

Schools Omnibus 2004 (Wave 10)

**A Research Study Among 11-16 Year Olds
on behalf of The Sutton Trust**

January-March 2004

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Introduction

This report presents findings from the 2004 Survey of Secondary School Pupils, carried out by Market and Opinion Research International (MORI) on behalf of the Sutton Trust. A survey topline (a marked-up questionnaire) and the computer tabulations are appended.

Methodology

The sample of schools comprised 254 middle and secondary state schools in England and Wales. The sampling universe included LEA, voluntary aided/controlled and foundation schools, but excluded special schools and sixth form colleges. This sampling frame was stratified by Government Office Regions (GORs) and within each stratum, schools were selected proportional to the size of the school register, thus producing a nationally representative sample of secondary and middle schools.

The age groups included in the survey were 11-16 year olds in curriculum years 7 to 11. Each school was randomly allocated one of these curriculum years, from which MORI interviewers selected one class at random (using a random number grid) to be interviewed. Interviewing was carried out through self-completion questionnaires with the whole class in one classroom period. A MORI interviewer was present to explain the survey to pupils, to reassure them about the confidentiality of the survey, to assist them in completing the questionnaire, and to collect completed questionnaires. In classes where four or more children were absent during the self-completion session, up to two follow-up visits were arranged to interview absent pupils.

Fieldwork for the study was conducted between 12 January and 12 March 2004. Of the 254 schools approached, 73 declined to participate at the invitation stage (a letter sent to the headteacher) and a further 84 schools refused to participate during the fieldwork period. In total, 97 schools participated, giving a response rate of 38%. Overall, fully completed questionnaires were obtained from 2,303 pupils, an average of 24 pupils per class.

Data were weighted by gender, age and region. The weights were derived from data supplied by the Department for Education and Skills and the Welsh Office. The effect of weighting is shown in the sample profile in the Appendices and in the computer tables.

Acknowledgements

It is clear that schools are increasingly working under great pressure from a number of different sources. They also receive numerous requests to participate in surveys such as this. Consequently, we wish to record our gratitude to the many schools that took part and we are indebted to all pupils and staff who made this survey possible.

MORI would also like to thank Peter Walsh and colleagues at the Sutton Trust for their help and involvement in the project.

Presentation and Interpretation of Data

When interpreting the findings it is important to remember that the results are based on a sample of the maintained school population, and not the entire population. Consequently, results are subject to sampling tolerances, and so not all differences between sub-groups are statistically significant. A guide to statistical significance is included in this document.

In tables where percentages do not add up to 100%, this may be due to multiple answers, to computer rounding, or to the exclusion of 'Don't know' or 'No response' categories. Throughout the tables an asterisk (*) denotes a value greater than zero, but less than 0.5%.

Publication of Data

As with all our studies, these results are subject to our Standard Terms and Conditions of Contract. Any publication of results requires the prior approval of MORI. Such approval will only be refused on the grounds of inaccuracy and misrepresentation.

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Checked & Approved:

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Jane Stevens

Checked & Approved:

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Fiona Johnson

Summary of Findings

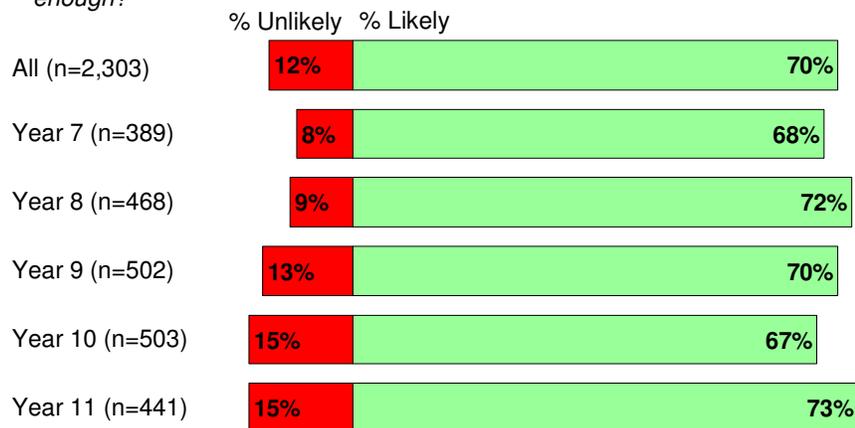
Likelihood of going into Higher Education

- As in previous years, the majority of young people (70%) say they are likely to go into higher education when they are old enough. In 2004, however, only a third of young people (33%) say they are *very likely* to do so, a significant drop since 2003 (40%). Correspondingly, the number saying they are *fairly likely* to do so has risen significantly (36% in 2004 compared to 31% in 2003). It is worth noting that fieldwork for this year's survey coincided with the highly-publicised debate in Parliament about the introduction of 'top-up' fees for students and this may go some way to explaining the fall in the relative levels of certainty expressed by young people.
- This is suggested, too, by the significant increase in the number of young people who are *not sure either way yet*. In 2003, one in seven young people (14%) weren't sure either way; in 2004, nearer to one in five (18%) say this.
- Encouragingly, the number of young people who say they are unlikely to go into higher education remains low at just over one in ten (12%).
- Also encouraging is that there has been a marked fall in the number of pupils in Year 11 who think they are *unlikely* to go into higher education, compared to 2003. Although Year 11 pupils (along with pupils in Year 10) are most likely of all year groups to think they will not go into higher education, the proportion saying this has dropped from around one in four (23%) last year to around one in seven (15%) this (see Figure 1).
- Meanwhile, the proportion of pupils in Years 7-9 who think they are unlikely to go into higher education remains at around one in ten (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Likelihood of going into higher education

Q How likely or unlikely are you to go into higher education when you are old enough?



Base: All respondents

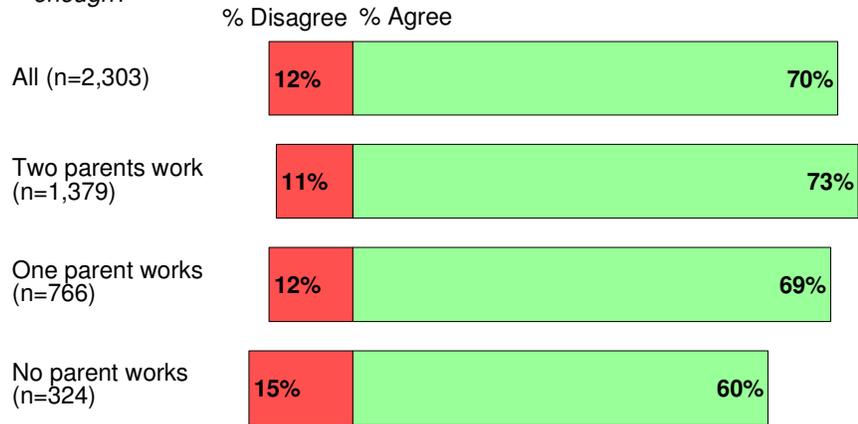
Source: MORI

- The proportion of boys saying they were likely (*very + fairly*) to go into higher education increased significantly between 2002 and 2003. This upwards trend has not continued into 2004: disappointingly, there has been a significant decline in the number of boys who now say this (66% compared to 70% in 2003 and 64% in 2002). Moreover, girls continue to be more likely than boys to think they will go into higher education (74% versus 66%).
- As in 2003, around eight in ten minority ethnic respondents think they are likely to go into higher education. However, there has been a significant decline in the number of BME respondents who think they are *very likely* to do so (45% versus 55% in 2003).
- Nevertheless, minority ethnic pupils are more certain than white pupils to think they are *likely* to go into higher education (80% versus 68%).
- As in 2003, the 'work status' of their household influences the certainty expressed by young people about going into higher education. Around seven in ten young people in households where at least one adult is working say they are *likely* to go into higher education compared to six in ten households where no adult is working (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Likelihood of going into higher education

Q How likely or unlikely are you to go into higher education when you are old enough?



Base: All respondents

Source: MORI

Reasons for not going into higher education

- Young people who think they are *unlikely* to go into higher education most frequently say this is because they *prefer to do something practical rather than studying from books*. There has been a marked increase in the number of young people giving this as a reason, from around four in ten in 2003 (39%) to nearly half (49%) in 2004.
- As in 2003, four in ten young people (40%) say they *want to start earning money as soon as possible*.
- The apparent lack of confidence in their academic abilities amongst girls which emerged in 2003 does not reappear in 2004; in fact, the opposite is true with boys now significantly more likely than girls to give *I won't get good enough exam results to get into a university* (33% versus 22%) as a reason for being *unlikely* to go in to higher education.
- Only a minority of young people says that they are unlikely to go into higher education because they are *worried about getting into debt as a student*. However, young people living in households where no adult is working are significantly more likely to say this than their peers in households where at least one adult is working¹. Although the proposals to introduce 'top-up' fees after 2006 allow exemptions, grants and bursaries for students from poorer backgrounds, this finding appears to reinforce fears expressed by critics of the proposals that economically disadvantaged young people will be deterred from entering higher education² (see Figure 3).

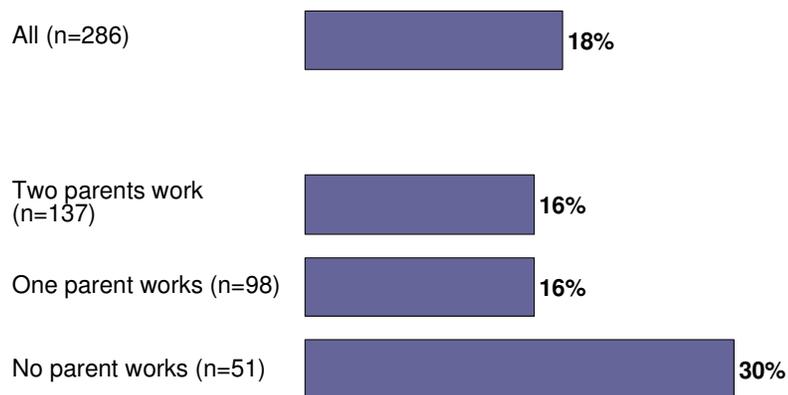
¹ Indicative finding: small base size.

² See, for example <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/3583401.stm> for comments by Mandy Telford, President of the NUS and John Brennan, chief executive of the Association of Colleges.

Figure 3

Reasons for not going into higher education

Q Why are you unlikely to go into higher education?
A I'm worried about getting into debt as a student.



Base: All respondents who are unlikely to go into higher education

Source: MORI

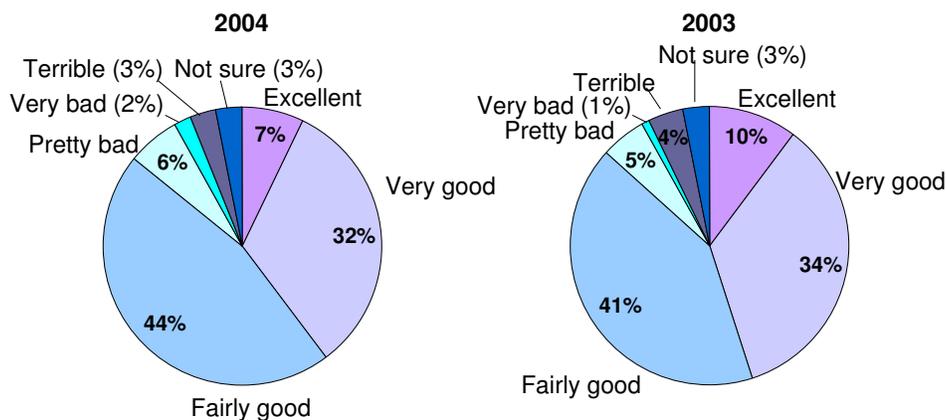
How do young people rate the quality of their school?

- As in 2003, the majority of young people rate their school as fairly good or better (85%). Fewer young people now rate their school as *excellent*, though (7% versus 10% in 2003), while more say their school is only *fairly good* (see Figure 4).
- Girls, pupils in Years 7-9, white pupils and those in households with two working adults are particularly likely to think their school is good overall.
- In comparison, amongst the one in ten respondents describing their school as bad, boys, pupils in Years 10 and 11, BME pupils and pupils living in households with one or no working adults appear more frequently.

Figure 4

Descriptions of Schools

Q Thinking about your school overall, how would you describe it?



Base: All respondents (2004 = 2,303; 2003 = 2,469)

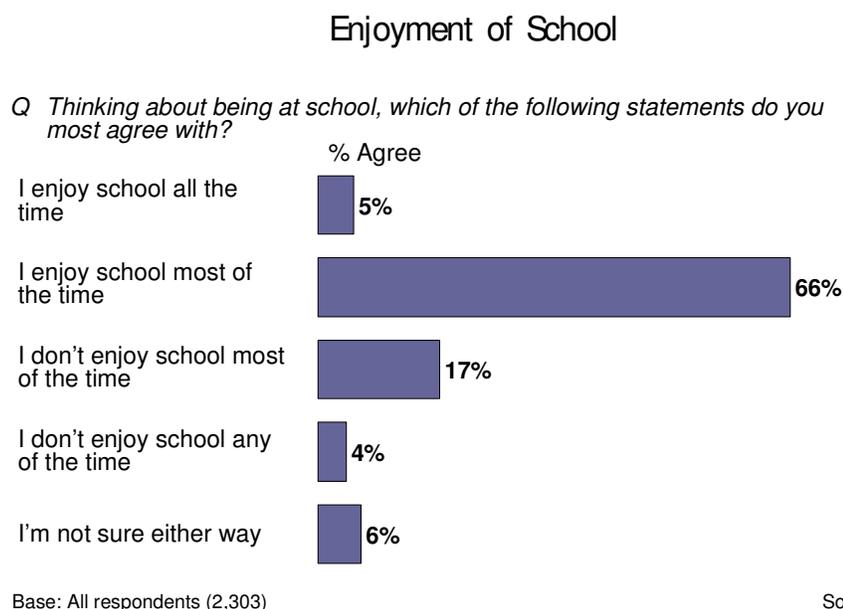
Source: MORI

- There is a marked relationship between positive ratings of school and the likelihood that young people will go into higher education. Nearly three in four young people (72%) who describe their school as good also say they are likely to go onto university. This compares to less than three in five young people (56%) who describe their school as bad.

How do young people rate their enjoyment of school?

- Encouragingly, most young people (66%) say they enjoy school *most of the time*, with a further five per cent saying they enjoy it *all the time* (see Figure 5). These figures are unchanged on 2003.
- However, over one in five young people (22%) say they don't enjoy school either *most of the time* or *at all* (see Figure 5).

Figure 5



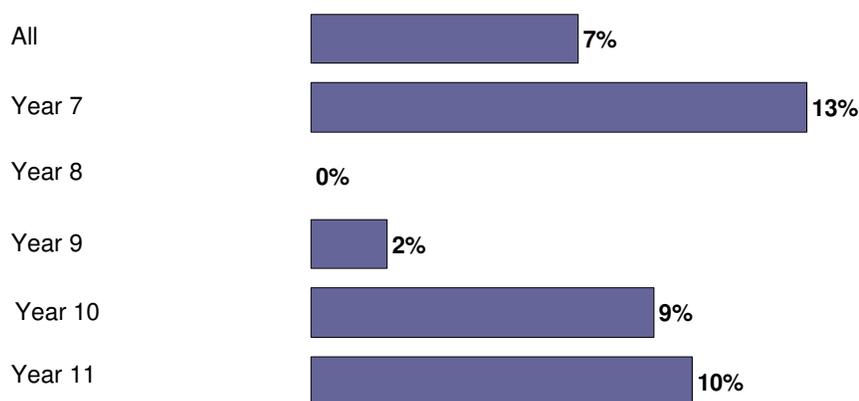
- Girls, pupils in Years 7 and 8, and those living in households with two working adults are all more likely to say they enjoy school than boys, pupils in Years 9-11 and those living in households with no, or just one, working adult.
- As with rating schools positively, there is a relationship between enjoying school and the likelihood that young people will go into higher education: three-quarters of young people (75%) who largely enjoy school say they will do this, compared to just over half of young people (53%) who don't.
- Young people who do not enjoy school have clear ideas on what would make it more enjoyable, with their wish list including:
 - Less homework (66%);
 - Fewer exams or tests (42%);
 - Teachers who are less strict (41%); and

- Easier lessons (31%).
- However, as in 2003, there is some indication that schools are not yet meeting the needs of some disaffected pupils. Over half (54%) of those who say they do not enjoy school want *lessons that are more interesting* and nearly two in five (39%) say they would enjoy school more if they had *more choice over what subjects I study*. Over one in five young people (22%) would also like *more practical or vocational courses/courses that would qualify me to do a job*.
- Pupils in Year 11, in particular, are more likely to want *lessons that are more interesting* and *more practical or vocational courses*.
- Boys, meanwhile, are more likely than girls to want *more choice over what subjects I study* (44% versus 32%) and a *wider range of subjects to study* (23% versus 13%); so, too, are pupils in households where at least one adult is working compared to pupils living in households where no adult is working.
- Although fewer than one in ten respondents (7%) say they would enjoy school more with the presence of *teachers who are more strict*, pupils in Years 10 and 11 (with those in Year 7³) are particularly likely to say this (see Figure 6).

Figure 6

Making school more enjoyable

Q Which of the following, if any, would make school more enjoyable for you?
Teachers that are more strict



Base: All who do not enjoy school (525)

Source: MORI

- This is true, too, of black and minority ethnic pupils, who are also more likely than their white peers to say they would like *more extra-*

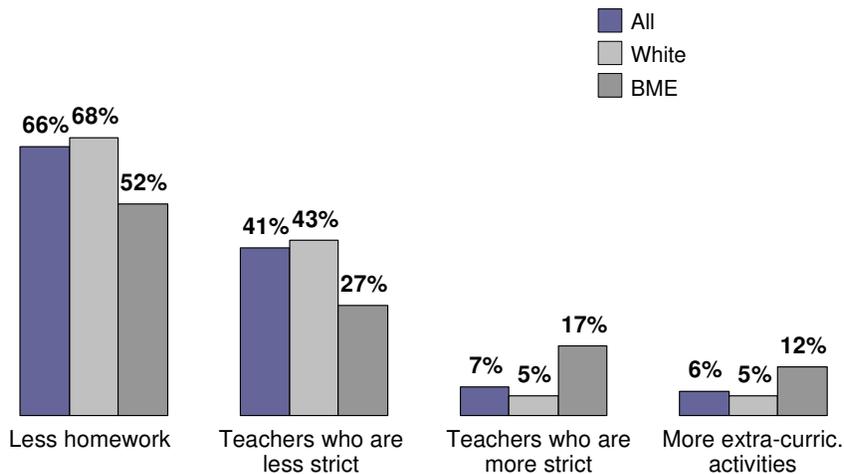
³ Indicative finding (small base size).

curricular/ after-school/ out-of-school hours activities but less likely to say they want *less homework* (see Figure 7).

Figure 7

Making school more enjoyable

Q Which of the following, if any, would make school more enjoyable for you?



Base: All who don't enjoy school (525)

Source: MORI

Appendices

Sample Profile

	Number	Unweighted %	Weighted %
Total	2,303	100	100
Gender of Pupils			
Male	1,189	52	51
Female	1,114	48	49
Age of Pupils			
11	220	10	19
12	424	18	19
13	511	22	19
14	465	20	19
15	469	20	16
16	214	9	8
Year of Pupils			
7	389	17	26
8	468	20	19
9	502	22	20
10	503	22	18
11	441	19	17
Ethnic Origin			
White	2,001	87	88
BME	294	13	12
Household Composition			
Two parents in household	1,774	77	77
Single parent in household	467	20	20
Sibling in household	1,957	85	85
Work Status of Household			
Two parents work	1,198	52	52
One parent works	792	34	34
No parent works	313	14	14
Region			
London	274	12	11
South East	368	16	16
South West	251	11	9
North East	83	4	5
North West (incl. Merseyside)	389	17	14
Eastern (incl. Anglia)	287	13	10
East Midlands	212	9	8
West Midlands	189	8	11
Yorkshire & Humberside	152	7	10
Wales	98	4	6

Source: MORI

List of Local Education Authorities by Government Office Region

Eastern: Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Luton, Norfolk, Peterborough, Southend, Suffolk, Thurrock.

East Midlands: Derby, Derbyshire, Leicester, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, Rutland.

London: Barking, Barnet, Bexley, Brent, Bromley, Camden, Croydon, Ealing, Enfield, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Haringey, Harrow, Havering, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Kingston on Thames, Lambeth, Lewisham, Merton, Newham, Redbridge, Richmond upon Thames, Southwark, Sutton, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, Wandsworth, Westminster.

North East: Darlington, Durham, Gateshead, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, Northumberland, Redcar & Cleveland, South Tyneside, Stockton-on-Tees, Sunderland.

North West (incl. Merseyside): Blackburn, Blackpool, Bolton, Bury, Cheshire, Cumbria, Halton, Knowsley, Lancashire, Liverpool, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, St Helens, Salford, Sefton, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, Warrington, Wigan, Wirral.

South East: Bracknell Forest, Brighton and Hove, Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Medway, Milton Keynes, Newbury, Oxfordshire, Portsmouth, Reading, Slough, Southampton, Surrey, West Berkshire, West Sussex, Windsor and Maidenhead, Wokingham.

South West: Bath and North-East Somerset, Bournemouth, Bristol, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Isles of Scilly, , North Somerset, Plymouth, Poole, Somerset, South Gloucestershire, Swindon, Torbay, Wiltshire.

Wales: Anglesey, Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Conwyn, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Neath Port Talbot, Newport, Pembrokeshire, Powys, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Swansea, Torfaen, Wrexham, Vale of Glamorgan.

West Midlands: Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Herefordshire, Sandwell, Shropshire, Solihull, Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, Telford and Wrekin, Walsall, Warwickshire, Wolverhampton, Worcestershire.

Yorkshire and Humberside: Barnsley, Bradford, Calderdale, Doncaster, East Riding of Yorkshire, Kingston-upon-Hull, Kirklees, Leeds, North East Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire, North Yorkshire, Rotherham, Sheffield, Wakefield, York.

Letter to Schools

Name
Address 1
Address 2
Address 3
Postcode

December 2003

Dear

MORI National Schools Omnibus

MORI has been commissioned by a range of public and voluntary sector organisations to undertake a large-scale survey of pupils in compulsory secondary education (aged 11 to 16) throughout England and Wales. The survey will aim to discover what pupils think about a number of educational and social issues, including for example, higher education, transport, the law and criminal offences and developing countries.

I am writing to ask you for your school's participation in this important survey, due to begin on Monday 12th January 2004. Your school is one of 500 randomly selected to produce a nationally representative sample of schools in England and Wales. We aim to keep disruption to the school routine to an absolute minimum by randomly selecting **only one class** to participate. During one school period a MORI interviewer will attend the class, explain the survey process and hand out a self-completion questionnaire. She/he will be on hand to answer any queries and will then collect the completed questionnaires at the end of the session.

Participation in the survey is completely confidential and your school and pupils will not be revealed to the organisations who have commissioned the survey, nor identified in any analysis.

The survey is due to start on 12th January and continue until 5th March 2004. We are extremely conscious of the heavy demands currently placed on pupils and teachers. We are therefore anxious to stress that **all the administration connected with the survey will be carried out by representatives from MORI**. As a thank you for taking part, participating schools will receive a Social Sciences/Humanities resource pack to assist with the planning and teaching of modules relating to market or social research.

A MORI interviewer will be contacting you in the near future and will be able to explain the process to you in more detail. In the meantime, we would be grateful if you could complete the enclosed fax-back reply form to let us know whether or not you would be able to take part in the study.

I should stress that MORI will endeavour not to contact your school again in the current school year.

I very much hope that your school is able to take part in the study. A summary of the findings will be available on the MORI web site (www.mori.com/schoolsomnibus) after the survey has been completed. If you have any queries or would like any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Abbie Nicholas, Helen Shaw or myself at MORI on 020 7347 3000.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane Stevens', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jane Stevens
Director of Schools Omnibus

Statistical Reliability

The respondents to the questionnaire are only samples of the total “population”, so we cannot be certain that the figures obtained are exactly those we would have if everybody had been interviewed (the “true” values). We can, however, predict the variation between the sample results and the “true” values from a knowledge of the size of the samples on which the results are based and the number of times that a particular answer is given. The confidence with which we can make this prediction is usually chosen to be 95%, that is, the chances are 95 in 100 that the “true” value will fall within a specified range. The table below illustrates the predicted ranges for different sample sizes and percentage results at the “95% confidence interval”.

Size of sample on which survey results is based	Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	±	±	±
100 interviews	6	9	10
500 interviews	3	4	4
1,000 interviews	2	3	3
2,303 interviews (<i>Schools Omnibus</i>)	1	2	2

Source: MORI

For example, with a sample of 2,303 where 30% give a particular answer, the chances are 19 in 20 that the “true” value (which would have been obtained if the whole population had been interviewed) will fall within the range of plus or minus 2 percentage points from the sample result.

When results are compared between separate groups within a sample, different results may be obtained. The difference may be “real”, or it may occur by chance (because not everyone in the population has been interviewed). To test if the difference is a real one, i.e. if it is “statistically significant”, we again have to know the size of the samples, the percentage giving a certain answer and the degree of confidence chosen. If we use a “95% confidence interval”, the differences between the two sample results must be greater than the values given in the table below.

Size of sample compared	Differences required for significance at or near these percentage levels		
	10% or 90%	30% or 70%	50%
	±	±	±
250 and 100	7	11	12
500 and 250	5	7	8
500 and 500	4	6	6
1,000 and 500	3	5	5
1,000 and 1,000	3	4	4
1,500 and 1,000	2	4	4

Source: MORI

Guide to Computer Tabulations

Basic Table Structure

The accompanying tables set out the findings from the study. They present the number of respondents, expressed as percentages, who gave a response to each question and are analysed against a breakdown of other key questions to show which types of people have given each response.

Each table contains:

- the wording of the question and the question number;
- headings for the downbreak categories;
- headings for the crossbreak categories;
- a description of who answered each question;
- the number of respondents in each crossbreak who answered the question (the base);
- total figures.

The Downbreaks

The downbreaks are listed down the left-hand side of each table and include the range of all possible responses to a particular question. They include all the pre-coded responses that were available to the respondent.

Where percentages do not sum to 100%, this may be due to computer rounding, the exclusion of 'don't know' categories, or multiple responses. An asterisk (*) denotes a value of less than 0.5%, but more than zero.

Some tables also include combination scores. These are literally combined responses to two or more response categories on the same "side" of a scale. For example, very satisfied and fairly satisfied gives a combination score of "satisfaction".

Net scores are also provided. This reduces the findings for each question to a single figure in every column. The net score is calculated by subtracting the negative score from the positive score. For example, if 65% are satisfied and 20% dissatisfied, then the "net satisfaction" score is +45 points.

The Crossbreaks

The crossbreaks are found across the top of the table as column headings. The crossbreaks include:

- Weighted total;
- Gender of pupil (Male, Female);

- Age of pupil (11 years, 12 years, 13 years, 14 years, 15-16 years);
- Year of pupil (7, 8, 9, 10, 11);
- Ethnic origin (White, BME);
- Household Composition (Two parents in household, Single parent in household, Sibling in household);
- Work Status of Household (Two parents work, One parent works, No parent works);
- Government Office Region (London, South East, South West, North East, North West, Eastern, East Midlands, West Midlands, Yorkshire and Humberside, Wales);
- Unweighted total.

Viewing the results in this way can highlight any notable differences in the responses of these different types of respondent. Cross tabulations can also be used to show relationships to different questions.

Bases

The 'base' is the number of respondents answering the question.

Layout of Computer Tables

The next pages contain the questionnaire marked-up with the overall results. This is followed by the computer tabulations, with each question analysed by two pages of sub-groups (crossbreaks).

Interpreting the Data

When interpreting the data it is often helpful to start with the overall picture and then look at specific details. Look first at the total column, decide whether there appears to be anything particularly interesting and look to see whether anything is different to what you had expected. Then look at the rest of the table. Are there any major differences between sub-groups? Are things similar where you expected to find differences? Where there are significant differences between sub-groups, these are highlighted with the use of letters on the computer tabulations.

Marked-up Questionnaire

Computer Tabulations
