Young People's Reading and Writing

An in-depth study focusing on enjoyment, behaviour, attitudes and attainment

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National Literacy Trust

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Transforming Lives

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Foreword

At the end of 2009 the National Literacy Trust surveyed 17,000 children and young people online in the UK's largest ever study of young people's attitudes to literacy and literate behaviour. This survey was of special interest as it repeated questions asked by the National Literacy Trust in a survey of attitudes and reading behaviour undertaken in 2005.

Since the 2005 survey there had been an unprecedented promotion of reading to children and young people, reaching a peak in the 2008 National Year of Reading. The focus of much of this activity had been on the "narrowing the gap" target audiences – those pupils who had been identified as being less likely to reach the expected levels in reading and writing. These groups are characterised by their gender, ethnicity and their eligibility for free schools. We hoped the data would allow us to discern what impact these promotions have had.

Enjoyment of reading

In particular there have been significant concerns about the number of young people who say they enjoy reading. Prior to 2005 research showed that there had been a significant drop in the number of pupils who enjoyed reading and that the number of boys who at the age of 11 enjoyed reading was dropping significantly (Sainsbury and Schagen, 2004). The significance of this drop has been increasingly appreciated: reading for pleasure has been increasingly recognised as not only having a bearing on reading skills but as intrinsically important in its impact on life chances (Bradshaw et al., 2010).

The new 2009 research describes how the decline up until 2005 in the number of children who say that they enjoy reading has been halted. Between 2005 and 2009 there has been no significant overall variation in the percentage of children who say that they enjoy it.

Boys' reading

However, the headline figures mask a very worrying trend. When broken down by gender there has been a significant increase in the gap between boys and girls who enjoy reading: in 2005 10.7% more girls than boys enjoyed reading; by 2009 this had widened to a 15% gap. This is a major cause for concern. Its implications are significant not simply for literacy but for boys' wider educational attainment and ultimately their life prospects. Similarly, the gap between girls and boys who read at least once a month has widened (from 6.5% to 9.9%).

The widening of the gender gap has happened despite a large number of national promotions of reading focused on boys over this period. It is open to speculation whether the gap would be even wider if these had not occurred.

Strategies to encourage boys to read over the period have focused on two approaches: changing attitudes to reading (through programmes such as the National Literacy Trust's Reading Champions project) and giving boys the opportunity to read by providing free reading materials (for instance the Boys into Books bookgifting scheme).

There are signs at least that the attitudinal approach is making headway: the number of young people who think that reading is for girls has dropped from 17.4% to 12.5%.

However, access to reading materials for boys seems still to be an issue and seems to relate to parental attitudes around reading: boys are less likely to say that they have access to a computer, magazines, newspapers, blogs or books compared with girls – 66.5% of boys say they have books of their own at home as opposed to 79.1% of girls. The parental role in resource provision suggests that parents may have a role to play in addressing the gender gap and that campaigns may need to address social attitudes around boys' reading.

The importance of access to resources

The 2009 research demonstrates the powerful relationship between a child's access to resources and their attainment in reading and writing. There were strong positive relationships between a child's access to all the resources which were named and their literacy attainment.

However, the relationship between having books of their own and attainment in reading was the strongest – 58.2% of children who read below the expected level had books of their own compared with 80.4% of children who read above the expected level for their age had books of their own. This was much stronger than the relationship between access to electronic media and literacy attainment.

It might be argued that the strength of this relationship is due to the fact that literacy attainment in schools is defined by relatively traditional book-based activities and that if literacy was taught and measured in more multi-modal ways then the relationship between attainment and access to electronic media resources would be stronger. However, the 2009 PISA survey (Bradshaw et al., 2010) suggests that the correlation between book ownership and literacy skills supporting social mobility is particularly strong in England. It is apparent that approaches that promote book ownership (such as Booktrust's bookgifting programmes and the National Literacy Trust's Young Readers Programme) have a crucial and immediate role to play. These projects appear to be particularly important for those children less likely to own their own books (boys and children on free school meals).

Worryingly, children's access to all types of resources has fallen since 2005. Book ownership in children and young people has fallen steeply from 89% to 73%. Interestingly, there has been a significant drop in the number of children who access a computer at home (91% in 2005 to 83% in 2009) – perhaps linked to the rise in hand-held technologies.

Children on free school meals

Children on free school meals have been a target for many of the reading promotions over the past years. Between 2005 and 2009, unlike the gender gap, the free school meal gap does not appear to have widened, but neither has it diminished: still around 4% more of children not on free school meals enjoy reading more than children on free school meals.

The 2009 research begins to indicate some important attitudinal differences among children on free school meals and children not on free school meals to reading and writing. Previous research by the National Literacy Trust (Clark and Foster, 2005) had indicated that pupils on free schools meals would be more likely to respond to reading promotions that explained why reading would be useful to them and young people not on free schools meals would respond more positively to reading promotions that emphasised creativity and the imagination. This trend appears to continue. In the 2009 research pupils were asked what they felt made a good writer – 71.5% of children not on free school meals identified using the imagination as opposed to only 59.7% of pupils on free school meals.

Purpose and utility seem to be more significant issues in literacy for children on free school meals. Currently most promotions of reading are utilising strategies and approaches that emphasise fun and enjoyment. However, for the children who would benefit most from more positive attitudes to reading and writing, approaches that build on real-life scenarios and the practical purpose of literacy would be more effective.

Future research priorities

Over the past five years the National Literacy Trust has undertaken some landmark studies – large-scale surveys of pupils' attitudes to reading, writing, speaking and listening as well examinations of their literacy behaviours. From this platform, and based on the trend analyses emerging from the 2005/2009 data sets, we are now embarking on an annual survey that will allow us to spot core trends – particularly with regard to new technologies and the literacy behaviour and attitudes of groups of children and young people who may tend to fail to reach the expected attainment levels. This "omnibus survey" will allow us to shine a light annually on a particular issue that we believe deserves greater attention. The findings of the first of these, which was undertaken at the end of 2010, will be published from summer 2011 onwards.

Based on the data that we have from the 2009 survey we can also now begin to look at the relationship between attitudes to reading, reading behaviour, enjoyment of reading and reading attainment. Whilst not claiming causality, the data sets are large enough to look at how the relationships bear on each other.

A general comment

There has rightly been much discussion in the past few years about the pedagogy of reading. This is important and needs to be got right. However, a commitment to a rigour in the implementation of adsa\QQ phonics-based approach needs to be matched by a commitment to the promotion of reading and writing that creates lifelong readers who have an intrinsic desire to read. This is a massive challenge but if addressed will yield massive returns for the nation: a generation that enjoys reading will be a generation that thrives socially and economically. A 2011 Ofsted report, *Removing barriers to literacy*, has vividly described effective approaches to this challenge in schools, colleges and other settings. We hope this research adds evidence and weight to this insight into effective approaches to inspire new generations to read.

Jonathan Douglas
Director, National Literacy Trust
March 2011

Executive summary

17,089 pupils aged 8 to 16 from 112 schools from England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales participated in our online survey on young people's attitudes towards reading and writing in November and December 2009. Attainment data were available for 4,503 of participating young people for reading and 4,450 for writing.

The key objectives of this survey were to explore how much young people enjoy reading and writing; what types of text they read and write, and how often; how good a reader and writer they think they are; and what they think about reading and writing. Since we asked similar questions about reading in 2005, we also wanted to investigate how reading enjoyment, attitudes and behaviour in 2009 compare with reading enjoyment, attitudes and behaviour in 2005.

Access to resources:

- 8 in 10 young people own a mobile phone and either have their own computer or have access to one at home. 7 in 10 have books of their own. Nearly 5 in 10 have a profile on a social networking site, while 2 in 10 have their own blog.
- Girls are more likely than boys to say that they have resources at home, including a mobile phone (87% vs. 84%), a computer (87% vs. 83%), a desk of their own (82% vs. 73%), books of their own (79% vs. 67%) and a profile on a social networking site (51% vs. 44%).
- KS3 (11 to 14-year-olds) and KS4 (14 to16-year-olds) are more likely than KS2 pupils to have technology, such as mobile phones, a computer, a blog and a profile on a social networking site. They are also more likely to say that they have a desk of their own as well as access to newspapers and magazines. KS2 pupils (7 to 11-year-olds) were more likely to say that they have books of their own at home than their older counterparts.
- Young people who do not receive free school meals (FSMs) are more likely than young people who receive FSMs to own a computer (86% vs. 78%), to have a profile on a social networking site (50% vs. 39%), to have a desk (90% vs. 68%) and books of their own (75% vs. 66%), and to have access to newspapers (66% vs. 60%) and magazines (69% vs. 59%).
- Young people from Asian backgrounds were more likely to have their own desk and books compared with young people from other ethnic backgrounds. There were no significant differences by ethnic background and having a mobile phone, computer, a blog or a social networking site profile.
- Young people who read and write below the expected level for their age were less likely to say that they have a computer, have a desk or books of their own, have access to magazines and newspapers, or have a blog or a social networking site profile than their higher achieving peers.
- Compared to 2005, fewer young people now report having access to a computer, books of their own, access to a newspaper and access to magazines. However, more young people now reported having a desk of their own.
- The gap in the percentage of boys and girls who say that they have books of their own, a desk of their own and access to magazines has widened in 2009. In particular, the

percentage point difference between boys and girls who say that they have books of their own has tripled between 2005 and 2009 (increasing from 4.8% to 12.6%).

- The difference in desk ownership between young people who receive FSMs and those who do not has nearly doubled since 2005, increasing from a 13.4% point difference in 2005 to a 22.3% point difference in 2009.

- While in 2005 book ownership did not differ significantly by key stage, fewer KS4 pupils said that they had books of their own at home in 2009 than their younger counterparts.

Young people and reading: Key findings

Enjoyment of reading:

- 51% of young people enjoy reading either very much or quite a lot. Over a third only enjoy reading a bit, while 10% do not enjoy reading at all.

- Significantly more girls than boys say that they enjoy reading, with 43% of boys and 58% of girls enjoying reading either very much or quite a lot.

- Enjoyment of reading declines with age, with KS2 pupils enjoying reading significantly more than their older counterparts.

- Although there is a relationship between FSM uptake and enjoyment of reading, with young people who do not receive FSMs enjoying reading more than young people who do, this relationship is weak.

- There is also a weak relationship between reading enjoyment and ethnic background, with White young people enjoying reading the least and young people from Asian backgrounds enjoying it the most.

- Enjoyment of reading is significantly related to reading attainment, with young people who are at or above the expected reading level for their age enjoying reading more than young people who are below the expected level for their age.

- Overall, levels of enjoyment of reading have remained unchanged since 2005. However, the gap in reading enjoyment between boys and girls has widened since 2005, increasing from a percentage point difference of 10.7% in 2005 to a 15% point difference in 2009. By contrast, levels of enjoyment of reading appear to have remained unchanged with respect to FSM uptake and age.

Self-reported reading ability:

- Most young people rated themselves to be either average at reading (45%) or very good at reading (50%).

- Girls rated themselves as better readers than boys.

- KS2 pupils rated themselves as better readers compared with their older counterparts.

- Young people who do not receive FSMs rated themselves as better readers compared with young people who receive FSMs.

- Young people from Asian backgrounds also rated themselves as better readers compared with their peers from White, Mixed or Black backgrounds.
- There was a strong relationship between self-reported reading ability and reading attainment.
- Levels of self-reported reading ability remained unchanged between 2005 and 2009. Levels of self-reported reading ability broken down by gender, FSM uptake and age also remained stable.

Reading frequency:

- Most young people read outside of class every day (32%) or two to three times a week (29%). Only 7% do not read outside of class.
- Girls read outside of class more frequently than boys.
- Reading frequency declines with age, with KS2 pupils reading more often than KS3 pupils, who, in turn, read more frequently than KS4 pupils.
- Young people who receive FSMs read outside of class less frequently than young people who do not receive FSMs.
- Young people from Asian backgrounds read more frequently than young people from White, Mixed or Black backgrounds. Young people from White backgrounds tend to read the least frequently outside of class.
- There was a positive relationship between reading frequency and reading attainment, with young people who struggle with their reading being more likely to say that they rarely or never read outside of class.
- Fewer young people now read outside of class on a daily basis compared with 2005.
- Fewer boys and girls were reading at least once a month in 2009 than in 2005, with the drop in reading amount appearing to be greater in boys than in girls.
- The gap in the frequency with which young people who receive FSMs and those who do not read at least once a month has reduced between 2005 and 2009.
- The gap in reading frequency between KS2, KS3 and KS4 pupils has remained unchanged between 2005 and 2009.

Opinions on whether they read enough:

- Nearly half of young people said that they read enough, while a third do not currently think they read enough but would like to read more. 18% of young people said that they do not read enough and that they do not want to read more.
- Girls are more likely to say that they read enough. Twice as many boys than girls say that they do not read enough and do not want to read more.
- KS2 pupils were more likely to say that they read enough compared with their older counterparts. KS4 pupils were more likely to say that they do not read enough and do

not want to read more either compared with KS3 pupils, who, in turn, were more likely to say this than KS2 pupils.

- There was no relationship between FSM uptake and young people's opinions of whether they read enough.
- Young people from Black backgrounds were most likely to say that they would like to read more, while young people from White backgrounds were more likely than young people from other ethnic backgrounds to say that they do not read enough and that they do not want to read more.
- There was a positive relationship between opinions of whether they read enough and reading attainment, with young people who read below the expected level for their age being more likely to say that they do not read enough and do not want to read more.
- There was a slight increase in the proportion of young people who would like to read more in 2009 compared with 2005.
- The gap between boys and girls in their opinions of whether they read enough appears to have widened slightly between 2005 and 2009, as did the gap in opinions between the key stages. By contrast, the gap in opinions between young people who receive FSMs and those who do not has reduced between 2005 and 2009.

Materials read outside of class at least once a month:

- Text messages, magazines, websites and emails are the most common reading choices of young people. Fiction is read outside of class by over two-fifths of young people.
- Girls were more likely to read technology-based materials as well as fiction, poems and plays than boys, who were more likely to read comics, newspapers and manuals than girls.
- Technology-based reading materials were more popular with KS4 pupils, while materials such as comics, fiction, poems and plays decreased in popularity with age.
- Technology-based reading materials as well as fiction and magazines were more frequently read by young people who do not receive FSMs compared with those who do, who are more likely to read poems outside of class.
- The popularity of certain reading materials varied according to young people's ethnic background.
- Young people who read below the expected level for their age were the least likely to read a variety of materials outside of class. By contrast, young people who read above the expected level for their age are the most prolific readers of more traditional forms of reading, such as fiction, non-fiction, poems and plays.
- Fewer young people now read magazines, websites, text messages, fiction, comics, newspapers, song lyrics, poems, manuals and plays outside of class compared with young people in 2005. However, more young people in 2009 than in 2005 said that they read non-fiction books and English as an additional language (EAL) books, magazines and newspapers.
- The gap between boys and girls reading fiction increased between 2005 and 2009, nearly tripling from a 3.4% point difference to an 11.5% point difference. Similarly, the

gender gap in magazine reading has widened, increasing from a 12% point difference in 2005 to a 17% point difference in 2009.

- There was a decrease in the difference between young people who receive FSMs and those who do not reading a number of reading materials at least once a month, namely websites, emails, fiction, manuals, non-fiction, plays and EAL books and magazines. By contrast, the gap between FSM pupils and their non-FSM counterparts has increased slightly between 2005 and 2009 for the following reading materials: magazines, text messages, newspapers, song lyrics and poems.

- With the exception of fiction books, non-fiction books, plays or screenplays and EAL materials, the magnitude of the differences appears to have increased between KS2 and KS4 pupils.

Attitudes towards reading:

- Young people held positive attitudes towards reading. Most agreed that reading is important and that they enjoy it. They disagreed that reading is boring or hard and that they cannot find anything interesting to read. Most also disagreed that they only read in class or read only because they have to.

- Girls hold more positive attitudes towards reading compared with boys. Nearly twice as many boys as girls agreed with the statements that reading is more for girls than boys, that reading is boring and that reading is hard. More girls than boys agreed that they like going to the library and that they enjoy reading.

- KS2 pupils tended to hold more positive attitudes towards reading than KS3 or KS4 pupils. Fewer KS2 pupils compared with their older counterparts agreed that reading is boring, that they cannot find anything to read that interests them and that they only read when they have to. However, KS2 pupils felt less confident about their reading than KS3 or KS4 pupils, being more likely to agree with the statements that reading is hard and that they do not read as well as other pupils in their class.

- Young people who do not receive FSMs tended to hold more positive attitudes towards reading than those who receive FSMs, although this relationship is weak. Amongst other things, FSM pupils were more likely than their non-FSM counterparts to agree that reading is more for girls than for boys, that reading is boring and hard, that they cannot find anything to read that interests them, and that they do not read as well as other pupils in their class. However, they are also more likely to agree with the statements that they like going to the library and that reading helps them find what they want or need to know.

- Young people from Asian backgrounds tended to hold more positive attitudes towards reading than young people from White, Mixed or Black backgrounds.

- Young people who read at or above the expected level for their age hold more positive attitudes towards reading compared with young people who read below the expected level for their age.

- Young people in 2009 hold more positive attitudes towards reading than young people in 2005. Fewer young people now agree with the statements that reading is boring and that they cannot find things to read that interest them. A greater proportion of young people now feel more confident about their reading, being less likely now to agree with the statement that they do not read as well as other pupils in their class. However, going to

the library has fallen out of fashion as fewer young people now say that they like going to library compared with young people in 2005.

- The gender gap in attitudes seems to have narrowed slightly in 2009 compared with 2005. Similarly, the magnitude of the difference between young people who receive FSMs and those who do not in the degree to which they agreed with the attitudinal statements has decreased in 2009 compared with 2005. The difference in attitudes by key stages has largely remained unchanged between 2005 and 2009.

Importance of reading to succeed in life:

- 9 in 10 young people view writing either as very important or as important to succeed in life.
- Girls are more likely than boys to make the link between reading and success in life.
- More KS2 than KS3 or KS4 pupils see reading as important to succeed in life.
- There was no relationship between FSM uptake and seeing reading as important to succeed in life.
- Young people from White backgrounds were less likely to see reading as important to succeed in life than young people from Mixed, Asian or Black backgrounds.
- Young people who read at or above the level expected for their age believed that reading is more important than young people who read below the level expected for their age.

Young people and writing: Key findings

Enjoyment of writing:

- Just over half of young people enjoy writing either very much or quite a lot (52%). 13% say that they do not enjoy writing at all.
- Girls enjoy writing more than boys. Enjoyment of writing declines with age. Young people from White backgrounds enjoy writing less than young people from Mixed, Asian or Black ethnic backgrounds. There was no significant relationship between FSM uptake and enjoyment of writing.
- Enjoyment of writing is related to writing attainment, with young people who struggle with writing enjoying it less. Only 8% of young people who write below the level expected for their age enjoy writing very much compared with 18% of young people who write at the expected level for their age and 61% of young people who write above the expected level for their age.

Self-reported writing ability:

- Most young people believed themselves to be average writers, with a quarter rating themselves to be very good writers. A fifth of young people did not think that they were good writers.

- Girls rated themselves as significantly better writers than boys. KS4 also believed that they were better writers than KS2 and KS3 pupils. Similarly, pupils who do not receive FSMs rated themselves as better writers than pupils who receive FSMs. More young people from Asian and Black backgrounds rated themselves to be very good writers.

- Young people's self-reports of writing ability were strongly related to formal assessments of writing.

Views on what it means to be a good writer:

- For most young people being a good writer means enjoying writing, using one's imagination and using correct punctuation.

- Boys are more likely than girls to emphasise the technical aspects of writing, believing that a good writer writes neatly. By contrast, girls are more likely to say that a good writer uses his or her imagination, reads a lot, tries things out and talks about writing.

- Older pupils are more likely than their younger counterparts to say that a good writer uses his or her imagination, checks his work and enjoys writing. Conversely, younger pupils are more likely to say that a good writer writes neatly and writes a lot.

- Young people who do not receive FSMs compared to those who do are more likely to say that a good writer uses his or her imagination, tries things out and uses punctuation correctly.

- Fewer young people from Black backgrounds say that a good writer uses his or her imagination, tries things out and uses punctuation correctly, while more young people from Asian backgrounds say that a good writer reads a lot and uses punctuation correctly. More young people from White and Asian backgrounds also say that a good writer enjoys writing.

- Young people who achieve at or above the expected level for their age were more likely than those who struggle with writing to say that a good writer uses his or her imagination, tries things out, uses punctuation correctly, checks his or her work, reads a lot, writes a lot, talks about writing and enjoys writing.

Frequency of writing:

- A third (32%) of young people write every day, while over a quarter (27%) write two to three times a week. 21% said that they rarely or never write other than during class or for coursework or homework.

- Girls write more frequently than boys, with 37% of girls and 27% of boys writing every day. Writing frequency declined with age, with KS2 pupils writing more frequently than KS3 or KS4 pupils. There were differences in writing frequency by ethnic background, with young people from White and Mixed backgrounds writing less frequently than young people from Asian or Black backgrounds

- There was a relationship between writing frequency and writing attainment, with young people who write below the expected level for their age writing less frequently than their higher achieving peers.

Popular formats of writing:

- Young people wrote technology-based formats of writing, such as text messages, emails and posts on a social networking site, most commonly at least once a month.
- Girls tend to be more prolific writers than boys, with more girls than boys saying that they write in a diary, on a blog, text messages, notes in class, poems, lyrics, emails, instant messages (e.g. MSN, Skype), letters, notes to other people, fiction and on a social networking site at least once a month. Writing formats associated with school, such as essays, showed no gender divide.
- KS3 and KS4 pupils write more technology-based formats in a month than do KS2 pupils.
- More young people who receive FSMs than those who do not write letters, poems, and plays or screenplays at least once a month. By contrast, more young people who do not receive FSMs say that they write essays at least once a month.
- More young people from White backgrounds than the other three ethnic backgrounds said that they write text messages or on a social networking site.
- Young people who write below the expected level for their age were generally less likely to write any of the 17 different formats than young people who write at or above the expected level. The biggest difference exists for writing fiction, with young people who write at the expected level being nearly three times more likely and young people who write above the expected level being four times more likely to write fiction than young people who write below the expected level.

Attitudes towards writing:

- Young people generally held positive attitudes towards writing. Most believe that writing isn't boring and that writing is more fun when they can choose the topic, that their writing improves when they practise, that a pupil who writes well gets better marks than someone who doesn't, that it is easier to read than it is to write, that they like what they write, and that they are good writers compared to other students. Despite this, most young people also agreed with the statement that they have trouble deciding what to write.
- Girls generally hold more positive attitudes towards writing than boys, with more girls than boys believing that they wish they had more time to write at school. Conversely, boys were more likely than girls to believe that writing is boring.
- KS2 pupils were also more likely than their older counterparts to view writing as a gendered activity, with more KS2 than KS3 or KS4 pupils agreeing with the statement that girls enjoy writing more than boys do. KS2 pupils were also more likely than their older counterparts to disagree with the statements that writing is boring, that they have trouble deciding what to write and that it is easier to read than it is to write.
- FSM uptake was only weakly related to attitudes towards writing.

- Young people from White backgrounds held less positive attitudes towards writing than people from other ethnic backgrounds. White young people were more likely to agree with the statement that writing is boring and that they have trouble deciding what to write than pupils from other ethnic backgrounds. They were also more likely to disagree with the statements that they wish they had more time to write at school.

- Young people who write below the level expected for their age hold more negative attitudes towards writing than those who write at or above the expected level for their age. They are more likely to agree with the statement that writing is boring, that they have trouble deciding what to write and that it is easier to read than it is to write, and they are less likely to agree with the statements that when they practise their writing improves, that compared with others they are a good writer, that they like what they write and that writing is more fun when they can choose the topic.

Importance of writing to succeed in life:

- 9 in 10 young people view writing either as very important or as important to succeed in life.

- There were no significant gender, age or FSM differences in the degree to which young people feel that writing is important to succeed in life.

- Young people from Asian backgrounds see writing as more important than young people from White backgrounds.

- Ratings of the importance of writing to succeed in life were significantly related to writing attainment, with young people who write at or above the level expected for their age believing that writing is more important than young people who write below the level expected for their age

This report contains a wealth of data that provides us with an up-to-date insight into young people's reading and writing, which will form the basis of discussions and further explorations in the future. However, there are several important issues that have not been addressed in this report but that will be explored in several, separate publications over the coming months.

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Young people's reading and writing: An introduction to this survey

In 2005 we conducted a survey of 98 primary and secondary schools in England to explore why some pupils choose to read and others do not. The research literature had shown that reading for pleasure benefits children in numerous ways. Yet, research had also shown that young people's reading enjoyment was declining. We therefore collected evidence from 8,500 children and young people about their reading preferences and reading behaviour with the aim of supporting parents, teachers and other literacy professionals in promoting wider reading.

The report *Children's and Young People's Reading Habits and Preferences: The who, what, why, where and when* (Clark and Foster, 2005) showed that children and young people generally enjoyed reading, read a diverse range of texts and held positive attitudes towards reading. However, almost half the pupils never or almost never talked with their family about what they were reading. Girls differed from boys in their reading enjoyment, attitudes and behaviour as did primary and secondary pupils. We also found significant differences in terms of free school meal (FSM) uptake, published in a separate report (Clark and Akerman, 2006), which indicated that young people who receive FSMs do not enjoy reading as much and do not report to have as many reading opportunities as their more privileged counterparts.

Five years on we would like to know how children and young people now feel about reading. This time, however, we are also keen to explore how children and young people feel about writing. A survey we conducted (Clark and Dugdale, 2009) showed that young people aged 8 to 16 were ambivalent about writing. Only half of our sample of 3,001 young people enjoyed writing, and the sample was also divided in their attitudes towards writing. One question we asked indicated that the majority of young people think reading is easier than writing, and we will take the opportunity to explore the link between reading and writing further in the present survey.

One topic that has attracted a lot of interest in recent years, and which will be explored in this survey, is the link between enjoyment, attitudes and attainment. It is frequently claimed that that there is a positive relationship between enjoyment, attitudes and attainment, with pupils who enjoy reading or writing having a more positive attitude towards it, doing it more and thereby getting better at it. While this report outlines some of the relationships between literacy and attainment, a separate report will be available soon that will explore the inter-relationships of certain reading components and how they are related not only with each other but also with reading attainment.

Objective

The key objectives of this survey were to explore:

- How much young people enjoy reading and writing.
- What types of text they read and write, and how often.
- How good a reader and writer they think they are.
- What they think about reading and writing.
- How reading enjoyment, attitudes and behaviour in 2010 compare with reading enjoyment, attitudes and behaviour from 2005.

In a subsample of young people for whom we have attainment data, we also wanted to explore:

- The link between reading or writing attainment and enjoyment, attitudes and habits.

These objectives were further broken down into a number of questions. These included the following:

- Does enjoyment of reading and writing differ according to gender, age and socio-economic and ethnic background?
- Do the types of text being read or written differ according to gender, age and socio-economic and ethnic background?
- How do young people rate themselves as readers and writers? Is self-reported reading and writing ability related to gender, age and socio-economic and ethnic background? Is self-reported ability related to attainment assessed in schools?
- Do their attitudes towards reading and writing differ according to gender, age and socio-economic and ethnic background?

A final note: the aims of this survey were ambitious. Not only were we keen to explore reading and writing enjoyment, attitudes and behaviour but we were also interested in the relationship between attainment and our various literacy components. This report is therefore only an overview. While there is certainly scope to conduct more detailed analyses in the future, it does provide a broad understanding of the issues explored here.

Methodology

An invitation to participate in this online survey was sent out in National Literacy Trust (NLT) newsletters at the beginning of October. Schools were invited to express their interest to participate in one of three surveys:

1) A simple reading and writing attitude survey (without attainment data or name field)
2) An amended reading and writing attitude survey with two attainment questions for pupils to fill in
3) An amended reading and writing attitude survey with a name field and schools were asked to send us the reading and writing attainment data for participating pupils

The basic online survey consisted of 32 questions, exploring young people's background, reading and writing behaviour, perceived ability and attitudes. Due to the complexity of the questions and some concepts, the decision was made to restrict the age range of participating pupils to upper KS2 (9 to 11 years) and older.

155 schools expressed an interest to take part in one of the three surveys. A link to the online survey alongside guidance notes for teachers was emailed to the schools at the beginning of November. The survey was online between 16 November and 4 December. It took an average of 15 minutes for young people to complete the survey. Schools were offered a school-specific summary report as an incentive to take part.

Overall, 17,089 pupils from 112 schools participated in our online survey. 101 were schools from England, four from Wales, six from Scotland and one from Northern Ireland. One international school from Indonesia, an English-speaking school with a UK curriculum, also took part. However, data from this school are not included in the analyses in this report.

It should be noted that about 764 Scottish pupils, 462 Welsh pupils and 391 pupils from Northern Ireland took part in the survey. The educational system in Scotland differs quite markedly from the one in England, with pupils remaining at primary school for seven years. Then, aged 11 or 12, they start secondary school. No differences were found in terms of reading and writing behaviour, attitudes and enjoyment between English and Scottish pupils of the same age, and therefore the data here are presented for the sample as a whole. Although

the term ”key stage” only refers to England, Wales and Northern Ireland, key stage data will be used to compare pupils of similar age in England and Scotland.

Data analysis and some observations

The findings are described in percentages throughout the report. Differences in the sample by gender, age, free school meal uptake and ethnic background were analysed using PASW (formerly SPSS) 18. Three statistical tests were used predominantly to explore background differences in the main variables: independent t-tests, ANOVAs and chi-square tests of independence. For the sake of readability of the report, the statistical information is found in endnotes at the end of the report.

Any result for which statistical significance is reported was significant at the stringent significance level of 0.001. This means that the result would be likely to occur by chance only once in every 1,000 cases. This level was chosen over the more conventional of 0.05 due to our large sample size to make it more difficult for extremely small and non-notable differences to be found to be statistically significant. Where multiple items are compared simultaneously, a Bonferroni correction is applied (significance level / n of items), which lowers the significance level even further to prevent statistical errors as a result of chance.

However, a statistical significance test only tells us whether a result is likely to have occurred by chance, it tells us nothing about the actual strength of a relationship. A range of effect sizes were therefore also explored (Cohen’s D for t-tests, omega squared for ANOVAs, and Cramer’s V for chi-square tests of difference) to assess the strength of an association between two or more variables. Effect sizes are typically categorised as being small, medium or large. Some judgement is still needed about the educational significance of statistically significant findings with a medium or higher effect size.

Sample characteristics: Demography and attainment

There was an almost equal gender split in the sample, with 51.2% of boys (N = 8,752) and 48.8% of girls (N = 8,337) participating in this survey. **Table 1** shows that the majority of pupils were 11 and 12 years old. To investigate the impact of age, three broad categories were identified according to key stages: KS2, KS3 and KS4. The KS2 category (22%, N = 3,704) refers to pupils aged 7 to 11, KS3 (63%, N = 10,842) refers to pupils aged 11 to 14, while KS4 (15%, N = 2,543) applies to pupils aged 14 to 16.

Table 1: Sample age

	%	N		%	N
8	4.8	825	**13**	18.5	3,169
9	7.3	1,246	**14**	9.1	1,554
10	9.6	1,633	**15**	4.3	738
11	21.9	3,735	**16**	1.5	251
12	23.0	3,938			

(based on N = 17,089)

The percentage of pupils who receive free school meals (FSM), which is frequently used in educational research as a crude indicator of socio-economic background, was 19.3%, with 24.7% of KS2, 18% of KS3 and 15.2% of KS4 pupils receiving FSMs. The percentages of FSM uptake in this study are higher than the national average for primary and secondary pupils (17% and 14%, respectively; DCSF, 2009).

When asked how they would describe their ethnic background, most pupils said that they were White British (70.2%, N = 10,955). The second and third most frequent ethnic categories in this sample were Asian or Asian British Indian (4.0%, N = 623) and White other (3.6%, N = 559). See **Table 2** for a full breakdown of ethnic background.

Table 2: Ethnic background

	%	N
White British	70.2	10,955
White Irish	1.7	259
White Traveller	.5	76
White Romany	.8	128
White other	3.6	559
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	2.0	316
Mixed White and Black African	1.0	150
Mixed White and Asian	1.0	162
Mixed other	1.9	297
Asian or Asian British Indian	4.0	623
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	2.2	338
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	1.9	293
Asian or Asian British Chinese	2.2	337
Asian or Asian British Other	0.2	37
Black Caribbean	2.1	321
Black African	3.7	574
Black other	1.1	174

(based on N = 15,599)

To make comparisons by ethnic group meaningful, we combined the subcategories to form ”White”, “Mixed”, “Asian” and “Black” background categories. While this crude categorisation may hide some important differences within ethnic backgrounds, it allowed for general differences to be obtained at this stage.

How we dealt with attainment data

Attainment data for reading were available for 4,503 **KS2** and **KS3** pupils, and for writing for 4,450 KS2 and KS3 pupils. Since our attainment data contained a varied set of levels and spanned young people aged 8 to 14, we standardised the data to form three crude categories to

be applied to all ages: below expected level for their age, at expected level for their age and above expected level for their age. These levels were created for reading and writing.

> Please note that since this is not an experimental study we can only explore the **relationships** between attainment and other variables, and therefore we can make no statements about the **causality** or direction of influence between literacy components and attainment.

In line with official attainment figures, **Table 3** shows that over 8 in 10 young people read at or above the expected level for their age. However, nearly a fifth read below the expected level for their age. It also shows that writing attainment is lagging behind reading attainment, with 7 in 10 young people writing at or above the expected level for their age. Over a quarter of young people write below the expected level for their age.

Table 3: Reading and writing attainment categories

	Reading attainment (N = 4,503) %	*Writing attainment (N = 4,450) %*
Below expected level for age	17.6	27.3
At expected level for age	68.9	61.3
Above expected level for age	13.5	11.4

Access to resources at home

This section explores what types of resources young people have at home, how they differ according to demographic background and reading attainment, and how they compare with 2005.

Access to resources at home: Key findings

- Girls are more likely than boys to say that they have resources at home, including a mobile phone, a computer, a desk of their own, books of their own and a profile on a social networking site.
- Older pupils (KS3 and KS4) are more likely than KS2 pupils to have technology, such as mobile phones, a computer, a blog or a profile on a social networking site. They are also more likely to say that they have a desk of their own as well as access to newspapers and magazines. KS2 pupils were more likely to say that they have books of their own at home than their older counterparts.
- Young people who do not receive FSMs are more likely to own a computer, to have a profile on a social networking site, to have a desk and books of their own and to have access to newspapers and magazines than young people who receive FSMs.
- Young people from Asian backgrounds were more likely to have their own desk and books compared with young people from other ethnic backgrounds. There were no significant differences by ethnic background and having a mobile phone, computer, a blog or a social networking site profile.
- Young people who read and write below the expected level for their age were less likely to say that they have a computer, have a desk or books of their own, have access to magazines and newspapers, and to have a blog or a social networking site profile than their higher achieving peers.
- Compared to 2005, fewer young people now report having access to a computer, books of their own, access to a newspaper and access to magazines. More young people now reported having a desk of their own.
- The gap in the percentage of boys and girls who say that they have books of their own, a desk of their own and access to magazines has widened in 2009. In particular, the percentage point difference between boys and girls who say that they have books of their own has tripled between 2005 and 2009 (increasing from 4.8% to 12.6%).
- The difference in desk ownership between young people who receive FSMs and those who do not has nearly doubled since 2005, increasing from a 13.4% point difference in 2005 to a 22.3% point difference in 2009.
- While in 2005 book ownership did not differ significantly by key stage, fewer KS4 pupils said that they had books of their own at home in 2009 than their younger counterparts.

85% of young people say that they own a mobile phone, whereas 84% either own a computer or have access to one at home (see **Table 4**). Over three-quarters of young people (77%) have a desk of their own, while nearly three-quarters (73%) have books of their own. 64% of young people have access to a newspaper at home, while 67% have access to magazines. Nearly a

quarter (24%) report that they have their own blog, while nearly half (48%) have a profile on a social networking site (SNS)[1].

Significantly more **girls than boys** said that they have the following at home or easily have access to one: a mobile phone, a computer, a desk of their own, books of their own, magazines, a blog and a profile on a social networking site[2]. There were no significant gender differences in having access to a newspaper[3].

The biggest differences in access to resources at home exist between **KS2 and KS3 or KS4 pupils** (see **Table 4**), with secondary school pupils being significantly more likely to have all four technologies at their disposal[4]. Having a social networking site profile shows the biggest difference in terms of age, with over a fifth of KS2 pupils reporting that they have profile on a social networking site compared with over half of KS3 and over two-thirds of KS4 pupils. This may be at least partly explained by some social networking sites having a minimum age requirement. For example, Facebook and Bebo do not permit young people younger than 13 to register. However, there are a number of social networking sites now that, given parental consent, target the younger market. This may explain the high number of KS2 pupils who say that they have a social networking site profile.

KS3 and KS4 pupils were also more likely to say that they have a desk of their own, as well as to have access to newspapers and magazines[5]. By contrast, more KS2 and KS3 pupils than KS4 pupils said that they have books of their own[6].

Significantly more young people who do not receive **FSMs** say that they have a computer and a profile on a social networking site than do young people who get FSMs[7]. Although more young people who do not receive FSMs than those who do receive them also say that they have a mobile phone and a blog, none of these differences was statistically significant[8].

Significantly more young people who do not receive FSMs compared with those who do say that they have a desk and books of their own. They are also more likely to say that they have access to a newspaper and magazines[9].

There were no significant differences by **ethnic background** and having a mobile phone, a computer, a blog or a profile on a social networking site[10] (see **Table 4**).

Young people from Asian backgrounds were more likely to say that they have a desk as well as books of their own, while young people from Black backgrounds were the least likely to say that they have either. Similarly, young people from Asian backgrounds were also more likely to say that they have access to newspapers, while young people from White and Mixed backgrounds were more likely to say that they have access to magazines. Again, young people from Black backgrounds were least likely to say that they have access to either[11].

Table 4: Access to resources by background demographics

	Mobile phone %	*Computer* %	*Desk of your own* %	*Books of your own* %	*Newspaper* %	*Magazines* %	*Blog* %	*Profile on a social networking site* %
All young people (N = 17,089)	85.5	84.5	77.4	72.6	64.3	66.7	24.0	47.7
Boys (N = 8,752)	83.8	82.5	73.0	66.5	63.8	60.2	21.4	44.4
Girls (N = 8,337)	87.2	86.7	82.1	79.1	65.0	73.6	26.9	51.3
KS2 (N = 3,704)	79.1	74.7	68.9	72.7	54.1	57.7	15.7	22.5
KS3 (N = 10,842)	87.8	87.2	79.6	74.0	66.6	69.4	26.2	51.5
KS4 (N = 2,543)	88.3	87.0	80.2	66.3	69.6	68.3	26.8	68.4
FSM (N = 3,207)	84.5	77.6	67.6	65.5	59.6	58.6	21.8	38.6
Non-FSM (N = 13,690)	86.5	86.4	89.9	74.5	65.7	68.9	24.6	50.2
White (N = 11,977)	85.5	90.5	70.6	77.4	56.2	73.0	25.1	51.7
Mixed (N = 925)	84.9	88.9	72.4	77.5	70.3	71.1	29.3	50.1
Asian (N = 1,628)	85.9	91.2	76.4	79.5	72.4	64.9	23.8	46.6
Black (N = 1,069)	84.7	88.7	83.5	72.5	55.7	58.5	26.4	47.6

Table 5: Percentage of young people who read and write below or at or above the expected level and their access to educational resources at home

	Mobile phone %	*Computer* %	*Desk of your own* %	*Books of your own* %	*Newspaper* %	*Magazines* %	*Blog* %	*Profile on a social networking site* %
Reading (N = 4,503)								
Below expected level for age (N = 793)	83.4	80.9	56.7	58.2	56.1	59.3	22.1	40.2
At expected level for age (N = 3,102)	85.6	88.0	71.6	78.6	67.6	71.0	24.6	51.5
Above expected level for age (N = 608)	86.9	84.3	75.2	80.4	69.9	68.4	27.7	50.0
Writing (N = 4,450)								
Below expected level for age (N = 1,215)	82.9	83.6	66.9	66.2	59.7	63.1	24.5	42.2
At expected level for age (N = 2,728)	83.8	85.0	76.2	78.6	67.9	72.1	26.0	51.5
Above expected level for age (N = 507)	85.1	87.5	78.4	77.1	70.3	67.9	30.7	47.9

Access to resources and attainment

Table 5 (see previous page) shows that there are relationships between having (access to) certain resources at home and reading and writing attainment.

With the exception of mobile phones, which showed no significant relationship with reading attainment, there were statistically significant relationships between **reading attainment** and having a computer, having a desk of one's own, having books of one's own, having access to newspapers and magazines, having a blog and having a profile on a social networking site[12].

In particular, those who struggled with reading were less likely to have books of their own at home or to have a desk of their own. They were also less likely to have access to newspapers and magazines.

While still statistically significant[13], the relationships between access to resources at home and **writing attainment** were not as pronounced as the above relationships with reading attainment. Nonetheless, young people who struggled with writing were less likely to say that they have a computer (or access to one), a desk and books of their own, access to newspapers and magazines. They were also less likely to say that they have a blog or a profile on a social networking site.

Access to resources: 2005 to 2009 comparative analyses

Compared to equivalent questions asked in 2005, a lower proportion of young people now report having access to a computer (83% compared with 91% in 2005). The reason for the decrease in computer ownership is unclear. According to the Office for National Statistics (2009) Social Trends figures, computer ownership in the UK was at 70% in 2007 (having increased dramatically from 29% in 1998), and our figure still lies above that for 2009.

Fewer young people also reported having books of their own (73% compared with 89% in 2005), access to a newspaper (64% compared with 71% in 2005) and access to magazines (67% compared with 84% in 2005). More young people now reported having a desk of their own (77% compared with 72% in 2005).

These comparisons are comparable with those found in other studies. For example, an international comparative study of 10-year-olds (PIRLS; Twist et al., 2007) found that compared to equivalent questions in 2001, a lower proportion reported having a desk or table to work at (75% compared with 89%); a slightly lower proportion reported having books of their own at home (92% compared with 96%) or having a daily newspaper (66% compared with 78%).

Figure 1 compares access to resources by gender in 2005 and 2009. While more girls than boys stated that they have books of their own and that they have access to magazines in 2005, the figure shows that the gap in the percentage of boys and girls who say that they have books of their own, a desk of their own and access to magazines has widened in 2009. For example, the gap between boys and girls who say that they have books of their own at home nearly tripled from a percentage point difference of 4.8% in 2005 to a percentage point difference of 12.6% in 2009.

In both 2005 and in 2009 there was a difference between young people who receive FSMs and those who do not in the degree to which say that they have access to certain resources at home (see **Figure 2**). However, the difference in desk ownership between young people who receive FSMs and those who do not has nearly doubled since 2005, increasing from a 13.4% point difference in 2005 to a 22.3% point difference in 2009.

Figure 1: Access to resources by gender in 2005 and 2009

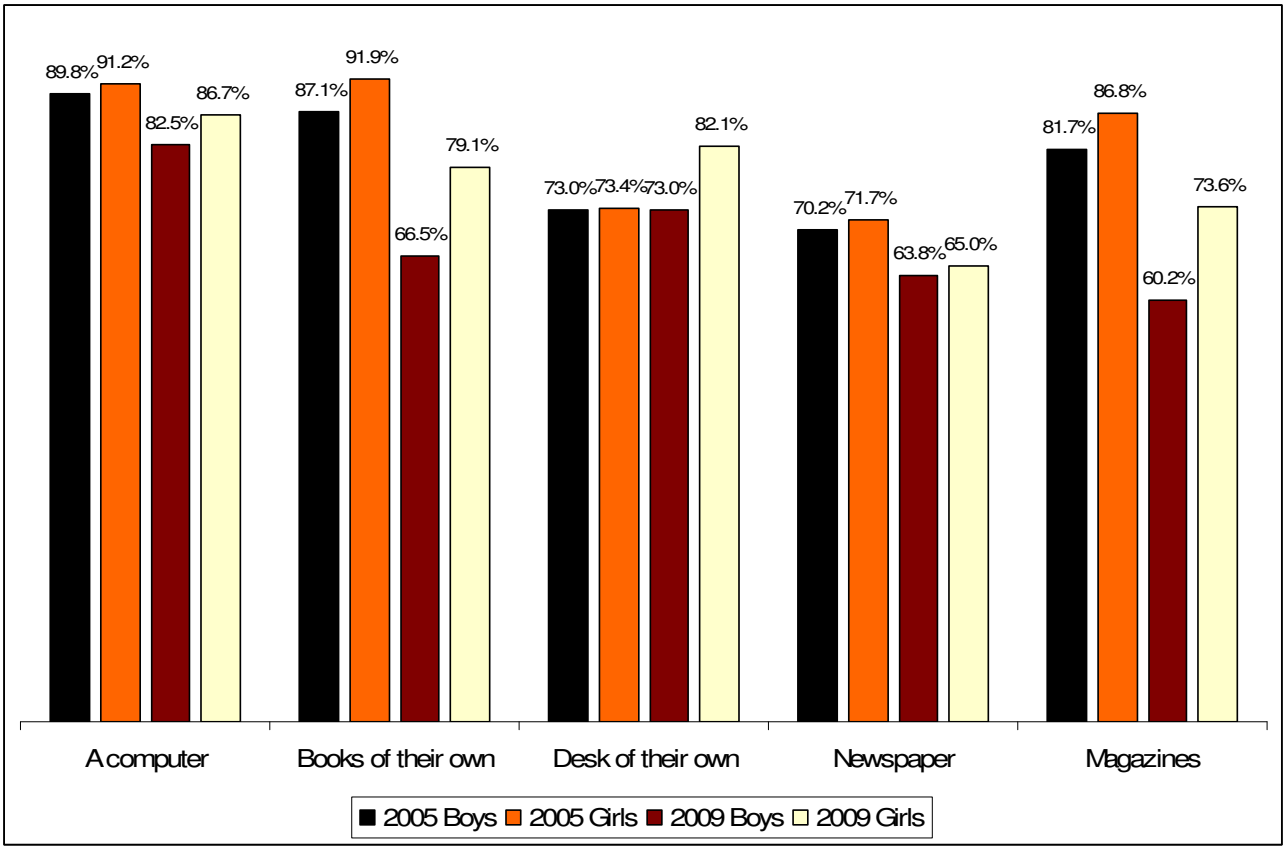
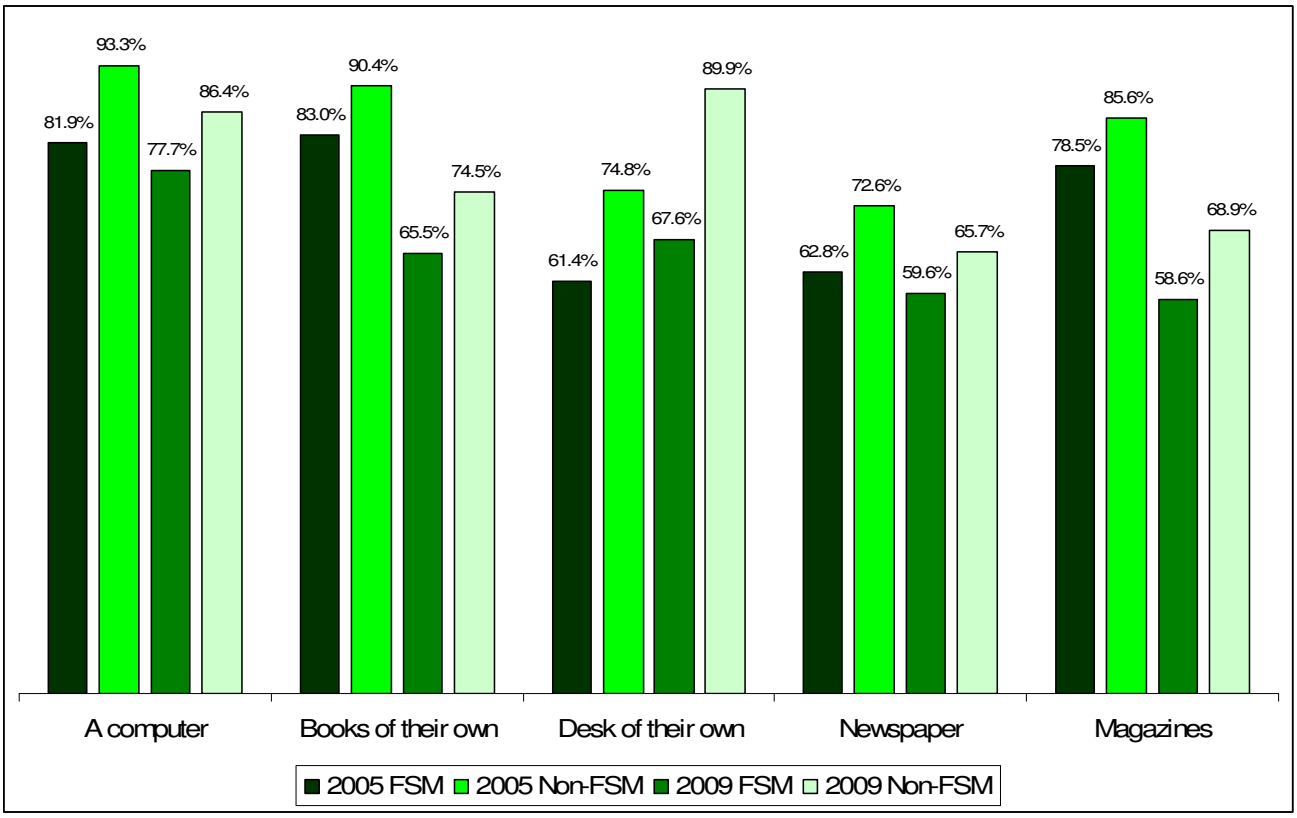
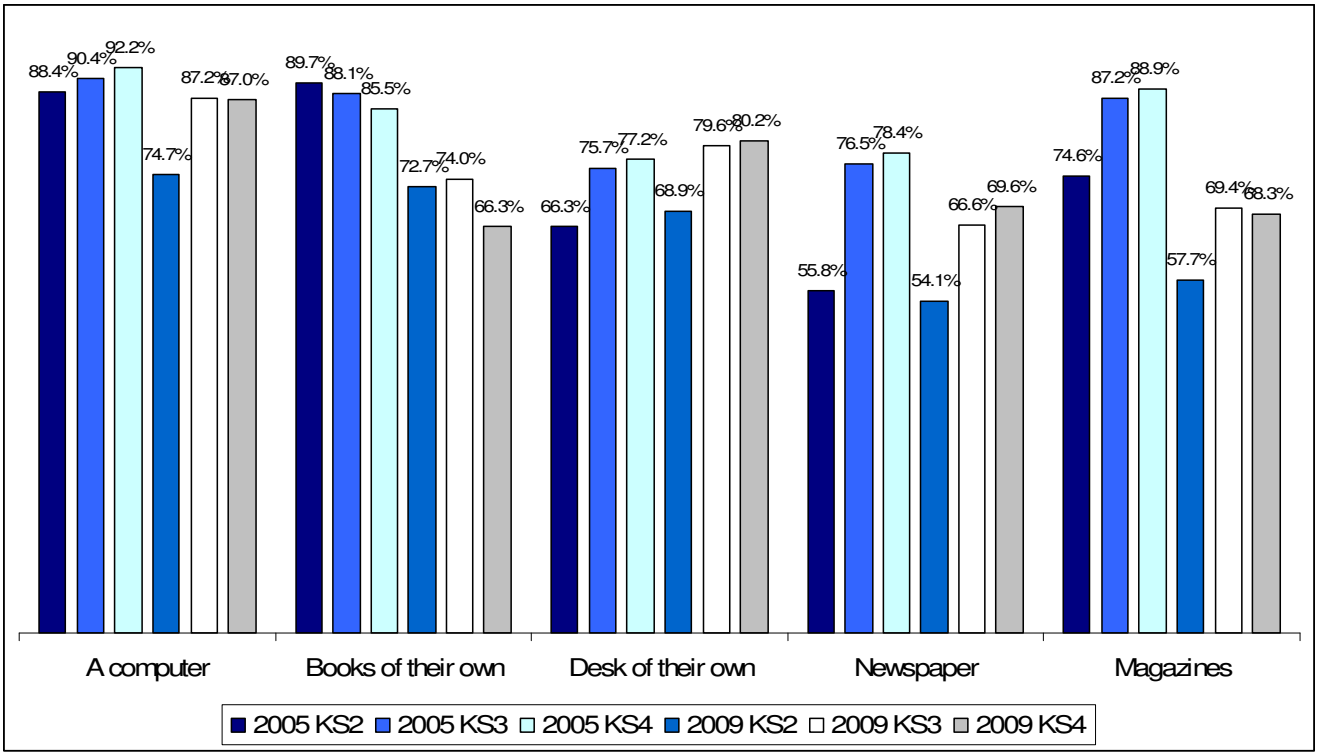


Figure 2: Access to resources by gender in 2005 and 2009



In both 2005 and 2009 a greater percentage of KS3 and KS4 pupils compared with KS2 pupils reported having a computer, a desk of their own, access to a newspaper and magazines (see **Figure 3**). While in 2005 book ownership did not differ significantly by key stage, fewer KS4 pupils said that they had books of their own at home in 2009 than their younger counterparts.

Figure 3: Access to resources by key stages in 2005 and 2009



Young people's enjoyment of reading

This section explores how much young people enjoy reading, how this differs according to demographic background and reading attainment, and how it compares with enjoyment of reading in 2005.

Enjoyment of reading: Key findings

- 51% of young people enjoy reading either very much or quite a lot. Over a third only enjoy reading a bit, while 10% do not enjoy reading at all.
- Significantly more girls than boys say that they enjoy reading, with 43% of boys and 58% of girls enjoying reading either very much or quite a lot.
- Enjoyment of reading declines with age, with KS2 pupils enjoying reading significantly more than their older counterparts.
- Although there is a relationship between FSM uptake and enjoyment of reading, with young people who do not receive FSMs enjoying reading more than young people who do, this relationship is weak.
- There is also a weak relationship between reading enjoyment and ethnic background, with White young people enjoying reading the least and young people from Asian backgrounds enjoying it the most.
- Enjoyment of reading is significantly related to reading attainment, with young people who are at or above the expected reading level for their age enjoying reading more than young people who are below the expected level for their age.
- Overall, levels of enjoyment of reading have remained unchanged since 2005. However, the gap in reading enjoyment between boys and girls appears to have widened since 2005, increasing from a percentage point difference of 10.7% in 2005 to a 15% point difference in 2009. By contrast, levels of enjoyment of reading appear to have remained unchanged with respect to FSM uptake and age.

The sample of young people was divided when asked in a general question whether they enjoy reading (see **Table 6**). Half of young people (50.6%) said that they enjoy reading either very much or quite a lot, while 49.4% either only enjoyed reading a bit or not at all.

Overall, **girls** enjoyed reading significantly more than **boys**[14], with 43.3% of boys compared with 58.3% of girls saying that they enjoy reading either very much or quite a lot. By contrast, nearly twice as many boys than girls said that they do not enjoy reading at all.

Similarly, **KS2 pupils** enjoyed reading significantly more than **KS3 and KS4 pupils**[15]. Nearly twice as many KS2 than KS3 or KS4 pupils said that they enjoy reading very much. By contrast, nearly twice as many KS3 pupils and three times as many KS4 pupils than KS2 pupils said that they do not enjoy reading at all.

Socio-economic background, in terms of **FSM uptake**, had been found to be significantly related to reading enjoyment in a previous survey (e.g. Clark and Akerman, 2006). There was a significant relationship between enjoyment of reading and FSM uptake in the present survey, with young people who do not receive FSMs enjoying reading significantly more than young

people who do receive FSMs. However, please note that the actual strength of the relationship in the present survey was weak[16].

There was also a weak relationship between **ethnic background** and enjoyment of reading[17], with young people from Asian backgrounds (57%) tending to enjoy reading more than young people from other ethnic backgrounds. White young people tended to enjoy reading the least (49.7%).

There were no significant interactions between enjoyment of reading, gender, key stage, FSM uptake, ethnicity and their various combinations.

Table 6: Enjoyment of reading by demographic background

How much do you enjoy reading?	*Very much %*	*Quite a lot %*	*A bit %*	*Not at all %*
All young people (N = 17,089)	22.2	28.4	39.2	10.2
Boys (N = 8,752)	16.8	26.5	42.9	13.7
Girls (N = 8,337)	27.8	30.5	35.3	6.4
KS2 (N = 3,704)	35.6	30.6	28.4	5.5
KS3 (N = 10,842)	18.9	28.8	41.9	10.4
KS4 (N = 2,543)	17.0	23.7	43.4	15.9
FSM (N = 3,207)	20.9	26.8	40.7	11.5
Non-FSM (N = 13,690)	22.4	28.8	39.0	9.9
White (N = 11,977)	22.0	27.7	39.5	10.8
Mixed (N = 925)	23.1	28.5	38.0	10.4
Asian (N = 1,628)	24.2	32.8	36.1	6.9
Black (N = 1,069)	22.2	30.1	40.2	7.5

Reading enjoyment and attainment

Reading enjoyment is related to reading attainment (see **Table 7**), with young people who are at or above the expected reading level for their age enjoying reading more than young people who are below the expected reading level for their age[18].

Please note that while enjoyment is related to attainment, our research design can make no inference about causality; that is, higher attainment may lead to greater enjoyment or greater enjoyment may lead to higher attainment.

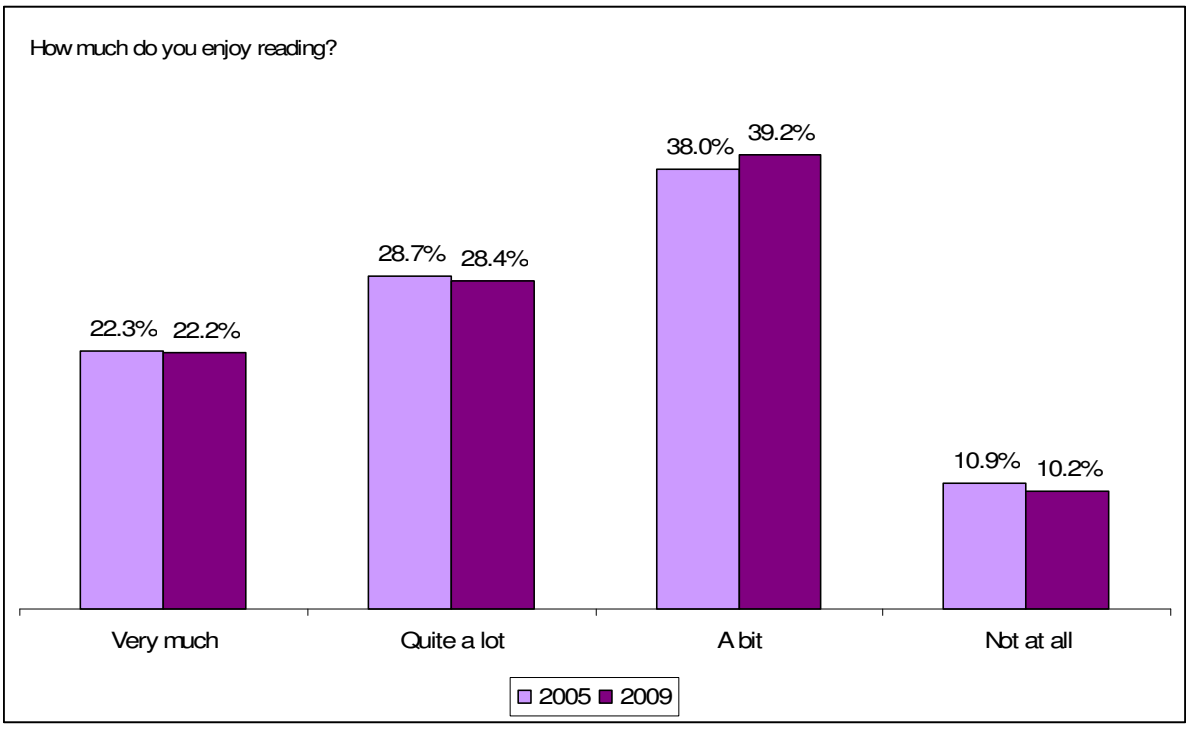
Table 7: Percentage of young people who read below or at or above the expected level and their enjoyment of reading (N = 4,503)

How much do you enjoy reading?	*Very much %*	*Quite a lot %*	*A bit %*	*Not at all %*
Below expected level for age (N = 793)	6.7	13.4	32.6	47.7
At expected level for age (N = 3,102)	21.7	35.6	37.2	5.6
Above expected level for age (N = 608)	55.7	21.8	16.1	6.4

Enjoyment of reading over time: 2005 and 2009 comparative analyses

When asked how much they enjoy reading, **Figure 4** shows that there has been very little change in young people's enjoyment of reading in the four years since we asked this question in 2005. Roughly the same proportion of young people enjoyed reading "very much" or "quite a lot" in 2005 as they did in 2009. While there was a slight increase in the number of young people who enjoyed reading "a bit", there was a very slight drop in the proportion of young people who now say that they do not enjoy reading at all.

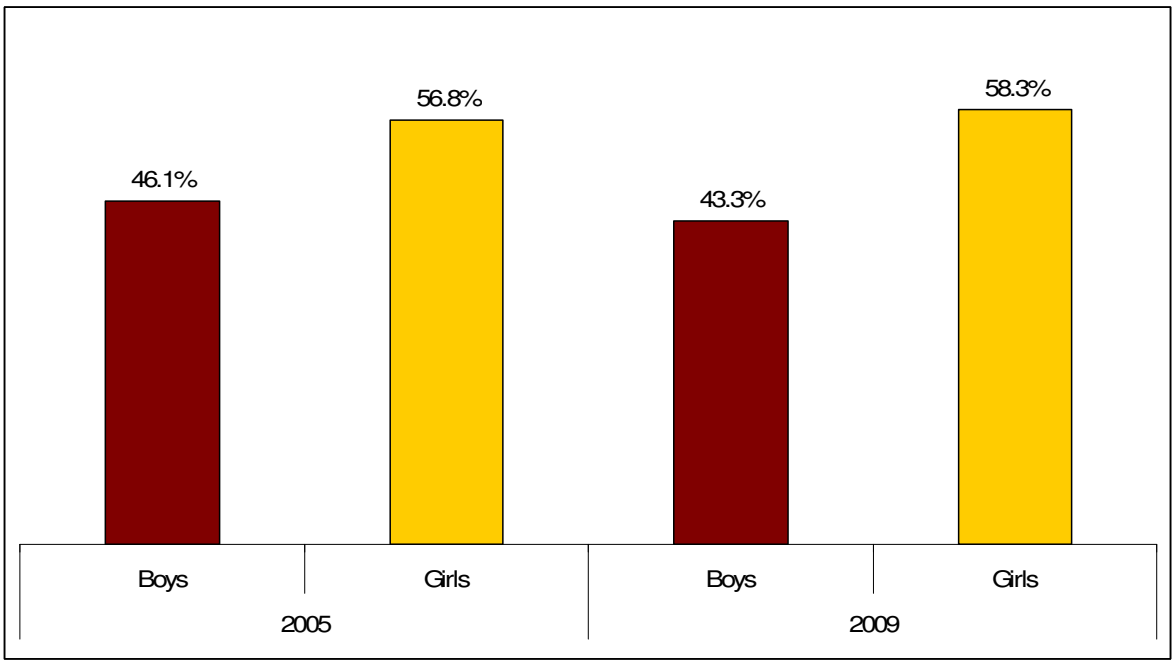
Figure 4: Enjoyment of reading 2005 and 2009



In both 2005 and 2009 there was a significant difference between boys and girls in the degree to which they enjoyed reading, with more girls than boys doing so[19]. **Figure 2** compares the proportion of girls and boys who enjoy reading either "very much" or "quite a lot" in 2005 and

2009. The data in **Figure 5** show that the gap between boys and girls in their enjoyment of reading appears to have widened between 2005 and 2009. In 2005, there was a 10.7% point difference between boys and girls who enjoyed reading either "very much" or "quite a lot". In 2009, this gap widened to a 15% point difference. See **Appendix A** for a breakdown of all the response options by gender over the two time points.

Figure 5: % of boys and girls enjoying reading either very much or quite a lot in 2005 and 2009



In both 2005 and 2009 there was a statistically significant difference between young people who receive FSMs and those who do not in the degree to which they enjoy reading either "very much" or "quite a lot", with young people who do not receive FSMs enjoying reading more than young people who receive FSMs at both time points[20]. See **Appendix A** for a full breakdown of all the reading enjoyment response options by FSM uptake in 2005 and 2009.

However, **Figure 6** shows that the magnitude of the difference in the proportion of young people who receive FSMs and those who do not who enjoy reading either "very much" or "quite a lot" has remained the same in 2005 and 2009 (3.7% and 3.5% point difference respectively).

In both 2005 and 2009 enjoyment of reading declined with age, with KS2 enjoying reading more than KS3 pupils who, in turn, enjoyed reading more than KS4 pupils[21]. **Figure 7** (overleaf) shows that the magnitude of the difference between key stages remained largely unchanged. See **Appendix A** for a breakdown of all the response options by gender over the two time points.

Figure 6: Percentage of FSM and non-FSM pupils enjoying reading either very much or quite a lot in 2005 and 2009

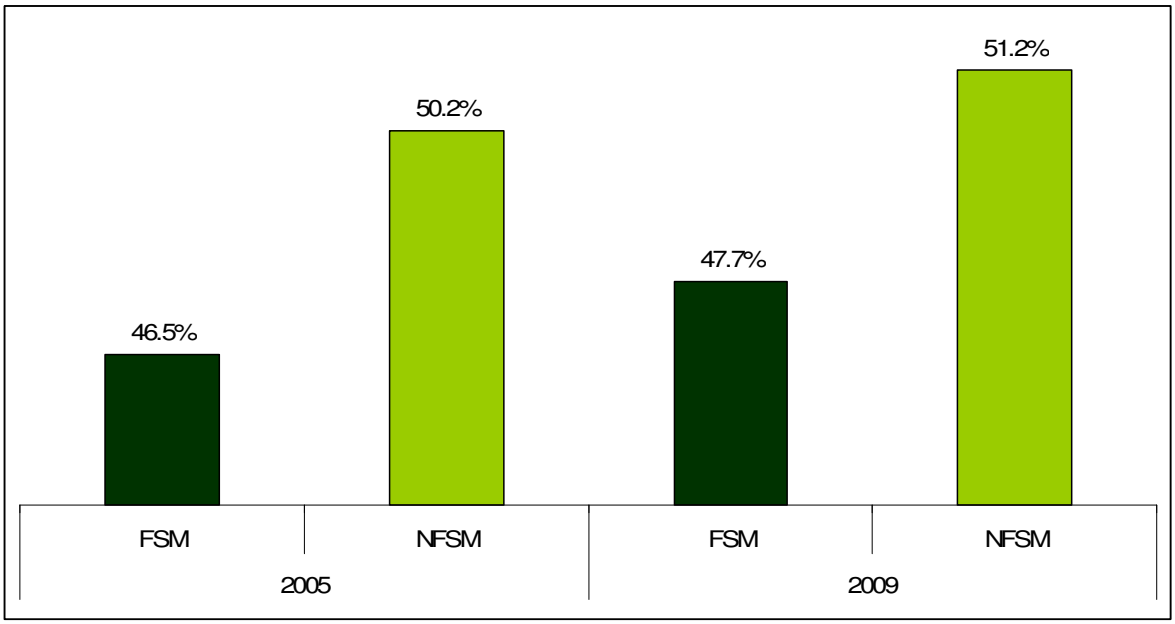
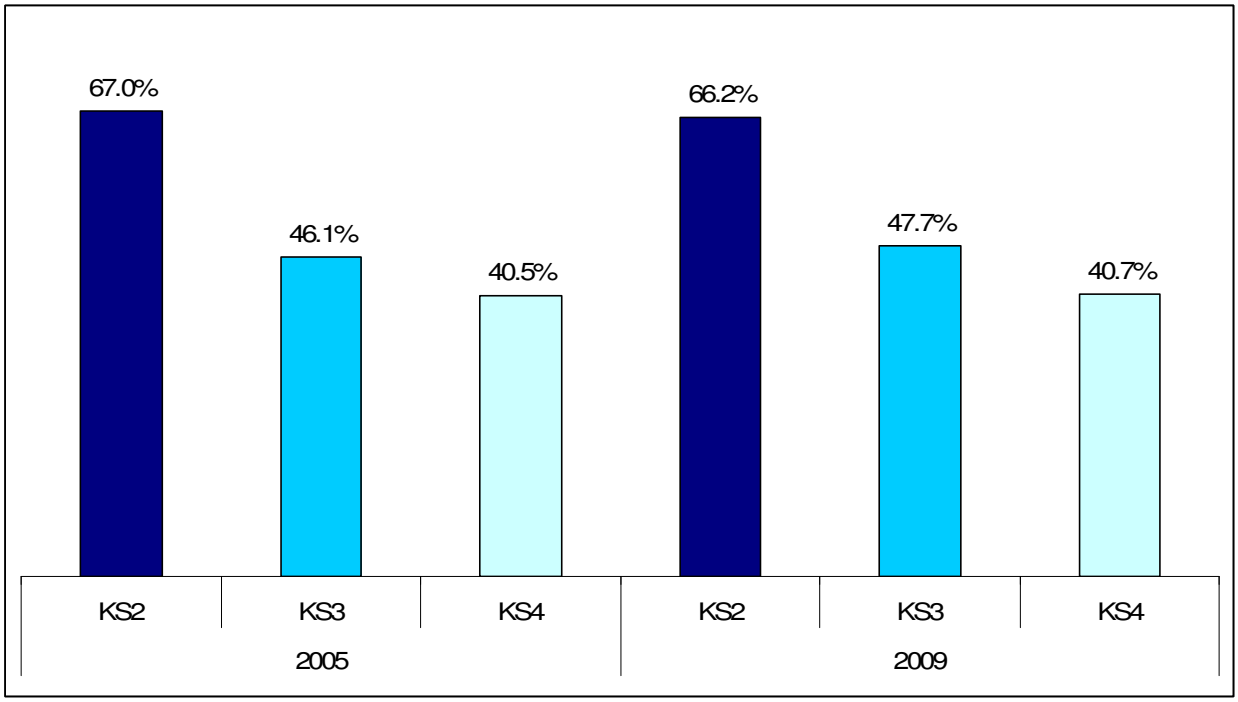


Figure 7: Percentage of KS2, KS3 and KS4 pupils who enjoy reading either very much or quite a lot in 2005 and 2009



Young people's self-reported reading ability

This section explores how good a reader young people think they are, how this differs according to demographic background and reading attainment, and how it compares with self-reported reading ability in 2005.

Self-reported reading ability: Key findings

- Most young people rated themselves to be either average at reading (45%) or very good at reading (50%).
- Girls rated themselves as better readers than boys.
- KS2 pupils rated themselves as better readers compared with their older counterparts.
- Young people from more privileged backgrounds rated themselves as better readers than their less privileged peers.
- Young people from Asian backgrounds also rated themselves as better readers compared with their peers from White, Mixed or Black backgrounds.
- There was a strong relationship between self-reported reading ability and reading attainment.
- Levels of self-reported reading ability remained unchanged between 2005 and 2009. Levels of self-reported reading ability broken down by gender, FSM uptake and age also remained stable.

9 in 10 young people rated themselves as either average (44.6%) or very good readers (49.5%, see **Table 8**). Only 6% of young people felt that they were not very good at reading.

Girls rated themselves as better readers than boys[22]. In line with our previous studies (e.g. Clark and Foster, 2005; McKenna et al, 1995), KS2 also rated themselves to be better readers compared with their older counterparts[23]. Consistent with previous research, there is also a relationship between socio-economic background and self-reported reading ability, with young people who do not receive FSMs rating themselves as better readers than young people who receive FSMs[24].

Ethnic background and enjoyment of reading were also related[25], with young people from Asian backgrounds tending to rate themselves as better readers compared with young people from other ethnic backgrounds.

There were no significant interactions between self-reported reading ability, gender, key stage, FSM uptake, ethnicity and their various combinations.

Table 8: Self-reported reading ability by demographic background

	Not a very good reader %	*Average reader* %	*Very good reader* %
All young people (N = 17,089)	5.9	44.6	49.5
Boys (N = 8,752)	7.0	46.0	46.9
Girls (N = 8,337)	4.7	43.1	52.2
KS2 (N = 3,704)	6.1	38.4	55.5
KS3 (N = 10,842)	5.8	46.4	47.8
KS4 (N = 2,543)	6.0	45.9	48.2
FSM (N = 3,207)	8.4	46.8	44.7
Non-FSM (N = 13,690)	5.3	44.1	50.6
White (N = 11,977)	6.1	44.8	49.1
Mixed (N = 925)	6.2	42.9	50.9
Asian (N = 1,628)	3.6	42.2	54.1
Black (N = 1,069)	5.6	46.3	48.2

Reading attainment and self-reported reading ability

Perhaps unsurprisingly, there was a very strong relationship between reading attainment and young people's perceptions of their own reading ability (see **Table 9**)[26], with young people who read below the expected level for their age being more likely to say that they are not a very good reader, and those who read at or above the expected level being more likely to say that they are average or very good readers.

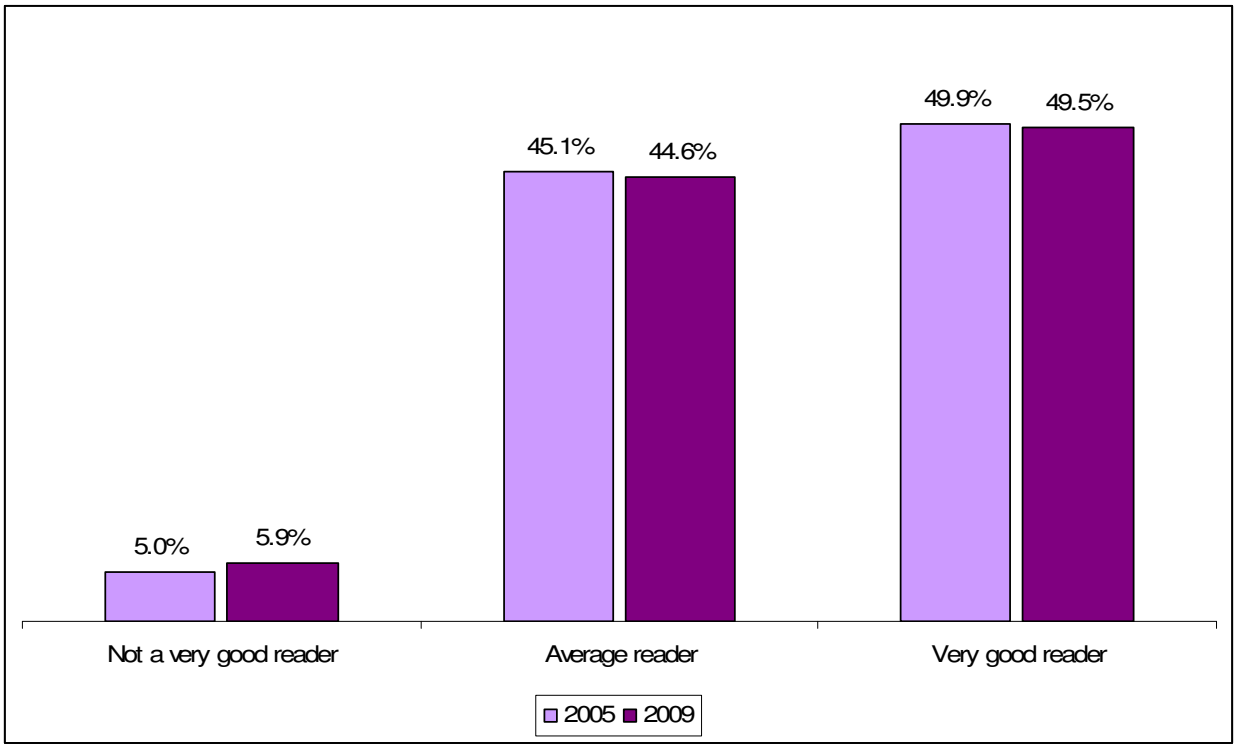
Table 9: Percentage of young people who read below or at or above the expected level and their self-reported reading ability (N = 4,503)

	Not a very good reader %	*Average reader* %	*Very good reader* %
Below expected level for their age (N = 793)	59.1	38.3	2.6
At expected level for their age (N = 3,102)	3.6	76.2	20.2
Above expected level for their age (N = 608)	0.4	14.7	84.9

Self-reported reading ability over time: 2005 and 2009 comparative analyses

Although there was a very slight increase in the proportion of young people who rated themselves to be not very good readers (from 5% to 6%), young people's self-reported reading ability in 2005 and 2009 was remarkably similar (see **Figure 8**).

Figure 8: Self-reported reading ability 2005 and 2009



In both 2005 and 2009 girls reported themselves to be better readers compared with boys[27]. **Figure 9** (overleaf) shows that there has been a very slight increase in the proportion of boys and girls (1% point) who rated themselves as not very good readers from 2005 to 2009.

Overall, however, the differences between boys and girls have remained largely unchanged. In 2005, 94.1% of boys rated themselves to be either average or very good readers compared with 96.2% of girls (2.1% point difference between boys and girls). This compares with 92.9% of boys compared with 95.3% of girls who rated themselves to be either average or very good readers in 2009 (2.4% point difference between boys and girls).

There was a statistically significant relationship between self-reported reading ability and FSM uptake both in 2005 and 2009[28], with young people who do not receive FSMs reporting themselves to be better readers compared with young people who receive FSMs.

However, the difference in self-reported reading ability between young people who receive FSMs and those who do not remained relatively unchanged between 2005 and 2009 (see **Figure 10,** overleaf). In 2005, 92.0% of young people who receive FSMs rated themselves to be either average or very good readers compared with 95.5% of young people who do not receive FSMs (3.5% point difference between FSMs and non-FSMs pupils). This compares with 91.6% of FSMs pupils compared with 94.7% of non-FSM pupils who rated themselves to be either average or very good readers in 2009 (3.1% point difference between boys and girls).

Figure 9: Self-reported reading ability by gender in 2005 and 2009

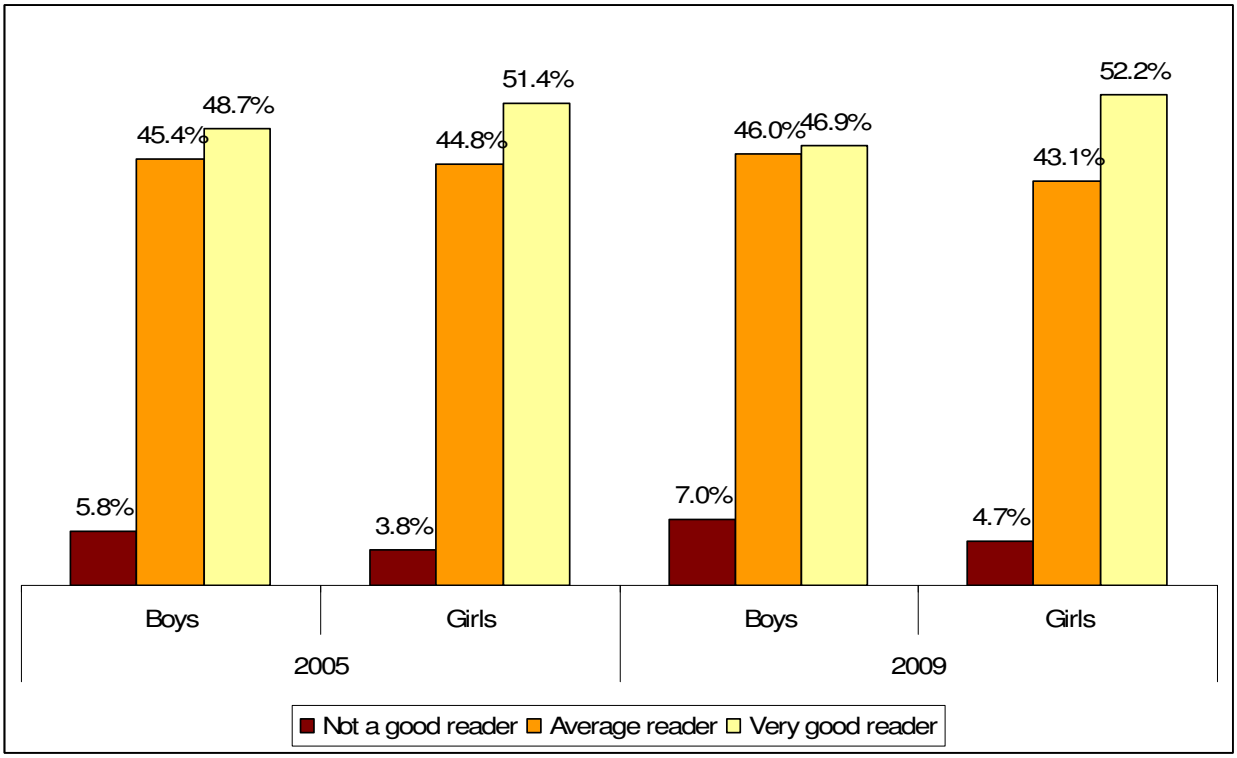
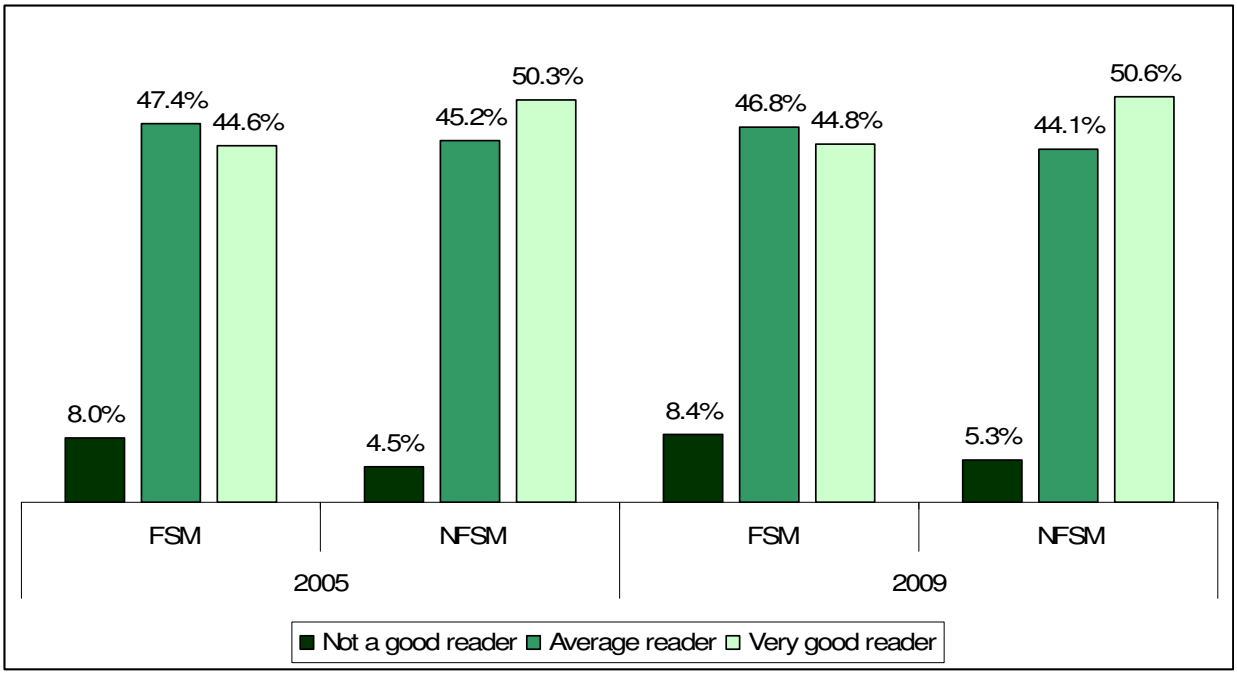
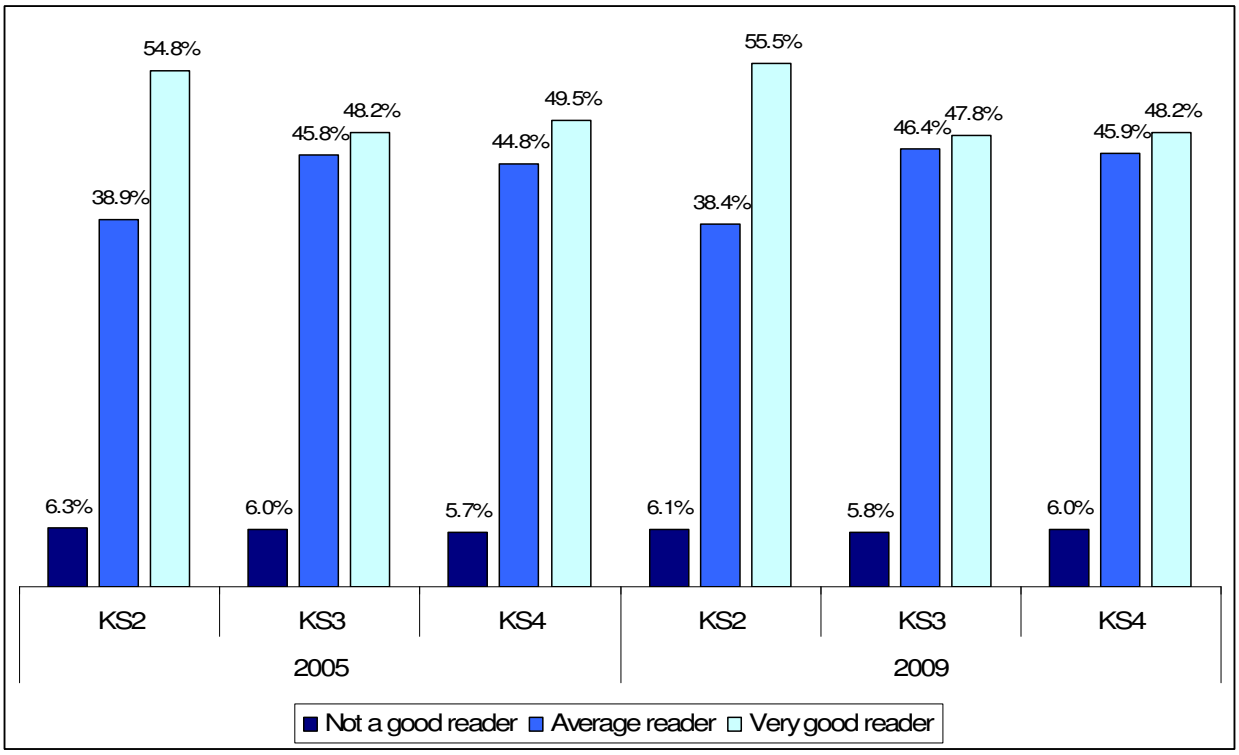


Figure 10: Self-reported reading ability by FSM uptake in 2005 and 2009



Perhaps counter-intuitively, younger pupils rated themselves to be better readers compared with their older counterparts in both 2005 and 2009[29], with a greater proportion of KS2 than KS3 or KS4 pupils saying that they are very good readers. **Figure 11** illustrates that there was very little variation in the levels of self-reported reading ability by the different key stages in 2005 and 2009.

Figure 11: Levels of self-reported reading ability by key stage in 2005 and 2009



Young people's reading frequency

This section explores how frequently young people read outside of class, how this differs according to demographic background and reading attainment, and how it compares with how frequently they read outside of class in 2005.

Young people's reading frequency: Key findings

- Most young people read outside of class every day (32%) or two to three times a week (29%). Only 7% do not read outside of class.
- Girls read outside of class more frequently than boys.
- Reading frequency declines with age, with KS2 pupils reading more often than KS3 pupils, who, in turn, read more frequently than KS4 pupils.
- Young people who receive FSMs read outside of class less frequently than young people who do not receive FSMs.
- Young people from Asian backgrounds read more frequently than young people from White, Mixed or Black backgrounds. Young people from White backgrounds tend to read the least frequently outside of class.
- There was a positive relationship between reading frequency and reading attainment, with young people who struggle with their reading being more likely to say that they rarely or never read outside of class.
- Fewer young people now read outside of class on a daily basis compared with 2005.
- Fewer boys and girls were reading at least once a month in 2009 than in 2005, with the drop in reading amount appearing to be greater in boys than in girls.
- The gap in the frequency with which young people who receive FSMs and those who do not read at least once a month has reduced between 2005 and 2009.
- The gap in reading frequency between KS2, KS3 and KS4 pupils has remained unchanged between 2005 and 2009.

The survey found that the majority of young people read every day (32%) or two to three times a week (29%, see **Table 10**) outside of class. However, 17% said that they read rarely and 7% said that they never read outside of class.

Girls read significantly more frequently outside of class than **boys**[30], with 39% of girls compared with 28% of boys reading every day. Twice as many boys as girls said that they never read at all (8% and 4% respectively)

Reading frequency declined with **age**[31]. KS2 pupils read significantly more often than KS3 pupils who, in turn, read significantly more often than KS4 pupils. For example, 45% of KS2 pupils compared with 31% of KS3 and 28% of KS4 pupils say that they read every day or almost every day. By contrast, a greater proportion of KS3 and KS4 than KS2 pupils indicated that they read a few times a month or about once a month. A greater proportion of KS4 than KS2 pupils also said that they rarely or never read outside of class.

Young people who receive **FSMs** read significantly less often outside of class than their more privileged peers (please note that although statistically significant, this relationship is weak)[32].

There was also a relationship between reading frequency and **ethnic background**, with young people from Asian backgrounds reading significantly more frequently than young people from the other three ethnicities, while young people from White backgrounds read the least frequently[33]. For example, 35% of young people from Asian backgrounds compared with 30% of young people from White backgrounds said that they read outside of class every day or almost every day.

There was a significant interaction between **gender** and **FSM uptake**. More specifically, boys who receive FSMs read less frequently than boys who do not receive FSMs or even girls who receive FSMs. Girls who do not receive FSMs read the most frequently[34] (see **Table 10**).

There were no further significant interactions among gender, key stage, FSM uptake and ethnic background with respect to reading frequency.

Table 10: Reading frequency by demographic background

	Every day	*2 to 3 times a week*	*2 to 3 times a month*	*About once a month*	*Rarely*	*Never*
	%	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*
All young people (N = 17,089)	32.2	29.1	10.6	4.5	17.0	6.6
Boys (N = 8,752)	28.1	28.2	10.4	4.9	19.5	8.9
Girls (N = 8,337)	38.7	30.2	8.5	4.1	14.3	4.2
KS2 (N = 3,704)	44.6	30.9	5.7	2.6	10.6	5.5
KS3 (N = 10,842)	30.9	29.7	10.3	4.8	17.6	6.6
KS4 (N = 2,543)	26.3	24.1	11.4	6.4	23.8	8.1
FSM (N = 3,207)	30.4	30.1	8.0	3.7	18.9	8.9
Non-FSM (N = 13,690)	33.8	28.9	9.8	4.7	18.0	6.0
White (N = 11,977)	30.2	28.6	9.5	4.6	17.6	6.4
Mixed (N = 925)	33.9	29.3	8.7	3.4	16.0	8.6
Asian (N = 1,628)	35.6	32.4	9.7	4.3	12.5	5.5
Black (N = 1,069)	31.8	29.9	10.6	5.4	15.9	6.3
Boys: FSM (N = 1,648)	26.2	29.4	8.9	3.9	20.6	11.1
Boys: NFSM (N = 6,745)	28.6	27.9	10.7	5.1	19.5	8.3
Girls: FSM (N = 1,370)	35.3	31.2	6.8	3.5	17.1	6.1

	Every day %	2 to 3 times a week %	2 to 3 times a month %	About once a month %	Rarely %	Never %
Girls: NFSM (N = 6,385)	39.3	30.0	9.0	4.3	13.8	3.6

Reading frequency and reading attainment

The frequency with which young people read was related to their reading skills[35]. **Table 11** shows that only 13% of young people who read below the expected level for their age read every day compared with 36% of young people at or 60% of young people above the expected reading level for their age. Conversely, young people who struggle with reading are more likely to say that they rarely or never read compared with young people who are at or above the expected reading level.

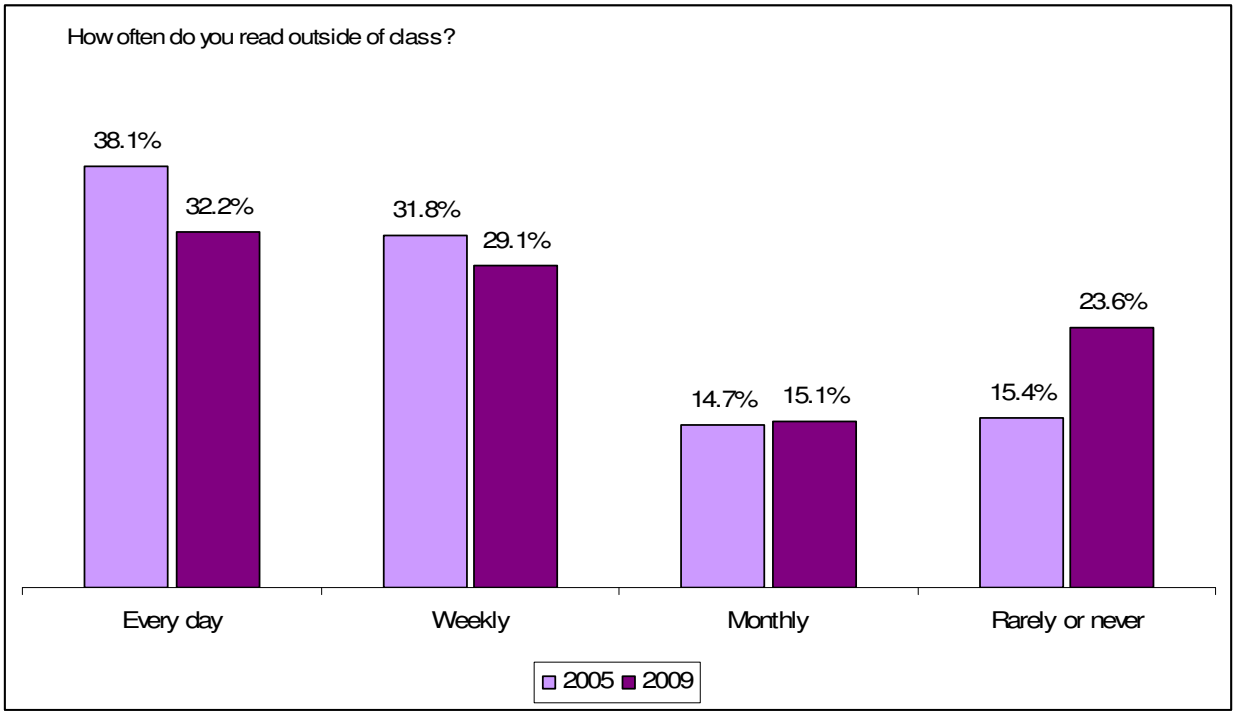
Table 11: Percentage of young people who read below/at/above the expected level and the frequency with which they read (N = 4,503)

	Below expected level for age (N = 793) %	At expected level for age (N = 3,102) %	Above expected level for age (N = 608) %
Every day	13.4	35.8	59.7
2 – 3 times a week	26.9	32.6	18.2
2 – 3 times a month	10.1	10.3	4.5
Once a month	6.1	4.3	2.3
A few times a year	6.9	3.1	2.5
Rarely	22.0	10.3	7.9
Never	14.6	3.6	4.9

Reading frequency over time: 2005 and 2009 comparative analyses

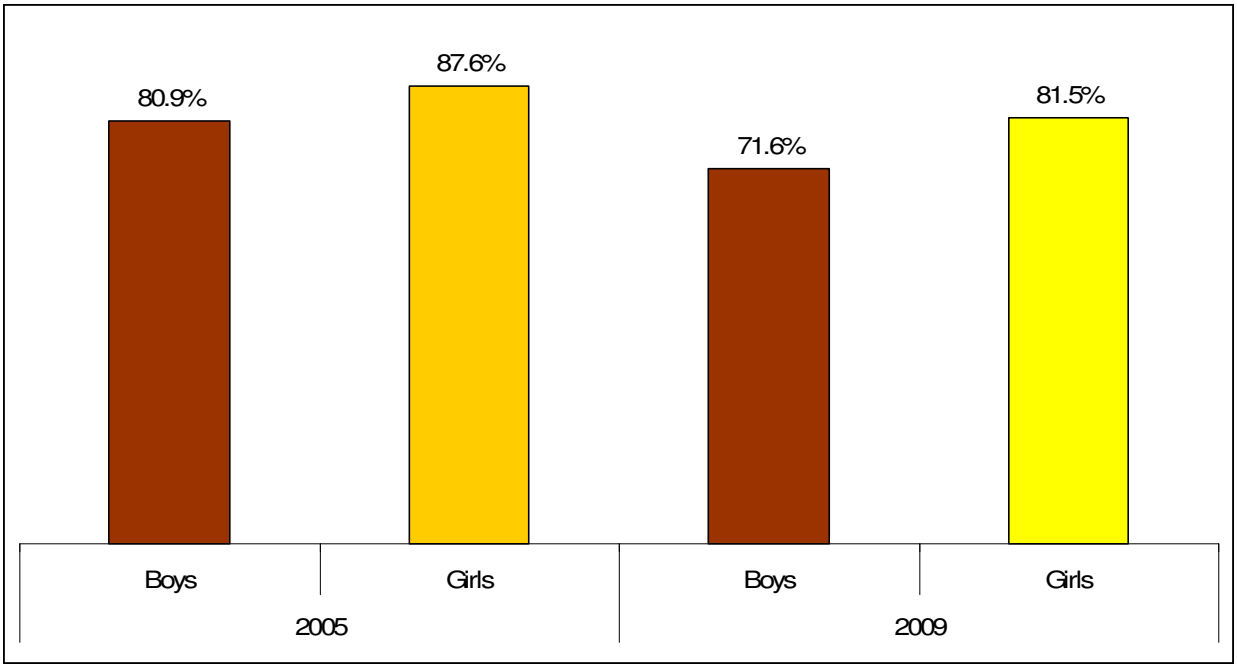
Fewer young people now read outside of class on a daily basis compared with 2005 (see **Figure 12**)[36]. In 2005 38% of young people said that they read every day or almost every day compared with 32% in 2009. Similarly, the proportion of young people who say that they rarely or never read increased by 9% points from 15% in 2005 to 24% in 2009.

Figure 12: Amount of reading outside of class 2005 and 2009



Girls read significantly more frequently outside of class than boys in both 2005 and 2009[37]. However, **Figure 13** illustrates that fewer boys and girls were reading at least once a month in 2009 than they did in 2005, with the drop in reading amount appearing to be greater in boys than in girls. Categories were combined to form an "at least once a month" index for comparative purposes. Please see **Appendix B** for a breakdown of the different response categories by gender in 2005 and 2009.

Figure 13: % of boys and girls reading at least once a month in 2005 and 2009



In both 2005 and 2009 there was a significant relationship between FSM uptake and reading frequency[38], with more young people who do not receive FSMs reporting that they read more frequently outside of class than young people who receive FSMs.

Again, categories were combined to form an "at least once a month" index for comparative purposes. Please see **Appendix B** for a breakdown of the different response categories by FSM uptake in 2005 and 2009. Overall, **Figure 14** shows that the gap in the frequency with which young people who receive FSMs and those who do not read at least once a month has reduced between 2005 and 2009. In 2005, there was a 7.2% point difference in the proportion of young people who receive FSMs and who read at least once a month and those who do not receive FSMs, compared with a 3.8% point difference in 2009.

Figure 14: % of young people who read at least once a month by FSM uptake in 2005 and 2009

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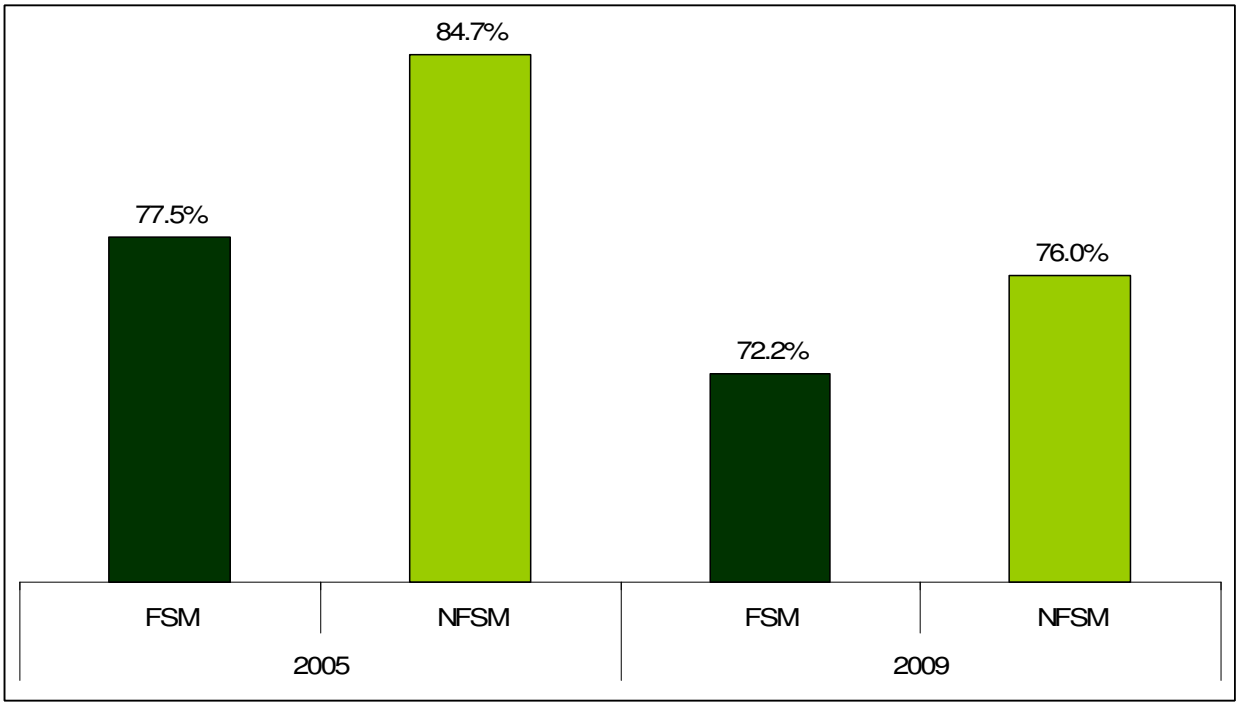
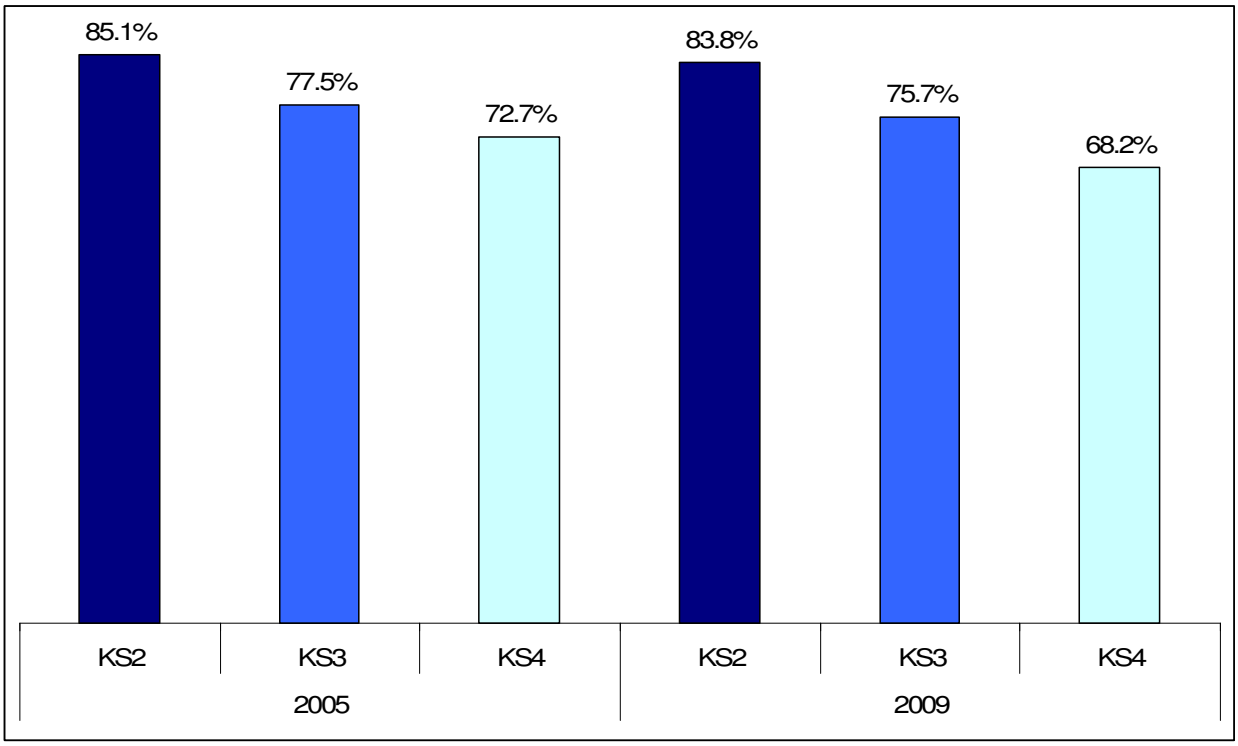


In both 2005 and 2009 KS2 pupils read more frequently compared with their older counterparts. Again, categories were combined to form an "at least once a month" index for comparative purposes. Overall, **Figure 15** (overleaf) shows that the gap in the frequency with which young people in the different key stages read at least once a month has remained unchanged between 2005 and 2009.

Figure 15: % of KS2, KS3 and KS4 pupils reading at least once a month in 2005 and 2009



Young people's opinion of whether they read enough

This section explores whether young people read enough, how this differs according to demographic background and reading attainment, and how this compares with 2005.

Young people's opinion of whether they read enough: Key findings

- Nearly half of young people say that they read enough, while a third do not currently think they read enough but would like to read more. 18% of young people said that they do not read enough and that they do not want to read more.
- Girls are more likely to say that they read enough. Twice as many boys than girls say that they do not read enough and do not want to read more.
- KS2 pupils were more likely to say that they read enough compared with their older counterparts. KS4 pupils were more likely to say that they do not read enough and do not want to read more either compared with KS3 pupils, who, in turn, were more likely to say this than KS2 pupils.
- There was no relationship between FSM uptake and young people's opinions of whether they read enough.
- Young people from Black backgrounds were most likely to say that they would like to read more, while young people from White backgrounds were more likely than young people from other ethnic backgrounds to say that they do not read enough and that they do not want to read more.
- There was a positive relationship between opinions of whether they read enough and reading attainment, with young people who read below the expected level for their age being more likely to say that they do not read enough and do not want to read more.
- There was a slight increase in the proportion of young people who would like to read more in 2009 compared with 2005.
- The gap between boys and girls in their opinions of whether they read enough appears to have widened slightly between 2005 and 2009, as did the gap in opinions between the key stages. By contrast, the gap in opinions between young people who receive FSMs and those who do not has reduced between 2005 and 2009.

When asked whether they think that they read enough, nearly half of young people said that they do, while a third said that they do not but that they would like to read more (see **Table 12**). However, nearly a fifth of young people said that they do not read enough and do not want to read more.

More **girls** than **boys** said that they read enough. However, nearly twice as many boys than girls said that they do not read enough and do not want to read more.

There were also significant differences in the degree to which young people from different **key stages** felt that they were reading enough. While nearly two-thirds of KS2 pupils felt that they read enough, only two-fifths of KS3 pupils and a third of KS4 pupils believed so too. Similarly, while only 8% of KS2 pupils didn't think that they read enough but did not want to read more either, this rose to 20% in KS3 and 27% in KS4 pupils.

There was no statistically significant difference in the degree to which young people who receive **FSM**s felt that they were reading enough or not as compared to those who do not receive FSMs.

Fewer young people from Black than from the other three **ethnic backgrounds** felt that they read enough. However, they were more likely than young people from the other three ethnic backgrounds to say that they would like to read more. Conversely, young people from White backgrounds were the most disengaged from reading, with more young people from White backgrounds (nearly 20%) than young people from Mixed, Asian or Black backgrounds saying that they do not read enough and do not want to read more.

Table 12: Young people's opinions of whether they read enough by demographic background

Do you think you read enough?	*Yes* %	*No but I would like to read more* %	*No and I do not want to read more* %
All young people (N = 17,089)	47.0	34.6	18.4
Boys (N = 8,752)	43.0	33.6	23.5
Girls (N = 8,337)	51.1	35.7	13.1
KS2 (N = 3,704)	62.6	29.3	8.1
KS3 (N = 10,842)	44.7	35.5	19.8
KS4 (N = 2,543)	34.7	38.5	26.8
FSM (N = 3,207)	47.0	35.1	17.9
Non-FSM (N = 13,690)	46.9	34.5	18.6
White (N = 11,977)	47.1	33.1	19.8
Mixed (N = 925)	47.7	36.2	16.1
Asian (N = 1,628)	48.6	38.8	12.6
Black (N = 1,069)	44.8	40.8	14.4

Reading enough and reading attainment

Young people's perceptions of whether or not they read enough were significantly related to their reading attainment[39].

Table 13 shows that only a quarter of young people who read below the expected level for their age say that they read enough compared with 50% of young people who read at the expected level and 74% of young people who read above the expected level for their age.

Overall, young people who read below the expected level for their age were more likely than their higher achieving counterparts to say that they do not read enough and do not want to read more.

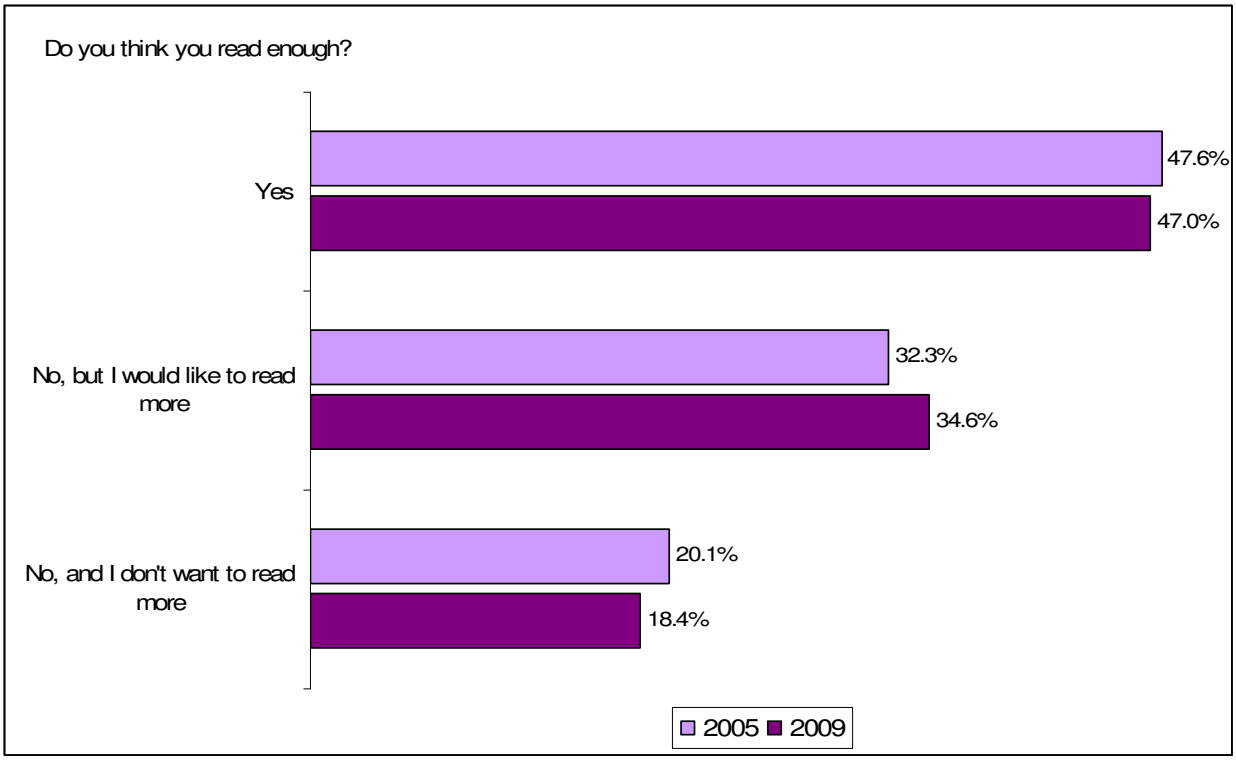
Table 13: Percentage of young people who read below or at or above the expected level and their views on whether they read enough (N = 4,503)

Do you think you read enough?	*Yes* %	*No but I would like to read more* %	*No and I do not want to read more* %
Below level for age (N = 793)	25.3	40.9	33.8
At level for age (N = 3,102)	50.0	36.1	13.9
Above level for age (N = 608)	74.3	16.3	9.4

Reading enough over time: 2005 and 2009 comparative analyses

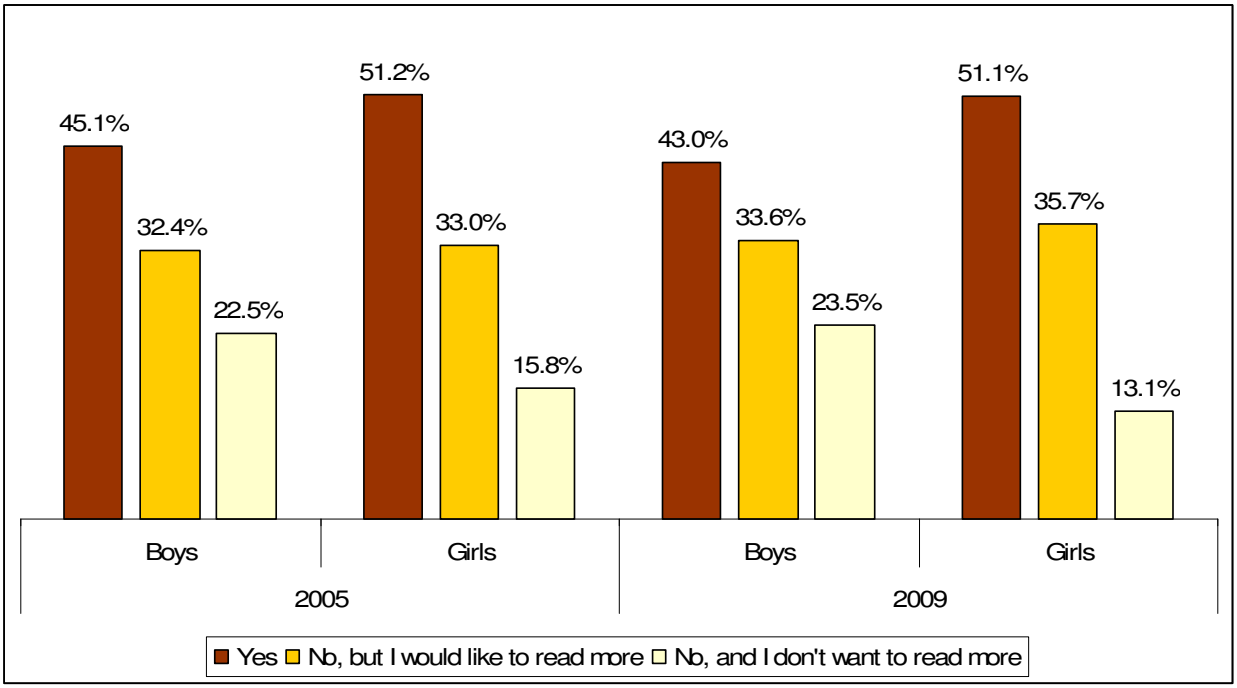
About the same proportion of young people in 2009 as in 2005 believed that they read enough (see **Figure 16**). There was a slight increase in the proportion of young people who would like to read more in 2009 compared with 2005. Concurrently, there was a decrease in the proportion of young people who do not want to read more in 2009 compared with 2005.

Figure 16: Young people's opinions of whether they read enough in 2005 and 2009



Girls were more likely to say that they read enough compared with boys in both 2005 and 2009 (see **Figure 17)**. However, the gap between boys and girls in their opinions of whether they read enough appears to have widened slightly between 2005 and 2009. For example, the percentage point difference between boys and girls who believe that they do not read enough and do not want to read more either increased from 6.7% in 2005 to 10.4% in 2009.

Figure 17: Young people's opinions of whether they read enough by gender in 2005 and 2009



Overall, **Figure 18** (overleaf) shows that the gap in opinions between young people who receive FSMs and those who do not has reduced between 2005 and 2009. For example, in 2005 there was a 2.4% point difference in the proportion of young people who say that they read enough between those who receive FSMs and those who do not, compared with a 0.1% point difference in 2009.

KS2 pupils were more likely to say that they read enough or that they would like to read more than KS3 or KS4 pupils in both 2005 and 2009 (see **Figure 19**, overleaf). However, the gap in opinions between the key stages has widened slightly. For example, the percentage point difference between KS2 and KS3 pupils who believe that they would like to read more has increased from 2.8% in 2005 to 6.2% in 2009. The percentage point difference between KS3 and KS4 pupils in that category also increased between 2005 and 2009 from 0.7% to 3%.

Figure 18: Young people's opinions of whether they read enough by FSM uptake in 2005 and 2009

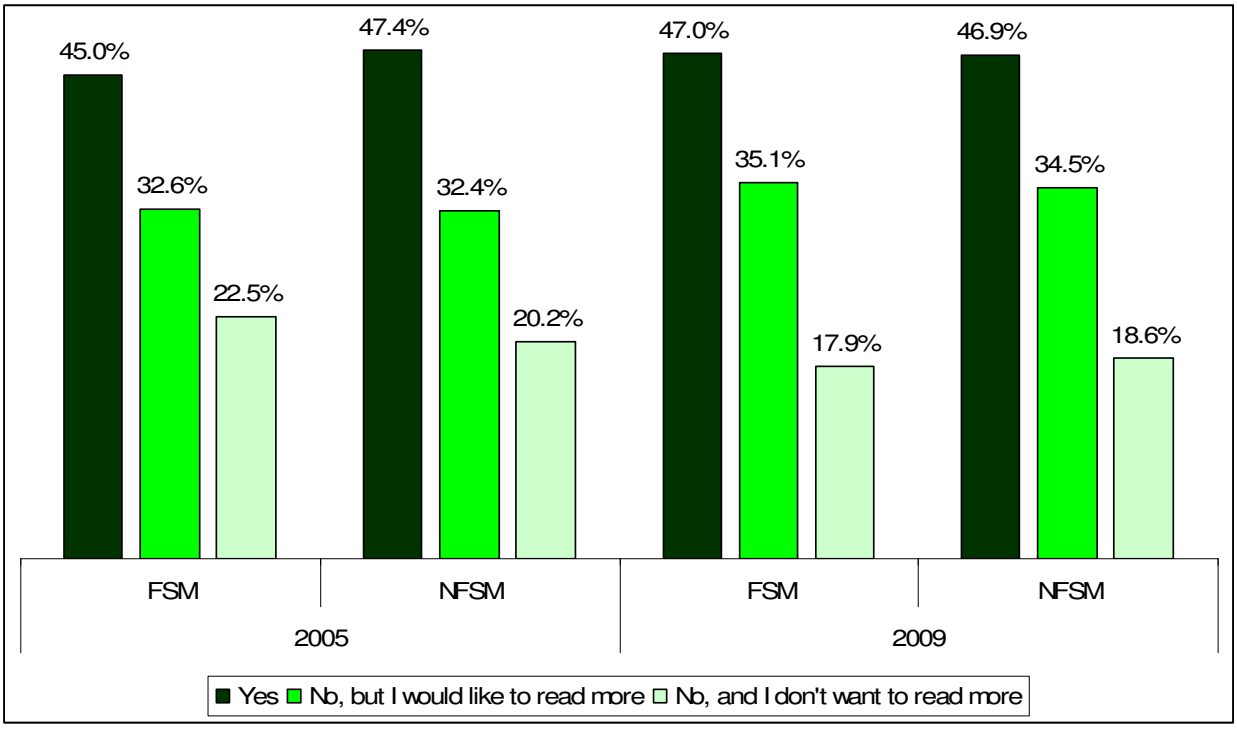
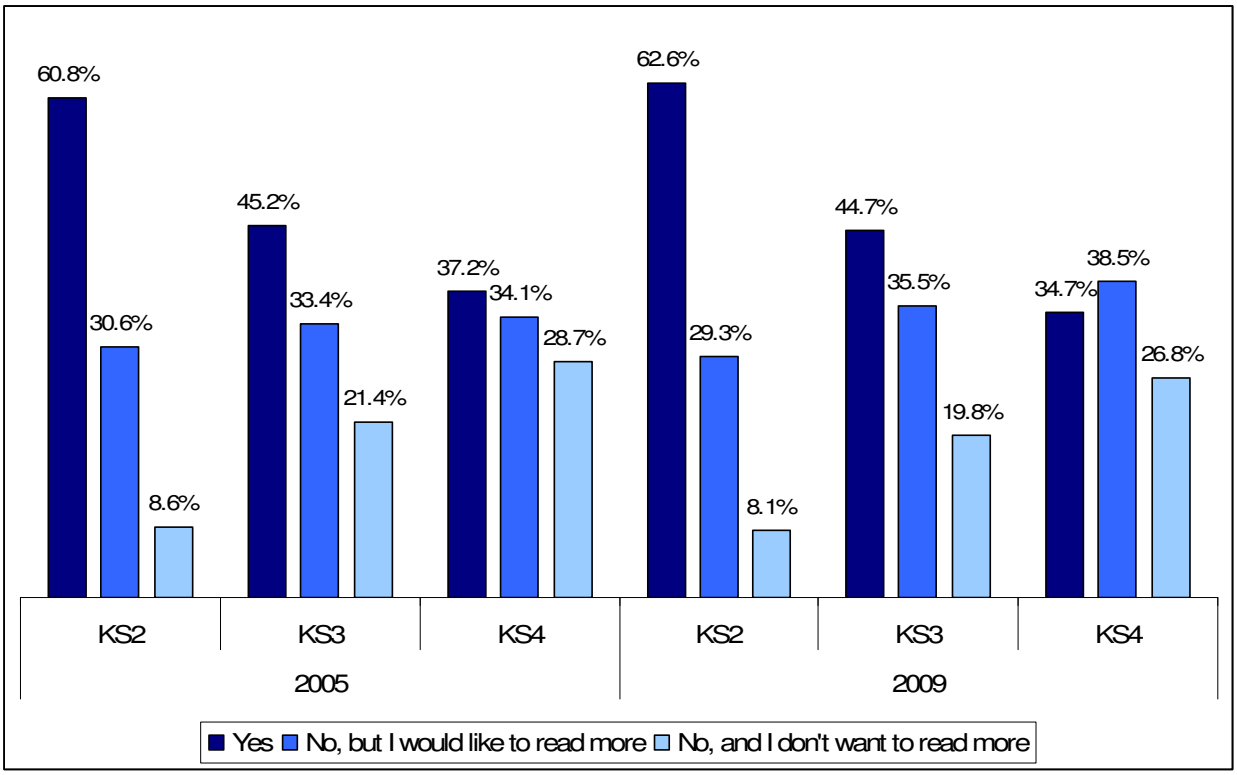


Figure 19: Young people's opinions of whether they read enough by key stage in 2005 and 2009



Young people's reading materials

This section explores what types of materials young people read outside of class, how this differs according to demographic background and reading attainment, and how it compares with materials read in 2005.

Young people's types of reading: Key findings

- Text messages, magazines, websites and emails are the top leisure reading choices of young people. Fiction is read outside of class by over two-fifths of young people.
- Girls were more likely to read technology-based materials as well as fiction, poems and plays, and boys were more likely to read comics, newspapers and manuals.
- Technology-based reading materials were more popular with KS4 pupils, while materials such as comics, fiction, poems and plays decreased in popularity with age.
- Technology-based reading materials as well as fiction and magazines were more frequently read by young people who do not receive FSMs compared with those who do. By contrast, pupils who receive FSMs are more likely to read poems outside of class.
- The popularity of certain reading materials varied according to young people's ethnic background.
- Young people who read below the expected level for their age were the least likely to read a variety of materials outside of class. By contrast, young people who read above the expected level for their age are the most prolific readers of more traditional forms of reading, such as fiction, non-fiction, poems and plays.
- Fewer young people now read magazines, websites, text messages, fiction, comics, newspapers, song lyrics, poems, manuals and plays outside of class compared with young people in 2005. However, more young people in 2009 than in 2005 said that they read non-fiction books and EAL materials.
- The gap between boys and girls reading fiction increased between 2005 and 2009, nearly tripling from a 3.4% point difference to an 11.5% point difference. Similarly, the gender gap in magazine reading has widened, increasing from a 12% point difference in 2005 to a 17% point difference in 2009.
- There was a decrease in the difference between young people who receive FSMs and those who do not in the degree to which they read certain materials at least once a month, namely websites, emails, fiction, manuals, non-fiction, plays and EAL materials. By contrast, the gap between FSM pupils and their non-FSM counterparts has increased slightly between 2005 and 2009 for the following reading materials: magazines, text messages, newspapers, song lyrics and poems.
- With the exception of fiction books, non-fiction books, plays or screenplays and EAL materials, the magnitude of the differences appears to have increased between KS2 and KS4 pupils.

What types of reading do young people engage in at least once a month? Text messages, magazines, websites, emails and fiction were most commonly read by young people at least once a month (see **Table 14**). Plays or screenplays and poems were read the least in a month.

There were numerous **gender** differences in the types of reading done in a month. A significantly greater proportion of girls than boys said that they read websites, blogs, magazines, emails, fiction, song lyrics, poems, plays or screenplays, text messages and books or magazines in a language other than English[40]. By contrast, a greater proportion of boys than girls said that they read newspapers, comics and manuals at least once a month[41]. There was no significant difference in the degree to which girls and boys read non-fiction.

Different types of reading were popular by the different **key stages**. The biggest differences exist with regards to technology-based reading, such as text messages, websites, blogs and emails[42], with more KS4 pupils than KS3 pupils engaging with technology-based reading, who, in turn, engage with technology more than KS2 pupils. A greater proportion of KS4 than KS3 pupils also read newspapers, magazines, song lyrics and manuals[43]. In turn, a greater proportion of KS3 than KS2 pupils read these materials at least once a month. By contrast, there was a gradual reduction in popularity of other reading materials, such as comics, fiction, poems, plays or screenplays and non-fiction books, with a greater proportion of KS2 pupils reading these materials than either their KS3 or KS4 counterparts[44]. There was no difference in the degree to which young people in the different key stages read books or magazines in a language other than English.

There were also significant **socio-economic differences** in the degree to which materials were being read. A greater proportion of young people who do not receive FSMs read technology-based materials, such as websites, blogs, emails and text messages compared with young people who receive FSMs[45]. A greater proportion of young people who do not receive FSMs also read magazines and fiction books at least once a month compared with young people who receive FSMs[46]. By contrast, more young people who receive FSMs said that they read poems at least once a month compared with young people who do not receive FSMs[47]. There were no significant socio-economic differences in the degree to which comics, song lyrics, plays or screenplays, non-fiction, manuals or books or magazines in a language other than English were being read at least once a month.

With the exception of manuals, the popularity of certain reading materials varied according to young people's **ethnic background**[48]. For example, more young people from White than the other three ethnic backgrounds read magazines and text messages. More young people from Asian than from the other three ethnic backgrounds read emails, fiction, non-fiction and books or magazines in a language other than English, while more young people from a Black ethnic background read newspapers, comics and song lyrics.

Table 14: Types of materials read at least once a month by demographic background

	All young people (N = 17,089)	*Boys (N = 8,680)*	*Girls (N = 8,267)*	*KS2 (N = 3,704)*	*KS3 (N = 10,842)*	*KS4 (N =2,543)*	*FSM (N = 3,207)*	*NFSM (N = 13,690)*
	%	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*
Text messages	58.3	52.1	65.0	49.8	63.7	77.0	50.1	60.6
Magazines	57.8	49.6	66.6	47.6	59.5	65.4	51.6	59.6
Websites	53.4	52.6	54.5	37.1	55.4	68.5	45.8	55.4
Emails	52.2	46.9	58.0	31.9	55.3	68.3	45.8	54.0
Fiction	44.4	38.9	50.4	46.4	44.5	41.1	37.7	46.2
Blogs	38.7	33.9	43.8	17.1	41.6	57.5	33.0	40.3
Song lyrics	36.5	26.8	46.7	28.7	37.3	48.2	34.4	37.1
Newspapers	32.9	36.9	28.7	22.0	33.6	46.2	31.6	33.3
Non-fiction	30.6	30.2	31.1	36.0	30.1	25.2	28.4	31.2
Comics	25.7	34.8	16.4	28.8	26.8	16.9	27.9	25.3
EAL materials	24.6	23.0	26.3	24.9	24.7	23.8	24.8	24.5
Manuals	16.7	20.3	13.0	13.8	16.9	20.1	15.4	17.1
Poems	16.5	11.1	22.2	29.0	14.1	8.6	22.0	15.1
Plays or screenplays	8.8	7.9	9.7	10.6	8.5	7.4	8.5	8.0

Table 14 continued: Types of materials read at least once a month by demographic background

	White (N = 11,977)	*Mixed (N = 925)*	*Asian (N = 1,628)*	*Black (N = 1,069)*
	%	*%*	*%*	*%*
Text messages	62.5	51.5	53.5	51.1
Magazines	62.1	51.9	55.2	54.3
Websites	55.9	50.6	54.1	49.2
Emails	54.5	46.8	57.9	49.2
Fiction	44.8	45.7	52.2	41.3
Blogs	40.8	40.3	34.5	36.6
Song lyrics	37.3	36.1	40.8	42.6
Newspapers	32.7	32.3	38.6	43.9
Non-fiction	29.9	36.9	38.7	32.9
Comics	25.7	28.9	29.4	34.1
EAL materials	23.8	26.1	32.6	29.0
Manuals	16.5	18.8	18.4	17.9
Poems	14.2	24.0	16.3	24.1
Plays or screenplays	9.4	7.8	6.4	10.1

Types of reading and reading attainment

There were significant relationships between reading attainment and the degree to which certain types of materials were read outside of class at least once a month[49]. Young people who read below the expected level for their age were less likely to say that they read a variety of materials outside of class compared with young people who read at or above the expected level for their age (see **Table 15**). Overall, young people who read above the expected level for their age were the most prolific readers of the more traditional forms of reading, such as fiction, non-fiction, poems and plays or screenplays.

Perhaps the biggest gap exists in terms of fiction, with only 26% of struggling readers saying that they read fiction outside of class at least once a month compared with 51% of young people who read at the expected level and 59% of young people who read above the expected level.

Table 15: Percentage of young people who read below or at or above the expected level and the types of materials they read at least once a month (N = 4,503)

	Below expected level for age (N = 793) %	*At expected level for age (N = 3,102) %*	*Above expected level for age (N = 608) %*
Text messages	55.1	61.7	58.2
Magazines	51.4	61.6	59.2
Websites	46.1	56.9	57.7
Emails	46.7	55.4	54.0
Fiction	25.9	50.8	59.3
Blogs	32.8	41.7	40.8
Song lyrics	31.3	38.1	42.7
Newspapers	25.0	35.5	40.0
Non-fiction	17.9	33.5	44.7
Comics	19.0	26.9	36.2
EAL materials	19.5	26.0	30.2
Manuals	11.3	18.1	22.6
Poems	12.7	16.0	27.3
Plays or screenplays	7.4	8.3	14.0

Types of materials read over time: 2005 and 2009 comparative analyses

When comparing equivalent materials from 2005 and 2009, **Figure 20** shows that fewer young people now read magazines, websites, text messages, fiction, comics, newspapers, song lyrics, poems, manuals and plays outside of class compared with young people in 2005. However, more young people in 2009 than in 2005 said that they read non-fiction books and EAL materials.

Figure 20: Types of materials read outside of school in 2005 and 2009

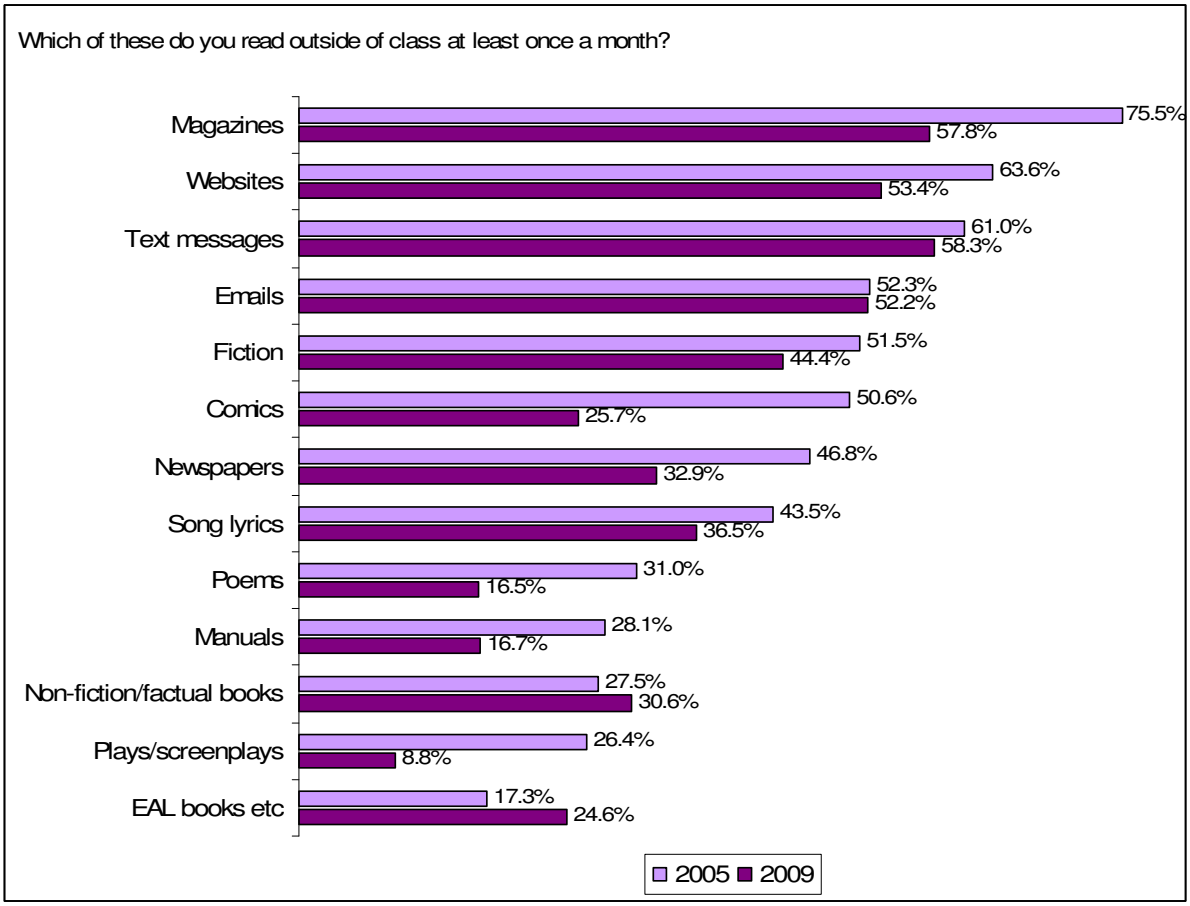
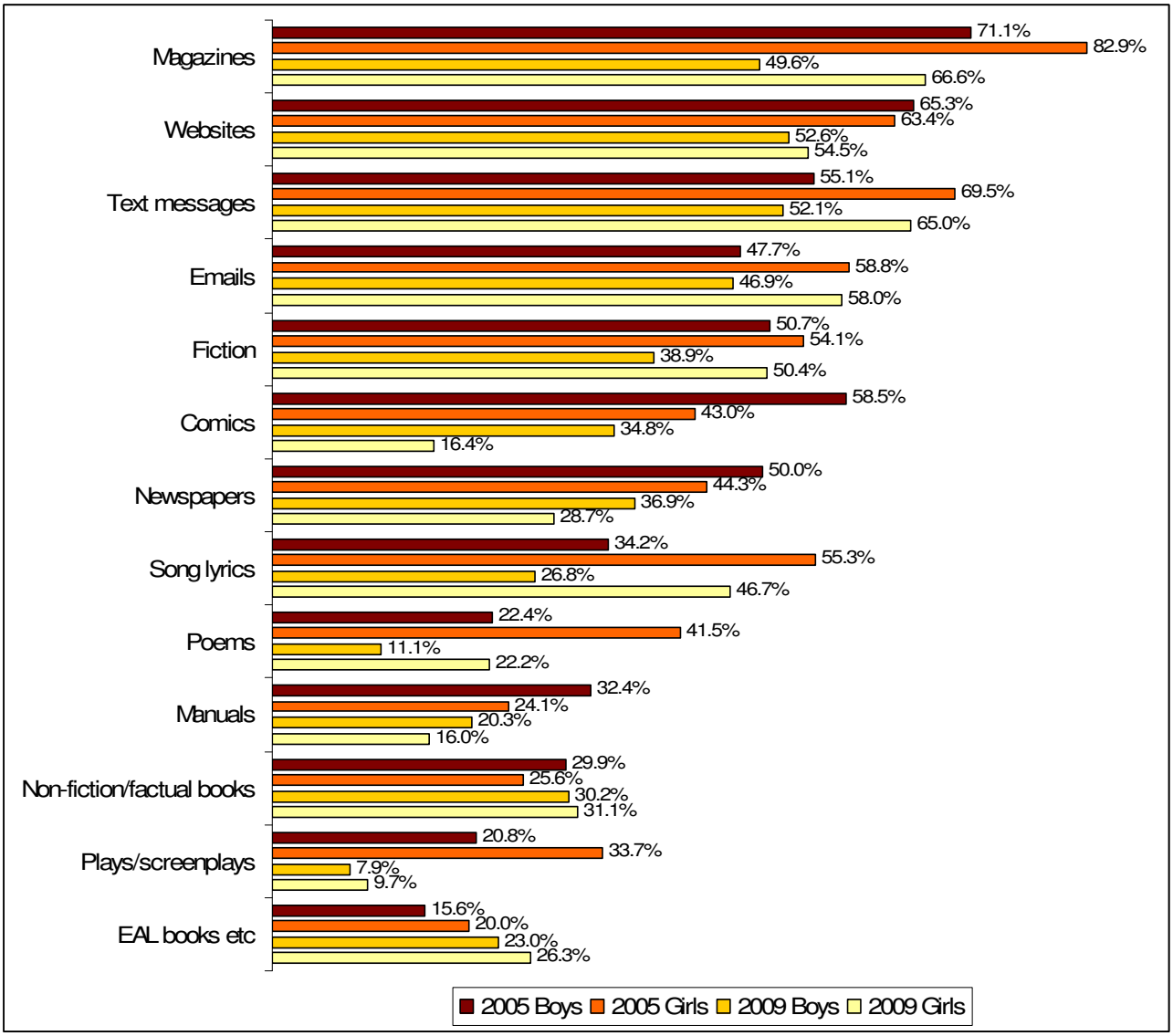


Figure 21 shows that percentages of materials being read by boys and girls in 2009 were lower than 2005. However, the direction and the magnitude of the differences remained largely the same. For example, not only did more girls in 2005 and 2009 read text messages, emails and song lyrics than boys in the same year, but the percentage point difference between girls and boys for each of these materials remained relatively unchanged. Boys continue to read more comics, newspapers and manuals than girls.

However, the gap between boys and girls reading fiction increased between 2005 and 2009, nearly tripling from a 3.4% point difference to an 11.5% point difference. Similarly, the gender gap in magazine reading appears to have widened, increasing from a 12% point difference in 2005 to a 17% point difference in 2009.

Girls also continued to read more poems than boys, but the gender difference in reading poems decreased from a 19% point difference to an 11% point difference in 2009. The gender gap in reading plays or screenplays nearly disappeared in 2009, declining from a 13% point difference in 2005 to a 2% point difference in 2009.

Figure 21: Types of materials read at least once a month by gender in 2005 and 2009



Mirroring the gender dynamics, **Figure 22** shows that percentages of materials being read by young people who receive FSMs and those who do not in 2009 were lower than 2005. However, the magnitude of the differences appears to have decreased for a number of reading materials, namely websites, emails, fiction, manuals, non-fiction, plays and EAL materials.

By contrast, the gap between FSM pupils and their non-FSM counterparts has increased slightly between 2005 and 2009 for the following reading materials: magazines, text messages, newspapers, song lyrics and poems.

Figure 23 shows that the percentages of materials being read by the different key stages in 2009 were lower than 2005. However, with the exception of fiction books, non-fiction books, plays or screenplays and EAL materials, the magnitude of the differences appears to have increased between KS2 and KS4 pupils.

Figure 22: Types of materials read at least once a month by FSM uptake in 2005 and 2009

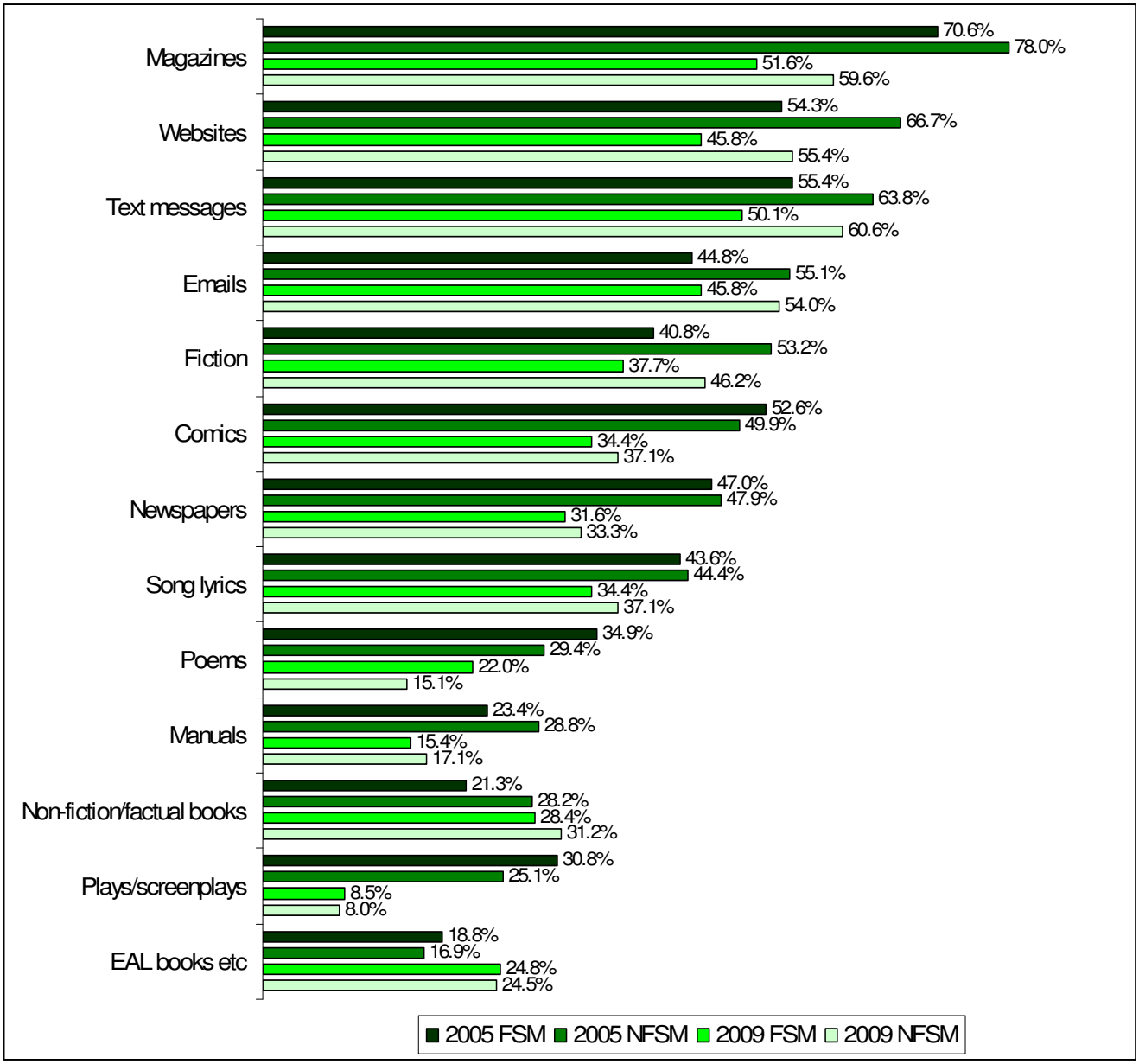
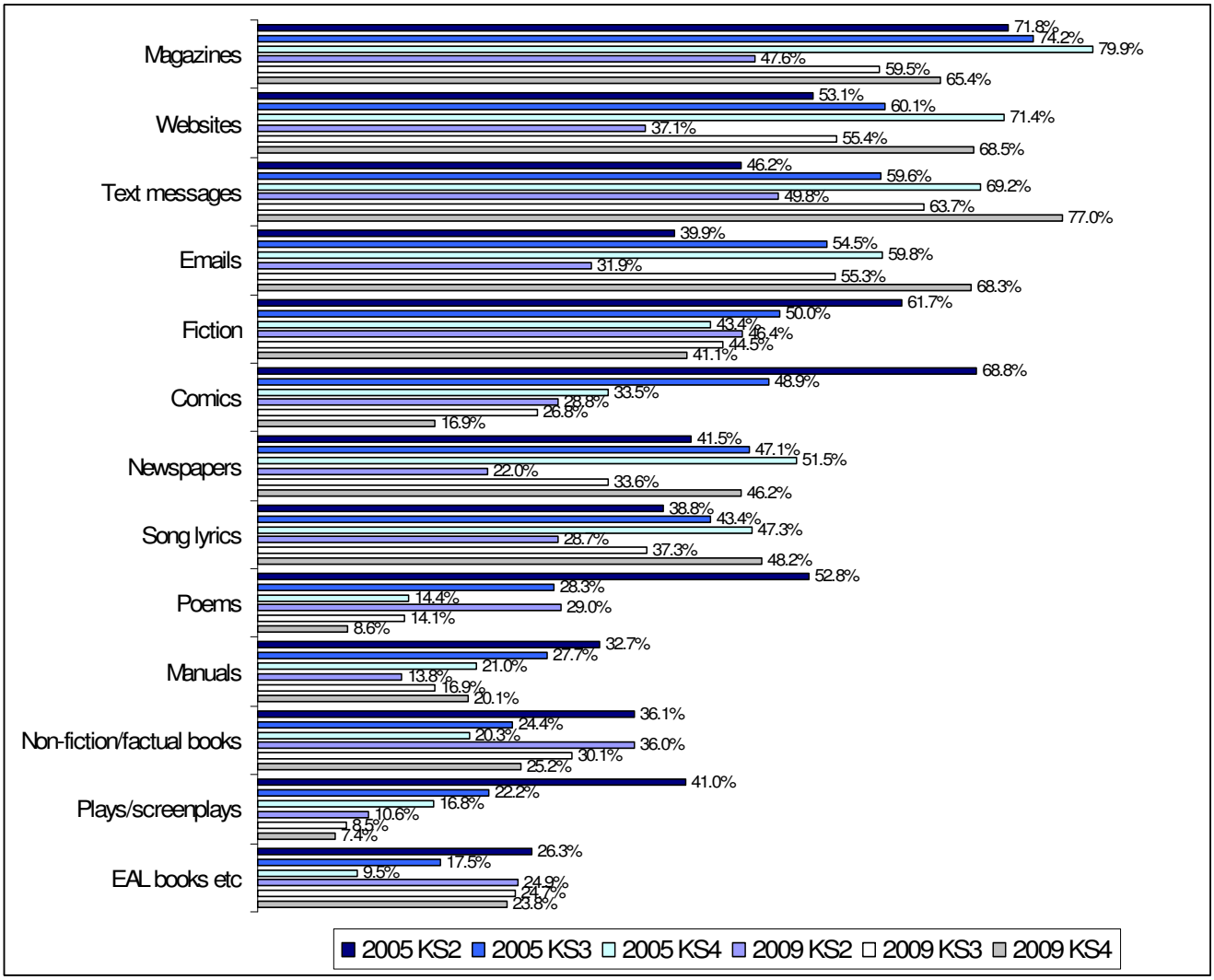


Figure 23: Types of materials read at least once a month by key stages in 2005 and 2009



Young people's attitudes towards reading

This section explores what young people think about reading, how this differs according to demographic background and reading attainment, and how attitudes towards reading compare with 2005.

Young people's attitudes towards reading: Key findings

- Young people held positive attitudes towards reading. Most agreed that reading is important and that they enjoy it. They disagreed that reading is boring or hard and that they cannot find anything interesting to read. Most also disagreed that they only read in class or read only because they have to.

- Girls hold more positive attitudes towards reading compared with boys. Nearly twice as many boys as girls agreed with the statements that reading is more for girls than boys, that reading is boring and that reading is hard. More girls than boys agreed that they like going to the library and that they enjoy reading.

- KS2 pupils tended to hold more positive attitudes towards reading than KS3 or KS4 pupils. Fewer KS2 pupils compared with their older counterparts agreed that reading is boring, that they cannot find anything to read that interests them and that they only read when they have to. However, KS2 pupils felt less confident about their reading than KS3 or KS4 pupils, being more likely to agree with the statements that reading is hard and that they do not read as well as other pupils in their class.

- Young people who do not receive FSMs tended to hold more positive attitudes towards reading than those who receive FSMs, although this relationship is weak. Amongst other things, FSM pupils were more likely than their non-FSM counterparts to agree that reading is more for girls than for boys, that reading is boring and hard, that they cannot find anything to read that interests them, and that they do not read as well as other pupils in their class. However, they are also more likely to agree with the statements that they like going to the library and that reading helps them find what they want or need to know.

- Young people from Asian backgrounds tended to hold more positive attitudes towards reading than young people from White, Mixed or Black backgrounds.

- Young people who read at or above the expected level for their age hold more positive attitudes towards reading compared with young people who read below the expected level for their age.

- Young people in 2009 hold more positive attitudes towards reading than young people in 2005. Fewer young people now agree with the statements that reading is boring and that they cannot find things to read that interest them. More young people now feel more confident about their reading, being less likely now to agree with the statement that they do not read as well as other pupils in their class. However, going to the library has fallen out of fashion as fewer young people now say that they like going to library compared with young people in 2005.

- The gender gap in attitudes seems to have narrowed slightly in 2009 compared with 2005. Similarly, the magnitude of the difference between young people who receive FSMs and those who do not in the degree to which they agreed with the attitudinal statements has decreased in 2009 compared with 2005. The difference in attitudes by key stages has largely remained unchanged between 2005 and 2009.

Overall the young people who took part in our survey in 2009 held positive attitudes towards reading (see **Tables 16 – 26**). The majority agreed that reading is important and that they enjoy it. Conversely, most young people disagreed that reading is boring or hard. Most also disagreed that they only read in class or read only because they have to. Encouragingly, most young people also disagreed with the statement that they cannot find anything interesting to read.

It is frequently said that reading is a gendered activity, which is more for women than men. Yet, the majority of young people disagreed that reading is more for girls than for boys. However, the sample of young people was ambivalent about libraries, with nearly as many young people agreeing as disagreeing that they like going to the library.

In line with previous research (Clark and Foster, 2005; Twist et al., 2007), **girls** tended to have more positive attitudes towards reading than **boys**. Nearly twice as many boys as girls agreed with the statements that reading is more for girls than boys, that reading is boring and that reading is hard. Boys were also more likely than girls to agree with the statements that they cannot find anything to read that interests them, that they only read in class, that they only read when they have to and that they do not read as well as other pupils in their class. Also, more girls than boys agreed that they like going to the library and that they enjoy reading.

There were no significant gender differences with respect to the statements that reading is important and that reading helps them find what they need or want to know.

There were significant **age** differences in attitudes towards reading, with KS2 pupils generally holding more positive attitudes towards reading than their older counterparts. Fewer KS2 than KS3 or KS4 agreed with the statements that reading is boring, that they cannot find anything to read that interests them, that they only read in class and that they only read when they have to. Similarly, more KS2 pupils than KS3 and KS4 pupils agreed with the statements that they enjoy reading, that reading is important, that they like going to the library and that reading helps them find that they need or want to know.

However, KS2 pupils were also more likely than their older counterparts to agree with the statements that reading is more for girls than boys, that reading is hard and that they do not read as well as other pupils in their class.

The relationship between attitudes towards reading and **FSM uptake** was only weak, with young people who do not receive FSMs tending to hold more positive attitudes towards reading than those who receive FSMs. Young people who receive FSMs were more likely than their non-FSM counterparts to agree with the statements that reading is more for girls than for boys, that reading is boring and hard, that they cannot find anything to read that interests them, that they only read in class, that they only read because they have to and that they do not read as well as other pupils in their class. However, they are also more likely to agree with the statements that they like going to the library and that reading helps them find what they want or need to know. There were no significant differences in the degree to which young people agreed that reading is important between FSM and non-FSM pupils.

The relationship between attitudes towards reading and **ethnic background** is complex. Overall, young people from Asian backgrounds tended to hold more positive attitudes towards reading than young people from White, Mixed or Black backgrounds. For example, fewer young people from Asian than the other three ethnic backgrounds agree with the statement that reading is more for girls than boys, that reading is boring and hard, that they only read in class, that they only read when they have to and that they do not read as well as other pupils in their class. Conversely, they tend to agree more with the statements that they enjoy reading and that they like going to the library. Alongside young people from Black backgrounds, Asian young people also tended to agree more with the statements that reading is important and that reading helps them find what they need or want to know.

Table 16: Reading is more for girls than boys

	Agree %	*Neither* %	*Disagree* %	*Do not know* %
All young people (N = 17,089)	12.5	18.3	60.1	8.4
Boys (N = 8,752)	15.6	18.5	57.9	8.0
Girls (N = 8,337)	9.1	18.2	62.4	8.9
KS2 (N = 3,704)	17.0	14.7	59.0	9.2
KS3 (N = 10,842)	11.6	18.8	60.2	8.4
KS4 (N = 2,543)	10.0	21.2	60.9	7.4
FSM (N = 3,207)	14.8	17.3	56.1	11.1
Non-FSM (N = 13,690)	11.8	18.6	61.1	7.8
White (N = 11,977)	12.4	18.8	60.9	7.9
Mixed (N = 925)	12.7	16.6	58.7	7.7
Asian (N = 1,628)	11.0	17.3	61.8	9.9
Black (N = 1,069)	14.2	16.4	58.1	11.3

Table 17: Reading is boring

	Agree %	*Neither* %	*Disagree* %	*Do not know* %
All young people (N = 17,089)	18.8	23.7	52.4	5.2
Boys (N = 8,752)	24.0	24.9	46.2	4.9
Girls (N = 8,337)	13.3	22.4	58.8	5.5
KS2 (N = 3,704)	11.2	15.0	68.5	5.4
KS3 (N = 10,842)	19.7	25.5	49.4	5.4
KS4 (N = 2,543)	24.7	27.5	44.4	3.8
FSM (N = 3,207)	20.1	24.2	48.4	7.3
Non-FSM (N = 13,690)	18.5	23.6	53.3	4.7
White (N = 11,977)	19.8	23.5	52.0	4.7
Mixed (N = 925)	18.6	22.7	53.0	5.7
Asian (N = 1,628)	12.8	23.6	57.5	6.1
Black (N = 1,069)	18.5	24.6	50.2	6.7

Table 18: Reading is hard

	Agree %	*Neither* %	*Disagree* %	*Do not know* %
All young people (N = 17,089)	8.6	13.7	73.1	4.6
Boys (N = 8,752)	10.1	14.4	70.8	4.6
Girls (N = 8,337)	6.9	12.9	75.6	4.7
KS2 (N = 3,704)	11.6	13.3	68.8	6.2
KS3 (N = 10,842)	8.0	13.9	73.7	4.5
KS4 (N = 2,543)	7.0	13.4	76.3	3.3
FSM (N = 3,207)	11.7	14.4	67.0	7.0
Non-FSM (N = 13,690)	7.8	13.5	74.6	4.1
White (N = 11,977)	9.3	13.7	72.6	4.4
Mixed (N = 925)	7.3	14.7	73.3	4.8
Asian (N = 1,628)	4.4	11.3	79.5	4.8
Black (N = 1,069)	5.8	13.8	75.0	5.4

Table 19: Reading is important

	Agree %	*Neither* %	*Disagree* %	*Do not know* %
All young people (N = 17,089)	77.5	12.2	6.5	3.8
Boys (N = 8,752)	77.3	13.0	6.0	3.7
Girls (N = 8,337)	77.9	11.3	6.9	3.9
KS2 (N = 3,704)	84.8	6.6	4.6	4.1
KS3 (N = 10,842)	76.2	12.7	7.2	4.0
KS4 (N = 2,543)	73.5	17.3	6.3	2.9
FSM (N = 3,207)	76.7	10.9	7.4	5.0
Non-FSM (N = 13,690)	77.7	12.5	6.3	3.6
White (N = 11,977)	78.0	13.0	4.9	4.1
Mixed (N = 925)	70.1	12.4	14.8	2.8
Asian (N = 1,628)	84.0	8.9	3.9	3.2
Black (N = 1,069)	85.1	8.2	4.1	2.6

Table 20: I enjoy reading

	Agree %	*Neither* %	*Disagree* %	*Do not know* %
All young people (N = 17,089)	59.5	19.9	15.3	5.3
Boys (N = 8,752)	52.1	22.4	20.1	5.4
Girls (N = 8,337)	67.0	17.3	10.4	5.3
KS2 (N = 3,704)	75.4	11.3	8.1	5.2
KS3 (N = 10,842)	56.8	21.4	16.3	5.6
KS4 (N = 2,543)	49.3	25.4	20.7	4.6
FSM (N = 3,207)	57.0	20.0	16.1	6.9
Non-FSM (N = 13,690)	60.0	19.9	15.1	5.0
White (N = 11,977)	58.8	19.9	16.5	5.1
Mixed (N = 925)	61.0	21.5	13.0	4.6
Asian (N = 1,628)	65.0	19.1	10.7	5.2
Black (N = 1,069)	59.6	19.8	12.9	7.7

Table 21: I cannot find anything to read that interests me

	Agree %	*Neither* %	*Disagree* %	*Do not know* %
All young people (N = 17,089)	28.9	20.6	44.5	6.0
Boys (N = 8,752)	32.3	20.4	41.6	5.6
Girls (N = 8,337)	25.2	20.9	47.4	6.5
KS2 (N = 3,704)	25.9	17.5	49.1	7.5
KS3 (N = 10,842)	29.7	21.2	43.3	5.7
KS4 (N = 2,543)	29.5	22.0	43.2	5.7
FSM (N = 3,207)	33.4	20.7	38.1	7.9
Non-FSM (N = 13,690)	27.9	20.6	46.0	5.6
White (N = 11,977)	28.2	20.8	45.3	5.7
Mixed (N = 925)	34.2	20.3	40.0	5.4
Asian (N = 1,628)	24.8	21.5	46.6	7.2
Black (N = 1,069)	28.9	18.8	44.9	7.4

Table 22: I only read in class

	Agree %	*Neither* %	*Disagree* %	*Do not know* %
All young people (N = 17,089)	15.1	15.6	66.9	2.4
Boys (N = 8,752)	19.0	16.9	61.8	2.3
Girls (N = 8,337)	11.2	14.2	72.1	2.4
KS2 (N = 3,704)	11.1	11.0	74.8	3.1
KS3 (N = 10,842)	15.6	16.8	65.5	2.2
KS4 (N = 2,543)	18.6	16.6	62.3	2.4
FSM (N = 3,207)	17.2	16.6	62.4	3.8
Non-FSM (N = 13,690)	14.5	15.4	68.0	2.1
White (N = 11,977)	15.3	15.6	66.9	2.2
Mixed (N = 925)	14.3	15.9	67.1	2.7
Asian (N = 1,628)	12.5	14.2	70.9	2.4
Black (N = 1,069)	15.4	14.6	67.2	2.7

Table 23: I like going to the library

	Agree %	*Neither* %	*Disagree* %	*Do not know* %
All young people (N = 17,089)	39.9	22.0	32.0	6.1
Boys (N = 8,752)	34.8	23.6	35.6	6.0
Girls (N = 8,337)	44.9	20.4	28.4	6.2
KS2 (N = 3,704)	65.1	13.0	15.4	6.6
KS3 (N = 10,842)	36.9	24.3	32.4	6.4
KS4 (N = 2,543)	18.8	24.3	52.6	4.2
FSM (N = 3,207)	45.8	18.3	28.3	7.6
Non-FSM (N = 13,690)	38.4	22.9	33.0	5.8
White (N = 11,977)	38.4	22.6	33.0	5.9
Mixed (N = 925)	39.4	19.5	35.1	6.0
Asian (N = 1,628)	52.1	22.7	19.1	6.0
Black (N = 1,069)	46.4	19.6	25.7	8.3

Table 24: I only read when I have to

	Agree %	*Neither* %	*Disagree* %	*Do not know* %
All young people (N = 17,089)	25.6	16.4	55.3	2.7
Boys (N = 8,752)	30.9	17.4	49.0	2.7
Girls (N = 8,337)	20.1	15.4	61.8	2.7
KS2 (N = 3,704)	22.0	10.2	63.9	3.9
KS3 (N = 10,842)	25.6	17.8	54.0	2.5
KS4 (N = 2,543)	30.1	18.7	49.2	2.0
FSM (N = 3,207)	29.8	16.3	50.1	3.8
Non-FSM (N = 13,690)	24.5	16.5	56.8	2.4
White (N = 11,977)	25.1	15.9	56.7	2.4
Mixed (N = 925)	26.1	17.5	52.5	4.0
Asian (N = 1,628)	22.7	17.0	56.7	3.6
Black (N = 1,069)	27.7	18.9	50.9	2.5

Table 25: I do not read as well as other pupils in my class

	Agree %	*Neither* %	*Disagree* %	*Do not know* %
All young people (N = 17,089)	26.7	19.6	41.1	12.5
Boys (N = 8,752)	29.3	19.9	39.8	11.0
Girls (N = 8,337)	24.0	19.3	42.5	14.2
KS2 (N = 3,704)	30.6	16.5	39.6	13.2
KS3 (N = 10,842)	26.4	20.5	40.3	12.7
KS4 (N = 2,543)	23.0	20.0	46.2	10.7
FSM (N = 3,207)	29.3	16.3	50.1	13.7
Non-FSM (N = 13,690)	24.5	16.5	56.5	12.3
White (N = 11,977)	28.8	19.6	39.0	12.6
Mixed (N = 925)	23.3	18.3	45.6	12.9
Asian (N = 1,628)	18.2	20.4	47.3	14.1
Black (N = 1,069)	20.6	21.4	46.3	11.7

Table 26: Reading helps me find what I need or want to know

	Agree %	*Neither* %	*Disagree* %	*Do not know* %
All young people (N = 17,089)	67.6	18.4	7.8	6.2
Boys (N = 8,752)	67.5	18.2	8.9	5.4
Girls (N = 8,337)	67.6	18.7	6.7	7.0
KS2 (N = 3,704)	77.0	10.6	6.3	6.1
KS3 (N = 10,842)	65.7	19.8	8.1	6.4
KS4 (N = 2,543)	63.0	22.9	8.9	5.2
FSM (N = 3,207)	69.9	15.5	7.6	7.0
Non-FSM (N = 13,690)	67.0	19.2	7.8	6.0
White (N = 11,977)	66.1	19.6	8.3	6.1
Mixed (N = 925)	69.8	16.4	8.6	5.2
Asian (N = 1,628)	72.4	15.1	5.5	6.9
Black (N = 1,069)	74.1	14.6	6.0	5.3

Attitudes towards reading and reading attainment

There were significant differences in attitudes towards reading by young people's reading attainment (see **Table 27**). Overall, young people who read at or above the expected level for their age hold more positive attitudes towards reading than young people who read below the level for their age.

Significantly more young people who read below the level for their age compared with their higher attaining counterparts agreed with the statements that reading is more for girls than boys, that reading is boring and hard, that they cannot find things to read that interest them, that they only read in class, that they only read when they have to and that they do not read as well as other pupils in their class[50].

Similarly, they were significantly less likely than their higher achieving counterparts to agree with the statements that reading is important, that they enjoy reading, that they like going to the library, that reading is a skill for life and that reading tells them what they need or want to know[51].

Table 27: Percentage of young people who read below or at or above the expected level and their agreement with attitudinal statements (N = 4,503)

	Below expected level for age (N = 793) %	*At expected level for age (N = 3,102) %*	*Above expected level for age (N = 608) %*
Reading is more for girls than boys	19.4	9.4	13.3
Reading is boring	36.5	13.0	11.6
Reading is hard	59.3	2.8	3.2
Reading is important	65.4	81.0	84.9
I enjoy reading	32.0	65.9	81.8
I cannot find interesting things to read	44.6	24.7	18.2
I only read in class	47.8	11.2	10.2
I like going to the library	29.7	40.1	57.8
I only read when I have to	63.3	19.6	17.4
I do not read as well as other pupils in my class	54.7	19.2	8.1
Reading is a skill for life	65.3	80.9	86.1
Reading helps me find what I want or need to know	57.7	69.7	76.2

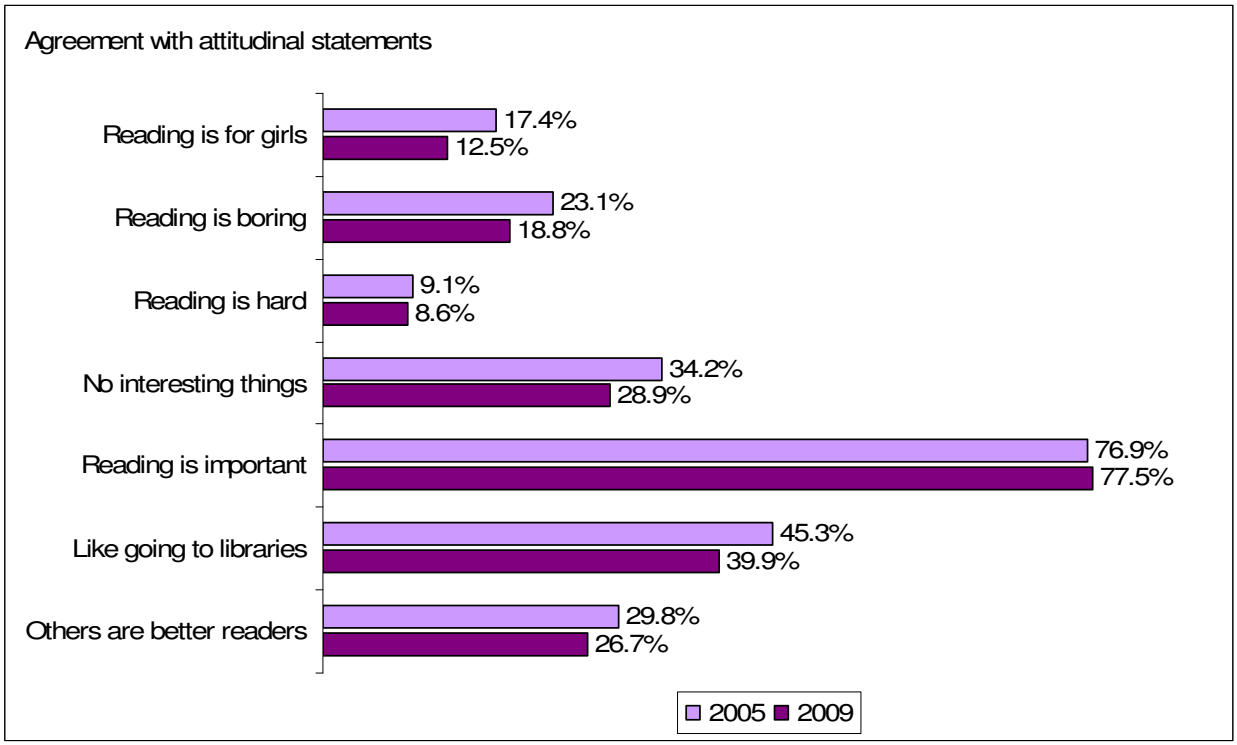
Attitudes towards reading over time: 2005 and 2009 comparative analyses

There were seven equivalent statements about reading in 2005 and 2009. These were: reading is more for girls than boys, reading is boring, reading is hard, I cannot find things to read that interest me, reading is important, I like going to a library and I do not read as well as other pupils in my class. In both cases young people were asked to indicate for each statement whether they agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or do not know.

Figure 24 shows that young people in 2009 feel better about reading than young people in 2005. Fewer young people now agree with the statement that reading is more for girls than boys, perhaps indicating a shift away from seeing reading as a gendered activity. Fewer young people now also agree with the statements that reading is boring and that they cannot find things to read that interest them. Slightly more young people now feel better about their reading ability when comparing themselves with others, as fewer now agree with the statement that they do not read as well as other pupils in their class.

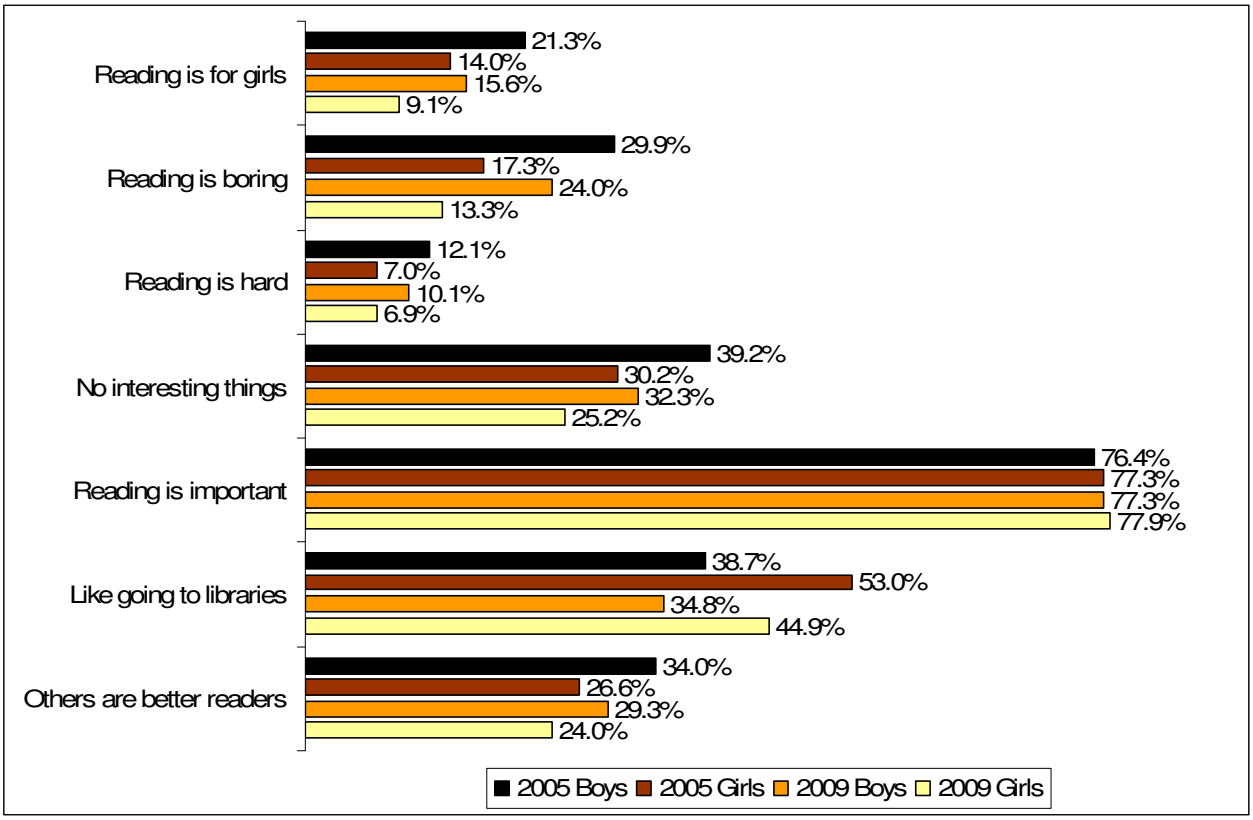
However, going to the library appears to have fallen out of fashion as fewer young people now say that they like going to the library.

Figure 24: Attitudes towards reading 2005 and 2009



Girls held more positive attitudes towards reading than boys in both 2005 and 2009. However, **Figure 25** illustrates that the gender gap in attitudes seems to have narrowed slightly in 2009 compared with 2005. For example, in 2005, there was a 12.6% point difference between boys and girls who agreed that reading is boring. In 2009, this gap narrowed to a 10.6% point difference. Similarly, in 2005, there was a 14.3% point difference between boys and girls who agreed that they like going to the library. In 2009, this gap narrowed to a 10.1% point difference, largely because of a decrease in girls agreeing with this statement in 2009.

Figure 25: Attitudes towards reading by gender in 2005 and 2009



In both 2005 and 2009 there was a statistically significant difference between young people who receive FSMs and those who do not in the degree to which they agreed with attitudinal statements, with young people who do not receive FSMs tending to hold more positive attitudes towards reading at both time points.

However, **Figure 26** shows that the magnitude of the difference between the two groups of young people in the degree to which they agreed with the attitudinal statements has narrowed in 2009 compared with 2005. Indeed, in some instances the difference between the two groups has halved. For example, there was a 10.2% point difference between FSM and non-FSM pupils who agreed that they cannot find anything to read that interests them. In 2009, this point percentage difference narrowed to 5.5%. Similarly, there was a 9.1% point difference between FSM and non-FSM pupils who agreed with the statement that they do not read as well as other pupils in their class. In 2009, this point percentage difference narrowed to 4.8%.

In both 2005 and 2009 attitudes towards reading became more negative with age, with KS2 holding more positive attitudes towards reading than KS3 pupils who, in turn, felt more positive about reading than KS4 pupils[52]. **Figure 27** shows that the magnitude of the difference between key stages remained largely unchanged in 2009 compared with 2005.

Figure 26: Attitudes towards reading by FSM uptake in 2005 and 2009

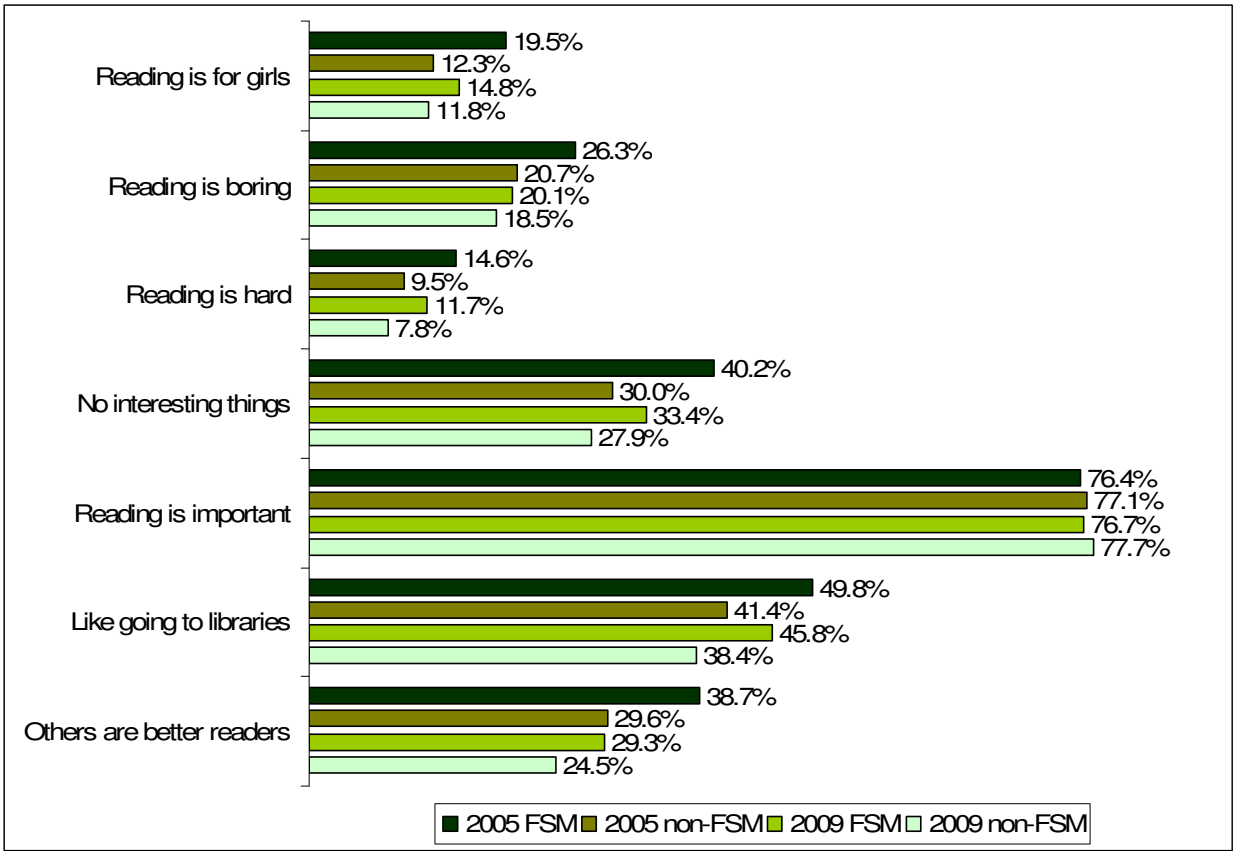
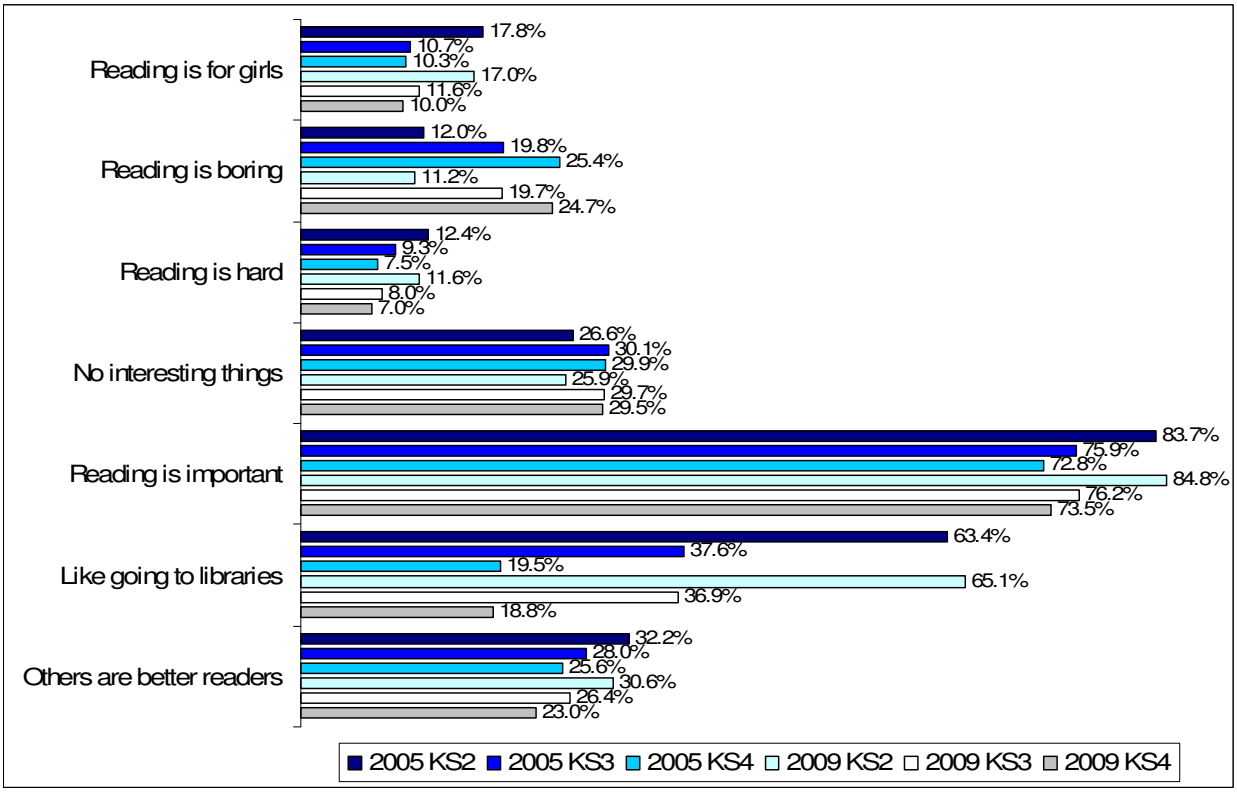


Figure 27: Attitudes towards reading by key stage in 2005 and 2009



Importance of reading to succeed in life

This section explores how important young people think reading is to succeed in life, how this differs according to demographic background and reading attainment.

Reading to succeed in life: Key findings

- 9 in 10 young people view writing either as very important or as important to succeed in life.
- Girls are more likely than boys to make the link between reading and success in life.
- More KS2 than KS3 or KS4 pupils see reading as important to succeed in life.
- There was no relationship between FSM uptake and seeing reading as important to succeed in life.
- Young people from White backgrounds were less likely to see reading as important to succeed in life than young people from Mixed, Asian or Black backgrounds.
- Young people who read at or above the level expected for their age believe that reading is more important than young people who read below the level expected for their age.

When asked how important they think reading is to succeed in life, most young people (90%) thought that is was either very important or important (see **Table 28**).

Girls were significantly more likely than **boys** to say that reading is important to succeed in life[53], with 88% of boys compared with 92% of girls making the link between reading and success in life.

There was also a statistically significant relationship between the importance of reading and **age**, with KS2 pupils seeing reading as more important to succeed in life than either KS3 and KS4 pupils[54].

There was no significant difference between young people who receive **FSMs** and those who do not in the importance they place on reading to succeed in life[55].

There were also significant differences between the four **ethnic groups** and the importance they placed on reading to succeed in life. Young people from Mixed, Asian or Black backgrounds rated reading as more important than young people from White backgrounds[56].

While gender, key stage and ethnicity were individually significantly related to the importance of reading to succeed in life, none of the interactions between the variables were statistically significant.

Table 28: Importance of reading to succeed in life

	Very important %	Important %	Not very important %	Not at all important %	Do not know %
All young people (N = 17,089)	51.6	38.2	5.4	1.6	3.3
Boys (N = 8,752)	48.7	39.3	6.4	2.0	3.5
Girls (N = 8,337)	54.6	37.1	4.2	1.1	3.1
KS2 (N = 3,704)	62.9	27.7	4.0	1.6	3.8
KS3 (N = 10,842)	50.1	39.8	5.5	1.6	3.1
KS4 (N = 2,543)	42.1	46.1	6.7	1.5	3.6
FSM (N = 3,207)	55.1	32.9	5.1	1.9	5.0
Non-FSM (N = 13,690)	54.6	35.6	5.4	1.5	2.9
White (N = 11,977)	48.9	40.8	5.5	1.4	3.5
Mixed (N = 925)	57.3	32.2	5.5	2.4	2.6
Asian (N = 1,628)	58.9	32.2	4.3	1.9	2.6
Black (N = 1,069)	63.1	28.6	4.5	0.9	2.8

Importance of reading by reading attainment

Ratings of the importance of reading varied significantly by reading attainment (see **Table 29**)[57], with young people who read at or above the expected level believing that reading is more important than young people who read below the level expected for their age (93% vs. 80%).

Table 29: Percentage of young people who read below or at or above the expected level and their ratings on how important reading is to succeed in life (N = 4,503)

	Below expected level for age (N = 793) %	At expected level for age (N = 3,102) %	Above expected level for age (N = 608) %
Very important	39.0	52.5	71.5
Important	41.1	40.6	21.7
Not very important	9.8	4.1	2.9
Not at all important	3.4	0.7	1.8
Do not know	6.7	2.1	2.1

Young people's enjoyment of writing

This section explores how much young people enjoy writing and how this differs according to demographic background and writing attainment.

Young people's enjoyment of writing: Key findings

- Just over half of young people enjoy writing either very much or quite a lot (52%). 13% say that they do not enjoy writing at all.
- Girls enjoy writing more than boys. Enjoyment of writing declines with age. Young people from White backgrounds enjoy writing less than young people from Mixed, Asian or Black ethnic backgrounds. There was no significant relationship between FSM uptake and enjoyment of writing.
- Enjoyment of writing is related to writing attainment, with young people who struggle with writing enjoying it less. For example, only 8% of young people who write below the level expected for their age enjoy writing very much compared with 18% of young people who write at the expected level and 61% of young people who write above the expected level for their age.

Mirroring responses seen in enjoyment of reading, this sample of young people was also divided when asked in a general question how much they enjoy writing (see **Table 30**). Half of young people (51.8%) said that they enjoy writing either very much or quite a lot, while a third enjoyed writing a bit and an eighth did not enjoy writing at all.

Girls enjoyed writing significantly more than boys[58], with 60% of girls and 44% of boys saying that they enjoy writing either very much or quite a lot. KS2 pupils also enjoyed writing significantly more than KS3 who, in turn, enjoyed it more than KS4 pupils[59]. Similarly, young people from Mixed, Asian or Black backgrounds enjoyed writing significantly more than young people from White ethnic backgrounds[60].

In line with a previous survey on enjoyment of writing (Clark and Dugdale, 2009), there were no statistically significant socio-economic differences in enjoyment of writing.

Table 30: Enjoyment of writing by demographic background

How much do you enjoy writing?				
	Very much %	*Quite a lot %*	*A bit %*	*Not at all %*
All young people (N = 17,089)	20.4	31.4	35.2	13.0
Boys (N = 8,752)	15.7	28.1	37.9	18.3
Girls (N = 8,337)	25.2	35.0	32.3	7.8
KS2 (N = 3,704)	34.6	32.3	26.2	7.0
KS3 (N = 10,842)	17.6	32.0	36.8	13.7
KS4 (N = 2,543)	12.4	27.9	41.0	18.6

How much do you enjoy writing?				
	Very much %	*Quite a lot %*	*A bit %*	*Not at all %*
FSM (N = 3,207)	22.6	31.7	32.6	14.1
Non-FSM (N = 13,690)	19.5	31.8	35.9	12.8
White (N = 11,977)	18.9	30.1	36.9	14.1
Mixed (N = 925)	22.1	35.2	31.8	10.8
Asian (N = 1,628)	24.6	36.7	29.8	9.1
Black (N = 1,069)	27.9	32.7	29.3	10.1

Enjoyment of writing and writing attainment

Enjoyment of writing was also significantly related to writing attainment (see **Table 31**)[61]. Fewer young people who write below the expected level for their age enjoy writing either very much or quite a lot than young people who read at or above the expected level for their age. Young people who write above the level expected for their age were most likely to enjoy writing.

Table 31: Percentage of young people who write below or at or above the expected level and their enjoyment of writing (N = 4,450)

How much do you enjoy writing?				
	Very much %	*Quite a lot %*	*A bit %*	*Not at all %*
Below expected level for age (N = 1,215)	7.8	16.8	41.0	34.4
At expected level for age (N = 2,728)	18.2	36.4	36.6	8.8
Above expected level for age (N = 507)	60.7	18.5	12.7	8.1

Young people's self-perceived writing ability

This section explores how good young people think they are at writing and how this perception differs according to demographic background and writing attainment.

Young people's self-reported writing ability: Key findings

- Most young people believed themselves to be average writers, with a quarter rating themselves to be very good writers.
- Girls rated themselves as significantly better writers than boys. KS4 also believed that they were better writers than KS2 and KS3 pupils. Similarly, pupils who do not receive FSMs rated themselves as better writers than pupils who receive FSMs. More young people from Asian and Black backgrounds rated themselves to be very good writers.
- Young people's self-reports of writing ability were strongly related to formal assessments of writing.

Young people were asked how good they think they are at writing. **Table 32** shows that the majority of young people rated themselves to be average writers. Overall, 8 in 10 young people rated themselves to be either average or very good writers. However, a fifth of young people felt that they were not very good writers.

In line with previous research (e.g. Clark and Dugdale, 2009; Pajares and Valiante, 1999), **girls** judged themselves to be better writers than **boys**.

There was also a significant relationship between self-reported writing ability and **age**, with KS4 pupils being significantly more likely to rate themselves to be very good writers than either KS2 or KS3 pupils.

In line with historical national attainment figures (DCSF, 2008), which show that pupils from more disadvantaged backgrounds (in terms of **FSM uptake)** have lower writing attainment than pupils from more privileged backgrounds, non-FSM pupils in the present study reported to be better writers than FSM pupils.

There were significant differences between **ethnic groups** in the self-reported level of writing ability. More young people from Mixed backgrounds rated themselves to be not very good writers compared with young people from the other ethnic background. More White young people rated themselves to be average writers, while young people from Asian and Black backgrounds were more likely to rate themselves to be very good writers.

Table 32: Self-reported writing ability by demographic background

	Not a very good writer %	*Average writer* %	*Very good writer* %
All young people (N = 17,089)	19.9	53.7	26.3
Boys (N = 8,752)	20.0	55.3	24.7
Girls (N = 8,337)	19.7	52.2	28.1
KS2 (N = 3,704)	19.3	57.7	23.0
KS3 (N = 10,842)	20.5	55.6	23.8
KS4 (N = 2,543)	18.6	51.3	30.1
FSM (N = 3,207)	23.1	51.6	25.3
Non-FSM (N = 13,690)	19.2	54.3	26.5
White (N = 11,977)	18.8	56.0	25.2
Mixed (N = 925)	26.4	48.7	24.9
Asian (N = 1,628)	14.8	50.6	34.6
Black (N = 1,069)	16.9	47.5	35.5

Self-reported writing ability and writing attainment

Young people's self-reports of writing ability were strongly related to formal assessments of writing (see **Table 33**)[62], with young people who write below the expected level for their age being more likely to say that they are not a very good writer and those who write at or above the expected level being more likely to say that they are average or very good writers.

Table 33: Percentage of young people who write below or at or above the expected level and their self-reported writing ability (N = 4,450)

	Not a very good writer %	*Average writer* %	*Very good writer* %
Below expected level for their age (N = 1,215)	72.5	26.9	0.6
At expected level for their age (N = 2,728)	2.4	79.1	18.5
Above expected level for their age (N = 507)	0.1	16.8	83.1

Young people's writing frequency

This section explores how much young people are writing and how this differs according to demographic background and writing attainment.

Young people's frequency of writing: Key findings

- A third (32%) of young people write every day, while over a quarter (27%) write two to three times a week. 21% said that they rarely or never write other than during class or for coursework or homework.
- Girls write more frequently than boys, with 37% of girls and 27% of boys writing every day. Writing frequency declined with age, with KS2 pupils writing more frequently than KS3 or KS4 pupils. There were differences in writing frequency by ethnic background, with young people from White and Mixed backgrounds writing less frequently than young people from Asian or Black backgrounds
- There was a relationship between writing frequency and writing attainment, with young people who write below the expected level for their age writing less frequently than their higher achieving peers.

The majority of young people wrote every day or two to three times a week (see **Table 34**). However, 14.5% said that they rarely write, while 6.5% said that they never write outside of class or other than homework.

Girls wrote significantly more frequently outside of class than boys[63], with 37% of girls compared with 27% of boys writing outside of class every day. As with enjoyment of writing, the frequency with which young people wrote outside of class declined with age[64]. KS2 pupils wrote significantly more often outside of school than KS3 pupils who, in turn, wrote significantly more often than KS4 pupils. There were no significant socio-economic differences in the frequency with which young people write outside of class[65].

There was also a relationship between writing frequency and ethnic background, with young people from Asian backgrounds writing significantly more frequently outside of class than young people from the other three ethnicities[66]. Young people from White and Mixed backgrounds wrote the least frequently and were more likely to say that they write rarely compared with young people from Asian or Black ethnic backgrounds.

Overall, there was a significant interaction between gender and ethnic background[67], with Asian and Black boys writing significantly more frequently outside of class than boys from the other White or Mixed ethnic backgrounds[68]. Similarly, significantly more Asian and Black girls write outside of school than girls from White or Mixed backgrounds[69] (see **Table 34**).

Table 34: Writing frequency outside of class by demographic background

	Every day %	2 to 3 times a week %	2 to 3 times a month %	About once a month %	A few times a year %	Rarely %	Never %
All young people (N = 17,089)	32.2	27.2	8.8	5.2	4.3	14.5	6.5
Boys (N = 8,752)	27.4	27.5	10.0	5.6	4.6	16.4	8.5
Girls (N = 8,337)	37.3	28.0	7.6	4.8	3.8	12.6	4.3
KS2 (N = 3,704)	33.4	31.6	8.7	4.1	3.8	11.8	6.7
KS3 (N = 10,842)	32.6	27.0	8.7	5.4	4.3	14.7	6.3
KS4 (N = 2,543)	28.9	25.5	9.4	5.8	5.0	17.8	7.0
FSM (N = 3,207)	33.4	27.6	8.8	4.3	3.7	13.5	8.0
Non-FSM (N = 13,690)	32.7	27.7	9.1	5.4	4.4	14.8	7.0
White (N = 11,977)	31.6	27.8	9.1	5.4	4.1	15.9	5.9
Mixed (N = 925)	29.4	26.5	8.9	5.4	4.7	12.8	8.0
Asian (N = 1,628)	39.3	30.9	8.4	3.9	3.5	9.1	4.9
Black (N = 1,069)	38.1	28.9	8.3	4.1	2.7	9.3	8.6
Boy White (N = 6054)	25.7	26.9	10.4	5.8	4.9	18.0	8.3
Boy Mixed (N = 478)	29.1	27.6	9.0	6.5	3.8	11.6	9.4
Boy Asian (N = 818)	34.7	31.7	8.7	3.9	4.4	9.7	7.0
Boy Black (N = 616)	34.9	27.6	9.1	4.5	2.8	10.7	10.4
Girl White (N = 5802)	37.8	29.0	7.7	5.0	3.3	13.7	3.5
Girl Mixed (N = 436)	29.8	24.8	8.9	4.4	5.7	11.0	6.4
Girl Asian (N = 794)	44.2	30.1	7.9	3.9	2.5	8.7	2.6
Girl Black (N = 438)	42.9	30.1	7.1	3.7	2.7	7.3	6.2
Boys KS2 (N = 1717)	34.2	30.7	10.2	4.9	4.9	10.1	5.0
Boys KS3 (N = 5212)	28.1	26.8	10.0	5.8	4.5	16.0	8.3
Boys KS4 (N = 1262)	26.1	26.1	9.6	5.9	5.0	18.6	8.6

	Every day %	2 to 3 times a week %	2 to 3 times a month %	About once a month %	A few times a year %	Rarely %	Never %
Girls KS2 (N = 1696)	40.6	32.6	7.3	3.3	2.6	9.5	4.2
Girls KS3 (N= 5074)	37.3	27.2	7.3	5.1	4.0	12.8	4.2
Girls KS4 (N = 1118)	32.3	25.0	9.4	5.5	4.8	16.8	5.1

Younger boys and girls also wrote more frequently outside of class than their older counterparts[70]. For example, while 34% of KS2 boys said that they write outside of class every day, only 26% of KS4 boys said that they did so too[71]. Similarly, while 41% of KS2 girls said that they write outside of class every day, only 32% of KS4 girls did so[72].

There were no other significant interactions between variables in terms of writing frequency.

Writing frequency and writing attainment

There was a relationship between the frequency with which young people write and their writing attainment[73]. **Table 35** shows that young people who write below the expected level for their age write less frequently than their higher achieving peers.

For example, young people who write above the expected level for their age are three times more likely and young people who are writing at the expected level are twice as likely to write every day as young people who write below the expected level for their age. Similarly, young people who write below the expected level for their age are twice as likely to say that they write rarely compared with young people who write at the expected level and three times more likely to write rarely than young people who write above the expected level.

Table 35: Percentage of young people who write below or at or above the expected level and the frequency with which they write (N = 4,450)

	Below expected level for age (N = 1,215) %	At expected level for age (N = 3,102) %	Above expected level for age (N = 507) %
Every day	17.5	33.0	53.5
2 to 3 times a week	19.5	30.5	19.8
2 to 3 times a month	7.1	9.6	5.6
Once a month	4.5	5.6	3.3
A few times a year	7.5	3.8	2.6
Rarely	23.4	13.4	7.8
Never	15.9	4.1	7.5

Young people's formats of writing

This section explores in what formats young people write at least once a month and how this differs according to demographic background and writing attainment.

Young people's formats of writing: Key findings

- Young people wrote technology-based formats of writing, such as text messages, emails and posts on a social networking site, most commonly at least once a month.
- Girls tend to be more prolific writers than boys, with more girls than boys saying that they write in a diary, on a blog, text messages, notes in class, poems, lyrics, emails, instant messages, letters, notes to other people, fiction and on a social networking site at least once a month. Writing formats associated with school, such as essays, showed no gender divide.
- KS3 and KS4 pupils write more technology-based formats in a month than KS2 pupils.
- More young people who receive FSM than those who do not write letters, poems and plays or screenplays at least once a month. By contrast, more young people who do not receive FSMs say that they write essays at least once a month.
- More young people from White backgrounds said that they write text messages and write on a social networking site than did young people from the other three ethnic backgrounds.
- Young people who write below the expected level for their age were generally less likely to write any of the 17 different formats than young people who write at or above the expected level. The biggest difference exists for writing fiction, with young people who write at the expected level being nearly three times more likely and young people who write above the expected level being four times more likely to write fiction than young people who write below the expected level.

Technology-based formats of writing, such as text messages, emails and notes on a social networking site, were the types of writing that young people engaged in most frequently in a month (see **Table 36**). Reviews and plays or screenplays were written least frequently in a month.

There were several differences in the extent to which **boys and girls** wrote a range of materials, with more girls than boys saying that they write the following at least once a month: in a diary, on a blog, text messages, notes in class, poems, lyrics, emails, instant messages, letters, notes to other people, fiction and on a social networking site[74]. Materials that were associated more with school, such as essays, reviews, reports, and newspaper or magazine articles, showed no statistically significant gender difference.

There also were several differences in the extent to which **KS2, KS3 or KS4 pupils** engaged in a variety of writing formats at least once a month, particularly with respect to technology-based types of writing, such as text messages, emails and instant messages, with KS3 and KS4 pupils writing these types of formats more than KS2 pupils. This is perhaps unsurprising considering that access to technology is more prevalent in older pupils.

Table 36: Types of materials written at least once a month by demographic background

	All young people (N = 17,089)	*Boys (N = 8,680)*	*Girls (N = 8,267)*	*KS2 (N = 3,704)*	*KS3 (N = 10,842)*	*KS4 (N =2,543)*	*FSM (N =3,207)*	*NFSM (N = 13,690)*
	%	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*
Text messages	62.9	58.1	68.1	34.9	69.1	77.4	61.8	63.5
Emails	54.8	50.6	59.3	34.9	58.5	66.3	48.1	56.6
Social networking site	52.3	48.4	54.5	15.1	65.5	76.5	41.4	60.4
Notes in class	48.9	42.5	54.8	39.8	49.8	55.1	50.8	50.5
Instant messages	48.4	43.3	53.9	21.8	53.3	66.0	44.2	54.6
Notes to other people	36.3	25.9	47.4	31.8	37.2	39.2	33.6	39.5
Letters	30.0	24.8	35.5	40.6	28.5	20.7	32.7	29.3
Diary	26.3	14.2	38.9	36.4	25.1	16.6	28.6	25.7
Fiction	25.1	22.1	28.3	33.5	24.7	14.9	26.1	24.9
Lyrics	23.9	16.5	31.8	25.0	24.6	19.5	24.7	23.6
Blogs	22.3	18.5	26.3	13.1	24.7	25.6	21.8	22.8
Essays	21.7	21.1	22.4	7.7	22.1	40.1	20.3	22.7
Newspaper or magazine articles	17.3	16.4	18.1	20.7	17.4	11.4	18.4	17.0
Poems	16.4	11.8	21.3	27.2	14.5	8.9	20.3	15.4
Reports	13.7	13.1	14.3	10.6	14.2	16.1	12.9	14.1
Plays or screenplays	8.1	7.3	8.9	11.6	7.7	4.5	10.8	7.5
Reviews	7.9	7.9	7.9	7.7	8.3	6.8	7.7	8.0

Table 36 continued: Types of materials written at least once a month by demographic background

	White (N = 11,977)	*Mixed (N = 925)*	*Asian (N = 1,628)*	*Black (N = 1,069)*
	%	*%*	*%*	*%*
Text messages	69.8	58.7	59.8	59.8
Emails	58.7	57.6	63.2	56.0
Social networking site	63.1	48.6	46.1	50.0
Notes in class	50.1	47.5	54.7	47.5
Instant messages	50.8	50.7	54.2	49.2
Notes to other people	38.5	42.1	37.5	33.8
Letters	29.5	30.8	28.9	30.1
Diary	27.2	28.2	32.1	32.7
Fiction	23.3	25.3	25.5	25.7
Lyrics	23.8	33.9	21.9	32.3
Blogs	21.9	30.1	24.1	20.7
Essays	21.3	23.9	21.8	22.0
Newspaper or magazine articles	16.9	18.8	16.7	17.9
Poems	14.9	16.5	14.3	19.9
Reports	14.3	14.8	16.6	13.2
Plays or screenplays	7.7	9.1	7.1	9.7
Reviews	8.6	7.4	6.8	9.7

Table 36 also shows that there were some significant differences between pupils who receive **FSMs** and those who do not in the frequency with which they engage in certain types of writing[75]. It shows that while there were no significant differences in terms of technology-based formats, such as text messages and emails, a greater proportion of pupils who receive FSMs than non-FSM pupils write letters, poems, and plays or screenplays at least once a month. By contrast, a greater proportion of non-FSM pupils say that they write essays at least once a month.

There were several differences in the types of formats that were written by young people from different **ethnic backgrounds** at least once a month. More young people from Asian and Black backgrounds than from White or mixed backgrounds said that they write in a diary at least once a month. However, more young people from White backgrounds than from the other three ethnic backgrounds said that they write text messages and write on a social networking site. By contrast, more young people from Black backgrounds said that they write poems, while more young people from Mixed backgrounds also said that they write on a blog and notes to other people at least once a month compared with young people from other ethnic backgrounds. More young people from Mixed and Black backgrounds also said that they write lyrics at least once a month compared with young people from White or Asian backgrounds. Finally, more young people from Asian backgrounds also said that they write emails at least once a month compared with young people from the other ethnic backgrounds[76].

There were no significant differences in the extent to which young people from different ethnic backgrounds said that they write formats associated more with school, such as notes in class, essays, newspaper or magazine articles, reviews and reports. There were also no statistically significant differences by ethnic background and the degree to which instant messages, letters, fiction and plays or screenplays were being written at least once a month[77].

Types of writing and writing attainment

Table 37 shows that with the exception of song lyrics, young people's types of writing were related to writing attainment[78].

Young people who write below the expected level for their age were generally less likely to write any of the 17 different formats than young people who write at or above the expected level. The biggest difference exists for writing fiction, with young people who write at the expected level being nearly three times more likely and young people who write above the expected level being four times more likely to write fiction than young people who write below the expected level for their age.

More young people who write at the expected level for their age tend to write text messages, emails, notes on a social networking site and notes in class compared with young people who write below or above the expected level. Furthermore, more young people who write above the expected level for their age tend to write notes to other people, letters, in a diary, on a blog, essays, poems, reports, plays or screenplays and reviews than young people who write below or at the expected level for their age.

Table 37: Percentage of young people who write below or at or above the expected level and the type of writing they engage in (N = 4,450)

	Below expected level for age (N =1,215) %	*At expected level for age (N = 2,728) %*	*Above expected level for age (N = 507) %*
Text messages	54.6	69.8	58.3
Emails	46.4	60.6	54.1
Social networking site	50.8	63.2	56.4
Notes in class	38.9	53.9	50.2
Instant messages	41.2	53.2	45.2
Notes to other people	32.6	39.1	41.8
Letters	24.5	31.6	33.6
Diary	18.3	28.2	39.9
Fiction	10.1	26.4	40.8
Lyrics	25.2	23.8	26.3
Blogs	18.6	22.0	26.9
Essays	16.6	23.8	27.0
Newspaper or magazine articles	18.1	27.0	27.5
Poems	18.3	15.2	21.5
Reports	11.0	14.5	19.6
Plays or screenplays	10.1	7.2	10.9
Reviews	5.1	8.4	13.2

Young people's views on what it means to be a good writer

This section explores what young people think it means to be a good writer and how this differs according to demographic background and writing attainment.

Young people's views on being a good writer: Key findings

- For most young people being a good writer means enjoying writing, using one's imagination and using correct punctuation.
- Boys are more likely than girls to emphasise the technical aspects of writing, believing that a good writer writes neatly. By contrast, girls are more likely to say that a good writer uses his or her imagination, reads a lot, tries things out and talks about writing.
- Older pupils are more likely than their younger counterparts to say that a good writer uses his or her imagination, checks his work and enjoys writing. Conversely, younger pupils are more likely to say that a good writer writes neatly and writes a lot.
- Young people who do not receive FSMs compared to those who do are more likely to say that a good writer uses his or her imagination, tries things out and uses punctuation correctly.
- Fewer young people from Black backgrounds say that a good writer uses his or her imagination, tries things out and uses punctuation correctly, while more young people from Asian backgrounds say that a good writer reads a lot and uses punctuation correctly. More young people from White and Asian backgrounds also say that a good writer enjoys writing.
- Young people who achieve at or above the expected level for their age were more likely than those who struggle with writing to say that a good writer uses his or her imagination, tries things out, uses punctuation correctly, checks his or her work, reads a lot, writes a lot, talks about writing and enjoys writing.

Table 38 illustrates that most young people said that to be a good writer one has to enjoy writing (72%), use one's imagination (70%) and use punctuation correctly (64%). Knowing how to type (30%) and talking about writing (37%) were mentioned least frequently in terms of what makes a good writer.

Significantly more **girls than boys** said that a good writer enjoys writing, uses his or her imagination, uses punctuation correctly, reads a lot, checks his or her work, tries things out and talks about writing[79]. By contrast, significantly more boys than girls indicated that a good writer writes neatly[80]. There were no significant gender differences in the degree to which boys and girls believed that a good writer writes a lot, knows how to spell or how to type[81].

There were also several significant **age differences** in what it means to be a good writer. Significantly more KS3 and KS4 than KS2 pupils said that a good writer uses his or her imagination, uses punctuation correctly, checks his or her work, knows how to spell, reads a lot and enjoys writing[82]. Significantly more KS3 than KS2 or KS4 pupils said that a good writer tries things out and talks about writing[83]. Conversely, significantly more KS2 than KS3 or KS4 pupils said that a good writer writes neatly and writes a lot[84]. There was no significant age difference in the degree to which young people said that a good writer knows how to type[85].

Beliefs of what makes a good writer also differed according to **socio-economic background**. Significantly more young people who do not receive FSMs compared to those who do said that a good writer uses his or her imagination, tries things out, uses punctuation correctly, checks his or her work, reads a lot and enjoys writing[86]. There were no statistically significant differences in terms of writing neatly, knowing how to spell and type, writing a lot and enjoying writing by FSM uptake[87].

Ethnic background was only weakly related to views on what makes a good writer. Fewer young people from Black backgrounds compared with the other three ethnic backgrounds said that a good writer uses his or her imagination, tries things out and uses punctuation correctly[88]. Other statistically significant differences by ethnic background include more young people from Asian backgrounds compared with the other three ethnic backgrounds saying that a good writer uses punctuation correctly and reads a lot[89]. Young people from White and Asian backgrounds are also more likely to say that a good writer enjoys writing compared with young people from Mixed or Black backgrounds[90]. There were no statistically significant differences by ethnic background and views on a good writer checking his or her work, writing neatly, knowing how to spell, writing a lot and talking about writing[91].

Table 38: What makes a good writer by demographic background

	All young people (N = 17,089)	*Boys (N = 8,680)*	*Girls (N = 8,267)*	*KS2 (N = 3,704)*	*KS3 (N = 10,842)*	*KS4 (N =2,543)*	*FSM (N =3,207)*	*NFSM (N = 13,690)*
	%	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*
Enjoy writing	71.9	68.4	75.7	64.3	73.8	74.6	65.0	73.8
Use one's imagination	69.0	64.5	74.0	56.8	72.1	73.3	59.7	71.5
Use correct punctuation	64.2	61.9	66.7	55.0	66.6	67.1	58.5	65.8
Know how to spell	61.3	61.5	61.2	54.4	62.9	64.5	59.8	61.9
Read a lot	60.6	58.0	63.5	54.9	62.7	59.7	55.5	62.0
Check one's work	60.1	57.0	63.7	53.5	62.7	58.5	53.4	61.9
Write a lot	50.4	50.8	50.2	52.3	50.8	46.1	51.0	50.4
Try things out	46.4	42.2	50.8	42.1	48.5	43.7	41.2	47.7
Write neatly	43.6	45.0	42.1	45.0	44.4	38.0	43.7	43.6
Talk about writing	37.2	34.5	40.0	35.8	38.8	32.4	36.1	37.6
Know how to type	29.9	30.8	29.0	31.2	30.0	27.5	31.1	29.7

Table 38 continued: What makes a good writer by demographic background

	White (N = 11,977) %	*Mixed (N = 925) %*	*Asian (N = 1,628) %*	*Black (N = 1,069) %*
Enjoy writing	77.6	69.2	76.7	71.4
Use one's imagination	74.5	71.4	75.3	67.0
Use correct punctuation	68.0	68.1	71.3	61.6
Know how to spell	65.0	67.0	64.3	62.3
Read a lot	63.4	64.8	70.6	63.2
Check one's work	64.3	60.3	65.8	59.8
Write a lot	54.2	49.2	54.5	53.2
Try things out	48.7	52.8	49.1	42.8
Write neatly	45.4	48.8	45.9	46.7
Talk about writing	38.5	40.9	41.4	41.1
Know how to type	31.6	33.6	29.2	32.6

What makes a good writer by writing attainment

There were several significant differences in the extent to which young people who achieve at different levels in writing believe that certain things make a good writer[92].

With the exception of knowing how to spell, which showed no statistically significant difference between the three groups, young people who achieve at or above the expected level for their age were more likely than those who achieve below the expected level for their age to say that a good writer uses his or her imagination, tries things out, uses punctuation correctly, checks his or her work, reads a lot, writes a lot, talks about writing and enjoys writing. Fewer young people who write at the expected level than young people who write below or above the level expected for their age say that a good writer writes neatly and knows how to type.

Table 39: Percentage of young people who write below or at or above the expected level and their views on what makes a good writer (N = 4,450)

	Below expected level for age (N =1,215) %	*At expected level for age (N = 2,728) %*	*Above expected level for age (N = 507) %*
Uses imagination	57.9	76.3	70.1
Tries things out	46.5	48.8	54.4
Uses punctuation correctly	61.0	69.7	63.1
Checks the work	54.7	65.3	62.6
Writes neatly	51.5	43.9	52.3
Knows how to spell	64.4	64.6	64.0
Knows how to type	33.8	29.0	40.8
Reads a lot	57.7	65.1	65.5
Writes a lot	49.1	53.8	58.8
Talks about writing	36.7	38.8	47.5
Enjoys writing	66.7	77.8	75.8

Young people's attitudes towards writing

This section explores what young people think about writing and how this differs according to demographic background and writing attainment.

Young people's attitudes towards writing: Key findings

- Young people generally held positive attitudes towards writing. Most believe that writing is not boring and that writing is more fun when they can choose the topic, that their writing improves when they practise, that a pupil who writes well gets better marks than someone who does not, that it is easier to read than it is to write, that they like what they write, and that they are good writers compared to other students. Despite this, most young people also agreed with the statement that they have trouble deciding what to write.
- Girls generally hold more positive attitudes towards writing than boys, with more girls than boys wishing they had more time to write at school. Boys were more likely than girls to believe that writing is boring.
- KS2 pupils were also more likely than their older counterparts to view writing as a gendered activity, with more KS2 than KS3 or KS4 pupils agreeing with the statement that girls enjoy writing more than boys do. KS2 pupils were also more likely than their older counterparts to disagree with the statements that writing is boring, that they have trouble deciding what to write and that it is easier to read than it is to write.
- FSM uptake was only weakly related to attitudes towards writing.
- Young people from White backgrounds held less positive attitudes towards writing than young people from other ethnic backgrounds. White young people were more likely to agree with the statement that writing is boring and that they have trouble deciding what to write than pupils from other ethnic backgrounds. They were also more likely to disagree with the statements that they wish they had more time to write at school.
- Young people who write below the level expected for their age hold more negative attitudes towards writing than those who write at or above the expected level for their age. They are more likely to agree with the statement that writing is boring, that they have trouble deciding what to write and that it is easier to read than it is to write, and they are less likely to agree with the statements that when they practise their writing improves, that compared with others they are a good writer, that they like what they write and that writing is more fun when they can choose the topic.

When the young people were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with various statements about writing, some interesting trends emerged, with attitudes towards writing generally being positive (see **Tables 40 – 49**).

Most young people agreed with statements that writing is more fun when they can choose the topic (76%), that their writing improves when they practise (64%), that a pupil who writes well gets better marks than someone who does not (53%), that it is easier to read than it is to write (52%), that they like what they write (51%), and that they are good writers compared to other students (33%). However, most young people also agreed with the statement that they have trouble deciding what to write (42%).

By contrast, most young people disagreed with the statement that reading is boring (43%) and that girls enjoy writing more than boys do (39%). However, over a third of young people (36%) also disagreed with the statement that they wish they had more time to write at school.

There were several significant differences in the way that **boys** and **girls** feel about writing, with girls generally holding more positive attitudes towards writing. Overall, girls were more likely to agree with statements that their writing improves when they practise and that they wish they had more time to write at school. By contrast, boys were more likely to agree that writing is boring, that girls enjoy writing more than boys do, that a pupil who writes well gets better marks than someone who does not, and that it is easier to read than it is to write. There was no significant relationship between gender and agreement or disagreement with the following statements: I like what I write, I have trouble deciding what to write, and writing is more fun when you can choose the topic.

There were also some marked differences in attitudes towards writing depending on **age**. KS2 pupils were more likely than their older counterparts to agree that their writing improves when they practise, that they are a good writer compared with other students, that they wish they had more time to write at school, that they like what they write, and that writing is more fun when they can choose the topic. However, KS2 pupils were also more likely than their older counterparts to view writing as a gendered activity, with more KS2 than KS3 or KS4 pupils agreeing with the statement that girls enjoy writing more than boys do. KS2 pupils were more likely than their older counterparts to disagree with the statements that writing is boring, that they have trouble deciding what to write and that it is easier to read than it is to write. There were no significant age differences with respect to the following statement: a pupil who writes well gets better marks than someone who does not.

Socio-economic background, in terms of **FSM uptake,** was only weakly related to attitudes towards writing. A greater proportion of FSM pupils compared with those who do not receive FSMs agreed with the statement that they wish they had time to write at school and that girls enjoy writing more than boys do. By contrast, more young people who do not receive FSMs than those who do agreed with the statements that writing is more fun when you can choose the topic and that it is easier to read than it is to write. There were no significant relationships between FSM uptake and agreement or disagreement with the following statements: writing is boring, when I practise my writing improves, compared to other students I am a good writer, a pupil who writes well gets better marks than someone who does not, I like what I write, and I have trouble deciding what to write.

Young people from a White background held less positive attitudes towards writing than young people from other **ethnic backgrounds**. For example, White young people were more likely to agree with the statement that writing is boring and that they have trouble deciding what to write than pupils from other ethnic backgrounds. They were also more likely to disagree with the statements that they wish they had more time to write at school.

Table 40: Writing is boring

	Agree %	*Neither* %	*Disagree* %	*Do not know* %
All young people (N = 17,089)	21.3	29.8	43.5	5.4
Boys (N = 8,752)	27.7	30.4	36.7	5.1
Girls (N = 8,337)	14.6	29.3	50.5	5.6
KS2 (N = 3,704)	15.8	19.4	59.1	5.7
KS3 (N = 10,842)	22.2	31.7	39.3	5.4
KS4 (N = 2,543)	25.2	36.3	33.3	4.8
FSM (N = 3,207)	22.6	26.9	42.3	8.1
Non-FSM (N = 13,690)	22.0	27.5	42.5	8.0
White (N = 11,977)	22.6	30.6	41.7	5.1
Mixed (N = 925)	19.2	28.9	46.5	5.4
Asian (N = 1,628)	15.6	28.4	49.6	6.5
Black (N = 1,069)	18.7	27.8	47.2	6.4

Table 41: When I practise my writing improves

	Agree %	*Neither* %	*Disagree* %	*Do not know* %
All young people (N = 17,089)	64.5	17.6	8.9	9.1
Boys (N = 8,752)	60.6	16.3	10.2	12.9
Girls (N = 8,337)	65.3	19.5	7.5	7.7
KS2 (N = 3,704)	78.3	10.3	6.3	5.1
KS3 (N = 10,842)	62.4	18.6	9.2	9.8
KS4 (N = 2,543)	54.6	23.4	12.2	9.8
FSM (N = 3,207)	66.8	16.4	8.8	8.0
Non-FSM (N = 13,690)	65.5	18.4	8.9	7.2
White (N = 11,977)	31.6	33.0	19.3	16.1
Mixed (N = 925)	36.3	31.8	20.0	11.8
Asian (N = 1,628)	36.5	32.2	12.4	18.9
Black (N = 1,069)	46.4	27.5	12.2	13.9

Table 42: Compared with other students I am a good writer

All young people (N = 17,089)	*Agree* %	*Neither* %	*Disagree* %	*Do not know* %
All young people (N = 17,089)	32.9	32.5	18.7	15.9
Boys (N = 8,752)	34.8	32.6	19.2	13.5
Girls (N = 8,337)	31.1	32.5	18.0	18.3
KS2 (N = 3,704)	43.1	23.1	17.5	16.2
KS3 (N = 10,842)	30.5	34.1	19.1	16.3
KS4 (N = 2,543)	29.6	38.8	18.2	13.3
FSM (N = 3,207)	32.1	31.0	20.6	16.3
Non-FSM (N = 13,690)	32.8	33.4	18.2	15.6
White (N = 11,977)	31.6	33.0	19.3	16.1
Mixed (N = 925)	36.3	31.8	20.0	11.8
Asian (N = 1,628)	36.5	32.2	12.4	18.9
Black (N = 1,069)	46.4	27.5	12.2	13.9

Table 43: I wish I had more time to write at school

	Agree %	*Neither* %	*Disagree* %	*Do not know* %
All young people (N = 17,089)	27.7	28.7	36.1	7.5
Boys (N = 8,752)	24.7	29.2	39.3	6.8
Girls (N = 8,337)	30.6	28.3	32.9	8.3
KS2 (N = 3,704)	44.3	21.0	26.7	8.0
KS3 (N = 10,842)	24.4	30.3	37.8	7.6
KS4 (N = 2,543)	19.0	32.6	41.9	6.6
FSM (N = 3,207)	30.4	25.0	35.5	9.0
Non-FSM (N = 13,690)	26.8	29.7	36.4	7.2
White (N = 11,977)	26.2	28.7	38.0	7.2
Mixed (N = 925)	34.4	26.1	32.1	7.4
Asian (N = 1,628)	26.5	32.4	31.1	9.8
Black (N = 1,069)	30.1	29.6	32.1	8.1

Table 44: Girls enjoy writing more than boys do

	Agree %	*Neither* %	*Disagree* %	*Do not know* %
All young people (N = 17,089)	21.1	25.8	39.5	13.6
Boys (N = 8,752)	25.4	25.4	36.5	12.7
Girls (N = 8,337)	16.8	26.2	42.6	14.4
KS2 (N = 3,704)	26.8	17.6	44.4	11.2
KS3 (N = 10,842)	20.1	27.1	38.5	14.4
KS4 (N = 2,543)	18.2	31.6	37.0	13.3
FSM (N = 3,207)	24.1	23.8	36.4	15.7
Non-FSM (N = 13,690)	20.5	26.3	40.1	13.1
White (N = 11,977)	20.9	26.1	40.1	12.9
Mixed (N = 925)	26.5	24.5	35.8	13.2
Asian (N = 1,628)	18.1	24.0	49.2	15.0
Black (N = 1,069)	22.5	25.4	36.5	15.6

Table 45: I like what I write

	Agree %	*Neither* %	*Disagree* %	*Do not know* %
All young people (N = 17,089)	50.9	30.2	11.3	7.7
Boys (N = 8,752)	52.2	29.6	11.4	6.8
Girls (N = 8,337)	49.5	30.9	11.1	8.5
KS2 (N = 3,704)	66.9	19.0	7.4	6.7
KS3 (N = 10,842)	48.5	32.0	11.8	7.8
KS4 (N = 2,543)	39.0	38.1	14.5	8.5
FSM (N = 3,207)	50.5	28.8	11.3	9.4
Non-FSM (N = 13,690)	50.1	31.6	11.0	7.3
White (N = 11,977)	49.2	31.4	11.7	7.7
Mixed (N = 925)	52.2	29.1	11.4	7.3
Asian (N = 1,628)	59.1	26.6	7.3	7.1
Black (N = 1,069)	64.9	22.4	6.3	6.4

Table 46: A pupil who writes well gets better marks than someone who does not

	Agree %	*Neither* %	*Disagree* %	*Do not know* %
All young people (N = 17,089)	53.0	23.4	14.6	9.0
Boys (N = 8,752)	58.4	21.4	13.1	7.1
Girls (N = 8,337)	47.5	25.3	16.2	10.9
KS2 (N = 3,704)	52.2	22.9	15.8	9.1
KS3 (N = 10,842)	51.6	24.8	14.5	9.1
KS4 (N = 2,543)	53.1	23.6	14.2	9.1
FSM (N = 3,207)	52.3	21.5	16.0	10.2
Non-FSM (N = 13,690)	53.1	23.8	14.4	8.7
White (N = 11,977)	53.6	23.6	14.1	8.8
Mixed (N = 925)	52.0	23.8	15.8	8.4
Asian (N = 1,628)	54.0	21.2	14.3	10.5
Black (N = 1,069)	56.5	22.5	14.0	7.0

Table 47: I have trouble deciding what to write

	Agree %	*Neither* %	*Disagree* %	*Do not know* %
All young people (N = 17,089)	42.2	27.5	24.1	6.1
Boys (N = 8,752)	42.1	27.5	24.9	5.4
Girls (N = 8,337)	42.3	27.6	23.3	6.8
KS2 (N = 3,704)	40.8	22.0	29.7	7.5
KS3 (N = 10,842)	42.5	28.4	23.4	5.8
KS4 (N = 2,543)	43.3	31.6	19.7	5.5
FSM (N = 3,207)	42.3	26.2	23.9	7.6
Non-FSM (N = 13,690)	42.2	27.9	24.1	5.7
White (N = 11,977)	44.0	27.1	23.3	5.6
Mixed (N = 925)	38.2	30.2	24.2	7.4
Asian (N = 1,628)	32.7	30.5	28.5	8.3
Black (N = 1,069)	37.1	25.1	30.8	7.1

Table 48: Writing is more fun when you can choose the topic

	Agree %	*Neither* %	*Disagree* %	*Do not know* %
All young people (N = 17,089)	75.8	13.2	6.5	4.5
Boys (N = 8,752)	77.3	12.2	6.6	3.9
Girls (N = 8,337)	74.4	14.1	6.5	5.1
KS2 (N = 3,704)	79.1	9.0	6.9	5.0
KS3 (N = 10,842)	76.2	13.3	6.2	4.3
KS4 (N = 2,543)	70.1	18.1	7.4	4.5
FSM (N = 3,207)	73.3	12.5	7.9	6.3
Non-FSM (N = 13,690)	76.4	13.4	6.2	4.1
White (N = 11,977)	76.6	12.8	6.4	4.2
Mixed (N = 925)	74.3	14.8	6.2	4.7
Asian (N = 1,628)	75.2	13.7	6.3	4.8
Black (N = 1,069)	77.1	10.7	7.0	5.1

Table 49: It is easier to read than to write

	Agree %	*Neither* %	*Disagree* %	*Do not know* %
All young people (N = 17,089)	51.9	24.1	16.1	7.9
Boys (N = 8,752)	57.0	21.6	14.5	6.9
Girls (N = 8,337)	46.8	26.6	17.7	8.9
KS2 (N = 3,704)	52.4	19.6	18.9	9.2
KS3 (N = 10,842)	51.6	24.8	15.8	7.8
KS4 (N = 2,543)	52.7	27.2	13.8	6.3
FSM (N = 3,207)	49.8	22.4	17.8	9.9
Non-FSM (N = 13,690)	52.3	24.5	15.8	7.4
White (N = 11,977)	52.0	24.4	16.2	7.5
Mixed (N = 925)	51.3	23.6	17.2	7.9
Asian (N = 1,628)	56.2	22.4	12.1	9.3
Black (N = 1,069)	49.6	24.0	17.2	9.2

Attitudes towards writing and writing attainment

Table 50 outlines the proportion of young people who agree with 10 attitudinal statements about writing broken down by their writing attainment.

Young people who write below the level expected for their age hold more negative attitudes towards writing than those who write at or above the expected level for their age. For example, those who write below the expected level for their age tend to agree more with the statement that writing is boring, that they have trouble deciding what to write and that it is easier to read than it is to write. They are less likely to agree with the statements that when they practise their writing improves, that compared with others they are a good writer
, that they like what they write and that writing is more fun when they can choose the topic.

There were no statistically significant differences in the extent to which young people of different writing abilities agreed with the statement that a pupil who writes well gets better marks[93].

Table 50: Percentage of young people who write below or at or above the expected level and their agreement with attitudinal statements (N = 4,450)

	Below expected level for age (N = 1,215) %	*At expected level for age (N =2,728) %*	*Above expected level for age (N = 507) %*
Writing is boring	43.1	17.5	14.7
When I practise my writing improves	39.3	68.4	77.5
Compared with others I am a good writer	9.1	33.2	74.8
I wish I had more time to write in school	28.5	24.9	49.1
Girls enjoy writing more than boys do	28.4	18.7	28.3
I like what I write	26.4	52.7	80.9
A pupil who writes well gets better marks	51.8	52.7	53.0
I have trouble deciding what to write	60.7	39.6	30.1
Writing is more fun when you can choose the topic	63.2	78.4	77.7
It is easier to read than to write	56.2	52.3	41.2

Importance of writing to succeed in life

This section explores how important young people think writing is to succeed in life and how this differs according to demographic background and writing attainment.

Young people's views on the importance of writing to succeed in life: Key findings

- 9 in 10 young people view writing either as very important or as important to succeed in life.
- There were no significant gender, age or FSM differences in the degree to which young people feel that writing is important to succeed in life.
- Young people from Asian backgrounds see writing as more important than young people from White backgrounds.
- Ratings of the importance of writing to succeed in life were significantly related to writing attainment, with young people who write at or above the level expected for their age believing that writing is more important than young people who write below the level expected for their age.

When asked how important they think writing is to succeed in life, 9 out of 10 young people thought that is was either very important or important (see **Table 51**). This endorsement is in line with a previous survey (Clark and Dugdale, 2009), which also showed that 9 in 10 young people acknowledge a link between writing and success in life. Only 1% of young people in the present study did not think that writing was at all important to succeed in life.

In line with previous research (Clark and Dugdale, 2009), there were no significant differences between **boys** and **girls** in the degree to which they believed writing to be important to succeed in life[94]. There was also no statistically significant relationship between the importance of writing and **age**[95]. Similarly, there was no significant difference between young people who receive **FSMs** and those who do not in the importance they place on writing to succeed in life[96].

However, there were statistically significant differences between the four **ethnic groups** and the importance they placed on writing to succeed in life, with post-hoc tests indicating that Asian young people consider writing as more important to succeed in life than young people from a White background[97]. **Table 51** shows that 85.9% of young people from White backgrounds believe that writing is either very important or important to succeed in life compared with 92.6% of young people from Asian backgrounds.

Table 51: Importance of writing to succeed in life by background demographics

	Very important %	*Important* %	*Not very important* %	*Not at all important* %	*Do not know* %
All young people (N = 17,089)	53.2	37.4	5.1	1.1	2.8
Boys (N = 8,752)	52.1	38.1	5.1	1.7	3.0
Girls (N = 8,337)	54.2	38.6	4.9	0.6	2.5

	Very important %	Important %	Not very important %	Not at all important %	Do not know %
KS2 (N = 3,704)	54.1	36.2	4.9	1.2	3.6
KS3 (N = 10,842)	53.2	37.6	5.1	1.1	3.0
KS4 (N = 2,543)	52.2	38.4	5.0	1.0	3.4
FSM (N = 3,207)	52.9	37.7	5.1	1.4	2.9
Non-FSM (N = 13,690)	54.6	36.0	5.5	1.1	2.8
White (N = 11,977)	51.6	34.3	8.2	1.1	4.8
Mixed (N = 925)	55.8	33.3	6.0	1.8	3.1
Asian (N = 1,628)	62.5	30.1	4.3	0.7	2.4
Black (N = 1,069)	59.2	32.1	4.7	1.4	2.6

Importance of writing to succeed in life by writing attainment

Ratings of the importance of writing to succeed in life were significantly related to writing attainment[98], with young people who write at or above the level expected for their age believing that writing is more important than young people who write below the level expected for their age (see **Table 52**).

Table 52: Percentage of young people who write below or at or above the expected level and their ratings of how important writing is to succeed in life (N = 4,450)

	Below expected level for age (N = 1,215) %	At expected level for age (N = 2,728) %	Above expected level for age (N = 507) %
Very important	37.0	54.1	73.3
Important	38.8	39.5	18.4
Not very important	10.9	4.1	3.4
Not at all important	4.4	0.4	1.5
Do not know	6.4	1.9	3.5

A look ahead

This report contains a wealth of data that provides us with an up-to-date insight into young people's reading and writing, which will form the basis of discussions and further explorations in the future. However, there are several important issues that have not been addressed in this report but that will be explored in several, separate publications over the coming months.

Previous research has shown that access to educational resources at home, such as books, as well as parents' or caregivers' engagement with reading and their own attitudes to reading, all play an important role in supporting a child's enjoyment of reading and help shape their reading behaviour and attitudes. The survey also contained a few questions about educational resources in the home and the level of family involvement in young people's reading, which will be explored in a separate paper.

In line with previous findings (e.g. Twist et al, 2007), our results also demonstrate the correlative relationship between enjoyment and attainment for both reading and writing very clearly. Similarly, our data showed clear relationships between attainment and attitudes as well as engagement in reading and writing. However, so far we have only explored how a single literacy component, such as enjoyment, is related to attainment. What we will explore in a separate paper is how different literacy components, such as enjoyment, confidence, attitudes and behaviour, interact with each other and with attainment.

The survey also contained several questions on school and public library use and young people's attitudes towards libraries. Questions on school libraries inform a public consultation currently being conducted on the topic, which will report in the summer 2010.

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Appendix A: Comparative additional analyses of reading enjoyment in 2005 and 2009

Figure A1: Enjoyment of reading by gender in 2005 and 2009

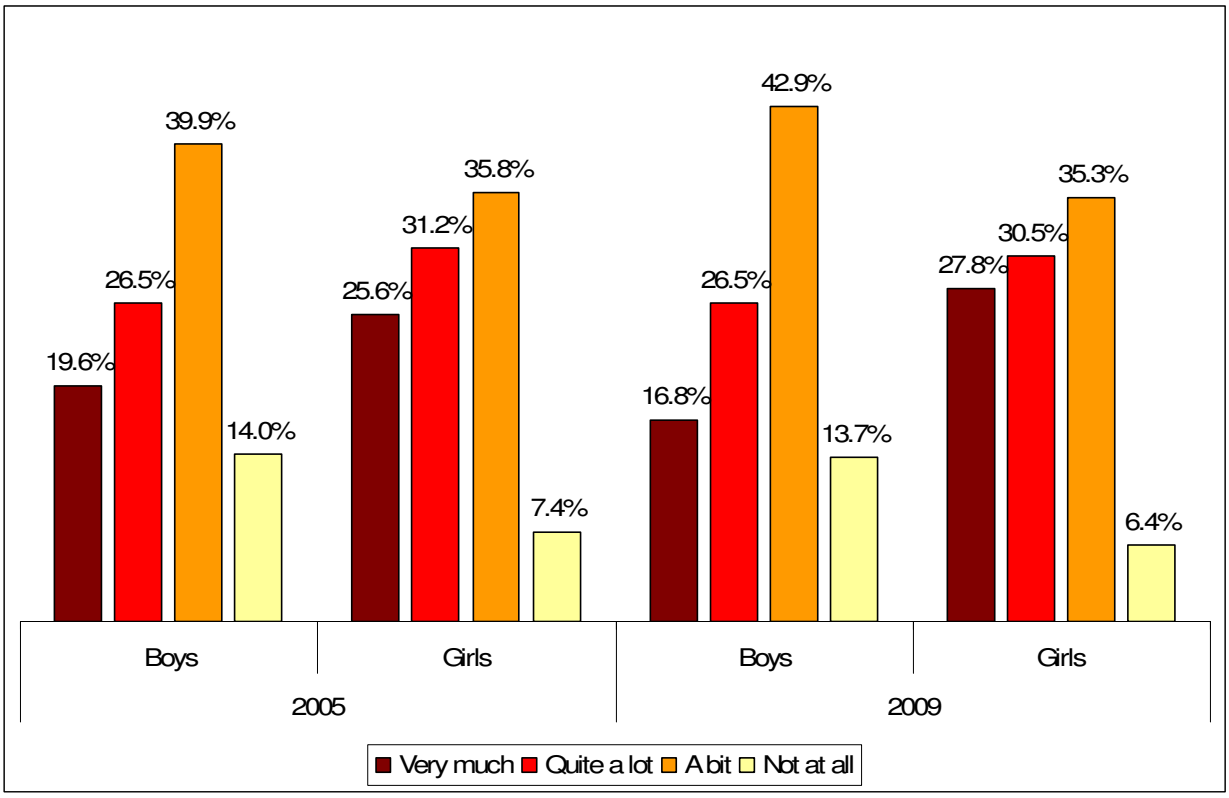


Figure A2: Enjoyment of reading by FSM uptake in 2005 and 2009

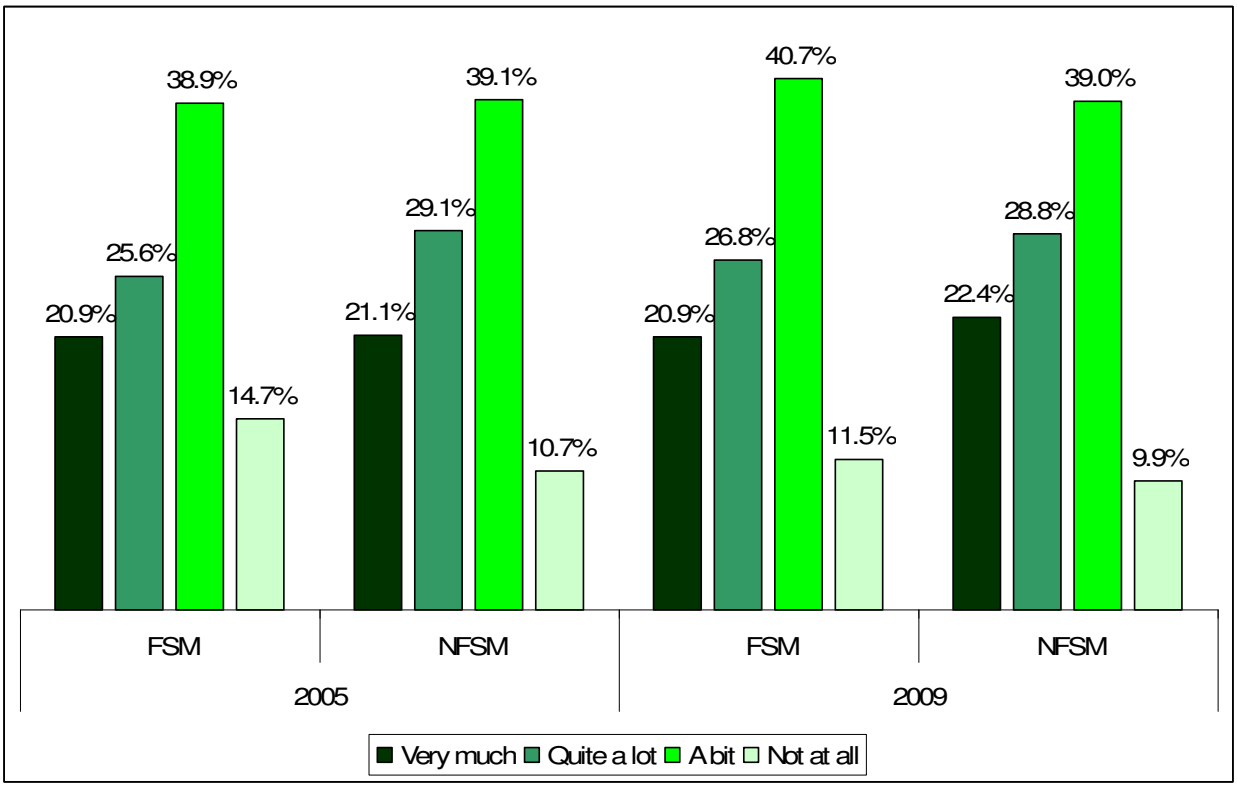
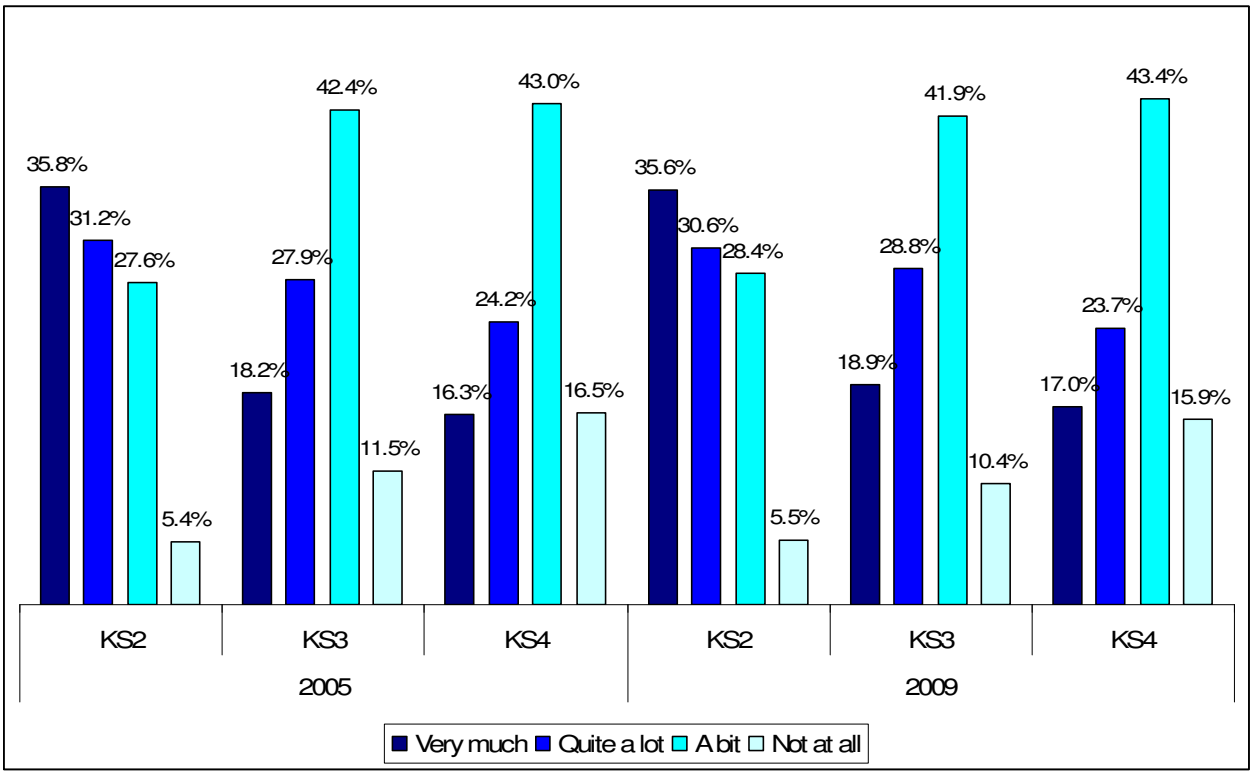


Figure A3: Enjoyment of reading by key stages in 2005 and 2009



Appendix B: Comparative additional analyses of reading frequency in 2005 and 2009

Overall, Figure B1 shows that there was a 6.6% point decline in boys reading every day or almost every day in 2009 compared with a 3.5% point decline in girls reading every day. Conversely, there was a 9.3% point increase in the proportion of boys who in 2009 say that they rarely or never read outside of class. This compares with a 6.1% point rise in girls who now say that they read rarely or never outside of class.

Figure B1: Reading frequency by gender in 2005 and 2009

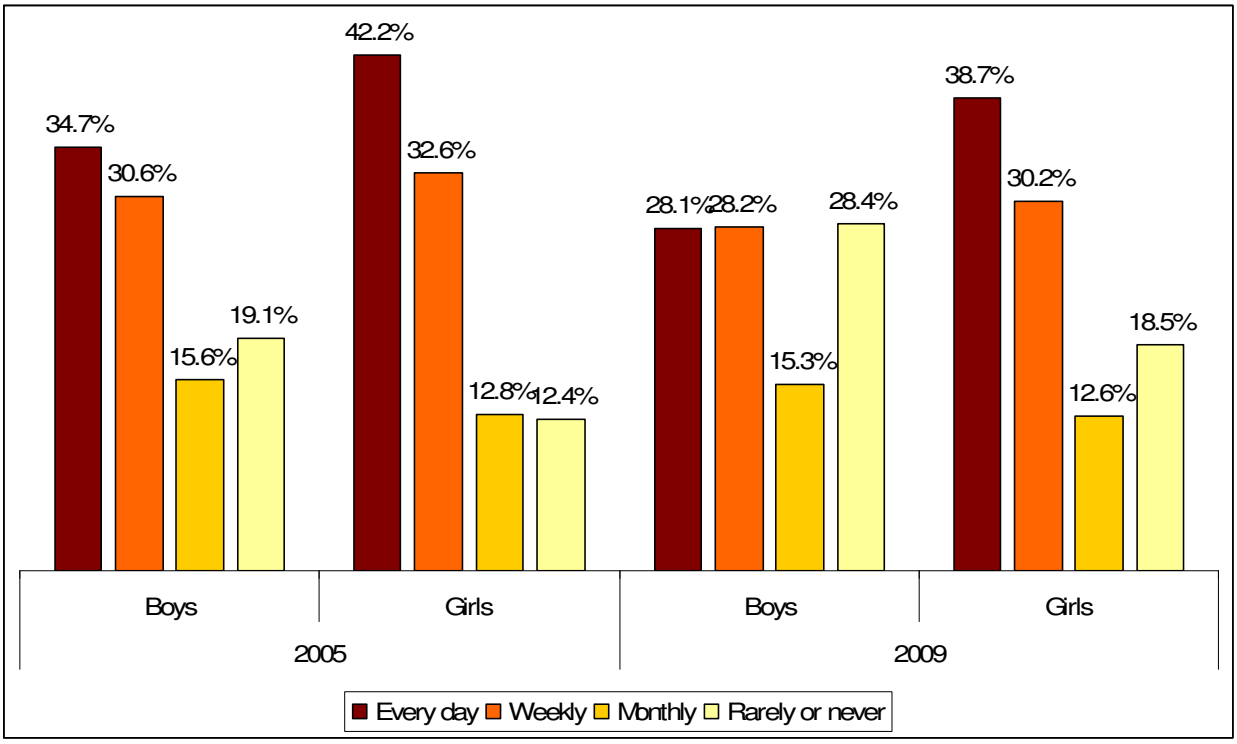


Figure B2 indicates that in 2005 there was a 7.2% point difference in daily reading between the proportion of young people who receive FSMs and those who do not. In 2009, this percentage point difference is now 2.6%. The reduction in the gap appears largely to be due to young people who do not receive FSMs reading less frequently in 2009 than they did in 2005. Indeed, the proportion of young people who do not receive FSMs who read rarely or never has increased by 8.3% points in 2009. While the proportion of young people who receive FSMs who read rarely or never has also increased between 2005 and 2009, this increase is smaller with only a 5.3% point difference.

Figure B2: Reading frequency by FSM uptake in 2005 and 2009

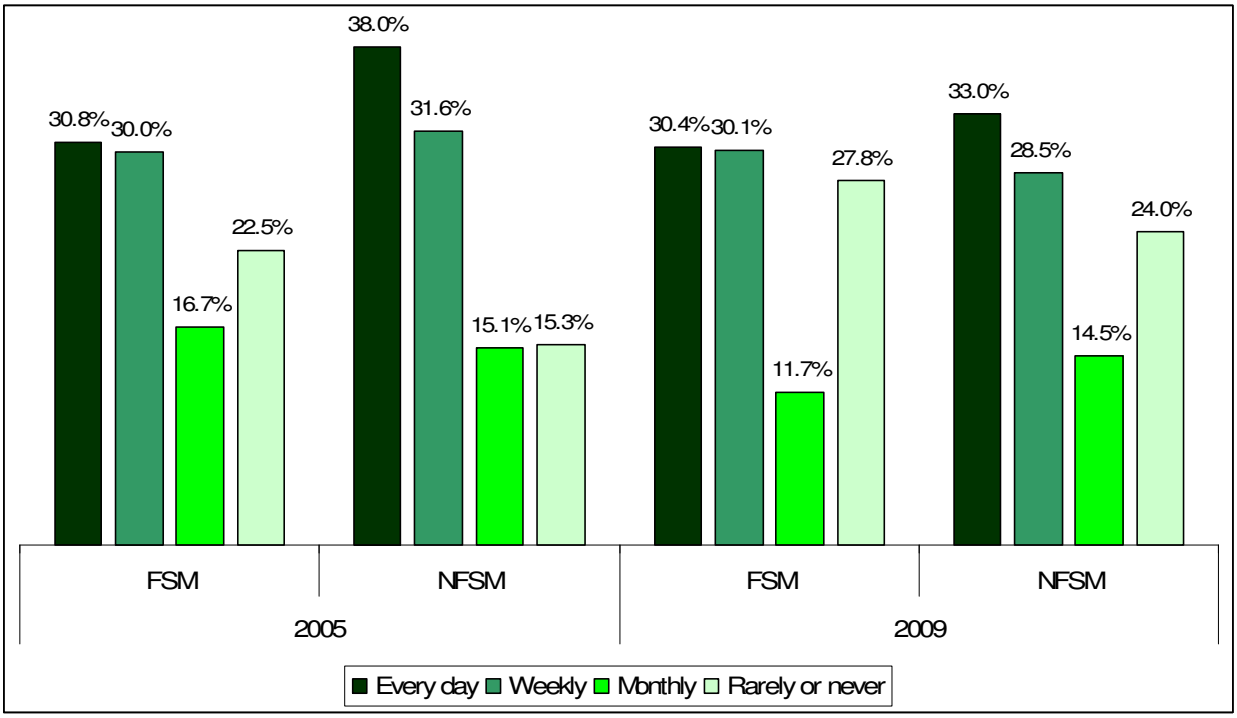
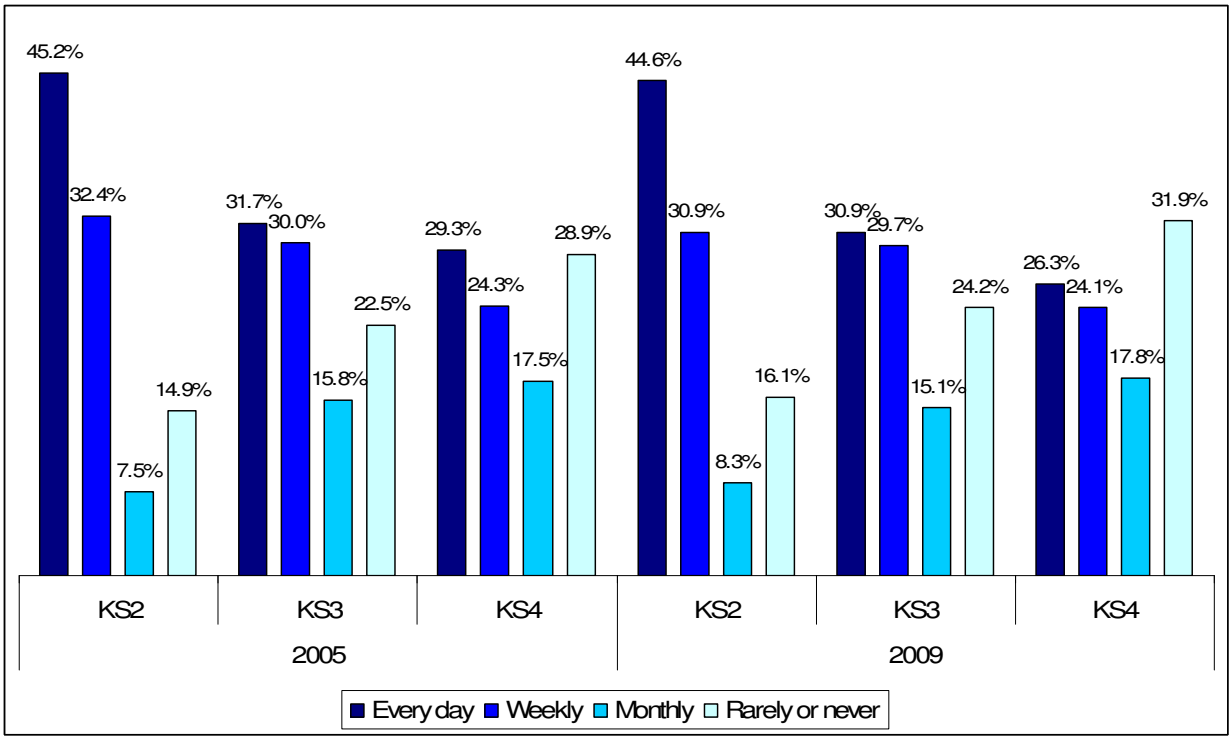


Figure B3: Reading frequency by age in 2005 and 2009



Statistical information

[1] The percentage of young people in this study who say that they have a profile on a social networking site is comparable with the 50% reported by Ofcom in 2009 in their study of 15 to 24-year-olds.

Cohen's *d* effect size magnitude: small = .2; medium = .5; large = .8+
Omega squared (ω^2) rough guide to effect size: small = .01; medium = .06; large = .14+
Cramer's V is a measure of the strength of an association between categorical data and varies from 0 – 1, with 0 being no association between variables and 1 being a perfect one

Access to resources and background demographics or attainment

[2] Mobile phone: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 53.899, p = .000, Cramer's V = .056; Computer: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 54.805, p = .000, Cramer's V = .057; Desk: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 143.705, p = .000, Cramer's V = .092; Books: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 342.781, p = .000, Cramer's V = .142; Magazines: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 344.222, p = .000, Cramer's V = .143; A blog: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 69.085, p = .000, Cramer's V = .064; Social networking site profile: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 81.634, p = .000, Cramer's V = .069.
[3] Newspaper: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 2.129, ns
[4] Mobile phone: χ^2 (2, N = 17089) = 340.711, p = .000, Cramer's V = .140; Computers: χ^2 (2, N = 17089) = 345.809, p = .000, Cramer's V = .142; Blog: χ^2 (2, N = 17089) = 180.383, p = .000, Cramer's V = .103; Social networking site profile: χ^2 (2, N = 17089) = 1441.033, p = .000, Cramer's V = .290.
[5] Desk: χ^2 (2, N = 17089) = 140.436, p = .000, Cramer's V = .091; Newspaper: χ^2 (2, N = 17089) = 207.516, p = .000, Cramer's V = .110; Magazines: χ^2 (2, N = 17089) = 173.455, p = .000, Cramer's V = .101.
[6] Books of their own: χ^2 (2, N = 17089) = 62.169, p = .000, Cramer's V = .060.
[7] Computers: χ^2 (1, N = 16897) = 156.751, p = .000, Cramer's V = .096; Social networking site profile: χ^2 (1, N = 16897) = 140.165, p = .000, Cramer's V = .091.
[8] Mobile phones: χ^2 (1, N = 16897) = 6.002, ns; Blogs: χ^2 (1, N = 16897) = 10832, ns.
[9] Desk: χ^2 (1, N = 16897) = 163.097, p = .000, Cramer's V = .098; Books: χ^2 (1, N = 16897) = 105.027, p = .000, Cramer's V = .079; Newspaper: χ^2 (1, N = 16897) = 39.005, p = .000, Cramer's V = .048; Magazines: χ^2 (1, N = 16897) = 124.350, p = .000, Cramer's V = .086.
[10] Mobile phone: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 9.765, ns; Computer: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 11.728, ns; Blog: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 10.868, ns; Social networking site profile: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 10.421, ns;
[11] Desk: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 46.499, p = .000, Cramer's V = .055; Books: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 18.573, p = .000, Cramer's V = .035; Newspaper: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 26.342, p = .000, Cramer's V = .041; Magazines: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 134.252, p = .000, Cramer's V = .093.
[12] Mobile phone: χ^2 (2, N = 4503) = 8.913, ns; Computer: χ^2 (2, N = 4503) = 131.133, p = .000, Cramer's V = .080; Desk: χ^2 (2, N = 4503) = 325.094, p = .000, Cramer's V = .139; Books: χ^2 (2, N = 4503) = 710.603, p = .000, Cramer's V = .206; Newspaper: χ^2 (2, N = 4503) = 188.262, p = .000, Cramer's V = .106; Magazines: χ^2 (2, N = 4503) = 188.694, p = .000, Cramer's V = .106; Blogs: χ^2 (2, N = 4503) = 25.825, p = .000, Cramer's V = .039; Social networking site: χ^2 (2, N = 4503) = 158.490, p = .000, Cramer's V = .097
[13] [13] Mobile phone: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 6.558, ns; Computer: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 115.829, p = .000, Cramer's V = .085; Desk: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 46.627, p = .000, Cramer's V = .054; Books: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 188.693, p = .000, Cramer's V = .108; Newspaper: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 67.730, p = .000, Cramer's V = .065; Magazines: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 88.015, p = .000, Cramer's V = .074; Blogs: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 27.036, p = .000, Cramer's V = .041; Social networking site: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 86.605, p = .000, Cramer's V = .078

Young people's enjoyment of reading and background demographics or attainment

[14] Boys: M = 2.54, SD = .927; Girls: M = 2.20, SD = .920; t(16799) = 23.323, p = .000; Cohens *d* = .368.
[15] KS2: M = 2.04, SD = .926; KS3: 2.44, SD = .923; KS4: 2.58, SD = .950; F(2,16932) = 335.132., p = .000; ω^2 = .038
[16] FSMs: M = 2.43, SD = .945; NFSMs: M = 2.36, SD = .936; t(16402) = 3.535, p = .000; Cohens *d* = .074
[17] White: M = 2.39, SD = .945; Mixed: 2.36, SD = .949; Asian: 2.26, SD = .902; Black: M = 2.33, SD = .903; F(3,15570) = 10,422., p = .000; ω^2 = .002
[18] χ^2 (6, N = 4503) = 3549.446, p = .000, Cramer's V = .471
[19] 2005: χ^2 (3, N = 7689) = 130.719, p = .000; Cramer's V = .135; 2009: χ^2 (3, N = 16801) = 535.578, p = .000; Cramer's V = .179
[20] 2005: χ^2 (3, N = 7250) = 14.149, p = .001, Cramer's V = .029; 2009: χ^2 (3, N = 16402) = 14.747, p = .001, Cramer's V = .030
[21] 2005: χ^2 (6, N = 7316) = 560.056, p = .000, Cramer's V = .189; 2009: χ^2 (6, N = 16935) = 707.252, p = .000, Cramer's V = .204. Please note that the original research published in 2005 only differentiated between primary and

secondary pupils. The data were reanalysed for the present comparison to create equivalent age groups – KS2, KS3, KS4.

Young people's self-reported reading ability and background demographics or attainment

[22] Boys: M = 2.39, SD = .616; Girls: M = 2.47, SD = .585; t(16621) = -8.185, p = .000; Cohens *d* = -.133
[23] KS2: M = 2.49, SD = .609; KS3: 2.42, SD = .599; KS4: 2.42, SD = .602; F(2,16745) = 21.442., p = .000; ω^2 = .002
[24] FSMs: M = 2.36, SD = .632; NFSMs: M = 2.45, SD = .594; t(16583) = -7.604, p = .000; Cohens *d* = -.147
[25] White: M = 2.43, SD = .605; Mixed: 2.45, SD = .609; Asian: 2.50, SD = .568; Black: M = 2.43, SD = .597; F(3,15487) = 7,468., p = .000; ω^2 = .001
[26] χ^2 (4, N = 4503) = 2968.103, p = .000, Cramer's V = .612
[27] 2005: χ^2 (2, N = 7601) = 58.114, p = .000; Cramer's V = .057; : χ^2 (2, N = 16623) = 70.546, p = .000; Cramer's V = .065
[28] 2005: χ^2 (2, N = 7274) = 69.723, p = .000, Cramer's V = .065; 2009: χ^2 (2, N = 16585) = 65.677, p = .000, Cramer's V = .063
[29] 2005: χ^2 (4, N = 7316) = 66.558, p = .000, Cramer's V = .060; 2009: χ^2 (4, N = 16748) = 73.044, p = .000, Cramer's V = .066

Young people's reading frequency and background demographics or attainment

[30] Boys: M = 3.10, SD = 2.095; Girls: M = 2.53, SD = 1.862; t(16308) = 18.313, p = .000; Cohens *d* = .288
[31] [31] KS2: M = 2.34, SD = 1.837; KS3: 2.89, SD = 2.007; KS4: 3.27, SD = 2.098; F(2,16429) = 176.193., p = .000; ω^2 = .021
[32] FSMs: M = 3.01, SD = 2.114; NFSMs: M = 2.78, SD = 1.977; t(16260) = 5.571, p = .000; Cohens *d* = .112
[33] White: M = 2.88, SD = 2.012; Mixed: 2.84, SD = 2.075; Asian: 2.57, SD = 1.855; Black: M = 2.80, SD = 1.944; F(3,15453) = 9.177., p = .000; ω^2 = .002
[34] ω^2 = .018
[35] χ^2 (12, N = 4503) = 2272.181, p = .000, Cramer's V = .373;
[36] (Please note that apart from the response option "every day or almost every day", there were slight variations in how the other options were worded in 2005 and 2009. In 2005, the options included " once or twice a week", "once or twice a month"

and " never or almost never". In 2009, the options included "2 – 3 times a week", "2 – 3 times a month", "about once a month"," rarely" and "never". For the purpose of comparison, "2 – 3 times a month" and "once a month" were combined into a monthly category. Similarly, "rarely" and "never" were combined to form a category.
[37] 2005: χ^2 (3, N = 7689) = 130.179, p = .000; Cramer's V = .083; 2009: χ^2 (3, N = 16307) = 367.342, p = .000; Cramer's V = .151
[38] 2005: χ^2 (3, N = 7264) = 37.375, p = .000, Cramer's V = .058; 2009: χ^2 (3, N = 16262) = 34.559, p = .000, Cramer's V = .052

[39] χ^2 (4, N = 4503) = 1814.540, p = .000, Cramer's V = .332

Young people's types of reading and background demographics or attainment

[40] Websites: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 109.673, p = .000; Cramer's V = .080; Blogs: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 173.084, p = .000; Cramer's V = .101; Magazines: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 685.071, p = .000; Cramer's V = .201; Emails: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 209.537, p = .000; Cramer's V = .111; Fiction: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 227.135, p = .000; Cramer's V = .116; Song lyrics: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 964.283, p = .000; Cramer's V = .239; Poems: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 381.132, p = .000; Cramer's V = .150; Plays or screenplays: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 16.872, p = .000; Cramer's V = .032; Text messages: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 289.300, p = .000; Cramer's V = .131; Books or magazines in a language other than English: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 25.243, p = .000; Cramer's V = .039
[41] Newspapers: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 130.257, p = .000; Cramer's V = .088; Comics: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 932.763, p = .000; Cramer's V = .243; Manuals: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 162.296, p = .000; Cramer's V = .098.
[42] Websites: χ^2 (2, N = 17089) = 695.798, p = .000; Cramer's V = .202; Blogs: χ^2 (2, N = 17089) = 1148.832, p = .000; Cramer's V = .259; Emails: χ^2 (2, N = 17089) = 921.732, p = .000; Cramer's V = .232; Text messages: χ^2 (2, N = 17089) = 1729.247, p = .000; Cramer's V = .318
[43] Newspapers: χ^2 (2, N = 17089) = 404.904, p = .000; Cramer's V = .154; Magazines: χ^2 (2, N = 17089) = 283.448, p = .000; Cramer's V = .129; Song lyrics: χ^2 (2, N = 17089) = 235.526, p = .000; Cramer's V = .117; Manuals: χ^2 (2, N = 17089) = 43.407, p = .000; Cramer's V = .050
[44] Comics: χ^2 (2, N = 17089) = 207.242, p = .000; Cramer's V = .110; Fiction: χ^2 (2, N = 17089) = 17.317, p = .000; Cramer's V = .032; Poems: χ^2 (2, N = 17089) = 580.504, p = .000; Cramer's V = .184; Plays or screenplays: χ^2 (2, N

= 17089) = 22.422, p = .000; Cramer's V = .031; Non-fiction: χ^2 (2, N = 17089) = 86.891, p = .000; Cramer's V = .071;

[45] Websites: χ^2 (1, N = 16897) = 104.130, p = .000; Cramer's V = .079; Blogs: χ^2 (1, N = 16897) = 57.558, p = .000; Cramer's V = .058; Emails χ^2 (1, N = 16897) = 70.910, p = .000; Cramer's V = .065; Text messages: χ^2 (1, N = 16897) = 116.826, p = .000; Cramer's V = .083

[46] Magazines: χ^2 (1, N = 16897) = 68.938, p = .000; Cramer's V = .064; Fiction: χ^2 (1, N = 16897) = 75.904, p = .000; Cramer's V = .067

[47] Poems: χ^2 (1, N = 16897) = 88.800, p = .000; Cramer's V = .072; Blogs: χ^2 (1, N = 16897) = 57.558, p = .000; Cramer's V = .072

[48] Websites: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 403.879, p = .000; Cramer's V = .161; Blogs: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 28.301, p = .000, Cramer's V = .043; Newspapers: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 72.304, p = .000; Cramer's V = .068; Magazines: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 761.502, p = .000; Cramer's V = .221; Comics: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 1229.190, p = .000; Cramer's V = .281; Emails: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 39.952, p = .000, Cramer's V = .051; Fiction: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 39.459, p = .000, Cramer's V = .050; Song lyrics: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 797.185, p = .000; Cramer's V = .226; Poems: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 104.606, p = .000, Cramer's V = .182; Plays or screenplays: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 19.377, p = .000; Cramer's V = .035; Text messages: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 128.378, p = .000, Cramer's V = .191; Non-fiction: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 41.071, p = .000; Cramer's V = .051; B0ooks or magazines in a language other than English: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 67.786, p = .000, Cramer's V = .066

[49] Text messages: χ^2 (2, N = 4503) = 69.712, p = .000, Cramer's V = .035; Magazines: χ^2 (2, N = 4503) = 152.840, p = .000, Cramer's V = .068; Websites: χ^2 (2, N = 4503) = 164.015, p = .000, Cramer's V = .070; Emails: χ^2 (2, N = 4503) = 94.540, p = .000, Cramer's V = .075; Fiction: χ^2 (2, N = 4503) = 919.636, p = .000, Cramer's V = .234; Blogs: χ^2 (2, N = 4503) = 104.304, p = .000, Cramer's V = .079; Song lyrics: χ^2 (2, N = 4503) = 135.919, p = .000, Cramer's V = .064; Newspapers: χ^2 (2, N = 4503) = 199.436, p = .000, Cramer's V = .109; Non-fiction: χ^2 (2, N = 4503) = 571.903, p = .000, Cramer's V = .185; Comics: χ^2 (2, N = 4503) = 253.902, p = .000, Cramer's V = .123; EAL text: χ^2 (2, N = 4503) = 106.623, p = .000, Cramer's V = .080; Manuals: χ^2 (2, N = 4503) = 158.603, p = .000, Cramer's V = .097; Poems: χ^2 (2, N = 4503) = 233.747, p = .000, Cramer's V = .118; Plays or screenplays: χ^2 (2, N = 4503) = 88.337, p = .000, Cramer's V = .073.

[50] Reading is for girls: χ^2 (6, N = 4503) = 456.644, p = .000; Cramer's V = .120; Reading is boring: χ^2 (6, N = 4503) = 1744.015, p = .000; Cramer's V = .331; Reading is hard: χ^2 (6, N = 4503) = 3465.804, p = .000; Cramer's V = .467; I cannot find interesting things: χ^2 (6, N = 4503) = 1136.626, p = .000; Cramer's V = .267; I only read in class: χ^2 (6, N = 4503) = 2057.682, p = .000; Cramer's V = .256; Only read when I have to: χ^2 (6, N = 4503) = 2421.759, p = .000; Cramer's V = .301; I do not read as well as other pupils: χ^2 (6, N = 4503) = 3251.414, p = .000; Cramer's V = .454.

[51] Reading is important: χ^2 (6, N = 4503) = 543.500, p = .000; Cramer's V = .130; Reading is for girls: χ^2 (6, N = 4503) = 456.644, p = .000; Cramer's V = .120; I enjoy reading: χ^2 (6, N = 4503) = 2148.407, p = .000; Cramer's V = .366; I like going to the library: χ^2 (6, N = 4503) = 520.149, p = .000; Cramer's V = .128; Reading is a skill for life: χ^2 (6, N = 4503) = 532.619, p = .000; Cramer's V = .130; Reading tells me what I want or need to know: χ^2 (6, N = 4503) = 335.998, p = .000; Cramer's V = .103.

[52] Please note that the original research published in 2005 only differentiated between primary and secondary pupils. The data were reanalysed for the present comparison to create equivalent age groups – KS2, KS3, KS4.

Importance of reading to succeed in life and background demographics or attainment

[53] Boys M = 1.72, SD .934; Girls M = 1.61, SD = .870; t(16378) = 7.990, p = .000. Cohen's *d* = .121

[54] KS2: M = 1.56, SD = .939; KS3: M = 1.68, SD = .889; KS4: M = 1.79, SD = .910; F(2,16506) = 47.942, p = .000; ω^2 = .006

[55] FSMs M = 1.69, SD 1.014; NFSMs M = 1.66, SD = .876; t(16337) = 1.339, ns

[56] White: M = 1.70, SD = .905; Mixed: M = 1.61, SD = .898; Asia: M = 1.57, SD = .874; Black: M = 1.52, SD = .857; F(3,15570) = 21.721, p = .000; ω^2 = .004

[57] χ^2 (8, N = 4503) = 1040.678, p = .000; Cramer's V = .252

Enjoyment of writing and background demographics or attainment

[58] Boys: M = 2.59, SD = .961; Girls: M = 2.22, SD = .909; t(16039) = 24.829, p = .000, Cohens' *d* = .960

[59] KS2: M = 2.06, SD = .940; KS3: M = 2.47, SD = .935; KS4: M = 2.66, SD = .920; F(2,16162) = 350.457, p = .000, ω^2 = .999

[60] White: M = 2.46, SD = .953; Mixed: M = 2.31, SD = .935; Asian: M = 2.23, SD = .924; Black: M = 2.22, SD = .965; F(3,15494) = 47.622, p = .000, ω^2 = .623

[61] χ^2 (6, N = 4450) = 3074.911, p = .000; Cramer's V = .438

[62] χ^2 (4, N = 4450) = 2577.483, p = .000, Cramer's V = .623

Young people's writing frequency and background demographics or attainment

[63] Boys: M = 3.16, SD = 2.103; Girls: M = 2.74, SD = 2.054; t(16074) = 12.837, p = .000; Cohens *d* = .202

[64] KS2: M = 2.753, SD = 1.977; KS3: 2.969, SD = 2.112; KS4: 3.170, SD = 2.133; F(2,16197) = 29.122., p = .000; ω^2 = .014

[65] FSMs: M = 2.92, SD = 2.132; NFSMs: M = 2.96, SD = 2.081; t(16038) = -1.058, ns

[66] White: M = 2.94, SD = 2.035; Mixed: 3.24, SD = 2.335; Asian: 2.48, SD = 1.843; Black: M = 2.67, SD = 2.019; $F(3,15549) = 37.564$., p = .000; $\omega^2 = .011$
[67] Boys White: M = 3.24, SD = 2.106; Boys Mixed: M = 3.10, SD = 2.116; Boys Asian: M = 2.68, SD = 1.952; Boys Black: M = 2.86, SD = 2.108; Girls White: M = 2.62, SD = 1.905; Girls Mixed: M = 3.40, SD = 2.541; Girls Asian: M = 2.27, SD = 1.699; Girls Black: M = 2.40, SD = 1.858; F(3, 15428) = 15.733, p = .000.
[68] χ^2 (18, 7966) = 108.312, p = .000; Cramer's V = .067
[69] χ^2 (18, 7470) = 709.102 , p = .000; Cramer's V = .178
[70] Boys KS2: M = 3.10, SD = 2.075; Boys KS3: M = 3.15, SD = 2.104; Boys KS4: M = 3.28, SD = 2.132; Girls KS2: M = 2.40, SD = 1.803; Girls KS3: M = 2.78, SD = 2.102; Girls KS4: M = 3.03, SD = 2.127; F(2, 16070) = 10.733, p = .000.
[71] χ^2 (12, 8188) = 124.795, p = .000; Cramer's V = .089
[72] χ^2 (12, 7888) = 124.563, p = .000; Cramer's V = .089
[73] χ^2 (9, N = 4450) = 1932.445, p = .000, Cramer's V = .347

Types of writing and background demographics or attainment

[74] Diary: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 1336.153, p = .000; Cramer's V = .381; Blogs: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 149.295, p = .000; Cramer's V = .094; Text messages: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 181.805, p = .000; Cramer's V = .104; Notes in class: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 255.809, p = .000; Cramer's V = .123; Poems: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 278.645, p = .000; Cramer's V = .128; Lyrics: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 542.075, p = .000; Cramer's V = .179; Emails: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 130.726, p = .000; Cramer's V = .088; Instant messages: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 190.756, p = .000; Cramer's V = .106; Letters: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 233.273, p = .000; Cramer's V = .117; Notes to other people: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 847.055, p = .000; Cramer's V = .224; Fiction: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 86.757, p = .000; Cramer's V = .072; SNS: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 466.917, p = .000; Cramer's V = .163.

[76] Diary: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 28.982, p = .000; Cramer's V = .043; Text messages: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 133.803, p = .000; Cramer's V = .093; Social networking site: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 81.882, p = .000; Cramer's V = .072; Poems: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 140.403, p = .000; Cramer's V = .095; Lyrics: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 87.537, p = .000; Cramer's V = .043; Blogs: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 37.651, p = .000; Cramer's V = .049; Emails: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 36.036, p = .000; Cramer's V = .048; Notes to other people: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) =75.104, p = .000; Cramer's V = .069.
[77] Notes in class: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 12.144, ns; Essays: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 13.276, ns; Newspaper or magazine articles: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 9.032, ns; Reviews: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 10.267, ns; Reports: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 8.193, ns; Instant messages: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 7.747, ns; Letters: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 10.144, ns; Fiction: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 9.032, ns; Plays or screenplays: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 8.255, ns.
[78] Text messages: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 272.840, p = .000; Cramer's V = .130; Emails: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 191.434, p = .000; Cramer's V = .109; Social networking site: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 150.874, p = .000; Cramer's V = .097; Notes in class: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 198.134, p = .000; Cramer's V = .111; Instant messages: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 92.674, p = .000; Cramer's V = .076; Notes to other people: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 48.281, p = .000; Cramer's V = .055; Letters: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 158.512, p = .000; Cramer's V = .099; Diary: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 229.115, p = .000; Cramer's V = .119; Fiction: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 226.410, p = .000; Cramer's V = .118; Lyrics: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 106.561, p = .000; Cramer's V = .081; Blogs: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 63.592, p = .000; Cramer's V = .063; Essays: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 79.421, p = .000; Cramer's V = .070; Newspaper or magazine articles: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 93.830, p = .000; Cramer's V = .076; Poems: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 40.650, p = .000; Cramer's V = .052; Reports: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 56.054, p = .000; Cramer's V = .059; Plays or screenplays: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 67.500, p = .000; Cramer's V = .050; Reviews: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 82.331, p = .000; Cramer's V = .071.

What makes a good writer and background demographics or attainment

[79] Enjoys writing: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 112.022, p = .000; Cramer's V = .081; Uses imagination: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 178.877, p = .000; Cramer's V = .103; Uses correct punctuation: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 42.482, p = .000; Cramer's V = .052; Reads a lot: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 53.644, p = .000; Cramer's V = .056; Checks one's work: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 80.034, p = .000; Cramer's V = .069; Tries things out: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 125.018, p = .000; Cramer's V = .086; Talks about writing: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 54.568, p = .000; Cramer's V = .057.
[80] Writes neatly: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 23.944, p = .000; Cramer's V = .049;
[81] Knows how to spell: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = .117, ns; Knows how to type: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = 6.034, ns; Writes a lot: χ^2 (1, N = 16947) = .650, ns.
[82] Uses imagination: χ^2 (2, N = 17089) = 326.927, p = .000; Cramer's V = .138; Uses punctuation correctly: χ^2 (2, N = 17089) = 174.293, p = .000; Cramer's V = .101; Checks work: χ^2 (2, N = 17089) = 101.985, p = .000; Cramer's V = .077; Knows how to spell: χ^2 (2, N = 17089) = 97.429, p = .000; Cramer's V = .076; Reads a lot: χ^2 (2, N = 17089) = 71.227, p = .000; Cramer's V = .065; Enjoys writing: χ^2 (2, N = 17089) = 134.905, p = .000; Cramer's V = .089;
[83] Try things out χ^2 (2, N = 17089) = 53.64, p = .000; Cramer's V = .056; Talk about writing: χ^2 (2, N = 17089) = 40.210, p = .000; Cramer's V = .049.
[84] Writes neatly: χ^2 (2, N = 17089) = 38.379, p = .000; Cramer's V = .047; Writes a lot: χ^2 (2, N = 17089) = 25.242, p = .000; Cramer's V = .038.
[85] Knows how to type: χ^2 (2, N = 17089) = 10.276, ns.
[86] Uses imagination: χ^2 (1, N = 16897) = 169.938, p = .000; Cramer's V = .100; Tries things out: χ^2 (1, N = 16897) = 45.162, p = .000; Cramer's V = .52; Uses punctuation correctly: χ^2 (1, N = 16897) = 61.081, p = .000; Cramer's V =

.060; Checks work: χ^2 (1, N = 16897) = 79.555, p = .000; Cramer's V = .069; Reads a lot: χ^2 (1, N = 16897) = 45.369, p = .000; Cramer's V = .052; Enjoys writing: χ^2 (1, N = 16897) = 99.383, p = .000; Cramer's V = .077.

[87] Writes neatly: χ^2 (1, N = 16897) = .016, ns; Knows how to spell: χ^2 (1, N = 16897) = 4.076, ns; Knows how to type: χ^2 (1, N = 16897) = 2.597, ns; Writes a lot: χ^2 (1, N = 16897) = .410, ns; Talks about writing: χ^2 (1, N = 16897) = 2.589, ns.

[88] Uses imagination: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 33.153, p = .000; Cramer's V = .046; Tries things out: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 20.773, p = .000; Cramer's V = .036; Uses punctuation correctly: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 27.630, p = .000; Cramer's V = .042;

[89] Reads a lot: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 63.4, p = .000; Cramer's V = .046.

[90] Enjoys writing: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 50.902, p = .000; Cramer's V = .057.

[91] Checks work: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 6.276, ns; Writes neatly: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 4.345, ns; Knows how to spell: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 5.345, ns; Knows how to type: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 6.470, ns; Writes a lot χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 9.200, ns; Talks about writing: χ^2 (3, N = 15599) = 8.379, ns.

[92] Uses imagination: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 378.288, p = .000, Cramer's V = .153; Tries things out: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 21.041, p = .000, Cramer's V = .036; Uses punctuation: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 91.307, p = .000, Cramer's V = .075; Checks their work: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 106.144, p = .000, Cramer's V = .081; Writes neatly: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 76.792, p = .000, Cramer's V = .069; Knows how to spell: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 0.214, ns; Knows how to type: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 78.649, p = .000, Cramer's V = .070; Reads a lot: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 51.395, p = .000, Cramer's V = .056; Writes a lot: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 36.195, p = .000, Cramer's V = .055; Talks about writing: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 48.871, p = .000, Cramer's V = .055; Enjoys writing: χ^2 (2, N = 4450) = 150.093, p = .000, Cramer's V = .096.

Importance of writing to succeed in life by background demographics or attainment

[94] Boys M = 1.67, SD .897; Girls M = 1.68, SD = 1.513; t(15754) = -.407, ns.

[95] KS2: M = 2.44, SD = .926; KS3: M = 2.48, SD = .916; KS4: M = 2.50, SD = .950; F(2,169326) = 5.132, ns

[96] FSMs M = 1.69, SD 1.203; NFSMs M = 1.68, SD = 1.232; t(15710) = .349, ns

[97] White: M = 2.39, SD = .945; Mixed: M = 2.36, SD = .949; Asian: M = 2.26, SD = .902; Black: M = 2.33, SD = .903; F(3,15570) = 10.422, p = .000; ω^2 = .002

[98] χ^2 (8, N = 4450) = 1337.529, p = .000; Cramer's V = .291