



SLAUGHTER AND MAY

Family Matters: The Importance of Family Support for Young People's Reading

Findings from the National Literacy Trust's 2011 annual literacy survey

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Words for life

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Table of contents

Acknowledgements	3
Tables and figures	4
Overview	5
Summary of findings.....	5
Main findings	5
Introduction	8
Method	8
Supporting reading in the home.....	9
Family encouragement to read	9
Family being seen reading.....	10
Other indicators of family support for young people's reading.....	10
Some demographic differences in family support.....	11
The impact of family support for young people's reading	12
Reading attainment	12
Family support, young people's reading enjoyment, confidence, frequency and attitudes.....	13
Wrapping up.....	15
Family Matters 2011 – Data tables	17
Appendix A: An introduction to the annual literacy survey.....	23
Appendix B: Methodology.....	24
Participation rate.....	24
Appendix C: Sample characteristics	25

Tables and figures

Figure 1: Encouragement to read by mother and father in 2005, 2009 and 2011	9
Figure 2: Mothers and fathers being seen to be reading in 2005, 2009 and 2011	10
Figure 3: Reading opportunities in 2011	11
Table 1: Reading attainment and levels of encouragement to read in 2011 (N = 7,000)	12
Table 2: Reading attainment and being seen to be reading in 2011 (N = 7,000).....	13
Table 3: Reading variables and encouragement to read in 2011	13
Table 4: Agreement with some attitudinal items and levels of encouragement to read in 2011 ..	14
Table 5: Reading variables and mother/father being seen to be reading in 2011.....	14
Table 6: Agreement with some attitudinal items and mother/father being seen to be reading in 2011	15
Table 7: Encouragement to read in 2011: whole sample and broken down by demographics ..	18
Table 8: Being seen to be reading in 2011: whole sample and broken down by demographics	19
Table 9: Talking about reading in 2011: whole sample and broken down by demographic background	20
Table 10a: Reading opportunities in 2011: whole sample and broken down by demographics ..	21
Table 10b: Reading opportunities in 2011: whole sample and broken down by demographics ..	22
Table C1: Sample age.....	25
Table C2: Ethnic background	25

Overview

Parents play a pivotal role in their children's education and literacy is one of the areas where parents have the relatively simple facilities, such as books or other reading materials, to become involved and to make a significant difference. In addition to reading with their children, parents can also show them that they value reading as a worthwhile activity by encouraging them to read and by reading themselves. These two activities are the focus of this short report on findings from our annual research funded by law firm Slaughter and May.

A significant area of concern highlighted by the report is that fathers are far less likely to support their children's reading. Far fewer fathers than mothers encourage their children to read, with one in three fathers giving no reading encouragement to their children at all. Mothers are twice as likely to be seen reading by their child than fathers, with one third of dads never seen with a book, newspaper or magazine. This is concerning as our research found that the children who are encouraged to read by their parents are achieving higher reading levels at school, and those who see their parents reading think more positively about reading than those who don't.

We hope the research will raise wider awareness of the role that parents can play and particularly encourage more fathers to support their child's reading. Our *Words for Life* parent campaign has developed tips and activities specifically to support fathers; this can be found at www.wordsforlife.org.uk.

Summary of findings

This report shows that what parents say, and what they do, can have a considerable impact on young people's reading enjoyment, confidence and attainment.

Nearly 21,000 8 to 16-year-olds from 128 schools in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales participated in our second annual literacy survey¹ at the end of November/December 2011. Using this data, this brief report explores who in the family encourages young people to read and who in the family is seen reading. It also outlines how each of these relate to young people's reading enjoyment, attitudes and behaviour as well as reading attainment.

Since we asked similar questions about parental involvement in reading in two previous surveys (a 2005 survey of over 8,500 primary and secondary pupils and a 2009 survey of over 17,000 young people), we also wanted to investigate how findings from 2011 compare with findings from 2005 and 2009.

Main findings

Parents can get involved with their children's reading in a variety of ways. One simple but effective way is to encourage them to read. To what extent do young people feel encouraged to read at home and what are the potential benefits?

- 82.6% of young people taking part in the 2011 survey say they receive at least some encouragement to read from their mother; the proportion of young people who say they are encouraged to read by their mother has remained broadly similar between 2005 and 2011.
- However, fewer young people report some encouragement from their fathers, with only 66.3% of young people in 2011 saying that their father encourages them to read to some degree. The percentage of young people who say their father encourages them to read a lot decreased from 28.7% in 2005 to 24.9% in 2011.
- Young people who get a lot of encouragement to read from their mother or father are more likely to perceive themselves as readers, to enjoy reading, to read frequently and

¹ For more information about our annual literacy survey see **Appendix A, p. 23**

to have positive attitudes towards reading compared to young people who do not get any encouragement to read from their mother or father.

- 48% of young people who read above the expected level for their age say that their mother encourages them to read a lot. Only 29% of young people who read below their expected level also say their mother encourages them to read a lot. Similarly, young people who read below the expected level for their age are four times more likely than those who read above the expected level to say that their father does not encourage them to read at all.

The other simple way that parents can become involved is by reading themselves and acting as reading role models.

- The majority (85.1%) of young people see their mother read either a lot or sometimes, but considerably fewer (67.1%) see their fathers reading. Indeed, over twice as many fathers as mothers were never seen reading by young people (32.9% vs. 14.9% respectively).
- The proportion of fathers who are not seen to be reading at all has increased considerably from 25.4% in 2009 to 32.9% in 2011.
- Young people who see their mother and father read a lot are more likely to identify themselves as readers, to enjoy reading, to read frequently and to have positive attitudes towards reading compared to young people who do not see their mother or father read at all.
- 47% of young people who read above the expected level for their age say that they see their mother read a lot. In comparison, just over a third of young people who read below their expected level say their mother reads a lot. Also, a third of young people who read above the expected level for their age say their father reads a lot compared with one-fifth of young people who read below their expected level.

Other interesting findings include:

- Most young people do not talk with their family about what they are reading on a regular basis. Indeed, 46% of young people say that they rarely or never talk about what they are reading with their family
- 12% of young people say that they have not received a book as a present, with nearly twice as many KS4 pupils (14 to 16 years old) as KS2 pupils (8 to 11 years old) saying that they have not been given a book as a present
- 14% of young people say that they have not been to a bookshop, with nearly twice as many KS4 pupils as KS2 pupils saying that they have not been to a bookshop

Family support for literacy therefore does not require a high level of academic ability or substantial financial resources; simple, everyday actions such as encouraging children to read and being seen reading can contribute positively to young people's reading attitudes and behaviour. Encouragingly, the majority of young people feel they are encouraged to read by both their mother and father and say they see both parents read. In turn, young people encouraged by a family member are twice as likely to read outside of class every day as those who are not, and those who see their parents read regularly also report more positive reading attitudes, increased reading frequency and enjoyment. They are also considerably more likely to read above the expected level for their age than those who are not encouraged to read or who rarely see parents read.

However, when surveys from 2005, 2009 and 2011 compared, less positive trends may be seen. While all three surveys show that family support for reading decreases as children grow older (which is understandable, if unfortunate, as reading for pleasure continues to have an impact on life chances into young adulthood and beyond), one of the strongest trends appearing relates to the role of fathers in supporting young people's literacy.

More must be done to increase parents', and particularly fathers', awareness of the important role they play in supporting their children's literacy. This has long been a priority of National Literacy Trust initiatives such as Literacy Champions, the Young Readers Programme for Families and Premier League Reading Stars, which uses the motivating power of sport to inspire men and boys in reading for pleasure. The challenge for organisations working with families, and families themselves, is to try and find time to help children and young people discover and develop themselves as readers by encouraging them to read, taking time to talk about reading and being seen to enjoy reading.

Introduction

Research has shown that the most accurate predictor of a pupil's achievement is not parental income or social status but the extent to which parents are able to create a home environment that encourages learning, communicates high, yet reasonable, expectations for achievement and future careers, and where parents become involved in their children's education at the school and in the community (for a research overview see:

http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0000/7901/Research_review-importance_of_families_and_home.pdf).

Literacy is one of the areas where parents have the simple facilities (a book or other reading materials) to become involved and to make a difference. Indeed, of all school subjects, reading has been found to be most sensitive to parental influences (Senechal and LeFevre, 2002). In turn, success in reading is a gateway to achievement in other academic areas. Involvement with reading activities at home has significant positive influences not only on reading achievement, language comprehension and expressive language skills, but also on pupils' interest in reading, attitudes towards reading and attentiveness in the classroom. Previous studies have provided ample evidence that parents who promote reading as a valuable and worthwhile activity have children who are motivated to read for pleasure².

The earlier parents become involved in their children's literacy practices, the more profound the results and the longer lasting the effects. Simple interactions, such as being read to, and exposure to books, magazines, newspapers and environmental print, impact children's progress in learning to read, and children who come from richer home literacy environments show higher levels of reading knowledge and skills at the start of reception and throughout primary school. Indeed, a report based on data from the most recent PISA survey showed that pupils whose parents read books to them as they entered primary school were more likely to have higher reading scores at age 15³. This is not just a reflection of their socioeconomic background and access to resources as "even among families with similar socioeconomic backgrounds, reading books to young children is still strongly related to better performance when those children reach the age of 15", (PISA, 2012, p. 18).

Although parental involvement has the greatest effect in the early years, its importance to children's educational and literacy outcomes continues into the teenage years. In addition to physically reading to them, parents can show their children that they value reading as a worthwhile activity by not only encouraging their children to read but also by being seen to be reading themselves. These two activities are the focus of this short report.

Method

Using data from our annual literacy survey in 2011, (for more information see **Appendix A**) in which nearly 21,000 young people aged 8 to 16 participated (see **Appendix B**), this paper explores the following:

- The degree to which young people feel that they receive encouragement to read from their parents
- The degree to which young people see their parents read
- Other family support indicators, such as talking about reading, getting books as presents and going to the library
- How encouragement to read and seeing their mother/father read are associated with young people's enjoyment of reading, attitudes towards reading and reading behaviour

² For an overview of the importance of parental involvement see Clark (2007)

http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0000/2040/Why_families_matter.pdf and Bonci (2008, 2011)

http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0000/7901/Research_review-importance_of_families_and_home.pdf

³ <http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/content/book/9789264176232-en>

In a subsample of 7,000 young people for whom we have reading attainment data, we also explore the link between family encouragement to read, seeing parents reading and young people's reading attainment.

Since we asked similar questions about parental involvement in reading in two previous surveys (a 2005 survey of over 8,500 primary and secondary pupils and a 2009 survey of over 17,000 young people), we also wanted to investigate how findings from 2011 compare with findings from 2005 and 2009.

Supporting reading in the home

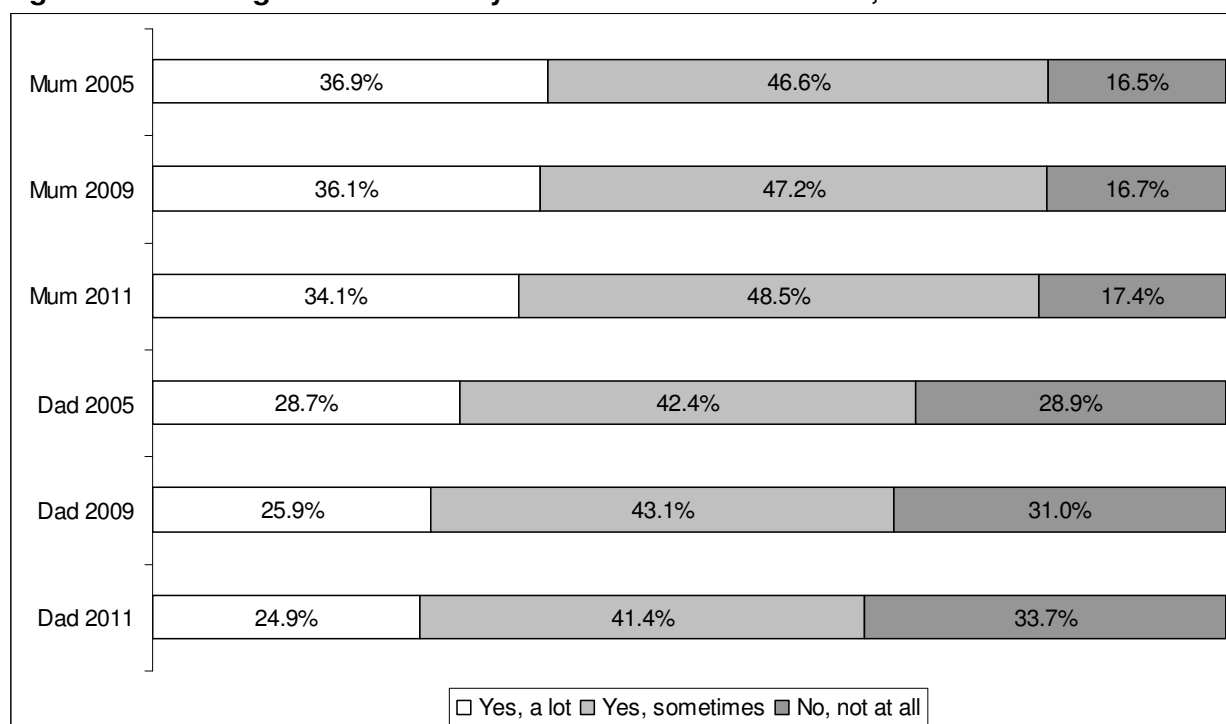
Family encouragement to read

Happily, the majority of young people say they are encouraged to read by at least one parent. In the 2011 survey, 82.6% of young people say that their mother encourages them to read either a lot (34.1%) or sometimes (48.5%). A considerably lower proportion (66.3%) of young people say that their father encourages them to read either a lot (24.9%) or sometimes (41.4%).

However, nearly a fifth of young people (17.4%) say their mother doesn't encourage them to read at all, and nearly twice as many (33.7%) say they receive no encouragement from their father. Not only are fathers less likely than mothers to encourage reading, there is also some evidence that fewer fathers now offer any encouragement to read compared to a few years ago.

Comparisons with data from 2005 and 2009 (see **Figure 1**) show that while the proportion of young people who say they are encouraged to read by their mother has remained relatively stable, the proportion encouraged to read by their father has fallen consistently since 2005. For example, the percentage of young people who say that their father encourages them to read a lot decreased from 28.7% in 2005 to 24.9% in 2011, while the percentage of young people who say that their father doesn't encourage them to read at all rose from 28.9% in 2005 to 33.7% in 2011.

Figure 1: Encouragement to read by mother and father in 2005, 2009 and 2011

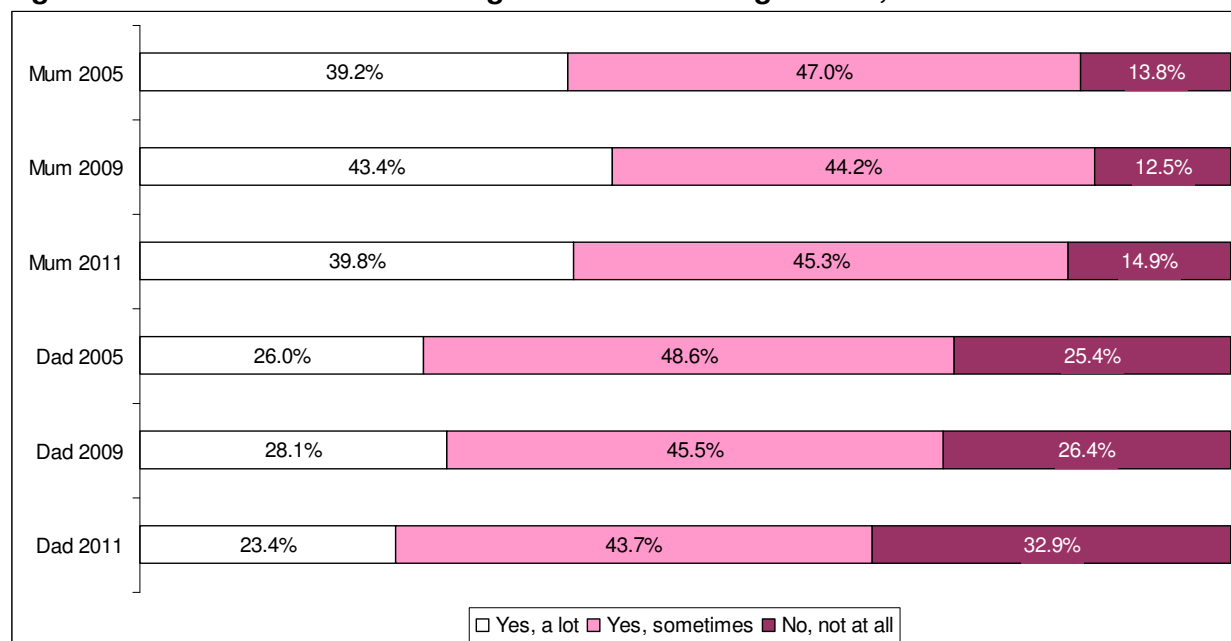


Family being seen reading

Just as more young people say that their mother encourages them to read compared to fathers, more young people say that they see their mother read than say they see their fathers read. 39.8% of young people say that they see their mother read a lot compared with 23.4% who see their father read a lot. 45.3% say that they see their mother read sometimes compared with 43.7% of fathers. Overall, over twice as many fathers as mothers were not seen to be reading at all by young people (14.9% of mothers compared with 32.9% of fathers.)

Figure 2 shows that between 2005 and 2009 there was a slight increase in the proportion of mothers and fathers seen to be reading a lot.. However, particularly in the case of fathers, this trend reversed in 2011: the proportion of fathers seen to be reading a lot or sometimes decreases and the proportion of fathers who are not seen to be reading at all increases from 25.4% in 2009 to 32.3% in 2011.

Figure 2: Mothers and fathers being seen to be reading in 2005, 2009 and 2011



Other indicators of family support for young people's reading

Information about levels of encouragement as well as family members being seen reading gives an indication about the value placed on reading in the home. Other potential indicators include time spent talking about reading, visiting libraries and bookshops and receiving books as presents. Findings from PISA (2012)⁴ suggest that these additional indicators have different degrees of impact. For example, they found that talking with 15-year-olds is more beneficial in terms of reading proficiency than going to the library or to a bookstore with them.

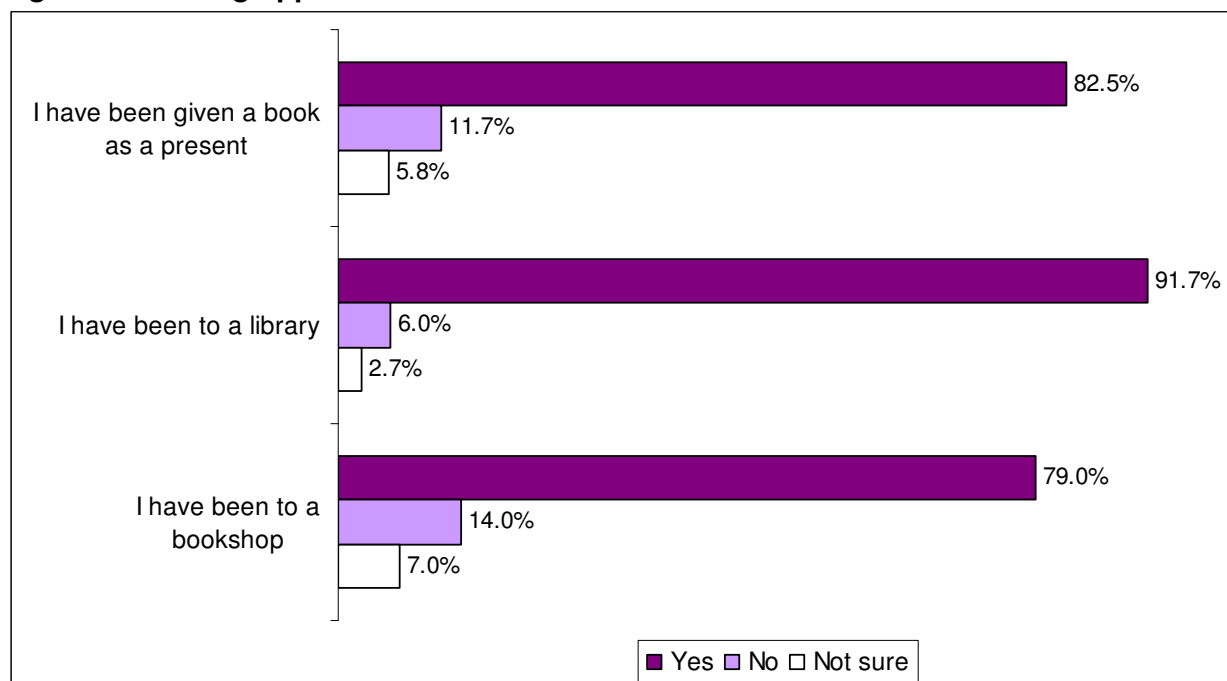
When we asked young people how frequently they talk about what they are reading with their family we found that it is something that most families do not engage in on a regular basis. Just a little over one in eight young people (13.2%) talk with their family about what they are reading every day, while just over a fifth (22.5%) talk about what they are reading with their family at least once week. Indeed, 24.1% rarely talk with their family about what they are reading, while 22.4% do not talk with their family about what they are reading at all.

When young people were asked whether they had received a book as a present and whether or not they had been to a library and bookshop (see **Figure 3**), 82.5% of young people said that

⁴ <http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/content/book/9789264176232-en>

they had received a book as a gift. 79% had been to a bookshop, while 91.7% of young people had been to a library.

Figure 3: Reading opportunities in 2011



Some demographic differences in family support

The data tables (pp. 17) outline some of the differences in family involvement by demographic background. Some broad differences in family involvement can be seen in relation to gender, social or ethnic background and age.

Slightly more boys than girls say that neither parent encourages them to read at all. Boys are also more likely than girls to say that they never talk about what they are reading with their family (25.6% vs. 19.3%) and less likely than girls to receive a book as a present (79.7% vs. 85.3%).

A higher proportion of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds report not being encouraged to read at all, and they are also more likely to report not seeing parents read; again this difference is particularly pronounced with respect to the father's perceived reading behaviour.

More young people from White than from Black, Asian or Mixed backgrounds reported that their father did not encourage them to read at all, and young people from White backgrounds were also more likely to say that they never see their father reading.

The age of a child has a significant impact on how likely they are to be encouraged to read by both parents. Twice as many KS2 (8 to 11-year-olds) as KS4 (14 to 16-year-olds) pupils say that their mother and father encourage them a lot. 49% of fathers of children aged 8 to 16 interviewed for the last National Year of Reading said they did not read with their child at all; 62% gave the age of the child as the reason, compared to 15% citing lack of time. Nearly twice as many KS4 as KS2 pupils said that they have not received a book as a present and they have not been to a bookshop.

The impact of family support for young people's reading

The above sections show that a sizeable proportion of young people do not get any encouragement to read from their mother or their father and do not see their mother or father read at all. The majority of young people also report that they rarely or never talk about what they are reading with their family. This should be of concern as our data also highlights the strong relationships that exist between family involvement, reading attainment and wider reading.

Reading attainment

As indicated in **Table 1**, nearly half (48.0%) of young people who read above the expected level for their age say that their mother encourages them to read a lot. 40% say that they get some encouragement to read from their mother, while 12% say that their mother does not encourage them to read at all.

By contrast, fewer than a third (29.2%) of young people who read below the expected level for their age say that they get a lot of encouragement to read from their mother. Twice as many young people (23.4%) who read below the expected level said that their mother does not encourage them to read at all compared with young people who read above the expected level.

A similar relationship exists between reading attainment and encouragement to read by their father; nearly half (47%) of young people who read above the expected level for their age say that their father encourages them a lot compared with a fifth (20.7%) who read below their expected level. Young people who read below the expected level for their age are also four times more likely to say that their father does not encourage them to read at all (42%) compared with young people who read above the expected level for their age (10.7%).

Table 1: Reading attainment and levels of encouragement to read in 2011 (N = 7,000)

	<i>Mother</i>			<i>Father</i>		
	<i>Yes, a lot</i> %	<i>Yes, sometimes</i> %	<i>No, not at all</i> %	<i>Yes, a lot</i> %	<i>Yes, sometimes</i> %	<i>No, not at all</i> %
Reading below expected level	29.2	47.5	23.4	20.7	37.3	42.0
Reading at expected level	31.9	51.7	16.4	23.0	54.1	22.9
Reading above expected level	48.0	40.0	12.0	47.0	42.2	10.7

(Please note that numbers might not add up to 100% as percentages are rounded up or down to the nearest one decimal place)

Table 2 shows that similar relationships exist between reading attainment and mothers/fathers being seen to be reading. 47.1% of young people who read above the expected level for their age say that their mother reads a lot compared with 35.2% who read below their expected level. Conversely, 21.4% of young people who read below the level expected for their age say that they do not see their mother read at all compared with 13.6% who read above the level expected for their age.

Similarly, 31.1% of young people who read above the expected level for their age say that their father reads a lot compared with 18.9% of young people who read below their expected level. 42.1% of young people who read below their expected level say they do not see their father read at all compared with 29.9% of those who read above the level expected for their age.

Table 2: Reading attainment and being seen to be reading in 2011 (N = 7,000)

	<i>Mother</i>			<i>Father</i>		
	<i>Yes, a lot</i>	<i>Yes, sometimes</i>	<i>No, not at all</i>	<i>Yes, a lot</i>	<i>Yes, sometimes</i>	<i>No, not at all</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Reading below expected level	35.2	43.4	21.4	18.9	38.9	42.1
Reading at expected level	39.0	47.0	14.0	22.4	45.6	32.0
Reading above expected level	47.1	39.3	13.6	31.1	39.0	29.9

Family support and young people's reading enjoyment, confidence, frequency and attitudes

Twice as many young people who say that they get a lot of encouragement to read from their mother or father say that they enjoy reading either very much or quite a lot compared with young people who do not get any encouragement to read from either their mother or father (66.9% vs. 33.2% - see **Table 3**).

Furthermore, in terms of self-perceived reading ability, young people who say they receive no encouragement to read from their mother or father are more than twice as likely to believe that they are not very good readers compared with young people get encouragement from their parents (20.6% vs. 9.6%).

43.1% of young people who say that they get a lot of encouragement to read from their mother or father also say that they read outside of class every day compared with just 23.9% of young people who do not get any encouragement to read at all.

Table 3: Reading variables and encouragement to read in 2011

	<i>Mother</i>			<i>Father</i>		
	<i>Yes, a lot</i>	<i>Yes, sometimes</i>	<i>No, not at all</i>	<i>Yes, a lot</i>	<i>Yes, sometimes</i>	<i>No, not at all</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Enjoying reading either very much or quite a lot	66.9	45.0	33.2	68.2	50.8	36.5
Rating themselves to be not very good readers	9.8	11.7	16.4	9.4	10.4	14.9
Reading outside of class every day	42.6	25.1	24.2	43.6	29.2	23.6

In addition, young people who feel that they are being encouraged to read by their mother or father tend to hold more positive attitudes towards reading than young people who do not feel that they are being encouraged to read. **Table 4** shows that young people who are encouraged to read a lot by their mother or father are more likely to agree with the statements "The more I read, the better I become" and "Reading is cool". Conversely, twice as many young people who say that they do not get any encouragement as those who say they are encouraged to read a lot agree with the statements "I cannot find anything to read that interests me" and "I only read when I have to".

Table 4: Agreement with some attitudinal items and levels of encouragement to read in 2011

	<i>Mother</i>			<i>Father</i>		
	<i>Yes, a lot</i>	<i>Yes, sometimes</i>	<i>No, not at all</i>	<i>Yes, a lot</i>	<i>Yes, sometimes</i>	<i>No, not at all</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
The more I read, the better I become	86.4	76.5	58.5	88.1	78.9	65.6
I only read when I have to	20.5	25.3	40.5	19.9	22.4	35.7
Reading is cool	49.1	26.9	21.5	52.7	30.6	22.5
I cannot find anything to read that interests me	20.9	26.1	37.9	20.4	23.3	34.2

Mirroring the relationships seen with respect to encouragement to read, **Table 5** shows that 61.7% of young people who say that their mother and father read a lot also say that they enjoy reading either very much or quite a lot, compared with 36.4% who do not see their mother or father read. The same relationship also holds with respect to seeing one's sibling read.

There is also a clear relationship with reading frequency, with nearly twice as many young people who say that they see their mother and father read a lot also saying that they read outside of class every day compared with young people who do not see their mother or father read. Young people who see their siblings read a lot are also more likely to engage in daily reading compared with their peers who do not see their brothers or sisters read.

Similarly, with respect to self-perceived reading ability, young people who do not see their mother, father or siblings read are more likely to believe that they are not very good readers compared with young people who see their mother, father or siblings read a lot.

Table 5: Reading variables and mother/father being seen to be reading in 2011

	<i>Mother</i>			<i>Father</i>		
	<i>Yes, a lot</i>	<i>Yes, sometimes</i>	<i>No, not at all</i>	<i>Yes, a lot</i>	<i>Yes, sometimes</i>	<i>No, not at all</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Enjoying reading either very much or quite a lot	59.7	47.3	34.8	63.6	52.4	38.0
Reading outside of class every day	37.2	28.6	21.0	41.8	31.3	22.7
Rating themselves to be not very good readers	10.1	11.3	17.3	9.1	10.2	15.2

With respect to attitudes towards reading, young people who see their mother or father read a lot also tend to think more positively about reading than young people who do not see their mother or father read (see **Table 6**).

Table 6: Agreement with some attitudinal items and mother/father being seen to be reading in 2011

	<i>Mother</i>			<i>Father</i>		
	<i>Yes, a lot</i>	<i>Yes, sometimes</i>	<i>No, not at all</i>	<i>Yes, a lot</i>	<i>Yes, sometimes</i>	<i>No, not at all</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
The more I read, the better I become	81.2	76.7	63.9	82.6	78.9	69.2
I only read when I have to	22.1	25.9	38.9	21.0	22.4	35.1
Reading is cool	40.6	30.3	23.5	45.9	33.2	24.6
I cannot find anything to read that interests me	23.4	25.1	37.8	22.6	22.5	33.6

Wrapping up

What parents say, and what they do, can have a considerable impact on young people's reading enjoyment, confidence and attainment. Young people encouraged by a family member are twice as likely to read outside of class every day as those who receive no encouragement, and those who see their parents read regularly also report more positive reading attitudes, increased reading frequency and enjoyment. They are also considerably more likely to read above the expected level for their age than those who are not encouraged to read or who rarely see parents read. Family support for literacy does not require a high level of academic ability or substantial financial resources – simple, everyday actions such as encouraging children to read, being seen reading and talking about reading can all contribute positively to young people's reading attitudes and behaviours.

Encouragingly, the majority of young people feel they are encouraged to read by both their mother and father and say they see both parents read. However, when surveys from 2005, 2009 and 2011 compared, less positive trends may be seen. All three surveys show that family support for reading decreases as children grow older (which is understandable, if unfortunate, as reading for pleasure continues to have an impact on life chances into young adulthood and beyond)⁵. All show some correlation between levels of family support and socioeconomic circumstances and between levels of family support and ethnicity. However one of the strongest trends appearing relates to the role of fathers⁶ in supporting young people's literacy.

Fathers are important reading role models for their children (Clark, Osborne and Dugdale, 2009) and their reading habits can have a substantial influence on their children's ability to read, their level of interest and their reading choices (Lloyd, 1999). However, evidence from the latest PISA report finds mothers are generally more likely to be engaged in supporting young people's reading, for example by discussing books, films or television programmes and talking about reading, or just spending time talking with their children (although interestingly, in some countries, fathers are more involved in helping children with their homework). This would also seem to be the case in our own surveys, which show an increasing proportion of young people saying they are not encouraged to read by either parent, with the trend being particularly pronounced in relation to fathers.

⁵ Taylor (2011): <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/189/childrens-books/articles/other-articles/the-impact-of-reading-on-career-projects>

Between 2005 and 2011, the percentage of young people who reported receiving no encouragement to read from their father increased from 28.9% to 33.7%, and in the same period the proportion of young people saying that they never see their father read rose from a quarter to a third. The most recent (2011) survey showed that young people who read below the expected level for their age were four times more likely than those reading above the expected level to say they received no encouragement to read from their father, and two-fifths of young people in this group say they never see their father reading.

While we do not have data to give us the full context of some elements of the findings (for example, children were not asked if their father was resident or how much time they spent with their father) factors influencing fathers' support for their children's literacy have been explored as part of a previous review (Clark, 2009). The review found little evidence to suggest that fathers are spending less time with their children, and that practical explanations such as employment status could not always explain different levels of involvement (for example, unemployed fathers were more likely than employed fathers to read to their children every day, but were also more likely not to read to their children at all). Other potential factors influencing young people's perception of fathers' reading could be related to the literacy activities fathers may be more likely to engage in (e.g. technology, informational, environmental print) and whether they are valued equally with book-based activities. The questions relating to family support for young people's reading included in the surveys referenced in this report were limited, however, and further investigation would be needed to fully explore such theories.

What is clear is that more must be done to increase parents', and particularly fathers', awareness of the important role they play in supporting their children's literacy. This has long been a priority of National Literacy Trust initiatives such as Literacy Champions, the Young Readers Programme for Families and Premier League Reading Stars, which aims to improve male engagement with children's literacy by using the motivating power of sport to inspire men and boys to read for pleasure. The challenge to organisations working with families, and families themselves, is to try and find time to help children and young people discover and develop themselves as readers by encouraging them to read, taking time to talk about reading and being seen to enjoy reading.

Family Matters 2011 – Data tables

The following pages contain the information for each of our reading questions in tables. Each table contains information pertaining to the sample as a whole (top purple row) as well as broken down by demographic background – gender, key stage, free school meal (FSM) uptake and ethnic background. The shaded areas at the bottom of each table contain information where two demographic background variables have been combined to provide a more detailed look into particular subgroups of young people.

Please note that due to rounding, the data in the tables do not necessarily add up to 100 in a row.

Table 7: Encouragement to read in 2011 for whole sample and broken down by demographics

	<i>Mothers</i>			<i>Fathers</i>		
	<i>Yes, a lot</i>	<i>Yes, sometimes</i>	<i>No, not at all</i>	<i>Yes, a lot</i>	<i>Yes, sometimes</i>	<i>No, not at all</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
All (N = 20,950)	34.1	48.5	17.4	24.9	41.4	33.7
Boys (N = 10,484)	33.1	47.7	19.3	24.4	40.9	34.7
Girls (N = 10,466)	35.2	49.3	15.5	25.5	41.9	32.6
KS2 (N = 4,031)	48.2	39.6	12.2	37.5	36.8	25.7
KS3 (N = 13,698)	33.2	50.9	15.9	23.6	43.6	32.8
KS4 (N = 3,139)	20.5	49.3	30.2	15.2	37.4	47.4
FSM (N = 3,147)	33.2	46.2	20.6	24.7	34.9	40.4
Non-FSM (N = 16,498)	34.1	49.1	16.8	24.7	42.6	32.7
White (N = 15,211)	32.0	50.1	17.9	22.6	42.4	35.1
Mixed (N = 990)	38.8	46.0	15.2	30.9	38.4	30.8
Asian (N = 1,458)	42.1	43.4	14.8	35.6	40.3	24.1
Black (N = 815)	53.3	34.7	12.0	44.5	29.3	26.2
Boys – KS2 (N = 1,965)	46.6	40.8	12.6	29.4	44.5	26.0
Girls – KS2 (N = 2,066)	49.7	38.5	11.7	29.7	41.5	28.8
Boys – KS3 (N = 6,907)	32.2	50.1	17.8	23.9	44.2	31.9
Girls – KS3 (N = 6,791)	34.3	51.8	14.0	21.2	44.1	34.8
Boys – KS4 (N = 1,565)	20.4	45.6	33.9	19.8	43.1	37.1
Girls – KS4 (N = 1,574)	20.5	52.8	26.7	18.7	42.7	38.6
Boys – FSM (N = 1,504)	32.0	44.2	23.8	19.3	38.6	42.1
Girls – FSM (N = 1,643)	34.3	48.0	17.7	18.9	38.2	42.8
Boys – Non-FSM (N = 8,311)	33.2	48.3	18.5	25.0	45.2	29.8
Girls – Non-FSM (N = 8,187)	35.1	49.9	15.0	22.9	44.4	32.7
Boys – White (N = 7,659)	31.0	49.4	19.6	23.5	44.8	31.8
Girls – White (N = 7,552)	33.0	50.8	16.2	21.0	43.7	35.2
Boys – Mixed (N = 486)	36.6	47.7	15.7	28.1	40.9	31.0
Girls – Mixed (N = 504)	41.0	44.4	14.7	27.2	42.9	30.0
Boys – Asian (N = 698)	40.5	41.5	18.0	24.7	47.4	27.9
Girls – Asian (N = 760)	43.5	45.1	11.3	25.4	47.1	27.5
Boys – Black (N = 413)	50.7	34.3	14.9	34.3	36.4	29.3
Girls – Black (N = 402)	55.9	35.1	9.0	38.5	36.7	24.8

Table 8: Being seen to be reading in 2011 for whole sample and broken down by demographics

	<i>Mothers</i>			<i>Fathers</i>		
	<i>Yes, a lot</i> %	<i>Yes, sometimes</i> %	<i>No, not at all</i> %	<i>Yes, a lot</i> %	<i>Yes, sometimes</i> %	<i>No, not at all</i> %
All (N = 20,950)	39.8	45.3	14.9	23.4	43.7	32.9
Boys (N = 10,484)	41.2	44.3	14.4	24.3	44.1	31.6
Girls (N = 10,466)	38.4	46.3	15.3	22.4	43.3	34.2
KS2 (N = 4,031)	46.8	41.4	11.7	29.6	43.0	27.5
KS3 (N = 13,698)	38.9	46.3	14.8	22.5	44.1	33.3
KS4 (N = 3,139)	35.4	45.9	18.8	19.3	42.9	37.8
FSM (N = 3,147)	35.1	44.9	20.0	19.1	38.4	42.5
Non-FSM (N = 16,498)	40.7	45.4	13.9	24.0	44.8	31.5
White (N = 15,211)	40.4	45.4	14.2	22.3	44.3	33.5
Mixed (N = 990)	41.5	43.9	14.5	27.6	41.9	30.5
Asian (N = 1,458)	28.4	50.3	21.3	25.1	47.2	27.7
Black (N = 815)	46.6	41.1	12.3	36.4	36.5	27.0
Boys – KS2 (N = 1,965)	47.7	40.3	12.0	36.8	37.6	25.6
Girls – KS2 (N = 2,066)	46.0	42.6	11.5	38.1	36.1	25.8
Boys – KS3 (N = 6,907)	40.8	44.8	14.4	23.0	42.8	34.2
Girls – KS3 (N = 6,791)	36.9	47.8	15.3	24.3	44.4	31.3
Boys – KS4 (N = 1,565)	35.3	47.0	17.7	15.9	36.2	47.9
Girls – KS4 (N = 1,574)	35.4	44.8	19.9	14.5	38.7	46.8
Boys – FSM (N = 1,504)	35.9	44.5	19.6	23.6	34.1	42.3
Girls – FSM (N = 1,643)	34.4	45.2	20.3	25.7	35.7	38.6
Boys – Non-FSM (N = 8,311)	42.1	44.4	13.5	24.4	42.0	33.6
Girls – Non-FSM (N = 8,187)	39.3	46.3	14.4	25.0	43.1	31.9
Boys – White (N = 7,659)	41.7	44.6	13.7	22.2	42.3	35.5
Girls – White (N = 7,552)	39.2	46.2	14.6	22.9	42.4	34.6
Boys – Mixed (N = 486)	45.1	40.6	14.3	28.8	39.2	32.0
Girls – Mixed (N = 504)	38.2	47.1	14.7	32.9	37.6	29.5
Boys – Asian (N = 698)	30.7	48.6	20.7	34.1	37.7	28.1
Girls – Asian (N = 760)	26.3	51.9	21.8	37.0	42.6	20.4
Boys – Black (N = 413)	47.7	40.2	12.1	45.5	25.5	31.0
Girls – Black (N = 402)	45.5	42.1	12.4	45.5	33.1	21.4

Table 9: Talking about reading in 2011 for whole sample and broken down by demographic background

	Every day %	At least once a week %	At least once a month %	A few times a year %	Rarely %	I do not talk with my family %
All (N = 20,950)	13.2	22.5	11.7	6.1	24.1	22.4
Boys (N = 10,484)	11.9	20.3	11.3	6.4	24.4	25.6
Girls (N = 10,466)	14.4	24.6	12.1	5.9	23.8	19.3
KS2 (N = 4,031)	29.0	30.5	7.8	5.3	14.5	12.8
KS3 (N = 13,698)	10.2	22.3	13.1	6.3	25.7	22.4
KS4 (N = 3,139)	5.9	12.9	10.5	6.2	29.5	34.9
FSM (N = 3,147)	16.3	19.6	8.8	5.8	23.4	26.2
Non-FSM (N = 16,498)	12.1	22.8	12.4	6.2	24.5	22.0
White (N = 15,211)	12.2	22.2	12.2	5.9	24.8	22.7
Mixed (N = 990)	15.9	26.2	12.1	5.8	20.4	19.6
Asian (N = 1,458)	16.7	23.9	10.5	6.5	21.8	20.5
Black (N = 815)	19.7	22.2	8.9	8.0	22.8	18.5
Boys – KS2 (N = 1,965)	26.2	28.0	8.3	5.6	15.9	15.9
Girls – KS2 (N = 2,066)	31.6	33.0	7.3	5.1	13.1	9.9
Boys – KS3 (N = 6,907)	9.4	20.4	12.6	6.7	25.8	25.2
Girls – KS3 (N = 6,791)	11.0	24.3	13.6	6.0	25.6	19.5
Boys – KS4 (N = 1,565)	5.3	10.3	9.4	6.6	28.8	39.7
Girls – KS4 (N = 1,574)	6.5	15.5	11.6	5.9	30.2	30.3
Boys – FSM (N = 1,504)	14.3	18.0	8.4	7.0	22.4	29.9
Girls – FSM (N = 1,643)	18.1	21.1	9.1	4.7	24.3	22.8
Boys – Non-FSM (N = 8,311)	11.3	20.5	12.0	6.3	24.8	25.1
Girls – Non-FSM (N = 8,187)	12.9	25.1	12.8	6.0	24.2	19.0
Boys – White (N = 7,659)	11.1	20.2	11.7	6.2	24.9	25.8
Girls – White (N = 7,552)	13.3	24.2	12.6	5.7	24.6	19.5
Boys – Mixed (N = 486)	14.8	21.8	13.3	5.8	18.9	25.4
Girls – Mixed (N = 504)	17.1	30.4	10.9	5.8	21.8	14.1
Boys – Asian (N = 698)	14.3	21.7	10.1	7.5	24.2	22.1
Girls – Asian (N = 760)	18.8	25.9	10.8	5.7	19.7	19.1
Boys – Black (N = 413)	16.5	18.0	9.7	8.7	24.3	22.8
Girls – Black (N = 402)	23.0	26.5	8.0	7.2	21.3	14.0

Table 10a: Reading opportunities in 2011 for whole sample and broken down by demographics

	<i>I have been given a book as a present</i>			<i>I have been to a library</i>		
	<i>Yes %</i>	<i>No %</i>	<i>Not sure %</i>	<i>Yes %</i>	<i>No %</i>	<i>Not sure %</i>
All (N = 20,950)	82.5	11.7	5.8	91.7	6.0	2.7
Boys (N = 10,484)	79.7	14.0	6.3	89.9	7.7	2.5
Girls (N = 10,466)	85.3	9.4	5.3	93.5	4.3	2.2
KS2 (N = 4,031)	85.2	8.5	6.3	90.5	6.7	2.8
KS3 (N = 13,698)	83.4	10.9	5.7	92.6	5.2	2.2
KS4 (N = 3,139)	75.5	18.7	5.8	89.5	8.3	2.2
FSM (N = 3,147)	75.7	17.2	7.1	90.3	7.0	2.8
Non-FSM (N = 16,498)	84.1	10.7	5.2	92.2	5.7	2.1
White (N = 15,211)	84.5	10.2	5.4	91.5	6.1	2.3
Mixed (N = 990)	83.4	10.2	6.5	92.8	5.6	1.6
Asian (N = 1,458)	67.8	23.5	8.7	93.0	4.2	2.8
Black (N = 815)	76.4	16.5	7.1	94.9	3.8	1.3
Boys – KS2 (N = 1,965)	81.8	11.4	6.8	89.0	8.4	2.6
Girls – KS2 (N = 2,066)	88.4	5.9	5.7	91.8	5.1	3.1
Boys – KS3 (N = 6,907)	81.0	12.8	6.2	90.9	6.7	2.4
Girls – KS3 (N = 6,791)	85.8	9.0	5.1	94.3	3.7	2.0
Boys – KS4 (N = 1,565)	71.7	22.8	6.0	86.6	11.0	2.4
Girls – KS4 (N = 1,574)	79.2	15.2	5.6	92.4	5.6	2.0
Boys – FSM (N = 1,504)	71.5	20.3	8.2	89.1	8.4	2.5
Girls – FSM (N = 1,643)	79.4	14.4	6.1	91.3	5.7	3.0
Boys – Non-FSM (N = 8,311)	81.5	12.9	5.6	90.3	7.4	2.3
Girls – Non-FSM (N = 8,187)	86.6	8.5	4.9	94.2	3.9	1.9
Boys – White (N = 7,659)	82.4	12.0	5.5	89.8	7.9	2.3
Girls – White (N = 7,552)	86.6	8.3	5.2	93.2	4.4	2.4
Boys – Mixed (N = 486)	81.1	11.7	7.2	91.1	6.9	1.9
Girls – Mixed (N = 504)	85.5	8.7	5.8	94.4	4.4	1.3
Boys – Asian (N = 698)	61.0	28.6	10.4	90.6	5.7	3.7
Girls – Asian (N = 760)	74.0	18.9	7.1	95.1	2.9	2.0
Boys – Black (N = 413)	72.5	19.7	7.8	92.8	5.4	1.8
Girls – Black (N = 402)	80.3	13.3	6.4	97.1	2.1	0.8

Table 10b: Reading opportunities in 2011 for whole sample and broken down by demographics

	<i>I have been to a bookshop</i>		
	<i>Yes</i> %	<i>No</i> %	<i>Not sure</i> %
All (N = 20,950)	79.0	14.0	7.0
Boys (N = 10,484)	75.8	17.1	7.2
Girls (N = 10,466)	82.2	11.1	6.8
KS2 (N = 4,031)	83.4	9.4	7.2
KS3 (N = 13,698)	79.2	13.7	7.1
KS4 (N = 3,139)	72.8	21.0	6.2
FSM (N = 3,147)	71.2	19.5	9.2
Non-FSM (N = 16,498)	80.7	13.1	6.3
White (N = 15,211)	79.2	13.8	7.0
Mixed (N = 990)	81.2	12.8	6.0
Asian (N = 1,458)	77.8	14.9	7.3
Black (N = 815)	80.2	14.9	4.9
Boys – KS2 (N = 1,965)	80.6	12.3	7.1
Girls – KS2 (N = 2,066)	85.9	6.7	7.4
Boys – KS3 (N = 6,907)	76.3	16.2	7.5
Girls – KS3 (N = 6,791)	82.1	11.2	6.7
Boys – KS4 (N = 1,565)	67.6	26.2	6.1
Girls – KS4 (N = 1,574)	77.9	15.8	6.3
Boys – FSM (N = 1,504)	67.6	23.2	9.2
Girls – FSM (N = 1,643)	74.5	16.3	9.3
Boys – Non-FSM (N = 8,311)	77.4	16.1	6.5
Girls – Non-FSM (N = 8,187)	84.0	10.0	6.0
Boys – White (N = 7,659)	76.2	16.7	7.0
Girls – White (N = 7,552)	82.1	10.9	7.0
Boys – Mixed (N = 486)	75.9	17.6	6.5
Girls – Mixed (N = 504)	86.4	8.1	5.5
Boys – Asian (N = 698)	72.6	19.3	8.1
Girls – Asian (N = 760)	82.5	10.8	6.6
Boys – Black (N = 413)	77.6	16.1	6.3
Girls – Black (N = 402)	82.8	13.7	3.6

Appendix A: An introduction to the annual literacy survey

We have been surveying children and young people on all sorts of literacy matters since 2005. This has given us great insight into the views and attitudes of youngsters on reading, writing, speaking and listening skills, home resources, role models, perception of themselves as readers and technology use.

However, what is still lacking in the attitudinal landscape in the UK is annual data on how young people feel about literacy to help us build a continuous picture of their attitudes year-on-year. It is the purpose of the National Literacy Trust annual literacy survey to plug this gap in the evidence base.

Combining previous National Literacy Trust survey topics, the annual literacy survey explores young people's attitudes towards reading, writing and communication skills as well as their technology use. More specifically, the key objectives of the annual literacy survey are to explore:

- Whether young people enjoy reading, how good they think they are at reading, how often they read and for how long, what type of materials they read outside of class, how many books they have in the home and what they think about reading.
- Whether young people enjoy writing, how good a writer they think they are, what makes a good writer, what types of materials they write and what they think about writing.
- What they think good communication skills are, how they feel about them and how important they are to succeed.

Two additional areas were included in the second annual literacy survey, which are family involvement in reading and young people's perceptions of themselves as readers.

In addition to exploring children's and young people's attitudes towards reading, writing and communication, we will also explore their link to attainment in a subsample of pupils for whom attainment data are available.

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

- Do reading enjoyment, behaviour and attitudes differ according to gender, age, socioeconomic and ethnic background?
- Do writing enjoyment, behaviour and attitudes differ according to gender, age, socioeconomic and ethnic background?
- Do attitudes towards communication skills and their perceived importance differ according to gender, age, socioeconomic and ethnic background?

Appendix B: Methodology

An invitation to participate in this online survey was sent out in National Literacy Trust newsletters at the beginning of September 2011. Schools were invited to express their interest to participate in one of three surveys:

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

The basic online survey consisted of 43 questions exploring young people's background, reading and writing enjoyment, behaviour and attitudes, attitudes towards communication skills as well as questions about family involvement and being a reader (these latter two were new areas for the 2011 survey).

Due to the complexity of the questions and some concepts, the decision was made to restrict the age range of participating pupils to upper Key Stage 2 (9 to 11 years) and older. However, some schools felt that their 8-year-olds would be capable of completing the survey.

210 schools expressed an interest in taking 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 14 November and 9 December 2011. It took an average of 25 minutes for young people to complete the survey. Schools were offered a school-specific summary report as an incentive to take part.

Participation rate

Of the 210 schools that had originally expressed an interest to take part 128 schools participated in our online survey – a participation rate of 61%. Of these, 115 were schools from England, four from Wales, three from Scotland and two from Northern Ireland. Four international English-speaking schools with a UK curriculum also took part. However, data from these international schools are not included in the analyses in this report.

Appendix C: Sample characteristics

Overall, 20,950 young people participated in this survey in November/December 2011. There was an equal gender split in the sample, with 50% boys (N = 10,484) and 50% girls (N = 10,466) participating.

Table C1 shows that the majority of pupils were 11, 12 and 13 years old. To investigate the impact of age, three broad categories were identified according to key stages: KS2, KS3 and KS4. The KS2 category (31.1%, N = 6,468) refers to pupils aged 7 to 11, KS3 (54.2%, N = 11,261) refers to pupils aged 11 to 14, while KS4 (14.6%, N = 3,045) refers to pupils aged 14 to 16. Although some young people aged 17 (N = 94, 0.4%) and 18 (N = 82, 0.4%) also took part, the sample was too small and they are therefore not part of the analyses by key stage.

Table C1: Sample age

	%	N		%	N
8	5.6	1,180	13	17.1	3,702
9	6.7	1,410	14	8.5	1,785
10	6.9	1,441	15	4.5	950
11	23.6	4,937	16	1.5	310
12	24.1	5,059			

The percentage of pupils who receive free school meals (FSM), which is frequently used in educational research as a crude indicator of socioeconomic background, was 15.2%. The percentage of FSM uptake in this study is slightly lower than the national average (18.2%⁷).

When asked how they would describe their ethnic background, most pupils said that they were White British (76.7%, N = 14,176). The second and third most frequent ethnic categories in this sample were Asian or Asian British Pakistani (3.3%, N = 604) and White other (3.2%, N = 593). See **Table C2** for a full breakdown of ethnic background. Please note that 11.8% (N = 2,476) of the sample chose not to answer this question. Overall, the ethnic make-up of this sample is representative of that found nationally⁸.

Table C2: Ethnic background

	%	N
White British	76.7	14,176
White Irish	1.5	270
White Traveller	0.3	58
White Romany	0.6	115
White other	3.2	593
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	1.3	243
Mixed White and Black African	0.8	146
Mixed White and Asian	1.2	214

⁷ <http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/s/sfr10-2012.pdf>, primary and secondary. Primary 19.3%, secondary 16%

⁸ <http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/s/sfr10-2012.pdf>

	%	N
Mixed other	2.1	387
Asian or Asian British Indian	2.1	379
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	3.3	604
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	1.0	190
Asian or Asian British Chinese	0.6	105
Asian or Asian British Other	1.0	180
Black Caribbean	1.1	205
Black African	2.5	463
Black other	0.8	147

(based on N = 18,474)

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