

Children's University: Our reach



The State of The Nation 2022

A series of evidence-based reports examining the impact and importance of learning beyond the classroom in modern Britain

An annual research project from Children's University Trust

Written by Liam Nolan and Cordelia Howard with data analysis by Sukie Duhra

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This report is one of a series of evidence-based reports examining the impact of what goes on beyond the classroom on the lives of children and young people.

Based on extensive data collated from a bespoke digital platform, Children's University Online, the aim of the reports is to inform and improve provision by providing educators, policy makers and stakeholders of all kinds with a broad set of insights about the current state of learning beyond the classroom in contemporary Britain.

Our 2022 reports are informed by data from:

- 50,000 children
- 12,000 activities
- 310,000 hours of recorded participation.

To download the rest of our reports, visit:

childrensuniversity.co.uk/stateofthenation

Learning beyond the classroom: Provision and Participation



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The role that learning beyond the classroom plays in skills development



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The impact of learning beyond the classroom



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Learning beyond the classroom: links and recommendations for policy makers



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Thank you for reading

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Introduction

Introduction

“We need to remain focused on capturing the insights and overviews of the learning environment beyond the classroom so that peers, policy makers, and educators of all stripes can call on us as the experts in our field and the holders of valuable live, and growing data sets.”

Children’s University has been encouraging, tracking, and celebrating children’s participation in learning beyond the classroom since the early 1990s. However, since 2019 we’ve been using a bespoke digital platform to work alongside our paper passports and certificates in order to add value to what we do. The biggest benefit to using digital technology is the data that this allows us to collate, analyse, and share.

We do not want to work alone and want our insights to benefit schools, communities, and other institutions that have children’s best interests at heart. Because of our broad and flexible approach to learning beyond the classroom we are able to paint the picture that no other organisation can, as we hope is evident from our State of the Nation reports.

In 2021, our first ever State of the Nation Report shared insights from a 2-year period and recorded 51,300 hours of learning and contained, what The Sutton Trust called "great analysis and important recommendations". Digital technology making scalability easy means that this 2022 report is based on usage and data significantly higher than previously reported. With an apparent revolving door at the Department for Education (DfE) seeing five Secretaries of State for Education in the time since our last report, it is clear to us that we need to remain focused on capturing and sharing the insights and overviews of the learning environment beyond the classroom so that peers, policy makers, and educators of all stripes can call on us as the experts in our field and the holders of valuable live, and growing data sets. Whatever is going on in the world of education policy, we are committed to ensuring that we can occupy a central role in collating this information to best share with those who make decisions affecting children and young people.

Headline figures

Children's University Online (CUO) gives us the opportunity to collect data that no one else is. The insights that feed into this report come from:



49,487* children

There are 49,487 children with active accounts on CUO. **This is an increase of 127% from last year's report.**



1,001 schools

There are 1,001 schools registered on CUO. **This is an increase of 11% from last year's report.**



12,171 activities

There are 12,171 activities currently validated and available for children on CUO. **This is an increase of 92% from last year's report.**



313,527 hours

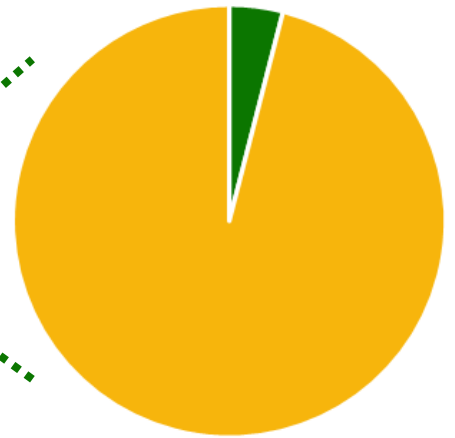
In the past year children have registered 313,527 hours of learning beyond the classroom. **This is an increase of 511% from last year's report.**

* Online account numbers accurate as of September 2022. In addition to these online users, we had 3,833 participants in Scotland using a previous platform, and we distributed over 27,000 paper passports.

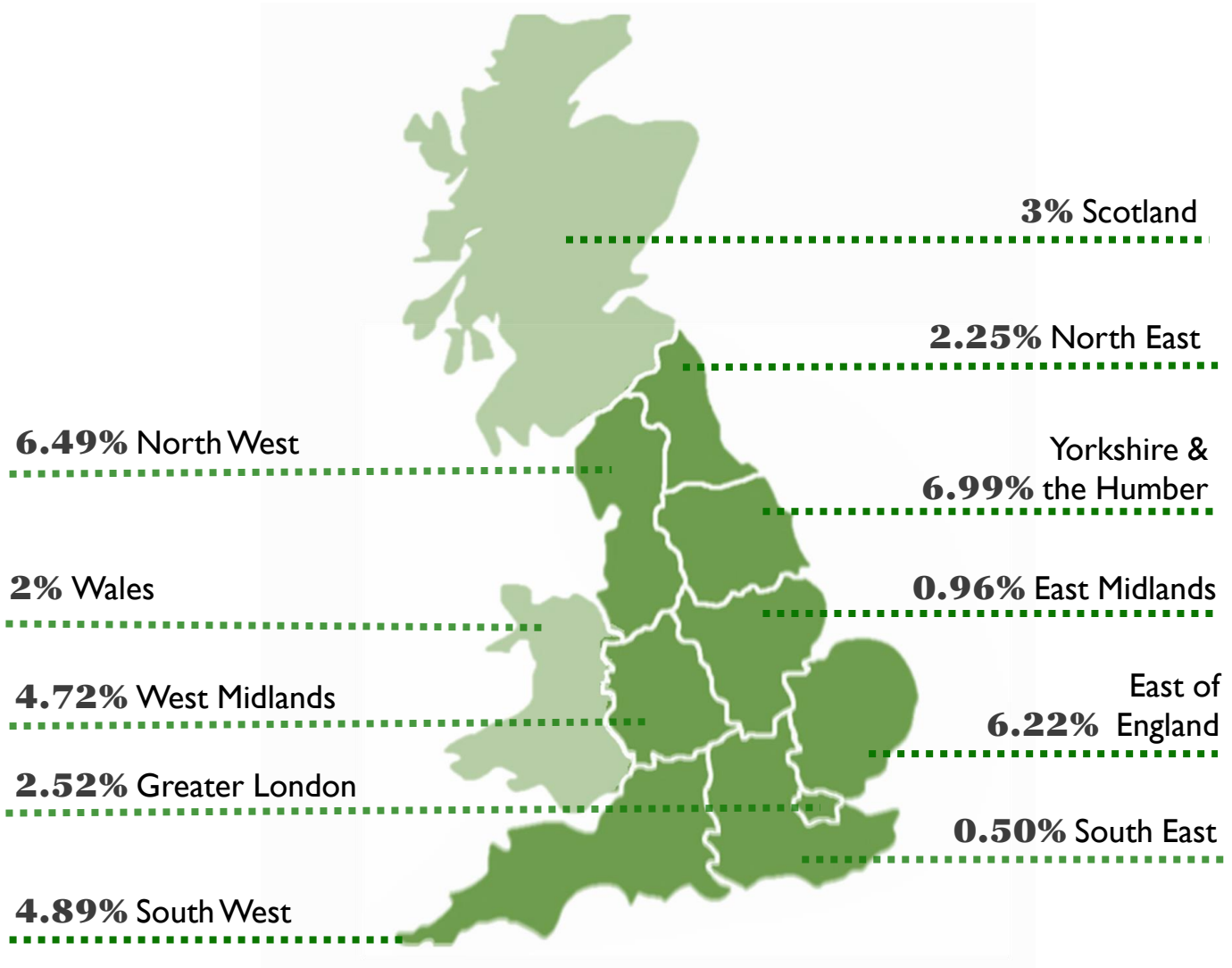
Children's University and our reach

In 2021-22 we had 67 partners running Children's University in 96 Local Education Authority Areas

We worked in 1,077 schools. This is only 4% of the state primary and secondary schools in Britain



As a percentage of schools, our reach into the different regions is as follows:



This is Children's University's presence in each region as a percentage of the total of state primary and secondary schools in the region.

Reaching those who need us

We focus our work where it is needed most. The areas in which we work are often those with unique challenges.

Our presence in English Local Education Authorities (LEAs) with a high proportion of pupils receiving free school meals (FSM)

We have a presence in 67% of the top 20% of LEAs where the primary school FSM rates are highest



We have a presence in 73% of the top 10% of LEAs where the primary school FSM rates are highest



We have a presence in 23% of the top 20% of LEAs where the secondary school FSM rates are highest



We have a presence in 33% of the top 10% of LEAs where the secondary school FSM rates are highest



We have a presence in 60% of the lowest scoring 10% of LEAs on the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI)

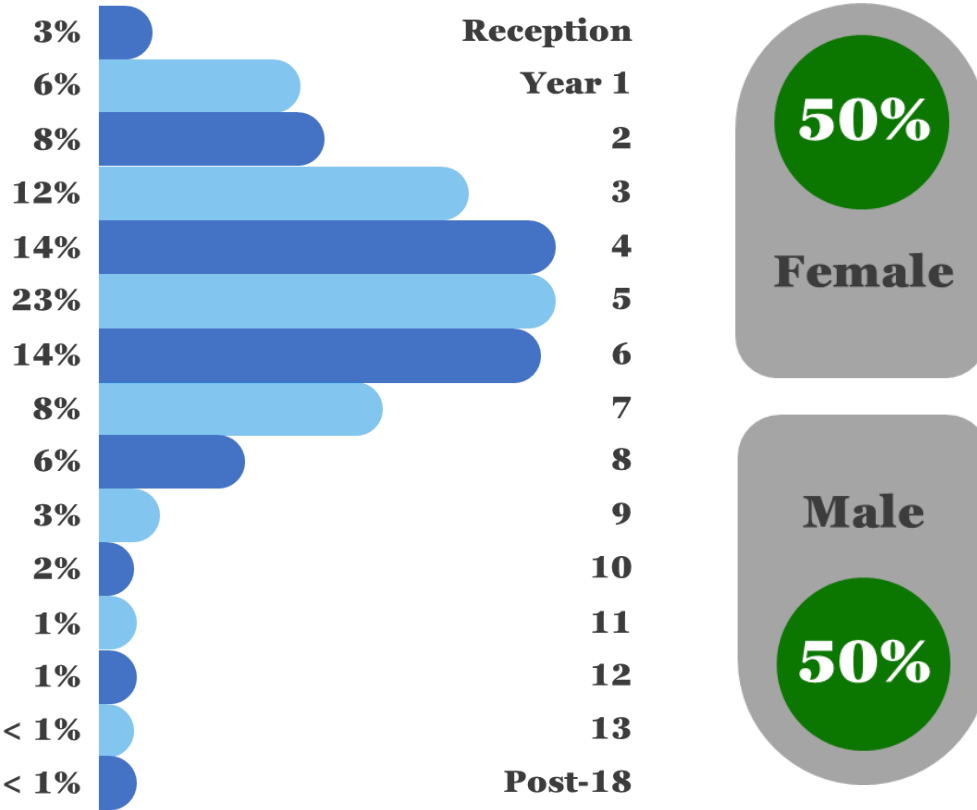


We operate in 10 out of the 12 Opportunity Areas as well as 64% of the Government's new Levelling Up Areas



Our participants

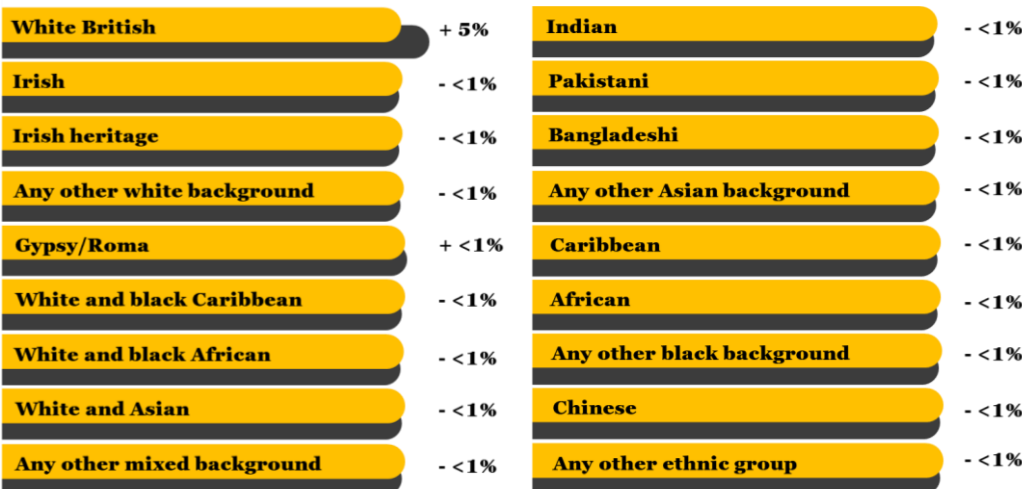
49,487 children from 1,001 schools have user accounts on CUO. This is what we know about them.



Age and Gender

All schools that register pupils with accounts on *Children's University Online* are able to record the gender of their participants. Not all of them choose to. For the pupils we have gender data for, we have a 50-50 male-female split.

Participant profiles extrapolated from school-level data



Ethnicity

We do not directly collect data on Free School Meal eligibility or ethnic background of participants. However looking at public DfE data, we can see at a school level the variances between Children's University participant levels compared to national averages.

Free School Meals

+ 8.3%

How participants feel about Children's University

“86% of respondents were positive in their feelings towards Children's University.”

During August 2022, we surveyed participants about Children's University. 400 respondents shared their views. All were asked to respond to the question: **“We'd love to know what you think about Children's University. Is there anything you think we should know?”**. 86% of respondents were positive in their feelings towards Children's University. A mixed selection of their responses is below:

“

“Absolutely brilliant, great for activities to do in the holidays.”

“It's really good and motivating to do activities so I can keep adding the hours.”

“There are a lot of activities not yet recognised.”

“I love Children's University and doing all the challenges. The graduations make me feel very special too.”

“It's good to celebrate extra things we do.”

“Love the certificates, would like to visit universities or colleges.”

“I am enjoying taking part but am currently doing the things I always do. More variety of free activities would be good.”

“Need more things for older children.”

“It shows my mummy and daddy new activities we can do together.”

“Love that it encourages to find new things to do and sparks new interests.”

“I love Children's University as it gives me freedom to learn skills I love and also it encouraged me to learn and do educational fun learning out of school.”

“I like being able to chose extra clubs after school that I like to do.”

“I love it because it gives me opportunities to do things I wouldn't normally do and they are fun to do.”

“It is a shame that more clubs don't know that signing up to Children's University is free.”

”

Summary of findings

- 1. Usage of Children's University Online is rapidly increasing. As user numbers grow, so too does the robustness and value of our data on learning beyond the classroom**
- 2. No one else is collecting the data that we are, as broadly and across such a spectrum of learning**
- 3. Children's University's reach across the country is significant, but there is still a long way to go in order to best collate data for all educators and local areas**
- 4. Children's University's presence is greatest in areas where its impact is needed most**
- 5. Participation in Children's University remains predominantly in primary-aged settings. For the impact to grow, greater reach into secondary schools is key**
- 6. The ethnic profile of Children's University participants largely matches that of the average school, with a slight (5%) difference in White British participants**
- 7. Children's University participants are more likely to be eligible for Free School Meals than the national average**

Want to take action or learn more?

Get your school involved

If you are a teacher or a parent of a child in an area with an operating Children's University, get in touch with them to find out how your school can get involved. Find your local contact [here](#)

Contact your nearest Children's University

You can find your nearest Children's University online and contact them to find out more about the work they do locally. All Children's Universities are managed by socially-minded and community-based institutions who partner with local businesses, education providers and stakeholders of all kinds. Talk about how you could get involved and find your local contact [here](#)

Validate your activities

If you run activities for children and young people, or you know someone who does, you can get these activities validated and added to those that Children's University signposts participants to. This is a great way to add value to your activities and reward participation. Find out more and fill out a basic online form [here](#)

Read more

- Read more about *Children's University Online (CUO)*, the bespoke digital platform built to add value for all stake holders engaged with learning beyond the classroom. It is the user data from this platform that informs this report. Read more [here](#)

