

# Parental Involvement in Children's Education

Nick Moon and Claire Ivins  
NOP Social and Political

Research Report  
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# **1 Executive Summary**

## **1.1 Background**

In October 2003, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) commissioned NOP Social and Political to carry out a survey of parents and carers of children aged 5-16 attending maintained schools, in order to assess parents' and carers' levels of involvement in their children's education. This followed an earlier survey of parents and carers carried out for DfES by BMRB in 2001.

## **1.2 Summary of Research Method**

A telephone survey of 2,021 parents and carers of children aged 5-16 attending maintained schools, in households containing two parents or carers, and living in England was carried out by NOP World between 27 January and 10 March 2004. Suitable households were identified by carrying out a screening exercise at a random sample of telephone numbers belonging to English Government Office Regions. This survey is referred to as the "Main Sample" and in it, quotas were set to ensure that half the parents and carers interviewed were men and half were women.

In addition, and at the same time, a telephone survey of 1,721 parents and carers of children belonging to particular minority ethnic groups was carried out. The minority ethnic groups included in this sample were Black African, Black Caribbean, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and mixed heritage. These children also had to be aged 5-16 and attending maintained schools. Suitable households for this survey were identified by carrying out a screening exercise at a sample of telephone numbers belonging to addresses in postcode sectors which the 2001 Census identified as having at least 30% of residents belonging to one or more of the minority ethnic groups of interest. Again all the postcode sectors had to fall within English GORs.

This survey is referred to as the "Minority Ethnic Group Booster Sample" and lone parents or carers were not excluded from this survey (forming 32% of respondents). No quotas were set on gender and the sample breaks down into 71% men and 29%, women. Of those in two parent households, though, the same proportion as the main sample had ever worked in a school (23%).

### 1.3 Summary of Findings – Main sample

Throughout the report, only statistically significant differences are reported, unless otherwise stated.

#### 1.3.1 General involvement

- The vast majority of the parents and carers say they feel very (38%) or fairly (51%) involved in their child's education
- [Comparing the findings of the current survey with the findings of a similar survey carried out for the Department for Education and Employment in 2001 by BMRB](#), the proportion of parents and carers feeling very involved in their children's education has increased from 29% to 38%.
- However, it is more complicated as to what claimed levels of involvement really mean, comparing different groups. Women, those working part-time, those who had worked in a school, those for whom the reference child is at primary school and those who think the primary responsibility for children's education largely or partially lies with parents are all more likely to claim to be very involved.
- This is borne out by subsequent questions about actual involvement. Thus the lower level of involvement claimed by men, for example, is reflected in lower proportions involved whenever they have the opportunity in going to parents evenings, helping with fund-raising activities, helping with dinner duties and school trips and helping out in class. Men are also less likely to help with their child's homework on every occasion.



- Those in social class D and E (ie those from households where the Chief Income Earner's occupation is an unskilled manual job or the Chief Income Earner is dependent on state benefits only) are also slightly more likely to say they feel very involved<sup>1</sup>. Yet only for helping with dinner duties and school trip is actual involvement by those in social class DE any higher than other groups, whilst speaking English as a first language makes similarly little difference.
- Thus variations in claimed involvement for these groups appear to reflect not so much actual differences in involvement but simply different perceptions of what being very or fairly involved means. That expectations about involvement in their child's education are lower is confirmed by the later findings that DEs, those not working and Asian respondents are the most likely to definitely agree that they know everything they need to know about their child's education, despite the fact that children's educational attainment is often lower for these groups.
- From this, two possible ways of increasing parental involvement are suggested. One is to aim to change perceptions about whether responsibility for a child's education lies primarily with the school or parents, affirming the important role parents have to play. The second is to try to increase perceptions or expectations of what level of parental involvement is possible and desirable, among those who did not grow up in the UK and/or who had low levels of educational achievement themselves.
- Three in ten (29%) of parents and carers feel they and their partner are both equally involved in their child's school life; 43% say they personally are more involved and 28% that their partner is more involved.

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<sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup> The social classification system used for this survey was the market research social class coding, developed originally by the advertising industry and now maintained by the Market Research Society. The classification is a household one, based on the current or previous occupation of the chief income earner in the household. Classification is carried out by the interviewer after asking questions, on job title, type of work done, qualifications required and supervisory responsibility.

It is technically a six-way classification, but at either end the two extreme categories are usually combined, producing the following classification:

AB	Professional and managerial
C1	Administrative, clerical and other white-collar
C2	Skilled manual
DE	Unskilled manual and those dependent solely on state benefit

- Those who say they personally are more involved are much more likely to be women than men – seven out of ten women (69%) say they are more involved; about half (52%) of men say their partner is more involved in their child's school life
- As well as fewer men feeling very involved (35% vs 42% of women), confirmed by most men feeling less involved than their wives/partners, this is also worked out in less involvement in practice. Thus men are less likely – whenever they have the opportunity – to go to parents evenings, help with fund-raising activities and help with dinner duties and school trips, as well as to always help with homework.
- The main barrier to parents and carers getting more involved in their child's school life is work commitments, in the parents' view: just over half (53%) say work commitments stop them getting more involved in their child's school life, especially men (62%) and those working full-time (71%). Yet this is less likely to be a problem for most of the groups for whom children's educational attainment is lowest.
- Lack of time (8%) and childcare difficulties (7%) are also significant factors, predominantly for women and those not working full-time.
- In terms of how those who do not feel 'very involved' in their child's school life would like to be involved, the largest proportion say they are already as involved as they can be (38%); clearly through all sections of the sample there is no one obvious thing large numbers would like to be doing but are not able to. This is particularly true, the older the child.
- Of those answers that were given, the largest proportions mention talking to teachers about progress more often (11%) or getting more frequent feedback on their child's progress (9%). Those in social class AB are more interested than others in finding out what their child is studying (13%). Thus for the small numbers who are aware that greater parental involvement in children's education may be desirable, these are the suggestions being made.

### **1.3.2 Attendance**

- Almost all parents (96%) describe it as "extremely important" to make sure their child attends school regularly – the same as in 2001.
- Despite that, just under half (46%) say they would be happy to take their children out of school during term time, especially those who left full-time education aged 16 or under,

those with children in Years 1-6 and those from social classes D and E. Thus targeting these groups in affirming the importance of full term attendance would be a worthwhile objective.

### 1.3.3 Home learning

- Three quarters (76%) believe it is extremely important to help their child with homework – the same as in 2001. This figure is higher for women (80%), parents/carers from Asian ethnic backgrounds (86%) and those with younger children. Those who think the main responsibility for a child's education lies with the school are less likely to say this and so again, challenging perceptions of the relative responsibilities of parents and school could be the key to unlocking greater parental involvement in that education.
- Most parents and carers are confident most or all of the time in helping with that homework (77%), with 35% always feeling confident. Confidence in helping with homework is higher among those with younger children, men, ABC1s and those who left full-time education aged 21 or older.
- For those who don't feel confident, there are two main difficulties. For 40%, it is that they don't understand the work their child does (which is higher for those in social class DE). For 38%, it is because of the different teaching methods currently used (which is higher for those in social class AB).
- Smaller numbers of those who don't feel confident said they weren't taught certain subjects at school (12%), or for 10%, that they had difficulty with numeracy or number skills, an answer that was more likely to be given by women and parents/carers aged 20-34. Just 3% said this was because of language difficulties or issues and 2% because they had difficulty with reading or writing. Of the latter group, just 16% had been on a course to help them with these skills.
- Almost three quarters (72%) think that their role in their children's learning at home is very important, and 25% think it is fairly important. Thus even if a clear increase in parental involvement in education is the Department's objective, most carers clearly already think their role is significant and need to be convinced there is more they can and should do. Schools also have an important role in convincing parents and carers that their help and support will make a difference and is welcomed. In particular, this should lead to a reduction from the 17% who believe that if they talked too much to teachers at their child's school, they would be labelled a trouble maker.

- Of the activities that parents and carers currently do personally to help their child with their learning, the one most widely participated in by parents and carers of children across the whole 5 to 16 age range is doing school projects together (79%); about three quarters (74%) say they make things; seven out of ten (71%) say they play sport; the same proportion (70%) read with their child; about two thirds (68%) say they take their child to museums or galleries and 67% do cooking; three in five (61%) do drawing or painting.

### 1.3.4 Communications with school

- Three quarters (74%) of parents and carers think it is extremely important to attend parents' evenings and other parent-teacher contact – the same as in 2001. It is notable though that this is higher among those aged 20-34 (82% vs 70% of those aged 40+).
- Four in five (81%) think it is extremely important to support schools' policies on children's behaviour in school, especially women (85% of women v 76% of men) and those who feel very involved in their child's education.
- Reflecting the commitment to parents' evenings, 90% of parents and carers had talked about how their child was doing at class at regular events arranged by school, such as parents' evenings, and 71% had spoken at them about their child's behaviour in school. Of the 19% who have not discussed their child's behaviour at school at all, though, it is not due to lack of opportunity or confidence – 78% of them go to parents evenings whenever they have the opportunity and 97% are very or fairly confident when talking to teachers.
- Therefore, reluctance to go to parents' evenings at all would seem to be mostly related to busyness or lack of conviction that they are important enough. For those who go to parents' evenings, reluctance to talk about their child's behaviour would seem to be mostly related to a belief that it is the teacher's job to bring it up, if there is a problem.
- Parents' evenings are also most mentioned as the most useful way in which they could get information about how their child is getting on at school (35%), though by fewer respondents than in 2001 (42%). One in six (18%) say talking to school staff informally is the most useful way, and 12%, school reports. Those in social class AB are more likely to prefer parents' evenings and those in social class DE are more likely to prefer talking to staff informally.

- About half (51%) of parents and carers receive written communication from their child's school once a week or more, and 15% receive it every day or most days. The lower the school year of the child, the more likely parents and carers are to receive written communication most days or every day.
- Three quarters (75%) of parents and carers who have received any written information find it very easy to understand, and 23% fairly easy; only 1% of parents say it is difficult to understand, so clearly this is not a significant problem.

### 1.3.5 Overview of impact of social class

- DEs are slightly more likely to feel very involved in the children's education (42% vs 37% of ABC1s). However, despite that, they are only more likely to be involved *in practice* in helping with dinner duties and school trips - perhaps reflecting a lesser likelihood of working full-time - as well as in reading with their child. By contrast, they are significantly less likely to get involved in PTAs, to take their children to museums and galleries, to play sport with them and to do school projects together.
- As noted earlier though, these variations in claimed involvement may reflect not so much actual differences in involvement, but simply different perceptions of what being very or fairly involved means. Thus DEs are more likely to definitely agree that they know everything they need to know about their child's education, despite the fact that children's educational attainment is often lower for this group. They are also more likely to say they know all they need to know about how they can help with their child's education.
- Class also has an impact on confidence and understanding. DEs are less likely to *not* feel very confident in helping with homework and more likely to give the reason for this that they do not understand the work that the child does. DEs are also less likely to feel very confident when talking to teachers. They are less likely to find written information very easy to understand.

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## 1.4 Summary of Main Findings – Minority Ethnic Group Sample

### 1.4.1 General involvement

- Just over half of the minority ethnic sample say they feel very involved with their child's education (55%). As for the main sample, women, those where the child is in Years 1-3 and those who left full-time education aged 21+ are far more likely to say they feel very involved; those from Black African backgrounds are also far more likely. The differences though are unrelated to whether English is first or second language.
- Compared to the main sample, two-parent/carer households in the minority ethnic group booster sample are far more likely to feel very involved (53% compared to 38%). The pattern is true for all ethnic groups within two parent/carer households, but to a much greater extent for Black African respondents.
- As for their involvement compared to their partner, 66% of women in two-parent/carer households say they are more involved than their partner and 6%, that their partner is more involved; 27% of men in two-parent/carer households say they are more involved than their partner and 32% that their partner is more involved.
- Men are more likely to be more involved than their partner if they are from a Black African background (41%). Men are least likely to be more involved if they are from a Bangladeshi (17%) or Black Caribbean (22%) background. These differences probably reflect higher levels of education among men within the Black African community compared to these two other ethnic groups and also - compared to respondents from Black Caribbean backgrounds - the higher proportion of two-parent families.
- In terms of actual involvement, about four in five (82%) say they go to parents' evenings whenever there is an opportunity. Those for whom English is not their first language are less likely to do this (78%), as – by a greater margin - are carers from Black African backgrounds (72%). Despite being more likely to claim to be very involved in the children's education, then, Black African respondents are *less* likely to show it in this way, instead being slightly more likely to be involved in helping with dinner duties and school trips, fund-raising activities, special interest groups, out of school clubs and Parents and Teachers Associations.
- Looking at men in particular, Bangladeshi men are the most likely to attend parents evenings sometimes or never (41%), perhaps due to the employment patterns of this

group. Pakistani men, by contrast, are the most likely to attend whenever there is an opportunity (81%). They are also more likely to give this answer for helping out in class (22%), compared to 18% for minority ethnic group respondents overall.

- For virtually all types of activity, the lowest levels of actual involvement were recorded by those who in a later question said they thought the responsibility for a child's education lay primarily with the school rather than with parents, as they were for the main sample.
- Compared to the main sample, carers in two person households from the minority ethnic group booster sample are more likely to ever help with PTAs, dinner duties and school trips, special interest groups and in class.
- In terms of how those not 'very involved' would like to be, those in two-parent/carer households in the minority ethnic group booster sample are more likely than the main sample to want to get more homework from school, talk to teachers more often, help out in the classroom, help on school trips, and give any kind of help. They are less likely to say that they are already be as involved as they can be (24% v 38%), suggesting there may be greater potential for increasing involvement within minority ethnic groups than in the wider population.
- As for the main sample, the main barrier to getting more involved in their child's school life is work commitments (33%), though for far less of them. Just over one in ten mention childcare difficulties (11%). For those who say there are no specific barriers, in most cases this appears genuine: compared to overall booster sample, a greater proportion elsewhere say they are already as involved as they can be and that they feel very involved in their child's education.
- Three in five parents and carers in the minority ethnic group booster sample say a child's education is the responsibility of both parents and schools equally (60%), 24% say it is largely the parents' responsibility and 16% say it is largely the school's responsibility. Carers of children of Black African background are the most likely to view it as the parents' responsibility (31%), especially if they are lone parents (35%).
- Compared to the main sample, respondents in two-parent/carer households are more likely to view it as the parents' responsibility (24% v 19%), again particularly among Black African (27%) as well as Black Caribbean and Bangladeshi respondents (both 26%). It is also Black Caribbean (9%) and Black African (11%) respondents that are particularly *unlikely* to say it was the school's responsibility.

- The proportion of Pakistani respondents viewing it as the parents' responsibility, though, was the same as the main sample (20%). It is notable that this group are so much closer to the views of the main sample for this question, given that their educational attainment levels are also closer to that of the general population. However, as detailed on P.76, children from Pakistani backgrounds are still an under-achieving group relative to the majority of the population.

#### **1.4.2 Attendance**

- Almost all parents (95%) believe attendance at school is extremely important. Despite that, 28% say they would be happy to take their children out of school during term time, especially among men and where the child is in Years 1-3. Far less give this answer than main sample (46%), however, for two person households in all minority ethnic groups.
- Slightly lower proportions of parents/carers of children from Black African or Black Caribbean households say they would be happy to do this compared with parents/carers of children from a Pakistani, Bangladeshi or mixed heritage background.

#### **1.4.3 Home Learning**

- Six in seven parents and carers in the minority ethnic group booster sample think it is extremely important to help their child with homework (84%).
- Among those in two-parent carer households in the minority ethnic group booster sample, 83% rate helping their child with homework extremely important, which is significantly higher than the proportion in the main representative sample (76%)
- Likewise, over five in six of those in two-parent carer households (85%) think that their role in their children's learning at home is very important, compared with 72% for the main representative sample.
- Among two-parent/carer households though, the proportion rating helping their child with homework extremely important is far higher among Black Caribbean parents/carers than minority ethnic groups overall (91% vs 83%). It is this group, then, that really differentiates the minority ethnic booster respondents from the main sample (76%). It is



also for older children that this difference is most pronounced, together with when the child is male, the carer is in full-time or part-time work and the carer is educated full-time to the age of 21.

- In terms of *actual* help with homework, Black African respondents are significantly more likely than other groups to say they help with their child's education every time. Their higher claimed involvement in the child's education, then, is evident in this activity. It is noteworthy, though, that despite having the highest proportion *saying* helping with homework was very important, Black Caribbean respondents are not the most likely to give this answer.
- Though 40% overall say they are always confident helping their child with homework (which is slightly higher than the main sample), carers of children from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds are far less likely to be always confident (36% and 34%) – as are the correlated group of those for whom English is not the first language (36%). This must partially explain then the lower levels of assistance with homework among these groups.
- For those who are not confident always or most of the time, the main reason is that they do not understand the work the child does (46%), whilst for 21% it is because of the different teaching methods used these days. For 22% of those from Asian backgrounds, language difficulties is a reason. Small numbers say they have difficulty with numeracy and number skills (11%) or with reading or writing (3%), but just 21% of these have been on a course to help them with these skills.

#### 1.4.4 Communications with school

- Four in five (79%) think it is extremely important to attend parents evenings and other parent-teacher contact. The proportion giving this answer is significantly higher among Black Caribbeans (83%), single parents (82%) and those who don't think responsibility for it lies solely or mainly with the school (81%). It is significantly lower for parents of children of Black African descent (74%), reflecting the earlier findings.
- Four in five (81%) agree it is extremely important to support schools' policies on children's behaviour in school.

- Seven out of ten parents and carers in the minority ethnic group booster sample (70%) feel very confident in talking to teachers at their child's school, with a further 59% very confident in talking to support staff. Those of Black Caribbean and Black African origin – and the correlated group of those speaking English as a first language – are more likely to feel confident.
- Those in two-parent/carer households in the minority ethnic group booster sample are less likely than those in the main sample to report receiving written communications from the child's school once a week or more – 35% compared with 51%
- Seven in ten (69%) of those who have received any written information found it very easy to understand, and 28% fairly easy.
- Among two-parent/carer minority ethnic group households, the proportion finding the written information very easy to understand is a little lower than for the main sample (68% v 75%). Those of Black Caribbean and Black African origin – and the correlated group of those speaking English as a first language – are more likely to find it easy.

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## 2 Introduction

### 2.1 Background to the survey

In 1997, the then Department for Education and Employment published the White paper “Excellence in Schools” which stated “*The Government recognises that parents play a crucial role in helping their children learn. Family learning is a powerful tool for reaching some of the most disadvantaged in our society.*” The paper set out the initiatives to encourage parents’ closer involvement in schools, including the requirement for schools to produce – in consultation with parents – home-school agreements which set out expectations about attendance, discipline, homework and the information schools and parents will give to one another; the increased information available to parents including the launch of the Parents’ Centre portal, National Curriculum topic information sheets and the Parent + Schools magazine. In 1999, DfEE commissioned MORI to carry out a telephone poll based on a quota sample of 1000 parents of 5-11 year olds, investigating issues such as homework and the literacy hour. In 2001, DfEE commissioned BMRB who carried out a telephone poll of 2019 parents to investigate levels of parental involvement and to identify what information parents want about their children’s education.

In 2003, the Department for Education and Skills decided to commission a survey to follow up some of the specific issues arising from the previous studies, in order to assess the impact of the recent Government initiatives to increase parental involvement, to obtain a measure of parental involvement in schools and to provide policy development with a customer focus evidence base in relation to parents and their partnership with schools.

As a result, in October 2003 DfES commissioned NOP Social and Political to carry out a telephone survey of a nationally representative sample of parents of school-aged children attending maintained schools, in households containing two parents or carers, with an additional sample of parents of children from Black African, Black Caribbean, Bangladeshi, Pakistani and mixed heritage communities. Following questionnaire development and piloting, the fieldwork was carried out between 27 January and 10 March 2004.

### **3 The Main Sample: Sample Demographics**

#### **3.1 Household selection**

The main sample in this survey is a sample of two-carer households in England containing children of primary or secondary school age (5-16) and attending maintained schools. The survey excluded one-carer households in order to concentrate more fully on the way involvement is shared or distributed between carers in two carer households. It was felt that the somewhat different issues surrounding involvement for both the parents with carer and the absent parents in one-carer households would be better explored in separate research. The exclusion of one-carer households, in the majority of which the carers are mothers, enabled this survey to look at equal numbers of male and female parents/carers who were all in broadly comparable positions (in terms of having another adult with whom to share responsibilities).

The households were identified by ringing a random selection of telephone numbers supplied by UK Changes and carrying out a household screening exercise. The numbers were identified as belonging to English GORs. The number of telephone numbers supplied for each GOR was broadly in line with total population numbers.

Households with one parent or carer were excluded from the survey. Households containing only five year olds in Reception classes in maintained schools were also excluded. Broad quotas were set on GOR. It would have been desirable to set quotas by social class, but this proved not possible as no population data were available on which to base quotas. It would have been inappropriate to impose quotas to bring the class profile of these households in line with the profile of all parents in two-carer households, because of the exclusion of children in private schools. Nationally some 7% of children attend a private school – this rises to about 10% in London.

All the findings presented in this report are based on unweighted data. The data were not weighted for the same reason that no quotas for social class were set - because it was not possible to obtain demographic profile data relating to the population selected for inclusion in the survey. The total number of respondents in the main sample was 2021.

##### **3.1.1 Respondent selection**

For a respondent to be eligible, he/she needed to have a parental or guardian's relationship towards at least one of eligible children in the household.

### **3.1.2 Gender**

In the 2004 survey, quotas were set so that the same number of male and female parents/carers would be interviewed. We understand that in the two-carer households interviewed in 2001, interviews were also split evenly between male and female parents/carers. However, in the 2001 survey lone parent households were not excluded, so for the purposes of comparability, only the findings for two-parent/carer households that took part in the 2001 survey are quoted in this report. The profile of respondents from two-carer households should be comparable across the two surveys.

### **3.1.3 Marital status**

Given the eligibility criteria for the survey, the vast majority of the main sample described themselves as married or living as married (95%). Most of the rest said they are single or engaged (3%), separated (1%) or divorced (1%).

### **3.1.4 Respondent age**

The main sample is fairly homogenous in terms of respondent age. This was to be expected given the children's ages formed the basis of the eligibility criteria. More than half (55%) of the parents surveyed were aged between 35 and 44, a similar figure to the sample of couples for the 2001 survey (57%). Also like 2001, just under a quarter (24%) were older and 21% were younger.

### **3.1.5 Ethnicity**

Eighty-three per cent of the main sample of parents and carers described themselves as white, and the vast majority of these, 79% of the main sample described themselves as White British. The second largest ethnic group in the sample was those describing themselves as Asian or Asian British (12%), including 5% Indian and 4% Pakistani. Just 3% said they were Black or Black British.

Compared to the 2001 sample of two parent households, a lower proportion of the 2004 main sample described themselves as white (84% v 94%). Reflecting that, one in eight respondents said that English was not their first language (12%), compared to 5% in 2001. Seventy per cent of Asians and 36% of those from Black ethnic backgrounds in the main sample gave this answer.

### 3.1.6 Respondent working status

Overall, 52% of carers said they work full time in a paid job (30 hours or more), a further 20% work part-time and 9% describe themselves as self-employed. Compared to the previous survey, an almost identical proportion are working full time or are self employed (61% v 62% in 2001).

	All parents/carers		Male respondents	Female respondents
	2004	2001	2004	2004
Unweighted sample size:	2021	1447	1014	1007
	%	%	%	%
Working in a paid job (30+ hours)	52	54	73	31
Working in a paid job (less than 30 hours)	20	22	4	36
Looking after home	11	12	3	20
Self employed	9	8	13	5
Unemployed	5	2	5	5
Other	3	3	4	2

### 3.1.7 Parents' education and social class

Exactly half of the main sample left full-time education aged 16 or younger, 22% left aged 17 or 18 and 29% did so aged 19 or older. This compared to the 25% of the 2001 sample who had stayed in education beyond 18.

The later the parent left education, the more likely he/she was to be working full-time. Two thirds of those who left aged 21 or older were working full-time (65%), compared to 52% of those who left aged 17-20 and 48% of those who left aged 16 or under.

	All parents/carers	Age of leaving full-time education		
		16 or earlier	17-20	21+
Unweighted sample size:	2021	990	566	412
	%	%	%	%
AB <sup>2</sup>	18	9	18	39
C1 <sup>3</sup>	35	29	40	39
C2 <sup>4</sup>	28	37	26	13
DE <sup>5</sup>	19	25	15	9

Compared to the previous survey, less of the sample are classified as AB (18% v 33% in 2001). There were more respondents in the C1 (35%, v 27%), C2 (28%, v 25%) and DE categories (23% v 14%).

<sup>2</sup> AB means the current or most recent occupation of the Chief Income Earner in the household is a professional or managerial job

<sup>3</sup> C1 means the current or most recent occupation of the Chief Income Earner in the household is an administrative, clerical or other white collar job

<sup>4</sup> C2 households are those where the Chief Income Earner's current or most recent occupation is a skilled manual job

<sup>5</sup> DE households are those where the occupation is an unskilled manual job (D) or the Chief Income Earner is dependent on state benefits only (E).

	2004	2001
Unweighted sample size:	2021	1447
	%	%
AB	18	33
C1	35	27
C2	28	25
DE	19	14

### 3.1.8 Children in the household

Throughout the interview, NOP wanted to ensure that parents and carers answered questions with a specific child in mind. This child is called the reference child. Quotas were set to ensure that roughly equal numbers of primary and secondary school aged children were selected as the reference child in the household. When there was more than one child at state school and aged 5-16 in the household, the quota category that had the greatest shortfall at the time was chosen. Where more than one child in a household fell into this quota category, the child with the next birthday was chosen (a random method of selection). Once the reference child had been selected, the child's name was noted in the interview script and was referred to by the interviewer wherever a particular question made it appropriate to do so

Most selected households had one (42%) or two (42%) children within this age group.

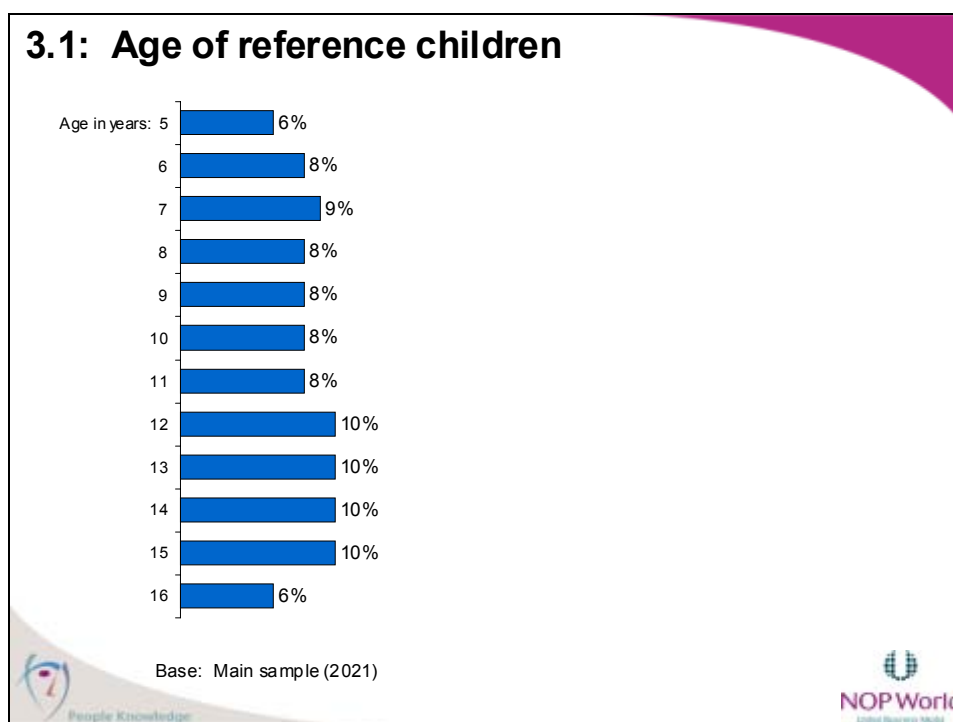


### 3.1.9 School year of selected child

The categorisation of reference children into school year was done by asking the parent/carer what school year the child was in. There were a small number of inconsistencies between the school year of child as reported by parents/carers and the school year that was expected based on the child's age.

	All reference children
	%
1-3	27
4-6	23
7-9	28
10-12	20

### 3.1.10 Age of reference child



The ages of the reference children are well spread across year bands. The relatively low proportion of reference children aged 5 could be due to the fact that 5 year olds in reception classes were (officially) excluded from the research.

### 3.1.11 Gender of selected child

Slightly more of the sample had a boy as the selected child (52%).

### 3.1.12 Special education needs

Eleven per cent of carers reported that the child selected as the subject of the interview had special educational needs (SEN), although this rose to 15% among parents living in households graded DE. This was very similar to 2001, where 10% of two-parent/carer households gave this

answer. Also as in 2001, it was notable that where the selected child was a boy, 14% of parents reported SEN, compared to only 7% when the selected child was a girl.

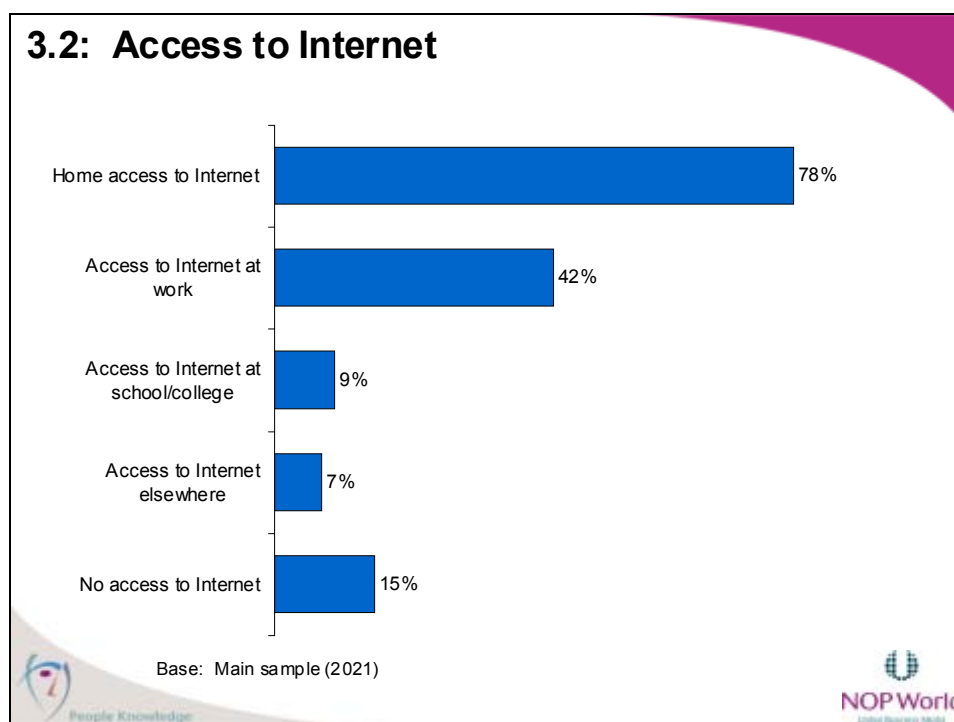
Less than half (46%) of parents who reported their child as having SEN said their child had a 'statement' of special needs, an identical figure to 2001. Over half (52%) knew they did not. Again the figure saying the child had a statement of special needs was higher among boys (51%) than girls (34%).

The vast majority (91%) of children with SEN attended a mainstream school, which was very similar to 2001 (89%).

It is interesting that the proportion of children with SEN in the sample is lower, at 11%, than in the population as a whole, where the figure is 17%. At least part of this difference could be due to the sampling design, which excluded children from one-parent carer households. It is known that SEN is associated with free school meals eligibility, and levels of poverty and deprivation are known to be higher among children from one-parent/carer households than among those from two-parent/carer households.

### 3.1.13 Access to internet

Just over three quarters of respondents had home access to the internet (78%), with two in five having it at work (42%). Unsurprisingly, the proportion for the former was lowest in the DE social class grouping (55%) and for the latter was far *higher* among those who are working full-time.



This question was included because it was felt to be relevant to parents' ease of access to information, including DfES' own website for parents school-age children.

### 3.1.14 Previous work experience in schools

Another background question asked whether they worked now, or had ever worked in any school, including a supplementary school or complementary school. If they had, they were asked which one.

Just over three quarters had never done so (77%). One in eight had done so at another school (13%) and 10% had done so at their child's school. Women were far more likely than men to

have worked in a school (34% v 12%), reflecting both the higher numbers of women in the teaching profession and the far higher numbers of women classroom assistants. It was also far higher among those who worked part-time (42%) and those who finished full-time education aged 21 or older (32%) – reflecting the normal entry requirements for entry into the teaching profession.

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## 4 The Main Sample: Main findings and Trends

### 4.1 *General involvement*

As in 2001, much of the questionnaire collected information about what parents actually do when they involve themselves in their child's school life. There are a number of different measures, including:

- How involved do parents *feel*? And do they want more involvement?
- What do parents do to help the school?

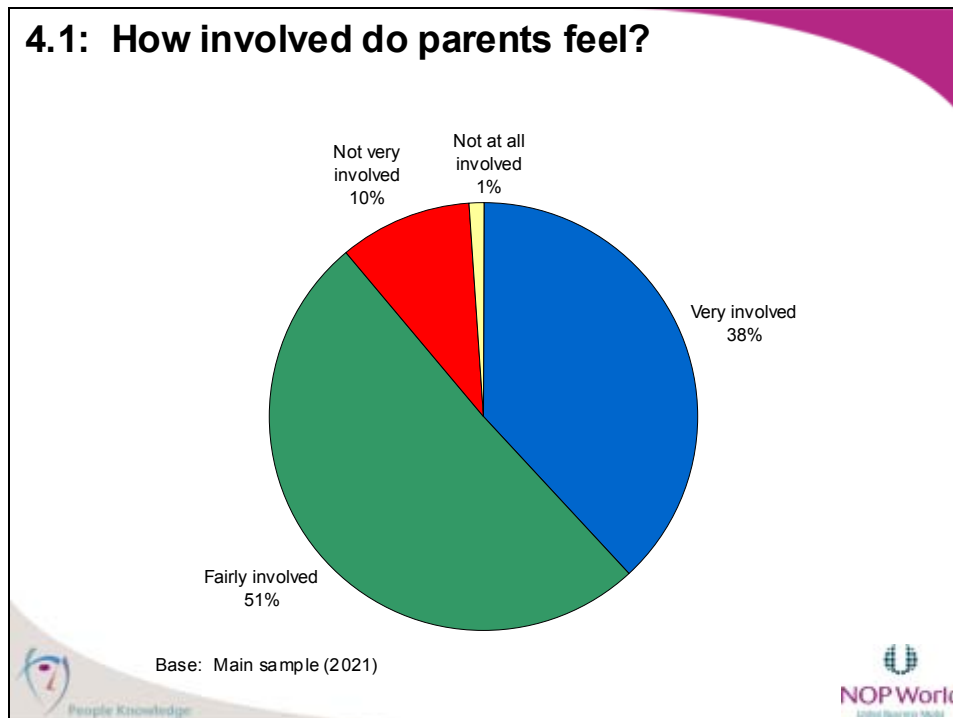
It is important to note again that each parent was asked to focus on *one* child only when considering their answers, and that the child was referred to by name to avoid confusion.

#### 4.1.1 **The subjective measure: how involved do parents *feel*?**

Parents were asked how involved they *feel* before being asked what they actually do to get involved. They were asked before being prompted with the kinds of activities that might be considered involvement.

Almost two in five said they felt very involved (38%), with a further 51% saying they felt fairly involved. Just 11% said they felt not very (10%) or not at all involved (1%).

This represents a significant increase on 2001. The proportion feeling very involved is clearly higher than in that survey (29%), an encouraging indication of progress over the last three years.



There were a number of variables which were correlated with the propensity of respondents to feel very involved. Women were more likely than men to feel very involved, as were respondents for whom the child in question was of primary school age. Thus of all the sub-groups, the proportion saying they were very involved was highest among women with the child in school years 1-3 (52%). Those in social class DE were also slightly more likely to say they felt very involved (42%, v 37% of ABC1s), as were those who worked part-time.

Of the other variables affecting perceived involvement, those for whom English is a second language were more likely to feel very involved, as were those who worked or had worked in a school. The proportion feeling very involved was significantly lower among those who in a later question said they thought the responsibility for a child's education lay primarily with the school rather than with parents. Clearly they were expressing this conviction in their own choices about involvement.

Table 4.1 % feeling very involved Base: Main sample parents and carers (2021)		
Male	%	35
Female	%	42
Year 1-3	%	45
Year 4-6	%	40
Year 7-9	%	34
Year 10-12	%	34
AB	%	37
C1	%	37
C2	%	39
DE	%	42
Full-time work	%	35
Part-time work	%	45
Other	%	41
English first language	%	37
English not first language	%	46
Work/ed in a school	%	46
Not work/ed in a school	%	36
Responsibility for child's education lies with parent	%	42
Responsibility for child's education lies with school	%	30
Responsibility lies with both equally	%	42

It should be noted though that some of these variables are clearly correlated with each other and so it requires more evaluation to establish which demographic factors have a *direct* influence on involvement. The obvious example is the male and female differences, as women are far less likely than men to be working full-time – and it is working status which has the strongest influence. Thus when comparing full-time working men with full-time working women, the differences between men (34%) and women (37%) are not significant.

However, they are just about significant when non full-time working men (39%) are compared with non full-time working women (44%) so we can conclude that mothers or female carers are slightly more likely to feel very involved than men, but only when free of the burdens of full-time work. This was also a finding in the 2001 survey.



#### 4.1.2 Who is more involved in your child's school life?

Overall for the main sample, 43% said that they were more involved than their partner in the child's school life, a similar proportion to 2001 (41%). The rest were split fairly evenly between those who said their partner was more involved (28%) and those who said they were equally involved (29%).

However, there were huge differences depending on the gender of the respondent. Women were far more likely to say *they* were more involved (69% v 16% of men); men were far more likely to say their partner was (52% v 5% of women). There were similarly large differences for the correlated variable of working status: those working part-time or not working at all were far more likely to say they were the more involved.

DEs were slightly more likely than ABs to say they were more involved, as were Black and Asian respondents. The proportion giving this answer was also higher among those who worked or had worked in a school. The proportion saying that both partners are equally involved was higher where the child was of secondary age, reflecting the reduced opportunities for daytime involvement in that sector. The correlated group of those aged 45 or older were also more likely to give this answer.

		Respondent	Partner
Men	%	16	52
Women	%	69	5
AB	%	35	33
C1	%	41	30
C2	%	45	29
DE	%	49	21
Full-time work	%	26	41
Part-time work	%	71	5
Other	%	54	21
White	%	42	30
Black	%	49	13
Asian	%	49	22
Work/ed in a school	%	55	15
Not work/ed in a school	%	39	32

### 4.1.3 Practical involvement in child's school

As well as the measure of respondents perceived involvement in their child's schooling, they were also asked which of a series of practical activities to help the school they did whenever they had the opportunity, sometimes and never.

The activities by definition require different amounts of commitment and so one activity stood out from the others in terms of respondents' commitment to it: some 86% said they went to a parents' evening whenever they had the opportunity. Just 3% said they never went to these. These findings were not significantly different from 2001, when 83% had said they did so whenever they had the opportunity.

The responses in terms of helping with fund-raising events were more evenly spread. Around a third gave each answer, ranging from 31% saying they helped whenever they had the opportunity, to 35% who did so sometimes. The proportion saying they did so whenever they had the opportunity was unchanged on 2001; the proportion saying they never did so though was higher in that survey (41%).

The other activities had far less involvement. Less than one in five said they got involved in Parents and Teacher Associations (18%), with 20% sometimes involved and 62% never. This compared with 68% never doing so in 2001.

Two thirds were never involved with helping out elsewhere in the school e.g. libraries, dinner duties and school trips (67%), with 18% doing so sometimes and 15% whenever there is an opportunity. This was identical to the 2001 findings.

Almost identical responses were given for helping out with class and helping with special interest groups like sports or drama clubs. One in eight for both helped whenever they had the opportunity (13%) and 73% of both never did so. In 2001, slightly more never helped out in class (79%), or never helped with special interest groups (77%).

The lowest participation figures were for helping with out of school clubs, such as breakfast clubs: 87% never helped with these and just 5% did so whenever they had the opportunity. This question was not asked in the previous survey.

In summary then, the significant changes in *actual* involvement compared to the 2001 wave concern the proportion saying they were never involved with the activity. Slightly less in 2004 gave this answer for helping with fundraising (34% vs 41%), Parents and Teacher Associations

(62% vs 68%), helping in class (73% vs 79%) or helping with special interest groups (73% vs 77%).

Of the small number whose children attended a supplementary or complementary school (4% of the main sample), 16% helped out whenever they had the opportunity and 26% did so sometimes.

	Whenever there is an opportunity	Sometimes	Never / don't know
	%	%	%
Go to parents' evenings	86	11	3
Help with fund-raising activities	31	35	34
Get involved with Parents and Teacher Associations	18	20	62
Dinner duties, school trips and so on	15	18	67
Help out in class	13	14	73
Help with special interest groups like sports or drama clubs	13	13	73
Help with out of school clubs such as breakfast clubs	5	7	87
Get involved in a supplementary or complementary school *	16	26	58

\* asked only of those who child attends a supplementary or complementary school

Comparing sub-groups, women (91%), the correlated group of part-time workers (92%) and those who felt very involved in their children's education (92%) were the most likely to say they went to parents' evenings whenever they had the opportunity. As shown in Table 3.4 overleaf, women were also more likely to help out whenever they had an opportunity with fund-raising activities, PTAs, dinner duties and school trips and in class. The same was true of those with children at primary schools, among those not working and, except for PTAs, those aged under 40 (compared to those aged over 45).

However, where there was no clear correlation, was by social class. Despite the fact that in, those in social class DE were also slightly more likely to say they *felt* very involved (see Section 4.1.1), this wasn't borne out in significantly greater involvement in practice. Thus as Table 3.5 shows, only for helping with dinner duties and school trip was involvement any higher than other

groups (19% vs 14% of ABC1s). Moreover, for involvement in PTAs, it was lower than for ABC1s (15% of C2DEs vs 20% of ABC1s).

	Whenever have an opportunity		Sometimes	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Unweighted sample size:	1014	1007	1014	1007
	%	%	%	%
Go to parents' evenings	80	91	16	7
Help with fund-raising activities	27	36	38	31
Get involved with Parents and Teacher Associations	16	20	20	21
Dinner duties, school trips and so on	11	20	18	18
Help out in class	10	15	14	15
Help with special interest groups like sports or drama clubs	15	11	17	10
Help with out of school clubs such as breakfast clubs	7	4	8	5

	Whenever have an opportunity				Sometimes			
	AB	C1	C2	DE	AB	C1	C2	DE
Unweighted sample size:	353	708	574	383	353	708	574	383
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Go to parents' evenings	86	88	85	82	12	10	12	13
Help with fund-raising activities	28	32	31	33	45	35	31	30
Get involved with Parents and Teacher Associations	21	19	14	16	26	17	20	20
Dinner duties, school trips and so on	14	14	15	19	19	19	18	17
Help out in class	14	11	13	12	15	13	13	16
Help with special interest groups like sports or drama clubs	12	14	14	12	16	14	11	15
Help with out of school clubs such as breakfast clubs	6	5	6	5	7	6	7	7

Those who had said they did not feel 'very involved' in their child's school life were asked in what ways, if any, they would like to be involved in their child's school life. Respondents were not prompted with suggested answers. The largest proportion said they were already as involved as they could be (38%); 11% said they would like to be involved in talking to teachers about progress more often and 9% for each of getting more frequent feedback on their child's progress, helping out in the classroom or attending lessons and receiving more information from school about what the child is studying. A further 8% said getting more homework from school, 7%, giving any kind of help and 6%, helping at special events, such as sports day.

Table 4.6: Ways in which would like to be involved in child's school life Base: Main sample parents and carers who do not feel very involved in their child's school life (1244)			
	Total	Men	Women
Unweighted sample size:	1244	656	588
	%	%	%
Talk to teachers about progress more often	11	9	12
Get more frequent feedback / updates on progress	9	8	10
Help out in classroom / attend lessons / spend more time in school	9	5	12
Receive more information from school about what child is studying / curriculum / framework	9	9	9
Get more homework from school / see home work more often	8	9	7
Give any kind of help	7	8	7
Help at special events e.g. sports day	6	7	5
Help on school trips	3	3	3
Already as involved as I can be	38	37	39
Others	7	5	2
Don't know	14	14	12

Comparing sub-groups, women (12%), respondents aged under 35 (15%) and in particular, parents/carers whose reference child was in Years 1-3 (17%), were the most likely to say they would like to help out in the classroom and/or attend lessons and in the latter two case, to help out on school trips (5%). Parents and carers from social classes AB were slightly more likely to say they would like to receive more information from school about what their child is studying (13%, v 8% of others). White respondents were the most likely to say they were already as involved as they could be (40%, v 21% of Black and Asian respondents), together with respondents aged over 40 (41%).

#### 4.1.4 Barriers to involvement

Parents and carers were also asked if there was anything that stopped them getting more involved in their child's school life. One answer was mentioned far more often than any other: 53% said work commitments stopped them. One in twelve said lack of time (8%) and 7% said childcare difficulties. Very similar answers were recorded in 2001.

A further quarter said there were no specific barriers (28%), with no other answer mentioned with any frequency.

There were several predictable differences by sub-group. Men (62%) and those working full-time (71%) were far more likely to say that work commitments were a barrier to further involvement. Those in social class DE and who did not speak English as a first language were far less likely to say this. Respondents aged under 35 (14%), women (12%) and the correlated group of those not working full time (12%) were the most likely to say the demands of childcare.

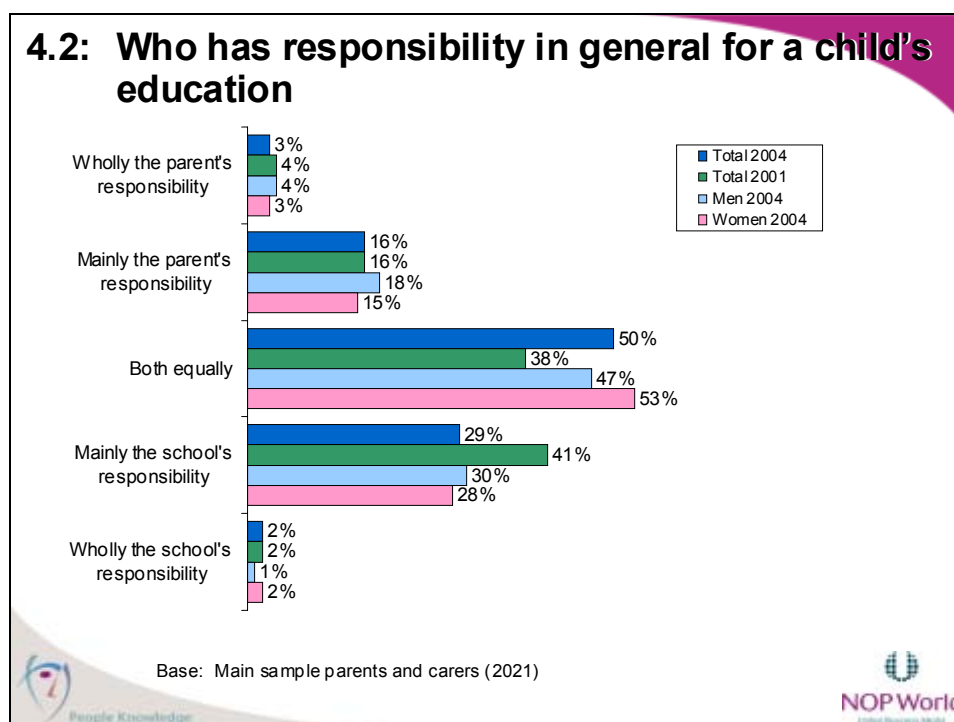
Slightly less predictably, those aged 45+ (32%) those in social class DE (40%), those not working (41%) and those for whom English was not their first language (51%) were the most likely to say there were no specific barriers. In the case of those aged 45+, this probably reflected the fewer opportunities for involvement with children of secondary school age. In the case of the others it probably reflects having more available time to help due to not working.

		Work commitments	Lack of time	Demands of childcare
Total	%	53	8	7
Men	%	62	7	2
Women	%	44	9	12
Working full-time	%	71	8	2
Working part-time	%	47	8	12
Not working	%	26	7	12

## 4.2 Responsibility for education

Parents and carers were fairly divided on whether a child's education is primarily the parent's or school's responsibility. Thus exactly half said it was the responsibility of both equally, 19% said it was wholly or mainly the parents' responsibility and 30% said it was wholly or mainly the school's responsibility. Very few parents see a child's education as being wholly the responsibility of either school or parents (3% and 2% respectively).

Since 2001, the proportion of parents/carers who feel that a child's education is wholly or mainly the responsibility of the school has fallen significantly – the proportion who gave this answer in the 2001 survey was 43%. The proportion feeling it is wholly or mainly the parents' responsibility has remained unchanged.



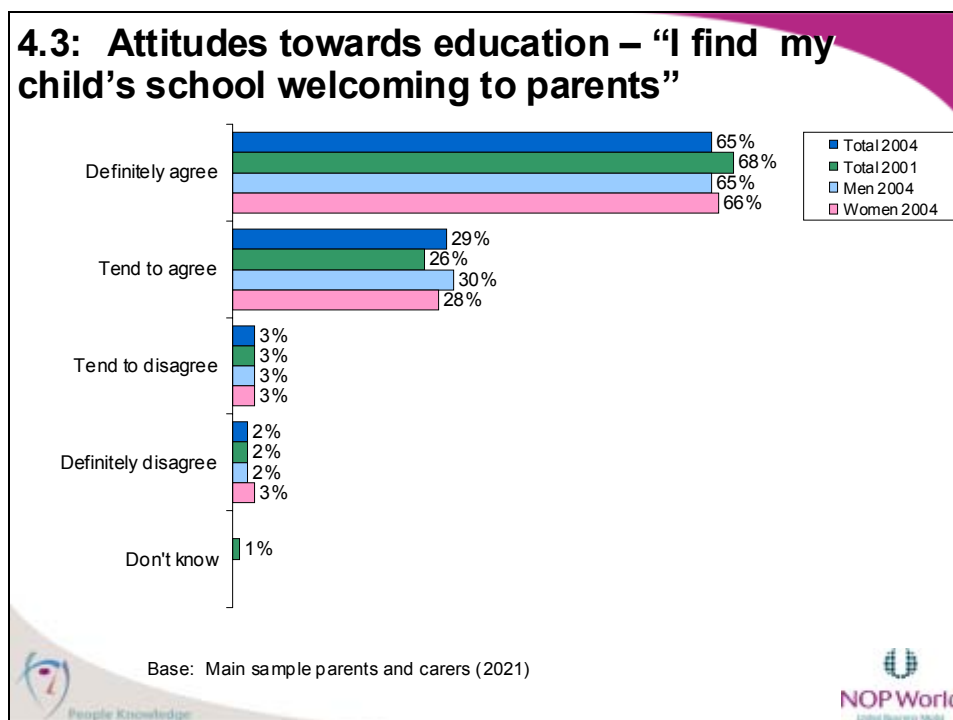


### 4.3 Attitudes towards education

Respondents were read a series of statements about parents and education and asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with them.

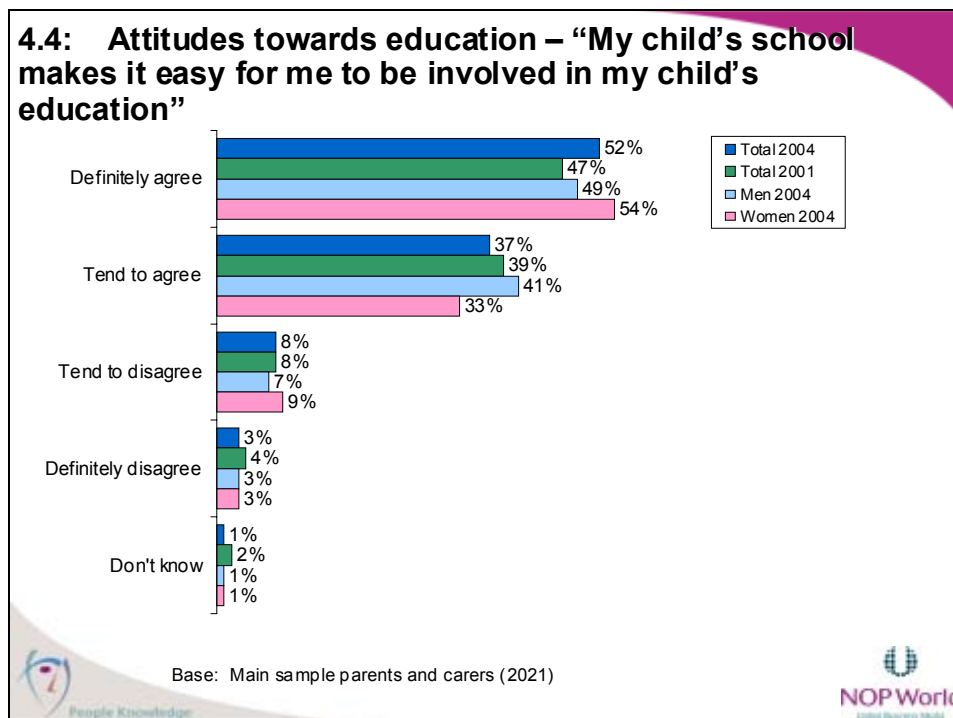
Two thirds definitely agreed that they found their child's school welcoming to parents (65%); this was similar to 2001 (68%). Just 5% disagreed in any way with this statement.

The proportion definitely agreeing was significantly higher among those where the child was in years 1-3 (74%), compared to years 7-12 (59%). It was also slightly higher among C2DEs (68%) and in cases where the child was female (69%), but lower in cases where the child has SEN (57%). There were no significant differences between men and women. For this and each of the other statements there was a very clear correlation between definitely agreeing and those who feel very involved in their child's education.



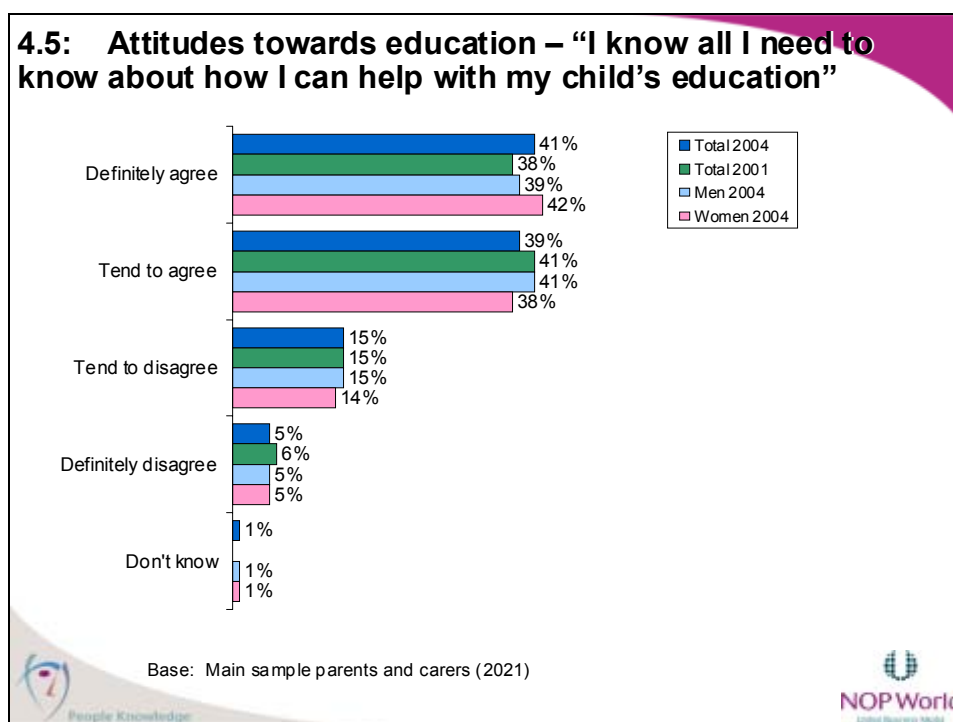
Just over half of parents and carers definitely agreed with the statement that their child's school makes it easy for them to be involved in their child's education (52%), a slight increase on 2001 (47%). Again disagreement was very limited - to just 11%.

Those with the child being in years 1-3 (61%), DEs (57%) and those not presently working (57%) were the most likely to say they definitely agreed. Women were also more likely than men to agree definitely with this view (54% v 49%).



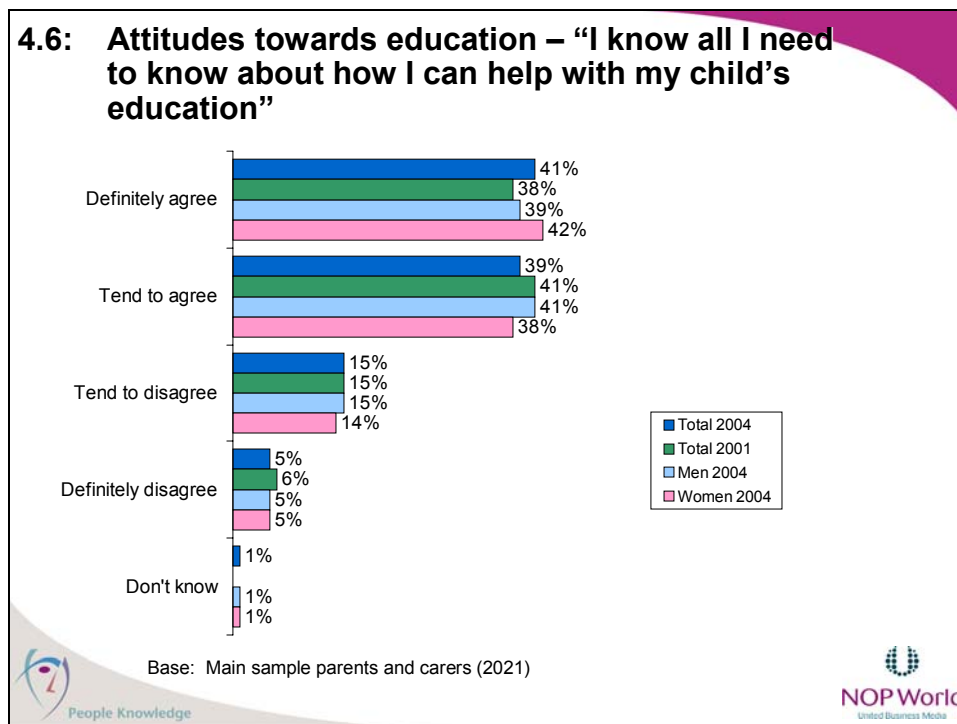
Two in five definitely agreed that they knew all they needed to know about their child's education (41%), with a further two fifths tending to agree (39%). The respective figures were not significantly different in 2001 (38% and 41%). A fifth disagreed, mostly tending to disagree.

The differences between men and women were not significant. However, DEs (46%), those not working (46%) and Asian respondents (50%) were the most likely to definitely agree despite the fact that these groups are in practice often less likely to know and have low or under-achieving children, in terms of education. Clearly feeling that they know all they need to know is as much to do with a low assessment of how much they need to know as it is to do with their actual knowledge.



The majority of parents disagreed with the statement that if they talked too often to teachers at their child's school, they would be labelled a trouble maker: 56% definitely disagreed with a further 25% tending to disagree. Only one in six agreed with the statement (17%), which was again virtually identical to 2001 (16%).

The proportion definitely disagreeing was highest among those with children in Years 1-3. Agreement with the statement was highest among women who completed their full-time education aged 21 or higher (23%) and those who did not feel very or at all involved in their child's education (26%). The differences between men and women overall were not significant.



#### 4.4 Attendance

All parents were asked how important they thought it was to make sure their child attended school regularly (and on time). They were given a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 was 'not at all important' and 5 was 'extremely important'. Almost all parents believed this was extremely important, rating this a 5 (96%), the same proportion as in 2001. There were no significant differences between sub-groups. Three per cent of parents gave a rating of 4 while only a handful gave any other rating.

Despite that, close to half said they would be happy to take their children out of school during term time, for example, to go on a family holiday or extended family break (46%), with a further 13% saying it depended on the circumstances. This was not significantly different from the previous survey (49%).

Table 4.8: Those who would be happy to take their child out of school during term time, for a holiday or family break Base: Main sample parents and carers (2021)		
Year 1-3	%	50
Year 4-6	%	52
Year 7-9	%	45
Year 10-12	%	36
Left FT education aged 16 or under	%	50
Left FT education aged 17-20	%	46
Left FT education aged 21+	%	40
White	%	50
Black	%	18
Asian	%	32
Have worked in a school	%	36
Have not worked in a school	%	50
AB	%	41
C1	%	47
C2	%	46
DE	%	50
Aged 20-34	%	52
Aged 35-39	%	49
Aged 40-44	%	47
Aged 45+	%	39

Those who left full-time education aged 16 or under, the correlated group of DEs and those with children in Years 1-6 were more likely to say they would be happy to do this; parents/carers aged 45 or older were less likely. Those who had ever worked in a school were also less likely, though it is perhaps surprising that as many as a third of this group (36%) said they would be happy to do this. White parents and carers were more likely than those from other ethnic backgrounds to say that they would be happy to do this, at 50% compared with 32% for Asian parents and 18% for Black parents.

The small number of parents/carers in the main sample whose children attended a supplementary or complementary school were also asked how important they thought it was to make sure their child attended it. The answers to this question were more mixed: 44% gave this an importance rating of 5, extremely important, while 15% gave it a 4 and 23% a 3. The mean importance rating was 3.85.

## 4.5 Home Learning

### 4.3.1 Importance of helping with homework

Parents and carers were also asked how important they thought it was to help their child with homework. Three quarters believed this was extremely important (76%), the same proportion as in 2001. The proportion saying this was higher, the lower the school year of the child and the younger the age of the parent/carer. It was also slightly higher among females, those not working and Asian respondents. It was significantly lower among those who thought the main responsibility for a child's education lies with the school, though 67% of this group still agreed that it was extremely important. Those who thought the main responsibility for a child's education lies with the parents and those who think it lies equally with parents and school attached an equal amount of importance to helping their child with homework.

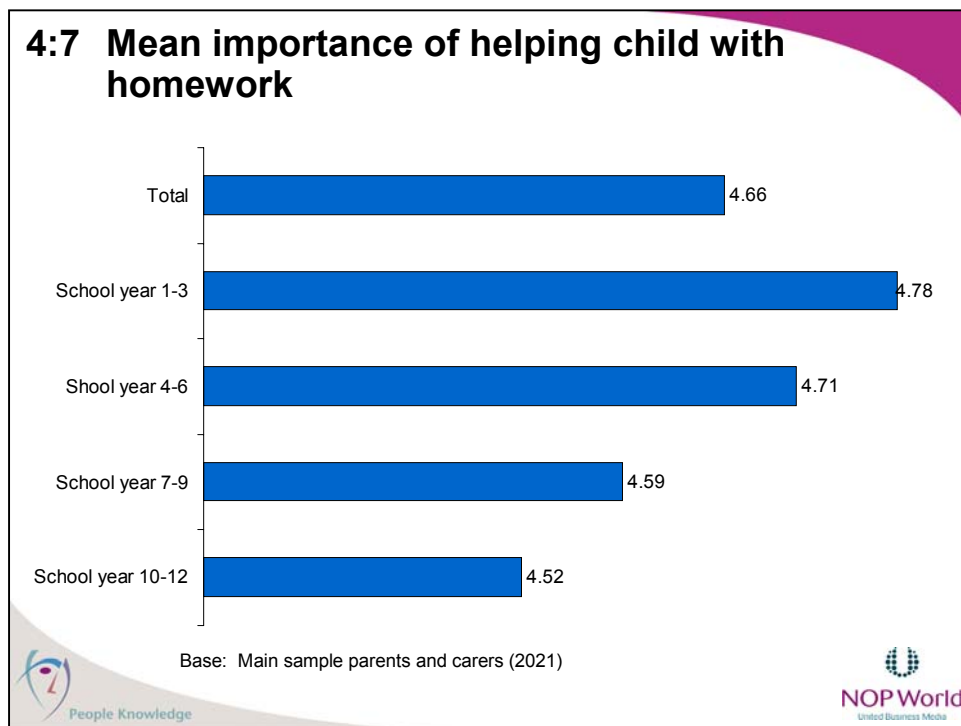
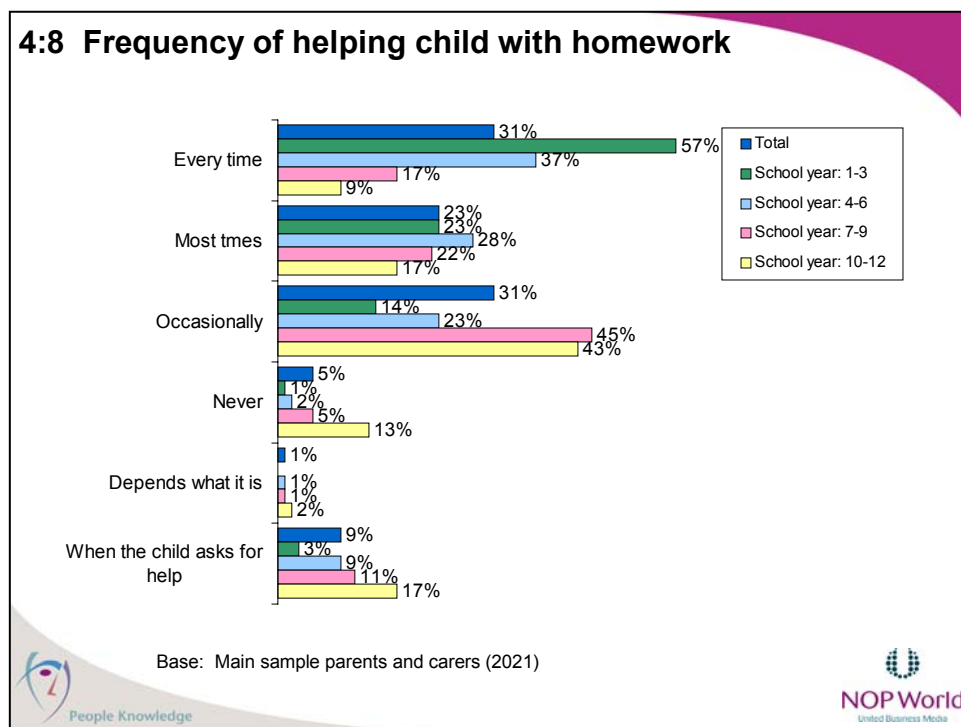


Table 4.9: Those thinking helping your child with homework is extremely important Base: Main sample parents and carers (2021)		
Men	%	71
Women	%	80
Year 1-3	%	84
Year 4-6	%	80
Year 7-9	%	71
Year 10-12	%	67
Full-time work	%	73
Part-time work	%	76
Other	%	80
White	%	74
Black	%	82
Asian	%	86
Responsibility for child's education lies with parent	%	79
Responsibility for child's education lies with school	%	67
Responsibility for child's education lies with both equally	%	80
Aged 20-34	%	83
Aged 35-39	%	78
Aged 40-44	%	74
Aged 45+	%	71

### 4.3.2 Frequency of helping with homework

A further question asked how often they helped their child with their homework, if at all. Over half said that they did so every time (31%) or most times (23%), with another 31% saying they did so occasionally. Just 5% never did so. The only difference from 2001 was that slightly fewer parents/carers in the current survey said they helped occasionally and slightly more said they did so whenever the child asked for help (though clearly these two answer categories are closely related anyway).



Reflecting their greater availability, women, plus the correlated group of those working part-time or not at all, were also more likely to help with their child's homework on every occasion. This is shown on the table above. Reflecting the greater need for help, so too were those with children with SEN.



As shown in the table below, the lower the school year of the child, the more likely respondents were to help with their child's homework on every occasion. Where the child was at secondary school, parents were far more likely to help them occasionally or never. The proportion of parents helping with homework either every time or most times stands at 80% among parents of children in years 1-3, 65% among parents of years 4-6, falling sharply among parents of secondary school children to 17% among parents of children in years 7-9 and 26% in years 10-12. This is matched by similar patterns by age of the respondent: those aged 20-34 were the most likely to help every time (47%) and those aged 45 or older were the most likely to help occasionally (39%), never (7%) or only when the child asks for help (13%).

	Total	School year of child			
		1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12
Unweighted sample size:	2021	544	479	566	413
	%	%	%	%	%
Every time	31	57	37	17	9
Most times	23	23	28	22	17
Occasionally	31	14	23	45	43
Never : child never gets homework	1	1	1	1	3
Never: child gets homework but parent never helps	4	1	1	4	10
Depends what it is	1	*	1	1	2
When the child asks for help	9	3	9	11	17
Every time/ most times	54	80	65	39	26

\* = less than 0.5%

### 4.3.3 Confidence in helping with homework

Just over a third of parents and carers said they always felt confident helping their child with their homework (35%); another 42% said they felt confident most of the time. Just 2% said they never felt confident.

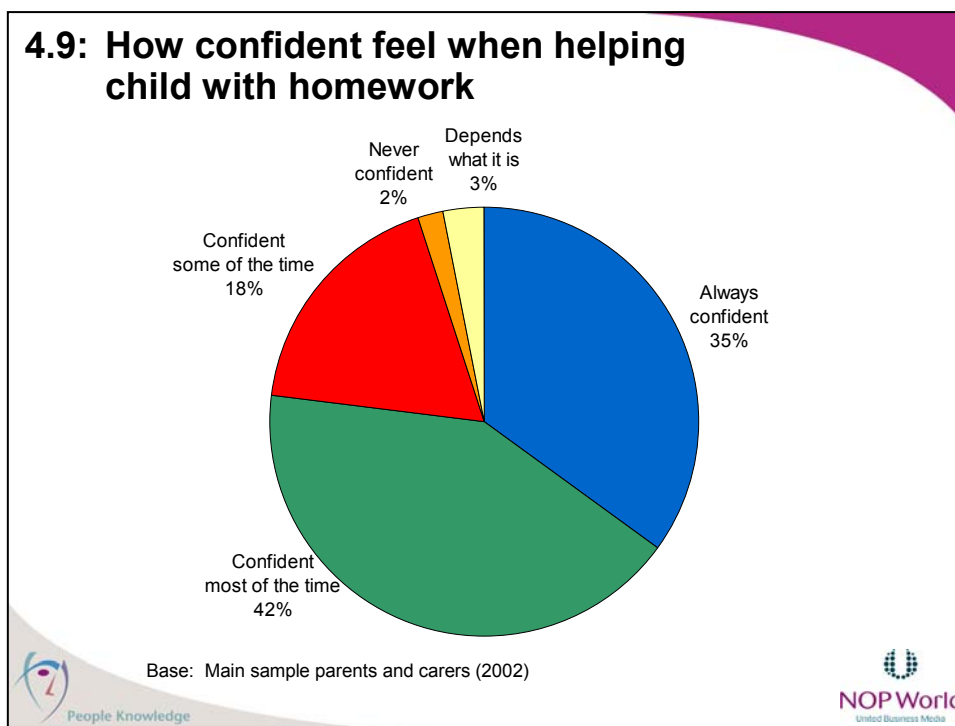


Table 4.11: How confident feel when helping child with homework  
Base: Main sample parents and carers (2021)

	Total	Gender		School year of child			
		Men	Women	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12
Unweighted sample size:	2021	1014	1007	544	479	566	413
	%	%		%	%	%	%
Always confident	35	42	28	58	38	21	20
Confident most of the time	42	41	43	34	43	51	40
Confident some of the time	18	12	23	6	16	22	30
Never confident	2	2	2	*	1	2	5
Depends what it is	3	2	3	1	2	4	5
Don't know	*	*	*	-	-	*	1

\* = less than 0.5%

Like frequency of actually helping, confidence in helping with homework is higher among those with younger children: those with a child in Years 1-3 were far more likely to say they were always confident (58% v 21% for carers of secondary pupils), as were parents/carers aged under 35 (41%). Men were more likely to say they felt confident always or most of the time

(84% v 71% of women), as were ABC1s and the correlated group of those who left education aged 21+.

Those who said their confidence about helping their child with certain homework subjects depended which subject was concerned (just 57 respondents) were then asked which subjects they felt less confident about. Maths was by far the most mentioned (61%), followed by Science (30%) and English (19%), Chemistry and French came next (12% and 11%), with no other subject mentioned by more than 10%.

The sample sizes were too small for any of the differences to be significant, but the table below shows some predictable patterns in responses by gender.

	Total	Men	Women
Unweighted sample size:	57	24	33
	%	%	%
Maths	61	46	73
Science (generally)	30	25	33
English	19	25	15
Chemistry	12	17	9
French	11	13	9
Physics	9	4	12
Biology	7	13	3
Music	5	13	-
German	4	8	-
History	4	8	-
Geography	2	-	3

The somewhat larger group of those who were generally not confident in helping their child with their homework (450 respondents) were then asked why that was. Two in five said that it was because they didn't understand the work their child does (40%) and a similar number said it was because of the different teaching methods used these days (38%). The proportion giving this latter answer was higher among ABs than those in the lower social class categories.

One in eight said they weren't taught certain subjects at school (12%) and 10% that they had difficulty with numeracy or number skills, an answer that was more likely to be given by women and parents/carers aged 20-34. One in twenty said a concern that they might confuse their child or do it wrong lay behind their lack of confidence (5%), with no other answer being given with any frequency. Nineteen per cent of those whose first language is not English said language difficulties or issues were the reason and 6% of parents/carers aged 45 or over, that the child was confident enough and didn't need their help.

	Total	Men	Women
Unweighted sample size:	450	165	285
	%	%	%
Don't understand the work my child does	40	38	41
Different teaching methods these days	38	41	36
Wasn't taught certain subjects at school	12	10	13
I have difficulty with numeracy / number skills	10	4	13
I might confuse my child / do it wrong	5	4	6
Language difficulties / issues	3	4	3
Child is confident enough / doesn't need my help	3	4	2
I have difficulty with reading or writing	2	2	2
School doesn't give any advice or guidance on homework	2	2	2
Don't know much about what child does / don't feel confident helping child	2	1	2

NB: No other answer given by more than 1%

There was also a further supplementary question for the 51 respondents who said difficulty with reading or writing lay behind this lack of confidence: they were asked whether they had been on a course to help them with these skills. Of these, 7 said they had and 43 said they hadn't.

#### 4.3.4 Parent's own importance in child's learning at home

In a new and more general question, close to three quarters thought that their role in their children's learning at home was very important (72%). A further quarter (25%) said it was fairly important, with only a tiny handful of parents (2%) giving any other answer.

As the table below shows, the sense of the parents' importance to their child's learning was greater the lower the school year of the child, and correspondingly greater among parents/carers under 40 (77%). Again reflecting their greater availability and higher frequency of helping with homework, it was also higher among female respondents (76%, v 69% of men) and those working part-time or not at all (75%, v 70% of those working full-time). White parents and carers were less likely than Black and Asian parents and carers to see themselves as very important (70% v 89% and 84% respectively).

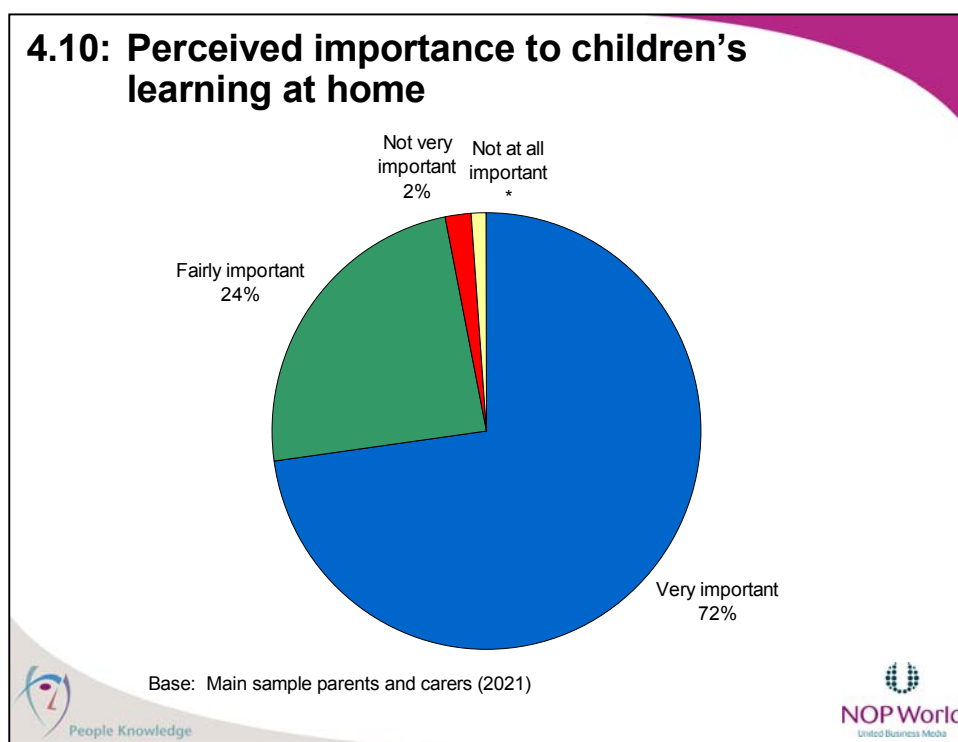


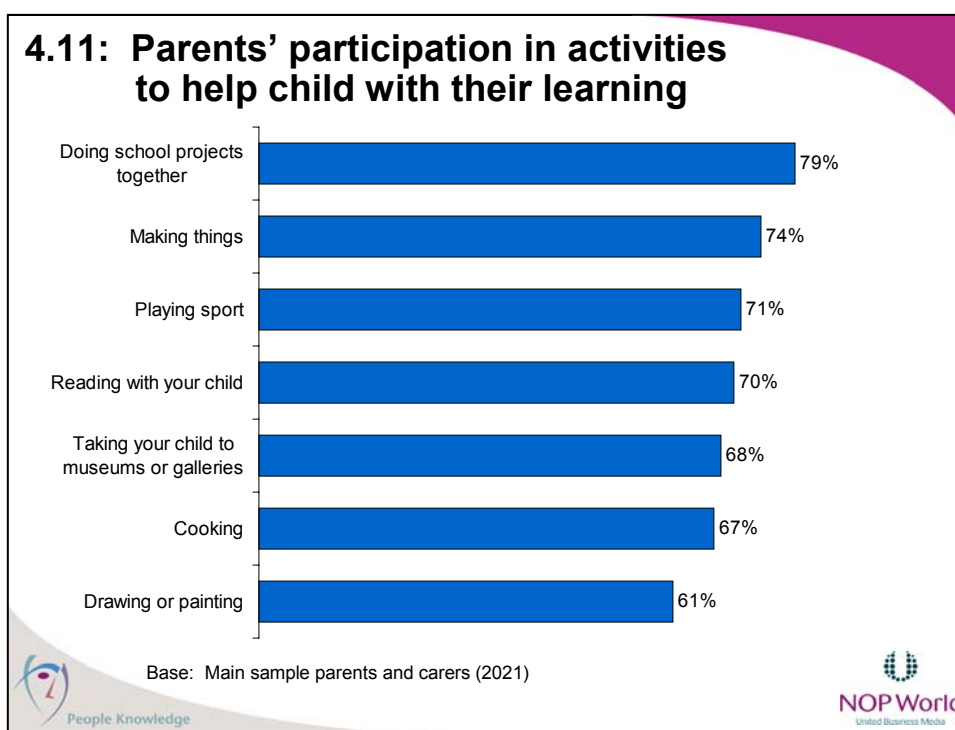
Table 4.14: Perceived importance to children's learning at home							
Base: Main sample parents and carers (2021)							
	Total	Gender		School year of child			
		Male	Female	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12
Unweighted sample size:	2021	1014	1007	544	479	566	413
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very important	72	69	76	82	77	66	64
Fairly important	24	28	23	17	21	32	31
Not very important	2	3	1	1	1	2	4
Not at all important	*	*	*	*	*	-	*

\* = less than 0.5%

### 4.3.5 Activities done to help children with their learning

Another new question asked about the sorts of activities that respondents did personally to help their child with their learning. Parents and carers were asked to say whether they did each of a list of activities. Participation in all activities was fairly high, with between three and four out of five parents claiming to do each one.

The activity which the largest proportion said they did was doing school projects together (79%). Just under three quarters (74%) said making things, and seven out of ten said playing sport or reading with their child. Just over two thirds said taking their child to museums or galleries or cooking. Three fifths (61%) said they did drawing or painting.



As shown on the tables below, for all of the activities, the lower the school year of the child, the more likely the parent was to help their child in this way - though the difference was most pronounced for reading and drawing or painting. Those who felt very involved in their child's education were also more likely to help their child in each of these ways.

Other differences for individual activities are indicated above the relevant table.

DEs, those who left education aged 21 or older, those aged 20-34, those with a child with SEN and those with children from ethnic backgrounds other than white were more likely to help by reading with their child.

Table 4.15: % who read with their child		
Base: Main sample parents and carers (2021)		
TOTAL	%	70
Men	%	69
Women	%	71
Year 1-3	%	98
Year 4-6	%	88
Year 7-9	%	56
Year 10-12	%	33
AB	%	69
C1	%	69
C2	%	70
DE	%	75
Working full-time	%	69
Working part-time	%	71
Not working	%	72
White	%	70
Black	%	78
Asian	%	75
Other	%	70
English first language	%	70
English second language	%	74
Left education 16 or under	%	68
Left education 17-20	%	71
Left education 21+	%	73
Child is male	%	71
Child is female	%	70
Child has SEN	%	80
Child does not have SEN	%	69
Feel very involved in child's education	%	79
Feel fairly involved in child's education	%	66
Feel not very/not at all involved in child's education	%	63
Aged 20-34	%	87
Aged 35-39	%	76
Aged 40-44	%	64
Aged 45+	%	57



The correlated groups of ABs, those who left full-time education aged 21 or older, those who had ever worked in a school and those working full-time were all more likely to take their child to museums or galleries, as were white respondents, those with a child with SEN and those who speak English as a first language. There were no differences by gender of carer or child, but those aged 35-44 were more likely to do it than those aged under 35.

Table 4.16: % who take their child to museums or galleries		
Base: Main sample parents and carers (2021)		
TOTAL	%	68
Men	%	68
Women	%	68
Year 1-3	%	70
Year 4-6	%	72
Year 7-9	%	70
Year 10-12	%	60
AB	%	81
C1	%	75
C2	%	61
DE	%	55
Working full-time	%	72
Working part-time	%	66
Not working	%	63
White	%	70
Black	%	62
Asian	%	59
Other	%	71
English first language	%	70
English second language	%	58
Left education 16 or under	%	60
Left education 17-20	%	74
Left education 21+	%	81
Child has SEN	%	63
Child does not have SEN	%	69
Feel very involved in child's education	%	71
Feel fairly involved in child's education	%	67
Feel not very/not at all involved in child's education	%	63
Aged 20-34	%	62
Aged 35-39	%	70
Aged 40-44	%	72
Aged 45+	%	68

Men, plus ABs and the correlated groups, were more likely to play sport with their child - and were more likely to do this if it was a boy. Those aged 45+ were far less likely to do it.

Table 4.17: % who play sport Base: Main sample parents and carers (2021)		
TOTAL	%	71
Men	%	77
Women	%	64
Year 1-3	%	81
Year 4-6	%	77
Year 7-9	%	67
Year 10-12	%	55
AB	%	78
C1	%	70
C2	%	70
DE	%	65
Working full-time	%	74
Working part-time	%	68
Not working	%	66
White	%	71
Black	%	71
Asian	%	70
Other	%	70
Left education 16 or under	%	67
Left education 17-20	%	72
Left education 21+	%	76
Child is male	%	74
Child is female	%	67
Feel very involved in child's education	%	76
Feel fairly involved in child's education	%	67
Feel not very/not at all involved in child's education	%	66
Aged 20-34	%	76
Aged 35-39	%	75
Aged 40-44	%	72
Aged 45+	%	59

Women were more likely to help with doing school projects, as were ABC1s, white respondents, those working part-time, those speaking English as a first language and those who had worked in a school. Those aged 45+ were far less likely. There was no difference by gender of child.

Table 4.18: % who do school projects together		
Base: Main sample parents and carers (2021)		
TOTAL	%	79
Men	%	73
Women	%	84
Year 1-3	%	79
Year 4-6	%	82
Year 7-9	%	81
Year 10-12	%	71
AB	%	82
C1	%	81
C2	%	78
DE	%	73
Working full-time	%	78
Working part-time	%	84
Not working	%	76
White	%	80
Black	%	78
Asian	%	68
Other	%	82
English first language	%	81
English second language	%	64
Left education 16 or under	%	77
Left education 17-20	%	81
Left education 21+	%	80
Worked in school	%	85
Has not worked in school	%	77
Feel very involved in child's education	%	83
Feel fairly involved in child's education	%	77
Feel not very/not at all involved in child's education	%	69
Aged 20-34	%	80
Aged 35-39	%	80
Aged 40-44	%	81
Aged 45+	%	74

Women, C2DEs, those not working, those speaking English as a first language, those aged 20-34 and those whose child is a girl were all more likely to help with drawing or painting.

Table 4.19: % who do drawing or painting together Base: Main sample parents and carers (2021)		
TOTAL	%	61
Men	%	58
Women	%	63
Year 1-3	%	88
Year 4-6	%	67
Year 7-9	%	49
Year 10-12	%	32
AB	%	58
C1	%	60
C2	%	62
DE	%	62
Working full-time	%	58
Working part-time	%	62
Not working	%	65
White	%	61
Black	%	64
Asian	%	57
Other	%	61
English first language	%	61
English second language	%	54
Left education 16 or under	%	59
Left education 17-20	%	62
Left education 21+	%	61
Child is male	%	57
Child is female	%	65
Feel very involved in child's education	%	67
Feel fairly involved in child's education	%	57
Feel not very/not at all involved in child's education	%	56
Aged 20-34	%	74
Aged 35-39	%	67
Aged 40-44	%	55
Aged 45+	%	48

Sex and work status of parents/carers do not appear to have any effect on their likelihood of making things to help with their child's learning, but the school year of the child has a strong effect, as 90% of parents/carers of children in years 1-3 said they made things, compared with just 50% of parents/carers of children in years 10-12. Similarly 79% of parents/carers aged under 40 did so, compared to 67% of those aged 45 or older.

Table 4.20: % who make things together		
Base: Main sample parents and carers (2021)		
TOTAL	%	74
Men	%	75
Women	%	74
Year 1-3	%	90
Year 4-6	%	79
Year 7-9	%	73
Year 10-12	%	50
AB	%	76
C1	%	75
C2	%	74
DE	%	72
Working full-time	%	74
Working part-time	%	74
Not working	%	75
White	%	75
Black	%	65
Asian	%	72
Other	%	82
English first language	%	75
English second language	%	73
Left education 16 or under	%	72
Left education 17-20	%	75
Left education 21+	%	77
Child is male	%	72
Child is female	%	77
Feel very involved in child's education	%	80
Feel fairly involved in child's education	%	71
Feel not very/not at all involved in child's education	%	68
Aged 20-34	%	80
Aged 35-39	%	78
Aged 40-44	%	72
Aged 45+	%	67

Cooking is an activity where very strong gender effects are seen. Only about half of men (52%) said they did cooking with their child, compared with 82% of women. The gender of the child also had an effect: 73% of parents/carers of girls said they did cooking, compared with 61% of parents/carers of boys. Other than that though, the results were very consistent, regardless of the working status of the parent/carer, school year or the age of the parent.

Table 4.21: % who do cooking together		
Base: Main sample parents and carers (2021)		
TOTAL	%	67
Men	%	52
Women	%	82
Year 1-3	%	69
Year 4-6	%	67
Year 7-9	%	69
Year 10-12	%	62
AB	%	67
C1	%	67
C2	%	67
DE	%	66
Working full-time	%	61
Working part-time	%	80
Not working	%	70
White	%	70
Black	%	65
Asian	%	50
Other	%	64
English first language	%	69
English second language	%	54
Left education 16 or under	%	63
Left education 17-20	%	72
Left education 21+	%	67
Worked in a school	%	78
Have not worked in a school	%	64
Child is male	%	61
Child is female	%	73
Feel very involved in child's education	%	72
Feel fairly involved in child's education	%	64
Feel not very/not at all involved in child's education	%	64
Aged 20-34	%	68
Aged 35-39	%	70
Aged 40-44	%	65
Aged 45+	%	65

Parents and carers were then asked what else they did to help their child with their learning, apart from the activities asked about at the previous question. Answers to this question were unprompted. One in six said they gave encouragement (16%) and one in seven that they bought books or educational software, or supervised their access to the internet (14%). One in eight said they did homework with them (13%) or did outdoor activities and field trips (12%). Just under one in ten mentioned discussing news or current events, playing games, setting additional homework or tests or taking them to participate in sporting activities or classes.

Women were more likely than men to buy books for their child.

Table 4.22: Other activities that respondents do to help child with learning (unprompted)  
Base: Main sample parents and carers (2021)

	Total	Men	Women
	%	%	%
Give encouragement	16	17	15
Buy books	14	11	16
Buy educational computer software	14	15	13
Supervise child's access to internet	14	14	13
Do homework with him/her	13	14	12
Do outdoor activities/field trips together	12	12	12
Discuss news / current events together	9	9	9
Play games	9	8	9
Set additional homework or tests	9	8	9
Take him/her to participate in sporting activities/classes	8	9	7
Get him/her to help with tasks around home	6	5	7
Arrange or pay for tuition in particular subjects	5	5	5
Teach him/her languages or music	5	5	5
Take him/her on holiday/travel abroad	4	3	4
Take him/her shopping	4	3	4
Watch TV with him/her	4	4	4
Nothing else	18	19	17

There were also many clear differences in the likelihood of parents doing certain activities depending on the year of the child. Parents were far more likely to say they gave encouragement if their child was in Years 10-12 and were more likely to discuss news and current events. They were far less likely to say they did homework with them. The lower the school year the greater the likelihood of respondents doing outdoor activities with their child, playing games, setting additional homework or tests and taking him or her to participate in sporting activities or classes.

Parents/carers aged 45+ were more likely to give encouragement (19%) and less likely to play games. Those aged 20-34 were less likely to discuss news and current events together but, together with 35-39 year olds were more likely to set additional homework and tests. Those aged 35-44 were more likely to get their child to help with tasks around the home and to supervise their access to the internet.

Other differences were that ABs were more likely to say they did outdoor activities together with the child (15%), gave encouragement (21%), supervised their child's access to the internet (18%), took them to participate in sporting activities (10%) and taught them languages or music (8%). The correlated group of those who left full-time education aged 21 or older were more likely to say they discussed news and current events (12%), did homework (17%) or outdoor activities together (13%), or that they taught them languages or music (8%). Those who had worked in a school were more likely to buy books for their child (18%).

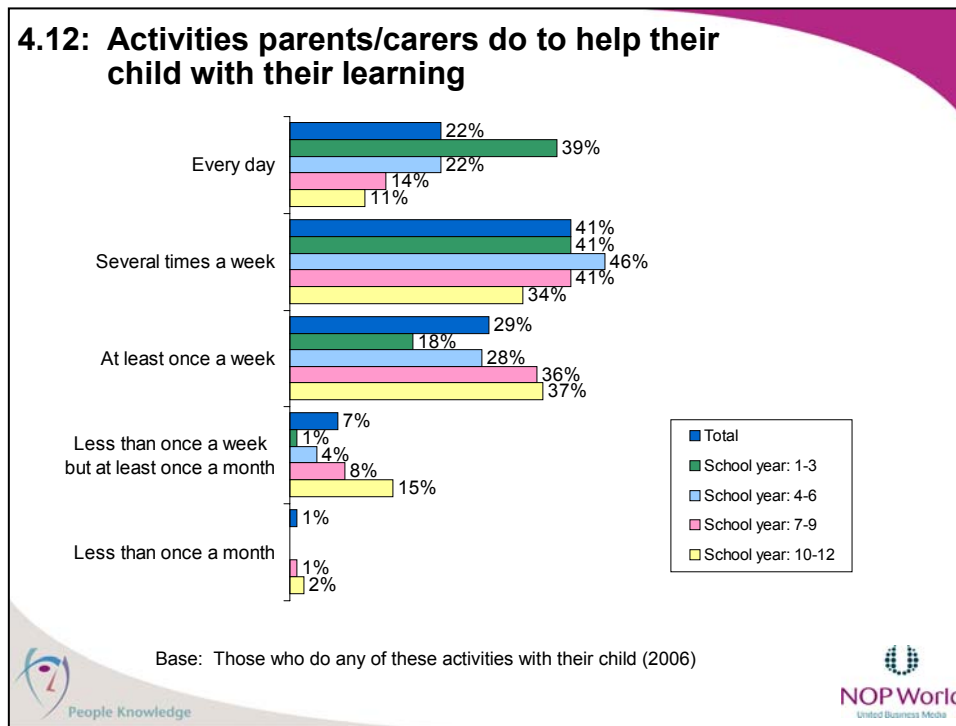
Asian parents or carers were more likely to say they took their child shopping (8%) and those for whom English is not their first language were more likely to say they gave encouragement (22%) and played games (14%) and were less likely to buy educational computer software (9%) or supervise their child's access to the internet (7%). Those working full-time were *more* likely to say they supervised their child's access to the internet (16%), perhaps reflecting this group's greater likelihood of having the internet at home.

Those who felt very involved in their child's education were more likely to buy books (15%), play games (10%), take them to organised activities (4%), get them to do tasks around the home (7%) and buy educational computer software (15%).



Table 4.23: Activities parents/carers do to help their child with their learning					
Base: Main sample parents and carers (2021)					
	Total	School year of child			
		1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12
Unweighted sample size:	2021	544	479	566	413
	%	%	%	%	%
Give encouragement	16	16	14	15	20
Buy books	14	16	11	14	14
Buy educational computer software	14	16	13	13	13
Supervise child's access to internet	14	10	14	17	14
Do homework with him/her	13	14	15	14	8
Do outdoor activities/field trips together	12	14	13	10	8
Discuss news / current events together	9	7	9	10	11
Play games	9	16	10	5	3
Set additional homework or tests	9	13	11	5	4
Take him/her to participate in sporting activities/classes	8	11	8	6	5
Get him/her to help with tasks around home	6	7	6	5	6
Arrange or pay for tuition in particular subjects	5	5	5	5	5
Teach him/her languages or music	5	6	7	4	4
Take him/her on holiday/travel abroad	4	4	3	4	4
Take him/her shopping	4	5	4	3	3
Watch TV with him/her	4	5	4	4	4

Those respondents who do any of these activities to help their child with their learning (virtually all of the sample) were then asked how often they do any of these activities. Just under a quarter said they did so every day (22%) and a further 41% said they did so several times a week. Twenty nine per cent did it at least once a week with just 8% doing so less often than that.



The main differences were by year of school: 39% of those with the child in Years 1-3 did one of these activities to help their child with their learning every day, compared to 11% where the child was in Years 10-12. In the same way, it was slightly higher among those aged 20-34 (29%). The proportion doing the activity or activities every day was also slightly higher among women (26%) and those whose child had been identified as having SEN (29%). It was lower among those who finished their full-time education aged 16 or under (18%).

Table 4.24: Activities parents/carers do to help their child with their learning					
Base: Those who do any of these activities with their child (2006)					
	Total	School year of child			
		1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12
Unweighted sample size:	2006	544	479	559	405
	%	%	%	%	%
Every day	22	39	22	14	11
Several times a week	41	41	46	41	34
At least once a week	29	18	28	36	37
Less than once a week but at least once a month	7	1	4	8	15
Less than once a month	1	*	*	1	2

#### **4.4 Parents evenings**

Three quarters thought it was extremely important to attend parents evenings and other parent-teacher contact (74%), an identical proportion to 2001. The proportion giving this answer was much higher among women than men (81% v 67%). It was also higher among Asian than white respondents (82% v 73%), those aged 20-34 (82% vs 70% of those aged 40+) and those who have ever worked in a school (79% v 72% of those who have not).

#### **4.5 Supporting schools' policies**

In a new question, four in five agreed it was extremely important to support schools' policies on children's behaviour in school (81%). This was higher among women (85% v 76% of men), the correlated group of those in part-time work (87% v 78% of those working full-time), and by a large margin, those who felt very involved in their child's education (89% v 71% of those who felt not very or not at all involved).

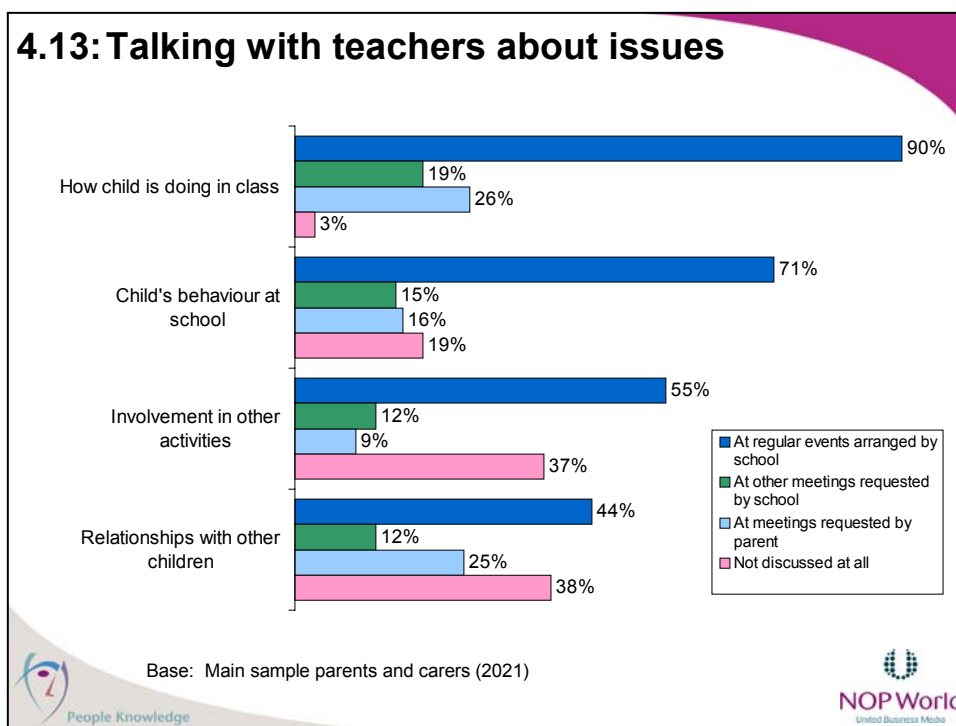
## 4.6 Communications with school

### 4.6.1 Communication on different subjects

Parents and carers were asked when, if at all, they talk with their child's teacher about each of a list of possible discussion subjects.

Nine out of ten parents and carers (90%) talked about how their child was doing at class at regular events arranged by school, such as parents' evenings. A further quarter did so at meetings they themselves requested (26%) and a fifth did so at other meetings requested by the school (19%); 3% claimed not to have discussed it at all.

Just under three quarters said that they spoke to teachers about their child's behaviour in school at regular events arranged by the school (71%), with one in seven doing so at other meetings requested by the school (15%) or by themselves (16%). Just over half talked about their child's involvement in other activities at regular events arranged by the school (55%), though 37% did not talk with teachers about this at all. Three in seven talked about their child's relationships with other children at regular events arranged by the school (44%). A further quarter did so at meetings requested by the parent and 38% did not do so at all.



Base: Main sample parents and carers (2021)		At regular events arranged by school	At other meetings requested by school	At meetings requested by parent	Not discussed at all
<i>Issue</i>					
How child is doing in class	%	90	19	26	3
Child's behaviour at school	%	71	15	16	19
Involvement in other activities	%	55	12	9	37
Relationships with other children	%	44	12	25	38

Other meetings about how the child is doing in class were more likely to be requested by parents when the child is male (29% v 23% for girls) or when the parents left full-time education beyond the age of 16 (27% v 23% of those who left aged 16 or under). They were less likely to be requested by parents/carers over the age of 45 (22% vs 27% of others) or when the child was secondary school. Other meetings were more likely to be requested by the school about this when the parents did not speak English as a first language (25% v 18% of those who did) or for DE respondents (24% v 17% of others). Both types of meetings were more likely to be requested to discuss this when the child had been identified as having SEN (40% and 30%).

	Total	Gender		School year of child			
		Male	Female	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12
Unweighted sample size:	2021	1014	1007	544	479	566	413
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
At regular events arranged by school	90	89	90	90	92	87	89
At other meetings requested by school	19	19	18	18	19	17	20
At meetings requested by parent	26	23	28	31	29	20	24
Not discussed at all	3	4	3	2	3	5	4

For the child's behaviour, the likelihood of the issue being discussed at meetings being requested by the school was higher for DEs (21% v 14% of others) and boys (18% v 12%). They were more likely to be requested by parents when the child is in Years 1-3 or the parents/carers under the age of 40 (18%). Both types of meetings were more likely to be requested to discuss this when the child had been identified as having SEN (27% and 24%), and the child's behaviour was more likely to be discussed *at regular events* when the respondent was in full-time work (74%, v 66% of those not working). Parents/carers over the age of 45 were the most likely not to have discussed the issue at all (23%).

In terms of the 19% who have not discussed their child's behaviour at school at all, the vast majority of them do go to parents evenings whenever they have the opportunity (78%), so in most cases it is not due to lack of opportunity. It is also not primarily down to lack of confidence when talking to teachers: 63% of them said they were very confident when speaking to teachers, with a further 34% fairly confident. In many cases it may instead simply reflect a belief that if there was a problem with their child's behaviour at school it would be brought up by the teacher and therefore did not need to be raised by the parent/carer otherwise.

Table 4:27: Experience of talking with teachers about issues – the child's behaviour at school

Base: Main sample parents and carers (2021)

	Total	Gender		School year of child			
		Male	Female	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12
Unweighted sample size:	2021	1014	1007	544	479	566	413
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
At regular events arranged by school	71	72	69	71	71	70	71
At other meetings requested by school	15	16	14	15	14	13	17
At meetings requested by parent	16	15	17	20	15	14	15
Not discussed at all	19	18	20	17	20	20	18

The child's involvement in sport or other extra-curricular activities was more likely to be discussed at regular events by men, ABC1s (58%, v 52% of C2DEs) and those in full-time work (61% v 49% of others). Those not in full-time work were more likely to not discuss it at all (44%, v 31%).

Table 4:28 Experience of talking with teachers about issues – the child’s involvement in extra-curricular activities

Base: Main sample parents and carers (2021)

	Total	Gender		School year of child			
		Male	Female	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12
Unweighted sample size:	2021	1014	1007	544	479	566	413
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
At regular events arranged by school	55	60	50	53	54	60	54
At other meetings requested by school	12	12	12	11	15	13	11
At meetings requested by parent	9	10	9	13	10	8	7
Not discussed at all	37	32	42	39	37	33	38

The child’s relationship with other children was more likely to be discussed at all when the child is at primary school age and more likely to be discussed at regular events among men and the correlated group of those working full-time (49%, v 39% of others). The discussion of this issue at other meetings requested by the parent was more likely when English was the respondent’s first language (26% v 19%) and at other meetings requested by parent or school were again more likely if the child had SEN (32% and 21%). Those aged 45+ were far less likely to have talked about this at regular events (36%) or at meetings they had requested (19%) and far more likely not to have talked about it at all (47%).

Table 4:29 Experience of talking with teachers about issues – the child’s relationships with other children

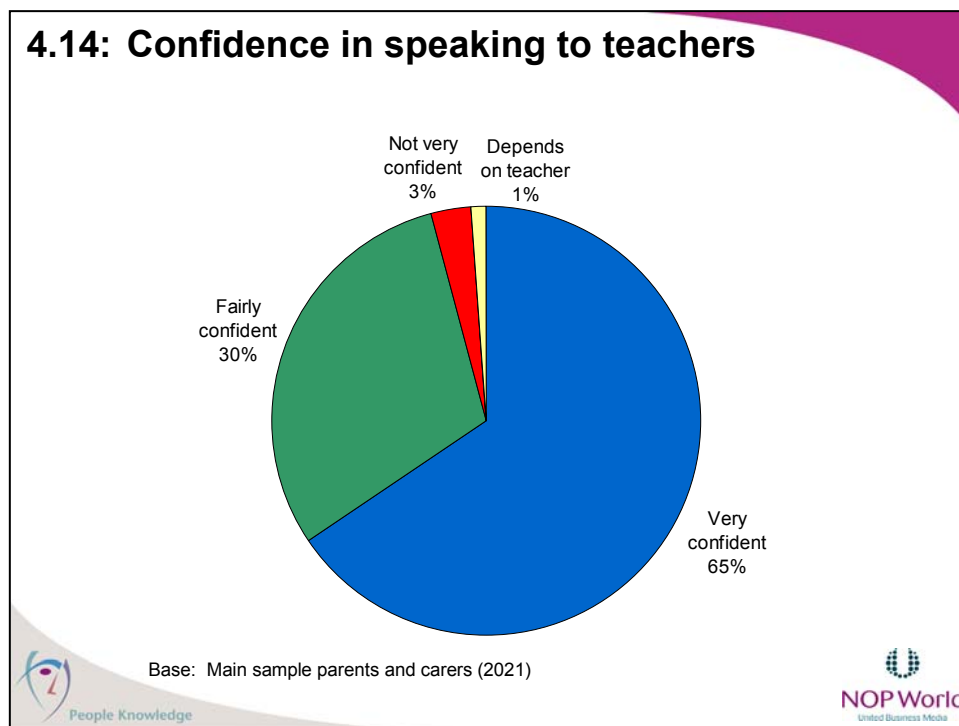
Base: Main sample parents and carers (2021)

	Total	Gender		School year of child			
		Male	Female	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12
Unweighted sample size:	2021	1014	1007	544	479	566	413
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
At regular events arranged by school	44	48	40	49	48	41	36
At other meetings requested by school	12	11	13	12	13	12	10
At meetings requested by parent	25	22	28	25	30	23	20
Not discussed at all	38	38	39	33	34	42	48



#### 4.6.2 Parents' confidence when talking to teachers / support staff

Parents and carers who had ever spoken to teachers were asked how confident they felt doing so. Just under two thirds felt very confident (65%), with a further 30%, fairly confident. This compares with 56% feeling very confident in 2001, and 37% fairly confident.



Comparing sub-groups, men, ABs, those aged over 40, those who left full-time education aged 21 or older and those who feel very involved in their child's education were more likely to feel very confident when talking teachers at their school. The proportions saying they feel very confident in each of these groups is shown below.

Table 4.30: Those feeling very confident when talking with teachers		
Base: Main sample parents and carers (2021)		
TOTAL	%	65
Men	%	71
Women	%	59
AB	%	73
C1	%	65
C2	%	63
DE	%	62
Left FT education aged 16 or under	%	61
Left FT education aged 17-20	%	66
Left FT education aged 21+	%	73
Feel very involved in child's education	%	76
Feel fairly involved in child's education	%	60
Don't feel involved in child's education	%	52
Aged 20-34	%	61
Aged 35-39	%	64
Aged 40-44	%	68
Aged 45+	%	67

A new question then asked about how confident people feel when talking to support staff at their child's school. A clear majority, though less than for talking to teachers, said they felt very confident (56%). Instead, a higher proportion (13%) said they didn't know. Just over a quarter were fairly confident (27%).

As for talking to teachers, men (59% v 52% of women), ABs (64%, v 54% of others), those who left education aged 21 or older (65% v 51% of those who left aged 16 or under) and those who feel very involved in their children's education (67% v 43% of those who don't feel involved) were the most likely to feel very confident. For this question though, the proportion feeling very confident was higher among those with children in the lower school years; this is shown in the table below. Similarly, those aged 20-34 were more likely than older respondents to feel very or fairly confident about talking to support staff (88%).

	Total	School year of child			
		1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12
Unweighted sample size:	2021	544	479	566	413
	%	%	%	%	%
Very confident	56	64	58	53	45
Fairly confident	27	27	28	26	29
Not very confident	2	1	2	2	1
Not at all confident	1	1	1	1	*
Depends on teacher	1	1	1	1	3
Don't know	13	6	11	17	21

### 4.6.3 Ways of getting information

Respondents were asked which was the most useful way in which they could get information about how their child was getting on at school. They were not prompted though with any suggested answers.

The most mentioned way of getting information was parents' evenings (35%), though by fewer respondents than in 2001 (42%). One in six (18%) said talking to school staff informally was the most useful way, up from 11% in 2001. One in eight said school reports, up slightly though not significantly from 2001. Significant proportions also said meetings they had requested to talk specifically about their child (9%) and written communication that their child brought home (7%); these were not significantly different from the previous survey. A smaller proportion than in 2001 mentioned the child telling the respondent or the respondent asking the child (4% v 10%).

Table 4.32: Most useful way to get information		
Base: Main sample parents and carers (2021)		
	2004	2001
	%	%
Parents' evenings	35	42
Talk to school staff informally, such as in the playground	18	11
School reports	12	10
Meetings you have requested to talk specifically about your child	9	11
Written communication from school that your child brings home	7	6
Other special meetings for parents	5	2
Child tells respondent or respondent asks child	4	10
Being asked to attend meetings with teachers specifically about child	3	-

NB: Only answers given by 3% or more shown above

Reflecting their greater daytime availability, women were slightly more likely to say meetings they request to talk specifically about the child are the most useful method (12%, v 7% of men), though they were also more likely to mention this if the *child* in question is a boy (12% v 7% for girls) – parents of boys were of course more likely to say this was something they had actually done.

Those with children of primary school age (26% v 10% of secondary school pupils), aged under 40 (22%, vs 14% of others) and to a lesser extent, those who felt very involved in their child's education (21%, v 16% of others), were more likely to prefer talking to school staff informally. Parents from social classes DE were also more likely to mention talking to staff informally (21% v 17% of others). Among parents/carers of older children (18% v 7% of others), those aged over 40 (14%, vs 9% of others) and those who did not feel very or at all involved in their child's education (16% v 9% of those who feel very involved), a greater proportion cited school reports. ABs were more likely to choose parents evenings (39%, v 33% of C2DEs).

#### 4.6.4 Frequency of communication from school

About half (51%) received written communication from their child's school once a week or more; this includes the 15% who received such communication most days or daily. A further third received such communication at least once a month (32%) and one in seven still received some, but less often than once a month (14%). In 2001; a similar proportion said they received

written communication from their child's school daily or most days (13%) and slightly more said they received it at least once a week (42%).

As the table below shows, there were clear differences by school year of child: the lower the school year, the more likely parents and carers were to receive written communication most days or every day. In the same way, those aged 20-34 were clearly more likely to receive written communication once a week or more (60%, vs 37% of those aged over 45). Those whose child had been identified as having SEN were more likely to say they received written communication every day (10%, v 3% of others).

	Total	School year of child			
		1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12
Unweighted sample size:	2021	544	479	566	413
	%	%	%	%	%
Every day	4	5	4	3	2
Most days	9	15	12	5	2
At least once a week	38	51	46	30	24
At least once a month	32	20	28	40	44
Less often than once a month	14	7	7	18	23
Never	1	1	1	1	1
Depends what it is	2	1	1	3	3
Don't know	1	1	*	*	*

Three quarters (75%) of respondents who had received any written information found it very easy to understand. Just under a quarter had found it fairly easy with virtually no-one giving any other answer. There were no significant differences from 2001.

As shown below, ABs were more likely than C2DEs to find it very easy to understand. The same was true of those educated beyond the age of 16 (80%, v 70% of others), those who spoke English as a first language (77%, v 65% of others) and those whose children had been identified as having SEN (77% v 67% of others). Less predictably, men were also slightly less likely to give this answer (72% v 79% of women).

	Total	AB	C1	C2	DE
Unweighted sample size:	1950	348	679	555	365
	%	%	%	%	%
Very easy	75	83	78	72	68
Fairly easy	23	16	21	26	28
Fairly difficult	1	1	*	1	2
Very difficult	*	-	*	*	1

\* = less than 0.5%

The twenty four respondents who had found the information hard to understand were asked what, in particular, had caused them difficulty. Eleven respondents said it was because of the vocabulary and language used. Six said it was because the information was bit vague and four because it was not in their first language.

They were also asked if the written information from school was in their preferred language. Fourteen respondents said that it was always, three said it was sometimes and seven said it never was.

## 5 The minority ethnic group booster sample: Sample Demographics

### 5.1 Household selection

The minority ethnic group booster sample in this survey is a sample of households containing children aged 5-16 and attending maintained schools, where the children come from the following ethnic groups (as identified by an adult in the household):

- Black African
- Black Caribbean
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Mixed heritage (excluding White/Asian)

These groups were chosen because in each case children within these groups consistently perform below the national average across all Key Stages and at GCSE (DfES Statistical First Release SFR 04/2004). Minority ethnic groups from which children consistently perform above the national average - such as Chinese, Indian and mixed white and Asian heritage - were excluded from the research.

In order to find such households, a list of postcode sectors was created which contained all postcode sectors in England identified by the 2001 Census as having 30% or more of their residents of Black African, Black Caribbean, Pakistani, Bangladeshi or mixed ethnic origin, excluding those which had a population of less than 1000 persons. There were 248 such postcode sectors. The list of postcode sectors was sent to UK Changes, a specialist telephone number supply agency, who were asked to provide telephone numbers from each postcode sector, proportional to the total number of telephone numbers available for selection in that postcode sector. The telephone numbers supplied were called, and where calls were answered, a household screening exercise was attempted.

Households headed by a lone parent or carer were not excluded from this sample, as it was felt that this would exclude too large a proportion of households containing children from particular ethnic groups such as Black Caribbean and mixed heritage. The 2001 Census data showed that "more than half of families with dependent children headed by a person of mixed origin (61%) or Black Caribbean origin (54%) were lone parent families". Additionally, previous DfES research about parental involvement has not included a sizeable cross-section of Minority



Ethnic Groups (MEG) families and it was therefore felt that this survey should obtain a representative sample of the family structure of these groups, to allow an accurate picture of parental involvement in education to be drawn.

However, as with the main sample, families containing only five year olds in Reception classes in state schools were excluded.

If the household contained more than one eligible child, a reference child was selected. First of all the interviewer checked how many eligible children were of primary school age and how many were of secondary school age. Aiming to end up with roughly equal numbers of each, the interviewing program gave priority to whichever age category was most short of interviews at the time. If there was more than one child in the selected age category, the interviewer then asked for the name and age of the child in that category with the next birthday. The child was referred to by name wherever necessary to make the question specific. There were no quota controls apart from this.

All the findings presented in this report are based on unweighted data. The total number of respondents for the minority ethnic group booster sample was 1712.

## **5.2 *The sample profile***

For a respondent to be eligible for inclusion in the survey, he/she needed to have a parental or guardian's relationship towards at least one of the children in the household.

### **5.2.1 Marital status**

Given that the booster respondents were not required to be in two-parent/carer households, far less than for the main sample described themselves as married or living as married (69% v 95%). Instead, over one in five said they were single or engaged (21%), with 9% separated or divorced.

Due to this difference in composition of the main and ethnic booster samples, all direct comparisons between the two in this report will be based on the ethnic booster respondents living in a two-carer household.

The segmentation into lone parents and couples in the analysis of the booster of minority ethnic groups parents was done by classifying all those who said they had a spouse or partner in the household as part of a couple, and all others as lone parents.

### **5.2.2 Partner in household**

Respondents from the booster of minority ethnic groups were asked, in addition to their marital status, whether they had a spouse or partner living with them as a member of the household. In all, 68% said they did and 32% said they did not. But whereas 90% of the men in the sample said they had a spouse or partner in the households – i.e. there were very few male lone parents/carers in the sample – only 59% of the women said the same, meaning there was a substantial number of female lone parents/carers in the sample. In fact, nearly a third of the booster of parents/carers from minority ethnic groups were female lone parents/carers (494 out of 1712).

The detailed analysis below shows that three fifths of the Black Caribbean women (62%) and half of the Black African women (49%) were lone parents/carers, as were 43% of the women of mixed heritage and other ethnic backgrounds (including white). A much smaller proportion of the Pakistani and Bangladeshi women in the sample were lone parents/carers – about one fifth in each case (18% and 19% respectively).

Table 5.1: Presence of spouse/partner in households analysed by gender and ethnic background of carer				
Base: All parents/carers in booster of minority ethnic groups				
	Sample size		Spouse/partner in household	No spouse/partner in household
Gender of respondents:		%		
Men	(499)	%	90	10
Women	(1213)	%	59	41
Sex of respondent within ethnic background of carer:				
Black Caribbean:				
Men	(50)	%	80	20
Women	(267)	%	37	62
Black African:				
Men	(102)	%	87	12
Women	(231)	%	51	49
Pakistani:				
Men	(172)	%	95	5
Women	(274)	%	82	18
Bangladeshi:				
Men	(58)	%	91	9
Women	(107)	%	81	19
Mixed heritage/other:				
Men	(117)	%	86	14
Women	(334)	%	56	43

### 5.2.3 Age of parents/carers in the survey

Like the main sample, the respondents from the booster of minority ethnic groups are fairly homogenous in terms of respondent age: close to half (46%) of the parents surveyed were aged between 35 and 44.

However, compared to the main sample, parents and carers in the minority ethnic group booster sample are rather younger on average: a significantly larger proportion of respondents in two-parent/carer households are younger than 35 (36% v 21%), with a correspondingly smaller proportion being older than 44 (16% v 24%).

## 5.2.4 Ethnicity

Household selection was based on the ethnic origin of the child, not of the parent, and the reference children selected for the survey belonged to the following ethnic backgrounds:

	N	%
Black African	327	19.1
Black Caribbean	375	21.9
Pakistani	518	30.3
Bangladeshi	178	10.4
Mixed heritage	314	18.3
Total	1712	100

The parents and carers therefore came from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. Forty three per cent of the ethnic booster sample described themselves as Asian or Asian British, including 26% Pakistani, 10% Bangladeshi and 5% Indian. Just under two in five said they were Black or Black British (39%), equally split between Black Caribbean and Black African (both 19%). Eight per cent of parents/carers were white (8%), with a further 5% from a mixed or dual background and 4% from some other background.

Just under half said that English was not their first language (47%). Seventy-nine per cent of carers of children of Bangladeshi origin gave this answer, as did 68% of carers of children of Pakistani origin and 60% of parents/carers of children of Black African origin and 29% of parents/carers of children of mixed heritage. A small proportion, 8%, of those whose reference children were described as Black Caribbean also said that English was not their first language.

## 5.2.5 Working status

Just over a third (34%) of carers said they work full time in a paid job (30 hours or more), a further 17% work part-time and 6% described themselves as self-employed. One in seven are unemployed (14%) and 21% are looking after the house or home.

Thirty seven per cent of those in a two person household are working full-time, compared to 52% of the main sample.

## 5.2.6 Education and social class

Thirty per cent of parents/carers in the minority ethnic group booster sample left full-time education aged 16 or younger. One in five left aged 17 or 18 (21%) and 47% did so aged 19 or older, including 8% who are still studying.

Compared with the main sample, significantly fewer parents/carers in minority ethnic group booster sample two-carer households left full-time education aged 16 or younger (29% v 50%).

One in ten households in the minority ethnic group booster sample were classified AB on the basis of the occupation of the Chief Income Earner, with 31% in the C1 category, a quarter classified as C2 (24%) and a third, DE (34%).

Compared with the main sample, significantly more minority ethnic group booster sample two-carer households were in the DE category (27% v 19%) and significantly *fewer* were ABs (12% v 18%).

	Ethnic booster total	Ethnic booster two-carer households	Main sample
Unweighted sample size:	(1712)	(1162)	(2021)
	%	%	%
AB	9	12	18
C1	31	31	35
C2	24	29	28
DE	34	27	19

## 5.2.7 Gender

Seven in ten parents/carers in the minority ethnic group booster sample were female (71%), compared to the 50/50 split for the main sample. However, the reference children were more evenly split, with 49% boys and 51% girls.

## 5.2.8 School year of child

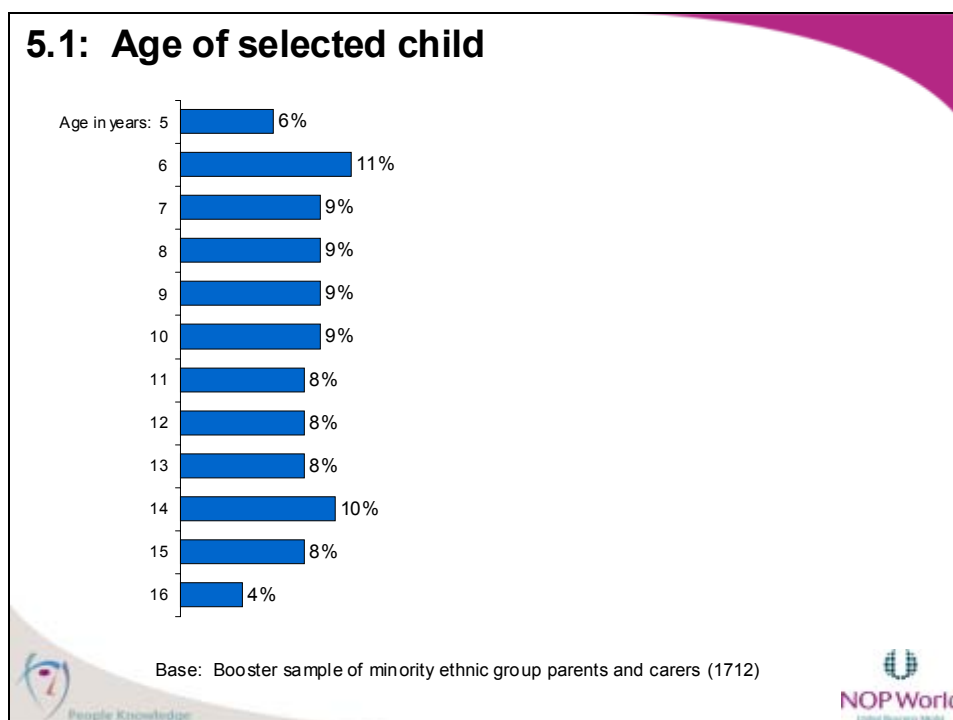
The sample consisted of slightly more households with children in in Years 1-6 than of secondary school age, and among two-parent/carer households, significantly more in Years 1-6 than the main sample (60% v 50%).

Table 5.4: School year of child – minority ethnic group booster sample  
Base: Booster sample of minority ethnic group parents and carers (1712)

	%
1-3	32
4-6	25
7-9	25
10-12	16

### 5.2.9 Age of selected child

The age of the selected children reflected this distribution.



### 5.2.10 Children in the household

Just over a third of households included in this part of the study had one (37%) or two (34%) children aged 5 to 16 in the household and just over a quarter had three or more (28%). Among two-parent/carer households 33% had three or more, a significantly higher proportion than for the main sample (17%).

### 5.2.11 Special education needs

Eleven per cent of parents/carers in the minority ethnic group booster sample were interviewed about a child who has special education needs, which, as for the main sample, was higher among DEs (14%) than ABs (6%), as well as when the child is a boy (15%, v 8% for girls).

Slightly under half of parents who reported their child as having SEN said their child had a 'statement' of special needs (48%).

### 5.2.12 Access to internet

Fifty-two per cent of parents/carers in the minority ethnic group booster sample said they had access to the internet at home, while 27% had access at work and 10% at school or college and 9% elsewhere. One third (34%) said they had no access to the internet.

Of those in two-parent/carer households, 54% have home access to the internet. Compared with the main sample, access to the internet both at home and at work is significantly lower, though access at school/college or other locations is similar. Overall access to the internet is lower for parents/carers in the minority ethnic group booster sample.

	Two-parent/carer households in minority ethnic group booster sample	Main sample
Unweighted sample size:	(1162)	(2021)
	%	%
Home access to internet	54	78
Access to internet at work	28	42
Access to internet at school/college	9	9
Access to internet elsewhere	9	7
No access to internet	34	15

### 5.2.13 Previous work experience in schools

Another background question asked whether they worked now, or had ever worked in any school, including a supplementary school or complementary school. If they had, they were asked which one.

Just over three quarters had never done so (76%), one in seven had done so at another school (15%) and 8% had done so at their child's school. Women were far more likely than men to have worked in a school (28% v 13%), reflecting the greater number of female teachers and classroom assistants. It was also far higher among those who worked part-time (43%) and those for whom English is a first language (27% v 20%).

The proportion of parents/carers from two-parent/carer households who had ever worked in a school was identical to the proportion found in the main sample, at 23%.



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## 6 The Minority Ethnic Group Booster Sample: Main Findings and Comparisons

### 6.1 *General Involvement*

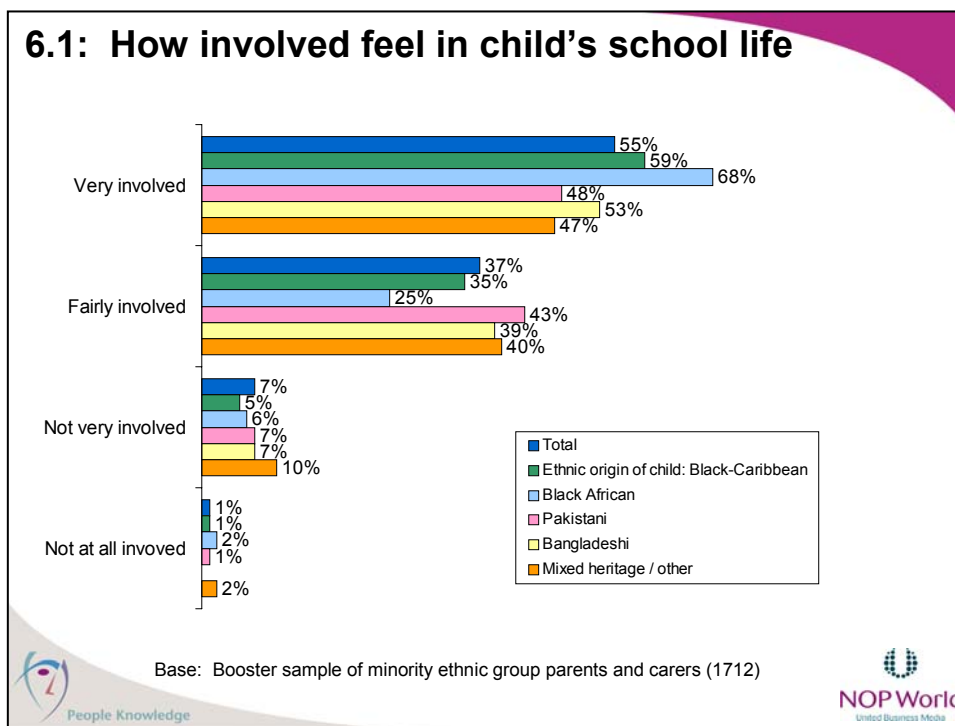
Much of the questionnaire collected information about what parents actually do when they involve themselves in their child's school life. It is important to note again that each parent was asked to focus on *one* child only when considering their answers. The child was selected at the start of the interview and referred to by name throughout.

Also, due to this difference in composition of the main and ethnic booster samples, all direct comparisons between the two are based on the ethnic booster respondents living in a two-carer household.

#### 6.1.1 **The subjective measure: how involved do parents *feel*?**

The first question asked parents how involved they *feel* before being asked what they actually do to get involved. They were asked before being prompted with the kinds of activities that might be considered involvement.

Just over half of the booster sample said they felt very involved (55%). A further 37% said they felt fairly involved and just 8% said they felt not very (7%) or not at all involved (1%).



As shown in the table below, the proportion feeling very involved was highest when the child was from a Black African ethnic background (68%) and lowest when of Pakistani (48%) or Mixed Heritage background (47%). There were no significant differences in the proportion feeling not very or not at all involved. The differences were also unrelated to whether English was first or second language.

	Ethnic origin of child					
	Total	Black-Caribbean	Black African	Pakistani	Bangla-deshi	Mixed heritage / other
Unweighted sample size:	1712	375	327	518	178	314
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very involved (+3)	55	59	68	48	53	47
Fairly involved (+2)	37	35	25	43	39	40
Not very involved (+1)	7	5	6	7	7	10
Not at all involved (0)	1	1	2	1	-	2
Mean score	2.46	2.53	2.59	2.39	2.47	2.34
S.D.	0.67	0.62	0.67	0.67	0.62	0.73

As with the main sample, there were also a number of other variables which were correlated with the propensity of respondents to feel very involved (see table below). Women were slightly more likely than men to feel very involved, as – more significantly - were respondents for whom the child in question was in Years 1-3 and those who left full-time education aged 21+. The

proportion feeling very or fairly involved though was higher among those aged over 45 (96%). The group that felt the lowest level of involvement were those who in a later question said they thought the responsibility for a child's education lay primarily with the school rather than with parents, again presumably expressing this conviction in their own choices about involvement.

It is notable though that some of these variables that are clearly correlated with this question and with each other for the main sample do not seem to have the same impact here. In particular, though the feeling of involvement is again very slightly higher for women, unlike the main sample, respondents working full-time are no less likely to feel very involved (and no *more* likely to feel uninvolved) than those working part-time or not at all.

There were also no significant differences within the minority ethnic group booster sample between two and one-parent households (mean involvement score of 2.45 vs 2.49).

Table 6.2: % feeling very involved analysed by demographic and attitudinal variables Base: Booster sample of minority ethnic group parents and carers			
Gender of respondent:			
Male respondent	(499)	%	52
Female respondent	(1213)	%	56
School year of child:			
Year 1-3	(545)	%	59
Year 4-6	(439)	%	54
Year 7-9	(435)	%	52
Year 10-12	(284)	%	52
Social class of household:			
AB	(171)	%	60
C1	(535)	%	55
C2	(419)	%	47
DE	(578)	%	58
Work status of respondent:			
Full-time work	(588)	%	56
Part-time work	(257)	%	51
Other	(867)	%	55
Language:			
English first language	(899)	%	54
English not first language	(810)	%	55
View on responsibility for child's education:			
Lies with parent	(407)	%	57
Lies with school	(275)	%	42
Lies with both equally	(1025)	%	57
Age of leaving full-time education:			
Left FT education aged 16 or under	(523)	%	49
Left FT education aged 17-20	(574)	%	53
Left FT education aged 21+	(455)	%	61
Age of respondent:			
Aged 20-34	(610)	%	91
Aged 35-39	(436)	%	93
Aged 40-44	(356)	%	89
Aged 45+	(293)	%	96

Looking at the breakdown by ethnic origin of parent/carer, Black Africans are the most likely to feel very involved in their child's school life, at 71%, and Black Caribbean parents/carers are also more likely to say they feel very involved than are parents/carers of Pakistani, Bangladeshi or other ethnic origin. The views of male and female carers are generally quite consistent within ethnic origin, but the small apparent differences between male and female carers within some of the ethnic group are not large enough to be statistically significant, given the small subgroup sizes involved.

Table 6.3: Feeling of involvement in child's school life, analysed by gender of carers within ethnic origin of carers (mean score, where 3=very involved and 0=not at all involved)  
Base: All booster sample parents/carers

		Base:	Mean score	Standard deviation
Black Caribbean	Male	(50)	2.56	0.54
	Female	(267)	2.52	0.63
Black African	Male	(102)	2.72	0.55
	Female	(231)	2.62	0.64
Pakistani	Male	(172)	2.35	0.64
	Female	(274)	2.41	0.65
Bangladeshi	Male	(58)	2.40	0.65
	Female	(107)	2.50	0.64
Mixed heritage	Male	(117)	2.32	0.69
	Female	(334)	2.35	0.75

Compared to the main sample, those from two-parent/carer households in the minority ethnic group booster sample were far more likely to feel very involved (53% v 38%). Their mean score for feelings of involvement is also higher at 2.45 compared with 2.27. The pattern was true for all ethnic groups within two parent/carer households, but to a much greater extent for Black African respondents (2.69).

Table 6.4: Feeling of involvement in child's school life, analysed by ethnic origin of carers within two parent / carer households (mean score, where 3=very involved and 0=not at all involved)  
Base: Two parents/carer households

	Base:	Mean score	Standard deviation
All main sample parent/carers	(2021)	2.27	0.67
Two parent/carer households from booster sample of minority ethnic groups:			
Black Caribbean	(139)	2.53	0.61
Black African	(206)	2.69	0.58
Pakistani	(388)	2.37	0.64
Bangladeshi	(140)	2.46	0.64
Mixed heritage/other	(289)	2.32	0.74
All	(1162)	2.45	0.66

## 6.1.2 Who is more involved in your child's school life?

In terms of who is the more involved in their child's school life, 66% of women in two-adult households said they were the more involved, compared to 27% of men. Those working part-time or not at all were also more likely to say this. Those in social grade category AB and with children in school years 1-6 were slightly more likely than other groups to say their partner was more involved.

	Sample size		Respondent	Partner
Gender of respondent:				
Men	(337)	%	27	32
Women	(715)	%	66	6
Social class of respondent:				
AB	(145)	%	45	23
C1	(358)	%	51	17
C2	(334)	%	54	15
DE	(320)	%	51	14
Work status of respondent:				
Full-time work	(426)	%	40	25
Part-time work	(175)	%	61	11
Other	(561)	%	56	11
School year of child:				
1-3	(399)	%	52	18
4-6	(293)	%	54	20
7-9	(282)	%	50	12
10-12	(179)	%	47	12

The table below shows the different patterns by ethnic background and gender of the carer.

Men were more likely to be more involved than their partner if they were from a Black African background (36%). They were least likely to be more involved if they were from a mixed heritage (13%) or Bangladeshi (17%) background.

Table 6.6: Who is more involved in child's school life analysed by ethnic background of carers within gender  
 Base: Booster sample of minority ethnic group parents and carers – two person households only

		Sample size		Respondent	Partner
All men		(337)	%	27	32
All women		(715)	%	66	6
Black Caribbean	Male	(51)	%	22	35
	Female	(117)	%	61	7
Black African	Male	(89)	%	36	21
	Female	(112)	%	50	8
Pakistani	Male	(184)	%	33	28
	Female	(265)	%	71	6
Bangladeshi	Male	(59)	%	17	36
	Female	(94)	%	67	6
Mixed heritage	Male	(64)	%	13	56
	Female	(127)	%	73	5



### 6.1.3 Practical involvement in child's school

Respondents were also asked which of a series of practical activities to help the school they did whenever they had the opportunity, sometimes and never.

The activities by definition require different amounts of effort and one activity stood out from the others in terms of respondents' commitment to it: some 82% said they went to a parents' evening whenever they had the opportunity. Just 4% said they never went to these. The responses in terms of helping with fund-raising events were more evenly spread. Around a third gave each answer, ranging from 31% saying they helped whenever they had the opportunity, to 38% who never did so.

The other activities had far less participation. Exactly a quarter said they got involved in Parents and Teacher Associations, with 21% sometimes involved and 53% never being so. Exactly three in five were never involved with helping out elsewhere in the school e.g. libraries, dinner duties and school trips. A further 21% do so sometimes and 19% whenever there is an opportunity. Almost identical responses were given for helping out with class and helping with special interest groups like sports or drama clubs.

The lowest participation figures were for helping with out of school clubs, such as breakfast clubs: 80% never helped with these.

Of the 153 whose children attended a supplementary or complementary school, 27% helped out whenever they had the opportunity and 27% did so sometimes.

		Whenever there is an opportunity	Sometimes	Never / don't know
Go to parents' evenings	%	82	14	4
Help with fund-raising activities	%	31	30	38
Get involved with Parents and Teacher Associations	%	25	21	53
Dinner duties, school trips etc.	%	19	21	60
Help out in class	%	18	17	64
Help with special interest groups like sports or drama clubs	%	18	18	63
Help with out of school clubs such as breakfast clubs	%	9	10	80
Get involved in a supplementary or complementary school *	%	27	27	45

\* asked only of those whose child attends a supplementary or complementary school

### 6.1.3.1 Parents' evenings

Men are less likely than women to attend parents' evenings whenever there is an opportunity (73% vs 86%), and more likely to attend sometimes (21% vs 11%).

Looking at ethnic background of cases, the overall figures suggest that Black carers are slightly less likely than other minority ethnic groups to go to parents' evenings whenever there is an opportunity, (79%, vs 82% of all respondents). However, there are differences between Black Caribbean and Black African carers – 87% of the former say they go to parents' evenings whenever there is an opportunity, compared to 72% of the latter. The table below shows differences by gender within ethnic background of carers. Bangladeshi men are apparently the most likely of all men to attend parents' evenings sometimes or never (41%); Pakistani men are the most likely to attend whenever there is an opportunity (81%).

		Sample size		Whenever there is an opportunity	Sometimes	Never / don't know
All		(1712)	%	82	14	4
Male		(499)	%	73	21	5
Female		(1213)	%	86	11	3
Gender within ethnic background of carer:						
Black Caribbean	Male	(50)	%	74	22	4
	Female	(102)	%	86	12	2
Black African	Male	(267)	%	68	24	9
	Female	(231)	%	77	16	6
Pakistani	Male	(172)	%	81	13	5
	Female	(274)	%	86	10	3
Bangladeshi	Male	(58)	%	59	36	5
	Female	(107)	%	89	9	2
Mixed heritage	Male	(117)	%	74	23	3
	Female	(334)	%	90	7	2

As the table below shows, those from social class DE (78%) and those not speaking English as a first language (78%) were significantly less likely to go to parents evenings whenever they had the opportunity.

	Sample size		Whenever there is an opportunity	Sometimes	Never / don't know
All	1712	%	82	14	4
School year of child:					
1-3	(545)	%	81	14	5
4-6	(439)	%	81	16	3
7-9	(435)	%	84	12	4
10-12	(284)	%	85	13	2
Social class:					
AB	(171)	%	86	11	3
C1	(535)	%	85	13	2
C2	(419)	%	83	13	4
DE	(578)	%	78	17	4
Language:					
English first language	(899)	%	86	12	2
English not first language	(810)	%	78	16	6

Carers of children from Pakistani backgrounds were the most likely to help out in class whenever they had the opportunity (22%), while those from Black Caribbean and mixed heritage backgrounds were the most likely never to do so (71% and 69% respectively). As the table below also shows, carers of children at primary school were more likely to ever help.

Other differences were that DEs were more likely than ABC1s to ever help out in class (40% v 32%), as were those with a partner in the household (39% v 29%), those not working (40% v 28% of those working full-time), those who left full-time education at 21+ (40% v 30% of those who left at 16 or under), those for whom English is a second language (42% v 30%), those aged under 40 (39% vs 31% of older respondents) and those who feel very involved in their child's education (41% v 17% of those who don't feel very involved).

Table 6.10: Practical involvement in child's school – Helping out in class				
Base: Booster sample of minority ethnic group parents and carers (1712)				
		Whenever there is an opportunity	Sometimes	Never
All	%	18	17	64
Black Caribbean	%	16	13	71
Black African	%	18	17	65
Pakistani	%	22	19	58
Bangladeshi	%	15	25	60
Mixed heritage / other	%	14	16	69
Year 1-3	%	22	21	56
Year 4-6	%	18	21	60
Year 7-9	%	13	11	76
Year 10-12	%	16	16	68
Aged 20-34	%	20	19	61
Aged 35-39	%	20	18	62
Aged 40-44	%	17	16	67
Aged 45+	%	13	15	72

As the table overleaf shows, there were no significant differences between ethnic groups in helping out with dinner duties and school trips, but those with children in Years 1–6 were clearly more likely to ever help than those with older children. Other significant differences were that DEs were more likely than ABs to ever help (44% v 34%), as were those with a partner in the household (42% v 36%), those not working full time (44% v 34% of those working full-time), those who left full-time education aged 17 or older (42%), those whose first language is English (47% v 35%) and those who feel very involved in their child's education (47% v 16% of those who don't feel very involved). Those aged over 45 were less likely to help whenever there is an opportunity (13% vs 21% of others).

Table 6.11: Practical involvement in child's school – Helping with dinner duties, school trips etc.

Base: Booster sample of minority ethnic group parents and carers (1712)

		Whenever there is an opportunity	Sometimes	Never
All	%	19	21	60
Black Caribbean	%	21	17	62
Black African	%	21	23	56
Pakistani	%	17	20	62
Bangladeshi	%	16	29	55
Mixed heritage / other	%	19	21	59
Year 1-3	%	21	24	55
Year 4-6	%	23	23	53
Year 7-9	%	14	17	69
Year 10-12	%	17	18	65
Aged 20-34	%	21	21	58
Aged 35-39	%	19	19	62
Aged 40-44	%	21	22	57
Aged 45+	%	13	24	63

As the table overleaf shows, carers of children from Bangladeshi backgrounds were far less likely than other groups to help with fund-raising activities whenever they had the opportunity. Carers of primary school age children were far more likely.

Other significant differences were that women were more likely to help than men whenever they had the opportunity (33% v 27%), as were ABs than C1s (39% v 29%). Those who finished full-time education at 21+ were more likely to ever help than those aged 16 or under (66% v 55%), as were those who feel very involved in their child's education (68% v 40% of those who don't feel very involved). Those aged over 45 were less likely to help whenever there is an opportunity (25% vs 33% of those aged under 40). There were no significant differences between one and two-parent households.

		Whenever there is an opportunity	Sometimes	Never
All	%	31	30	38
Black Caribbean	%	34	27	39
Black African	%	33	33	33
Pakistani	%	33	28	39
Bangladeshi	%	18	34	48
Mixed heritage / other	%	30	33	38
Year 1-3	%	35	31	34
Year 4-6	%	34	32	34
Year 7-9	%	27	27	46
Year 10-12	%	27	29	43

As the table overleaf shows, carers of children of Black African origin were the most likely to ever help with special interest groups like sports or drama clubs and carers of children of mixed heritage were the least likely. Men were also more likely than women to ever help.

Other significant differences were that those educated beyond 21 (41% v 31% of those who left age 16 or under), those who don't speak English as a first language (42% v 32%) and those feel very involved in their child's education (44% v 21% of those who don't feel very involved) were more likely to ever help. Those aged 45 or older were more likely to never do so (68%, vs 62% of others). There were no significant differences between one and two-parent households.

Table 6.13: Practical involvement in child's school – Helping with special interest groups like sports or drama clubs  
Base: Booster sample of minority ethnic group parents and carers (1712)

		Whenever there is an opportunity	Sometimes	Never
All	%	18	18	63
Black Caribbean	%	19	16	65
Black African	%	23	23	54
Pakistani	%	18	18	63
Bangladeshi	%	16	21	63
Mixed heritage / other	%	15	12	72
Men	%	19	21	59
Women	%	18	17	65

As shown in the table below, carers of children of Black African origin were more likely than other carers to ever help with out of school clubs such as breakfast clubs. Men were more likely to ever help than women. Other significant differences were that those who finished full-time education aged 21+ were more likely to ever help (24% v 17% of those who left aged 16 or under), as were those who speak English as a second language (25% v 16% of others) and those feel very involved in their child's education (26% v 6% of those who don't feel very involved). There was not a significant difference between one and two-parent households.

Table 6.14: Practical involvement in child's school – Helping with out of school clubs such as breakfast clubs

Base: Booster sample of minority ethnic group parents and carers (1712)

		Whenever there is an opportunity	Sometimes	Never
All	%	9	10	80
Black Caribbean	%	8	7	84
Black African	%	14	15	70
Pakistani	%	10	13	77
Bangladeshi	%	7	11	81
Mixed heritage / other	%	7	4	88
Men	%	10	14	75
Women	%	9	9	82



As shown on the table below, carers of children of Black African background were more likely to ever help with Parents and Teacher Associations. Men were also more likely than women. Other significant differences were that ABs were more likely than others to help whenever they had the opportunity (35% v 25%) as were those in two-parent/carer households (27% v 21%), those who were educated beyond the age of 21 (33% v 22%) and those who feel very involved in their child's education (55% v 22% of those who don't feel very involved).

		Whenever there is an opportunity	Sometimes	Never
All	%	25	21	53
Black Caribbean	%	24	23	53
Black African	%	30	24	46
Pakistani	%	27	20	52
Bangladeshi	%	17	28	54
Mixed heritage / other	%	23	17	59
Men	%	28	25	46
Women	%	24	20	55

Compared to the main sample, carers in two person households from the minority [ethnic group](#) booster sample were more likely to ever help with PTAs, dinner duties and school trips, special interest groups, out of school clubs and in class (see table below).

	Two-parent/carer households in minority ethnic group booster sample		Main sample	
Unweighted sample size	1162		2021	
	Whenever there is an opportunity	Sometimes	Whenever there is an opportunity	Sometimes
	%	%	%	%
Go to parents' evenings	82	15	86	11
Help with fund-raising activities	32	31	31	35
Get involved with Parents and Teacher Associations	27	22	18	20
Dinner duties, school trips and so on	20	23	15	18
Help out in class	19	19	13	14
Help with special interest groups like sports or drama clubs	18	19	13	13
Help with out of school clubs such as breakfast clubs	10	11	5	7

### 6.1.4 Ways in which parents would like to be more involved

Those who had said they did not feel ‘very involved’ in their child’s school life were asked in what ways, if any, they would like to be involved in their child’s school life. Respondents were not prompted with suggested answers and were allowed to give more than one response.

The largest proportion said they were already as involved as they could be (25%); 16% said they would like to be involved in talking to teachers about progress more often and 13% for each of: helping out in the classroom or attending lessons, getting more homework from school and giving any kind of help. Almost as many said getting more frequent feedback on their child’s progress (12%) and receiving more information from school about what the child is studying (11%).

	%
Talk to teachers about progress more often	16
Help out in classroom / attend lessons / spend more time in school	13
Get more homework from school / see home work more often	13
Give any kind of help	13
Get more frequent feedback / updates on progress	12
Receive more information from school about what child is studying / curriculum / framework	11
Help at special events e.g. sports day	6
Help on school trips	6
Already as involved as I can be	25
Don’t know	12

Comparing sub-groups, those with children in Years 10-12 were more likely to want more frequent updates on progress (19%), while those with children in Years 1-3 were more likely to want to help out in the classroom or attend lessons (19%). Those not working and those who speak English as a second language were slightly more likely to want to get more homework from school (17% and 18%), and in the latter case also wanted to talk to teachers more often about progress (20%). Those working full-time were unsurprisingly slightly more likely to say they were already as involved as they could be (29%), as were those who speak English as a first language (29%) and those who finished full-time education aged 16 or under (30%).

Compared to the main sample, those in two-parent/carer households in the minority ethnic booster sample were more likely to want to get more homework from school (14% v 8%), talk to teachers more often (16% v 11%), help out in the classroom (13% v 9%), help on school trips (6% v 3%) and give any kind of help (12% v 7%). They were less likely to say that they were

already as involved as they could be (24% v 38%), suggesting there may be greater potential for increasing involvement within minority ethnic groups than in the wider population. Those aged over 40 were more likely to be already as involved as they can be (29% vs 22% of younger parents/carers).

### **6.1.5 Barriers to involvement**

Parents and carers were also asked if there was anything that stopped them getting more involved in their child's school life. One answer was mentioned far more often than any other: 33% said work commitments stopped them. Just over one in ten said childcare difficulties (11%) and 7%, lack of time. No other answer was mentioned with any frequency and 42% said there were no specific barriers.

There were the predictable differences by sub-group, as for the main sample. Men (40% v 31%) and those working full-time (60% v 45% of those working part-time) were far more likely to say that work commitments were a barrier to further involvement. It was also highest within the 40-44 age group (41%, vs 27% of 20-34 year olds). Women (14% v 3%) and the correlated group of those not working (15% v 5% of those working full-time) were the most likely to say the demands of childcare and this was less of an issue, the older the respondent (just 5% of those aged over 40), or the older the child.

Comparing ethnic groups, carers of children from Black Caribbean backgrounds were more likely to say work commitments (46% vs 33% of the whole sample). Carers of children from Bangladeshi and Pakistani backgrounds were more likely than those for Black African backgrounds to say the demands of children (14% and 12%, vs 7%).

Of those who said there were no specific barriers, 63% had elsewhere said they felt very involved in their child's education, whilst 31% felt fairly involved. This compared with 55% and 37% in the sample overall. Likewise, 30% of this group had said they were already as involved as they could be, compared to 25% for the whole minority ethnic group booster sample. It is fair to conclude then that for the majority of this group, there genuinely are no specific barriers, because they already are more involved than others.

Compared to the main sample, those in two-parent/carer households in the minority ethnic group booster sample were far less likely to say work commitments (34% v 53%), reflecting the lower proportion of the ethnic booster sample in full-time work.

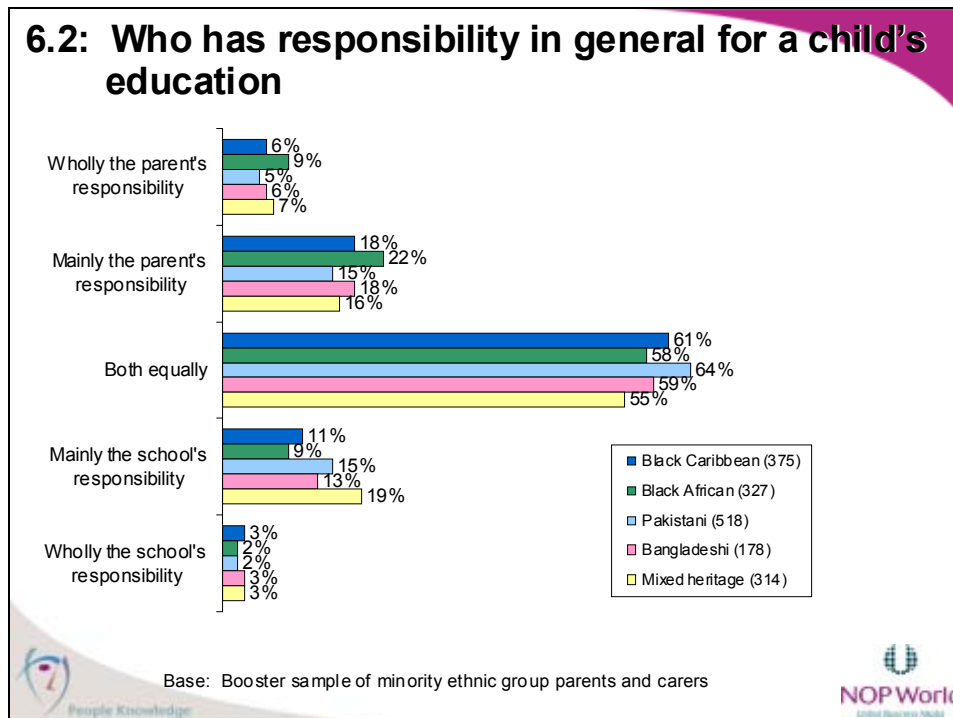
## 6.2 Responsibility for education

Three in five parents and carers in the minority ethnic group booster sample said a child's education is the responsibility of both parents and schools equally (60%), 24% said it is largely the parents' responsibility and 16% said it is largely the school's responsibility.

	Total	Social grade			
		AB	C1	C2	DE
Unweighted sample size:	1712	171	535	419	578
	%	%	%	%	%
Wholly the parent's responsibility	6	2	8	7	6
Mainly the parent's responsibility	17	15	16	19	18
Mainly the school's responsibility	14	18	17	10	12
Wholly the school's responsibility	3	4	1	3	4
Both equally	60	61	59	61	60

As shown in the table above, ABs were slightly more likely to view it being the school's responsibility and less likely to think it lay with the parents.

As shown in the table below, carers of children of Black African background were the most likely to view it as the parents' responsibility (31%), especially if they were lone parents (35%). This was significantly different from many of the other ethnic groups, especially carers of children from a Pakistani background (20%).



Compared to the main sample, respondents in two-parent/carer households were more likely to view it as the parents' responsibility (24% v 19%), with a far smaller proportion saying it was the school's responsibility (16% v 31%). However, as the table below shows, it was Black Caribbean (26%), Black African (27%) and Bangladeshi respondents (26%) that were particularly likely to view it as the parents' responsibility; the proportion of Pakistani respondents saying this was the same as the main sample. It was also Black Caribbean (9%) and Black African (11%) respondents that were particularly *unlikely* to say it was the school's responsibility.

Table 6.19: Responsibility for child's education, analysed by ethnic origin of carers within two parent / carer households

Base: Two parent/carer households

	All main sample	All ethnic booster	Black Caribbean	Black African	Pakis- - tani	Bangla- - deshi	Mixed heritage
Unweighted sample size:	2021	1162	139	206	388	140	289
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Wholly the parent's responsibility	3	7	9	7	5	6	7
Mainly the parent's responsibility	16	17	17	20	14	20	18
Mainly the school's responsibility	29	14	8	9	15	16	18
Wholly the school's responsibility	2	2	1	2	1	4	2
Both equally	50	60	65	61	65	53	55

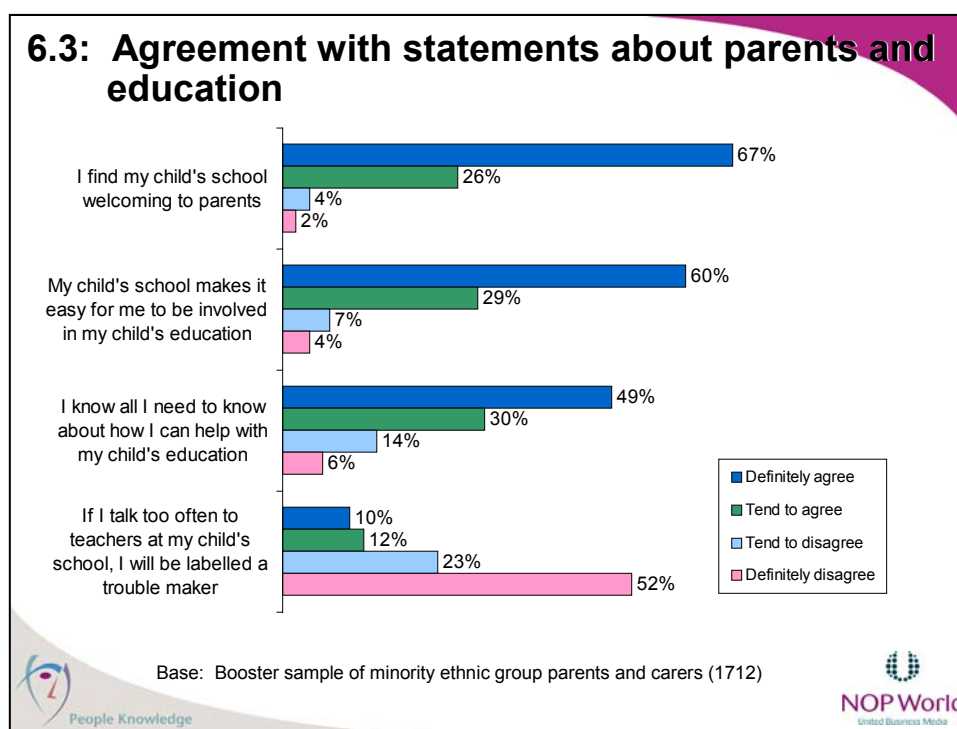
### 6.3 Attitudes towards education

Respondents were read a series of statements about parents and education and asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with them. Two thirds definitely agreed that they found their child's school welcoming to parents (67%). Just 2% disagreed in any way with this statement.

Three in six definitely agreed with the statement that their child's school makes it easy for them to be involved in their child's education (60%). Again disagreement was very limited – to just 11%.

Just under half definitely agreed that they knew all they needed to know about their child's education (49%), with a further 30% tending to agree. A fifth disagreed, mostly tending to disagree.

Three-quarters of parents and carers in the minority ethnic group booster sample disagreed with the statement that if they talked too often to teachers at their child's school, they would be labelled a trouble maker: 52% definitely disagreed with a further 23% tending to disagree. Only 22% agreed with the statement.





	Definitely agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Definitely disagree
	%	%	%	%
I find my child's school welcoming to parents	67	26	4	2
My child's school makes it easy for me to be involved in my child's education	60	29	7	4
I know all I need to know about how I can help with my child's education	49	30	14	6
If I talk too often to teachers at my child's school, I will be labelled a trouble maker	10	12	23	52

In the table below, mean scores are given to facilitate making comparisons between groups. "Definitely agree" was scored as +2, "tend to agree" as +1, "tend to disagree" as -1 and "definitely disagree" as -2. Black Africans recorded a significantly higher mean level of agreement that their school makes it easy for them to be involved in their child's education (with those of mixed heritage scoring significantly lower) and that they knew all they needed to know about how they can help with their child's education (with Black Caribbeans scoring significantly lower). For finding their school welcoming to parents, Black Africans, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis together recorded significantly higher mean scores than the other two groups. The mean scores for "if I talk too often to teachers at my child's school, I will be labelled a trouble maker" were not significantly different.

As for other sub-groups, the proportion agreeing that their child's school was welcoming to parents was slightly higher among those where the child was in years 1-6 (mean score 1.58), compared to years 10-12 (1.45). It was slightly lower among C1s (1.49 v 1.58 for Des). The pattern was similar for whether respondents felt the child's school made it easy for them to be involved in their child's education. Those with the child being in years 1-3 (1.44%), C2DEs (1.44) and those for whom English is second language (1.41) all recorded significantly higher scores than other groups.

Those for whom English is the second language (1.17) recorded significantly higher agreement than others that they knew all they needed to know about their child's education. It was significantly *lower* among C1s (0.94) than DEs (1.17) and ABs (1.11). There were no significant differences by sex of carer or child, by school year, working status, or by whether the

respondent was a lone parent. Carers of children in Years 10-12 (-0.81), those aged over 45 (-0.76) and those whose child has SEN (-0.68) gave significantly lower scores for “if I talk too often to teachers at my child’s school, I will be labelled a trouble maker”.

For each of these statements there was a very strong correlation between definitely agreeing and those who feel very involved in their child’s education.

	Black Caribbean	Black African	Pakis--tani	Bangla--deshi	Mixed heritage
Unweighted sample size:	375	327	518	178	314
	Mean score	Mean score	Mean score	Mean score	Mean score
I find my child’s school welcoming to parents	1.48	1.59	1.59	1.61	1.43
My child’s school makes it easy for me to be involved in my child’s education	1.34	1.50	1.38	1.42	1.12
I know all I need to know about how I can help with my child’s education	0.82	1.21	1.08	1.23	0.99
If I talk too often to teachers at my child’s school, I will be labelled a trouble maker	-0.92	-1.03	-1.02	-0.94	-1.04

Comparing two person households with the main sample (see table overleaf), carers of children from Black African backgrounds were far more likely than the main sample to say their school makes it easy for them to be involved in their child’s education (1.52). Together with those from a Bangladeshi background they were also more likely to say they knew all they needed to know about how they could help with their child’s education (1.23 and 1.29 respectively). Carers of children from Black Caribbean and mixed heritage backgrounds were *more* likely than the main sample to say if they talked too often to teachers at their child’s school, they would be labelled a trouble maker (-0.89 and -0.99 respectively).

	Main sample	Black Caribbean	Black African	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Mixed heritage
Unweighted sample size:	2021	168	201	449	153	191
	Mean score	Mean score	Mean score	Mean score	Mean score	Mean score
I find my child's school welcoming to parents	1.53	1.49	1.62	1.60	1.61	1.41
My child's school makes it easy for me to be involved in my child's education	1.26	1.37	1.52	1.38	1.42	1.10
I know all I need to know about how I can help with my child's education	0.96	0.81	1.23	1.09	1.29	0.96
If I talk too often to teachers at my child's school, I will be labelled a trouble maker	-1.16	-0.89	-1.09	-1.05	-0.99	-0.92

#### 6.4 Attendance

All parents were asked how important they thought it was to make sure their child attended school regularly (and on time). They were given a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 was 'not at all important' and 5 was 'extremely important'. Almost all parents believed this was extremely important (95%), as for the main sample. There were no significant differences between sub-groups.

Those whose children attended a supplementary or complementary school were also asked how important they thought it was to make sure their child attended it. The answers to this question were more mixed: 56% said it was very important. Most of the rest said it was fairly important (22%).

Over a quarter said they would be happy to take their children out of school during term time, for example, to go on a family holiday or extended family break (28%), with a further 18% saying it depended on the circumstances.

There were a few clear differences between sub-groups for this question, as shown on the table below. Men were significantly more likely to say they would be happy to do this than women. This was also far more likely to be the case if the child is in Years 1-3, has special educational needs (especially if stated) and when the child is from a Pakistani, Bangladeshi or mixed heritage background.

Men	%	33
Women	%	26
Year 1-3 etc	%	33
Year 4-6	%	26
Year 7-9	%	27
Year 10-12	%	25
Child has SEN	%	36
Child does not have SEN	%	27
Black Caribbean	%	26
Black African	%	23
Pakistani	%	31
Bangladeshi	%	30
Mixed heritage	%	31

The proportion of respondents in two-parent/carer households saying they would be happy to do it was far lower than for the main sample (28% v 46%). This was the case for all minority ethnic groups. However, there were also significant differences *between* these groups: those from Black Caribbean (21%) and Black African (23%) were less likely to give this answer than other groups.

All main sample parent/carers	(2021)	%	46
Two parent/carer households from booster sample of minority ethnic groups:			
Black Caribbean	(139)	%	21
Black African	(206)	%	23
Pakistani	(388)	%	31
Bangladeshi	(140)	%	28
Mixed heritage	(289)	%	33
All	(1162)	%	28

## 6.5 Home Learning

### 6.5.1 Importance of helping with homework

Parents and carers in the minority ethnic group booster sample were also asked how important they thought it was to help their child with homework. Six in seven thought it was extremely important (84%). As shown in the table below, the proportion saying this was higher, the lower the school year of the child, and among female respondents. Other differences were that it was higher among those who feel very involved in their child's education, who continued in full-time education beyond 16 and where the child is of Black Caribbean background.

Table 6.25: % thinking helping your child with homework is extremely important (1712)		
Total	%	84
Year 1-3	%	87
Year 4-6	%	84
Year 7-9	%	80
Year 10-12	%	81
Men	%	78
Women	%	86
Finished FT education aged 16 or under	%	80
Finished FT education aged 17-20	%	86
Finished FT education aged 21+	%	86
Black Caribbean	%	88
Black African	%	84
Pakistani	%	82
Bangladeshi	%	85
Mixed heritage	%	80
Feel very involved in child's education	%	89
Feel fairly involved in child's education	%	80
Feel not very/not at all involved in child's education	%	66

The proportion of respondents from two-parent/carer households giving this answer was significantly higher for the minority ethnic group booster sample than for the main sample (83% v 76%). However, analysis of those two-parent/carer households (below) shows that this was far higher among Black Caribbean parents/carers than other groups (91%), and only slightly higher than the main sample among those of Pakistani origin (81%) or mixed heritage (80%). Then with a full comparison of the two parent/carer households with the main sample, it is clear that the difference is also disproportionately pronounced in certain demographic groups.

Firstly, and most significantly, the difference between two carer households within the minority ethnic group booster sample and the main sample is far higher, the older the child. Thus whereas 86% of this subset of the booster sample said helping their child with homework was extremely important if their child was in Years 1-3, an increase of 2% on the main sample, the difference was 10% for Years 7-9 (81% vs 71%) and 14% for Years 10-12 (81% vs 67%). Second, though sex of respondent made no difference, the difference was 10% if the *child* was male, compared to 5% if the *child* was female. It was also greater if the parent/carer was in full-time or part-time work (9%) than if they were not working (4%).

Then the other great difference was related to age of leaving full-time education. Whereas just 2% more of the two carer-household booster respondents than the main sample thought helping their child with homework was extremely important, the difference was 14% if they had left full-time education aged 21 or older. It was also far higher if they felt fairly rather than very or not

very involved in their child's education (10%) and, reflecting the differences by ethnic group noted above, it was far higher if the respondents' first language was English (11%).

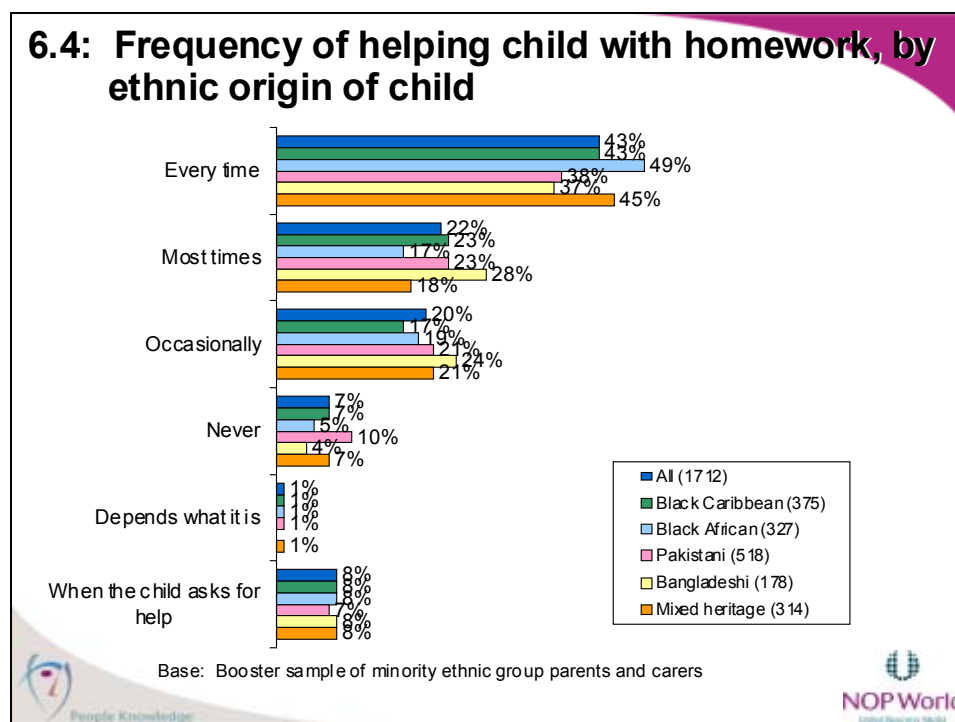
Thus to summarise, the increased importance attached to helping children with homework among two-carer households within the minority ethnic group booster sample compared to the main sample was greatest among Black Caribbean and to a lesser extent, Black African respondents, among those for whom the child in question was of secondary school age, among those who themselves were educated full-time to the age of 21 or older and among those who considered themselves only *fairly* involved in their child's education (perhaps reflecting their greater expectations of what involvement may entail). The differences between the Asian community, among those without further or higher education and when the children are at primary school compared to the main sample, were far smaller.

Table 6.26: % thinking helping your child with homework is extremely important, analysed by ethnic origin of carers within two parent / carer households  
Base: Two parents/carer households

	Base:	%
All main sample parent/carers	(2021)	76
Two parent/carer households from booster sample of minority ethnic groups:		
Black Caribbean	(139)	91
Black African	(206)	86
Pakistani	(388)	81
Bangladeshi	(140)	83
Mixed heritage/other	(289)	80
All	(1162)	83

## 6.5.2 Frequency of helping with homework

A further question asked how often they helped their child with their homework, if at all. Almost two thirds said that they did so every time (43%) or most times (22%). Just 7% never did so.



	All	Black Caribbean	Black African	Pakis--tani	Bangla--deshi	Mixed heritage
Unweighted sample size:	1712	375	327	518	178	314
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Every time	43	43	49	38	37	45
Most times	22	23	17	23	28	18
Occasionally	20	17	19	21	24	21
Never	7	7	5	10	4	7
Depends what it is	1	1	1	1	-	1
When the child asks for help	8	8	8	7	8	8

Comparing the different ethnic groups, shown in the table above, carers of children from Pakistani backgrounds were the most likely to never help (10%) and Black African respondents were significantly more likely than those of Pakistani or Bangladeshi background to say they did so every time. It was noteworthy though that despite having the highest proportion saying helping with homework was very important, Black Caribbean respondents were not the most likely to give this answer (though the 66% who said they helped every or most of the time was joint highest).

As shown in the table below, the lower the school year of the child, the more likely respondents were to help with their child's homework on every occasion. Where the child was at secondary school, parents were far more likely to help them occasionally or never. The same was true of parents/carers over the age of 40: just 35% helped every time, compared to 48% of those under 40. The carer's own education is clearly also a factor: those who finished full-time education beyond the age of 20 were far more likely to help every time (48%).

Reflecting the greater need for help, those with children with SEN were more likely to help every time or occasionally (70%), whilst reflecting their greater availability, women were also more likely to help with their child's homework on every occasion (44%). The correlated group of those who are not presently working were ironically more likely than others to both help every time (44%) and never (9%), due to the very different groups that fall within the non-working category (e.g. the unemployed, as well as middle class women looking after the home). Unsurprisingly, those who don't feel very involved in their child's education or who feel the responsibility for it lies mostly with the school were the most likely to never help.



Table 6.28: Frequency with which help child with homework by school year of child  
Base: Booster sample of minority ethnic group parents and carers

	School year of child				
	All	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12
Unweighted sample size:	1712	545	439	435	284
	%	%	%	%	%
Every time	43	63	47	26	22
Most times	22	21	24	21	20
Occasionally	20	9	17	29	33
Never	7	4	4	9	13
Depends what it is	1	*	1	2	2
When the child asks for help	8	3	7	13	11

• = less than 0.5%

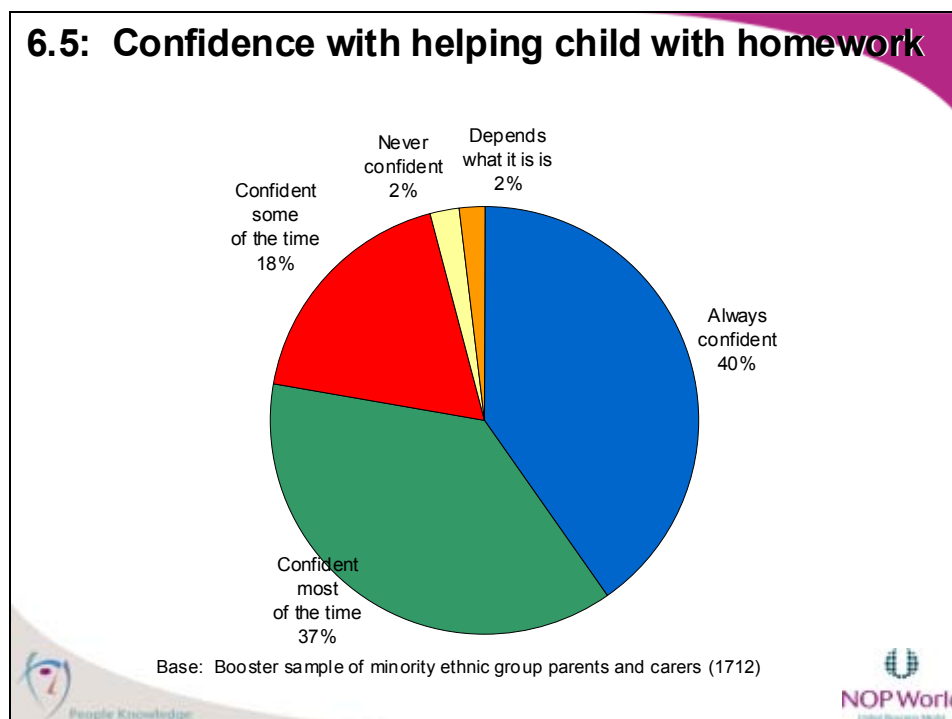
Compared to the main sample, the proportion of respondents from two-parent/carer households saying they helped every time was significantly higher for the minority ethnic group booster sample respondents (41% vs 31%). However, there were again big differentials between ethnic groups: as for all respondents, Black African parents/carers in two carer households were by far the most likely to give this answer (51%), despite the fact that Black Caribbean respondents had been the most likely to have said helping with homework was very important.

Table 6.29: Frequency with which help child with homework by school year of child, analysed by ethnic origin of carers within two parent / carer households  
Base: Two parents/carer households

	All main sample	All ethnic booster	Black Caribbean	Black African	Pakis- -tani	Bangla- -deshi	Mixed heritage
	2021	1162	139	206	388	140	289
		%	%	%	%	%	%
Every time	31	41	41	51	35	36	45
Most times	23	23	22	19	26	29	20
Occasionally	31	21	21	18	20	24	22
Never	5	7	7	3	10	4	5
Depends what it is	1	1	1	1	1	-	1
When the child asks for help	9	7	7	7	8	8	7

### 6.5.3 Confidence in helping with homework

Two in five said they always felt confident helping their child with their homework (40%); another 37% said they felt confident most of the time and 18%, some of the time. Just 2% said they never felt confident.



Like frequency of actually helping, those with their child in Years 1-3 were far more likely to say they were always confident. Men were also more likely to say this (48%), as were ABs (48%), the correlated group of those who left education aged 21+ (50%) and carers of children from Black African backgrounds (50%). Those aged 20-34 were more likely to be confident always or most of the time (81%).

Carers of children from Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds were far less likely to be always confident (36% and 34%) – as were the correlated group of those for whom English is not the first language (36%) and those whose child has SEN (35%).

Exactly two in five respondents in two-parent/carer households said they were always confident, compared to 35% for the main sample.

	School year of child				
	All	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12
Unweighted sample size:	1712	545	439	435	284
	%	%	%	%	%
Always confident	40	53	40	32	30
Confident most of the time	37	37	38	38	33
Confident some of the time	18	8	18	24	26
Never confident	2	1	1	2	5
Depends what it is	2	1	2	3	5
Don't know	*	*	*	*	1

\* = less than 0.5%

Those who said their confidence about helping their child with certain homework subjects depended which subject was concerned (just 41 respondents) were then asked which subjects they felt less confident about. Maths was by far the most mentioned (63%), followed by English (22%), Science (17%) and German (15%). No other subject was mentioned by more than 10%.

The somewhat larger group of those who were generally not confident in helping their child with their homework (379 respondents) were then asked why that was. Close to half said that it was because they didn't understand the work their child does (46%), an answer more likely to be given in cases where the child is at secondary school (50% v 39%), when the respondent left full-time education before the age of 21 (49% v 35%) and, as the table overleaf shows, by those not working full-time.

Just over a fifth (21%) said it was because of the different teaching methods used these days. The proportion giving this latter answer was higher among those whose first language is English (26% v 16%) and, in particular, ABs (38%, v 14% of DEs). Though only 7% overall said they weren't taught certain subjects at school, this answer was also more likely to be given by ABs and the correlated group those educated full-time beyond 20 (both 13%).

One in eight overall said language difficulties was a reason for lack of confidence, which was unsurprisingly higher for Asian backgrounds (22%) and those for whom English is their second language (23%), as well as those who are not working (19%).

A further 11% said they had difficulty with numeracy or number skills, with no other answer given by more than 7%.

Table 6.31: Reasons why don't feel confident about helping child with homework				
Base: Booster sample of minority ethnic group parents/carers who are not confident in helping their child with homework				
		Work status		
	Total	FT	PT	Other
Unweighted sample size:	379	120	57	202
	%	%	%	%
Don't understand the work my child does	46	38	53	49
Different teaching methods these days	21	28	23	16
Language difficulties / issues	13	4	11	19
I have difficulty with numeracy / number skills	11	16	14	7
Wasn't taught certain subjects at school	7	13	7	4
I might confuse my child / do it wrong	7	7	4	9
I have difficulty with reading or writing	3	1	4	5
Don't know much about what child does / don't feel confident helping child	3	4	2	2
Child is confident enough / doesn't need my help	2	3	4	1
School doesn't give any advice or guidance on homework	2	-	4	2

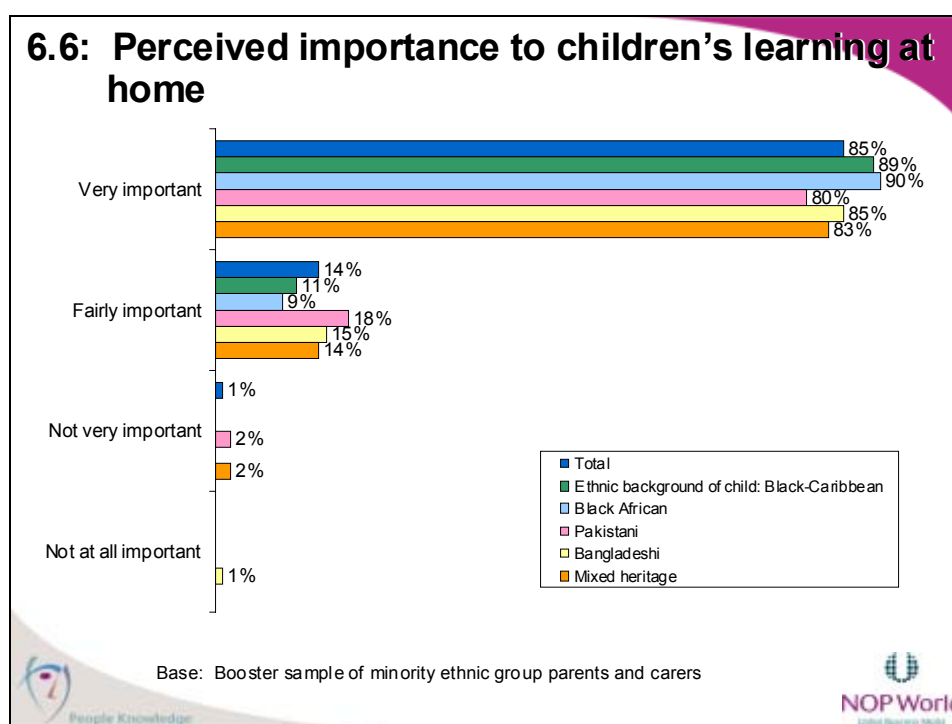
NB: No other answer given by more than 1%

There was also a further supplementary question for the 53 respondents who said difficulty with numbers, reading or writing lay behind this lack of confidence: they were asked whether they had been on a course to help them with these skills. Of these, 11 said they had and 42 said they had not.

### 6.5.4 Parent's own importance in child's learning at home

Over five in six thought that their role in their children's learning at home was very important (85%). One in seven said it was fairly important (14%), with virtually no-one giving any other answer.

As the table below shows, the sense of the parents' importance to their child's learning was higher for children of Black Caribbean and Black African background than for those of Pakistani origin. It was also higher among female respondents (87% v 80%) and those who finished full-time education after the age of 16 (87% v 79%), as well as those who feel very involved in their child's education (93% v 74%) and those who do not feel it is primarily the school's responsibility (87% v 87%).



Compared to the main sample, far more of the two person households in the booster sample of minority ethnic group parents and carers thought they were very important (84% vs 72%). However, though true of all groups, it was particularly high for two person households for whom the respondent was Black African (93%) or Black Caribbean (90%).

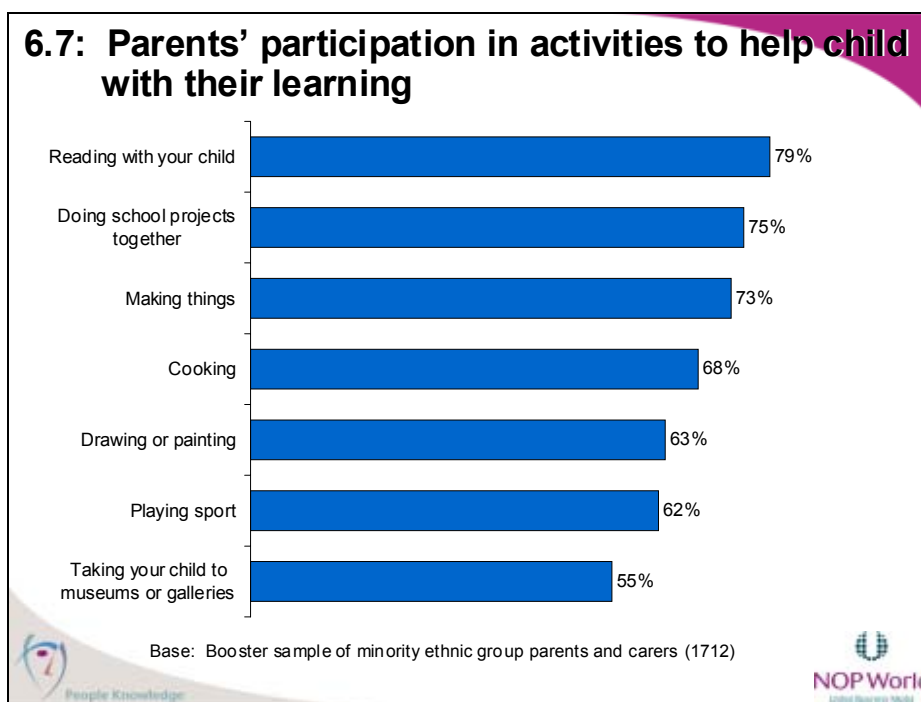
Table 6.32: Perceived importance to children's learning at home, analysed by ethnic origin of carers within two parent / carer households  
Base: Two parents/carer households

	Total main sample	Total ethnic boost	Ethnic background of child				
			Black Caribbean	Black African	Pakis-tani	Banglad-eshi	Mixed heritage
Unweighted sample size:	2021	1162	139	206	388	140	289
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very important	72	84	90	93	80	84	82
Fairly important	25	14	9	7	19	15	15
Not very important	2	1	1	-	2	-	2
Not at all important	*	*	-	-	-	1	*

\* = less than 0.5%

### 6.5.5 Activities done to help children with their learning

Another new question asked about the sorts of activities that respondents did personally to help their child with their learning. Most frequently mentioned was reading with their child (79%), with three quarters saying doing school projects together and 73%, making things. Just over two thirds said cooking (68%) and just under two thirds, drawing or painting (63%) or playing sport (62%). Just over half took their child to museums or galleries (55%).



As the chart above shows, carers of children of Black Caribbean background showed similar patterns to the overall ethnic booster sample, except that they were significantly more likely to do cooking with their child (82% v 68% overall). Those of Black African background were significantly more likely to do school projects together (80%) and making things (79%). Carers of children of Pakistani background were significantly more likely than those from Black Caribbean backgrounds to do drawing and painting (66% v 58%).

Carers of children of Bangladeshi background were significantly more likely than carers of children of mixed heritage to do reading with their child (82% v 75%) and *less* likely than all other groups to do school projects together (64%). Together with those from Pakistani backgrounds they were less likely to do cooking (56% and 57%) and together with carers of children from Black African backgrounds, to take their child to museums and galleries (49%). Carers of children of mixed heritage background were far *more* likely than the rest of the sample to take their child to museums and galleries (65% v 55% overall).

For virtually all of the activities, those who felt very involved in their child's education and who thought it was primarily the parents' responsibility were also more likely to help their child in each of these ways. For reading with the child, drawing and painting, doing projects together, making things and playing sport, it was more common if the children are of primary school age (see table below) and those under the age of 40. Visiting museums and galleries is more common for children in Years 4-9 and respondents aged 35-39; cooking is more common for years 7-12 and again respondents aged 35-39.

Predictably cooking (76%) and making things (77%) are more common activities with girls. Making things and playing sport (72%) are - together with visiting museums and galleries (68%) – more common among ABs. In all cases but cooking and playing sports, the longer the respondent was in full-time education the more likely they were to do the activity.

Those who speak English as their first language were most likely to take their children to museums and galleries (59% v 53%). Doing school projects together (80% v 72% of those not working at all) was more common if the respondents were working part-time.

	Total	School year of child			
		1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12
Unweighted sample size:	1712	545	439	435	284
	%	%	%	%	%
Doing school projects together	75	77	76	74	70
Making things	73	78	73	72	73
Playing sport	62	71	65	58	46
Reading with your child	79	96	89	67	47
Taking your child to museums or galleries	55	52	59	57	52
Cooking	68	60	67	77	74
Drawing or painting	63	84	65	53	35

Respondents were then asked what else they did to help their child with their learning, apart from the activities mentioned at the previous question. One in six said they did homework with them, bought books or educational software (all 18%), or gave encouragement (16%). One in eight said they did outdoor activities and field trips (13%), set additional homework or tests (11%) or bought educational computer software (11%). Exactly one in ten supervised their child's access to the internet or discussed news or current events.

	%
Buy books	18
Do homework with him/her	18
Give encouragement	16
Do outdoor activities/field trips together	13
Set additional homework or tests	11
Buy educational computer software	11
Supervise child's access to internet	10
Discuss news / current events together	10
Play games	9
Get him/her to help with tasks around home	8
Take him/her to participate in sporting activities/classes	7
Take him/her shopping	6
Watch TV with him/her	6
Arrange or pay for tuition in particular subjects	5
Teach him/her languages or music	5
Take him/her on holiday/travel abroad	3
Nothing else	18



As shown on the table below, some of these activities again were more common with younger children: buying books, doing outdoor activities and setting additional homework. Discussing current affairs and giving encouragement were more common for older children. Younger parents/carers were slightly more likely to play games (10% of those under the age of 40) and those aged over 40, to supervise access to the internet (13%, vs 8% of 20-34 year olds). ABs – and in most cases the correlated group of those educated beyond the age of 20 - were more likely to buy educational computer software (15%, v 8% of DEs), take them to participate in sporting activities (12%, v 6% of DEs), discuss current affairs (13%, v 7% of DEs), do outdoor activities together (18%, v 11 of DEs), supervise their access to the internet (16%, v 7% of DEs) and take them on holiday abroad (6%, v 2% of DEs).

Doing homework was more common with carers of children of Black African (22%) and Bangladeshi origin (23%) than other groups and among those for whom English is second language (21% v 16%). Where the child has SEN, carers were more likely to give encouragement (22% v 15% of others). Those who believe a child's education is primarily the responsibility of the school were less likely to do this (11% v 17% of others). Those not working were more likely to do homework with their child (21% v 15% of those working full-time) and those working part-time to take them to organised activities (6% v 2%).

	Total	School year of child			
		1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12
Unweighted sample size:	1712	545	439	435	284
	%	%	%	%	%
Buy books	18	18	20	18	13
Do homework with him/her	18	18	19	19	16
Give encouragement	16	14	13	17	18
Do outdoor activities/field trips together	13	14	14	13	8
Set additional homework or tests	11	15	17	6	5
Buy educational computer software	11	12	11	10	10
Supervise child's access to internet	10	8	12	12	7
Discuss news / current events together	10	7	8	13	13
Play games	9	14	8	7	4
Get him/her to help with tasks around home	8	9	10	9	5
Take him/her to participate in sporting activities/classes	7	8	8	7	6
Take him/her shopping	6	6	7	6	4
Watch TV with him/her	6	6	8	7	3
Arrange or pay for tuition in particular subjects	5	3	7	4	6
Teach him/her languages or music	5	7	5	6	2
Take him/her on holiday/travel abroad	3	4	4	3	2

Those respondents who do any of these activities to help their child with their learning (virtually all of the sample) were then asked how often they do any of these activities. Just over a quarter said they did so every day (26%) and a further 41% said they did so several times a week. Exactly a quarter do it at least once a week with just 7% doing so less often than that.

As for the main sample, the main differences were by school year of child: 35% of those with the child in Years 1-3 did one of these activities to help their child with their learning every day, compared to 19% where the child was in Years 10-12. The proportion doing the thing every day was also slightly higher among women (28%), those whose child had been identified as having SEN (33%), those who finished their full-time education aged 21 or older (30%), those who feel very involved in their children's education (32%) and those who do not think their child's education is solely the school's responsibility (29%). Carers of children of Black African origin were more likely to help their child with their learning once a week or more (97%), compared to 88% for Black Caribbeans.

The proportion of respondents in two-parent/carers households who did it every day was slightly higher in the minority ethnic group booster sample than the main sample (26% v 22%).

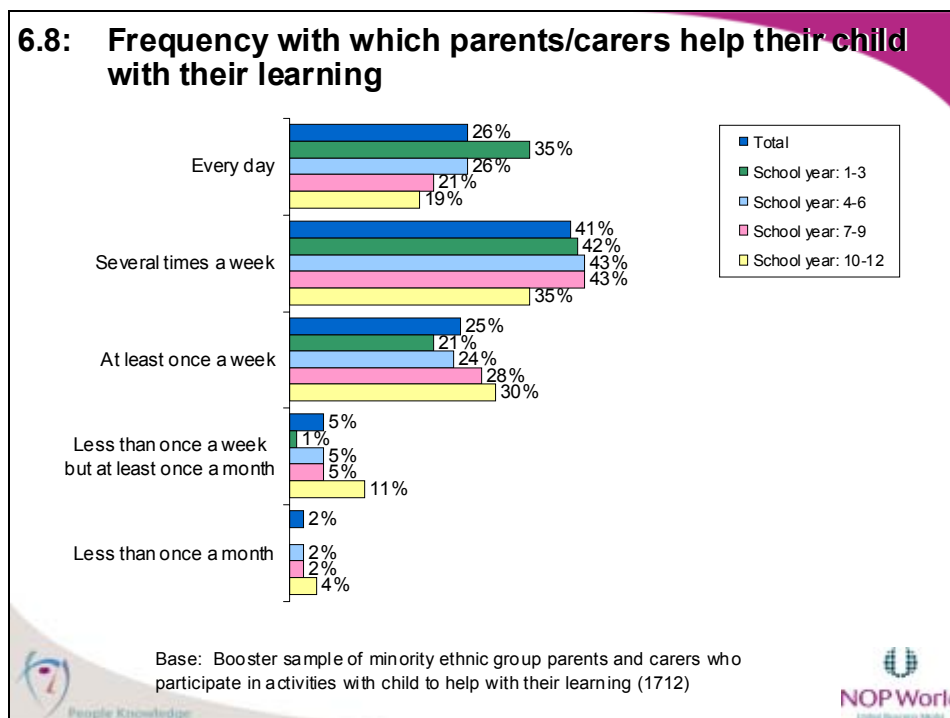


Table 6.36: Frequency with which parents/carers help their child with their learning  
Base: Booster sample of minority ethnic group parents and carers who participate in activities with child to help with their learning

	Total	School year of child			
		1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12
Unweighted sample size:	1702	545	438	434	276
	%	%	%	%	%
Every day	26	35	26	21	19
Several times a week	41	42	43	43	35
At least once a week	25	21	24	28	30
Less than once a week but at least once a month	5	1	5	5	11
Less than once a month	2	*	2	2	4

## **6.6 *Parents evenings***

Four fifths of parents and carers in the minority ethnic group booster sample thought it was extremely important to attend parents' evenings and other parent-teacher contact (79%). The proportion giving this answer was significantly higher among women (83%), those with children in Years 10-12 (82%), C2DEs (81%), Black Caribbeans (83%), single parents (82%), those not working (81%) and those who felt very involved in their child's education (83%) and didn't think responsibility for it lay solely or mainly with the school (81%). It was significantly lower for parents of children of Black African descent (74%).

## **6.7 *Supporting schools' policies***

Four in five parents in the minority ethnic group booster sample said it was extremely important to support schools' policies on children's behaviour in school (81%). This was higher among women (83%), Black Caribbeans and Black Africans (both 83%), and again, those who felt very involved in their child's education (84%) and didn't think responsibility for it lay solely or mainly with the school (82%).

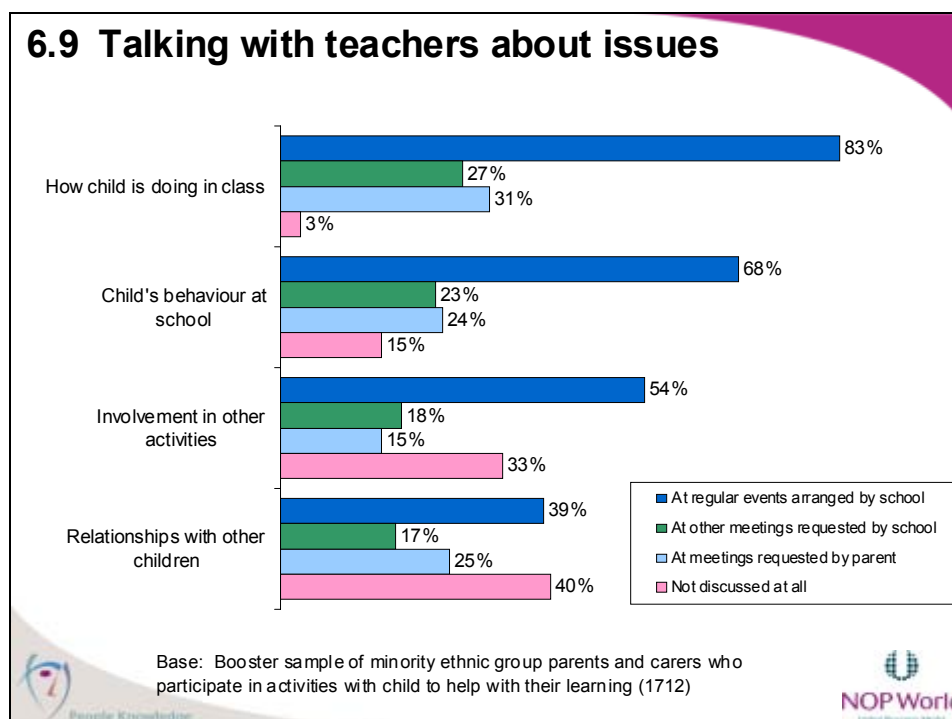
## 6.8 Communications with school

### 6.8.1 Communication on different subjects

Respondents were asked when, if at all, they talk with their child's teacher about each of a list of possible discussion subjects.

Over four out of five parents and carers (83%) talked about how their child was doing at class at regular events arranged by school, such as parents' evenings. Three in ten had done so at meetings they themselves requested (31%) or at other meetings requested by the school (27%).

Just over two thirds said that they spoke to teachers about their child's behaviour in school at regular events arranged by the school (68%), with just under a quarter having done so at other meetings requested by the school (23%) or by themselves (24%). Just over half had talked about their child's involvement in other activities at regular events arranged by the school (54%), whilst a third (33%) had not talked with teachers about this at all. Two in five had talked at regular events arranged by the school about their child's relationships with other children (39%). A further quarter had done so at meetings requested by the parent and 40% had not done so at all.



Comparing sub-groups, women (33%), ABC1s (35%), those who were educated beyond 20 (35%), non-native English speakers (34%), carers of children with SEN (38%) and carers of children of Black Caribbean background (33%) were the most likely to have discussed how their child is doing in class at meetings *they* had requested. Carers of children of Black African (35%) or Black Caribbean background (31%) or with SEN (36%) were the most likely to have had their progress in class discussed at meetings requested by the school. Carers of children of Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds (86% and 87%) were the most likely to have discussed their child's progress at regular events.

The child's behaviour at school was the most likely to have been discussed at parents evenings by ABs (74%), and by carers of children of Pakistani origin (73%). It was more likely to have been discussed at meetings requested by the *school* by DEs (26%), lone parents (26%) and at meetings requested by the *parents* by those in full-time education beyond 20 (27%) and those speaking English as their first language (26%). It was more likely to have been discussed at both by carers of boys (27% and 28%) children of Black Caribbean origin (29% and 29%) and with SEN (30% and 32%).

The child's involvement in sport or other extra-curricular activities was more likely to be discussed at parents evenings by male carers (58%), those aged over 40 (60%) and ABs (64%), and at meetings requested by the parent when the child was male (17%). It was more likely to have been discussed at meetings requested by the school when the child was of Black African origin (25%) and at all three when the child was in Years 9-12 and when the carer felt very involved in their child's education.

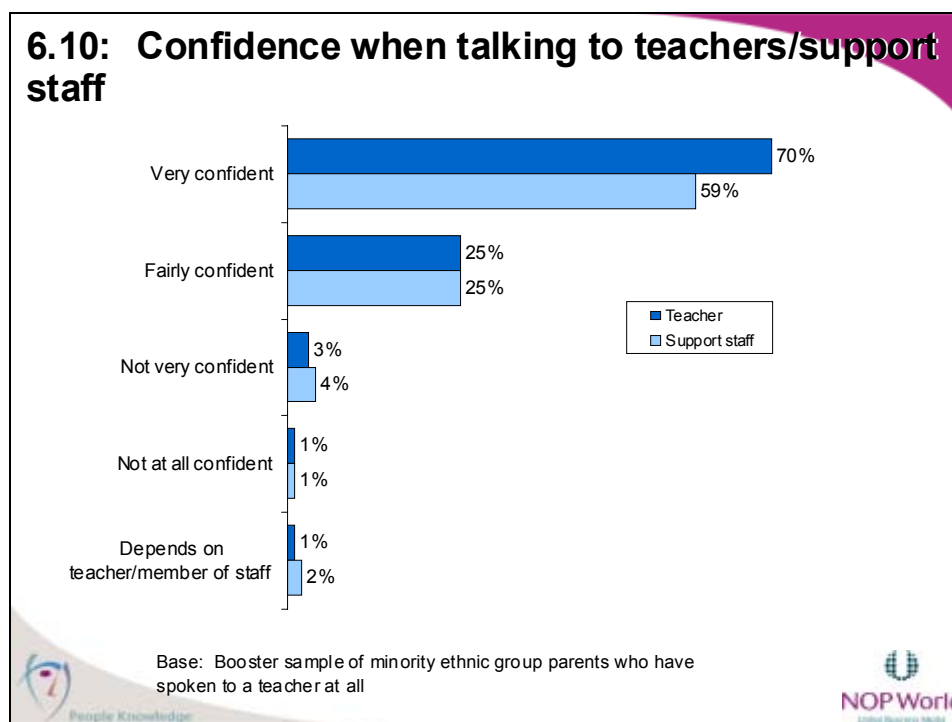
The child's relationship with other children was most likely to have been discussed at parents evenings by men (45%), ABs (47%), those in full-time work (44%) and those in two person households (42%). It was more likely to have been discussed at meetings requested by the parent by women (27%), those aged 20-34 (29%) and for children in Years 1-3 (32%), and at meetings requested by the school for children of Black Caribbean (22%) and Black African (21%) origin. It was more likely to have been discussed at both by lone parents (29% and 20%) and carers of children with SEN (31% and 23%).

Eighty four per cent of carers in two-parent/carer households in the minority ethnic group booster sample had talked about how their child was doing at class at regular events arranged by school, compared to 90% for the main sample. Higher proportions had also done so at meetings they themselves requested (31%, v 26%) or at other meetings requested by the school (27%, v 19%). Likewise, higher proportions than the main sample had spoken to

teachers about their child's behaviour in school at other meetings requested by the school (22%, v 15%) or at meetings requested by themselves (23%, v 6%).

## 6.8.2 Parents' confidence when talking to teachers / support staff

Parents and carers who had ever spoken to teachers were asked how confident they felt doing so, as well as in speaking to support staff.



Seventy per cent felt very confident in talking to teachers at their child's school with a further quarter fairly confident. Comparing sub-groups, ABs (77%), carers of pupils of Black Caribbean (76%) or Black African (78%) backgrounds, single parents (75%), those in full-time work (74%), those speaking English as their first language (74%), those who finished full-time education aged 21 or older (75%) and those who feel very involved in their child's education (80%) were all more likely to feel very confident.

Then in terms of support staff, a clear majority, though less than for teachers, said they felt very confident (59%). Instead, exactly a quarter were fairly confident, with 9% saying they didn't know. Similar sub-group differences were evident as for teachers, with ABs (71%), those working full-time (64%), those who left education aged 21 or older (63%) and those who feel very involved in their children's education (68%) the most likely to feel very confident.

## 6.8.3 Ways of getting information

Parents and carers were asked which was the most useful way in which they could get information about how their child was getting on at school. They were not prompted with any suggested answers.



The most mentioned way of getting information was parents' evenings (30%). One in five (21%) said talking to school staff informally was the most useful way, and 11%, meetings they had requested to talk specifically about their child. Around one in twelve said school reports (9%) or written communication that their child brought home (7%), with no other answer given by more than 5%.

Table 6.37: Most useful way to obtain information	
Base: Booster sample of minority ethnic group parents and carers (1712)	
	%
Parents' evenings	30
Talk to school staff informally, such as in the playground	21
Meetings you have requested to talk specifically about your child	11
School reports	9
Written communication from school that your child brings home	7
Other special meetings for parents	5
Being asked to attend meetings with teachers specifically about child	5
Child tells respondent or respondent asks child	3

NB: Only answers given by 3% or more shown above

Carers of children in Years 1-3 (31%), C2DEs (23%), those aged 20-34 (27%), those not working full-time (23%) and those who feel very involved in their child's education (23%) were more likely to think talking to staff informally was the most useful method, and carers of secondary school children (10%) and carers over the age of 35 (11%), that it was school reports or notes or letters from school. Carers of Black Caribbean children preferred meetings that they had requested to talk specifically about their child (14%). Those who speak English as a second language were more likely to prefer parents meetings (34%) and those aged over 45, other special meetings for parents (8%).

Slightly less of those in two-parent/carer households preferred parents' evenings than the main sample (30% v 35%).

### 6.8.4 Frequency of communication from school

A large minority received written communication from their child's school once a week or more (45%); this included the 14% who received such communication most days or daily. Just under a third received such communication at least once a month (31%) and one in six still received some, but less often than once a month (16%).

As the table below shows, there were clear differences by school year of child: the lower the school year, the more likely parents and carers were to receive written communication most days or every day. This was also true of those aged 20-34 (15%). Those educated full-time beyond the age of 20 (16%) and those whose child has SEN (19%) were also more likely to say they received written communication most days or daily.

Compared to the main sample, less respondents in two-parent/carer households said they received written communication at least once a week or more (35% v 51%).

	Total	School year of child			
		1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12
Unweighted sample size:	1712	545	439	435	284
	%	%	%	%	%
Every day	5	7	3	5	2
Most days	9	13	10	6	5
At least once a week	31	39	40	22	16
At least once a month	31	25	25	38	39
Less often than once a month	16	10	14	19	30
Never	3	3	3	3	3
Depends what it is	4	2	3	6	5
Don't know	1	1	*	1	*

Just over two thirds of respondents who had received any written information had found it very easy to understand (69%). Just over a quarter had found it fairly easy (28%) with virtually no-one giving any other answer.

As shown below, ABs were more likely than other social class groups to find it very easy to understand. The same was true of those educated beyond the age of 20 (76%), those who spoke English as a first language (76%) and the correlated group of carers of children from Black Caribbean (75%) or Black African backgrounds (72%). Carers of children of primary school age were also slightly more likely to find it very easy to understand (71%), suggesting the communication may be a little simpler in that sector.

The 68% of those in two-parent/carer households who had found it very easy to understand was less than the main sample (75%).

Table 6.39: Ease of understanding of written information from school  
Base: Booster sample of minority ethnic group parents and carers who have received written communication from the school (1583)

	Total	AB	C1	C2	DE
Unweighted sample size:	1583	160	500	381	534
	%	%	%	%	%
Very easy	69	81	72	68	63
Fairly easy	28	19	25	29	33
Fairly difficult	2	1	2	2	2
Very difficult	1	-	*	1	2

\* = less than 0.5%

The forty six respondents who had found the information hard to understand were asked what, in particular, had caused them difficulty. The largest proportion said it was because it was not in their first language (21 respondents) whilst five each said it was because the information was bit vague or because of the vocabulary and language used.

They were also asked if the written information from school was in their preferred language. Fifteen respondents said that it was always, six said it was sometimes and twenty five said it never was.

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