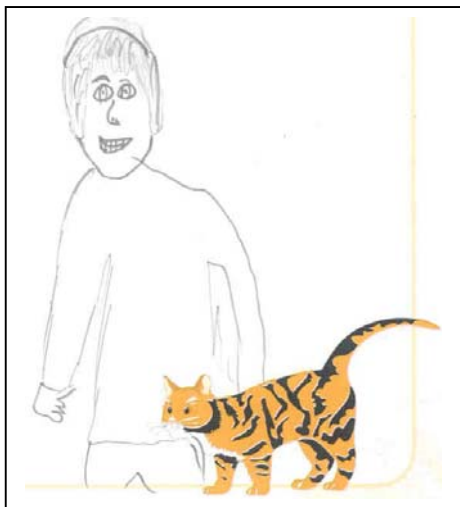


Every Child Matters

Survey of Children & Young People Autumn 2005

Report



Executive Summary

This report is based on a survey of children and young people undertaken in Suffolk during September and October 2005. The survey was part of a commission from the Children and Young people's Partnership Board, to prepare for the production of the new statutory Children and Young People's Plan due in April 2006.

The purpose of the survey was to test out some emerging areas for development against the views of children and young people. Questions were grouped around the 5 Every Child Matters outcomes – :

Be Healthy

Staying Safe

Enjoying and Achieving

Making a Positive Contribution

Achieving Economic Well Being.

Questionnaires were distributed via schools in the Healthy Schools programme, youth groups, Connexions and the Children's Fund. 1748 children and young people responded to the survey, aged 5 to 17. The report provides an analysis of responses in table form, together with commentary and analysis. The report also highlights implications for services and organisations working with young people and for the production of the Children and Young People's Plan.

December 2005.



Illustrations scanned in from returned questionnaires

Contents

1.	Introduction	4
2.	Methodology	4
3.	Scope	4
4.	Profile of respondents	5
5.	Structure of the questionnaires	6
6.	Analysis by ECM Outcome	6
6.1	Be Healthy	7
6.2	Staying Safe	9
6.3	Enjoy and Achieve	10
6.4	Make a Positive Contribution	11
6.5	Achieve Economic Well-Being	11
7.	Key issues from each outcome	12
8.	Key Issues for the Children and Young People’s Plan	13
9.	Recommendations	14

Tables

1-6 relate to the questionnaire aimed at teenagers (T questionnaire)-

Table 1	Be Healthy – emotional well-being	14
Table 2	Be Healthy relationships and sexual health	15
Table 3	Staying Safe	16
Table 4	Enjoy and Achieve	17
Table 5	Make a Positive Contribution	18
Table 6	Achieve Economic Well-Being	19

7-11 relate to the Y questionnaire aimed primarily at pupils in primary schools

Table 7	Be Healthy relationships	20
Table 8	Staying Safe	21
Table 9	Enjoy and Achieve	22
Table 10	Make a Positive Contribution	23
Table 11	Achieve Economic Well-Being	24

List of contributors and acknowledgements	25
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Every Child Matters Survey Autumn 2005. Report.

1 Introduction

The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board commissioned a self-evaluation exercise as preparation for the new inspection regime, described in the *Framework for Inspection of Children's Services*. This requires the County Council to submit an annual self-assessment, known as the Annual Performance Assessment, which is replaced every 3 years by a Joint Area Review that includes all services for children and young people across the partnership. A self-evaluation was completed by partners during the summer of 2005. In a related exercise, it was requested that the project group should assess how the emerging priorities from each of the 5 Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes reflected the views of children and young people, through a consultation process.

2 Methodology

A working party from agencies involved in direct work with children and young people was convened to steer the consultation exercise. Representatives from the Children's Fund, Connexions, the Youth Service, the Voluntary sector, education and social care brought their expertise to bear on developing the methodology and content.

This group recommended the development of a questionnaire based on key themes from the ECM framework, which could be related to the self-evaluation findings, whilst not directly referring to them. The group also strongly recommended that the findings of any report should be reported back to the children and young people who participated, and that where possible there should be identified actions as a result of the findings.

The working party developed two versions of the questionnaire, one aimed primarily at pupils in the primary/ lower secondary school phase (Y) and one aimed at older teenagers (T), for use in schools or other settings, such as youth centres. Schools were able to choose which questionnaire was most appropriate for their students.

The draft questionnaires were trialled with a number of groups of children and young people from Children's Fund projects, the youth service and millennium volunteers, which resulted in improved wording of some questions and changes in the leaflet design.

The final versions were printed in full colour and distributed via the agencies who had contributed to their development. Schools participating in the Suffolk Healthy Schools Programme were all invited to participate. Samples are available with this report.

3. Scope

3,000 Y, and 1,500 T questionnaires were distributed during the first two weeks in September. A total of 1,748 completed questionnaires were returned by the closing date October 21 (1,070 of version Y and 678 of version T) – a response rate of 39%. Responses were received from across the county with 16 named schools/ groups returning version Y and 7 named schools/ youth groups returning version T. A significant number of returned questionnaires did not specify which school/ group had completed them. Respondents were asked to provide details of their gender, where they lived, their age and their ethnicity. The table below shows the demographic breakdown of respondents. Please note, the percentages do not add up to 100 as not all respondents provided these details.

4. Profile of respondents

	Version Y		Version T		Total	
	No. of respondents	%	No. of respondents	%	No. of respondents	%
Gender						
Male	521	48.7	291	42.9	812	46.5
Female	534	49.9	339	50.0	873	49.9
Location						
Town	515	48.1	506	74.6	1,021	58.4
Village	438	40.9	100	14.7	538	30.8
Countryside	95	8.9	25	3.7	120	6.9
Ethnicity						
White	981	91.7	593	87.5	1,574	90.0
Black or minority ethnic	59	5.5	35	5.2	94	5.4
Age						
5	2	0.2			2	0.1
6	51	4.8			51	2.9
7	86	8.0			86	4.9
8	242	22.6			242	13.8
9	189	17.7			189	10.8
10	218	20.4			218	12.5
11	38	3.6	40	5.9	78	4.5
12	12	1.1	117	17.3	129	7.4
13	14	1.3	129	19.0	143	8.2
14	16	1.5	84	12.4	100	5.7
15	13	1.2	76	11.2	89	5.1
16	1	0.1	16	2.4	17	1.0
17			10	1.5	10	0.6

Analysis of respondents:

Significant proportions of respondents said that they spoke languages other than English at home (14.4% Y and 9.9% T). Some respondents reported speaking more than one language other than English at home. The most frequently spoken languages were French, Spanish and German. A full list of the languages mentioned is listed below:

Chinese	Bengali	Gujarati	Portuguese
Spanish	French	Hindi	Italian
Vietnamese	German	Welsh	Turkish
Russian	Finnish	Dutch	Polish
Arabic	Irish	Thai	Greek
Japanese	Danish	Iranian	Ethiopian
Punjabi	Sign language		

5. Structure of the questionnaires

Both questionnaires were divided into themed sections, broadly aligned to the 5 ECM outcomes as follows

	Y		T	
Be Healthy	Your feelings	Q1-4	Friends, relationships and responsibilities	Q1-8
	People important to you	Q 5-8	Feelings	Q9-16
Stay Safe	Keeping safe	Q9-12	Staying Safe	Q17-22
Enjoy and Achieve	At school	Q13-19	Getting on with others	Q23-27
Make a Positive Contribution	Speaking up	Q20-25	Speaking up	Q28-36
Achieve Economic Well-Being	What happens after I leave school	Q26-30	What does the future hold?	Q37-42

The trial groups requested that there should be more opportunity for free-text responses. This offers a more personal response to questions and a potentially wider range of responses, but is less susceptible to a numerical analysis and comparison. A number of questions were added to each version in response to this request.

	Y	T	
Closed	20	33	Respondents were asked to reply Yes/ No or Don't Know to statements
Open (free-text)	10	7	

6. Analysis

The analysis that follows is structured against the 5 ECM outcomes, using the themes in the questionnaire. The responses are summarised and variations in response according to age/ gender/ location/ ethnicity are highlighted where relevant. Free-text responses have been reviewed, and some comment and quotations to illustrate the range of issues is included in italics.

Graphs illustrating the responses for each of the closed questions can be found at the back of this report. (*pages 13-21*)

6.1 Be Healthy

What we wanted to know

In the Every Child Matters framework, this outcome considers the physical and mental health of children and young people and how they are encouraged and supported in adopting healthy lifestyles. It has clear links to the National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services. The County has been praised for the effectiveness of its teenage pregnancy strategy and has identified support for mental health as a priority area for development, including support for developing the emotional health and well-being of children and young people. The questionnaires focused on seeking to understand how children and young people experience these issues. We wanted to know if they feel confident in expressing their feelings and if they feel they have support when they need it. We wanted to know if young people are confident in seeking advice on sex and relationships.

What children and young people told us

Emotional well-being. (Table 1)

Around a third of T respondents reported no frequent feelings of anxiety or stress, 41.7% reported that they often feel anxious or stressed. 74% would talk to friends and 68% would talk to an adult if they were feeling low, and this suggests a high proportion of young people have someone to turn to when they need to talk. Girls were more likely than boys to say that they often felt anxious or stressed (45% vs. 38%) although they were also more likely to say that they could talk to their friends when they feel low (83% vs. 66%). Boys were twice as likely as girls to say that they couldn't talk to their friends when they were feeling low (14% vs. 7%).

There were 20 respondents (i.e. just under 3%) who said they couldn't talk to friends or adults if they were feeling low. 12 of these respondents also said they often felt anxious or stressed.

We asked if respondents were aware of where to go for advice or support if a friend felt depressed. Girls were more likely to reply Yes to this (50% vs. 40%) but almost a quarter (24.5%) of all respondents said they would not know where to recommend their friends to go.

When this group is feeling anxious or stressed, 47.3% expressed a preference for talking about it face to face, though nearly a quarter (23.3%) would not prefer this method. Boys were more likely to state that they would not rather talk face-to-face about feeling anxious or stressed (29% vs. 21%).

Y respondents were asked to describe what makes them happy or sad, and what happens to them when they get angry. The questionnaire also asked who could they trust to turn to with a problem. The overwhelming source of happiness for this group was being with friends and family (464), and people being nice (101). A second group of responses related to doing things – sport (75) and having fun (77). Animals and pets were mentioned frequently (50) and relatively few responses related to things e.g. TV (10); computers (17), presents (25).

Sadness is experienced through feeling alone (58), having no-one to play with (63) or people being nasty (138) and expressed through crying, feeling angry and having a funny feeling

“When I have deep dark feeling inside”.

“ I just shut down”.

When they get angry, they recognise physical changes – getting hot, red, shaky, tense and express their feelings of anger through shouting, screaming, wanting to punch and kick and be hurtful (252). However, a sizeable number recognise these feelings and seek to be by themselves until they have calmed down (126).

When this group is troubled, they overwhelmingly trust their family for support (445) with friends (299) and teachers (252) as the main other sources they would turn to. Only a very small number said they could trust no one (13).

Relationships (Tables 2 and 7)

69% of pupils responding on Y reported that their school made time to talk about love and caring for people. Almost half of this group (47%) feel happy talking to adults about boy/ girl friendships.

They were also asked to list the three most important things parents do for their children. Practical care – feeding, clothing and keeping safe were all mentioned, but the largest number of responses related to being loved, being cared for, listening and talking to their children.

T asked if time was made in sex and relationship lessons to talk about feelings and values - 37.9% said yes. 63% of this group said that enough information on safe sex and contraception was given in sex and relationships lessons.

44% of the T group said they were treated with respect when they wanted to discuss sex and contraception with adults. Fewer respondents in this group (33.3%) felt confident talking to their parents on these issues, which suggests there is a range of other adults young people feel able to confide in when they need advice and support. However, 34.2% of young people do not know where they can go for confidential information and advice, and almost a fifth reported that there is nowhere they can go to locally. Those living in towns are slightly more likely to say that there is somewhere for them to go locally for confidential information and advice (47% living in towns vs. 40% living in village/countryside).

Gender variations

There are no significant variations in the responses of boys and girls with the respondents that generally completed the Y questionnaire.

However, there are some variations in the responses to version T. Boys were more likely than girls to say that the sex and relationship lessons allowed time to talk about feelings and values (44% vs. 35%). Girls were slightly more likely to say that they were not confident about talking to their parents about sex and contraception (39% vs. 32%) and that they would feel embarrassed going to their doctor to ask for emergency contraception (41% vs. 35%), whereas boys were more likely to answer 'Don't know' to both of these questions. Girls were more aware that there was somewhere to go locally for confidential information and advice (51% vs. 40%).

We asked T respondents to suggest ways that information on relationships and sex education could be improved. From a very wide range of responses, some themes emerged. Many responses emphasised the value placed on confidentiality. Ways to ask questions anonymously in school, on the internet or by phone were all suggested, as helpful to avoid embarrassment -

“ to be able to talk to somebody you don’t need to see face to face so it is less embarrassing”

It may also reflect a worry that not all information is kept private

“ it would help if teachers didn’t tell classes about pupils problems”.

Other respondents expressed a need for a different approach to sex education – “ more sex education lessons out of science”, “make us feel like we are more able to express our feelings”, and the use of external professionals such as nurses. There was also a plea to provide sex education lessons earlier “Do it before Year 9”, and from many a desire to have separate lessons for girls and boys.

6.2 Staying Safe

What we wanted to know

In the ECM Framework this outcome has a clear focus on child protection issues. However, for the purpose of this exercise, we focused on the issue of bullying, and how safe children and young people feel at school. We are aware that for many children the fear of bullying is real and can be significant, and want to know what the scale of this is in Suffolk.

What children and young people told us

We asked if bullying was a big problem at their school - T responses were varied - with just over a quarter each agreeing and disagreeing with the statement, and a further 43.7% not sure. Y respondents were asked if they sometimes didn’t want to go to school because other children were unkind, and over a third said they had felt this (35.5%). There were no significant differences between the responses from boys and girls or between white and black or minority ethnic respondents in the T questionnaire. Those living in towns were more likely to say that bullying was a big problem in their school (31% vs. 16%).

In the Y questionnaire girls were more likely to say that they sometimes didn’t want to go to school because other children were being unkind to them (41% vs. 31%) Respondents living in towns were also slightly more likely to say that they sometimes didn’t want to go to school for this reason (39% vs. 33% of those living in villages/countryside). There was no difference by ethnicity.

When asked what the worst things are about school, the Y group overwhelmingly quoted being bullied and people being nasty as factors.

It would seem from this that the experience of bullying, whilst not universal is significant across the phases.

There are some marked differences in response to similar questions in the two questionnaires. In response to the question “ everyone in my school is treated fairly and with respect” (Q13 Y; Q17 T), 64.4% of Y respondents said yes, but only 27.4% of T respondents said yes . Both questionnaires asked if bullying would be reported - nearly 82% of respondents to Y said yes, but only 41.2% of T respondents said they would be confident in doing this. Y respondents had high levels of confidence that their teachers would make sure that children were not unkind to each other - only 4.7% disagreed with this statement. To a related question - asking if there is enough support available for students who are being bullied – 30.2% of T respondents said no. 58.1% of T respondents also reported that there is bullying going on that staff

don't notice. Clearly this indicates that the change in school phase is significant in the experience of how bullying is experienced. Perceptions about the respect given to individuals and fairness of treatment may have a significant impact in the confidence young people have in confiding in adults what is going on.

T respondents were asked for their ideas on how bullying could be dealt with better in schools. Clubs, support groups, counsellors and buddies were all quoted as positive supports, as were some teachers' effectiveness at dealing with problems early. However, the vast majority of comments reflected a lack of confidence that the problem of bullying is taken seriously by all adults in school.

"some teachers bully by not listening to me"

"stop the teachers ignoring it"

Lunchtime is seen as an important time to manage well – there were many comments wanting more staff on duty, and for those staff to be vigilant and take action. Detention for bullies is not perceived as an effective punishment, and these final two quotes are effective in conveying the despair of some students

"If you try and stick up for yourself or tell teachers it makes it worse"

"Actually care"

6.3 Enjoy and Achieve

What we wanted to know

A wide range of factors impact on how individual children and young people achieve at school. We wanted to focus on how behaviour in the classroom affects learning, given that Suffolk has a comparatively high rate of exclusions. We also wanted to know how well pupils feel they understand their own strengths and if they felt able to ask for and receive extra help where they needed it. Individual target-setting and clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve are thought to be effective in raising standards of attainment.

What children and young people told us *(Tables 4 and 9)*

Most respondents to Y reported that they talk about how to behave in school, and are clear about the rules (83.9%). 55.8% of T respondents said that their school was teaching them about life skills including solving conflicts and working with others.

77.1% of T respondents understood why some pupils had been excluded and 55.8% reported that they found it easier to learn when pupils had been excluded from class. 71.3% of Y respondents reported that they sometimes could not work because other pupils were being silly.

Both groups reported that they could get extra help if they needed it (69.3% Y; 58.7% T), but over a third of Y respondents were not positive that they understood their work at school and knew how to make it better. (Q14. 27.8% don't know; 8% no)

6.4 Make a Positive Contribution

What we wanted to know

Currently there are few indicators that report on the contribution children and young people make to their communities. We wanted to find out if children and young people feel valued by adults, if they feel their views are taken into account, if they enjoy working with others and what might encourage them to become involved in volunteering.

What children and young people told us (Table 5 and Table 10)

Only 26.7% of T respondents said that their views were taken into account when decisions were made about services they use, although 58.3% of Y respondents said that adults asked them about things that matter to them. This figure rose to 69.4% when Y respondents were asked if they were asked for their opinions and listened to by teachers.

The schools that took part in the questionnaires are all involved in the Healthy Schools programme, so all should have a school council. However, only 61.2% of T respondents think that school councils are a good idea, and 32.6% said they would not like to be more involved in the way their school is run.

75% of Y respondents enjoyed working together in groups, and nearly half (47.3%) feel that sometimes things change because of their ideas.

Almost half of the T respondents (46.9%) said they would get involved in volunteering projects if they knew more about them. This rose slightly to 51% if the volunteering was included in the record of achievement.

When asked what sort of volunteering activities they would like to be involved in, all manner of activities were suggested - anything fun and challenging; work on creative arts projects; community projects to improve their local environment; helping others – other children and the elderly; work with animals; sport and some expressed an interest in global projects such as Africa and working against terrorism.

6.5 Achieve Economic Well-Being

What we wanted to know

In Suffolk, pupils perform generally well at school, but staying on rates and achievement post 16 have been below expectation. Widening the curriculum offer, improving information and advice, and raising aspirations are key strands of the 14-19 strategy.

This section asked respondents to think about life after school - their aspirations and how well-informed they feel about what they have to do to make this happen.

What children and young people told us (Table 6 and Table 11)

Y respondents are surer of what they want to do after leaving school, and what they need to do at school to do this, than T respondents. 70.9% of Y respondents knew what they wanted to do, compared to 38.8% of T respondents. Y respondents express a positive understanding of what they are good at (85%) and what they need more help with (73.4%).

T respondents are not always clear about the choices available to them. Only 32.3% feel their school provides enough information on the course choices available, and over 50% are not sure or do not know where to find out about courses available at

other schools and colleges. Just over half (54.4%) are aware of courses other than GCSE and A Levels, but only 29.6% said that they could access vocational or practical courses. 38.5% of T respondents want to go to university.

7. Key Issues for each outcome

Be Healthy

Children and young people turn to friends, family and adults they trust when they have problems, but as they get older there seems to be an increased need to provide a range of confidential advice that can be accessed anonymously or remotely. Currently around a quarter of young people are not sure where to go for help if they or a friend feel depressed. A third of young people report that they do not know where to go for confidential advice on sex and relationship issues.

Implications for

- Personal, Social and Health Education teachers and advisers
- Healthy Schools Programme – emotional health strand
- Teenage Pregnancy Strategy
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

Stay Safe

Many children and young people clearly experience bullying or the effect of bullying in their schools. Progression to secondary school seems to coincide with a decrease in confidence in teachers and schools to intervene quickly, and for the intervention to be effective.

Implications for

- Behaviour Support teachers and advisers
- Suffolk Healthy Schools Programme
- Secondary school staff

Enjoy and Achieve

Children and young people report a good understanding of expected behaviour in school, and most report that they can access additional help if they need it. Not all pupils are clear what they need to do to improve.

Implications for

- How pupils receive feedback and guidance on how to improve

Make a Positive Contribution

Some children and young people report that their views are taken into account and that they can influence what happens in services they use.

Almost half of the respondents expressed an interest in taking part in voluntary work, but seem to lack information on what they can do.

School Councils have yet to be perceived as very effective.

Implications for

- For all organisations to consider how they can increase the ways children and young people feel involved in services
- Improved access to information on volunteering opportunities
- The development of the role of School Councils

Achieve Economic Well-Being

Around half of the respondents were familiar with the wider range of qualifications now available, but fewer knew how to find out about the courses or reported that they could access them

Implications for

- 14-19 Strategy
- Connexions service
- Staff in secondary schools

8. Key Issues for the Children and Young People's Plan

This exercise reports a snapshot of the views of children and young people. The questions were designed to test if the emerging priorities from the service self-evaluation could be matched to the experiences of children and young people, and to identify other issues of concern.

Some matches have been identified.

- The work being done through the Suffolk Healthy Schools Programme and the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy on the provision of information and advice on sex and relationship issues is an area of need identified in this survey.
- Consideration of how to improve support for emotional and mental health at all levels has also been identified as an area for development for the partnership drawing in early identification and support in schools to specialist services for the most serious and complex cases.
- The 14-19 Strategy has already identified the need for improved access to information and guidance on course choices, and has recently launched a web-based resource to help meet this need. (www.future4me.org.uk)
- Finding ways to increase and improve the range of ways children and young people can positively engage with services is the focus of the Having My Say strategy which partners signed up to in May. Implementation of this may take several years to be fully embedded but ways are being developed to use school councils and other existing mechanisms to build good practice.
- Finding ways for children and young people to get involved in their communities is an area where the youth service and voluntary sector have expertise, and plans to develop further.

A major issue of concern revealed by this survey has been the extent to which bullying impacts on children and young people in Suffolk. Although the survey does not suggest the experience is universal – in fact almost a quarter say that it is not a problem in their school - for many it is a factor, which affects their experience of school and their happiness and enjoyment. This issue may need to receive a higher profile, particularly in secondary schools.

There is a note of caution to be made. This survey represents a single snapshot of views. It is possible that were we to replicate the survey with a different group of 1800 pupils we may get a different response. We would hope that if we were to repeat the survey in a year, or five years time, that some of the responses would reflect the work of the partnership in addressing the identified issues.

9. Recommendations

It is recommended that

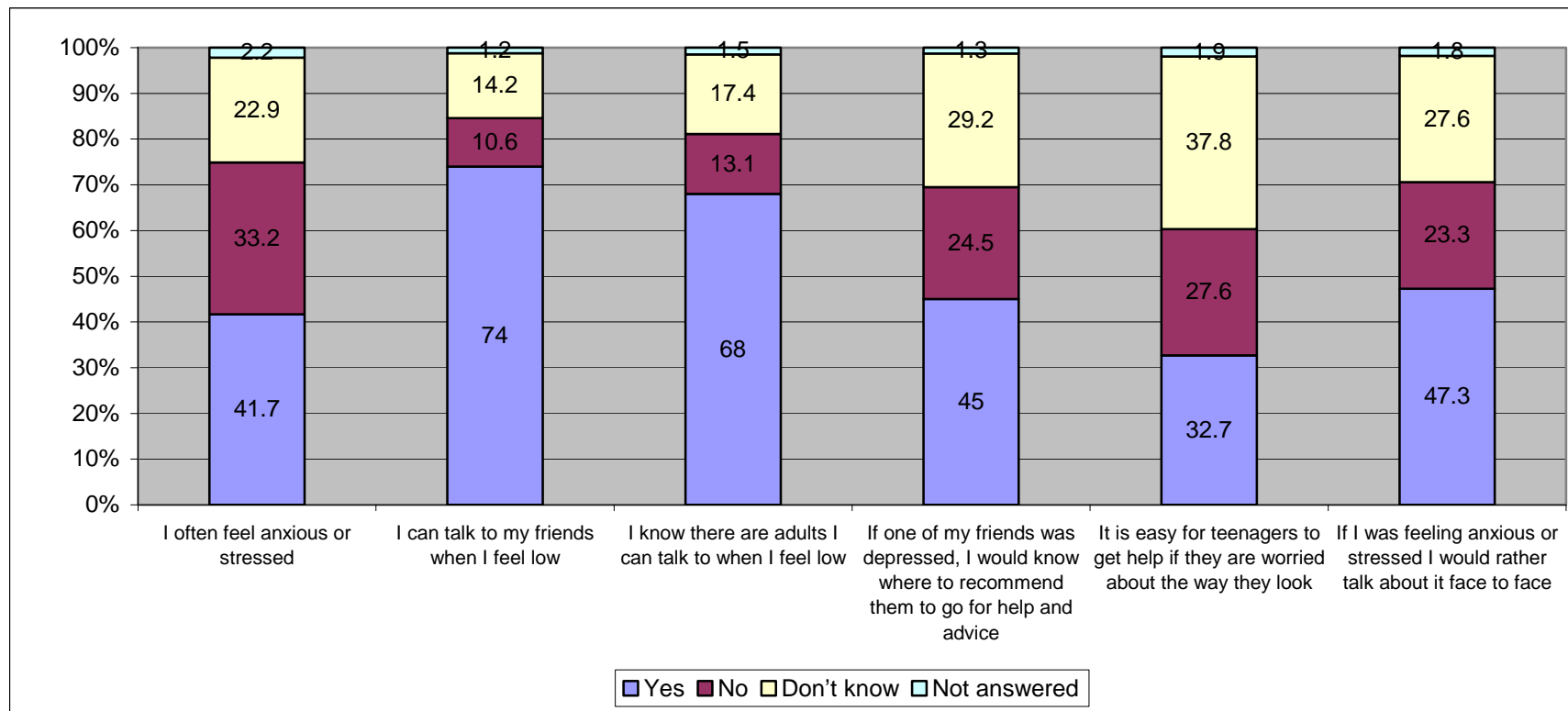
9.1 The findings of the survey are noted and that the issues identified are used as part of the needs analysis for the 2006 Children and Young People's Plan

9.2. That the learning from this exercise informs the development of a further project to define a programme of empirical research in support of the implementation of the change for children agenda in Suffolk.

References:

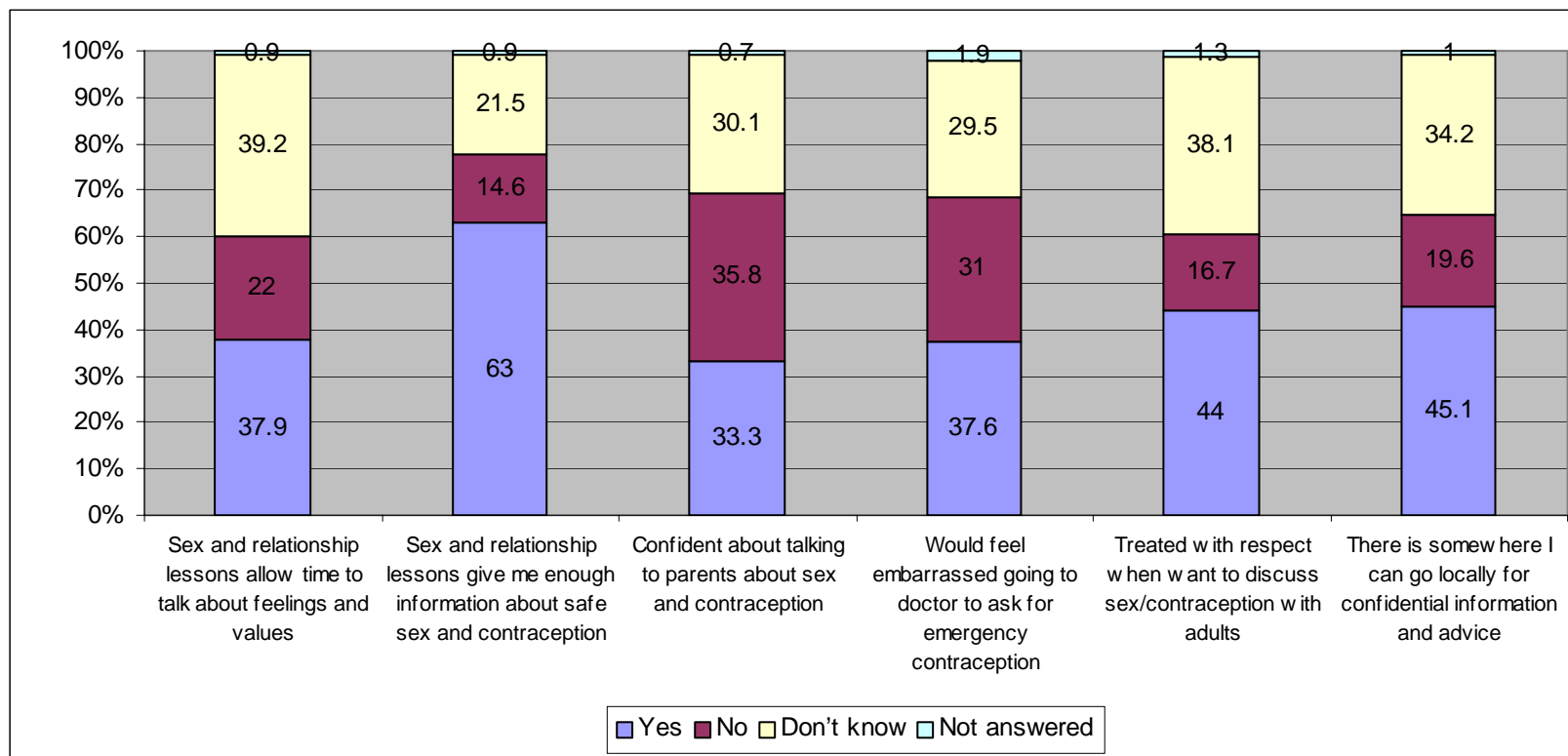
Every Child Matters: Framework for the Inspection of Children's Services
<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/index>.

Table 1. Be Healthy – Emotional Well-Being (T)



Source: ECM What you think matters questionnaire September –October 2005
 Base: 678 children and young people age 11-17

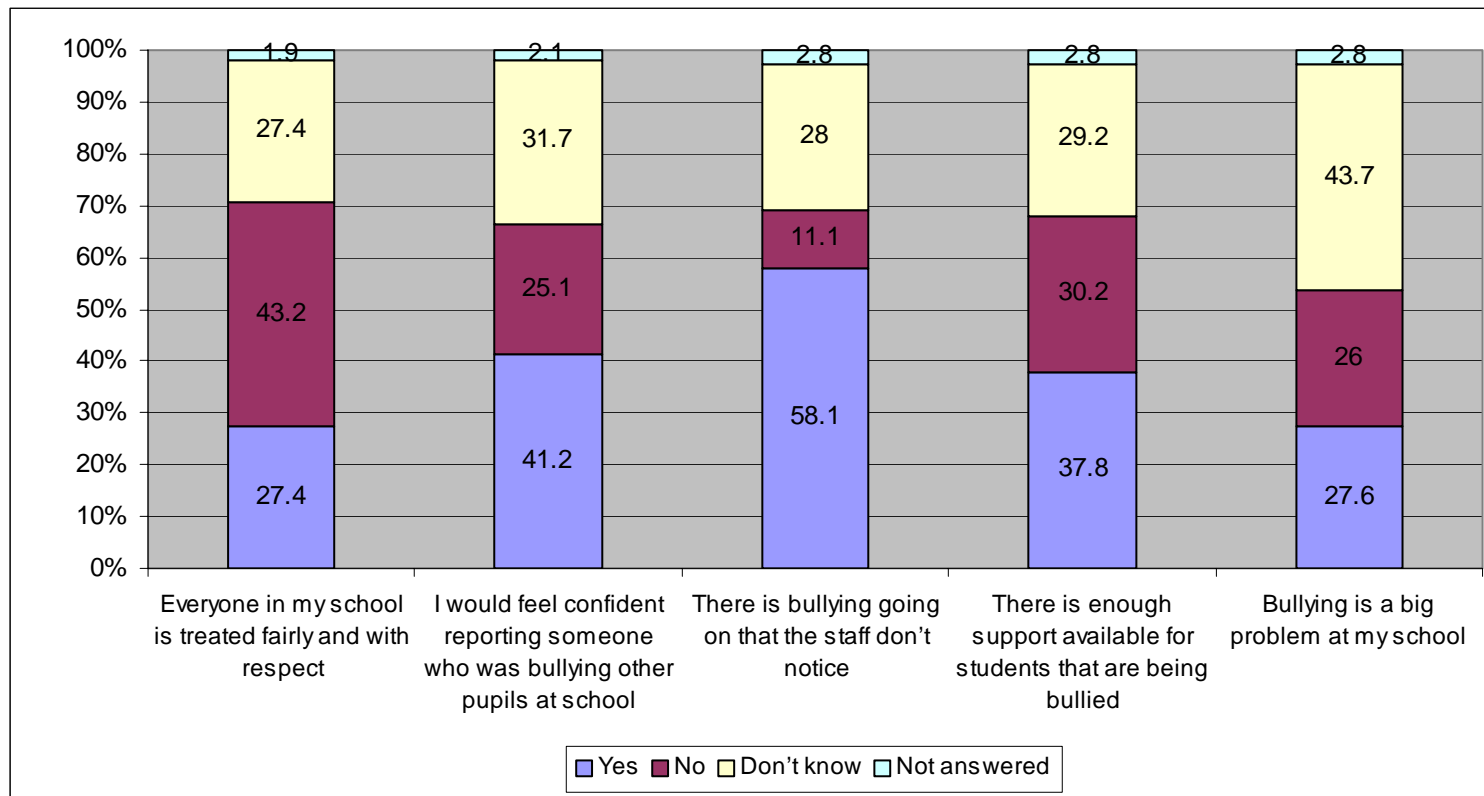
Table 2. Be Healthy – Relationships and Sexual Health (T)



Source: ECM What you think matters questionnaire September-October 2005

Base: 678 children and young people age 11-17

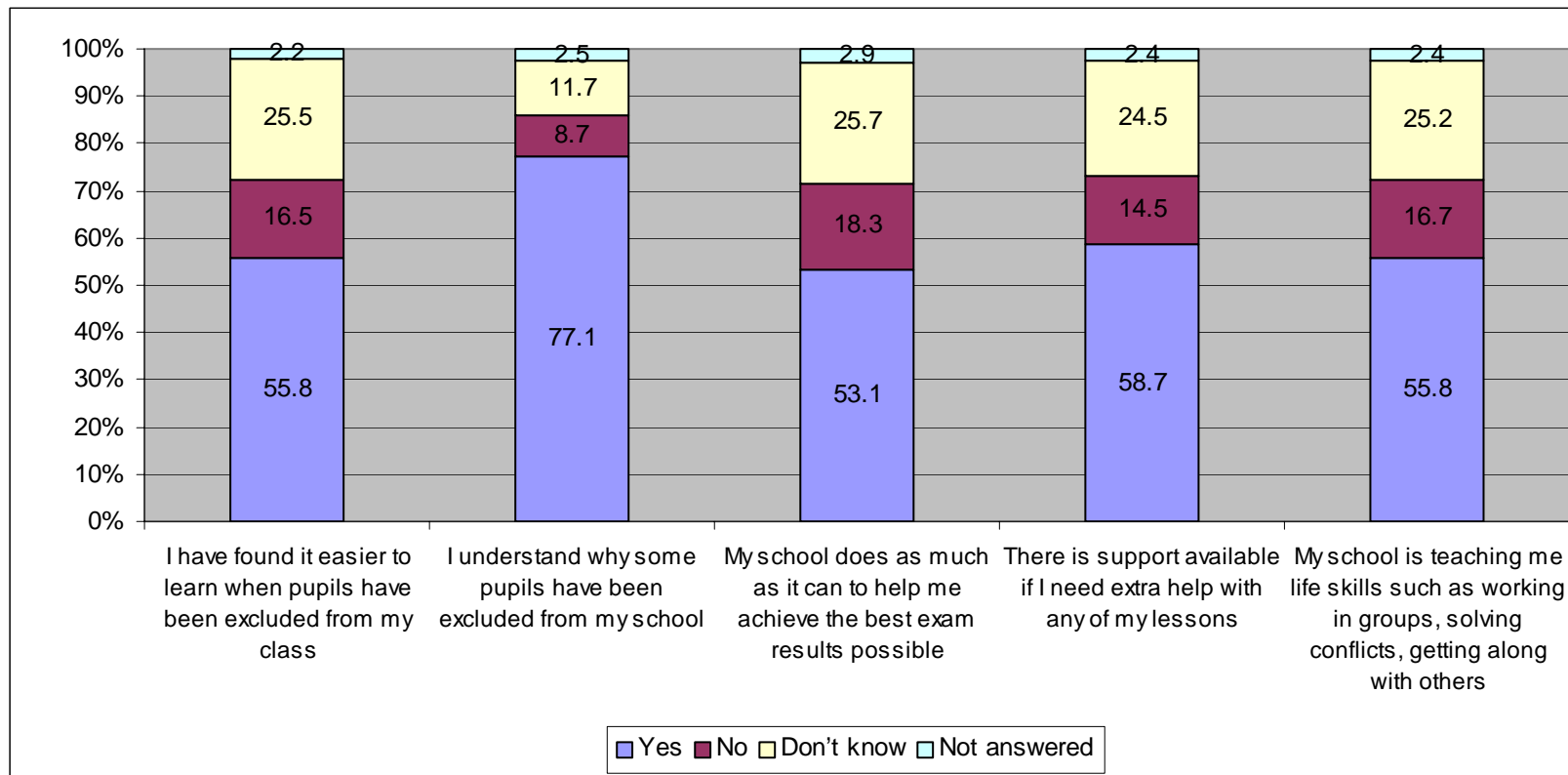
Table 3: Staying Safe (T)



Source: ECM What you think matters questionnaire September -October 2005

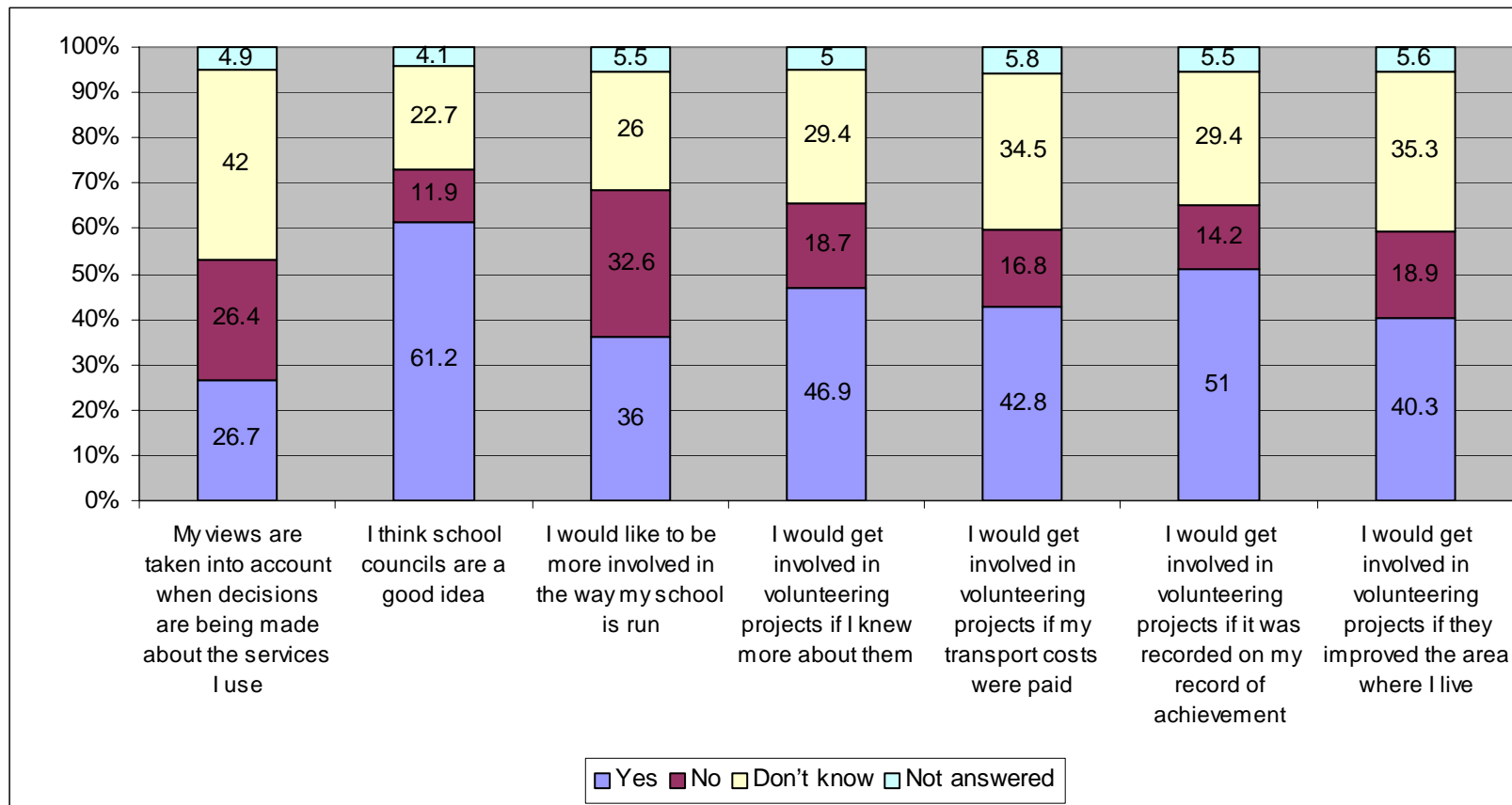
Base: 678 children and young people age 11-17

Table 4 Enjoy & Achieve (T)



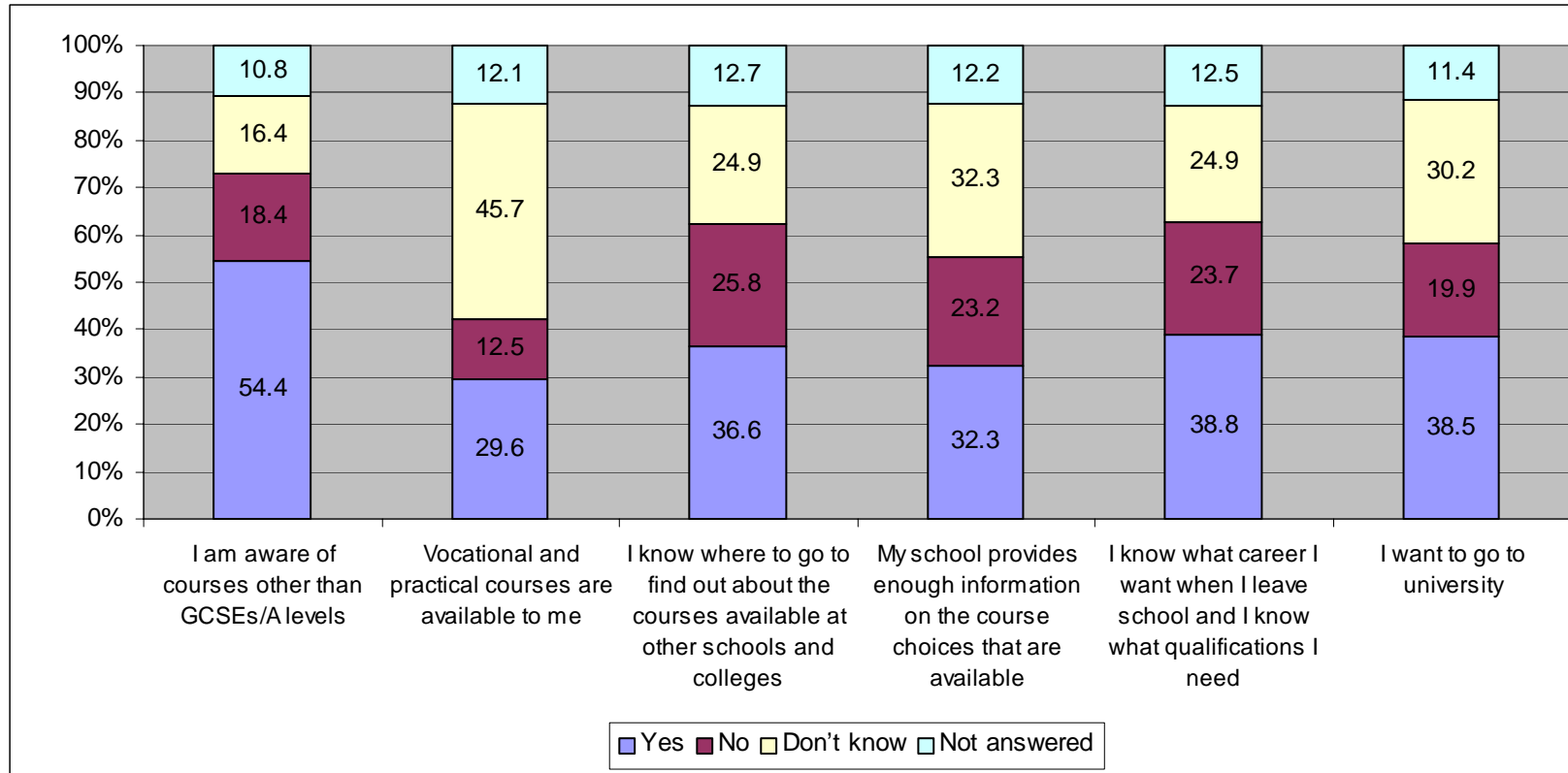
Source: ECM What you think matters questionnaire September - October 2005
 Base: 678 children and young people age 11-17

Table 5. Make a Positive Contribution (T)



Source: ECM What you think matters questionnaire September - October 2005
 Base: 678 children and young people age 11-17

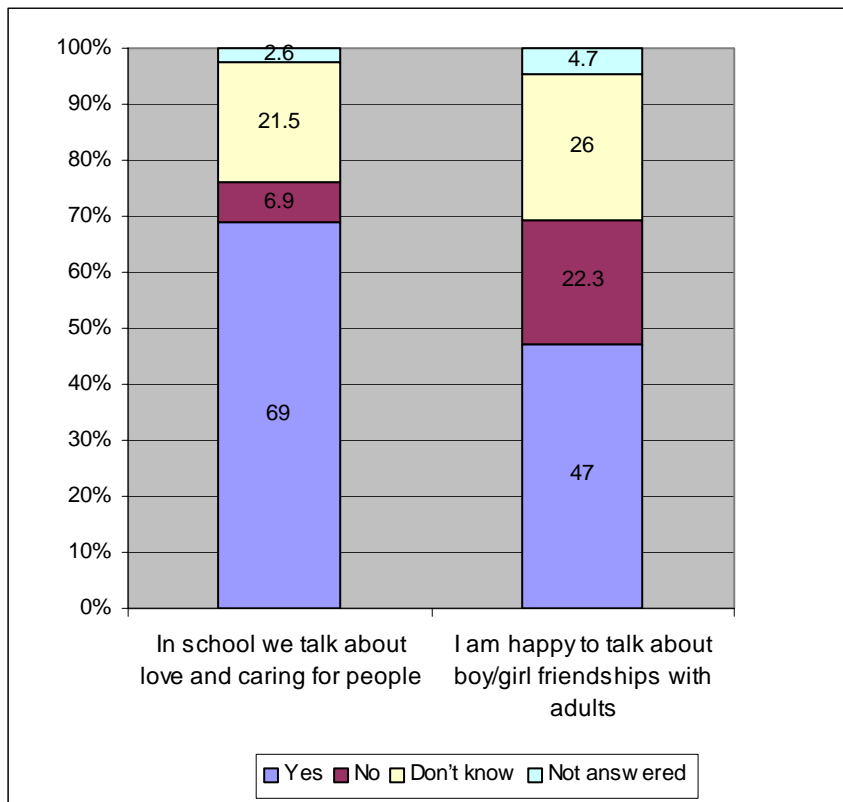
Table 6: Achieve Economic Well-Being (T)



Source: ECM What you think matters questionnaire September - October 2005

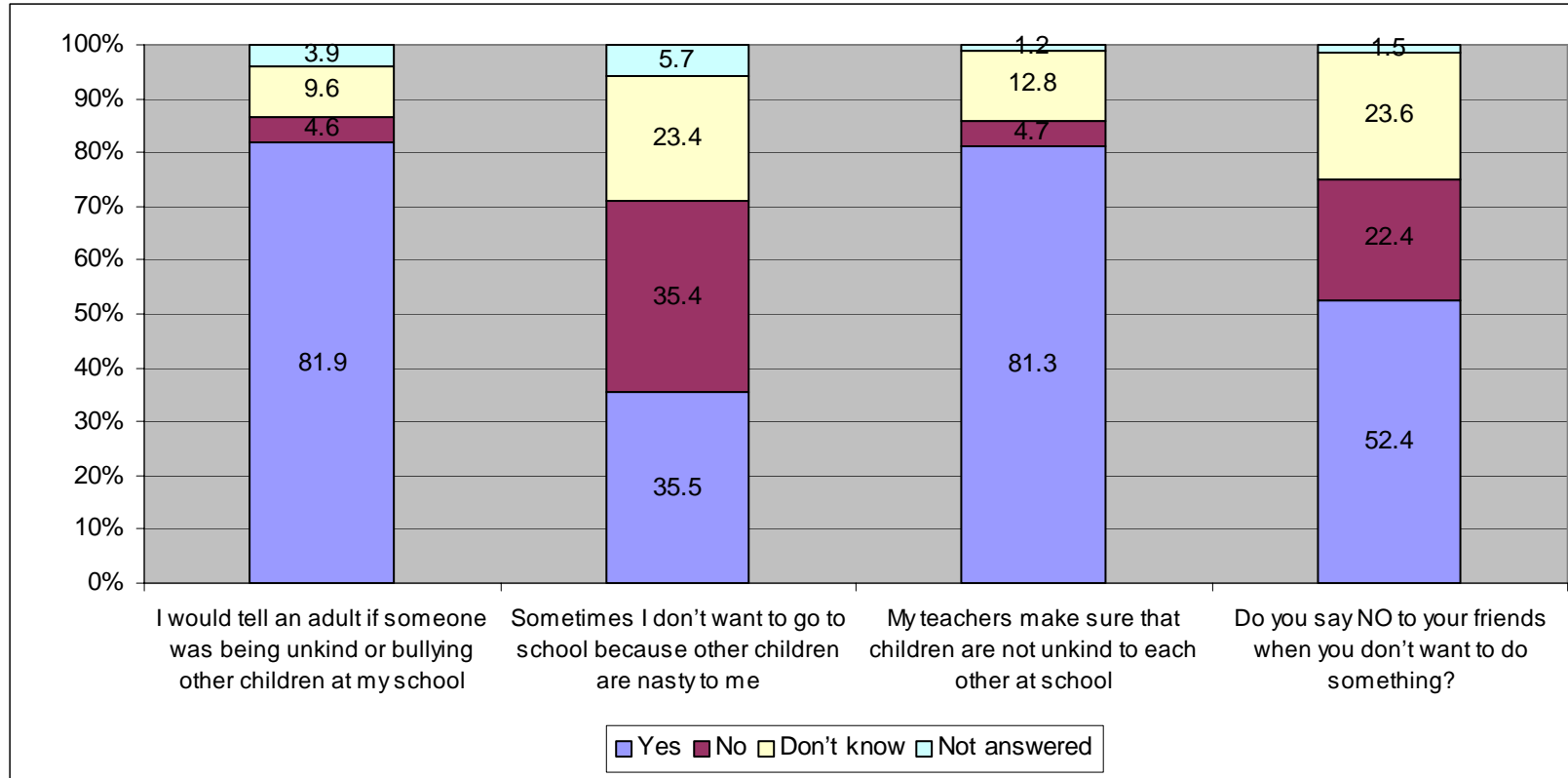
Base: 678 children and young people age 11-17

Table 7: Be Healthy – Relationships (Y)



Source: *Every Child Matters questionnaire September -October 2005*
 Base: 1,070 children and young people age 5-16

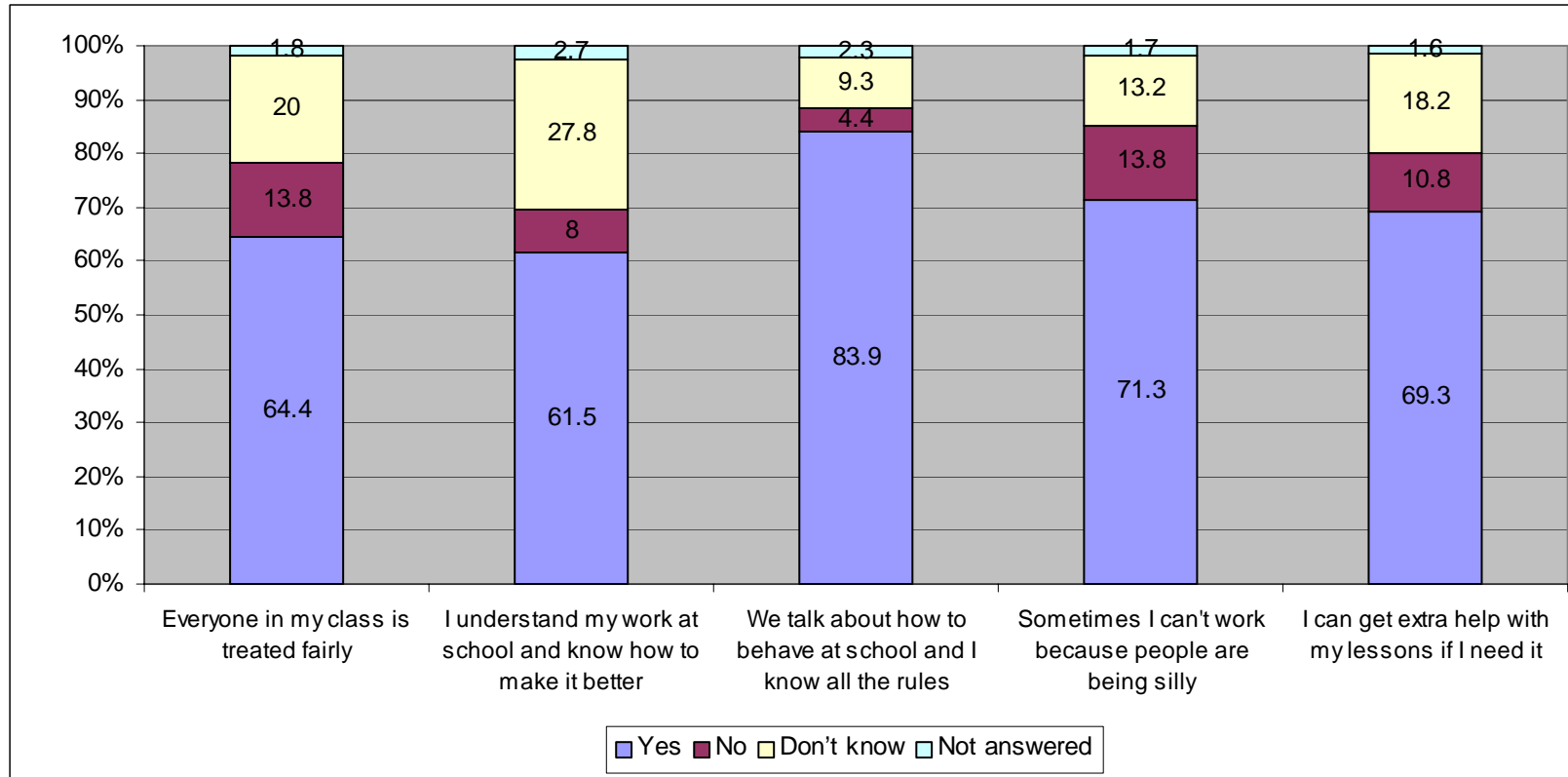
Table 8: Staying Safe (Y)



Source: Every Child Matters questionnaire September -October 2005

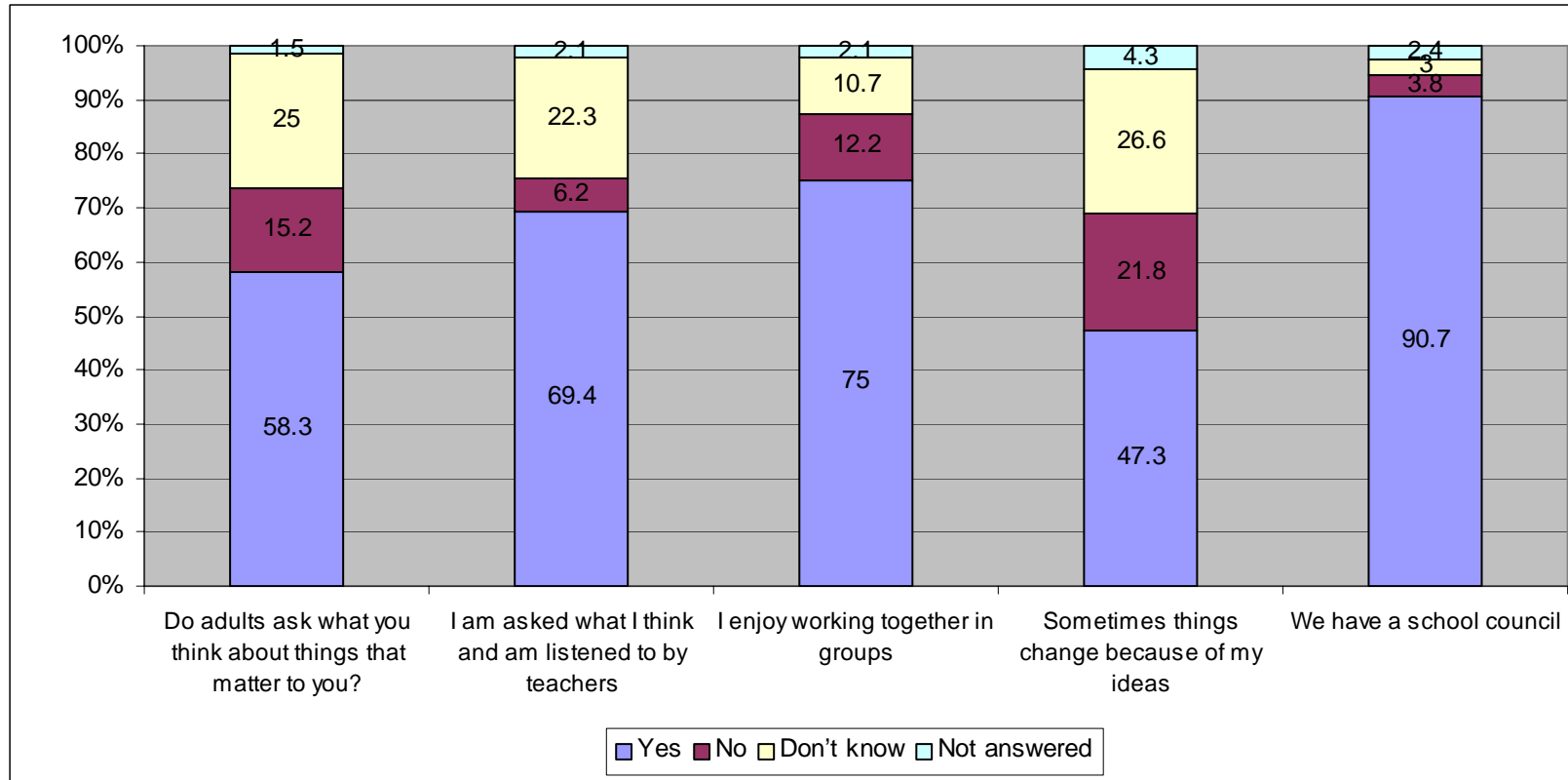
Base: 1,070 children and young people age 5-16

Table 9: Enjoy & Achieve (Y)



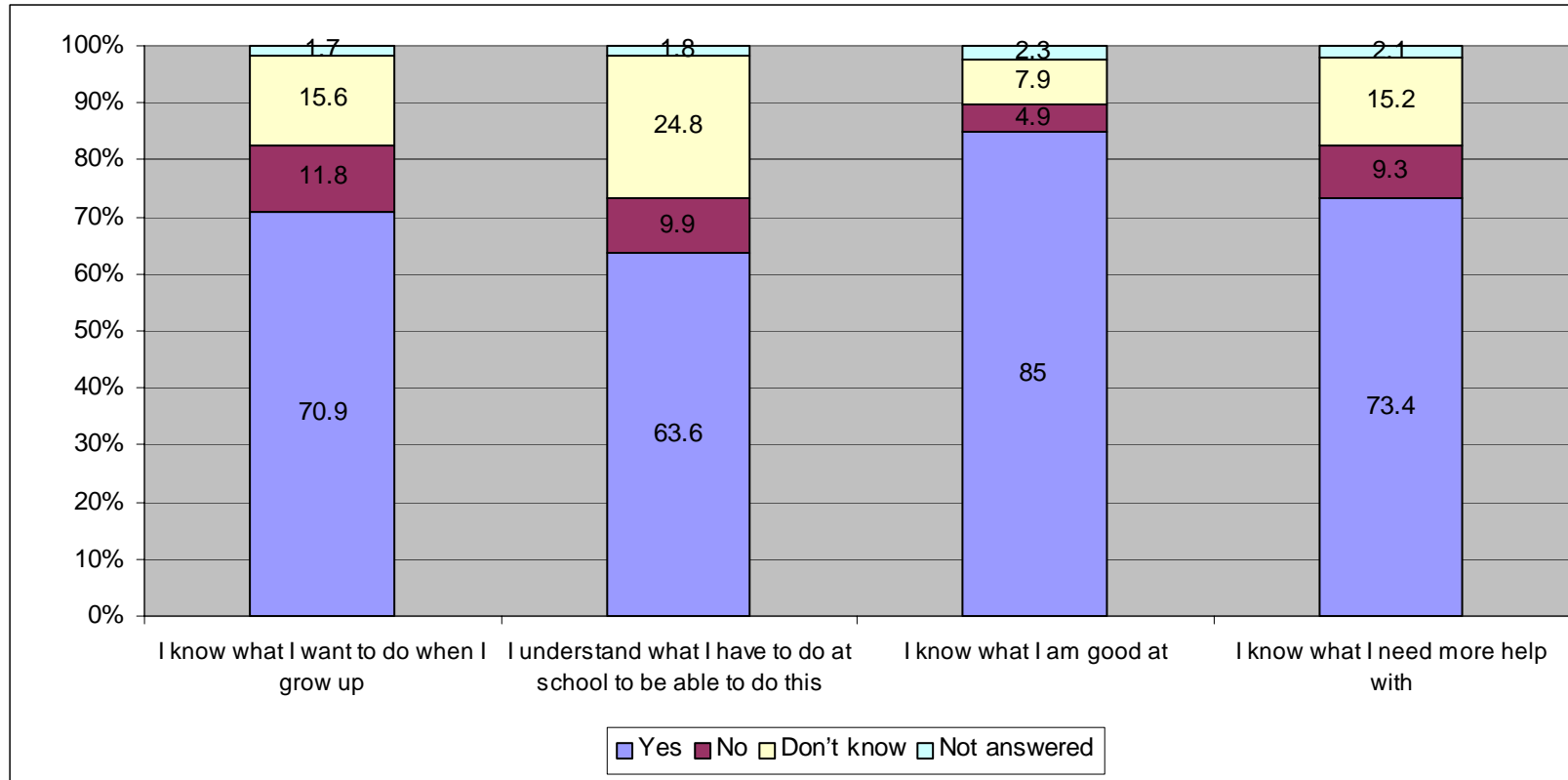
Source: *Every Child Matters questionnaire September -October 2005*
 Base: 1,070 children and young people age 5-16

Table 10: Make a Positive Contribution (Y)



Source: *Every Child Matters questionnaire September -October 2005*
 Base: 1,070 children and young people age 5-16

Table 11: Achieve Economic Well-Being (Y)



Source: *Every Child Matters questionnaire September -October 2005*
 Base: 1,070 children and young people age 5-16

Thanks to all contributors to this survey

Bungay High School
Bungay Middle School
Chelmondiston Primary
East Bergholt Primary
Family Welfare Association (Waveney)
Hadleigh Youth Club
Holbrook High School
Kesgrave Youth Club
Morton Road Youth Club

Serbert Wood Community Primary
St. Edmund's Primary
St. Mary's (Bury)
Stowmarket Middle School
Stutton Primary
The Ashley School
The Poplars CP
Wells Hall Community Primary
Whitton Green Community Primary
Wickham Market Primary
Witnesham Primary
Wood Ley Primary

And to the 16 other groups who sent in completed questionnaires anonymously

And to the following organisations, and their users, for their work in developing and distributing the questionnaire:

Children's Fund
Children's Futures
Connexions
Consultation Manager, Suffolk County Council
Customer Rights Team, Suffolk County Council
Millennium Volunteers
Suffolk Schools Advisory Service
Youth Service



December 2005.