

National Survey for Wales, 2013-14

Education

Introduction

In 2013-14, the National Survey for Wales included a number of questions about parents' satisfaction with schools and their experience of dealing with schools and teachers. Parents were then asked about the aspirations they have for their children when they leave school at 16, and how often they spend time with their children on various activities. Parents' and non-parents' views were also sought on the education system in Wales overall. The full questionnaire is available [here](#).

The National Survey results are used together with other data sources (inspection reports, exam results etc.) to provide the Welsh Government with a broader assessment of the quality of education services. This evidence will inform actions identified in the [Improving Schools](#), which sets out how the Welsh Government's key priorities for education will be implemented. It will also feed into evaluations of Welsh Government programmes and policies, including studies and effectiveness of school improvement reforms.

Key Findings

- 92% of parents were satisfied with the primary school their child attended and 85% were satisfied with the secondary school their child attended.
- Parents of 12 year olds recorded higher levels of satisfaction when their child had attended a primary school than when their child had attended a secondary school in the preceding 12 months.
- Parents of primary school children felt more involved with their child's school than parents of secondary school children.
- Over half of parents of children aged 3 to 7 looked at books or read stories with their child every day.
- Parents with fewer children in the household were more likely to help their child (aged 3-7) every day with educational activities.
- 25% of parents of children aged 8 to 17 supported their child with school work every day. 33% had never helped their child to use the internet for educational purposes.
- 81% of parents want their child to continue in full-time education once they finish compulsory full-time education at age 16.

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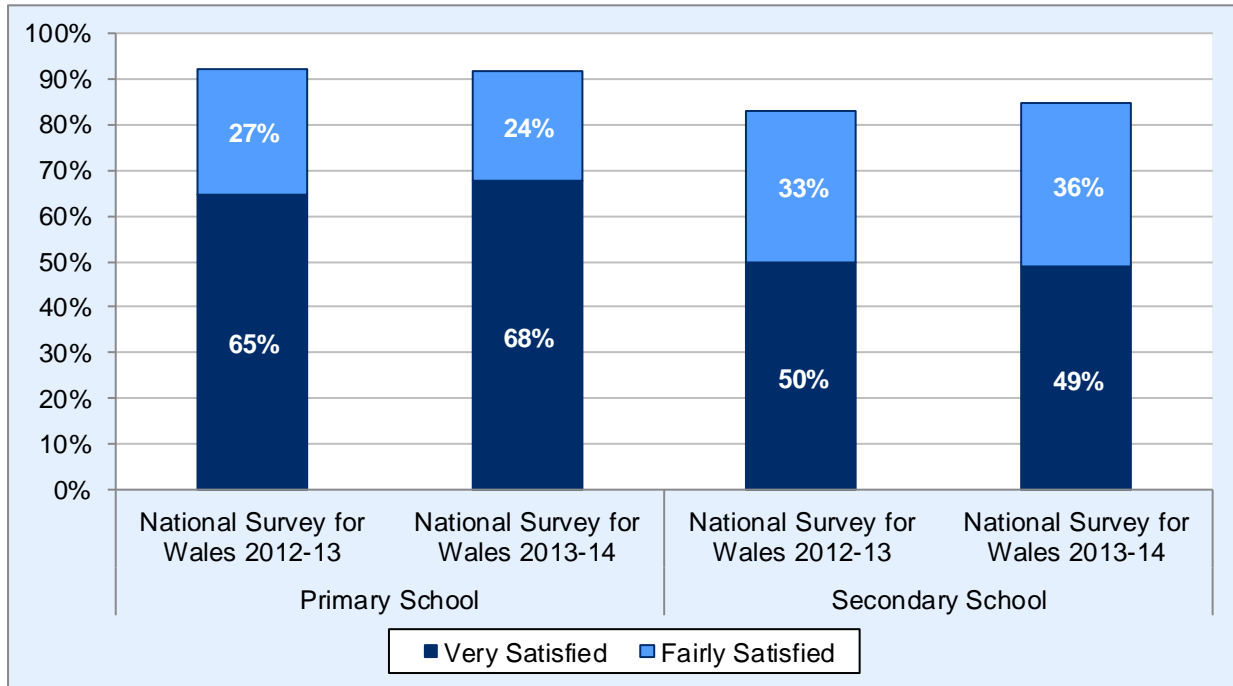
[Chart 14: Overall satisfaction of the education system, by age](#)

Satisfaction with primary and secondary schools

The National Survey asked parents a series of questions about their satisfaction with their children's local authority funded primary and secondary schools.¹

Results from the National Survey show that 92% of parents were satisfied² with the primary school that their child attended, and 85% were satisfied with the secondary school their child attended. Chart 1 shows that fewer parents were 'very' satisfied with secondary schools than primary schools.

Chart 1: Percentage of parents satisfied with their child's primary and secondary school



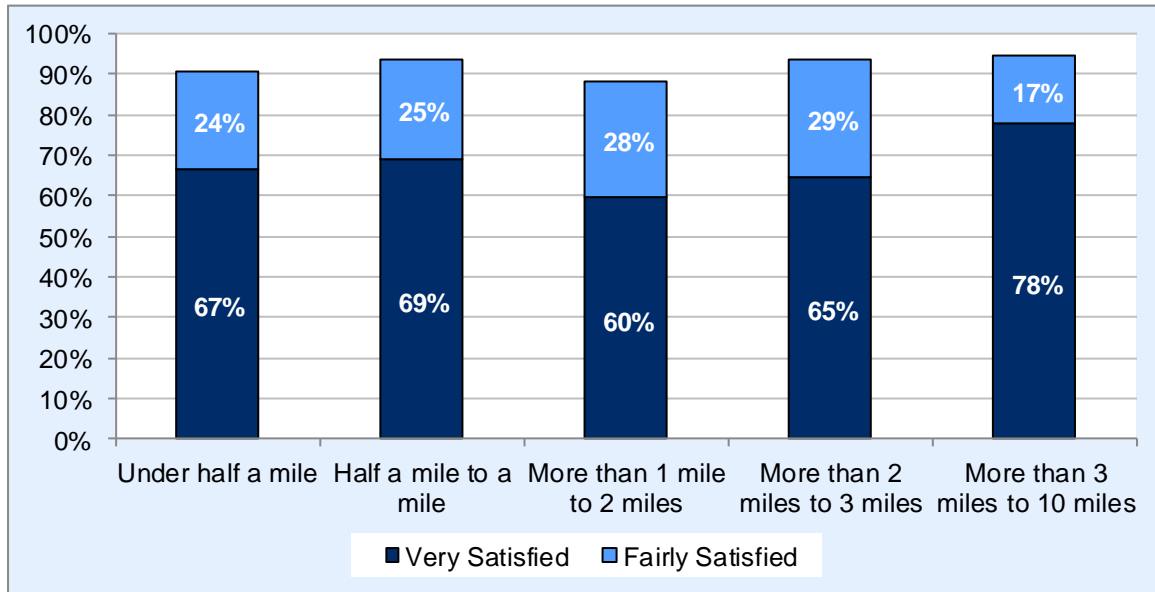
In 2013-14, 68% of parents were 'very satisfied' with primary schools compared with 49% for secondary schools. The figures for both 'very satisfied' and 'fairly satisfied' showed little variation between 2012-13 and 2013-14.

It is possible to see if satisfaction with primary school varies by the distance travelled to get to the school. This can be seen in Chart 2. However there may be other factors that affect satisfaction which would need to be explored in further analysis.

¹ Respondents were asked to think about their experiences over the past 12 months. Legal guardians were also asked these questions and are included in the category 'parents' here.

² Satisfied includes 'very satisfied' and 'fairly satisfied', dissatisfied includes 'very dissatisfied' and 'fairly dissatisfied'.

Chart 2: Satisfied with child's primary school, by distance to get to school (a)

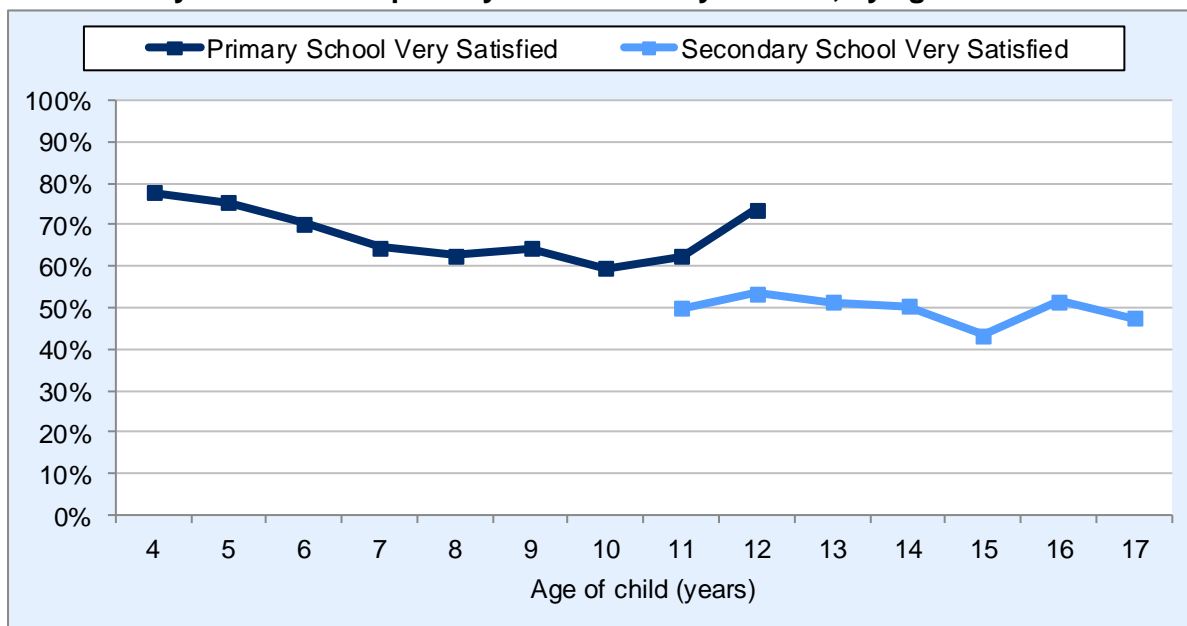


(a) Fewer than 30 people travelled over 10 miles to primary school; these are not shown in the chart

Parents whose child travels over a mile but under two miles to their primary school on a typical school day are less likely to be 'very satisfied' with the school than parents whose child travels between 3 and 10 miles to their primary school on a typical school day.

[Further research](#) using the 2012-13 data showed that parents were more likely to be satisfied with their child's primary school if their child was at the younger end of the 4 to 11 age range. A similar relationship can be seen in the 2013-14 data and is shown in Chart 3.

Chart 3: Very satisfied with primary and secondary schools, by age of child



78% of parents of primary school children aged 4 were very satisfied with the primary school compared with 60% of parents of primary school children aged 10.³

Chart 3 also shows that there was a difference when the child was 12 years old depending on whether the parent was referring to a primary school or secondary school that the child had attended in the preceding 12 months.⁴ 74% of parents where the child aged 12 attended a primary school in the last 12 months were very satisfied, compared with 53% of parents where the child aged 12 attended a secondary school in the last 12 months.

Using the combined data from the first two full years of the National Survey it was found that satisfaction with secondary schools was lower in Central South Wales consortia than in South West and Mid Wales consortia.⁵ More on this can be found in the [Headline results, April 2012 - March 2014](#).

The relationship between parents' satisfaction with schools and the outcomes for pupils is investigated further in an [Ofsted report](#) published in 2006 on satisfaction with schools in England.

More of the 2013-14 National Survey results for satisfaction with primary and secondary schools can be found on [StatsWales: Satisfaction with primary and secondary schools](#).

Experience of dealing with schools

The [Improving Schools](#) plan outlines the need for schools to engage with parents and develop a two-way relationship in order to improve learning outcomes. Questions were therefore included in the National Survey to ask parents about specific aspects of dealing with their child's primary or secondary school.

Parents were asked whether they felt they were kept informed about the performance of their child's school. 85% of primary school parents and 82% of secondary school parents felt that they were kept informed. Similar results were found in 2012-13 (86% of primary school children's parents and 81% of secondary school parents).

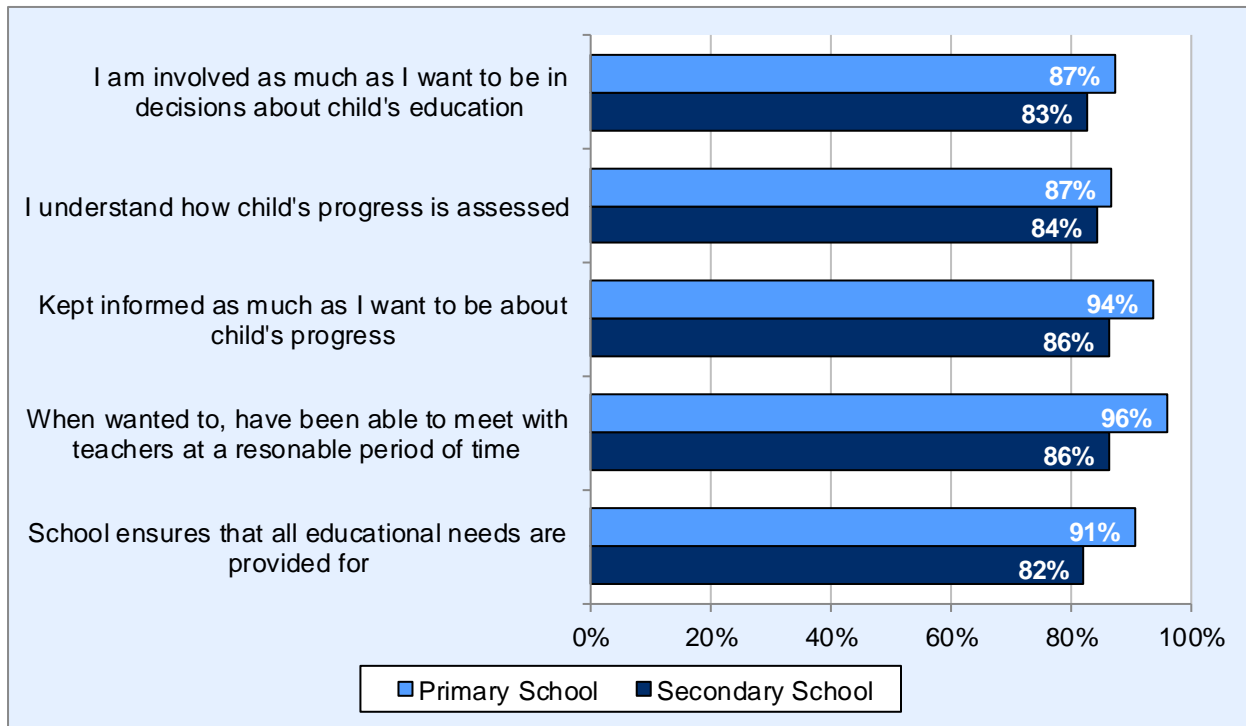
Parents were also asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statements about involvement with different aspects of schools. The results are shown in Chart 4.

³ If parents or guardians had more than one child in the household who was aged 4-19, interviewers randomly selected one of their children for them to think about when answering this question.

⁴ As asked of the last 12 months it is possible that children aged 11 or 12 could have attended either a primary or secondary school.

⁵ See [Terms and definitions](#) for explanation of consortia.

Chart 4: Percentage of parents who agreed with statements about their experience of dealing with schools



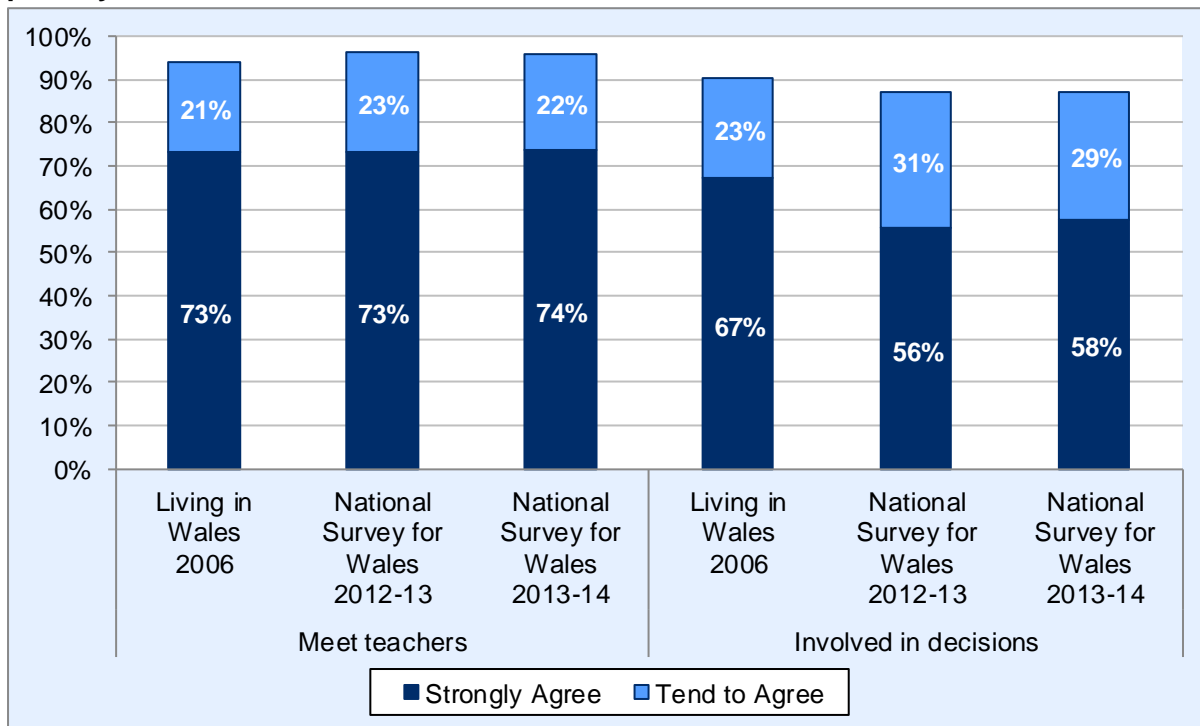
Agreement with the statements is higher in primary schools than secondary schools in all five statements.

94% of primary school children's parents and 86% of secondary school children's parents felt they were kept informed as much as they wanted to be about their child's progress. Similar results were found in 2012-13: 92% of primary school children's parents and 86% of secondary school children's parents felt they were kept informed as much as they wanted to be about their child's progress.

Using combined data from the first two full years of the National Survey, it was possible to look at parents' views at local authority level. This showed that Pembrokeshire (92%) had the highest parental levels of agreement about how well they feel they are kept informed about primary school performance, compared with Cardiff which had the lowest (80%). More on this can be found in [Headline results, April 2012 - March 2014](#).

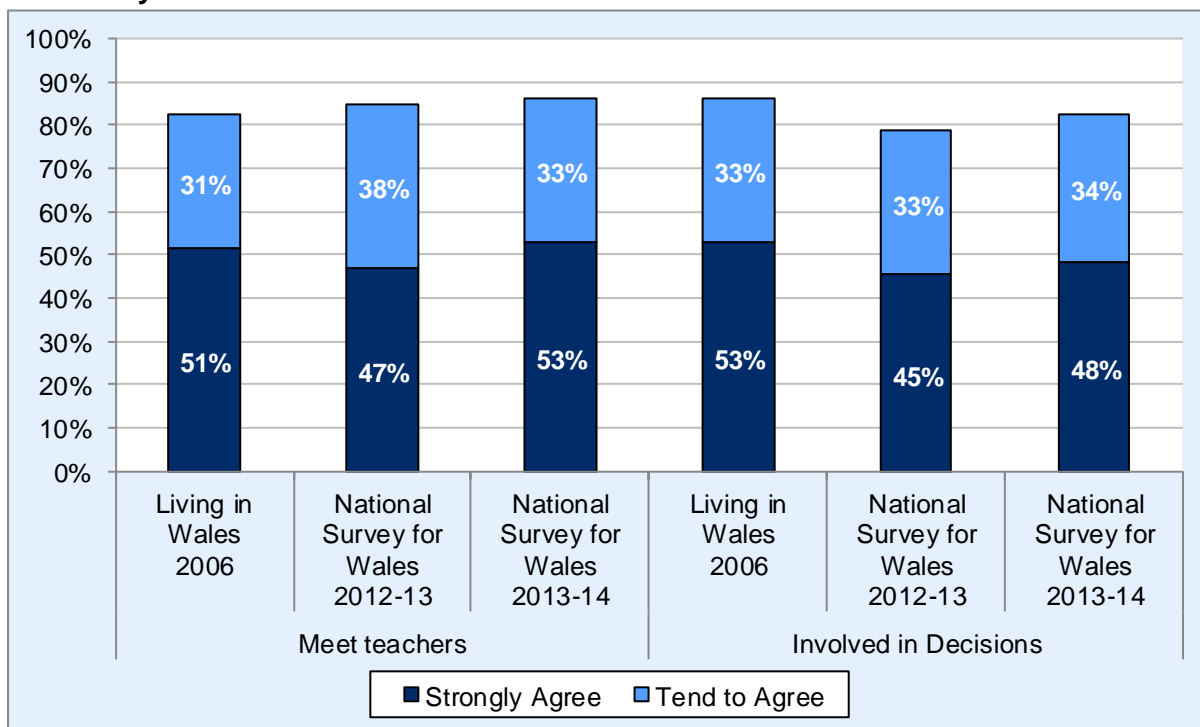
Similar questions relating to meeting teachers and being involved in decisions were asked in the [2006 Living in Wales Survey](#). It is possible to compare the differences between these two questions over the years when considering primary schools (Chart 5) and secondary schools (Chart 6).

Chart 5: Percentage of parents who agreed with statements about their experience of dealing with primary schools over time



When looking at ‘strongly agree’ and ‘tend to agree’ together, neither ‘Meet with teachers’ nor ‘Involved in Decisions’ show much variation across the years. However, more parents ‘strongly agree’ that they can meet teachers when they need to than ‘strongly agree’ that they are involved in decisions.

Chart 6: Percentage of parents who agreed with statements about their experience of dealing with secondary schools over time



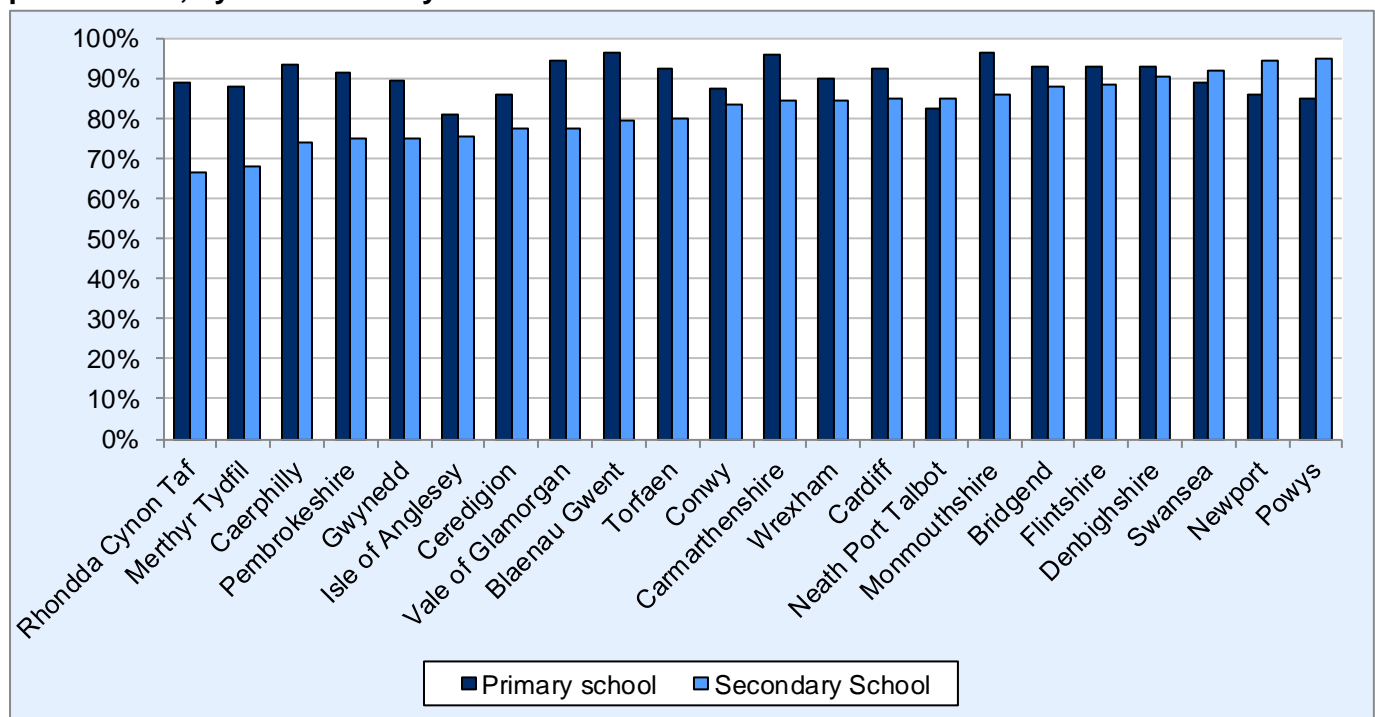
Results for secondary schools can also be compared across the two years of the National Survey and the 2006 Living in Wales survey. In both 'meet with teachers' and 'involved in decisions' there is more variation between the years than seen for primary schools, however the differences between the years are not statistically significant ones.

As discussed previously when two years of National Survey data is combined it is possible to make local authority level comparisons. The percentage of parents, with a child at secondary school, who feel that when they want to meet with teachers they can do so within a reasonable period of time, differs between local authorities. Parents in Rhondda Cynon Taf reported the lowest percentage who agreed with this statement (78%), whilst 95% of parents in Powys agreed with the statement. More on this can be found in the [Headline results, April 2012 - March 2014](#).

The questions concerning all educational needs being provided for and understanding how a child's progress is assessed were not asked in the 2012-13 National Survey, thus no comparison between years is possible.

Chart 7 shows how the percentage of parents who agree that the school ensures that all of the child's educational needs are provided for differs between local authorities and between primary or secondary school.

Chart 7: Agree that primary or secondary school ensure that all child's educational needs are provided for, by local authority



For primary schools, Isle of Anglesey had the lowest percentage in agreement (81%), compared with Blaenau Gwent which had the highest level of agreement with 97%. For secondary schools, Rhondda Cynon Taf had the lowest percentage of agreement with 67%, compared with Powys which had the highest level of agreement with 95%.

It is also possible to compare how the levels of agreement differ between primary and secondary schools within the same local authority. Neath Port Talbot had the smallest difference between primary schools and secondary schools, with 2 percentage points difference. Rhondda Cynon Taf had the greatest difference between primary schools and secondary schools, with 23 percentage points difference.

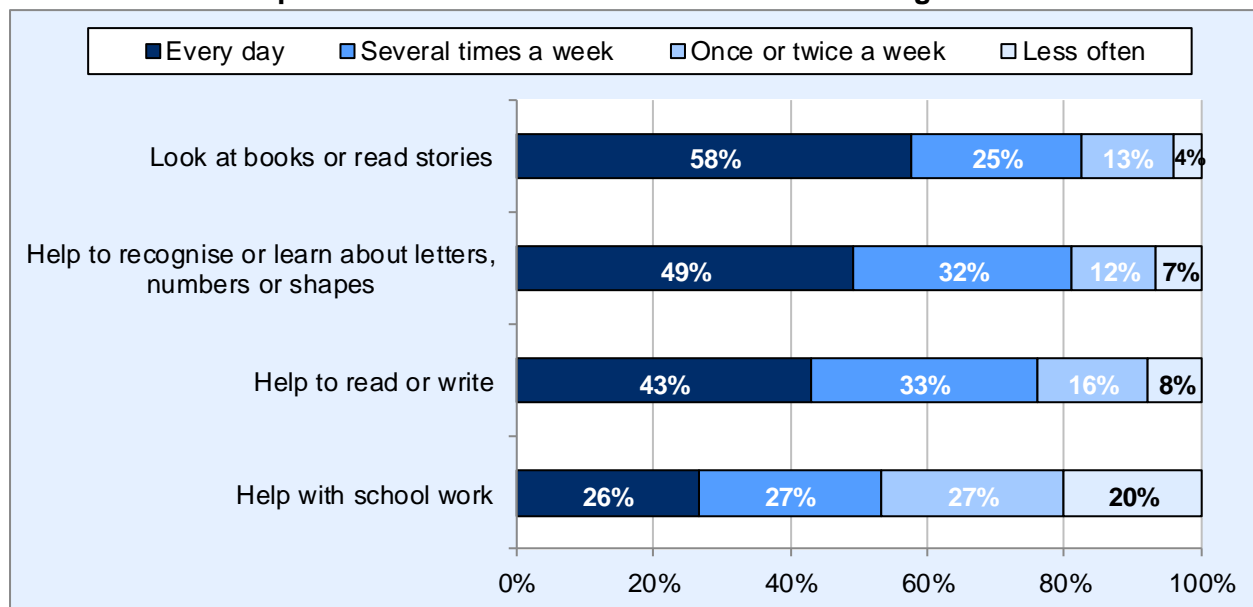
More of the 2013-14 National Survey results for experience of dealing with schools can be found on [StatsWales: Experience of dealing with schools](#).

Parental involvement with children’s learning

Research has consistently shown that supportive parents and a good home learning environment can help to improve a child’s cognitive development and make a positive difference to their achievement at school. For example, a range of activities (such as playing with letters and numbers, reading together and teaching songs and nursery rhymes) is known to be associated with positive outcomes at age 3 and 7.

Consequently, the Welsh Government is keen to find out how much time parents spend doing various activities with children of different ages. In the National Survey, parents of children aged 3 to 7 were asked a series of questions about how often they look at books or read stories to their children, help their children to recognise or learn about letters, numbers or shapes, help their children to read or write, and help their children with school work. The results are shown in Chart 8.

Chart 8: How often parents did certain activities with their child aged 3 to 7



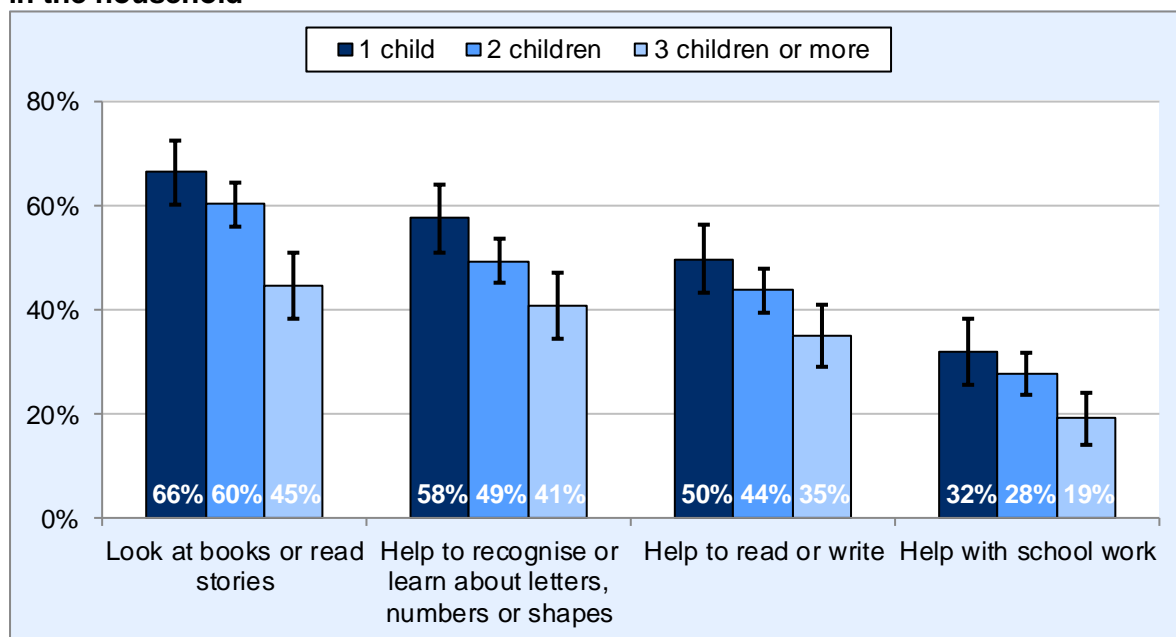
(a) Parents who answered ‘Not at all’ are included in the ‘Less often’ category

It is important to note that the survey only asked the parent randomly selected for interview how much time they spent doing various activities with their child. Information about the time that another parent or adult spent doing the same activities with their child was not collected.

These four questions were also asked in the 2012-13 National Survey and produced [similar results](#) to the 2013-14 results in Chart 8. The biggest change between the two survey years was seen in help with school work every day, with a 6% decrease from 2012-13 to 2013-14, although the difference is not a statistically significant one.

[Further research](#) with the 2012-13 data showed that parents assisted more with basic learning if there were fewer children in the household. A similar relationship can be seen in the 2013-14 data and is shown in Chart 9.

Chart 9: Parents did certain activities with their child aged 3 to 7 every day, by number of children in the household



A higher percentage of parents look at books or read stories to their child every day than help to read or write every day or help with school work every day. Also, in each of the four activities the percentage of parents who help a child every day with an activity decreases as the number of children in the household increases.

Chart 9 (above) shows the 95% confidence intervals⁶ around the results, that is the margin of uncertainty. As a rough guide, where the confidence intervals around the estimates overlap, it can be assumed that there is no statistically significant difference between the estimates.

In the [Millennium Cohort Study](#) (MCS) similar questions were asked of the parents when their child had reached 3, 5 and 7 years old. When the children were 3, 62% of mothers read to their child every day, and 22% of fathers did the same. At age 5, 50% of mothers and 15% of fathers read to their child every day. And by age 7, 39% of mothers and 13% of fathers read to their child every day. The MCS is a longitudinal survey and asked at different stages of a child's life; whilst the questions are similar, the results are not directly comparable with the National Survey.

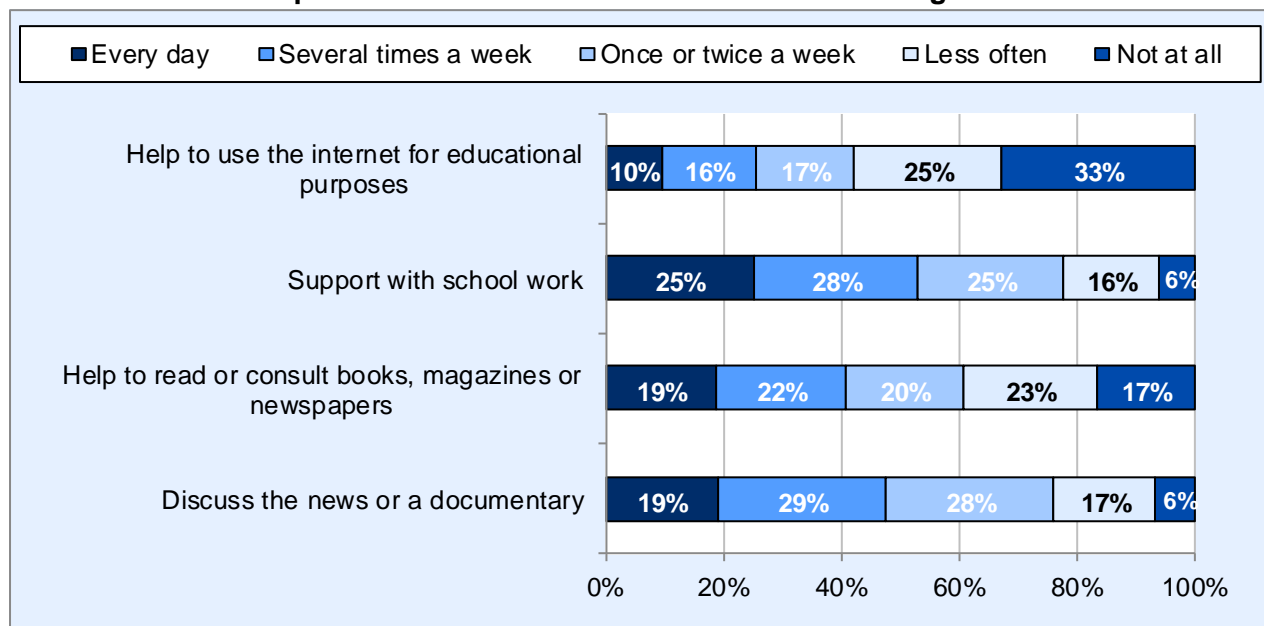
⁶ See Key quality information section, [Sampling Variability](#) and [Significant Differences](#) for more information about confidence intervals.

The two year combined National Survey data found that men were less involved than women in parental involvement in activities with their child (aged 3-7) every day. More on this can be found in the [Headline results, April 2012 – March 2014](#).

A similar set of questions were asked of parents in the Welsh Government’s [2005 Individuals Panel](#). Respondents who had children were asked which activities, if any, they had undertaken with their children aged 3 to 7 in the last 12 months. 96% of parents had looked at books/read stories to their child, 88% helped him/her to read, 86% helped him/her to recognise or learn about letters, numbers or shapes, and just over three quarters had helped their child with other school work (79%).

Parents of children aged 8 to 17 were asked a series of questions in the National Survey about how often they: discussed the news or a documentary with their children; helped their children to read or consult books, magazines or newspapers; helped their children to use the internet for educational purposes; and supported their children with school work. The results of these questions are shown in Chart 10. For comparison with the 2012-13 National Survey, please see [Headline results, 2012-13](#).

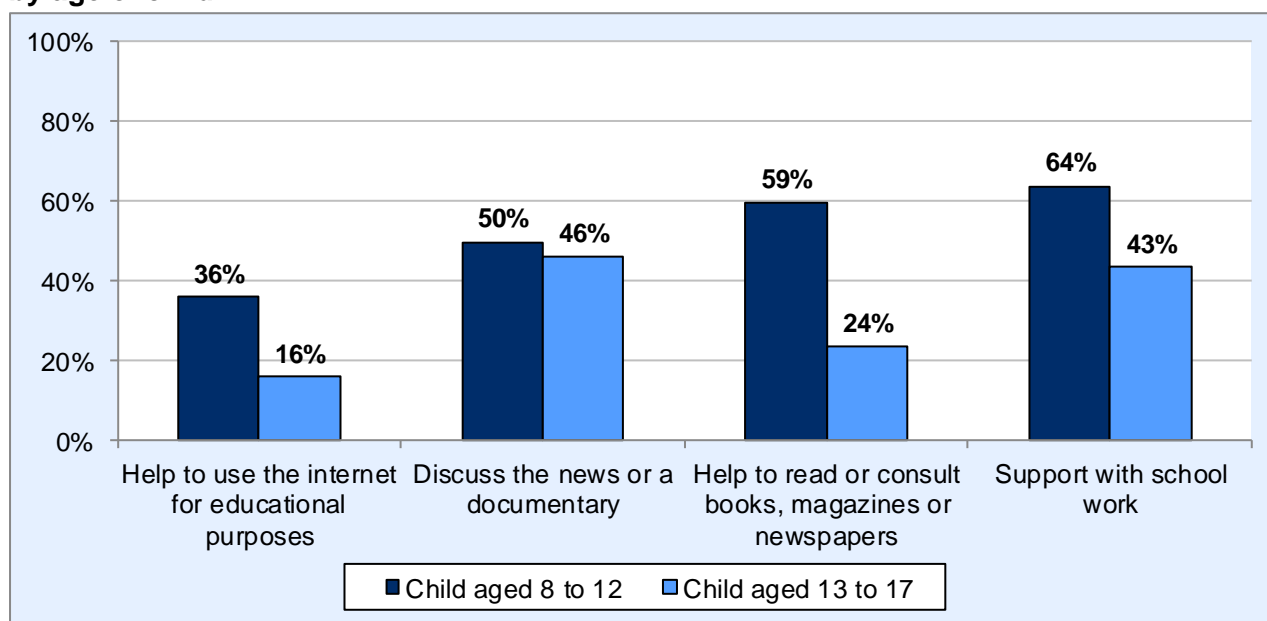
Chart 10: How often parents did certain activities with their child aged 8 to 17



These questions were also asked in the 2012-13 National Survey (except for help to use the internet for educational purposes), with similar results to those found in 2013-14. The biggest change between the two survey years was seen in support with school work every day, with a 4 percentage point decrease from 2012-13 to 2013-14 (although the difference is not statistically significant).

[Further research](#) with the 2012-13 data showed that parents assisted more with advanced learning if the child was at the younger end of the 8 – 17 age range. A similar relationship can be seen in the 2013-14 data and is shown in Chart 11.

Chart 11: Parents did certain activities with their child aged 8 to 17 at least several times a week⁷, by age of child



For each of the activities, apart from ‘discuss the news or a documentary’, parents were more likely to help their child at least several days a week if their child is in the lower end of the age range (8-12) rather than the higher end (13-17).

A similar set of questions was asked of parents in the Welsh Government’s [2005 Individuals Panel](#). Parents who had children aged 8 or older were asked whether they had done any of a list of activities in the last 12 months to support their child’s learning. 82% had helped their child with their school work, 70% had discussed the news or a documentary with their child, 67% had helped their child to look up information on a computer or internet, and 63% had helped their child to read or consult books, magazines or newspapers. The questions in this survey are not directly comparable with the National Survey results, but they do provide additional context.

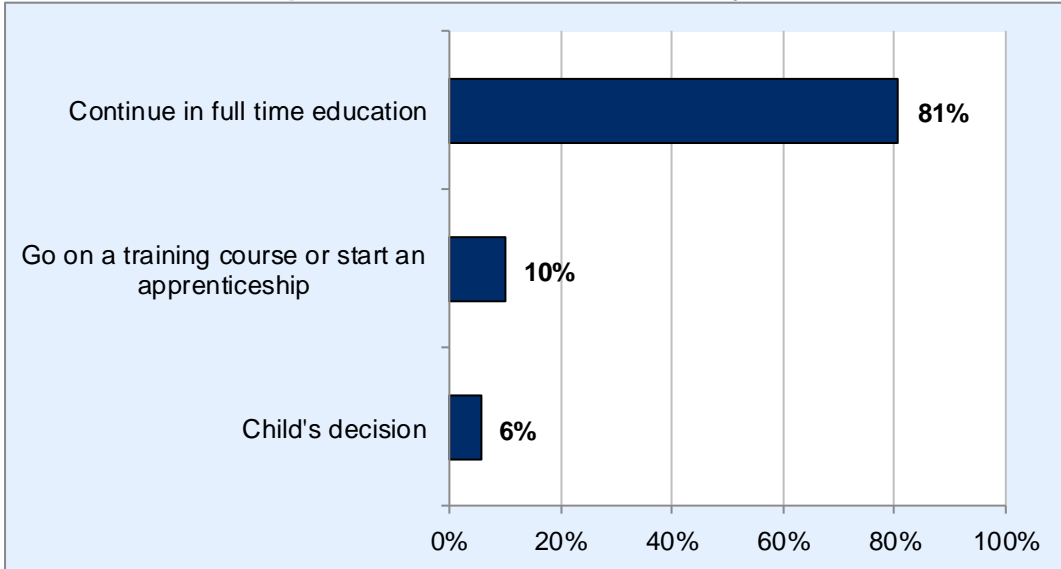
More of the 2013-14 National Survey results for parental involvement with child can be found on [StatsWales: Parental involvement with child’s learning](#).

Aspirations post 16

In the National Survey, parents of children aged 11 to 15 were asked what they would like their child to do when they reach 16 and can leave school. This question was included because there is evidence that the attitudes and aspirations of parents (and of children themselves) can be a useful predictor of children’s educational achievement. This can be seen in Chart 12.

⁷ At least several times a week includes the responses ‘Every day’ and ‘Several times a week’.

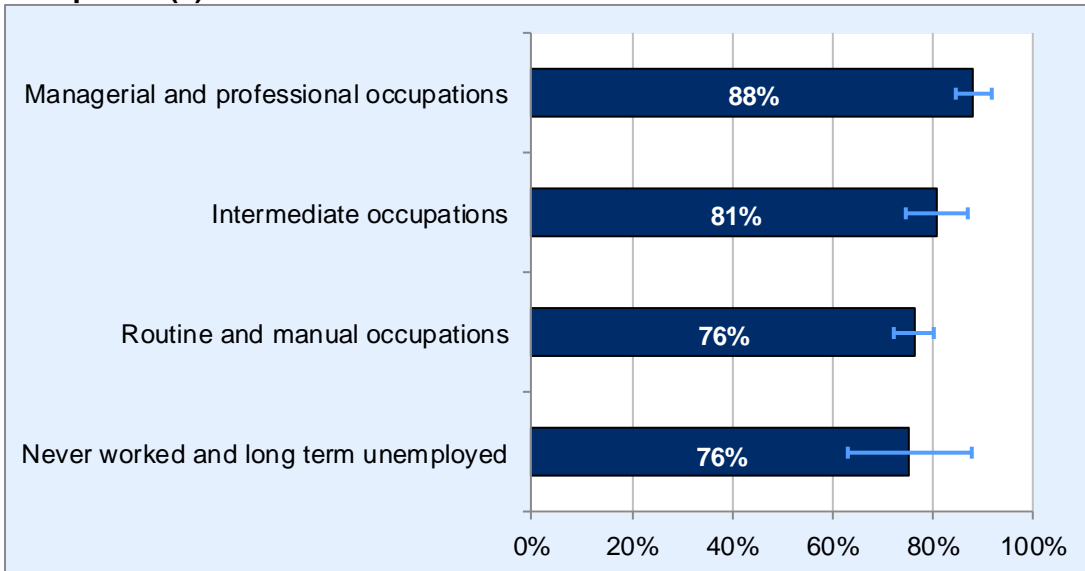
Chart 12: Parents aspirations for their child after they finish full time education at age 16



In 2013-14, 81% (79% in 2012-13) of parents wanted their child to continue in full time education at 16. In both 2012-13 and 2013-14 10% wanted their child to go on a training course or start an apprenticeship when they reached 16 and 6% stated that it was up to their child to decide.

It is possible to explore the percentage of parents who wish their child to continue in full time education by parental occupation. This can be seen in Chart 13.

Chart 13: Percentage of parents who want their child to continue in full time education, by occupation (a)



88% of parents in managerial and professional occupations wanted their child to continue in full time education beyond 16, a notable difference from the 76% of parents in routine and manual occupations who had that aspiration for their child. 13% of parents with routine and manual occupations wished their child to go on a training course or start an apprenticeship and 7% said it was the child's decision.

Once again the 95% confidence intervals shown on the chart indicate where there are true differences in the data.

Views on the education system in Wales

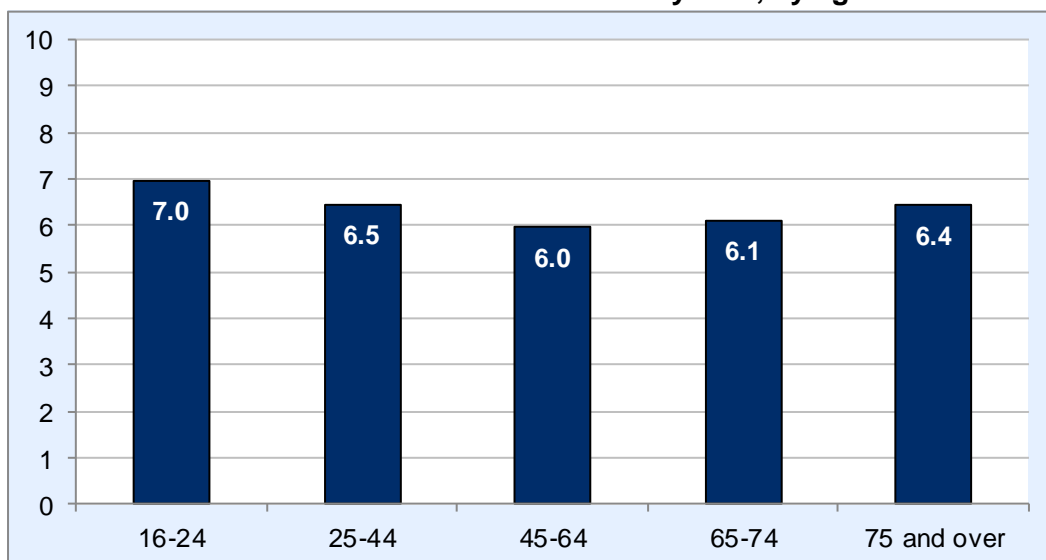
Since devolution, the education policy in the four constituent countries of the UK has diverged: for example, in England reforms have been introduced based on diversity of school types and parental choice; in Wales (and Scotland) there remains a commitment to community-based comprehensive schools. The Welsh Government is therefore keen to find out people's views on the education system in Wales from a cross-section of people, not only those who are parents.

The National Survey asked the question 'Please say what you think overall about the state of education in Wales nowadays?' where 0 is 'extremely bad' and 10 is 'extremely good'. The average response given for the National Survey was 6.3 (6.4 in 2012-13). The proportion of people answering 'Don't know' to this question was 11% (9% in 2012-13). As with all other questions, 'Don't know' responses have been excluded from the analysis.

Local authorities in Wales are responsible for their own education budget. They have substantial scope to decide how the money can be used to meet local needs and priorities. When overall satisfaction with education is split by local authority there are differences between the local authorities which gave the lowest ratings and those which gave the highest. Neath Port Talbot, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Monmouthshire were the least satisfied, with an average of 6.0, whilst Gwynedd, Denbighshire and Flintshire were most satisfied, with an average of 6.7.

Chart 14 shows that the average satisfaction varies between age groups of the respondents.

Chart 14: Overall satisfaction of the education system, by age



The 16 to 24 age group gave the highest satisfaction rating of 7.0 notable since this is the group to still be in, or to recently have left, education. The 45 to 64 age group gave the lowest rating at 6.0.

Average satisfaction with the state of education in Wales nowadays differs depending on if there is a person under 16 in the household or not. The average satisfaction score was 6.6 for households containing

a person under 16, a difference from the average satisfaction score of 6.2 for households not containing a person under 16.

The average satisfaction score for the education system differs with highest qualification of the respondent. People with qualifications at National Qualification Framework levels 4-8 were less satisfied with the education system than those with all other levels of qualifications. People with National Qualification Framework levels 4-8 gave an average rating of 6.0, compared with those with below National Qualification Framework level 2 and those with no qualification who gave an average rating of 6.5 and 6.6 respectively.

More of the 2013-14 National Survey results for views on the education system can be found on [StatsWales: Views on the education system](#).

Key quality information

Background

The National Survey is carried out by TNS-BMRB and Beaufort Research on behalf of the Welsh Government. The results reported here are based on the sample of addresses issued to interviewers between April 2013 and March 2014. Addresses were chosen randomly from the Royal Mail's Small User Postcode Address File. Interviewers visited each address, randomly selected one adult (aged 16+) and carried out a 25-minute face-to-face interview with them. A total of over 14,500 interviews were completed, with a response rate of 71%.

Education questions

The Education questions were asked of all parents, including legal guardians. If there was more than one child in the house then the respondent was asked to think about the specific child that was randomly selected by the CAPI. Parents of children aged 4-12 were asked about primary schools, and parents of children aged 11-19 were asked about secondary school. There is an overlap between the two age groups as respondents are asked to think about the last 12 months, and depending on the date the question was asked children of age 11 or 12 may have attended either a primary or secondary school in the previous 12 months.

The full questionnaire is available on the [National Survey web pages](#).

Sampling variability

As a sample survey, the National Survey is subject to a margin of uncertainty, because different randomly-selected samples of the population of Wales will give different results. Confidence intervals are therefore used to provide an indication of the precision of these estimates.

A selection of the results discussed in the bulletin is presented on [StatsWales](#) along with their 95% confidence intervals. A confidence interval can be calculated around a survey estimate and gives a range within which the true value is likely to fall. In 95% of survey samples, the 95% confidence interval will contain the 'true' figure for the whole population (that is, the figure we would get if the survey covered the entire population). In general, the smaller the sample size the wider the confidence interval.

Confidence intervals for a range of key estimates from the survey are available in Chapter 7 of the [technical report](#). More information on confidence intervals can also be found on the technical notes page of the [StatsWales](#) tables.

Significant differences

Where the text of this release notes a difference between two National Survey results, we have checked to ensure that the confidence intervals for the two results do not overlap. This suggests that the difference is statistically significant (but as noted above, is not as rigorous as carrying out a formal statistical test), i.e. that there is less than a 5% (1 in 20) chance of obtaining these results if there is no difference between the same two groups in the wider population.

Checking to see whether two confidence intervals overlap is less likely than a formal statistical test to lead to conclusions that there are real differences between groups. That is, it is more likely to lead to "false negatives": incorrect conclusions that there is no real difference when in fact there is a difference. It is also

less likely to lead to "false positives": incorrect conclusions that there is a difference when there is in fact none. Carrying out many comparisons increases the chance of finding false positives. Therefore, when many comparisons are made the conservative nature of the test is an advantage because it reduces (but does not eliminate) this chance.

Where National Survey results are compared with results from other sources, we have not checked that confidence intervals do not overlap.

Quality Report

A summary [quality report](#) is available, containing more detailed information on the quality of the survey as well as a summary of the methods used to compile the results.

Technical Report

More detailed information on the survey methodology is set out in the [technical report](#) for the survey.

Revisions

For more information on our revisions policy please see:

<http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/about/statement-of-compliance/revisions-errors-postponements/?lang=en>

Release policy

Information about the process for releasing new results is available from the Welsh Government's <http://wales.gov.uk/statistics-and-research/about/statement-of-compliance/publication-strategy/?lang=en>

Availability of datasets

The survey dataset for April 2013 to March 2014 is now available via the [UK Data Archive website](#).

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Terms and definitions

Answer options

We have combined answer options for opinion questions in this report as follows:

<u>Answer options:</u>	<u>Reported as:</u>
Very satisfied and fairly satisfied	Satisfied
Very dissatisfied and fairly dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
Strongly agree and tend to agree	Agree
Strongly disagree and tend to disagree	Disagree

Average

Where 'average' is mentioned in this report it refers to an arithmetic mean.

National Qualification Framework

The National Qualification Framework (NQF) provides an indication of the relative demands of different qualifications. Qualifications in the NQF are grouped together according to their difficulty. They are given a level from entry level to level 8. The levels are based on the standards of knowledge, skill and competence needed for each qualification. Qualifications at the same level can be very different in terms of content and the length of time they take to complete.

Household

A household is defined as one person living alone or a group of people (not necessarily related) living at the same address with common housekeeping – that is, sharing a living room or sitting room or at least one meal a day.

Parent

The term 'parents' in this report refers to parents and legal guardians of children under the age of 20.

Consortia

Consortia are bodies established by local authorities to deliver school improvement services on a regional basis. The list below shows which local authorities make up each consortia.

North Wales: Isle of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham.

South West and Mid Wales: Powys, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot.

Central South Wales: Cardiff, Bridgend, Vale of Glamorgan, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil.

South East Wales: Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen, Monmouthshire and Newport.