

7 Pupils and Schools

Schools are complex sets of institutions and processes in which various actors participate: classroom teachers, teaching managers, children, to some degree parents and others outside the school itself. They can be described from the perspective of any of these actors, but as they are authoritarian institutions, and the source of authority is the teaching hierarchy, most descriptions in practice adopt the perspective of teachers. We decided within this study to try to describe at least some aspects of school from the perspective of the children. One of our objectives in doing this was to provide alternative criteria of school success: if children enjoy school and participate in a range of school activities, then those are results and achievements in themselves. Another objective was to explore the relationships between children's enthusiasm and participation, for example, and their academic progress.

The pupil questionnaires completed in the second and third years were the principal source of information from the children's perspective. The method worked well where the questions were about concrete facts or events as seen through the children's eyes. It worked less well where the questions were about attitudes to school, possibly because more intensive work needs to be done to develop suitable instruments.

Enthusiasm for school

The following question was included in the pupil questionnaire to give an indication of how children felt about school.

Imagine that you are lying in bed and you start to wake up, and you think to yourself: 'It's the first day of term, I'm going to school today'. How do you feel?

I feel excited and happy

I feel quite happy

I feel a bit gloomy

I feel really fed up

This question was placed at the very beginning so that the answers could not be influenced by the decision to highlight certain topics in the rest of the questionnaire.

Overall, the children's answers are fairly evenly divided between positive and negative ones: 58 per cent say they would feel 'excited and happy' or 'quite happy'. One-third of children choose answers at the two ends of the scale ('excited and happy' 19 per cent, 'really fed up' 13 per cent). A mean score can be calculated from these results, having a minimum of 1, a maximum of 4 and a mid-point of 2.5 (see Table 7.1). The mean is distinctly higher for girls than for boys (2.81 compared with 2.48). This corresponds to a

distinct difference in the percentage distributions: for example, 67 per cent of girls compared with 50 per cent of boys would be 'happy' or 'quite happy' to find it was the beginning of term.

If children belonging to ethnic minority groups face special difficulties at school, then we might expect them to be less enthusiastic than white children. In fact, the opposite is the case. The answers given by south Asian children are substantially more positive than those given by children originating from the UK, and the answers given by children of West Indian origin are also distinctly more positive (south Asians 3.06, West Indians 2.71, those originating from the UK 2.48). Thus, despite any special problems and difficulties that they may face, children of Asian or West Indian origin are more enthusiastic about school than those of UK origin. Some of the difficulties that children of Asian and West Indian origin have been thought to face are things they would notice and find distressing. The most obvious examples are racial hostility from other children (including physical attacks) and racial prejudice on the part of teachers. The findings do seem to imply that difficulties that children would notice, such as racial hostility at school, are rare, or that the children have learnt to live with them. There is strong confirmation of this finding from the survey of parents (see Chapter 6, which also includes a discussion of evidence from other sources about racial hostility at school). Other difficulties are ones that children would not be aware of (for example, lack of good English) or would not care about (for example, the lack of a multi-faith religious education). Such difficulties will probably not affect enthusiasm for school, but they may still be important.

There are no noteworthy differences in enthusiasm for school among south Asian children from different countries or among those belonging to the different religious groups. Differences among children from families belonging to different socio-economic groups are also small, as are the differences between those from single-parent and two-parent families, and between those whose parents are in or out of work.

In general, variations between schools in the degree of enthusiasm shown by the children are rather small. One school (15) has a much higher mean score (3.28) than any other, but this is largely because it is a girls' school consisting mainly of south Asians girls and south Asians are the two groups showing higher than average enthusiasm for school. Among the remaining 18 schools, the highest score is 2.86 and the lowest 2.32.

There is very little relationship between the child's level of attainment and enthusiasm for school on this measure. For example, there is, if anything, a small *negative* relationship between the second year reading score and enthusiasm for school ($r = -0.08$). Further analysis in later sections will confirm that this measure of enthusiasm is very little related to the other factors described in the study. It may be that this single question does not provide a good or reliable measure of a child's general attitude towards school. An alternative approach would be to ask a number of questions and combine them into a scale. The resulting scores would certainly be more reliable, but the measure would be less open, as the choice of questions would impose the researchers' judgements as to which aspects of the school experience are important. It remains possible that the single 'projective' question does reflect how children feel about school, but if so we have no idea why they have those feelings, as the results are not systematically related to other facts.

Language

Most of the schools included in the study had a substantial or large proportion of children from ethnic minority groups and of south Asian children in particular. Consequently, the proportion who report that they are actively bilingual is higher than in most urban secondary

school populations in Britain. Just over a quarter of the study children (27 per cent) reported speaking one or more community languages in addition to English; among these are 20 per cent speaking one minority language, six per cent speaking two, and one per cent speaking three or four. Children of Pakistani, African Asian and Indian origin are those most likely to be multilingual.

Just over half (55 per cent) of bilingual pupils report that they are literate in a minority language, a proportion similar to that found by the Linguistic Minorities Project secondary language survey.¹ Children born outside Britain are significantly more likely to be literate than those who are British-born.

In one-fifth of the bilingual pupils' homes, parents reported that they spoke only minority languages and did not use English. In the remaining four-fifths of homes, both English and minority languages were used.

Among households where no English was used, a majority of the study children were born outside Britain. Nevertheless, among families where the study children had been born in Britain, 16 per cent exclusively used minority languages at home.

Children were asked which language they usually used with each of a number of people who might be considered to compose their out-of-school language community: their mother, father, older and younger brothers and sisters, and friends when they were in and out of school. The responses to these seven questions have been used to construct an index of language use: a score of seven means that the child reported usually using English with people in all categories, whilst a score of zero means that they reported usually using a minority language with people in all categories. The distribution of scores on this index is shown below. The great majority of south Asian children (85 per cent) were bilingual to some degree, and 11 per cent of non-Asian children were bilingual. Two-thirds of bilingual children scored two to four, showing a fairly even balance between use of English and a minority language. In general, the pattern is one of functioning bilingualism.

There is, however, an asymmetry of language use in that more children usually use English when speaking to their parents than usually hear English from their parents; this asymmetry is more pronounced between children and their mothers than between children

Index of minority language usage	Per cent of			
	All children	Bilingual children	All Asian children	Non Asian children
0	73	–	15	89
1	2	9	6	1
2	5	18	14	2
3	3	11	9	1
4	10	37	34	2
5	3	12	10	1
6	3	11	9	1
7	1	3	2	*

and their fathers. The explanation may be that parents and children do, to some extent, move in different linguistic communities, so that for the parent and child the various languages have different domains of use. It is possible that this may result in an asymmetry of receptive and productive skills, with the children understanding minority languages

better than they speak them, but the parents understanding English better than they speak it. However, no specific information on this point is provided by the present project.

These findings on asymmetry of language use are summarised below.

	Per cent using a minority language
Mother speaking to child	86
Father speaking to child	73
Child speaking to mother	75
Child speaking to father	60

The bilingual children were asked which language they spoke best and which they most liked speaking. It is important to remember that this tells us about the children's perceptions, and not about their actual language performance, which may not be related to their perceptions in a simple or direct way. The majority of bilingual children (63 per cent) reported that English was their 'best' language, a notable exception being the children of Bangladeshi origin, of whom only one-third said English was their 'best' language. Children who said English was their 'best' language were significantly more likely than other bilingual children to use English with members of their home language community. Again, a majority of bilingual children said they liked speaking English most (61 per cent) and those who preferred English were significantly more likely to use it out of school than those who preferred to use a minority language.

Comparing 'best' and 'preferred' languages among children from the south Asian language groups, the pattern was for children to *prefer* higher status languages more often than to choose them as their *best* language; thus, English, Urdu and Hindi all tended to be the preferred more often than the best language, and these are all literary languages and *lingua franca*.

Attitudes towards languages are reflected in patterns of language use and consequently in patterns of language performance. Minority languages in Britain have long been regarded, along with their speakers, as being of low status. They seldom appear on the modern language curriculum for all pupils and are thereby implicitly devalued. It is the low status accorded to these languages that encourages attitude shift against them and their use. Action by schools, education authorities and examining bodies could have a considerable influence on attitudes towards these languages and consequently on the pattern of language use and the linguistic resources of children. Within the framework of the Education Reform Act 1988, schools can offer Asian languages as foundation subjects provided that they also offer at least one modern European language. If schools take advantage of these provisions, then children will be able to study an Asian language and its literature as one of the seven foundation subjects within the 70 per cent of classroom time allocated to the National Curriculum. It is clear that there would be a substantial demand for these subjects if schools could offer them (see the next section on lessons in minority languages outside school). One of the most important steps that schools can take towards a multi-cultural education policy is to develop the teaching of Asian languages and literatures within the framework of the National Curriculum.

Lessons in minority languages

Of the bilingual pupils, 39 per cent currently take lessons in a minority language outside of school. Those families whose children were born outside the UK are significantly more

likely to send their children to lessons than those whose children were born in Britain. These findings show that a large number of children do attend out-of-school language classes, and this represents a substantial level of organisation and effort on the part of the minority communities. Nevertheless, the majority of bilingual children do not go to these classes, while at the same time the state schools provide little language support for them. This means that the majority of bilingual pupils receive no formal tuition in minority languages, which may help to explain the low levels of literacy in minority languages reported by the children.

Participation in out-of-school language classes varies as follows between bilingual children belonging to different ethnic groups.

Country of origin	Percentage of bilingual children attending out-of-school language classes
Bangladesh	71
Pakistan	49
India	32
African Asian	32
Other	30

Attendance at these classes by children of Bangladeshi origin is notably higher than by children from other ethnic groups; this may be partly because this community is more recently established and partly because of the religious importance of literacy in Arabic.

Bilingualism and other factors

It is important to consider whether parents who use minority languages have a different relationship with the schools from other parents, and whether bilingual children have different attitudes to school from others, or participate in school activities less. When the index of usage of minority languages is analysed by other factors among all children and their families, many apparent differences are shown, but these are essentially differences between south Asians and others, as most children with a high score on the index are south Asians. We have therefore carried out further analyses, based on south Asians alone, to explore differences within this group according to the extent to which minority languages are used. Some of the results are summarised in Table 7.2 in the form of coefficients of correlation between the index of minority language usage and other variables.

Among south Asian parents there is very little relationship between parents' assessments of the school and of the child's progress and happiness on the one hand and the family's use of minority languages on the other. A separate analysis shows that there is a strong relationship between the second-year reading score and use of minority languages: that is, children who use minority languages extensively tend to have lower reading scores (see Chapter 9). Yet among Asian parents, there is no relationship between use of minority languages and a perception that the child has problems with English at school. This is in line with findings presented in the last chapter which show that in general there is only a weak relationship between parents' assessments of their child's progress and problems and the actual attainment of the child.

We have shown (in Chapter 6) that south Asian parents tend to have substantially less contact with the school than others. However, the evidence suggests that this is not because

of language problems. When we analyse the pattern of contact among South Asians according to the index of use of minority languages, we find no relationship at all.

There are, however, some significant relationships between the child's perceptions and experience at school and his or her use of minority languages. Among Asian children, those who use minority languages tend to be more enthusiastic about school ($r = 0.164$) but they tend to participate less in school activities ($r = 0.176$). These relationships are not very strong, but they are quite unmistakable. There is an obvious danger that linguistic minorities will not fully participate in school activities, and this seems to be realised to some extent. This is important, as we find (see Chapter 10) that participation is related to progress in maths and English. We are not able to interpret the finding that linguistic minorities are more enthusiastic about school. A possible explanation is that school is more stimulating and exciting for them because it is more different from what they are used to. It is, of course, very encouraging to find that the relationship is not in the opposite direction: that far from finding school difficult or off-putting, linguistic minorities actually like it better than those who mainly speak English.

Overall the finding is that neither parents nor children belonging to linguistic minorities perceive any greater problems or difficulties at school than those belonging to the linguistic majority.

Praise, blame, activities

In the pupil questionnaire, the children were asked whether they had received praise and blame from teachers and from the head teacher in various specific circumstances. They were also asked whether they had taken part in various activities organised by or associated with the school. The answers to these questions can be used to help us understand the experience of the individual child, and of children belonging to particular groups (for example, ethnic or social class groups). They can also be used to provide an insight into school policies, practices and methods.

Praise and blame

There were four questions about instances of praise or encouragement that were in each case exactly mirrored by questions about blame or discouragement. For example, the children were asked: 'Have you been told in class that you have done *good work* in the past week?', and then: 'Have you been told in class that you have done *poor work* in the past week?' There were three other pairs of questions on this pattern, which covered praise or criticism by the head, by the form teacher or tutor, and outside class by any other teacher. The percentage of children who answered 'yes' to each of these questions is shown in Tables 7.3 and 7.4. On three out of the four dimensions, praise and criticism are equally common, but it is interesting that a far higher proportion of children say they have been praised than criticised for their work in class (77 per cent compared with 20 per cent).

We would expect that children who are praised in one context would tend to be praised in another, and similarly in the case of criticism. To explore these relationships, Tables 7.3 and 7.4 also show the correlation coefficients between each of the pairs of 'praise' and of 'blame' items. On the whole these relationships are fairly strong, which confirms the expectation that a child who receives encouragement or discouragement in one context will tend to receive it in others too. The relationships are notably stronger in the case of the 'blame' than in the case of the 'praise' items. This may be because the formal procedures for reiterating and underlining criticism are more effective than those for reiterating and underlining praise. If a child is criticised in class for doing bad work, this

may be reported to the form teacher and the head, who may reiterate the criticism, whereas a similar procedure may not be followed where the child is praised in class for doing good work. Another possible interpretation, which may fit with the first one, is that children are more readily typecast as 'baddies' than as 'goodies'.

There is considerable variation in the strength of the correlation between particular pairs of 'praise' and 'blame' items. The explanation for these variations probably lies in the arrangements whereby matters are reported by one teacher to another, but we cannot come up with a hypothesis that explains the pattern in detail. The highest correlation is between being told off by the form teacher or tutor and being told off, outside class, by some other teacher ($r=0.368$); this may be because most schools have a well-established system for reporting bad behaviour to the teacher who has pastoral responsibility for the child (but a much less well-established system for reporting *bad work*). The lowest correlation is between being praised in class for good work and being praised by the head ($r = 0.116$); this may be because most children are praised from time to time for good work in class, but praise from the head tends to arise from something more special and which often did not happen in class.

From the levels of correlation shown between the four 'praise' and between the four 'blame' items it seems appropriate to make two scales, by scoring one for each 'praise' or 'blame' item. This produces two mean scores, with a range from 0 to 4. The overall mean is 2.29 for the praise index and 1.62 for the blame index. By subtracting the one from the other we can see that on average praise exceeds blame by two-thirds of an item (0.67). Table 7.5 shows these mean scores for various sub-groups of the children. The level of praise is the same for boys and girls, but the level of blame is distinctly higher for boys than for girls, probably because their behaviour tends to be worse. Both children of West Indian and of south Asian origin tend to receive more praise than children originating from the UK, though, except in the case of Bangladeshis, these differences are small. Children of south Asian origin receive substantially less blame than those originating from the UK, but children of West Indian origin receive distinctly more criticism than those originating from the UK and much more than those of south Asian origin.

Table 7.6 shows the relationships between the indices of praise and blame and various other factors in the form of correlation coefficients. There is virtually no correlation between the levels of praise and of blame. This is not a trivial result. We might have expected to find a strong inverse relationship, which would have meant that a child who is encouraged tends not to be criticised, and vice versa. In fact the level of encouragement seems to be almost completely independent of the level of criticism, which means that there are many children who receive both praise and blame, but also many who receive neither praise nor blame. This shows that the total amount of attention given to a child varies quite independently of the balance of attention between positive and negative. Children of West Indian origin receive distinctly more attention than any other group, whereas children of south Asian origin receive rather less attention than those originating from the UK.

The child's enthusiasm for school is very little related to the level of praise, but fairly strongly related (inversely, of course) with the level of blame. In other words, children tend to dislike school if they are often criticised, but do not necessarily like school if they are often praised.

It is extremely interesting to find that there is no relationship between the family's socio-economic group and the level of praise or blame received by the child. This shows that the teachers' tendency to encourage or discourage is not a function of social class perceptions, though consistently with this it is possible that teachers' expectations of the

children are influenced by perceptions of social class. The children from the higher social classes will tend to be doing better than those from the lower social classes, but if teachers expect a different level of performance according to the child's social class, then the levels of praise and criticism may be equal for children from different social classes even though the levels of performance are different. On this hypothesis, varying teacher expectations serve to equalise the amount of praise and criticism.

We have also shown the correlations between the levels of praise and blame and the parents' satisfaction with the school, how happy they think their child is at the school, and how well they think their child is getting on with school subjects. In each case there is almost no correlation between the parents' attitudes and the level of praise given to the child, but quite a strong (inverse) correlation with the level of blame or criticism of the child at school. The tendency for the child to be told off or criticised at school is much more strongly related (in an inverse manner) to how happy the parents think the child is, and how well they think the child is getting on, than to their overall satisfaction with the school. This means that criticism of their child by teachers may lead the parents to think that the child has a problem rather than that the school is no good. Nevertheless, there is some tendency ($r = -0.123$) for parents to be dissatisfied with the school where their child is told off or criticised by teachers.

In addition to the four that were included in the index, children were asked three further questions about instances of being praised or encouraged. Just over half of children (51 per cent) said they had had their name read out at assembly or at some other school meeting for doing well in work; 79 per cent said they had (ever) been given a credit, point, badge or something like that for doing well in work; and 47 per cent said they had (ever) been given a prize or badge or something like that for doing well in sport. These questions were not included in the index because they did not have negative counterparts. Table 7.6 shows that the answers to all three questions correlate with the index of praise, and the correlation is very high in the case of having one's name read out in assembly (0.442).

We should also consider the possibility that the answers to these questions can tell us something about the variation in policies, practices and methods between schools (Table 7.7). The index of praise varies appreciably between schools, but not generally in a very extreme way. However, there are some outlying cases. While in most schools the mean lies between 2.1 and 2.3, there is one school (14) with a much lower mean (1.73), and there are several with considerably higher ones, notably school 44 with a mean of 2.91. However, in the case of the index of blame, the variation between schools is much greater. There are three schools with a mean of over 2.0 on the index of blame, the highest being 2.45 (school 16); but at the same time there is one school with a mean of less than 1.0 (school 15) and several others with very low means, for example school 22 and school 31 have less than 1.3. We therefore arrive at the important conclusion that our schools differ from one another very considerably in the amount of 'negative attention' that they give to their children.

The three additional 'positive' items show up enormous variations between the schools. This is presumably because they relate to specific practices (such as reading out in Assembly the names of children who have done well) that are far more common in some schools than in others. Thus, 14 per cent of children in school 35 say their names have been read out, compared with 82 per cent of children in school 32 within the same LEA. We have seen that, at the level of the individual child, there is a considerable correlation between these additional items and the index of praise: that is, children who score high on the index also tend, for example, to have had their names read out in Assembly. However,

at the level of the school there is virtually no correlation between the index of praise and the additional items: that is, schools which tend to encourage children in ways measured by the index do not tend to read out names in Assembly, or to give out credits or prizes for work and sport. To put this more quantitatively, we can calculate a correlation coefficient (r) that expresses the relationship between the index of praise (for a school) and the proportion of children who have had their names read out, etc. The value of r for the first of the additional questions (names read out) is 0.018, which indicates that there is no significant relationship. What these findings suggest is that methods of formally signifying approval (credits, prizes, etc.) differ substantially between schools in their details and the frequency with which they are used; but this is quite independent of more informal encouragement given by teachers and the head, so that a school may offer a great deal of informal encouragement but not use credits, read out names in Assembly, etc. At the same time, of course, where schools do read out names, or whatever, the children whose names are read out tend to be those who are also informally encouraged.

Participation in various activities

Pupils were asked a considerable number of questions about participation in activities within the school or organised by the school. The results are an indication of something that has value in itself: the richness of activities organised by the school and the extent to which various groups of children participate in them. This may also be part of a process that produces other kinds of success, for example academic progress.

Table 7.8 shows the exact wording of the questions and the results for the study group as a whole. The first four questions are about activities outside the curriculum (teams, plays or concerts or special evenings, school trips, the child doing something special in assembly or a year or house meeting). The next two questions are about the child doing special jobs or errands for a teacher, and having a special job in the school or class. The last question is about participation in clubs or other groups. On the whole, the results indicate a fairly high level of participation in these various activities; the only exception is that the proportion of children who have a special job in the school or class is fairly small (22 per cent). Among the clubs, those concerned with games and with social activities are the ones most commonly attended.

Cross-analysis between the answers to these various questions shows a complex pattern which is not worth describing in detail. On the whole, there is a tendency for children who take part in one kind of activity to take part in others as well, but these relationships are often fairly weak. This is probably the result of a balancing between two tendencies: some children will tend to be more outgoing than others, and outgoing children will tend to take part in more than one activity; on the other hand, a child who takes part in one activity will thereby have less time or opportunity to take part in others. Bearing this in mind, it seems appropriate to summarise the data by computing a score for the first four and (separately) the next two items. This has been done simply by assigning one point for participation in any activity. The mean scores derived in this way, together with the percentage belonging to clubs or other groups, are shown in Tables 7.9 and 7.10, analysed by ethnic and socio-economic group and by school. Taking children originating from the UK or Eire as the point of comparison, the participation score is much lower among south Asian children, but a bit higher among those originating from the West Indies. Dividing the south Asian children by religion, we find that the participation score is much lower among the Moslems than among the Hindus or Sikhs. The percentage belonging to clubs or other groups varies between ethnic groups in the same way as the participation score. However, the special

jobs score does not vary between ethnic groups. Perhaps the important factor here is that children are nominated by teachers for special jobs, whereas the children (possibly influenced by their parents) decide whether to participate in the other activities. It may also be significant that the special jobs are tasks or responsibilities 'within school' whereas the other activities take place outside the mainstream of school. Asian children (again, influenced by their parents) may wish to participate fully in what they see as school activities, but not in what they see as fringe activities, and ones that are not angled to their interests, habits or expectations. The high level of participation of West Indian children on all counts seems a very important finding.

There is a strong and consistent relationship between the participation score and the percentage belonging to school clubs or groups on the one hand, and the family's socio-economic group on the other. To a very considerable extent, it is the middle-class children who tend to participate. On the other hand, there is again no similar relationship in the case of the special jobs score.

The analysis by school shows some very large differences in the participation score, which means that some schools involve far more children in more activities than others do. The percentage of children belonging to clubs is at a middling level in a majority of the schools, but a few schools show highly divergent patterns: only nine per cent of children at school 32 belong to clubs, compared with 73 per cent at school 33 in the same area.

By computing a score for participation over four items we are, to some extent, ignoring the detailed differences between policies and practices at different schools. While the participation score varies substantially between schools, the responses to the individual items vary considerably more. For example, some schools make far more use of assembly and of house or year meetings than others do. Only 7 per cent of children at school 12 and 11 per cent of those at school 31 said they had done something special in assembly or a similar meeting, compared with 80 per cent at school 41 and 76 per cent at school 24. These startling differences are partly balanced by opposing differences on other items, so that variations in the overall score are less extreme. This means that there are differences between schools in the pattern of participation as well as in the amount.

Friendship patterns

The study of friendship patterns may be a useful approach towards understanding the social and institutional processes that underlie varying degrees of success in secondary schools. The method seems particularly apt in multi-ethnic schools, where the school population is by definition heterogeneous. In these schools, there is inevitably a tension between the need for coherence and purpose, and the multiple traditions, expectations and perceptions of different ethnic groups. Against this background, it seems important to consider how far relationships between children in the school setting are confined within ethnic groups or cross from one group to another.

Both adults and children tend to have friends who are like themselves, for example, in terms of sex, social class and educational level.² However, to make use of this information, we need to distinguish between structural or institutional influences which define the opportunities for meeting people, and individual characteristics which determine friendship preferences within the range of people that the structures and institutions make available. People have to choose their friends from the limited pool of people with whom they are brought into contact through the institutions and social settings in which they move. Thus, friendship patterns result partly from social structures, but partly from individual personality, preferences or interests.

In the school setting, there is a good prospect of identifying the influence of the institution on the choice of friends. The pool from which the friends are to be drawn can be precisely defined, if children are asked to choose from others in the same school year. The institutional structure that defines the opportunity to make friends is then the school alone.

Method

As part of the pupil questionnaire administered during the Spring term of the second year, children were asked the following questions.

Suppose you wanted to pick some people to be your close friends. Which three people who are *in this classroom* right now would you pick?

Suppose you could pick anyone from *the whole year* to be your close friends. Who would you pick then?

In the event, we decided not to use the answers to the first question, because the limitation to people who happened to be in the room introduced an unwanted element of chance, and we did not have good information afterwards about who was in the room at the time. Children were invited to nominate three friends in answer to the second question. They wrote each name on a separate line, so it was quite clear that there was an order of preference. This analysis is confined to the first friend.³

There may be some tendency for children to choose from among those who were in the room at the time. By first asking for a choice among those in the room then for a choice among everyone in the year we have done everything possible to encourage children to widen the scope of their choice.

By definition, the chosen friends were also members of the group of children being studied. By making use of the information collected about the study children, it is possible to analyse the characteristics of 'self' by the characteristics of 'first friend'.

The pattern of friendships shown does not have to be reciprocal, and in fact it often is not. In other words, if A chooses B as her first friend it does not follow that B must choose A. Consequently, a person may be chosen as the first friend by several others, or in principle by everyone in the school year except herself or himself. In our analysis, we have not pursued the question how far the relationships are reciprocal, nor have we taken an interest in tracing the detailed chains of the relationships, nor in identifying children who are highly popular or unpopular. Instead, we have concentrated on the overall associations between the characteristics of self and friend and on what this can tell us about the schools as institutions.

Records are included in the analysis only when the relevant information is available both for the child and for the chosen friend. The normal element of non-response is substantially increased because of this requirement that both sets of information should be present. However, there is no evidence of significant bias as a result of non-response, since the characteristics of the children analysed in the tables on friendship patterns are closely similar to those of the larger group included in analysis elsewhere in this report.

Sex

In the 16 schools having both boys and girls, nearly all children chose a friend of the same sex as themselves (97 per cent of the boys chose a boy and 98 per cent of the girls chose a girl). This is in agreement with findings from other studies and indicates the overwhelming importance of sex as a determinant of social groupings at this age. There is, of course,

no room for variation between the schools in the extent of segregation of friends by sex, since it is almost complete everywhere, and there is no reason to think that this segregation is connected with school policies and practices.

Country of origin

Tables 7.11 and 7.12 show the friendship pattern by country of origin in two different ways. Table 7.11 simply compares the choosing children with the friends chosen. It shows, for example, that 57 per cent of children originate from the UK or Eire, while almost the same proportion (58 per cent) of the friends chosen are of the same origin. It is important to recognise that the columns for 'child' and 'friend' are strictly comparable, since the friends are those chosen by the precise set of children shown in the 'child' column. Table 7.12, on the other hand, shows the results of a cross-analysis: that is, it shows the country of origin of the friends chosen by children of a particular origin themselves.

If there were a general tendency for white children to be more popular than others, then the proportion of friends who originate from the UK or Eire would be higher than the proportion of children who themselves belong to this group. In fact, Table 7.11 shows no significant differences between the proportion of children and of their friends who belong to various ethnic groups. This shows that no ethnic group tends to be generally popular or unpopular.

Looking at the cross-analysis (Table 7.12), we find there is a fairly strong tendency for children to choose friends within their own group. However, the comparison between children and friends as a whole (Table 7.11) shows that these preferences balance out almost exactly. While each group tends to 'prefer its own' there is no overall tendency for any group to be favoured.

Of course, the choice of friends by different ethnic groups depends substantially on the pool of children available within a particular school. This is illustrated by a separate analysis for schools with relatively high and low proportions of South Asians, also shown in Tables 7.11 and 7.12. In the schools with 25 per cent or more South Asians, a majority of the South Asians (71 per cent) choose friends in their own ethnic group, while only 38 per cent of them do so in the schools with a lower proportion of South Asians. However, this contrast between schools with high and low concentrations of Asians is not as great as might be expected. In the schools with 25 per cent or more of South Asians, the probability that the friend of an Asian will also be an Asian is about twice as high as it would be if the children disregarded ethnic group when making the choice; in the schools with less than 25 per cent of South Asians this probability is four times as high as would be expected (since nine per cent of the children are Asians, but 38 per cent of the friends of Asians are also Asians in these schools, a contrast of more than four to one).

There is some difficulty in deciding what is meant by a greater or lesser degree of segregation where the ethnic composition varies widely between one school and another. In the schools with a relatively high proportion of Asians, a majority of both white and Asian children choose first friends among their own group; in the schools with a lower proportion of Asians, three-quarters of the white children but a much smaller proportion of the Asian children (38 per cent) choose friends in their own group, so in absolute terms there is more segregation in the schools with a relatively high proportion of Asians. Yet in a more fundamental sense, the findings point in the opposite direction. If we consider the pool of children available to be chosen as friends, it is clear that in the schools with a low proportion of Asians, the Asian children are going out of their way to choose a friend

in their own group, and are more likely to do so than in schools with a high proportion of Asians.

There are unfortunately only 83 West Indian children for whom this information is complete (it should be remembered that a parental interview must have been completed both for the child and for the chosen friend). Table 7.12 appears to show that West Indian children make strong efforts to choose a friend in their own group, but this may be just a consequence of the uneven distribution of the West Indian children across the schools. In the one school with a large enough number of West Indians for separate analysis (school 12) the tendency for West Indians to choose a friend in their own group is not particularly strong.

The 'Other' group is shown in the tables for the sake of completeness, but it is difficult to draw any conclusions about these children since they are very heterogeneous. They include children of mixed marriages as well as children originating from a wide range of countries outside Britain, the Caribbean and the Indian sub-continent. There is some tendency for children in the 'Other' group to choose as friends West Indians or 'Others', but this tendency is not very strong.

Analysis within schools

If it is accepted that schools should encourage interaction between children belonging to different ethnic groups, then an important question is whether there is a greater tendency for cross-cultural friendships to be formed in some schools than in others. Unfortunately, the variation in ethnic composition between the schools is such that it is not possible to produce a single index of segregation that adequately summarises the findings and allows unambiguous comparisons to be made. Even if there were only two groups (whites and blacks) it would be quite hard to decide on a measure of segregation that would allow us to compare schools with a high and a low proportion of blacks. With four groups (even after lumping all South Asians together) it is extremely difficult.

After some experimentation, we have decided to look at these findings in a drastically simplified way. On this method, we consider only whether a child is 'UK/Eire' or not. This can then be treated as a variable with values of 1 and 0, so that the correlation coefficient between ethnic group of self and friend can be calculated. These results are shown in Table 7.13.

Despite the difficulty in finding an appropriate model to describe what is going on, it is quite clear that there are huge differences between schools in the extent to which children form friendships within their own ethnic group. The correlation coefficients (based only on whether the child is 'UK/Eire' or not) range from zero (or a non-significant negative quantity) to 0.74 (in school 34). The level of segregation tends strongly to be higher in schools with a large proportion of children belonging to ethnic minority groups than in schools with a lower proportion. Yet it is quite clear that the level of segregation is not just a function of the proportion of ethnic minorities in the school, for there are several outstanding exceptions to the general pattern. School 15, which has the highest proportion of non-UK/Eire children, has no ethnic segregation at all. School 35, with half of the school population being UK/Eire, has no ethnic segregation, yet four other schools with a similar proportion of UK/Eire children (42, 24, 43, 31) have a substantial to high degree of segregation. Schools 31 and 14 have almost exactly the same proportion of UK/Eire children, yet 31 has substantial segregation while 14 has no significant segregation. Finally, while most of the schools with a high proportion of UK/Eire children do not have

significant segregation, the school with the very highest proportion does have some segregation.

In principle, this pattern of results could be explained if some specific groups, such as Moslems or bilingual Asians, tend very strongly to seek friends within their own group, and if these groups were numerous in the schools showing a high correlation between ethnic group of self and friend. However, from the actual findings, detailed ethnic composition (Table 5.1) can account for only a small part of the variation between schools in the degree of segregation. The school with the highest proportion of Moslems and of bilingual children (15) actually shows no correlation between ethnic group of self and friend. The next two schools, in terms of the proportion of Moslems, are school 34 and school 31, with 44 per cent and 39 per cent respectively. Both have high levels of segregation. However, among the next three, each of which has between 27 per cent and 29 per cent Moslems, there is one (school 35) which has no segregation and two (schools 41 and 42) with substantial segregation. Inspection suggests that the proportion of bilingual children in the school may be rather more strongly related to the level of segregation, but again there are two schools that strikingly fail to show this relationship.

We can draw the following two conclusions. First, there are huge differences between schools in the extent to which friendships tend to follow ethnic groupings. Second, it seems unlikely that these can be explained by detailed differences in ethnic composition between the schools and likely that they are instead associated with differences in the policies and practices of the schools.

It is worth noting that in three of the four schools in area 1 there is no significant relationship between ethnic group of self and friend, while in the fourth the correlation is significant but not very high (school 12 with a correlation coefficient of 0.32). This education authority has more explicit anti-racist policies than the others.

Socio-economic group

To the extent that friendships are not reciprocal, there could be an overall tendency for children to choose friends of a higher, or conceivably of a lower, social class than themselves. Table 7.14 shows that there is overall a significant but small tendency for children to choose friends of a higher social class: thus six per cent of the children belong to the 'professional and managerial' group, compared with 10 per cent of the friends chosen.

But the cross-analysis (Table 7.15) shows that children very frequently choose a friend from a different social class, and friendships frequently bridge the whole range from the out-of-work group to the professional and managerial group. If we treat this measure of social class as a numeric variable (scoring the six groups from 0 to 5), we obtain a correlation coefficient between self and friend of only 0.155 across all schools. Even this is an exaggeration, since the variation in social class composition between the schools creates some spurious correlation.

Table 7.16 shows this correlation coefficient for each school separately. In only two out of the 19 schools is there a significant positive relationship between socio-economic group of self and friend, and the highest of these two correlation coefficients is 0.267, which implies that in this school social class of self accounts for seven per cent of the variance in social class of friend. In three schools there is a significant inverse relationship between social class of self and friend, while in the remaining 14 schools there is no significant relationship.

Taken in conjunction with the findings on ethnic segregation, these results seem remarkable. It is frequently said that social classes constitute the most fundamental divisions in our society, and specifically that the different social classes interact in different ways with the educational system. For our own group of children, as for all others that have been studied, there are large differences in attainment between children from different social classes. Yet our findings also show that as an influence on social assortment, as illustrated by friendship patterns, social class has little, if any, importance for 13-year-old children within a particular school setting, whereas ethnic group has a strong influence, though it varies strikingly between one school and another. These findings strongly suggest that in some sense (in what sense we do not yet understand) ethnic group has far more importance than social class either for these children or for the schools in which they make their choice of friends.

The inverse relationships between social class of self and friend in three schools seems odd, but these relationships are statistically significant, though based on fairly small samples.

Test scores

There is some tendency for children to choose friends who have a similar level of attainment to themselves, as measured by second year test scores. This can be seen from the coefficients of correlation between the test scores of self and friend on reading, maths and verbal reasoning; the results for the reading scores are shown in Table 7.17. In most schools, these relationships are statistically significant. The correlation coefficients cluster around 0.3. This level of correlation indicates that about 10 per cent of the variance in the attainment of the friends is explained by the level of attainment of the children themselves. While these relationships are not particularly strong, it is worth noting that they are considerably stronger than any relationship between the social class of self and friend. This can be explained in two ways. First, attainment is something that is directly visible in the school setting and evidently relevant to it, whereas social class may be more directly visible in other settings, particularly in the home. Secondly, in many schools, children are taught maths and English in sets that are sorted by some measure of attainment, so for some of their lessons children find themselves in groups with others at a similar level of attainment to themselves. Setting must encourage children to make friends with others in the same attainment group, and not so much in the same social class.

The findings suggest that setting is the decisive influence, though they do not show it conclusively. Below is a list of the three schools showing the highest correlations between the test scores of self and friend in reading or maths or both, and the two schools showing no such correlation. The setting policies of the five schools are summarised.

		Correlation (r) between score of self and friend in	
		reading	maths
<i>High correlation schools</i>			
43	Mixed ability year 1, streaming year 2	0.37	0.57
34	Setting for maths and English years 1 and 2; remedial pupils withdrawn	0.16	0.50
41	Mixed ability year 1, banding years 2-3 (with three bands)	0.22	0.48

Low correlation schools

15	Mixed ability years 1-2	0.03	-0.03
45	Mixed ability years 1-2	0.01	0.06

While the schools showing high correlations between the test scores of self and friend used some element of setting or banding, there are some other schools which pursued similar setting policies, but did not produce the same high correlations. Also, while the schools showing no correlation between the test scores of self and friend taught in mixed ability groups, there are some other schools that used similar methods, but produced some correlation between the test scores of self and friend. Still, the comparison between the high correlation and low correlation schools does support the theory that classroom groupings have a considerable influence on friendship patterns.

Participation, praise and blame

In all but two of the schools there is a significant correlation between the participation score of self and friend (Table 7.18). The two schools in which the level of participation does not seem to be a principle of assortment (12 and 14) are among those with the lowest levels of participation; however, there are several schools with equally low participation but where this factor does have an influence on choice of friends. In school 15, where choice of friends is not influenced by ethnic group, nor by social class nor by attainment, it is associated with the level of participation in school activities. Generally, the strength of the correlation between self and friend is greater with respect to the participation score than with respect to attainment or, of course, social class. Ethnic group has much more importance than participation score in determining friendship patterns in some schools, but much less importance in others. We do not understand why the importance of participation in determining friendship patterns varies between schools or how this might relate to school policies or practices.

In 15 out of the 19 schools there is a significant correlation between the index of blame for self and friend (see Table 7.20). These correlation coefficients lie in the range between 0.16 and 0.56, the midpoint being about 0.30. There is, therefore, some tendency for children who are often criticised to be friends with each other. In most schools this tendency is not very strong: typically, the child's index of blame explains about 10 per cent of the variance in the index of blame for the friends. There are fairly wide variations between schools in the extent to which friendships are formed among children with a similar index of blame. There is no indication that these differences relate to the extent to which the schools convey negative messages to the children; in other words, there is no consistent tendency for the schools where the average index of blame is high to be those where children choose friends with respect to the index of blame nor is there an opposite tendency.

In nine out of the 19 schools there is a significant correlation between the index of praise for self and friend. In general, these correlations are lower than in the case of the index of blame. In five schools the correlation coefficient is 0.3 or more. This confirms the earlier finding that the index of blame has more explanatory value than the index of praise.

Attendance

A high level of attendance may be regarded as a good outcome in itself, and it may also be related to achieving other desired outcomes, such as academic progress. We collected information about the attendance of the study children in each school year.⁴ In this section,

we use the data for the first two years to explore the general pattern of attendance. In later chapters we consider more intensively the differences in attendance patterns between schools, and bring attendance into the analysis of rates of progress in school work.

On average the children were off school for about 15 days in each of the school years, which amounts to about seven per cent of school days (see Table 7.21). The results for the two school years are very similar. The proportion of children showing a high rate of absenteeism is fairly small. In 1982/3, 19 per cent were away for over 25 days, and four per cent were away for over 50 days.

There is no difference between boys and girls in the rate of attendance (Table 7.22). An important finding is that children of West Indian origin are distinctly better attenders than those originating from the UK and from south Asian countries. Among the Asians, those originating from Pakistan and Bangladesh seem to have a poorer record of attendance than the others. There is a clear and consistent relationship between attendance and social class, such that attendance improves as we move from the lower to the higher groups. On average, the number of days absent is twice as high among children from families in the 'underclass' group as among those from families in the professional or managerial group.

The level of attendance is slightly higher among children from two-parent than among those from single-parent families, but a more important factor seems to be whether the parents are working. Where neither parents works, or the one parent does not work, the level of attendance is worst, and it is best where both parents work full-time, or the one parent works full-time (see Table 7.23). There are significant, but not large, differences in attendance between schools and also between areas.

This pattern of variation seems to arise from a number of distinct influences. Some non-attendance is truancy, some is a reflection of the child's lack of enthusiasm for school but takes place with the consent of the parent, and some is a reflection of the opportunity to stay at home because a parent is there, or may even be a response to a request from the parent to stay at home. Some non-attendance is, of course, caused by sickness, or by the family being on holiday, or by a visit to the country of origin. At the same time, there are very few children who are away from school so much that this substantially reduces their opportunity to learn. Thus, although we do have a clear and objective measure of the extent to which the child was away from school, this does not relate to underlying factors (such as enthusiasm for school, emotional disturbance, 'defiant' truancy, emphasis placed on education by the parents) in a simple and direct way; and the variation in attendance, while significant, is not enough to deprive many children of access to a major part of their schooling.

Summary

Enthusiasm for school

Children were asked in the second-year questionnaire how they felt when they woke up on the first day of term. In general, it proves hard to understand the responses to this question in terms of the other factors covered by this study. For example, there is not much correlation between the child's enthusiasm, as shown by this measure, and the parents' assessment of how happy the child is at school; also, enthusiasm is very little related to attainment. Although there may be a case for developing a more complex measure based on a range of questions, it may be that the present measure is a good one, but children's feelings about school are governed by factors that we do not understand.

On the basis of the present measure, children from ethnic minority groups actually have more positive feelings about school in the second year than white children. These findings

suggest that difficulties children would notice, such as racial hostility at school, are rare, or that children have learnt to live with them. This is strongly confirmed by the survey of parents (see Chapter 6, which also includes a discussion of evidence from other sources). The level of enthusiasm for school expressed by children varies significantly, though not widely, from one school to another, but is stable in relation to the socio-economic characteristics of the families from which the children come.

Language

Just over one-quarter of the study children speak one or more community languages in addition to English. The great majority of those originating from the Indian sub-continent are bilingual. Just over half of bilingual pupils say they are literate in a minority language. More children use English when speaking to their parents than hear English from their parents. Children tend to prefer high-status languages such as English, Urdu and Hindi, even when they speak some other language better. Attitudes will continue to shift against minority languages unless action is taken to give them recognition. Most children cannot study minority languages at school, but 39 per cent of bilingual pupils were currently taking lessons in a minority language outside school. This represents a substantial level of organisation and effort on the part of the minority communities.

Within the framework of the Education Reform Act 1988, schools can offer Asian languages as foundation subjects provided that they also offer at least one modern European language. If schools take advantage of these provisions, then children will be able to study an Asian language and its literature as one of the seven foundation subjects within the 70 per cent of classroom time allocated to the National Curriculum. From the extensive teaching of minority languages outside schools, it is clear that there would be a substantial demand for these subjects if schools could offer them. One of the most important steps that schools can take towards a multi-cultural education policy is to develop the teaching of Asian languages and literatures within the framework of the National Curriculum.

Neither parents nor children belonging to linguistic minorities perceive any greater problems or difficulties at school than those belonging to the linguistic majority. However, among south Asians, the bilingual children are less likely than the others to participate in school activities. Those who use minority languages extensively tend to have lower reading scores, and this point will be pursued in later analyses (see Chapter 10).

Praise, blame, activities

From items on the pupil questionnaire two indices were derived to describe the extent to which the child had received praise or encouragement on the one hand and blame or discouragement on the other. The correlations between the four 'blame' items were stronger than those between the four 'praise' items. This suggests that formal procedures for reiterating and underlining criticism are more effective than those for reiterating and underlining praise. Also, children may be more readily typecast as 'baddies' than as 'goodies'.

The level of praise is the same for boys and girls, but the level of blame is distinctly higher for boys than for girls, probably because their behaviour tends to be worse. Both children of West Indian and of south Asian origin tend to receive a bit more praise than children originating from the UK. Children of West Indian origin receive distinctly more criticism than those originating from the UK, who in turn receive more than children of south Asian origin. The balance between praise and blame is most positive among children of south Asian origin and most negative among children of West Indian origin.

The level of encouragement seems to be almost completely independent of the level of criticism, which means that there are many children who receive both praise and blame, but also many who receive neither. The child's enthusiasm for school is very little related to the level of praise, but fairly strongly related (inversely) with the level of blame. In other words, children dislike school if they are often criticised, but do not like school if they are often praised. There is no relationship between the family's socio-economic group and the level of praise or blame received by the child. Parents are more likely to think their child is unhappy at school and not getting on well with school subjects where the child reports a high level of criticism, but only slightly more likely to be dissatisfied with the school. There is almost no correlation between the parents' attitudes and the level of praise given to the child.

The index of praise varies between schools, but not in a very extreme way. The index of blame varies very widely between schools. These differences are not related to differences between the pupil characteristics that we know about, so we arrive at the important conclusion that schools differ from one another very considerably in the amount of 'negative attention' that they give to their children.

Pupils were also asked a number of questions about participation in activities within the school or organised by the school. A participation score was derived from four of these questions. On this measure, participation is slightly higher among children of West Indian origin than among those originating from the UK, but much lower among children of south Asian origin; looking more closely at the south Asians, participation is much lower among the Moslems than among the Hindus or Sikhs. There is a strong relationship between participation and social class: to a considerable extent, it is the middle-class children who tend to participate.

There are some very large differences in the participation score between schools, which means that some schools involve far more children in more activities than others do. There is even more variation between schools in the responses to particular questions about participation. This is because some of the detailed variation between schools in policies and practices is evened out by computing a more generalised participation score.

Friendship patterns

We have found a number of factors that help to explain the friends chosen by children aged 12-13 in a school setting from others in their year. In order of importance these factors are: sex, ethnic group, participation in school activities, second year attainment in maths and reading, index of blame, index of praise. It seems that social class has little, if any, importance independently of the other factors, though this finding conflicts with the results of earlier studies. Certainly, ethnic group influences the choice of friends far more than social class.

There are some large differences between schools in the way that friends are chosen. Most important, while there is a strong tendency in some schools for children to choose friends within their own ethnic group, this pattern is either much weaker or completely absent in a number of other schools. The pattern of variation between schools cannot be explained by differences in ethnic composition; it probably springs from different approaches or methods of organisation. There are also fairly large differences between schools in the extent to which participation, attainment and negative feedback to the child are principles of assortment between pairs of friends. These differences are real, but do not seem to relate to obvious differences of structure, except that assortment by attainment is partly related to setting for maths and English.

Attendance

Children of West Indian origin are distinctly better attenders than those originating from the UK and from south Asian countries. There is a clear and consistent relationship between attendance and social class, such that attendance improves as we move from the lower to the higher groups. With regard to other social background factors, the pattern of variation suggests that attendance is not an indicator of the child's attitude to school, but reflects a complex set of influences. For example, attendance is best where the parent or parents are out at work, so that the child would have no company at home. Findings such as these suggest that some non-attendance is truancy, some is a reflection of the child's lack of enthusiasm for school but takes place with the consent of the parent, and some is a reflection of the opportunity to stay at home because the parent is there, or a response to a request from the parent. In any case, attendance is not an index of 'defiant truancy'.

Notes

1. See linguistic Minorities Project (1983) and (1985).
2. The study by Julienne Ford (1969) showed that children have friends who are like themselves in various respects, though in the case of social class this conflicts with the data from the present study.
3. We have also carried out substantial analysis of the results for the second friend. The pattern shown for the first and second friends is very similar, so nothing is lost by concentrating on the first friend.
4. Information on attendance was taken from the school registers, which are completed twice a day, and are an accurate record of whether the child was present for the roll-call. They do not, of course, show whether children were absent from particular classes. As the registers are completed twice a day, we recorded the number of half days that each child was absent. The children included for this purpose were those who were both shown on the registers and present at some time during the year.