three figures show the levels of satisfaction of children with various aspects of their schooling. All are predominantly positive but less so than we have seen with relations with their families. Perhaps the most interesting of these is Figure 11 which shows much lower satisfaction than we have come to expect with other children in the class.

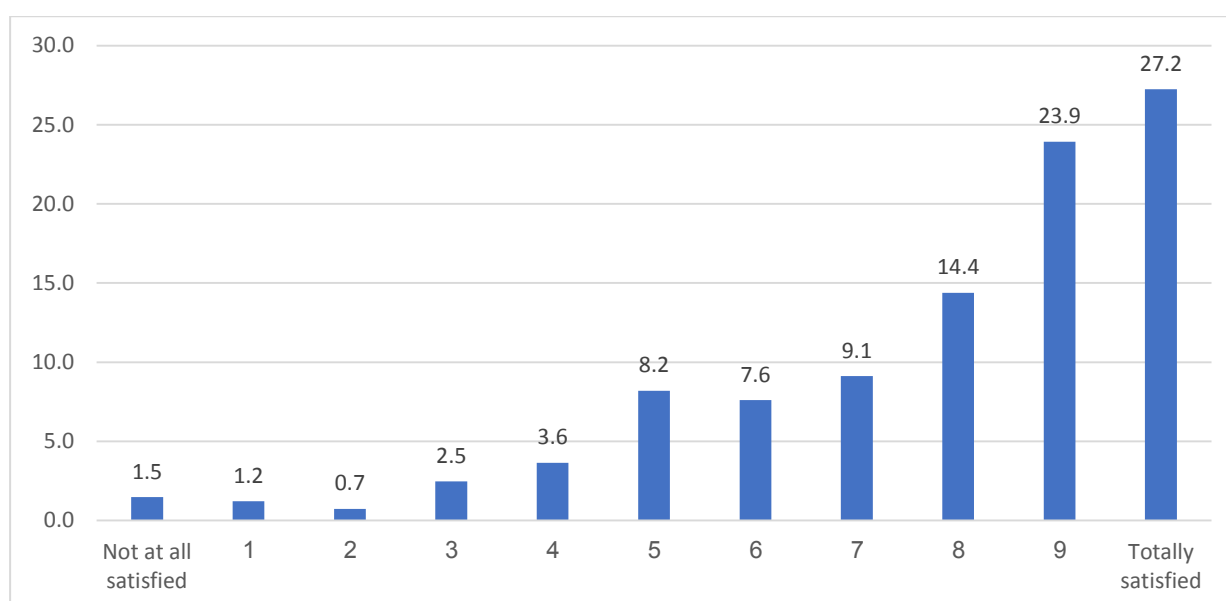
**Figure 9: Satisfaction with: Your life as a student**



**Figure 10: Satisfaction with: Things you have learned**



**Figure 11: Satisfaction with: Other children in your class**



Eighty-eight percent of children spend less than 30 minutes travelling to school and there were only four children in the sample who said they spent more than hour. Sixty-three percent of children felt very safe going to school and only 4% felt not very safe or not at all safe.

The children were more positive about their teachers than with other children at the school. They were also less positive about teachers listening and taking what I say into account and the scope to make decisions at school. But most children felt safe at school.

**Table 19: Agreement with aspects of schooling (percentages)**

	I do not agree	Agree a little	Agree somewhat	Agree a lot	Totally agree	Total
<b>My teachers care about me</b>	2.2	3.3	7.0	26.4	61.1	100.0
<b>If I have a problem at school my teachers will help me</b>	2.0	4.8	12.4	20.2	60.6	100.0
<b>If I have a problem at school other children will help me</b>	3.5	10.1	15.3	25.7	45.4	100.0
<b>My teachers listen to me and take what I say into account</b>	2.6	5.9	11.4	24.8	55.3	100.0
<b>There are a lot of arguments between children in my class</b>	17.3	30.7	13.2	13.9	24.8	100.0
<b>At school I have opportunities to make decisions about things that are important</b>	3.6	6.1	11.3	23.4	55.6	100.0
<b>I feel safe at school</b>	2.8	3.4	7.9	19.6	66.4	100.0

Girls were more satisfied with their life as a student than boys. Deprived children were less positive about all aspects of school. For two questions these differences were statistically significant variations. Deprived children were less likely to totally agree that if other pupils would help them if they had a problem, or that they had opportunities to make decisions.

**Table 20: Mean school scores by gender and deprivation**

	Gender		Deprivation	
	Girl	Boy	No	Yes
<i>Mean (out of 10)</i>				
Satisfaction with: Your life as a student	8.69	8.05**	8.45	7.98
Satisfaction with: Things you have learned at school	8.93	8.76	8.92	8.50
Satisfaction with: Other children in your class	7.78	7.79	7.84	7.44
<i>% Totally agree</i>				
My teachers care about me	63%	59%	63%	53%
If I have a problem at school my teachers will help me	61%	61%	61%	57%
If I have a problem at school other children will help me	45%	46%	47%	33%*
There are a lot of arguments between children in my class	24%	26%	25%	19%
My teachers listen to me and take what I say into account	58%	53%	57%	46%
At school I have opportunities to make decisions about things that are important to me	58%	52%	58%	44%*
I feel safe at school	66%	67%	67%	65%

Asterisks indicate a statistically significant difference (\* =  $p < 0.05$ . \*\* =  $p < 0.01$ ) between girls and boys and between children who were and were not deprived.

In the last month, a third of children reported having been hit by other children at school. Over half of children had been called unkind names, 19% more than three times. 47% felt they had been left out by other children in the class.

**Table 21: Bullying (in the last month) and violence at school**

	Never	Once	Two or 3 times	More than three times	Total
<b>How often: Hit by other children in your school</b>	67.6	15.7	8.2	8.5	100.0
<b>How often: Called unkind names by other children in your school</b>	47.6	20.1	13.8	18.5	100.0
<b>How often: Left out by other children in your class</b>	53.0	19.4	14.7	12.9	100.0

We compare children who have experienced the above bullying behaviours more than once in the past month by gender and deprivation (Table 22). Boys were significantly more likely to have been hit by other children at school, while girls were significantly more likely to have been left out by others.

**Table 22: Bullying by gender and deprivation**

	Gender		Deprivation	
	Girl	Boy	No	Yes
<i>% more than once in past month</i>				
Hit by other children in your school (not including fighting or play fighting)	11%	23%**	16%	22%
Called unkind names by other children in your school	29%	34%	31%	41%
Left out by other children in your class	32%	22%**	26%	37%

Asterisks indicate a statistically significant difference (\* =  $p < 0.05$ . \*\* =  $p < 0.01$ ) between girls and boys and between children who were and were not deprived.

## Local area

Attitudes to the local area are not quite as positive as with some other domains. Only 38.5% totally agree that children have opportunities to participate and 48% totally agree that they feel safe in the area they live in.

**Table 23: Attitudes to the local area**

	I do not agree	Agree a little	Agree somewhat	Agree a lot	Totally agree	Total
I feel safe when I walk in the area, I live in	2.3	9.1	15.2	25.6	47.8	100.0
In my area there are enough places to play or to have a good time	7.2	8.2	13.2	19.6	51.7	100.0
If I have a problem, there are people in my local area who will help me	15.1	10.8	13.0	20.2	40.9	100.0
In my local area adults are kind to children	3.6	9.5	13.4	20.5	52.9	100.0
Adults in my area listen to children and take them seriously	6.9	10.3	15.2	24.3	43.3	100.0

There were no variations in satisfaction with local area by gender. Deprived children had significantly lower satisfaction with their local area. They were also significantly less likely to totally agree that their area was safe or had enough play/leisure facilities.

**Table 24: Variations in views about local area by gender and deprivation**

	Gender		Deprivation	
	Girl	Boy	No	Yes
<i>Mean (out of 10)</i>				
Satisfaction with: The area where you live	8.80	8.50	8.79	7.59**
<i>% Totally agree</i>				
I feel safe when I walk around in the area I live in	48%	47%	49%	35%*
In my area there are enough places to play and have a good time	52%	52%	53%	40%*
If I have a problem there are people in my local area who will help me	43%	39%	42%	32%
Adults in my local area are kind to children	56%	49%	53%	50%
Adults in my area listen to children and take them seriously	46%	40%	45%	31%

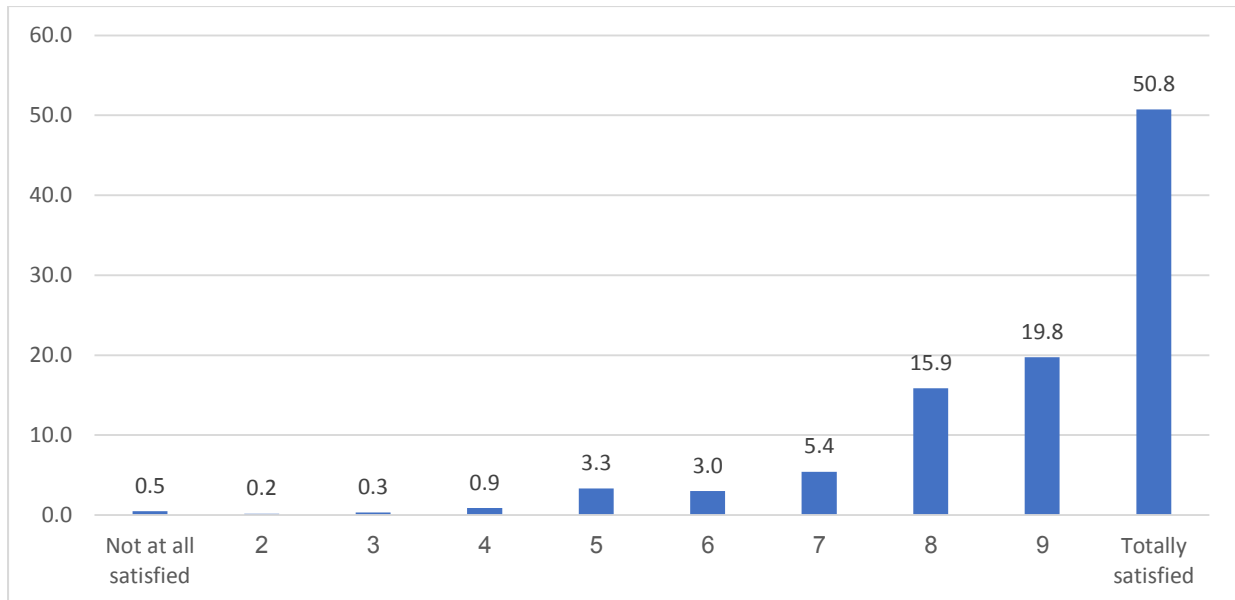
Asterisks indicate a statistically significant difference (\* =  $p < 0.05$ . \*\* =  $p < 0.01$ ) between girls and boys and between children who were and were not deprived.



## Time use

There was a high degree of satisfaction at how the children used their time and with how much free time they had.

**Figure 12: Satisfaction with: How you use your time**



**Figure 13: Satisfaction with: How much free time you have**

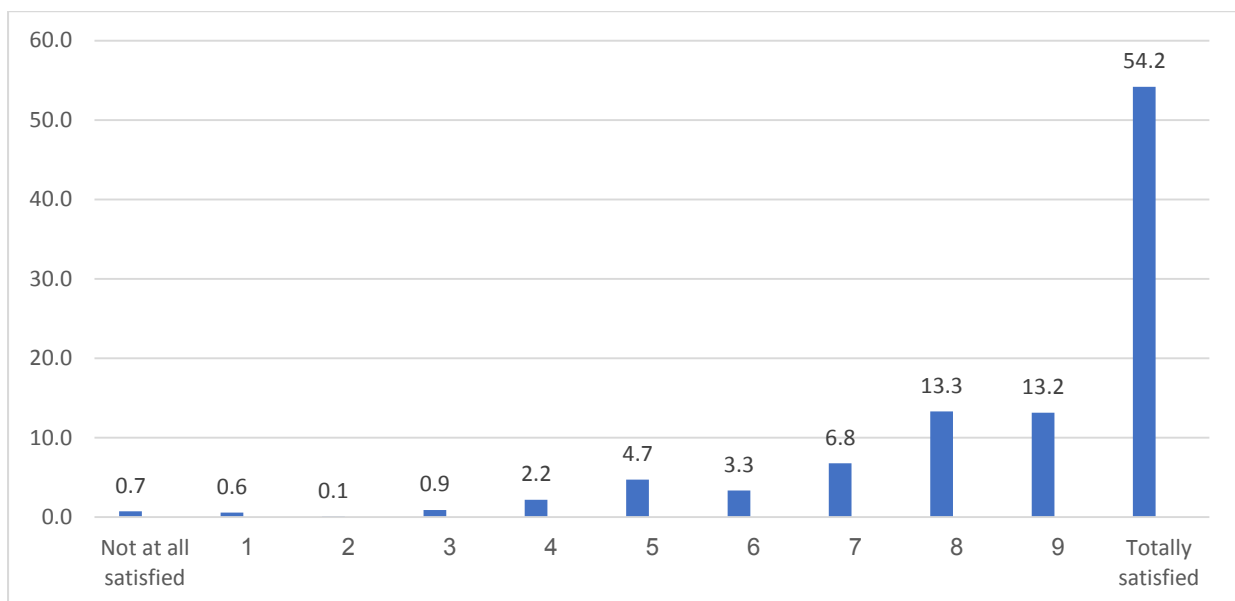


Table 25 gives more details on how the children use their time. 64.5% said they never worked with the family, 46% never did extra classes or tuition and 57% never went to religious places or services. In contrast 44% played with electronic games every day, 43% watched TV and 48% relaxed with the family every day.

**Table 25: How often do you spend time?**

	Never	Less than once a week	Once or twice a week	Three or four days a week	Five or six days a week	Every day	Total
<b>Working with family</b>	64.5	12.2	10.1	4.0	3.1	6.2	100.0
<b>Helping around the house</b>	8.4	14.4	28.0	19.3	8.7	21.1	100.0
<b>Taking care of siblings or others</b>	20.2	16.2	15.3	9.7	7.3	31.2	100.0
<b>Playing sports/doing exercise</b>	5.1	6.3	19.3	21.5	14.3	33.5	100.0
<b>Doing extra classes/tuition</b>	46.3	12.4	22.1	7.8	4.7	6.7	100.0
<b>Doing homework/studying</b>	3.4	10.7	36.0	15.8	12.2	21.8	100.0
<b>Going to religious places/ services</b>	56.5	16.0	11.0	4.0	6.5	6.0	100.0
<b>Playing electronic games</b>	4.5	6.9	13.8	13.7	17.4	43.6	100.0
<b>Doing nothing/Resting</b>	27.3	21.0	16.9	11.2	7.9	15.8	100.0
<b>Watching TV</b>	4.9	7.4	13.3	15.0	16.9	42.5	100.0
<b>Relaxing, etc. with family</b>	2.7	5.5	13.1	18.0	12.8	47.9	100.0
<b>Playing/time outside</b>	5.0	11.7	16.3	20.8	14.6	31.6	100.0
<b>Using social media</b>	18.5	7.5	9.5	13.1	11.8	39.6	100.0

## Living in England

Attitudes to England were fairly positive – 53% totally agreed with “In my country children are allowed to participate in decisions” and 46% totally agreed with “I think in my country adults in general respect children’s rights.

**Table 26: Attitudes to England**

	I do not agree	Agree a little	Agree somewhat	Agree a lot	Totally agree	Total
<b>Adults in England care about children</b>	1.6	7.1	20.0	29.9	41.4	100.0
<b>England is a safe place to live</b>	2.2	7.0	22.7	25.5	42.5	100.0
<b>I think in my country adults in general respect children's rights</b>	2.0	6.8	17.8	27.4	46.0	100.0
<b>In my country children are allowed to participate in decisions</b>	3.3	7.9	17.1	19.2	52.5	100.0

There is evidence of children worrying about the things they hear about (e.g. in the news) in Table 27. Thirty-nine percent worry often or always.

**Table 27: How often do you worry about things you hear about**

	%
<b>Never</b>	13.9
<b>Sometimes</b>	46.8
<b>Often</b>	25.3
<b>Always</b>	14.1
<b>Total</b>	100.0

## Child rights

Sixty-five percent of children said they knew about the rights that children have but only 30% said they knew about the UN Children’s Rights Convention.

## Overall well-being

The Children’s Worlds survey included a variety of different measures asking about overall well-being. These reflect different aspects of Diener’s tripartite model<sup>8</sup> of subjective well-being – life satisfaction, positive affect and negative affect; and the six aspects of Ryff’s model<sup>9</sup> of psychological well-being – self-acceptance, environmental mastery, relations with others, autonomy, personal growth and purpose in life.

### *Life satisfaction*

We start with the simplest a single-item measure where children rate how satisfied they are with their life as a whole on an 11-point scale. 69.1% of 10-year olds were totally satisfied.

**Table 28: Overall life satisfaction**

	Not at all satisfied	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Totally satisfied
<b>Satisfaction with: Your life as a whole</b>	1.1	0.6	0.9	1.5	1.4	1.6	3.2	3.2	6.2	11.2	69.1

We also used a multi-item measure of life satisfaction which was developed from Huebner’s Student Life Satisfaction scale<sup>10</sup> but has subsequently been modified through consultation with children and statistical testing to attempt to make it more suitable for cross-national comparative work. The scale is based on six statements which children are asked to indicate how far they agree. In the Children’s Worlds survey, children aged 10 were asked to respond using an 11-point scale ranging from not at all agree to totally agree. We follow the work presented in the international comparative report and drop one of the six items (‘I like my life’) that did not appear to function well as part of a scale.

**Table 29: Components of SWBS**

	Not at all agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Totally agree	Total
<b>I enjoy my life</b>	0.9	0.4	1.0	0.5	1.7	3.9	2.3	6.3	7.5	15.2	60.3	100.0
<b>My life is going well</b>	1.5	0.4	0.7	1.0	1.7	5.0	3.3	4.6	8.2	14.7	58.8	100.0

<sup>8</sup> Diener, E. (2009). Assessing subjective well-being: Progress and opportunities. In *Assessing well-being* (pp. 25-65). Springer, Dordrecht.

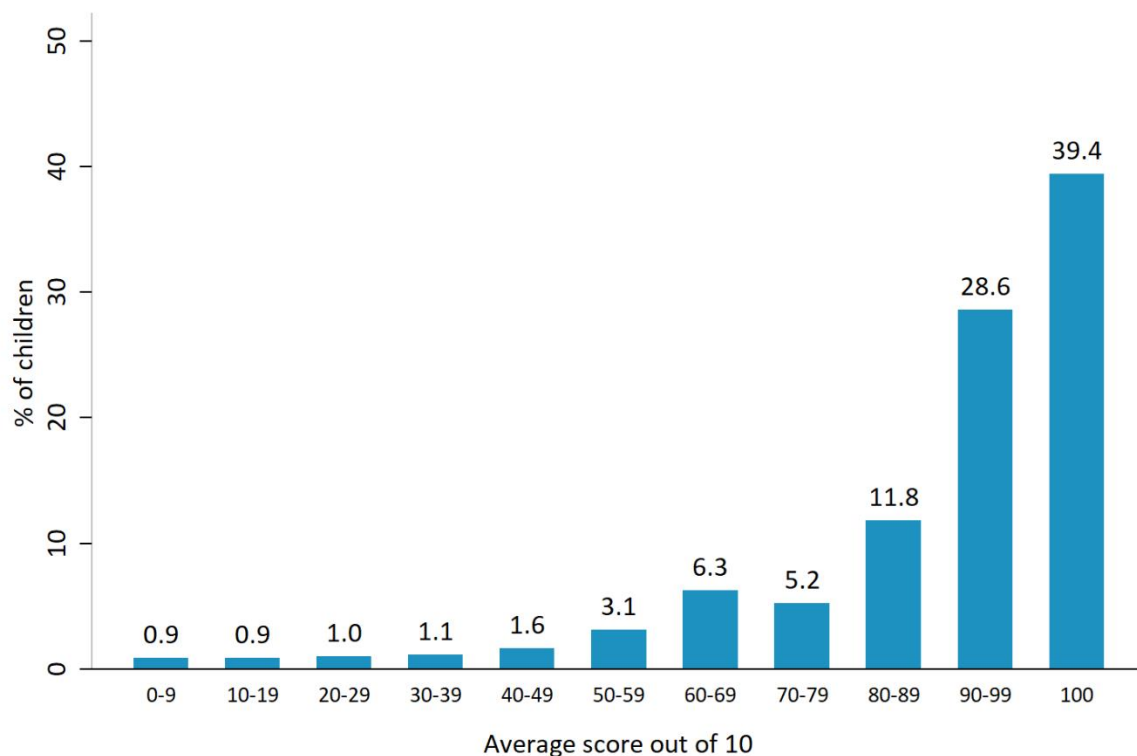
<sup>9</sup> Ryff, C. D. (1989). Happiness is everything, or is it? Explorations on the meaning of psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57(6), 1069.

<sup>10</sup> Huebner, E. S. (1991). Initial Development of the Student’s Life Satisfaction Scale. *School Psychology International*, 12(3), 231–240. <http://doi.org/10.1177/0143034391123010>

<b>I have a good life</b>	1.0	0.8	0.6	0.7	1.5	3.5	2.5	4.8	5.8	12.1	66.6	100.0
<b>The things that happen in my life are excellent</b>	1.6	1.6	0.4	1.8	2.0	4.7	5.0	7.7	10.0	17.4	47.7	100.0
<b>I am happy with my life</b>	1.5	0.8	0.8	1.2	1.7	2.8	2.4	4.7	8.1	12.4	63.7	100.0

We formed a scale by summing all of the items and transforming the scale from 0-100. The distribution of responses on this scale are shown in Figure 14. We can see that 39% indicated that they had the highest possible levels of satisfaction with all of the indicators used. In general, few children reported low levels of satisfaction, and most reported levels of satisfaction towards the top of the scale. This is reflected in the proportion of children – 5.5% - in the tail (scoring less than 50 out of 100) on the SWBS.

**Figure 14: Distributions of scores for cognitive subjective well-being**



#### *Positive and negative affect*

The survey included six questions on positive affect (derived from Russell's measure of Core Affect). Children were asked how often in the last two weeks they had felt;

- Happy
- Full of energy
- Calm
- Sad (reverse coded).
- Stressed (reverse coded).
- Bored (reverse coded).

The intention was to create scales of positive and negative affect from these two sets of three items. However statistical testing does not support this, so we present each indicator individually. Feeling are generally very positive with over 54% often feeling extremely happy and only 4% extremely sad. Only 7% were feeling extremely stressed and 11% extremely bored.

**Table 30: How often in the last two weeks have you felt ...**

	Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Extremely
<b>Happy</b>	0.3	0.3	1.3	0.9	1.5	4.7	3.5	7.3	11.6	14.5	54.1
<b>Full of energy</b>	2.8	0.9	1.6	2.1	2.2	4.4	6.5	6.9	8.5	11.2	52.9
<b>Calm</b>	3.9	0.6	1.6	2.6	2.8	10.0	6.6	11.2	13.9	12.3	34.4
<b>Sad</b>	24.1	15.0	13.5	10.4	6.2	6.6	4.9	4.7	6.2	4.4	4.1
<b>Stressed</b>	27.9	10.2	8.6	5.8	6.3	10.2	4.7	6.5	7.5	4.9	7.4
<b>Bored</b>	19.8	11.6	11.7	10.2	5.8	9.0	6.1	5.5	5.0	4.6	10.6

### *Psychological well-being*

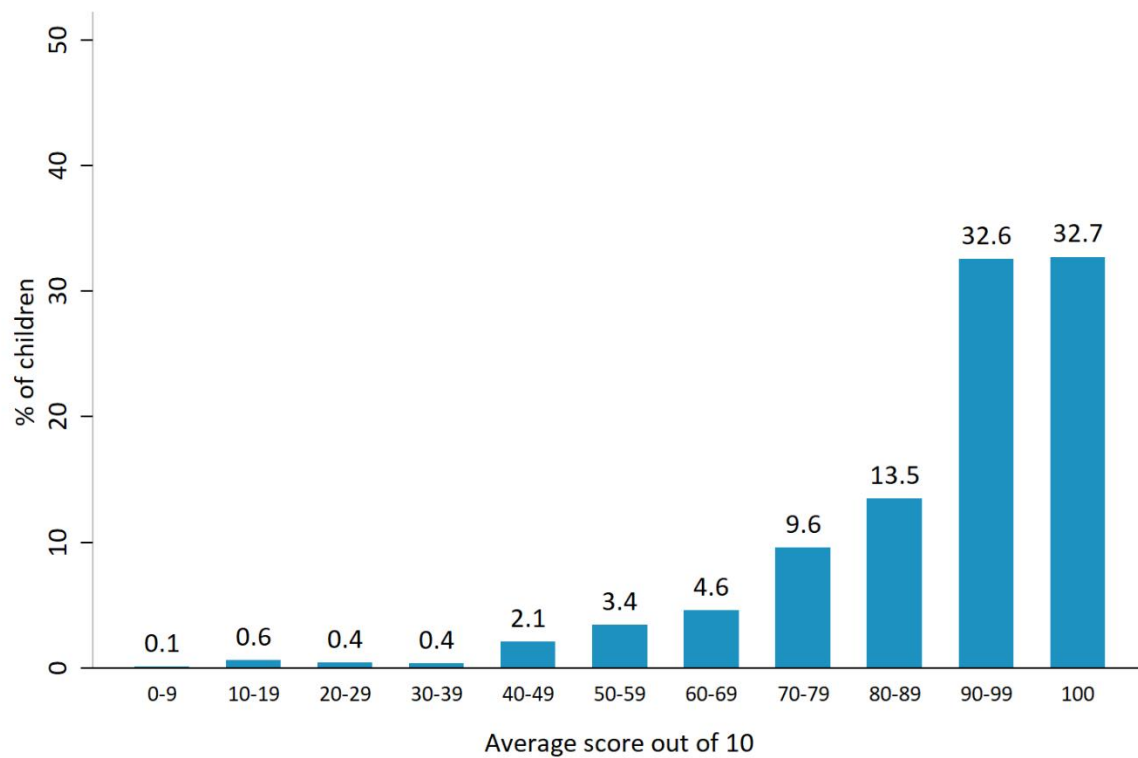
Psychological well-being was also generally positive with 64% totally agreeing with “I like being the way I am”, and “I feel I am learning a lot at the moment”. The lowest percentage totally agreeing was with the statement “I am good at managing my daily responsibilities” – 55%.

**Table 31: Aspects of psychological well-being**

	Not at all agree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Totally agree
<b>I like being the way I am</b>	1.8	1.0	1.1	0.4	1.7	3.3	2.6	6.1	6.4	12.0	63.7
<b>I am good at managing my daily responsibilities</b>	1.6	0.3	0.3	0.5	1.7	3.7	3.6	5.3	11.8	16.3	54.8
<b>People are generally pretty friendly towards me</b>	1.3	0.6	0.3	1.2	1.6	3.8	4.1	5.5	9.6	15.4	56.6
<b>I have enough choice about how I spend my time</b>	1.1	0.5	0.7	1.5	1.0	3.9	3.0	5.0	7.9	15.2	60.3
<b>I feel that I am learning a lot at the moment</b>	1.3	0.0	0.6	0.7	1.4	3.6	3.0	5.2	6.8	13.8	63.5
<b>I feel positive about my future</b>	1.1	1.0	0.4	1.4	1.4	3.2	3.8	3.7	7.5	15.0	61.6

Statistical testing confirmed the fit of these six items as a scale. The distribution of the scale summing the six items and transforming to range from 0 to 100 is shown in Figure 15. There is more variation here than for the measure of cognitive subjective well-being with around a third of children scoring the maximum. The proportion scoring below the mid-point is low at 3.6%.

**Figure 15: Distribution of scores for psychological well-being**





### *Variations by gender and deprivation*

We compared mean scores for each of the measures discussed above by gender and deprivation (Table 32). There was only one significant gender difference – girls reported feeling sad significantly more than boys. Deprived children had significantly lower scores for cognitive subjective well-being (life satisfaction), feelings of happiness and energy, and psychological well-being.

**Table 32: Variations in measures of overall well-being by gender and deprivation**

	Gender		Deprivation	
	Girl	Boy	No	Yes
Cognitive subjective well-being	8.81	8.76	8.90	8.00**
Positive affect: Happy	8.64	8.83	8.80	8.25*
Positive affect: Full of energy	8.24	8.29	8.34	7.70*
Positive affect: Calm	7.68	7.47	7.64	7.16
Negative affect: Sad	3.56	2.87**	3.23	3.12
Negative affect: Stressed	3.67	3.77	3.72	3.81
Negative affect: Bored	3.91	3.98	3.88	4.69
Psychological well-being	8.81	8.84	8.98	7.86**

Asterisks indicate a statistically significant difference (\* =  $p < 0.05$ . \*\* =  $p < 0.01$ ) between girls and boys and between children who were and were not deprived.

### 3. Conclusions

#### Key points

Most ten-year old children in England are relatively satisfied and happy with their lives. However, there is a minority who are relatively unhappy. While this is a small proportion it still amounts to a substantial number of children. We know from other research we have conducted with children in England<sup>11</sup> that low well-being is not just a temporary state and that many of these children will be unhappy with their lives for extended periods of time.

The findings presented on children's feelings about different aspects of their lives show some important variations, which are not immediately apparent when discussing each aspect of life separately. This variability in satisfaction demonstrates the value of asking children about different aspects of their lives.

Table 33 below shows mean satisfaction scores, standard deviations, and percentages scoring six or less for all questions asked about satisfaction with different aspects of life in the survey. It can be seen that, while most children in this age group in England are relatively positive about all aspects of their life, there are some interesting and important variations in levels of satisfaction. As would be expected, the mean scores and percentages below the mid-point show a reasonably similar pattern. The aspects of life that children are most satisfied with tend to relate to their material well-being, family and close relatives. Satisfaction with the local area and school are notably lower. However, the most striking pattern is for questions about children's feelings about themselves and their future. Satisfaction with the way you look, life as a student and their classmates are three of the lowest four mean scores and are the three aspects of life with the highest proportion of children below the mid-point. The standard deviation statistics also show a relatively high level of variation in responses to these three questions. Of course, what we do not know, solely from the findings in England, is whether this type of pattern of relatively low satisfaction with aspects of oneself is common amongst children in different national and cultural contexts, or whether it is specific to England. The cross-national comparative analysis will therefore be very important in helping us to understand this issue further and informing debate about children's subjective well-being in England.

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<sup>11</sup> Over the last decade, the University of York and The Children's Society have produced a series of reports on the subjective well-being of children in the UK. The latest of these reports is accessible at <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/good-childhood-report>

**Table 33: Satisfaction with different aspects of life (mean, SD and % scoring 6 or lower)**

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>% in the tail</b>
<b>Satisfaction with: All the things you have</b>	9.42	1.215	3.2
<b>Satisfaction with: The people you live with</b>	9.21	1.473	6.9
<b>Satisfaction with: The house or flat where you live</b>	9.20	1.631	7.7
<b>Satisfaction with: How safe you feel</b>	9.12	1.670	8.7
<b>Satisfaction with: Your health</b>	9.05	1.756	8
<b>Satisfaction with: Your life as a whole</b>	9.04	2.004	10.2
<b>Satisfaction with: Other people in your family</b>	8.91	1.787	9.7
<b>Satisfaction with: How you use your time</b>	8.90	1.583	8.2
<b>Satisfaction with: The freedom you have</b>	8.87	1.890	11
<b>Satisfaction with: Things you have learned</b>	8.84	1.764	9.3
<b>Satisfaction with: How you are listened to by adults in general</b>	8.82	2.069	11.8
<b>Satisfaction with: Your friends</b>	8.70	1.846	11.3
<b>Satisfaction with: How much free time you have</b>	8.70	1.949	12.6
<b>Satisfaction with: The area where you live</b>	8.63	2.138	13.5
<b>Satisfaction with: What may happen to you later in your life</b>	8.53	2.152	14.5
<b>Satisfaction with: Your life as a student</b>	8.38	2.090	16.3
<b>Satisfaction with: The way that you look</b>	8.13	2.700	21.0
<b>Satisfaction with: Other children in your class</b>	7.78	2.329	25.3

For many of the measures of children's subjective well-being we have presented in this report there are small but significant variations by gender. For most aspects of life, the differences in satisfaction between girls and boys aged 10 are negligible. In contrast to previous studies of older children there did not appear to be gender differences in satisfaction with appearance.

We have also presented some analysis of variations in children's feelings and experiences according to children's material deprivation. In contrast material deprivation influenced variations in well-being in most aspects of life. Indeed, this is the major finding of this study.