

‘Staying Safe and Out of Trouble’

***A survey of young people’s
perceptions and experiences***

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1: Background and Methodology of the Survey

Background

A central purpose of this school based survey was to get a picture of the extent to which some of the more high profile issues, such as knife crime and gangs, touch the lives of ordinary young people attending mainstream schools. Most of the questions asked in the survey were chosen on the basis of existing research evidence and because all have been asked in school-based surveys before (see Section Two), therefore comparison between the survey that forms the basis of this report and other surveys is possible.

A lot of people were involved in collecting the data for this report and in helping the lead researcher gain access to schools. They cannot be named here because of the confidentiality agreement with the schools and local authority.

The 14 schools in this survey are located in the south of England and cover a wide range of socio-economic circumstances and levels of academic achievement, including single sex and mixed sex schools.

Methodology

The overall research design is a questionnaire survey, using an 'action research strategy'. The latter term is used to mean that the research set out to help in establishing the evidence about a potential problem identified, as well as inform strategy development. Further, the data collection involved youth service practitioners who would be part of any response to the problems identified. Young people were given information about access to relevant help and independent advice at the time of the survey. The survey was carried out in and around Anti-Bullying week (November 19-23, 2007) in order to link with some of the issues being raised in schools at that time.

The questions in the questionnaire were developed from a number of national and international survey instruments, so that comparison can be made with other research. The format and final content of the questionnaire was decided upon in consultation with a number of people in the area in which the survey was conducted (see Appendix for a copy of the questionnaire). The questionnaire was piloted with a group of young people and presented to a Head Teacher's group for approval. A full pilot was undertaken in one school before the questionnaire was finalised. The pilot indicated that the questionnaire and information giving could be completed within a minimum of 20 minutes. However, many schools preferred input to a PSHCE (personal, social, health and citizenship education) session - these varied from 40 minutes to one hour in length. Therefore strategies to use different time slots were developed and included showing the 'Knife City' video¹ and consulting young people about key issues to do with safety and what they understood 'a gang' to be and so on. In all, it was possible to have some level of broader consultation and discussion with young people, following questionnaire

¹ See www.actiononviolence.com : downloadable copy of DVD, lesson plans etc.

completion, in seven of the fourteen schools that took part in the survey. A training session for youth workers and other staff administering the questionnaire was undertaken prior to the fieldwork. Four schools chose to administer the survey themselves.

Overall Aim:

To conduct a survey of year 10 pupils in mainstream state secondary schools

Objectives:

To establish prevalence data on the following problematic behaviours amongst year 10 mainstream state school pupils: bullying (in and out of school); gang membership; weapons carrying (in and out of school)

To obtain measures of 'school connectedness', 'feelings of safety' and 'worries' to compare against the problem behaviours

To inform the work of professionals working with young people

To provide feedback information to schools on the basis of which they can plan a response to the survey

To give school students information about access to independent advice in relation to any of the issues raised by the questionnaire

What the survey set out to do

The survey set out to provide evidence to children's services and the police about the prevalence and inter-connection of issues to do with safety, bullying, gang membership and weapons carrying by sex and ethnicity, for a cross section of ordinary 14-15 year olds attending mainstream schools in a range of circumstances. The survey also set out to give schools data that could inform policy development in respect of these issues.

Further, the survey provided an opportunity for information giving to pupils on access to help (via youth workers and advisory services). It aimed to raise awareness about the potential consequences of carrying weapons. The format of the questionnaire and feedback is such that it can be repeated to track any changes. It could be used with other groups too, such as off-site and special units, young people in contact with Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) and so on.

How representative, valid and reliable is the survey?

The survey covers mainstream schools and those young people attending school or particular sessions on the day and time the survey was administered. The survey covers year 10 pupils (14-15 year olds) only. It includes 14 schools and 76 classes in year 10 in mainstream schools in the south of England. Schools surveyed include single sex, denominational and mixed sex establishments. Indicators of socio-economic status, examination passes and other data about these schools show wide ranging circumstances.

Validity: that is whether the questions adequately measure what we were trying to find out. This is enhanced by using questions that have been used and found valid in other surveys. This is especially true in relation to the questions on gangs which have a long history of development through the 'Eurogang' programme of research. The MORI questions have been repeated five times in school-based surveys conducted for the Youth Justice Board.

Reliability: that is whether young people answered questions truthfully. All self-report surveys carry the potential for some individuals answering in a way that tends towards what is seen as 'socially desirable'.

Validity and reliability should be enhanced by the way we administered the questionnaires in most schools. Questionnaires were administered face to face in ten of the fourteen schools by individuals external to the school (researchers and youth workers) so that there was the opportunity to introduce what was being done and why and emphasise the seriousness of the issues and importance of truthfulness in responses. Confidentiality of answers (we talked about the answers being 'private') was emphasised and questionnaires were put into sealed envelopes in front of the young people whilst we were in the classrooms. Further we were on hand to go through how to complete the questionnaire and help pupils who had any difficulty in answering questions. The opportunity to talk with many groups of pupils about their broader experiences and understanding of the issues raised in the questionnaire has enhanced the interpretation of what the results of the questionnaire show. Nevertheless, in one of the four schools that self-administered the questionnaires (79 responses, 5.5% of total responses) the school contact felt that there was likely to be an under-reporting in the section on gangs and weapons, in part because of the literacy levels of some of the pupils perceived to be likely to be involved in these activities. There were a few more gaps in these questions from this school, in comparison with other schools in the sample. In the other three schools self-administering the questionnaires, the pattern of answering questions was very much in line with the rest of the sample.

Overall, existing research has shown that young people excluded from school or not attending are more likely to be involved in problematic behaviour (see MORI, 2004 and section two of this report). It is therefore reasonable to conclude that this survey is likely to *underestimate* the prevalence of the identified problem behaviours amongst this age group in the area. Having said this what the survey does do is give an indication of the extent to which high profile problems such as gangs and weapons carrying touch the lives of the majority of 'ordinary' 14 and 15-year-olds in the area.

Interpreting the findings

As with any research, it is very important to understand the issues already outlined in this section; that is the background or context to what was done and why; the specifics of the methodology and sample obtained. It is particularly important to understand the nature and focus of the questions asked.

Sections one to three are about the *perception* of young people: to do with 'school connectedness', 'safety' and 'worries'. Sections four to six are asking young people to report *what has happened to them and what they do*, as well as *what they witness* in relation to 'bullying', 'gangs' and 'weapons carrying.' In each of these latter sections, questions are asked that provide some evidence about the extent to which young people may be 'bystanders' or witnesses to a problem that may actually directly involve a small group of people. It is important to understand the distinction and purpose behind these two ways of asking about the same problems, when interpreting the findings:

- Questions about what individuals themselves have done, or had done to them, establish the *prevalence of a problem*.
- Questions about what individuals have seen or about which they are aware, establish the *extent to which problems touch a wider group of people, some of whom could be viewed as 'bystanders.'* The concept of 'bystanders' is used in research on bullying and can be important in trying to find solutions to the problem that can involve young people themselves.

2: Evidence from Other Research

Questionnaire themes

The survey covers the following themes (see Appendix for a copy of the Questionnaire):

Section 1: How pupils feel about their school – ‘School connectedness’

Section 2 and 3: Safety and Worries – in and out of school

Section 3 and 4: Bullying – in and out of school; bullies, victims, bully/victims

Section 5: ‘Gang’ prevalence; perception – in and out of school

Section 6: ‘Weapons’ carrying – in and out of school, reasons

The background research to the themes covered in Sections one to six of the questionnaire will now be summarised.

Section 1: How do you feel about school? (‘School-Connectedness’)

The broader role of school in enhancing protective factors against adverse social circumstances and outcomes is well appreciated and more widely researched in American studies. American research has singled out the concept of ‘school-connectedness’ as the most important school-related variable that is protective for adverse outcomes, such as substance use, violence and early sexual activity (Resnick, Bearman and Blum, 1997). For example, one study of over 83,000 pupils found that four attributes explained a large part of between school variance in school-connectedness (McNeely, Nonnemaker and Blum, 2002). These attributes included: classroom management climate; school size; severity of discipline policies and rates of participation in after school activities. School-connectedness was found to be lower in schools with difficult classroom management climates and where temporary exclusion was used for minor issues. Zero Tolerance policies (often using harsh punishments like exclusion from school) were associated with reports of pupils feeling less safe, than schools with more moderate policies. Pupils in smaller schools felt more ‘connected’ or attached to their schools than those in larger schools. Not surprisingly students who participate in extracurricular activities report feeling more connected to school; they also achieve higher grades (McNeely *et al*, 2002).

The study by McNeely *et al* (2002) shows that: ***‘the average level of school connectedness in all schools is 3.64 on a scale of 1 to 5, indicating most students in most schools feel attached to school. The restricted range of mean connectedness across the 127 schools (from 3.1 to 4.4) indicates that at no school do the majority of students feel totally disconnected, and at no schools do all students feel enchanted with their school career’*** (p.144).

Section 2: Feeling Safe

Relationships with other young people is a major issue that relates to whether pupils at school feel unsafe. Feeling safe or unsafe is obviously a subjective experience but is likely to affect pupil wellbeing, attendance and achievement at school.

It is clear from the MORI (2004) evidence that **most pupils feel ‘very safe’ or ‘fairly safe’ at their school or education project.** It is interesting to note that excluded pupils at education projects are proportionately more likely to feel ‘very safe’ in comparison with pupils in mainstream schools. However, we should take note of the minority who feel ‘very unsafe’ or a ‘bit unsafe’ at their school or education project.

Perceptions of safety from pupils within their education setting reflect levels (and locations) of victimisation reported. In all types of victimisation in the MORI survey, a higher proportion is reported to occur in school for mainstream pupils. Victimisation was proportionately more likely to occur outside school in community settings, for young people attending education facilities for excluded pupils.

Table 2.1: Perceptions of safety at school or education project

Relative level of safety	Mainstream students (N=4,715)	Excluded young people attending education projects (N=687)
Very safe	27%	51%
Fairly safe	49%	26%
A bit unsafe	11%	5%
Very unsafe	3%	3%
Don’t know	4%	8%
Not stated (ie missing)	5%	8%

Note: % don’t add up to 100, due to rounding

Source: MORI, 2004, Table 4.4, p.56.

Section 3: Any Worries?

‘Worries’ inter-relate with feeling safe, school climate as reflected in school connectedness and experiences of bullying and physical attack in a particular setting.

Table 2.2: Whether worried about bullying and physical attack

	Mainstream students	Excluded yps
Being bullied at school	35% worried 61% not worried	10% worried 79% not worried
Being physically attacked*	47% worried 46% not worried	26% worried 60% not worried

*Note: this proportion doesn’t specify where, see Table 2.4 for more detailed analysis of those who report being bullied or physically attacked

Source: MORI, 2004, Table 4.1a, p.50.

Table 2.2 shows that a higher proportion of pupils are worried about being physically attacked, compared with those worried about bullying.

Section 4: Bullying

A huge amount of research on bullying and young people has established that it is relatively common but decreases with age. Much of the research has been school based but some includes other settings. Bullying surveys

produce fairly wide ranging estimates depending on the way questions are asked and the timescale involved. Overall, Smith and Myron-Wilson (1998) estimate that: **‘around 1 in 5 children are involved in bully-victim problems’** (p.406) in the UK, with similar incidences reported in other countries. More recent DfES (Department for Education and Skills) research showed that more than **1 in 4 (28%) year 8 (12-13 year olds) pupils** report being bullied in a school term (Oliver and Candappa, 2003).

There are problems of definition and comparability across surveys. For example, ‘physical violence, pupil to pupil’ may be one-off acts of aggression; they may on the other hand be more sustained. According to Smith (2002) *‘bullying is a subset of aggressive behaviours, characterised by repetition and power imbalance’* (p.117). Bullying takes various forms – physical, verbal, social exclusion and indirect forms such as spreading rumours (p.118). Results from the MORI survey include data on bullying and physical attack.

Table 2.3: Whether bullied or physically attacked in the last 12 months

	Mainstream pupils	Excluded pupils
Bullied in the last year*	23%	16%
Physically attacked in the last year*	13%	23%

*Note: the above proportions don't specify where, see Table 2.4 for more detailed analysis of those who report being bullied or physically attacked **Source:** MORI, 2004, p.51.

Table 2.4: Where young people are attacked or bullied, if they report these experiences

Mainstream or excluded	At school/exclusion project	To/from education	Home/local area	Elsewhere	Not stated
Bullied mainstream	79%	23%	19%	11%	10%
Bullied excluded	28%	13%	44%	28%	19%
Physically attacked mainstream	43%	19%	39%	22%	6%
Physically attacked excluded	13%	7%	56%	39%	8%

Source: MORI, 2004, Table 4.3, p.55.

Section 5: Gangs

There is a long history of research into ‘gangs’ and ‘gang culture’ much of it relating to involvement in criminal behaviour. However UK academics have often been reluctant to apply the term ‘gang’ to group offending by young people (YJB, 2007). Practitioners (interviewed as part of the YJB research) were reported to be concerned by what they saw as the indiscriminate use of the term ‘a gang’. However, practitioners and young men involved in group

offending did agree about 'real gangs' involved in more serious types of behaviour: *'real gangs were distinguished by transgressing certain norms...particularly regarding the use of unacceptable levels of violence'* (YJB, 2007, p.9).

The YJB (2007) research concludes that: *'while there are gangs that use serious violence and threats to assert control locally (often in competition with similar groups), these are more likely to involve young adults than 10 to 17 year olds. Though juvenile versions of these gangs may exist, these are relatively rare, but offending by young people in groups of three or more is a wider phenomenon'* (p.12).

Bennett and Holloway (2004) review a range of evidence sources in the UK. comparing it with US research and reporting on their own research, based in 14 custody suites in largely urban areas in England and Wales. The latter research shows that nearly one in six (15%) people arrested in urban custody suites has current or past experience of gang membership.

Table 2.5: Gang membership: people arrested in 14 urban custody suites in England and Wales

Current or past experience of gang membership	15%
Past membership of a gang	11%
Current membership of a gang	4%

Source: Bennett and Holloway, 2004.

N= 2,666 arrestees.

There is a bigger body of research based on young people and gangs in the United States and in Europe. One of the key international experts in the area is Malcolm Klein (an American academic), who has researched gangs in the USA and in Europe (as part of the 'Eurogang' project).

The 'Eurogang' definition of street gangs is as follows: *'A street gang (or a troublesome youth group corresponding to a street gang elsewhere) is any durable, street orientated youth group whose identity includes involvement in illegal activity'* (Klein, Weerman and Thornberry, 2006, p. 418).

Klein *et al* advise the use of self definition plus the indicators (in the definition above) to differentiate between 'gangs' and other youth groups. Durability, street orientation, identity connected to illegal activity are key to differentiating 'gangs' from other youth groups. Being a member of a gang (as defined by Klein *et al*) is associated with proportionately more violent, aggressive and criminal behaviour than young people who are not members of a gang.

Klein *et al* (2006) argue that: *'Many European countries face such youth groups, which may be called street gangs although researchers and policy makers often hesitate to call them this because they compare their own groups to an America stereotype*' (p. 414).

Table 2.6: Prevalence rates for youth ‘gangs’ in research studies

High risk youth in two cities (ie high risk neighbourhoods, early school leavers)	
Membership of a gang or troublesome youth group, <i>over a four year period</i> :	
Bremen – 13%	
Denver – 14%	
Larger scale surveys	
United States – 8%	(5, 935 pupils, 13-15 years old, in 11 cities)
The Netherlands – 6%	(1,978 pupils, 12- 17 years old, from The Hague and ‘a few other cities’)
UK	
Edinburgh – 20% belong to ‘a gang’ (4,299 pupils, mostly 13 years old)	
3.5% belong to ‘a gang with a name <i>or</i> sign’	
3.3%* belong to ‘a gang with both a name and signs’	
Young people in the most restrictive category (3.3% of the sample) had the highest scores for violence.	

Source: Klein *et al*, 2006.

‘Delinquent youth groups’

The Home Office (Sharp, Aldridge and Medina, 2006) use the phrase ‘delinquent youth groups’ (in preference to ‘gangs’) which they define in the following way:

- Young people who spend time in groups of three or more (including themselves)
- The group spend a lot of time in public places
- The group has existed for three months or more
- The group has engaged in delinquent or criminal behaviour together in the last 12 months
- The group has at least one structural feature (either a name, an area, a leader, or rules)

The Home Office estimate (below) comes from an analysis of the *2004 Offending, Crime and Justice Survey*, in which 3,827 young people from different areas in England and Wales were asked questions that identified the proportion who were members of delinquent youth groups.

Table 2.7: Prevalence – ‘delinquent youth groups’ (England and Wales)

6% of young people aged 10-19 were classed as being a member of a delinquent youth group, levels were similar for males and females
12% of 14-15 year olds were members of these groups (ie a higher level than the overall age range)

Source: Sharp, Aldridge and Medina, 2006.

Section 6: Carrying Weapons

Weapons-carrying is a highly topical and emotive subject, particularly in the school context. It is also difficult to get accurate and meaningful data so reference is made to the findings from other surveys, as well as MORI. The MORI surveys show a higher level of young people carrying potential weapons than surveys where teachers are reporting what is officially known, recorded, or experienced on the school site (see for example Gill and Hearnshaw, 1997; Neill, 2002). Over ten years ago Gill and Hearnshaw found that about **one in eight schools** (12.1%) in a survey of English schools reported that weapons had been carried on the school site, *during the last year*. Neill's survey for the NUT (National Union of Teachers) reported that **3% of teachers, per week**, found a pupil in possession of a weapon.

An important point to emphasise is that the MORI survey is not just about behaviour in school – it includes behaviour in the community.

Table 2.8: Weapons carrying by young people *in the last year* (anywhere)

Weapon	Mainstream students	Excluded young people
Carried a knife (1)	28%	57%
Carried a BB gun	23%	45%
Carried a real loaded pistol or firearm	2%	6%
Carried an air gun	7%	20%
Carried a replica pistol or firearm	4%	7%
Carried another weapon	4%	7%
None of the above	51%	23%

(1) Most knives carried are **penknives**

(2) **BB guns** account for a large proportion of 'any form of weapon'

Source: MORI, 2004, p.33-34.

A survey of 11,400 young people aged 11-15 years, in inner London schools (all in areas with high levels of crime - notably gun crime - and deprivation) found a lower proportion of young people claiming to have **carried a gun (6%); knife (10%) or some other type of weapon (7%) in the previous twelve months** (CtC, 2005). However, nearly one in five reported that they could 'easily' get hold of a replica gun or airgun and 8% said they could 'easily' access a handgun. The most common reason for carrying a gun was to defend oneself. Having carried a gun was associated with a range of other criminal and problematic behaviour, including carrying other types of weapon and drug use (CtC, 2005).

In Scotland, McKeganey and Norris (2000) found that **34.1 % of males and 8.6% of females aged 11-16 in a sample of 3,121 pupils across 20 schools had ever carried a weapon**. This survey included: three independent schools as well as five schools in rural areas. Importantly the study found a strong relationship (statistically significant) between illegal drugs use and ever having carried a weapon.

The Offending Crime and Justice Survey (OCJS) provides further evidence about the prevalence of knife and gun carrying by young people. The most recent data, at the time of writing, show that **7% of 16-17 year olds have carried a knife and 1% carried a gun, in the last 12 months** (Wilson, Sharp and Patterson, 2006).

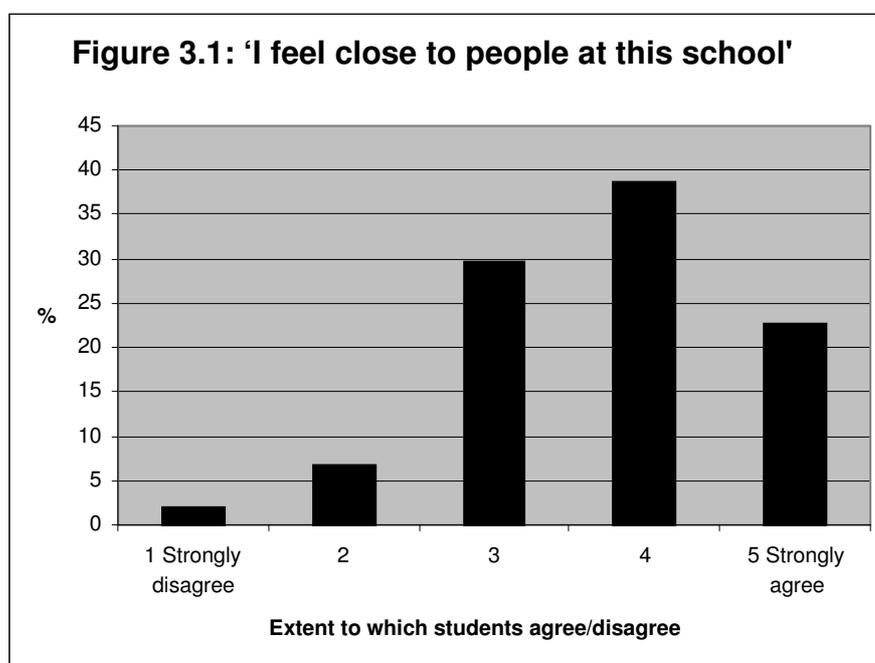
The various data available on weapons carrying by young people in the UK provide a confusing array of estimates of prevalence. So, whilst the CtC survey is focussed upon communities already viewed as 'at risk', it shows lower levels of weapon carrying than the MORI survey, as does the OCJS, alerting us to the need to look carefully at how and where these surveys are carried out, whether they are nationally representative and what specific questions are asked. The prevalence of weapons carrying amongst young people is difficult to establish accurately and there is a lack of data on the frequency of weapons carrying. However, whatever study we refer to there are no grounds for complacency. The evidence points up particular challenges in keeping young people safe in some circumstances, as in large public institutions like schools or in social events and venues. The safety issues in public spaces are obvious.

3: Survey Findings

This section will be presented in the same themes covered by the research in the previous chapter and in the questionnaire format. The findings are summarised as tables, showing numbers and percentages, in the format of the questionnaire in the Appendix to this report. This part of the report will present the findings as graphs. Each graph is followed by the number (**N**) of young people responding to the particular question, as not every question was answered by every young person. **The total number of possible responses to any question is: 1,426.** In Sections One to Three, the **Mean** (average) rating for each question also follows each graph.

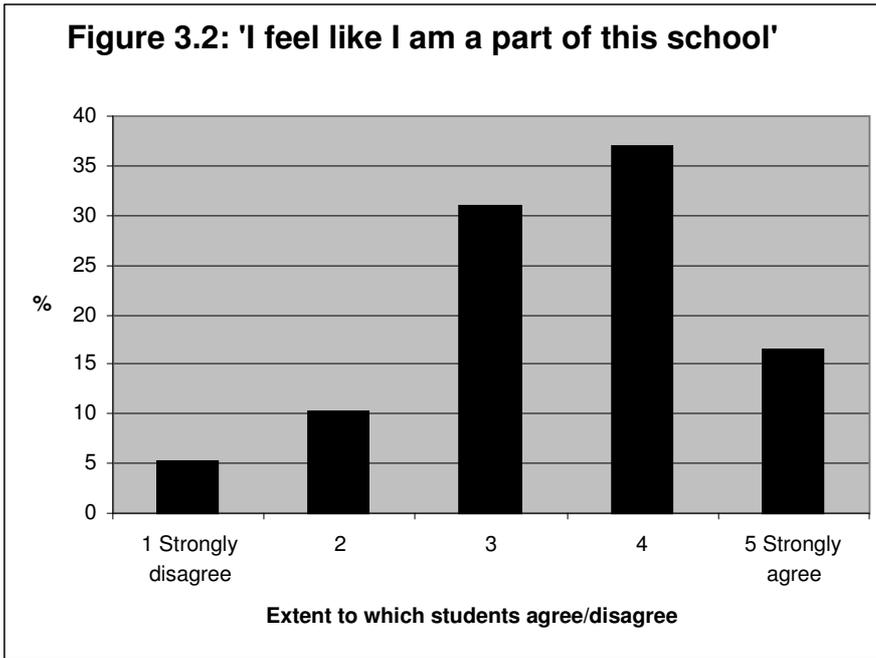
Section 1: How do you feel about school?

How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

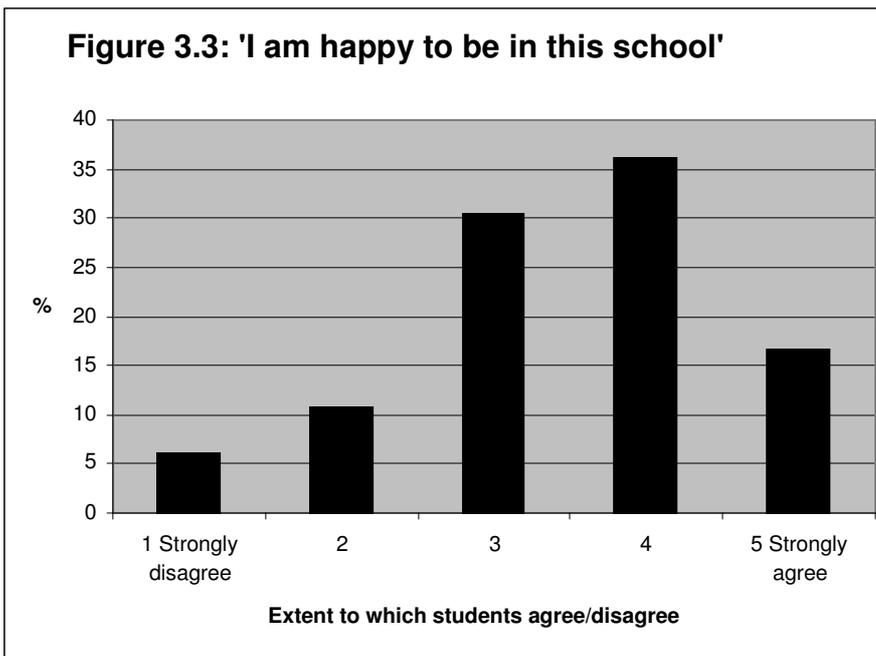


N=1,423 (from possible total of 1,426); **Mean** = 3.73

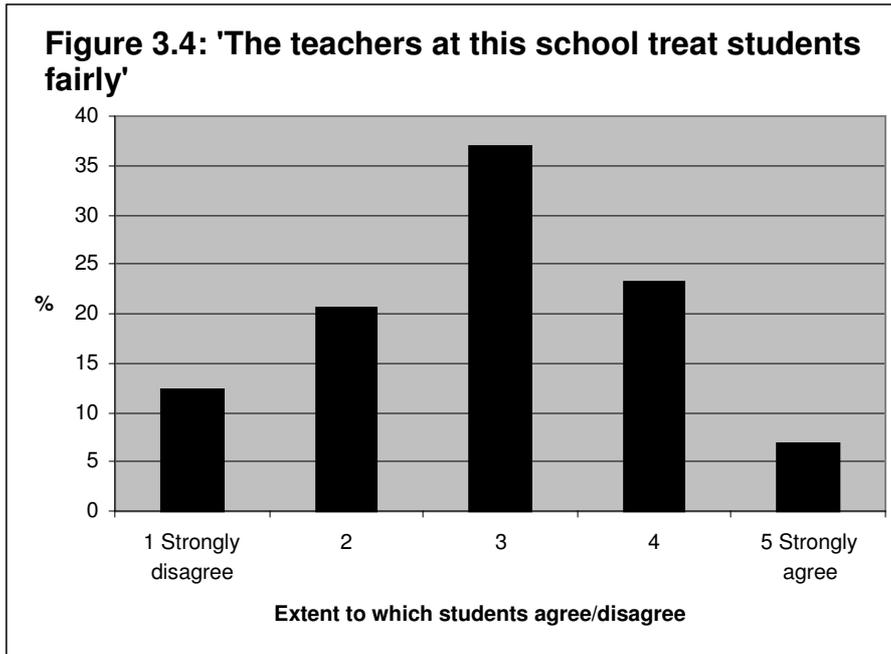
Overall young people agreed more strongly with the statement 'I feel close to people at this school' than the other statements in this section.



N=1,421; Mean =3.49

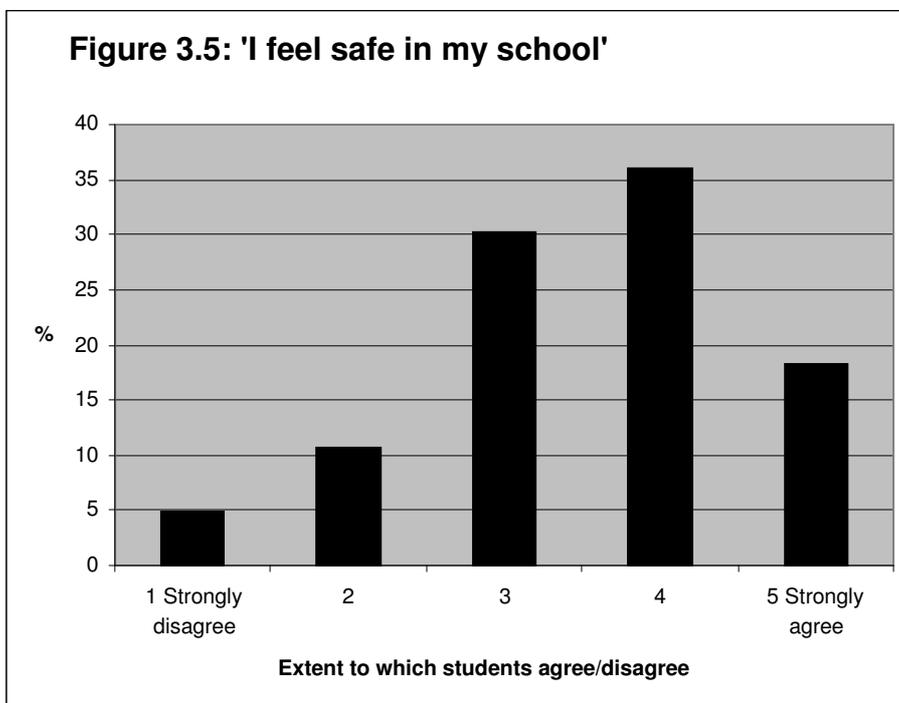


N=1,415; Mean =3.46



N=1,414; Mean = 2.91

The pattern of responses to the statement 'the teachers at this school treat teachers fairly' was the most varied; with around one in eight (12.4%) young people strongly disagreeing and one in fourteen (6.9%) strongly agreeing with this statement.



N=1,419; Mean=3.52

When the results from all five statements are combined the survey finds an overall mean (average) rating for school connectedness across the survey schools of **3.42**. The median or middle value is 3.40. The range in the overall

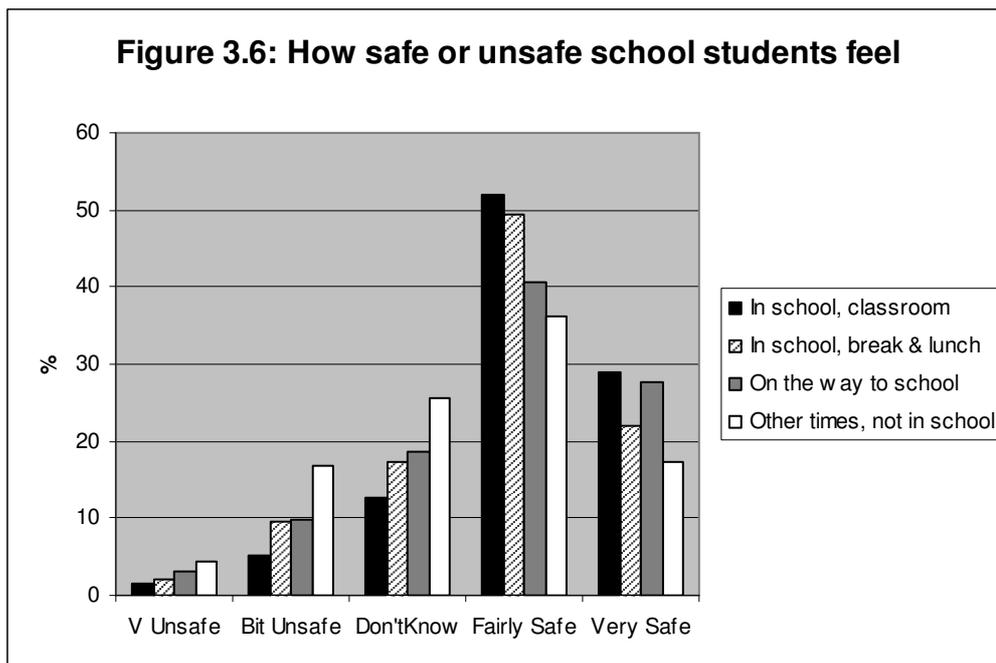
rating for 'school connectedness' across the fourteen schools in the city is from: **3.00** to **3.8**.

Comparison

The mean rating for 'school connectedness' across the survey schools of **3.42** is slightly lower than the large scale research in the United States, at **3.64** (see McNeely *et al*, 2002).

Section 2: Feeling safe

How safe do you feel at different times and places?



'In school in the classroom': **N=1,423; Mean = 4.02.**

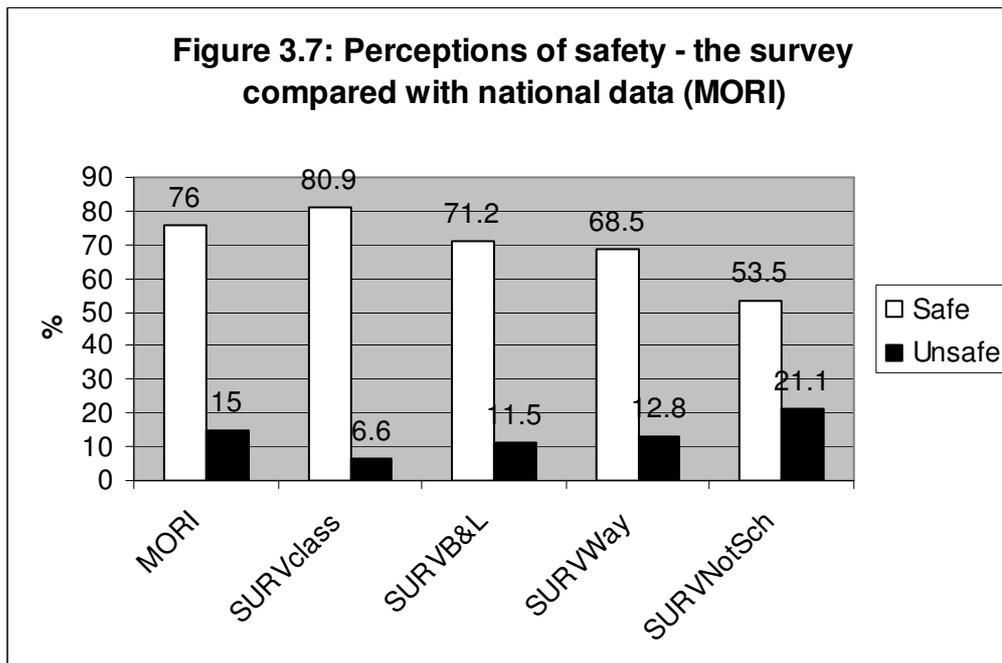
'In school, break and lunch times': **N=1,421; Mean =3.80.**

'On the way to school': **N=1,419; Mean = 3.80;**

'Other times not in school': **N=1,422; Mean=3.45**

It is clear that most young people feel 'fairly safe' or 'very safe' and that they feel most safe in school in the classroom and least safe at other times when they are not in school.

Comparison



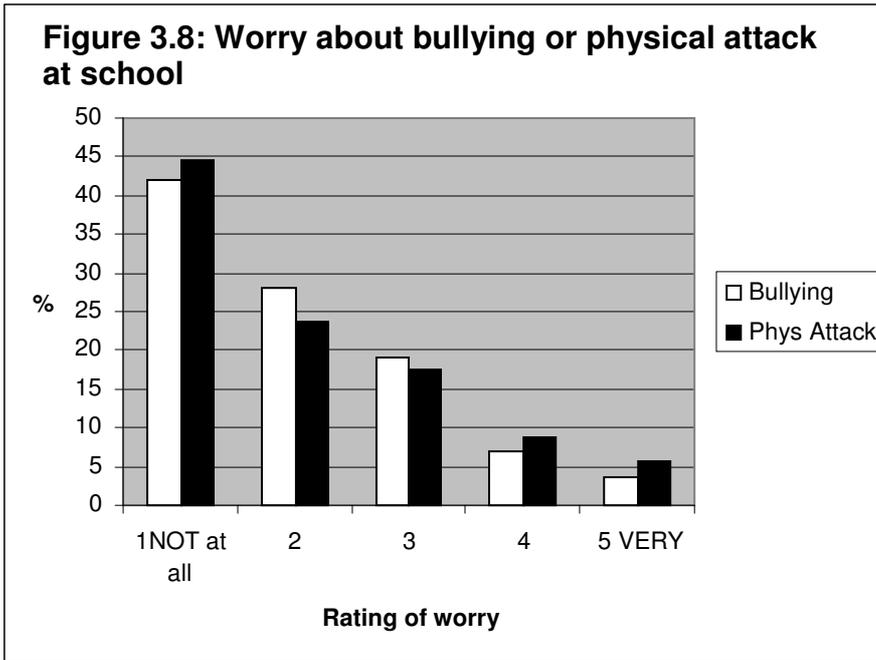
Key: MORI = national survey data see MORI, 2004; 'SURVclass' = survey students' perception of safety in the classroom; 'SURVB&L' = survey students' perception of safety at breaks and lunchtimes; 'SURVWay' = survey students' perception of safety on the way to school; 'SURVNotSch' = survey students' perception of safety when they are not in school.

Comparison with the national data available through MORI (2004) shows that students in our survey are less likely to feel unsafe in school or on the way to school, emphasising the relative safety in the school environment, in comparison with outside school.

Section 3: Any worries?

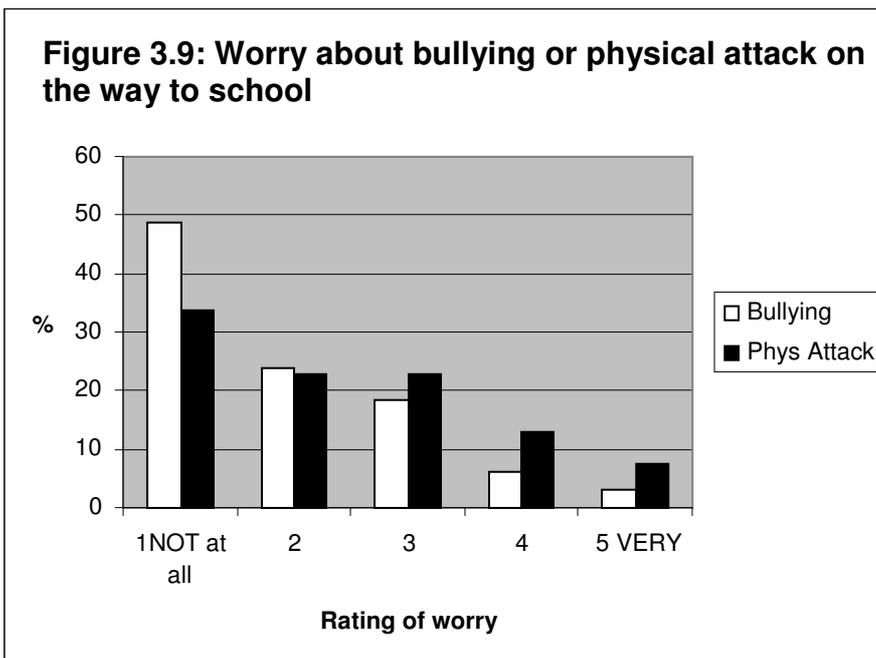
How worried are you about the following things happening to you?

Overall, young people were most worried about being physically attacked 'somewhere else outside school.' The highest rating for worry was in relation to physical attack, rather than bullying. Worry about bullying was more strongly focussed on being in school, in comparison with outside school.



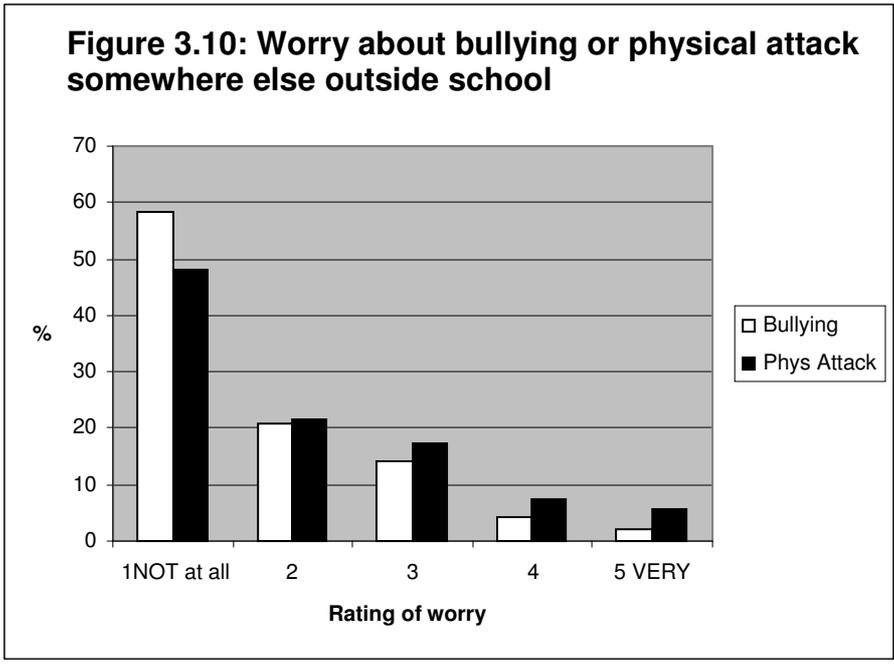
Bullying, **N** = 1,419; Bullying Mean = 2.04

Physical attack, **N** = 1,408; Physical attack Mean = 2.08



Bullying, **N** = 1,418; Bullying Mean = 1.71;

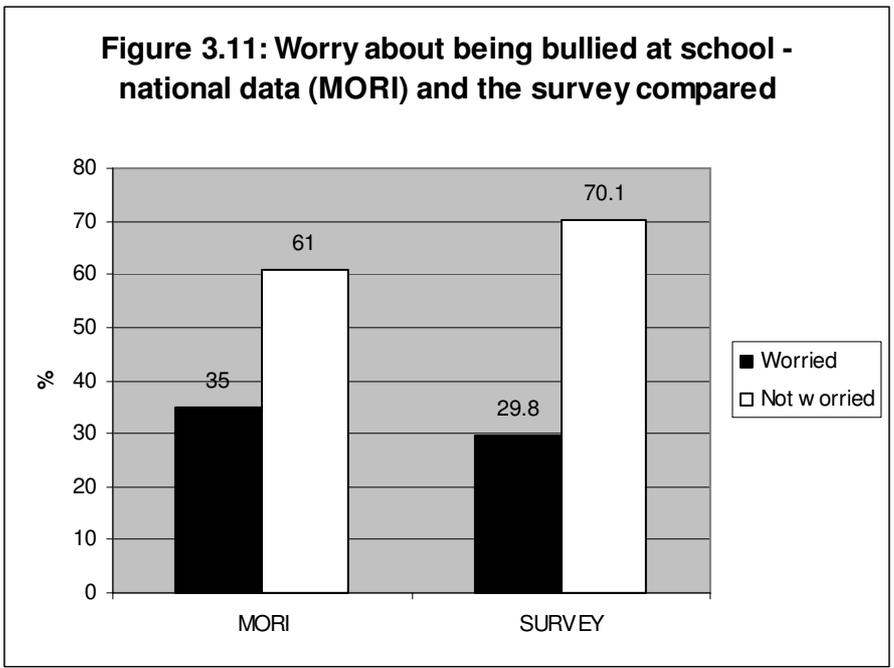
Physical attack, **N** = 1,414; Physical attack Mean = 2.01



Bullying, N = 1,415; Bullying Mean = 1.92;
Physical attack, N = 1,413; Physical attack Mean = 2.38

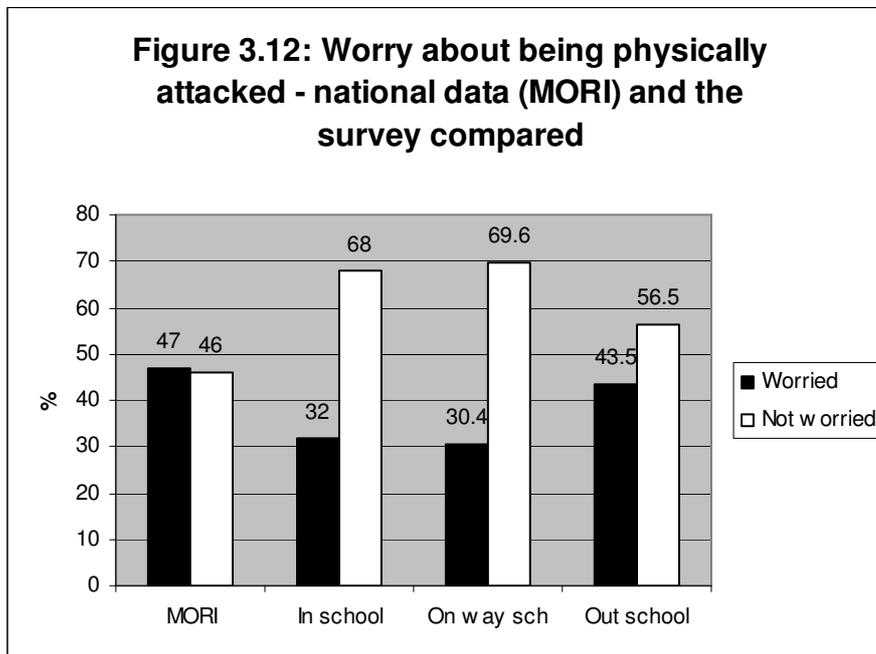
Comparison

The MORI survey presents their findings in only two categories ('worried' and 'not worried'). The current survey has taken these categories to mean a rating of 3 to 5 for 'worried' and 1 or 2 for 'not worried', in order to compare results. Comparison with national data shows that students in our survey are less likely to be worried about being bullied at school.



Key: SURVEY = schools in current survey

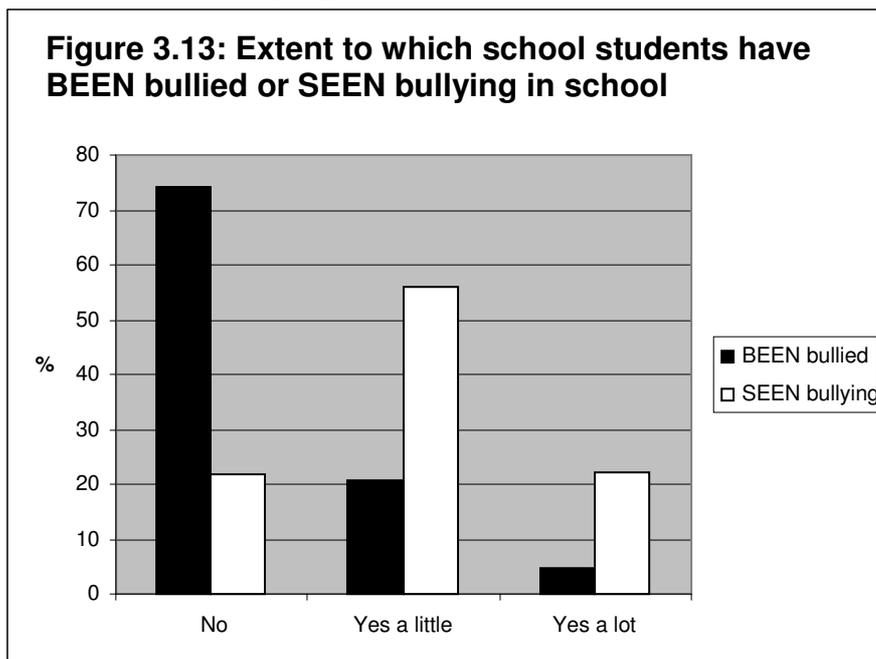
Comparison with national data also shows that the survey students are less likely to be worried about being physically attacked, whether this is at school, on the way or somewhere outside school.



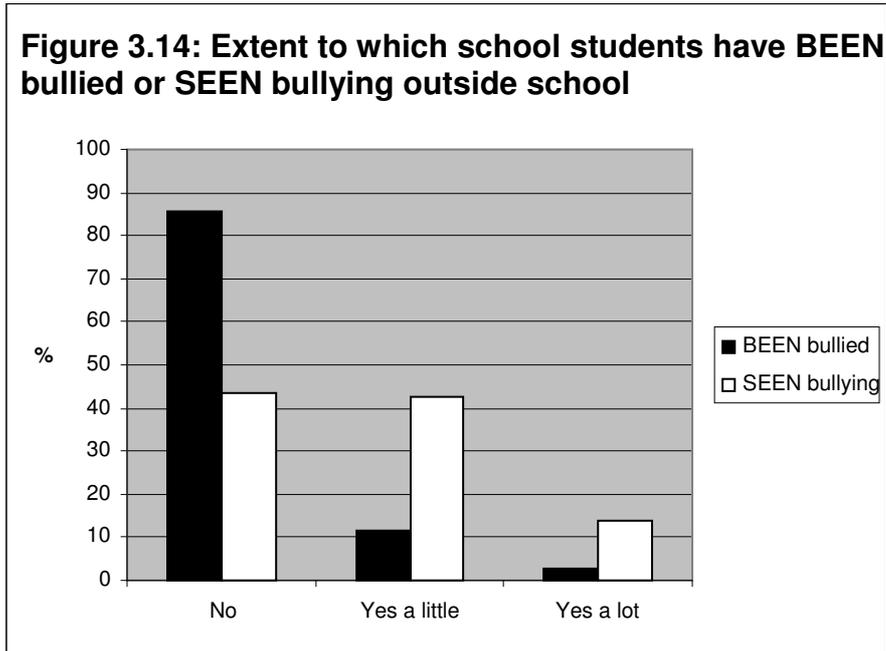
Key: 'In school' = in survey schools; 'On way sch' = on the way to school in survey schools; 'Out school' = somewhere else outside schools in survey area.

It should be noted that a smaller proportion are more worried (rating of 4 or 5) about being physically attacked in the current survey, than shown in Figure 3.12 (which includes the rating of 3 in the 'worried' group).

Section 4: Bullying

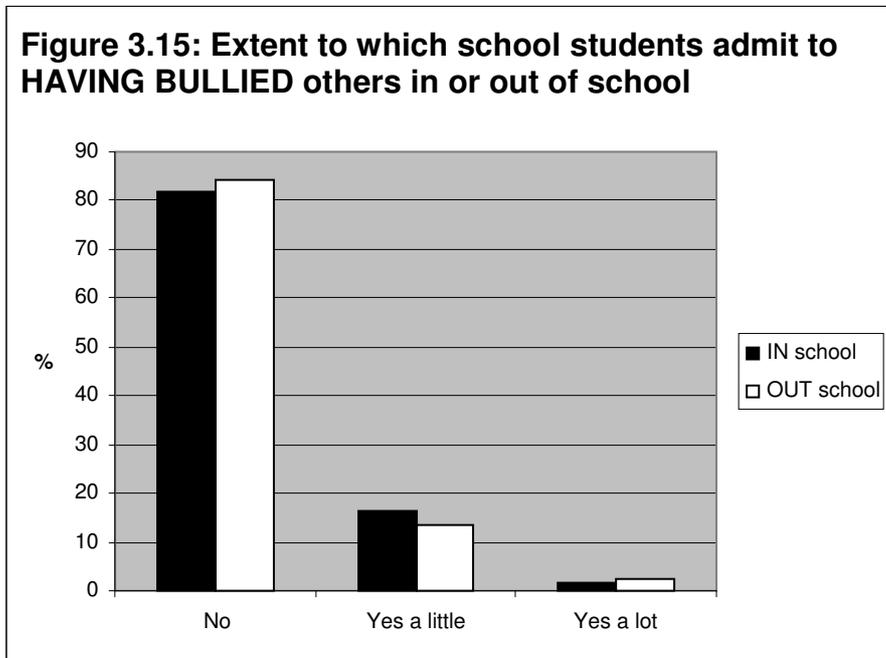


BEEN bullied, N=1,423; SEEN bullying, N=1,418



BEEN bullied, N=1,422; SEEN bullying, N=1,423

Being bullied outside school is less prevalent at 14.2% of the young people responding and probably accounts for the lower level of 'worry' reported on being bullied in this context. More than half (56.3%) of young people had seen bullying outside school in the last 12 months.

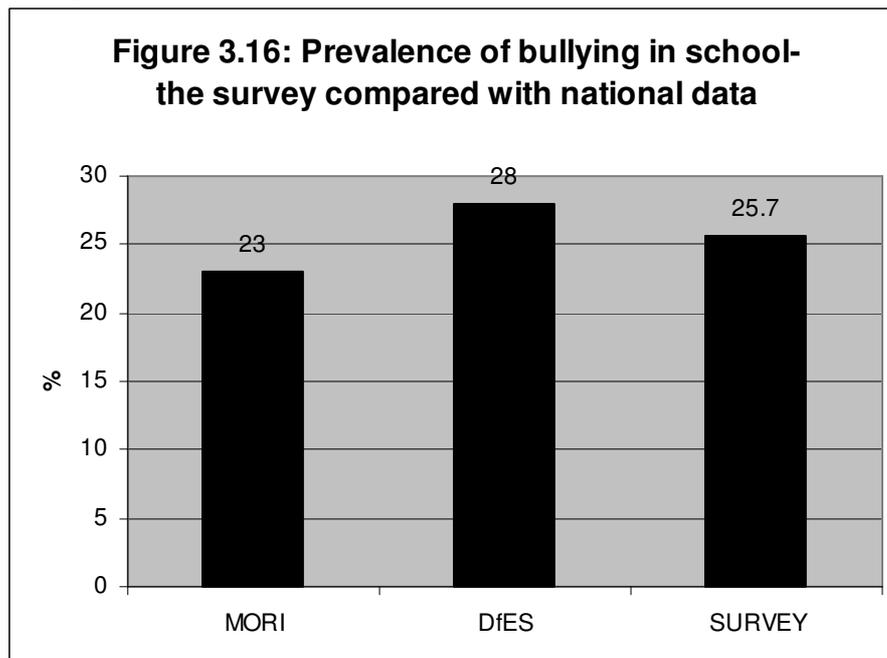


IN school, N=1,419; OUT of school, N=1,420

18% of young people admitted to bullying other young people in school: of whom 1.8% reported bullying 'a lot' and 16.2% 'a little'. A smaller proportion

(15.9%) of young people reported bullying others outside school. The smaller proportion of people admitting to bullying in surveys such as this, in comparison to those reporting having been bullied can be explained in a number of ways. It should be noted that this pattern is common in bullying surveys. Partly it is an issue of whether people know what they are doing and are prepared to admit to it. The level of reporting may also relate to multiple victimisations from a single bully. Similarly individuals are likely to differ in their perception of what is 'a little' or 'a lot' of bullying/ being bullied.

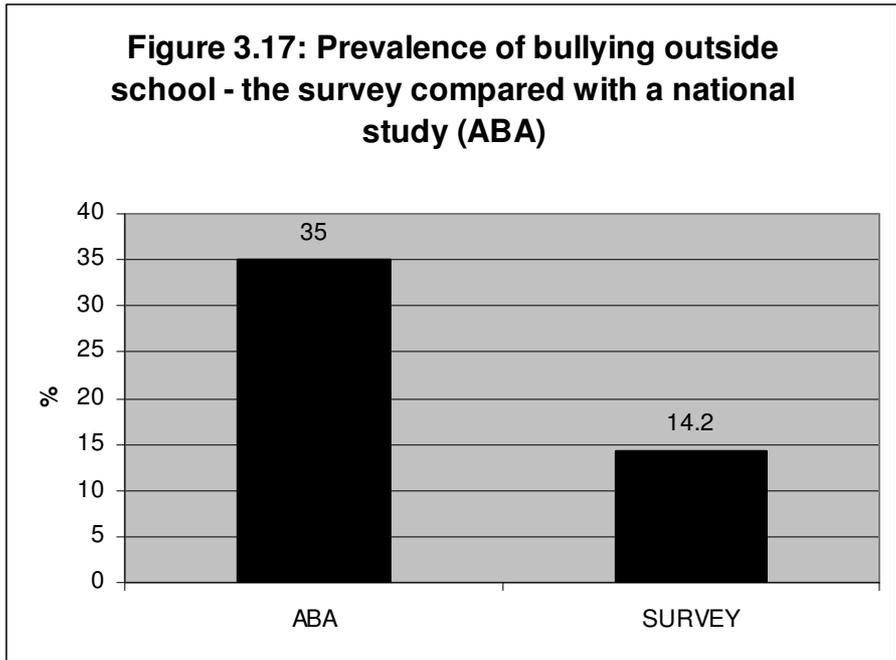
Comparison



The overall prevalence in our survey for experiencing bullying in school in the last 12 months, at 25.7% is slightly more than the MORI survey at 23% and the general estimate of around one in five (20%) made by Smith and Myron-Wilson (1998). It is lower than the DfES (Oliver and Candappa, 2003) study, where the figure given is for year 8 students. It is widely recognised in research that bullying behaviours reduce with age. The current survey differentiates between being bullied 'a lot' (4.9%) and 'a little' (20.8%) from the young person's perspective. Most (78%) young people have seen (or witnessed) bullying in school in the last 12 months.

The overall prevalence for experiencing bullying outside school in the last 12 months, at 14.2% in our survey is a lot lower than that found in recent research by the Anti Bullying Alliance (ABA, 2007). There is relatively little research on the extent to which children and young people experience bullying in the community. The much higher rate shown in the ABA research is likely to be related to the on-line method of data collection; partly because more of those motivated to complete the survey may do so because of their experience of bullying.

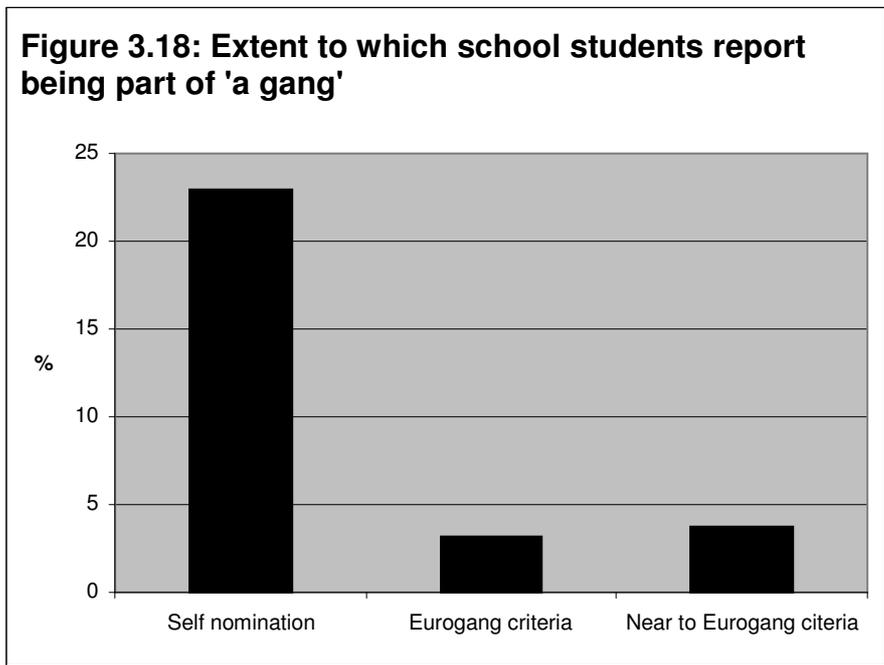
Figure 3.17: Prevalence of bullying outside school - the survey compared with a national study (ABA)



ABA = Anti-Bullying Alliance. They conducted an on-line survey as part of 2007 Anti-Bullying week, N=1,078, 7-18 year olds.

Section 5: Gangs

Figure 3.18: Extent to which school students report being part of 'a gang'



Self nomination, N =1,320; Eurogang criteria or near, N =1,419

Overall, 23% of young people in the survey saw themselves (self nomination) as part of 'a gang', however in most cases this related to being a group of friends who shared a number of things in common, they did not qualify for what constitutes a gang for criminologists. Young people were asked two 'self nomination' questions and a further five statements relating to their 'gang'. These five statements were developed from criteria used by other researchers on gangs to differentiate youth groups from youth 'gangs' (or 'troublesome

youth groups', as they are referred to in recent Home Office research). These additional five statements (or criteria) are as follows:

- I have been part of a gang for 3 months or more
- I think that doing things that are against the law is ok
- I do things that are against the law, as part of a gang
- We have our own territory/ area of
- We spend a lot of time together 'on the street'

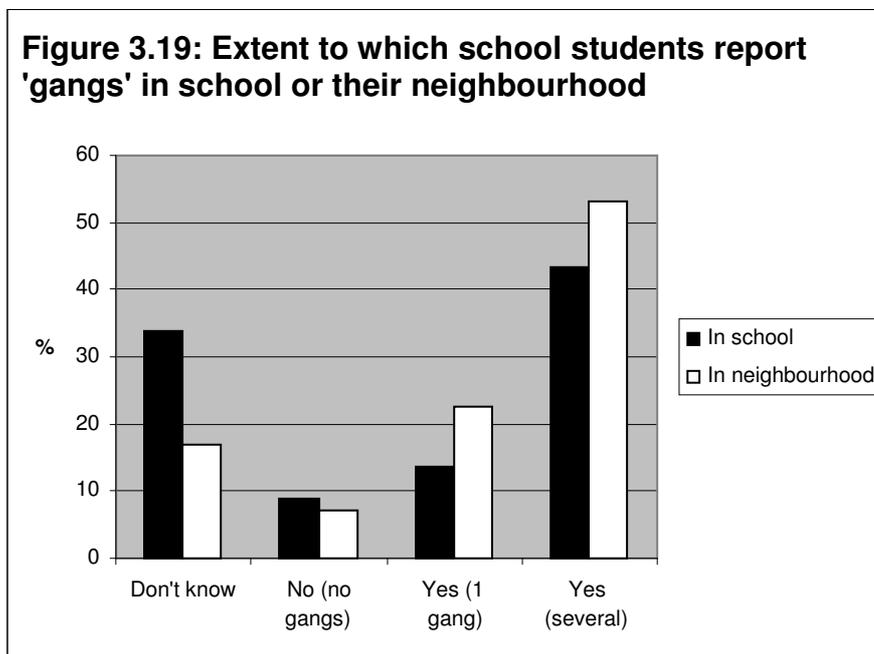
Using these additional five 'Eurogang' criteria **55 individuals or 3.9 %** of the young people in the survey can be viewed as a member of a youth gang or troublesome youth group that does things against the law, as part of a gang.

Another 57 individuals, or 4.0%, meet all but one of the criteria or self definition questions ('near to Eurogang criteria').

The range in the proportion of young people who meet all the 'Eurogang' criteria for being part of a gang across the 14 schools is: none in a small sample in one school to 11.3%.

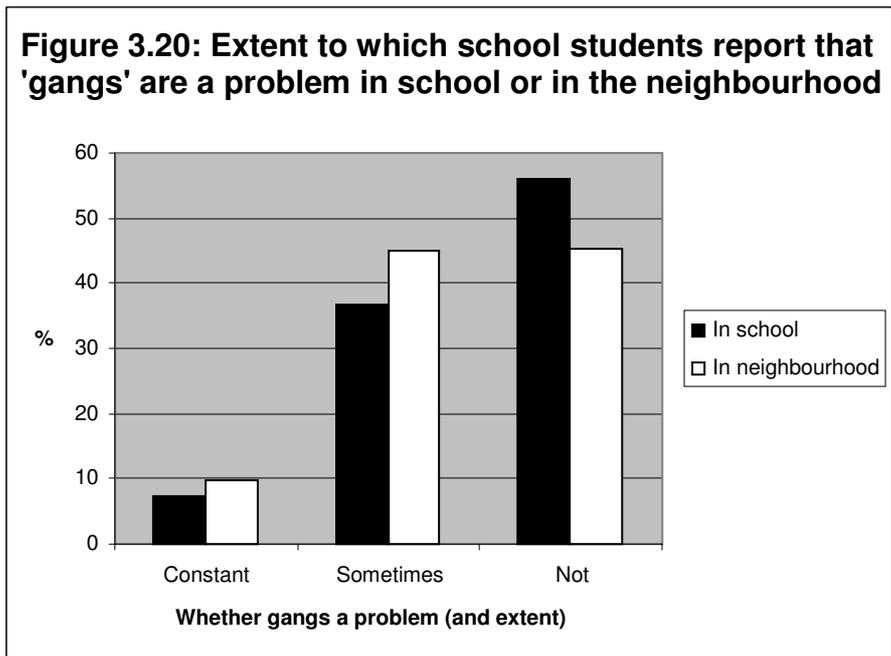
Comparison

Home Office research indicates higher levels of 'troublesome youth groups' within the 14-15 year old age group at **12%**.



In school, N=1,329; In neighbourhood, N=1,392

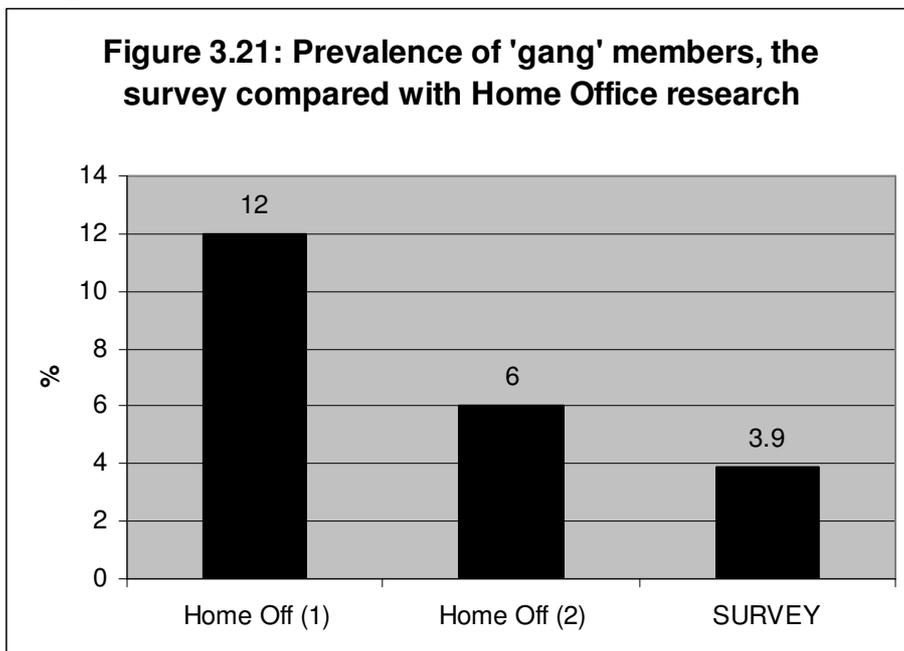
It is clear that most young people (76%) believe that there is one or more gangs in their neighbourhood; with a lower proportion (57.3%) believing the same thing about their school. In interpreting this finding we should remember that for many young people 'youth groups' rather than 'gangs' may be what they are reporting.



In school, N=1,362; In neighbourhood, N=1,314

Opinions are fairly divided about whether 'gangs' are a problem in schools or in the neighbourhood. It is clear that 'gangs' are less likely to be perceived to be a problem in the school context, in comparison with in the neighbourhood.

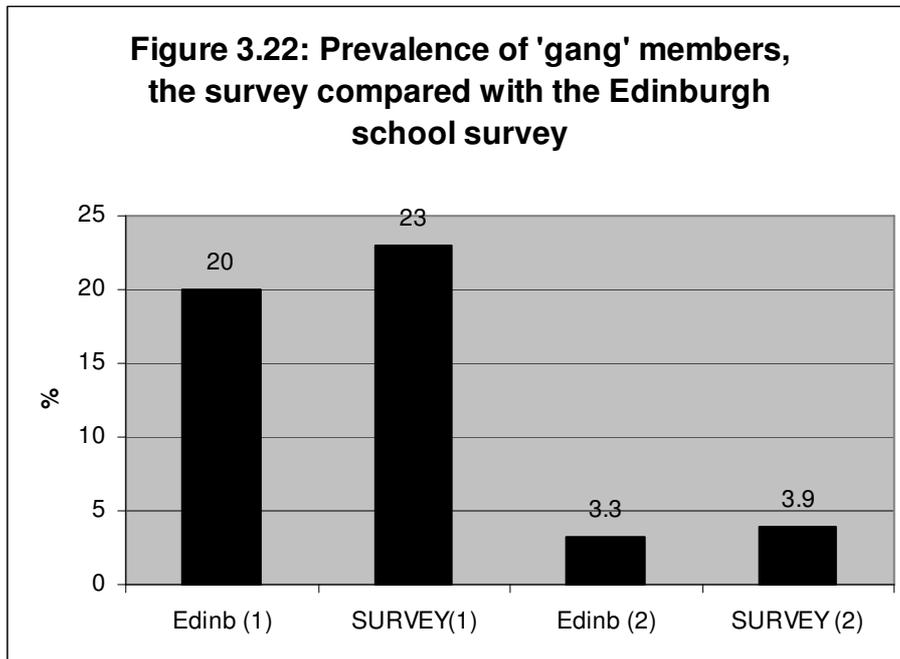
Comparison



Home Off (1) = Home Office prevalence of 'delinquent youth groups', focussed on 14-15 year olds. **Home Off (2)** = Home Office prevalence of 'delinquent youth groups', based on 10-19 year olds. Both based on the *Offending, Crime and Justice Survey* (2004) N=3,827.

Comparison with the Home Office survey shows a lower rate of 'gang' membership in our survey, compared with this national data, especially when

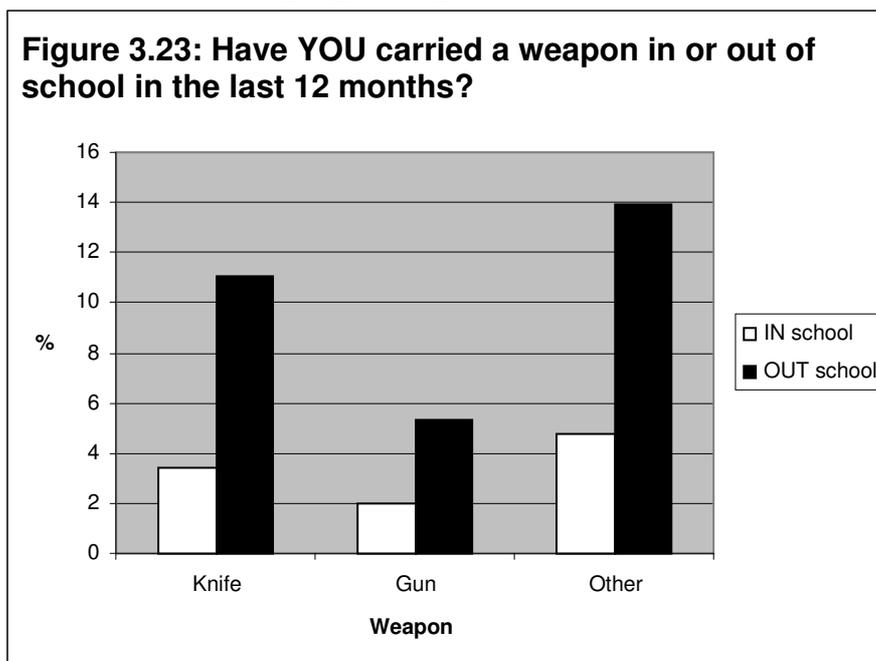
the age group in the current survey is compared with the same age group and higher rate (12%) in the Home Office study.



(1) = self nomination as a member of a 'gang'. (2) = stricter inclusion criteria before categorised as a member of a 'gang'. **Edinb** = Edinburgh survey N=4,299

However, Figure 3.22 shows that the prevalence of self nominated 'gang' members (23% compared with 20%) and those that would fulfil stricter criteria (3.9% compared with 3.3%) are similar when the survey is compared with another school based survey in Edinburgh (see Klein *et al*, 2006).

Section 6: Carrying weapons



IN school, knife, N=1,385; Gun, N=1,382; Other weapon, N=1,380

OUT of school, knife, N=1,384; Gun, N=1,383; Other weapon, N=1,383

Figure 3.23 illustrates the proportion of young people in the survey who admitted to carrying some type of knife, gun or another item as a weapon at some point *in the last 12 months*. In all cases a much higher proportion of young people admitted having carried a weapon outside school, in comparison with in school. Overall, **nearly one in five (268, 19.3%)** of the young people answering this question in this survey, admitted to carrying some form of item as a weapon either outside school or in fewer cases in school², in the last 12 months. A small group of young people (35, 2.5%) did not answer these questions.

Of the 268 young people (or 19.3% of those answering this question, as noted above) who admitted to carrying a weapon in the last 12 months, the breakdown of where they did this is as follows:

In school only: 14 young people, 1% of the survey

Both in and out of school: 71 young people, 5.1% of the survey

Out of school only: 182 young people, 13.2 % of the survey

'Weapons' carrying is probably the most emotive aspect of this survey. It is crucial that any interpretation of these findings is measured, based on the question asked and informed by what other research has been done on this issue and with this age group. Evidence from the MORI (2004) survey would indicate that *most* 'knives' that are carried by school-aged young people are penknives. Indeed, as one of the police officers involved with this research emphasised:

"small folding penknives are not weapons per se and are often carried for lawful purposes."

BB guns are the next most frequent type of 'weapon' cited in the MORI survey. We don't know how frequently 'weapons' have been carried, or any details about the nature of the weapons from our survey, only that an item has been carried as a weapon *in the last 12 months*.

On the other hand we do know about the reasons young people gave for carrying a weapon, in the current survey:

The most common reason was 'self-defence or protection' (148 of 248 responses from young people who admitted to carrying some form of weapon in the last year, 59.7%).

'Attack' was rarely given as a reason for carrying a weapon (20 of 248, 8%).

² Please note the **percentages in Figure 3.23** do not add up to 19.3%, as some young people admitted to carrying more than one type of weapon and some had carried a weapon both inside and outside school.

A variety of ‘other reasons’ for carrying a weapon cited by about a third (80 of 248, 32.3%) of those who responded to this question, many of them have nothing to do with either self-defence or attack.

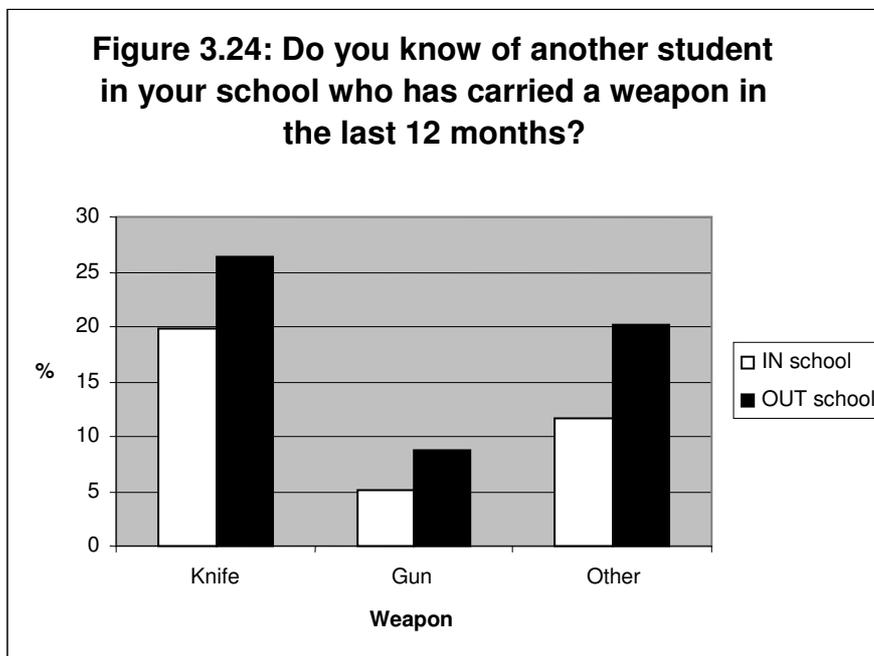
It should be highlighted that an expert review on evidence and policy on knife crime concluded that it is almost impossible to limit the availability of knives as it takes only a trip to the kitchen drawer to get a knife. The review is critical of misleading media reporting and political comment and states that:

Sensational statements increase public fear of crime beyond the actual risk and might, in the end, hinder rather than help the police (Eades et al, 2007, p.9).

In sum the data provided in this section of the survey needs careful interpretation. A comment made by a young person during the fieldwork makes the important point that:

“Anything can be a weapon if you want it to be.”

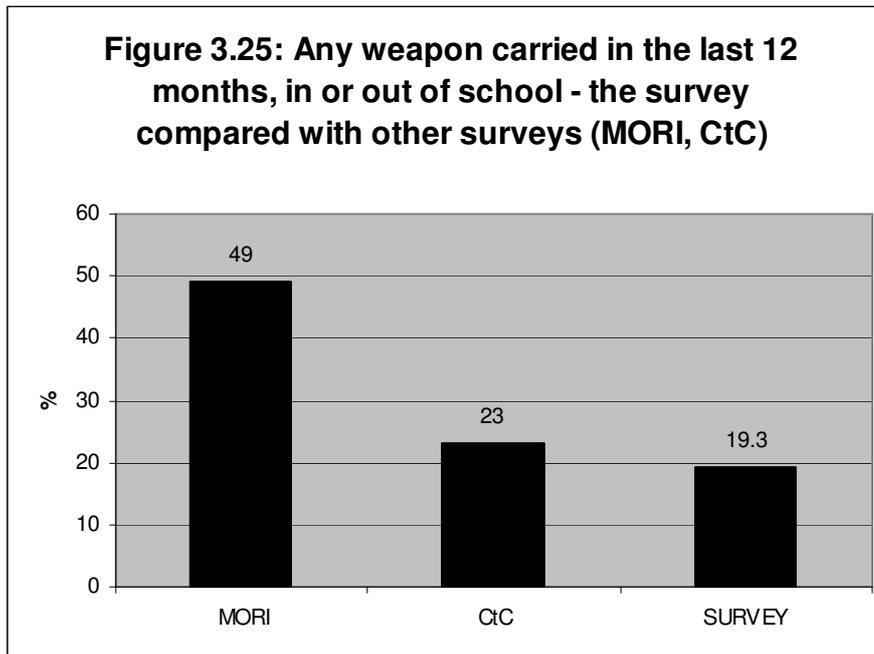
More young people know of weapons carrying by others, especially outside school. Young people are more likely to perceive that other young people carry a weapon for the purpose of attack (22.9% report this, compared with 8.0% when they are reporting about themselves).



IN school, knife, **N**=1,371; Gun, **N**=1,363; Other weapon, **N**=1,362

OUT of school, knife, **N**=1,370; Gun, **N**=1,363; Other weapon, **N**=1,365

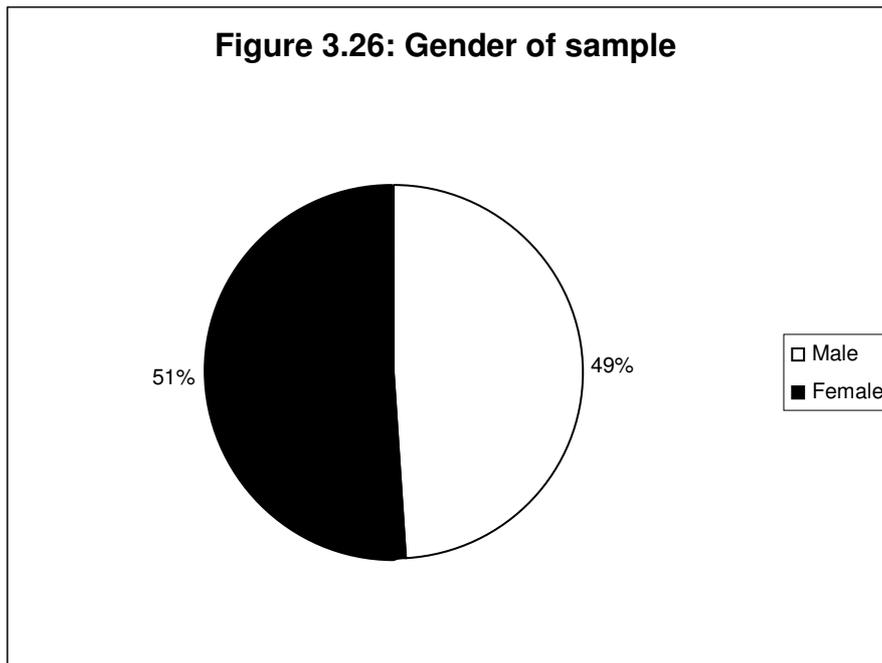
Comparison



CtC = Communities that Care, this survey was based on 11,400 young people aged 11-15 years in inner London schools, see CtC (2005). NB: The **MORI** survey is a national sample, based on 11-17 year olds, 11-16 in mainstream schools and 11-17 excluded young people.

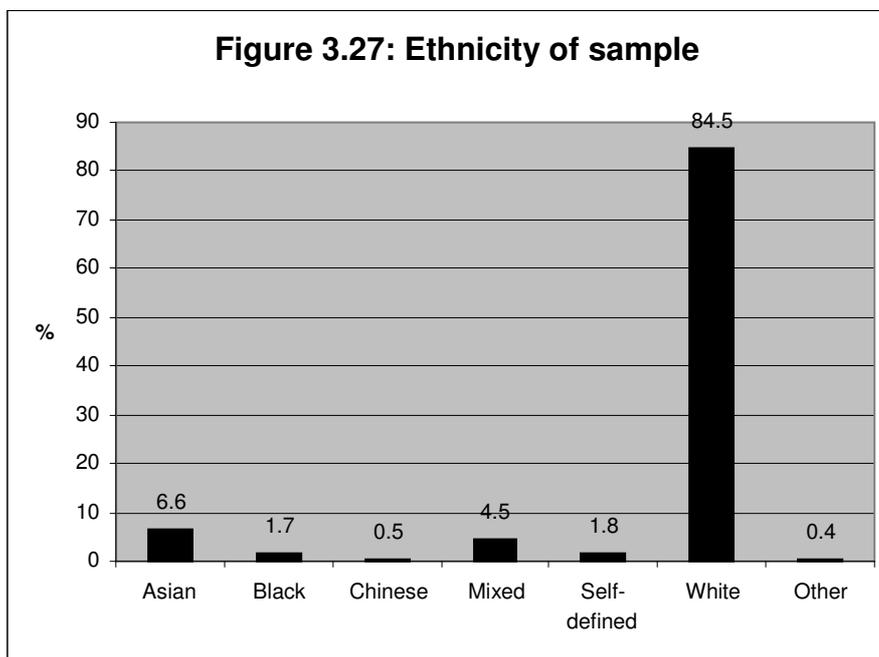
Existing data on the prevalence of weapons carrying amongst young people has provided a range of estimates, two of which are presented above. It should be noted that the MORI and CtC samples contain a wider age range. As the young people in our survey are all aged 14-15 years, an age that is likely to be associated with more problematic behaviour, it can be concluded that the current research suggests a lower level of weapons carrying than these other studies indicate.

Section 7: Gender and Ethnicity of sample



N=1,384

The sample is fairly evenly divided between males and females.



N=1,388

Nearly one in six (15.5%) of the sample report that they are from some minority ethnic or self-defined ethnic grouping.

In total young people named 55 different areas across the local authority and surrounding area as their place of residence.

4: Key Findings and Associations

This section will highlight the key findings and associations in this survey. Various potential associations between variables likely to be of particular interest to professionals responding to this survey (such as bullying and worries; gender and weapons carrying and so on) were explored using the Chi-Square test³ to see if any of the observed differences in the survey were significant. All associations that are reported, are significant at the 0.01 (1%) or 0.05 (5%) level, meaning that the chance that any association found is false is at the most 5%. These tests are not exhaustive; for example the broader issue of 'school-connectedness' and how it may inter-relate to various aspects of the issues covered in this survey is not explored in this report.

Bullying, worries and safety

- The prevalence of bullying in this survey is similar to many other surveys. One in four young people reported being bullied in school *in the last 12 months* (20.8% bullied 'a little'; 4.9% 'a lot').
- Young people who have been bullied are more likely to worry about being bullied.
- Young people who have been bullied feel less safe in school.
- Boys are more likely than girls to admit to bullying someone.
- Ethnicity only becomes significantly associated with being bullied at the 0.057 level (ie outside the parameters set above) and only if all Black and Minority Ethnic groups are in one category, compared with White students.
- A bigger proportion of young people are more worried about being physically attacked than bullied.
- Overall most young people feel safer in school than outside school (80.8% feel 'fairly safe' or 'very safe' in the classroom; 71.2% in school outside the classroom; 54.5% when outside school)
- Perceptions of safety in school are NOT significantly related to whether the school is single or mixed sex.
- There are NO significant differences in perceptions of safety in school by gender.

³ **Chi-Square** is used when you wish to explore the relationship between two categorical variables. Each of these variables (eg gender, weapons carrying) can have two or more categories. The test compares the observed frequencies or proportion of cases that occur in each of the categories, with the values that would be expected if there was no association between the two variables being measured (Pallant, 2007, p.214).

- There are NO significant differences in perceptions of safety in schools across the local authority.
- There are NO significant differences in the prevalence of bullying across areas in the local authority.

Weapons and gang membership

- Overall, nearly one in five (19.3%, 268) young people reported having carried an item as a weapon either in or out of school at some point in the previous 12 months. A minority of young people (2.5%, 35) did not answer this question.
- Carrying an item as a weapon and gang membership are highly significantly associated.
- At the level of individual young person: girls are significantly less likely to report carrying any kind of item as a weapon in or out of school in comparison with boys. Boys make up 77% (201) of those admitting to carrying any weapon, in or out of school in the last 12 months; girls make up 23% (60) of this group⁴. (7 young people who admitted to carrying a weapon did not indicate their gender)
- At the school level: the prevalence of carrying any item as a weapon is lower in the 'girls only' schools (6.6%, 23) in the survey. However, the overall prevalence was the same in the 'boys only' schools (23.5%, 53) as the mixed sex schools (23.5%, 192).
- Boys were more likely (5.6%, 38) to meet the full criteria for being a member of 'a gang' than girls (2.0%, 14)⁵. Interestingly, slightly more girls than boys reported that they considered their special group of friends to be 'a gang' (24% compared with 22%) and that they were a member of 'a gang' (24.8% compared with 21.2%). Although this latter difference is NOT statistically significant.
- NO significant differences were found in relation to weapons carrying and 'gang' membership, when Black and Minority Ethnic students are compared with White students.
- Young people reported that gangs were either a 'constant' problem or 'sometimes' a problem in their neighbourhood in areas where there were more 'gang' members.

⁴ **Seven young people** who admitted to carrying a weapon did not indicate their gender

⁵ **Three young people** who fulfilled all the criteria for being a 'gang' member did not indicate their gender

APPENDIX: SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS IN QUESTIONNAIRE FORMAT

Date(s) survey carried out: October – December, 2007
 Number of schools: 14 (all) mainstream state secondary schools
 Number of groups: 76 year 10 teaching or tutor groups
 Number of responses: 1,426

Section 1: How do you feel about school?

Young people were asked to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with each of the following statements

1 means 'strongly disagree' 5 means that you 'strongly agree' with the statement

Statement	Strongly DISAGREE 1	2	3	4	Strongly AGREE 5	Mean Rating
I feel close to people at this school	2.1 %	6.7%	29.6%	38.7%	22.8%	3.73
I feel like I am part of this school	5.3%	10.3%	31.0%	36.9%	16.5%	3.49
I am happy to be at this school	6.1%	10.8%	30.4%	36.1%	16.6%	3.46
The teachers at this school treat students fairly	12.4%	20.6%	36.9%	23.2%	6.9%	2.91
I feel safe in my school	4.9%	10.6%	30.2%	36.1%	18.2%	3.52
OVERALL 'school connectedness' rating for the survey:						3.42

Section 2: Feeling safe

Young people were asked to indicate how safe they felt at different times and places

	Very Unsafe 1	A bit unsafe 2	Don't Know 3	Fairly Safe 4	Very safe 5	Mean Rating
In school in the classroom	1.5%	5.1%	12.6%	52.0%	28.9%	4.02
In school at lunch and break times	2.0%	9.5%	17.4%	49.3%	21.9%	3.80
On the way to school	3.1%	9.7%	18.7%	40.7%	27.8%	3.80
Other times when you are not in school	4.4%	16.7%	25.5%	36.2%	17.3%	3.45

Section 3: Any worries?

Pupils were asked how worried they were about the following things happening to them

1 means 'not at all worried'; 5 means 'very worried' about being bullied or physically attacked in a particular place or situation

	1 Not at all	2	3	4	5 Very worried	Mean Rating*
Being bullied at school	42.0%	28.1%	19.1%	7.0%	3.7%	2.04
Being bullied on the way to school	58.4%	21.0%	14.1%	4.4%	2.1%	1.71
Being bullied somewhere else outside school	48.6%	23.7%	18.3%	6.1%	3.2%	1.92
Being physically attacked at school	44.5%	23.6%	17.6%	8.7%	5.7%	2.08
Being physically attacked on the way to school	48.2%	21.4%	17.2%	7.6%	5.6%	2.01
Being physically attacked somewhere else outside school	33.6%	22.9%	22.9%	13.1%	7.5%	2.38

Section 4: Bullying

Have you been bullied **IN SCHOOL** in the last 12 months?

No 74.3% Yes, a little 20.8% **Yes, a lot 4.9%**

Have you **SEEN** any bullying **IN SCHOOL** in the last 12 months?

No 22.0% Yes, a little 55.9% **Yes, a lot 22.1%**

Have you been bullied **OUTSIDE SCHOOL** during the last 12 months?

No 85.8% Yes, a little 11.6% **Yes, a lot 2.6%**

Have you **SEEN** any bullying **OUTSIDE SCHOOL** in the last 12 months?

No 43.7% Yes, a little 42.4% **Yes, a lot 13.9%**

Have **YOU** bullied anyone in the last 12 months **IN SCHOOL**?

No 82.0% Yes, a little 16.2% **Yes, a lot 1.8%**

Have **YOU** bullied anyone in the last 12 months **OUTSIDE SCHOOL**?

No 84.2% Yes, a little 13.5% **Yes, a lot 2.4%**

Section 5: Gangs

Do you consider your special group of friends to be a 'gang'?

Yes	23.3%	No	76.7%
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Are you a member of a gang?

Yes	23.0%	No	77.0%
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The following markers had to apply before an individual met the 'Eurogang' criteria for being a gang

I have been part of a gang for 3 months or more

I think that doing things that are against the law is ok

I do things that are against the law, as part of a gang

We have our own territory/ area of

We spend a lot of time together 'on the street'

Number and proportion of sample that constitute a gang, using the Eurogang criteria: Number = 55 individuals or 3.9 %

Another 57 individuals, or 4.0%, meet all but one of the criteria or self definition questions.

Are you aware of any gangs in your neighbourhood?

Don't know	16.9%
No (there are no gangs in my neighbourhood)	7.0%
Yes, there is one gang	22.7%
Yes, there are several gangs	53.3%

Are gangs a problem in your neighbourhood?

Yes, they are a constant problem	9.8%
Yes, sometimes they are a problem	44.9%
No, they are not a problem	45.3%

Are you aware of any gangs in your school?

Don't know	33.9%
No (there are no gangs in my school)	8.8%
Yes, there is one gang	13.8%
Yes, there are several gangs	43.5%

Are gangs a problem in your school?

Yes, they are a constant problem	7.2%
Yes, sometimes they are a problem	36.8%
No, they are not a problem	56.0%

Section 6: Carrying weapons⁶

Have YOU carried a weapon in school in the last 12 months?

Carried a knife *in school*

Yes 3.4% No 93.8%

Carried a knife outside school

Yes 11.1% No 88.9%

Carried a gun *in school*

Yes 2.0% No 98.0%

Carried a gun outside school

Yes 5.3% No 94.7%

Carried a weapon other than a knife or gun, *in school*

Yes 4.8% No 95.2%

Carried a weapon other than a knife or gun, outside school

Yes 13.9% No 86.1%

If YOU have carried a weapon in the last 12 months please tell us the main reason why you carried a weapon: (based on 249 responses)

Attack	8.0%
Self-defence/protection	59.4%
Another reason*	32.5%

Do you know of ANOTHER STUDENT IN YOUR SCHOOL who has carried a weapon in the last 12 months?

Carried a knife *in school*

Yes 19.8% No 80.2%

Carried a knife outside school

Yes 26.3% No 73.7%

Carried a gun *in school*

Yes 5.1% No 94.9%

Carried a gun outside school

Yes 8.8% No 91.2%

Carried a weapon other than a knife or gun, *in school*

Yes 11.7% No 88.3%

Carried a weapon other than a knife or gun, outside school

Yes 20.2% No 79.8%

If you know of ANOTHER STUDENT IN YOUR SCHOOL who has carried a weapon in the last 12 months please tell us the main reason why you think they carried a weapon: (based on 414 responses)

Attack	22.9%
Self-defence/protection	51.2%
Another reason*	25.8%

*e.g. scouts/activities- 'drill and target practice with cadets'; art and cooking; self-defence - 'because he got bullied'; other leisure activity- 'a bb gun, for fun, not for attack or defence'; 'air rifle, shooting targets in the back garden, under supervision'; image - 'make them feel hard and cannot be touched' or 'I left it in my pocket by accident'.

⁶ 'small folding penknives are not weapons per se and are often carried for lawful purposes'.
Reminder from Police Officer involved with the study.

The sample - age, gender and ethnicity,

Age: all year 10 pupils, mean age of 14.2 years

Gender:

Male	49%
Female	51%

Ethnicity:

Asian/Asian British	6.6%
Black/Black British	1.7%
Chinese	0.5%
Mixed heritage	4.5%
Self-defined	1.8%
White	84.5%
Any other ethnic group	0.4%

*** From Section 7 of the questionnaire ‘About You’**

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