

Enrichment

The Curriculum and Assessment Review recognises that the national curriculum is not the entirety of a school's curriculum nor their whole offer to pupils.

Evidence shows that **extra-curricular enrichment participation is associated with higher educational achievement**^{23,24,25} and positive outcomes in adulthood²⁶. For example, a report from the Education Policy Institute found that children who attended sport clubs were more likely to be in education or employment as young adults, and children who attended clubs for hobbies, arts and music²⁷ were significantly more likely to progress to higher education than those who did not²⁸.

But the enrichment offer varies significantly from school to school. When surveyed, the average number of activities offered by primary schools was 7 (out of 19 possible activity types). However, 21% offered 4 or fewer. The average offered by secondary schools was higher at 13, but there was variation here as well with 15% offering fewer than half of the 19 possible options (see Annex A).

And participation varies too. Around one-third of secondary school children said they did not participate in any activities in the 2024/25 autumn term. This was higher for pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) compared to those who were not (35% vs 25%)²⁹.

Breaking this down by ethnicity, non-participation was higher for white pupils eligible for FSM compared to white pupils who were not FSM eligible (40% vs 26%). When looking at all ethnic minority pupils, the non-participation difference was smaller and not statistically significant (28% FSM vs 23% not FSM). The data did not allow for further disaggregation, so the results for specific ethnic minority groups may differ ³⁰.

Looking at vulnerabilities, children in need had lower participation levels (63% vs 72%) and pupils with SEND were also less likely to be involved in sports and physical activities (38% vs 53%)³¹.

²³ Farb, A.F., Matjasko, J.L., 2012. Recent advances in research on school-based extracurricular activities and adolescent development. *Developmental Review* 32, 1–48

²⁴ Shulruf, B., 2010. Do extra-curricular activities in schools improve educational outcomes? A critical review and meta-analysis of the literature. *Int Rev Educ* 56, 591–612

²⁵ Laurus Trust - Student outcomes and Progress - Education Policy Institute, 2024

²⁶ Access to extra-curricular provision and the association with outcomes - Education Policy Institute, 2024

²⁷ These findings are for students who attended clubs for hobbies, arts and music but who did not attend sports clubs.

²⁸ Access to extra-curricular provision and the association with outcomes, Education Policy Institute, 2024

²⁹ Parent, pupil and learner voice: omnibus surveys for 2024 to 2025, December 2024 wave

³⁰ Results for specific ethnic categories were unavailable owing to insufficient sample sizes

³¹ Analysis of DfE PPLV survey December 2024. Supporting tables are in Annex A

These differences in access and participation demonstrate why these subjects and opportunities must be embedded within the school curriculum as well as extracurricular activities. Arts, music and PE are important curriculum subjects which we will strengthen through the Review's recommendations and ongoing support for high quality teaching. This is essential to ensure that disadvantaged pupils have the same access to wider enriching experiences.

In addition to a high-quality enriching curriculum, every child should be entitled to a strong and well-rounded extracurricular offer. This offer both supports and extends beyond the curriculum and school day – opportunities to discover interests, ignite passions, grow talents and, above all, to enjoy learning.

We will set out a new core enrichment offer that every school and college, in every community, should aim to provide for all children – beyond the statutory curriculum. Of course, many schools already excel at this offering a diverse range of activities that are woven into their ethos, all delivered using resources within and outside the school. These school activities are often enhanced by working with local clubs, voluntary sector organisations or national partners such as the Royal Shakespeare Company or the Youth Sport Trust. We want to enable and build such partnerships to spread opportunities across our schools.

To frame this joint working, we are working with sector experts, schools and colleges on the development of a new set of benchmarks, to set out the steps every school and college can take to provide every child with access to a strategically planned and ambitious enrichment offer. This will go hand-in-hand with the steps we have taken to ensure high quality careers advice and work experience, by providing a wider range of hands-on experiences that get children out of the classroom and into real-life situations to broaden their aspirations. **We will bring together support for schools and colleges to follow these benchmarks which will set out that, at a minimum, every school should deliver an enrichment offer which provides access to civic engagement; arts and culture; nature, outdoor and adventure; sport and physical activities; and developing wider life skills.**

Figure 1: Enrichment activities



Parents should have the confidence and knowledge that their children will have access to these experiences, wherever they live. To ensure that parents know how schools are meeting the benchmarks and that schools are recognised for putting an offer in place, we will **provide information on schools' enrichment opportunities in the new School Profiles**, based on access to the five categories set out above. School Profiles will bring together useful and up-to-date information about schools together in one place. We will consult on how enrichment is embedded in School Profiles, ensuring they are co-designed with the input of schools and frontline expertise. As set out in Ofsted's new inspection framework, pupils' access to opportunities that broaden their experiences and enable them to develop their talents and interests, is considered under personal development. When Ofsted updates its inspection toolkits next year, it will take account of the new enrichment benchmarks, in a similar way to the Gatsby Benchmarks currently included in relation to careers education.