

South Yorkshire Police

‘Adopt a school’ pupil consultation

City-wide report



Contents

Introduction	3
Executive summary	4
Key findings	5
Recommendations	5
City wide results	6
When do you want to see your PCSO in school?	6
How often do you want to see your PCSO in school?	6
How do you want to get to know your PCSO in school?	7
What do you want your PCSO to talk to you about in school?	8
What do you want to talk to your PCSO about in school?	9
How do you want to talk to your PCSO in school?	10
Consultation techniques	11

Introduction

Children are at the heart of many services throughout Sheffield. Their involvement in the planning, delivery and evaluation of services affecting them is critical for ensuring a service is efficient and based on actual need

Article 12 of the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child states that,

“Children and young people have a right to express an opinion on any matter affecting them and to have that opinion taken into account”.

This statement is supported in Sheffield through the Sheffield Children and Young People's Plan and the Sheffield Children and Young People's Participation Strategy.

The Children's Voices Project is firmly committed to this principle and is leading on consultation and participation work with children aged 5-13 years in Sheffield.

For more information on matters relating to this report or for support and advice in involving children in your setting please contact:

Clare Humberstone
Children's Voices Project Manager

Remington Youth and Community Centre
200 Remington Road
Parson Cross
Sheffield
S5 9AG

Tel: 0114 2466276
Email: clare.humberstone@sheffield.gov.uk

Executive summary

During April 2009, over 300 children aged between 5 and 11 years from 12 Sheffield primary schools were asked for their views on Police Community Support Officers (PCSO) and the service they provide to children in primary schools. The children were asked the following questions:

- When do you want to see a PCSO in school?
- How often do you want to see a PCSO in school?
- How do you want to get to know your PCSO?
- What do you want the PCSO to talk to you about in school?
- What do you want to talk to a PCSO about in school?
- How do you want to talk to your PCSO in school?

Pupils were consulted either through class groups or through their school council, giving a range of ages from within the school. The following chart shows the schools and year groups involved in the consultation:

School	Year group
Malin Bridge Primary	School council
Parson Cross CE Primary	Year 2 and 5 class groups
Broomhill Infants	School council
Lydgate Infants	School council
Lydgate Juniors	School council
Springfield Primary	School council
Wisewood Primary	Year 2 and 5 class groups
Manor Lodge Primary	School council
Fox Hill Primary	Year 2 and 5 class groups
Pipworth Primary	School council
Gleadless Primary	School council
Dore Primary	School council

The questions were asked using engaging, child-friendly techniques. Details of the techniques are presented on pages 11 and 12. Staff were also given a short questionnaire to complete to tell us about their experience of PCSOs in school, if they had been visited, and to tell us about what support they would want from a PCSO.

A summary of the key findings from the children's responses is presented below. Individual reports are available for each school on request from Children's Voices.

Key findings

- Pupils would like their PCSO to come and talk to them during lessons
- Pupils would like to see their PCSO in school on a weekly basis
- Pupils would like to get to know their PCSO in school through playing games in the playground with them
- Pupils would most like their PCSO to talk to them about 'guns and knives', 'drugs' and 'gangs'
- Pupils would also like information about what happens when someone goes to court or prison, family issues, fighting and violence, and keeping safe on the street
- When pupils have something they would like to talk to their PCSO in school about for advice and information, they would like to go and see them with a friend
- School staff were clear that a PCSO in their school would be valued and requested information about which PCSO is allocated to their school.

Recommendations

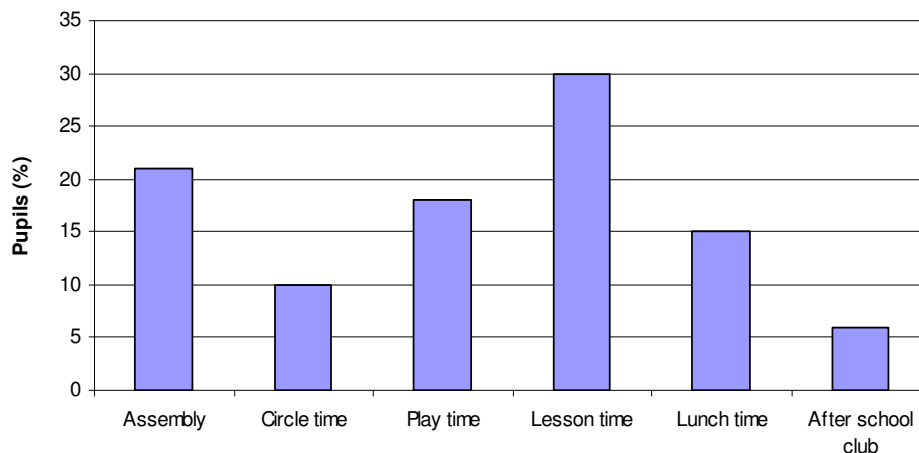
The following recommendations are based on the findings from the consultation:

- Each PCSO should 'adopt' a school and visit weekly to build relationships with pupils
- PCSOs should make themselves visible to all age groups so that each child in the school knows who their PCSO is and what to do if they need to talk to them
- PCSOs should build relationships with pupils by joining in their school life, such as playing games in the playground
- PCSOs should provide general information about topics identified by the pupils
- PCSOs should also establish a way of providing individual advice and information to pupils. This could be through providing one-to-one meeting times or via a suggestions box
- PCSOs should carry out an annual pupil consultation at the start of each academic year to set an agenda for the school year

City-wide results

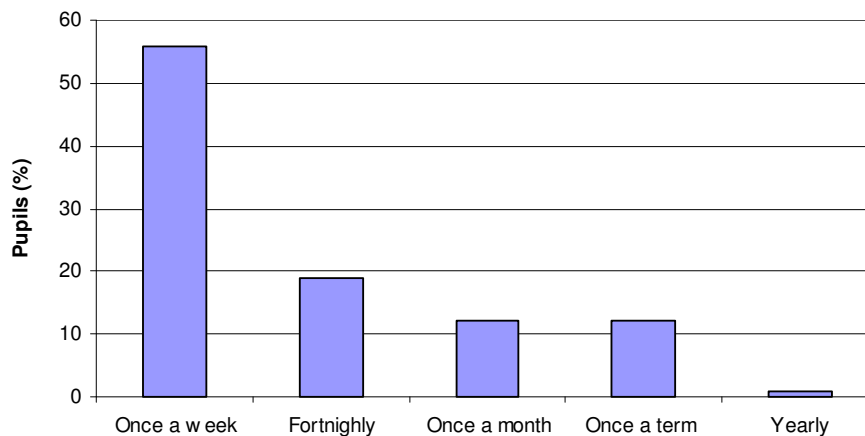
When do you want to see your PCSO in school?

The aim of this question was to find out from pupils when, during the school day, they would like the PCSO to give information sessions to the pupils. The most popular response was during lesson times. Many pupils commented that this was because a class situation is a small enough group for them to be confident about asking questions to the PCSO.



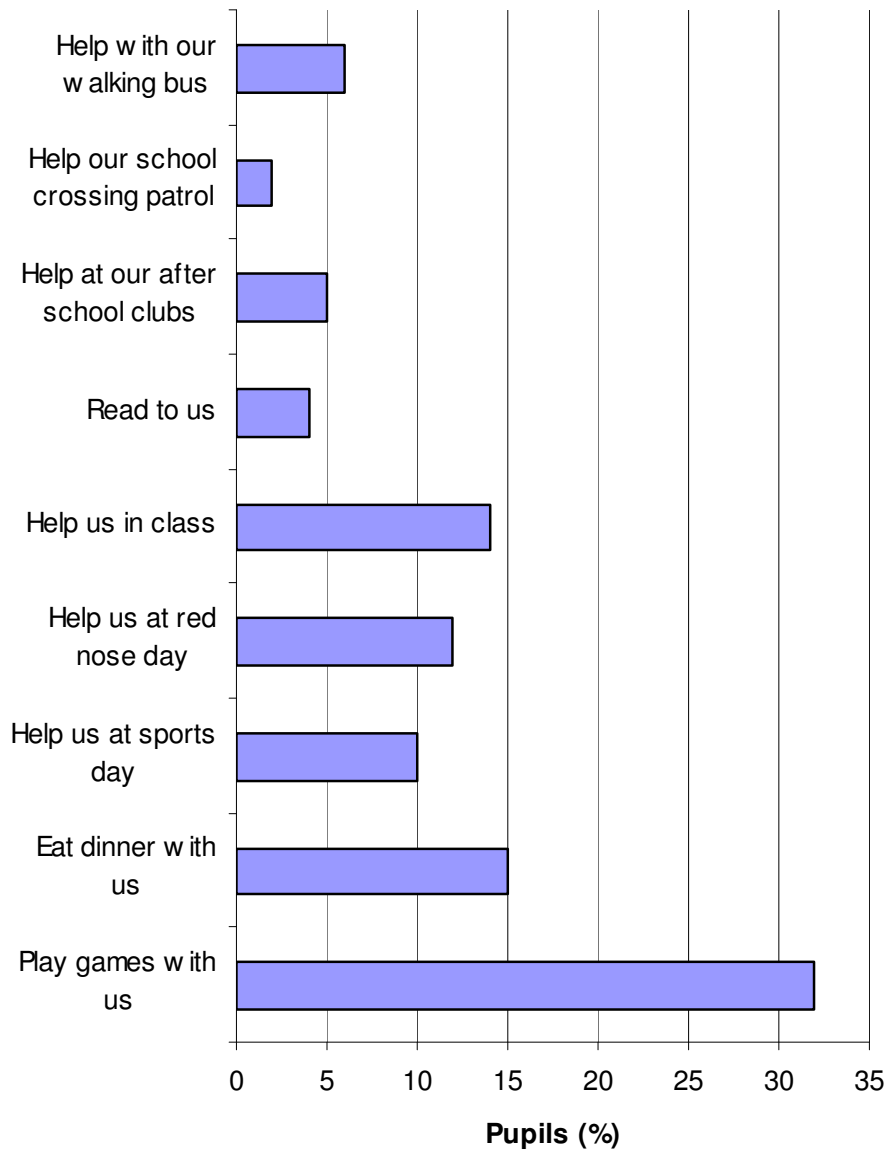
How often do you want to see your PCSO in school?

The aim of this question was to find out from pupils how regularly they would like to see a PCSO presence in school. The most popular response was on a weekly basis. Pupils explained that this did not necessarily mean that the PCSO should deliver formal information sessions on a weekly basis, but that there would be a PCSO presence in school on a regular basis when pupils could get to know them and talk to them if they needed advice, information or support on a particular issue. During discussions around this question, there was a clear indication from pupils of the reassurance that a regular PCSO presence in school would give them.



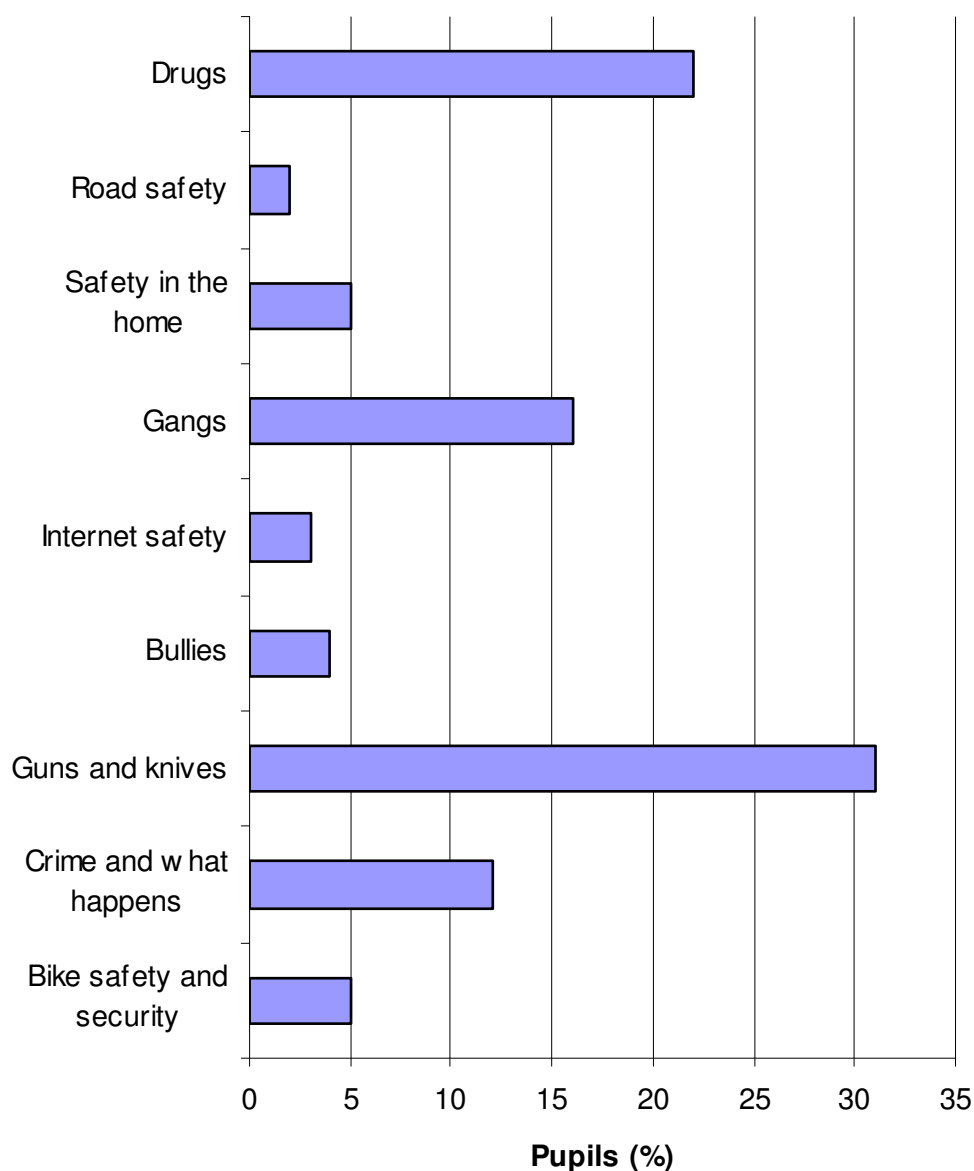
How do you want to get to know your PCSO in school?

The aim of this question was to find out from pupils how they would like to get to know their PCSO to build relationships and trust with them in order to facilitate conversation about difficult issues. The pupils were offered a range of fun events or activities that take place during the school year that the PCSO could get involved in and become a 'friend' to the pupils. The most popular response was for the PCSO to play games with them in the playground. In some schools that are being visited this ranged from playing games during playtimes to the PCSO running the Y6 boys' football club.



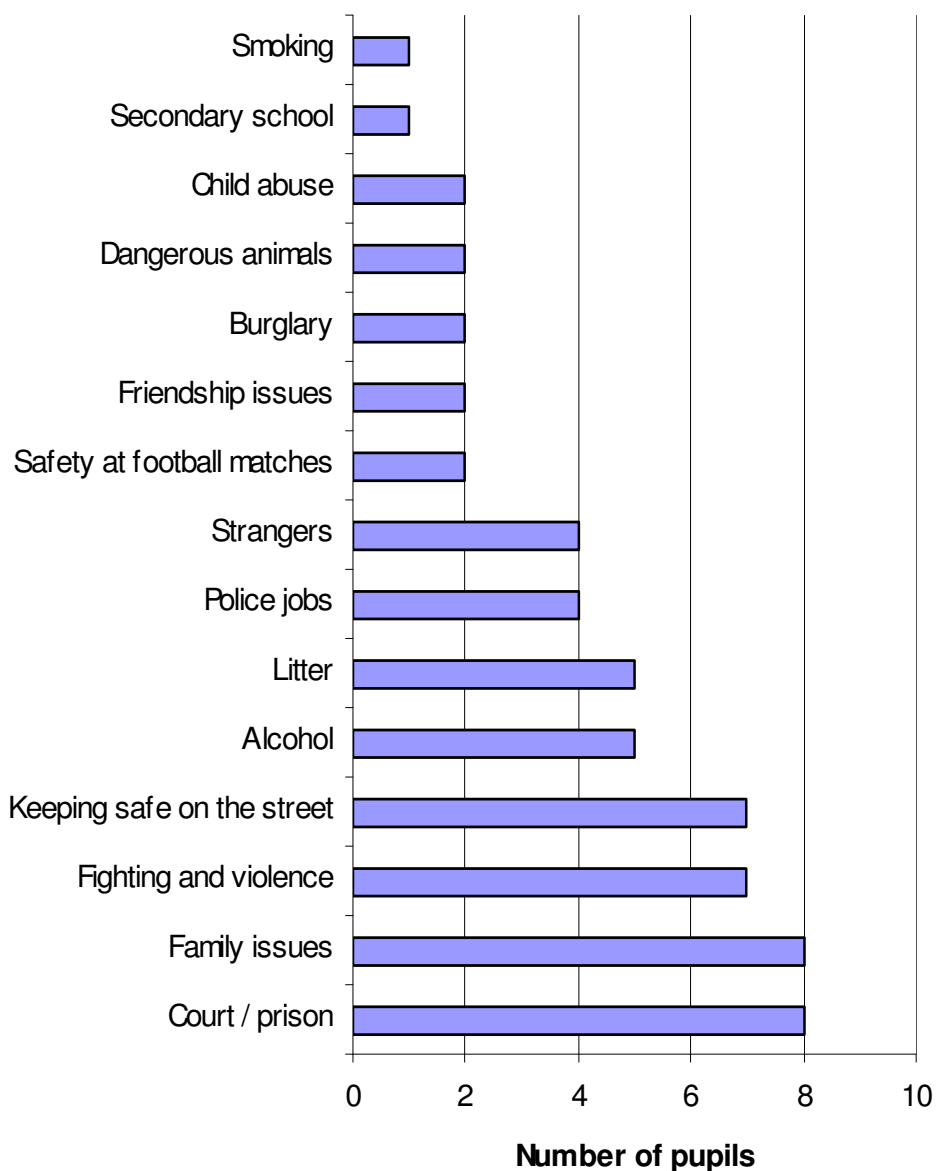
What do you want your PCSO to talk to you about in school?

The aim of this question was to find out from pupils what topics they would like the PCSO to talk to them about in formal or informal sessions. The issues were explained to the pupils before they voted. The most popular responses were ‘guns and knives’, ‘drugs’, ‘gangs’ and ‘crime and what happens’. The pupils responses to these issues fell into two main categories: the first were those who were scared by what they had heard in the media and wanted reassurance from the PCSO; the second were those who were excited by the image of guns and knives and expressed a view that such things were ‘cool’. It was clear that there is value in giving information in response to both these reactions – providing reassurance but also giving information about the dangers and potential consequences of carry knives, for example.



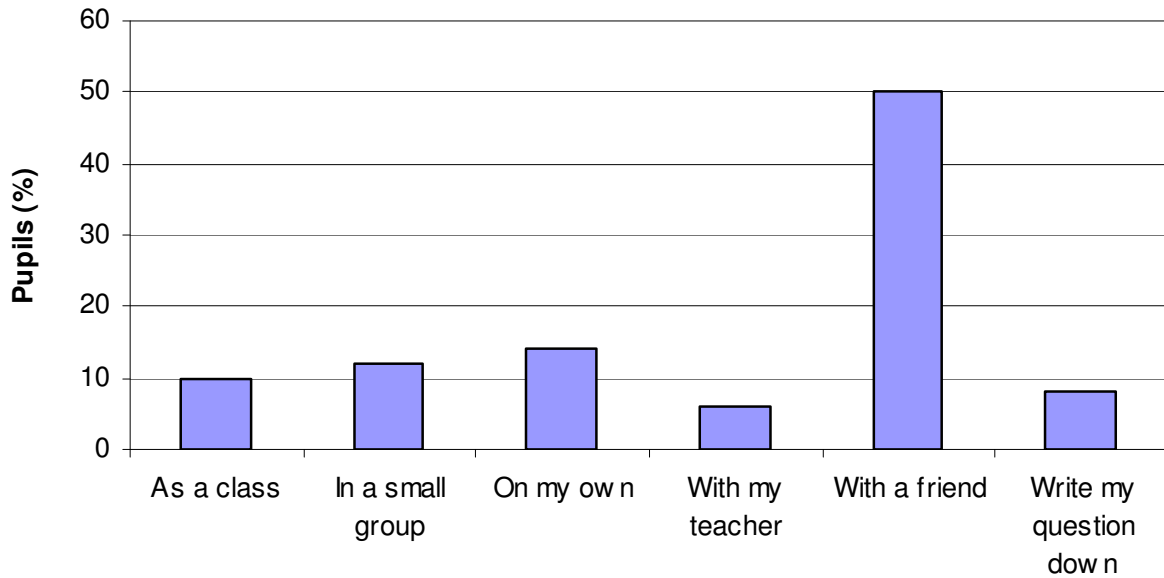
What do you want to talk to your PCSO about in school?

The aim of this question was to find out what issues the pupils wanted to talk to a PCSO about. The pupils were encouraged to think about anything in their community, home or family that was worrying them that the PCSO could help them with by providing information and support. The most popular responses were information about court and prison, family issues, fighting and violence and how to keep safe on the streets. Family issues ranged from family disputes, parents arguing and worries about individual family members, either grandparents being lonely or dying or teenage siblings getting into trouble or being involved in gangs and crime.



How do you want to talk to your PCSO in school?

The aim of this question was to find out how pupils would like to be able to talk to a PCSO about a personal issue. The most common response was with a friend. This was described as a regular drop-in session held by a PCSO in school where pupils could go with a friend to talk about an issue that was concerning them.



Consultation techniques

The following techniques were used to consult with the children:

Question: When do you want to see your PCSO in school?

Consultation technique: Tokens in a jar

Outline of activity: Several jars were set up with options on about when the children would like to see their PCSO in school. Children were given a token to put in the jar that represented their preferred choice.

Question: How often do you want to see your PCSO in school?

Consultation technique: Bulls eye!

Outline of activity: A target was displayed, the rings marking a different option for how often the pupils might want to see their PCSO in school. The children were given a sticker to place on the 'ring' indicating their preferred option.

Question: How do you want to get to know your PCSO in school?

Consultation technique: Hook a duck and picture voting

Outline of activity: Questions relating to various ways that the pupils could get to know their PCSO were stuck to the bottom of rubber ducks and placed in a paddling pool. The children were given a 'fishing rod' with a hook on the end which they used to 'hook' a duck. They then read the question from the bottom of the duck and voted on whether they thought it was a 'great idea', 'OK' or a 'rubbish idea'. The children were then asked to vote on their one favourite idea using the picture voting technique, as described below.

Question: What do you want your PCSO to talk to you about in school?

Consultation technique: Picture voting

Outline of activity: Photographs of different issues were presented to the children. Each child was given a sticker to vote on the topic that they would most like the PCSO to talk to them about. Post-it notes were also provided for the children to add any additional topics.

Question: How do you want to talk to your PCSO in school?

Consultation technique: Ballot box

Outline of activity: Children were given a voting slip with a number of options about how they would like to talk to their PCSO in school. The children marked their preferred option with an 'X' and posted it in the ballot box.

Question: What do you want to talk to your PCSO about in school?

Consultation technique: Post a postcard

Outline of activity: The children were given a postcard addressed to their PCSO at their school. They were asked to complete the sentence "I'd like to talk to you about...". Children were encouraged to think of issues that worry them in their home or the street where they live that they would like to talk to a PCSO about for advice and information. The children then posted their postcards to their PCSO in the post box.