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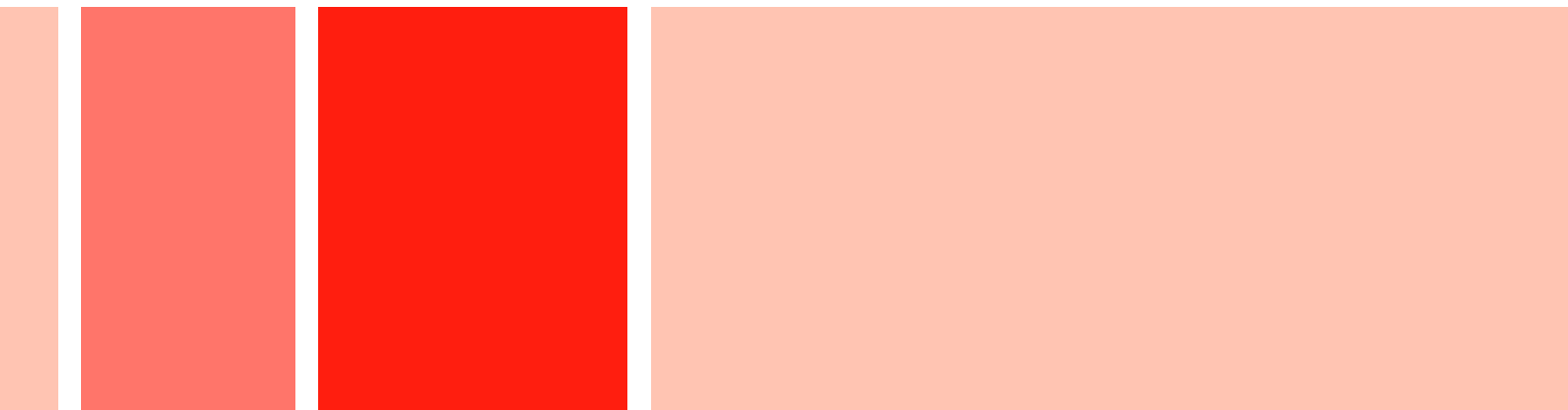


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National Survey for Wales, 2012-13

Satisfaction with education - Initial findings



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Views expressed in this document are those of the researcher and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government.

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Preliminary

Each year the National Survey for Wales involves face-to-face interviews across Wales with more than 14,000 people aged 16 and over. The education-related topics were identified through engagement with policy colleagues in DfES. The questions focus on key priorities such as parental satisfaction and engagement with schools.

Additional analysis on subject specific topics was commissioned in November 2013 and the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) were awarded the contract to look at “Satisfaction with education”. The following report presents their initial findings and a final full report will follow, with publication in April 2014.

Initial findings

Introduction

This research outlines and discusses analysis of the National Survey for Wales 2012-13 results on education. It explores which personal factors (such as demographics, income, qualifications, wellbeing, experience and views) and area-level factors (such as deprivation) were associated with differences in parental:

- satisfaction with their child's school;
- engagement with their child's school;
- assistance with their child's learning;
- aspirations for their children; and
- views on the education system.

The research also looks at any differences found at local authority level.

Key findings

Satisfaction with schools

Parental satisfaction with schools was high overall and only small differences were found at local authority level. Parents in one or more of the following groups were **more satisfied with primary schools**: those who lived in more deprived areas; spoke Welsh daily; were more satisfied with their neighbourhood; were more satisfied with their work situation; were more satisfied with their child's wellbeing; had younger children. Parents were **less satisfied with primary schools** if they lived in local authorities where children attained higher at Key Stage 2.

Parents in one or more of the following groups were **more satisfied with secondary schools**: those who lived in less deprived areas; were more satisfied with their neighbourhood; were more satisfied with their child's wellbeing; had a greater number of children.

These findings suggest that the interaction between socio-economic variables and satisfaction with schools is complex and further research is needed to understand it. It would also be useful to explore the relationship between speaking Welsh, satisfaction with schools and broader factors.

Engagement with schools

Parental engagement with schools was generally high and only small differences were found at local authority level. Parents in one or more of the following groups were **more engaged with primary schools**: those who lived in urban areas; spoke Welsh daily; were more satisfied with their neighbourhood; were more satisfied with their child's wellbeing; were more satisfied with the Welsh Government. Parents were **less engaged with primary schools** if they lived in less deprived areas or had difficulty in keeping up with their financial commitments.

Parents in one or more of the following groups were **more engaged with secondary schools**: those who were more satisfied with their neighbourhood; spoke Welsh daily; were more satisfied with their child's wellbeing; were more satisfied with the Welsh Government. Parents were **less engaged with secondary schools** if they had a higher socio-economic classification or had difficulty in keeping up with their financial commitments.

Again, these findings suggest that socio-economic variables and engagement with schools is complex. Effective practice in engaging parents with schools in challenging circumstances has been a key focus of existing research.

Assistance with learning

Parental assistance with learning was generally high and was similar across local authorities. Parents in one or more of the following groups **assisted more with basic learning**¹: those who had older children; had a university degree; had fewer children in the household. Parents in one or more of the following groups **assisted less with basic learning**: those who were male; had difficulty keeping up with their financial commitments; were more satisfied with their neighbourhood.

Parents in one or more of the following groups **assisted more with advanced learning**²: those who had younger children; were younger themselves; lived in less deprived areas; had a higher socio-economic classification; had higher life satisfaction; were more satisfied with their neighbourhood; lived in local authorities which spent more on education.

¹ Parents of children aged 3-7 were asked about basic learning. Basic learning was defined as looking at books or reading stories to your child; helping him/her to recognise or learn about letters, numbers and shapes; helping him/her to read or write; and helping him/her with school work.

² Parents of children aged 8-17 were asked about advanced learning. Advanced learning was defined as helping your child to read or consult books, magazines or newspapers; helping him/her to look up or consult information on a computer or the internet; and supporting him/her with school work.

The findings were largely in line with existing research into the relationship between assistance with learning and socio-economic status, parental education, parental gender, and children's age.

Aspirations for children

Most parents across Wales wanted their children to stay in full-time education after the age of 16. Parents were **more likely to want their children to stay in full-time education after the age of 16** if their children were older.

Parents who had no formal qualifications or lived in local authorities where children attain higher at GCSE level were **less likely to want their children to stay in full-time education after the age of 16**.

These findings show some support for existing research. However, the factors which influence parents' aspirations for their children are complex and multiple. The culture within families is important in influencing children's aspirations.

Views on the education system

Respondents across Wales generally had positive views of the education system. Respondents in one or more of the following groups had **more positive views of the education system**: those who were younger; had higher life satisfaction; were more satisfied with their neighbourhood; were more satisfied with the Welsh Government. Respondents had **less positive views of the education system** if they had a university degree and/or had a higher socio-economic classification.

Research exploring the relationships between background characteristics and views on education is scarce and needs expanding as a basis for further insight.