

# **Wellbeing, Health and Leisure**

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# **ASSESSING THE CONTRIBUTION OF OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS LEARNING SPORTS ACTIVITIES TO SPORTS PARTICIPATION BY BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC PUPILS**

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## **Introduction**

This paper reports on findings from research which was commissioned to investigate the involvement of young people from British, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups in out-of-school-hours (OSH) school sport and club sport. Over the last 10 years the UK has invested very heavily in sport for young people, especially through the school system. A key element of this strategy has been Out-of-school-hours learning (OSHL), which provides activities through schools, outside the school curriculum. It includes breakfast clubs, lunchtime, break time and after schools activities.

Within the wider spectrum of OSHL activities, the development of OSH sport has become established as an approach for raising levels of physical activity and sport participation amongst young people. The rationales for promoting young people's participation in sport are multiple: the claimed benefits range from the direct health gains from being physically active to the social inclusion benefits of developing individuals' competence and confidence, nurturing social relationships and contributing to the wider development of community cohesion and social capital (e.g. Bailey, 2006; Coalter, 2007; Coalter *et al.*, 2000; Long *et al.*, 2002; Positive Futures team, 2004; Sandford, Armour and Warmington, 2006). Although there are concerns that the evidence base to support such claims is weak (e.g. Coalter, 2007; Coalter *et al.*, 2000; Kay, 2009; Long *et al.*, 2002), this has not curtailed such policies.

OSH sports activities are run mostly by schools themselves, but some also include activities run by external sports clubs, which may take place at school sites or away from them. Other opportunities for participation include giving young people the chance to acquire coaching

awards and sports leadership awards. To date the overall impact of this provision has appeared very positive. Since 2001 there has been a substantial increase in participation in PE and School Sport. Data from the School Sport Partnership impact studies show very impressive early results for participation in OSH sports activities: over one year of partnership involvement by schools, boys participation rose by 75% and girls by 78% (Institute of Youth Sport, 2006).

There are, however, concerns that, as in sport as a whole, the benefits of OSH sports activities not equally shared across all groups. Variations are evident between young people of different ages, different levels of ability, and according to pupil characteristics including gender, ability/disability and ethnicity. Questions therefore arise as to whether provision of this type sustains, rather than challenges, inequitable access to sport. This is a particularly important consideration given the widespread adoption of these approaches, and the importance attached to them as mechanisms for nurturing lifelong participation in sport and physical activity.

This paper contributes to this debate by focusing on the issue of ethnicity: in this instance through analysis of the response of BAME pupils to OSH sports activities. It draws on findings from research undertaken by the Institute of Youth Sport Loughborough for the Youth Sport Trust, an independent national sports charity which works closely with government in sports policy for young people throughout the UK. In the account that follows, the paper first considers issues surrounding sports participation among young people of BAME identity, and then considers the findings of the research in this light. The data indicate a number of areas in which BAME pupils demonstrate lower levels of engagement with OSH sports activities than their white British counterparts. The concluding section discusses the possible reasons for this, and the implications that the findings have for this use of the OSH approach in youth sport participation policy.

### **Youth sport, education and ethnicity in the UK**

The UK has a substantial BAME population which at the time of the 2001 Census was 4.6 million or 7.9 % of the total population (Office for National Statistics, 2001). The demographic profile of BAME groups is however heavily skewed towards younger age groups, and a far higher proportion of the school population is of BAME identity than of the population as a whole. In addition, although BAME communities tend to be concentrated in particular geographical areas, they are becoming more widespread, and this too is reflected in the increasingly widespread distribution of BAME pupils. By 2004 all secondary schools and 75% of primary schools in England had some ethnic minority pupils

(Department for Education and Skills [DfES], 2004), and by 2006 BAME pupils made up one fifth of the pupil population in primary schools and one sixth in secondary schools. It is anticipated that by 2016 the proportion of BAME pupils in secondary schools will also rise towards one fifth (DfES, 2006a).

Many concerns surround the situation of young people from BAME communities in the UK. Overarching issues of racism and inequity have been addressed through a range of legislation, notably the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. A key focus for attention is BAME young people's experiences of, and levels of achievement in, education. The DfES publication 'Ethnic Minority Achievement' (2006b) observed that while many pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds do very well in schools, there is a significant gap between the lowest achieving groups and the national average. The document noted that "it is the responsibility of the government, local authorities, schools and the community to work together to ensure that all young people can achieve their potential, whatever their ethnic or cultural type and whichever school they attend" (p. 4). The 2000 Race Relations Act requires schools to prepare and maintain a written statement of policy on race equality and to be proactive in promoting equality of opportunity for all pupils. In addition, since the Macpherson report on the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry (Macpherson of Cluny, 1999) schools have been required to address and prevent racism.

Sport itself is widely recognised as a key site in which racism and inequity is constructed and experienced (Jarvie, 2002). Notwithstanding this, a number of DfES policy and research papers signal the importance of equal access to school sport for attainment, self-esteem, behaviour and good race relations. For example, a study in 2001 about the value of study support programmes identified out of school hours sport as having a broad positive impact and highlighted the finding that "sport seems to have a uniquely significant positive effect" on self-esteem (MacBeth *et al.*, 2001: p. 112). However, the same report noted that ethnic minority pupil participation was proportionately higher than that for white pupils in all forms of study support, with the possible *exception* of sport (MacBeth *et al.*, 2001). Since then, the Department's 2005 review of the evidence relating to ethnic minority pupils and education noted that "The three Asian groups and Chinese pupils are less likely to be entered for Physical Education [GCSE] than pupils from other ethnic minorities" (DfES, 2005: p. 17). There are therefore a number of indications that BAME young people are less connected to sport within the school context than other pupils.

The importance of understanding the significance of physical education and especially out of school hours sports activities for ethnic minority pupils has been reinforced by a number of recent educational

policies. The Secondary National Strategy (Key Stages 3 and 4) highlights the importance of raising standards for specified target groups including ethnic minorities through the Minority Ethnic Achievement Programme and the Black Pupils Achievement Programme. An integral part of the strategic ambitions for secondary schools is the reform of the system of 14–19 education. An important element of this programme is the emphasis on linking with external learning providers (which would include coaches in sports clubs) and enabling all pupils to take advantage of these opportunities.

The picture that emerges is therefore complex. On the one hand, there is recognition by schools and policymakers that physical education and school sport may have the potential to help achieve a number of whole school objectives; however, previous research suggests that this may be less effective for pupils from ethnic minorities than for those from other groups. This is consistent with the wider inequity experienced in sport by members of BAME groups, as a recent review of literature confirms (Long *et al.*, 2009). Quantitative data is sparse, but Rowe and Champion (2000) found that the participation level in sport by ethnic minorities in England was proportionately lower than that of the adult population as a whole — 40% for ethnic minorities and 46% for the general population. Other measures of sports involvement, including membership of sports clubs, show similar disparities: the Active People Survey, Survey 1 (2005–2006) (Sport England, 2007) found that White respondents (25.5%) are markedly more likely to be sport club members than non-white respondents, and that British Pakistani (15.5%) and British Bangladeshi (13.8%) individuals record the lowest levels of club membership. The survey also revealed a significant difference in levels of club membership between black British Caribbean (23.5%) and black British African (17%) adults. At youth level, data is also limited, although the Sports Equity Index (Sport England 2005a) showed that young people from BAME communities had below average levels of participation for taking part in casual (defined as participating at least once a month) and regular (at least once a week) sport.

There has of course been extensive research into the racialised experiences of BAME groups in sport which throws some light on the processes that lead to this pattern of under-representation. The importance of recognising differences between minority groups is central: Johnson (2000), in his review of research into the barriers to health-related physical activity among Asian communities, concluded that there were some reasons which appeared to be specific to South Asian communities. The distinctive barriers were often associated with religion, gender or generation, for example, modesty, gender segregation (for both men and women), and safety, (in terms of travel to sports facilities and racism). Johnson concluded that it was important to pay



attention to the particular characteristics of each minority ethnic community. In the school context, Bhattacharyya *et al.* (2003) noted that it was not sufficient simply to offer a range of activities: students needed to be attracted and encouraged to take part, something at which some schools are much more successful than others. A consistent, if rather nebulous, recent theme in these types of analysis has been the importance of 'comfort' (e.g. Callaghan *et al.*, 2001; Lowrey and Kay, 2005) — suggesting that a sense of belonging, familiarity, feeling welcome and fully part of the activity being provided is fundamental to participation.

On the whole there appears to have been mixed success in overcoming the barriers to sports participation for BAME pupils. The 2006 report by the Loughborough Partnership on the impact of School Sport Partnerships found that although "the participation by pupils from ethnic minorities in OSHL increased substantially by comparison with the figures reported in 2004, particularly in years 7–11", this was soon reversed: by 2006, "a substantial proportion of the gains in participation by ethnic minority pupils made between 2004 and 2005 had been lost". The report also recorded that participation of ethnic minority pupils in sports leadership awards declined between 2005 and 2006. This raises questions about the appropriateness of OSH sport as a mechanism for raising participation among BAME pupils, and especially whether this policy is more likely to reinforce rather than challenge inequities. It is in this context that we now turn to the findings of more specific research into BAME participation in OSH sports activities.

## **Methodology**

This research was commissioned by the Youth Sport Trust (YST) and undertaken by the Institute of Youth Sport at Loughborough University. The research took place between January–April 2007.

Data collection consisted of a postal survey distributed to the Directors of Specialism at 113 Specialist Sports Colleges in February and March 2007. Specialist Sports Colleges are English Secondary Schools for pupils age 11–16 or 11–18 year olds (the Director of Specialism is the person responsible for positioning PE and sport at the centre of the curriculum, using it as a vehicle to develop and improve opportunities for all). The sample included all Specialist Sports Colleges that (i) had above 3% BAME pupils in year 8 or year 10 in the school census taken January 2006 (academic year 2005–06); (ii) had more than 50 pupils in year 8 or year 10 in the school census taken January 2006. (In the case of small schools, the criteria was a high proportion of BAME pupils: for example, one school only had 19 pupils in year 10 but 58% were from a BAME community); and (iii) were affiliated to YST<sup>1</sup>.

The survey sought data from Directors of Specialism on three aspects of BAME pupils' response to OSH sport:

- staff reports of the proportion of students in years 9 and 11 in academic year 2006–07 from BAME backgrounds and non-BAME backgrounds participating in different forms of Out of School Hours (OSHL) school sport and club sport;
- staff perceptions of the barriers to participation in these activities faced by pupils from BAME backgrounds;
- strategies that have been used to overcome these barriers and their efficacy.

The response rate for the survey was 51% (58 out of 113). For the most part, Directors of Specialism responded to the questionnaire on the basis of their informed perception and experience rather than record-keeping or monitoring data. The results that are reported below should therefore be considered subjective measures that are indicative rather than conclusive.

## Findings

This paper reports on four aspects of the findings: the ethnic profile of the sample of sports colleges participating in the research; comparisons between BAME and non-BAME pupils' participation in OSH sports activities; and perceived barriers to participation; and strategies for promoting participation.

### *Ethnic profile of the sample of sports colleges*

Across all colleges, BAME pupils made up 23% of the pupils. There were large variations across colleges, with the percentage of BAME pupils ranging from 4% to 99% (see **Figure 1**). In most colleges (88%) BAME pupils were a clear minority, and in two-thirds of schools (69%) they constituted less than 20% of their year cohorts. The survey also included a small number of colleges (12%) in which BAME pupils were a majority.

### *Participation in Out of School activities by BAME pupils*

The survey sought information on three aspects of BAME pupils' involvement in OSH sports activities. Comparisons were made between the levels of participation of BAME and non-BAME pupils in relation to:

- variations between different year groups for school-based OSH sports activities;
- variations between different forms of delivery, i.e. whether delivered by the school or by local sports clubs, and whether delivered on or off the school site;
- participation in leadership and coaching programmes.

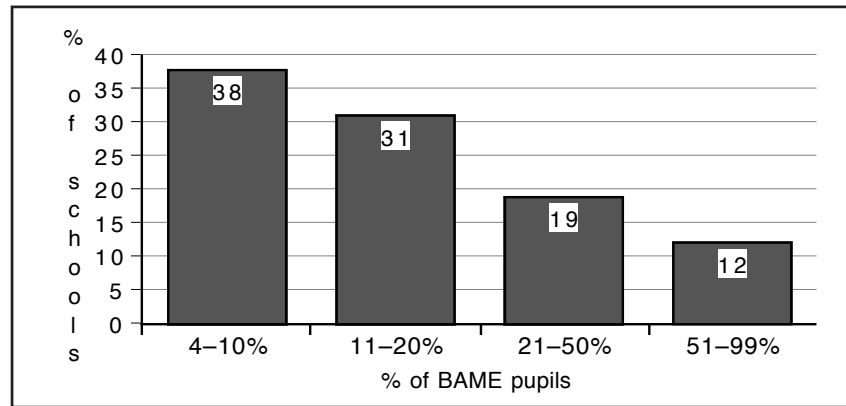


Figure 1 Percentage of BAME pupils in years 8 and 10 in January 2006 in the sample of sports colleges

The data for each of these aspects of participation was drawn from the judgements of the Directors of Specialism whether participation was 'lower', 'about the same' or 'higher' for BAME than non-BAME pupils. To provide an overall indicator of whether, on average, BAME pupils have higher or lower participation, we treat the category 'about the same' as neutral, but offset the figures for 'lower' and 'higher' against each other. This tells us whether more colleges reported lower BAME participation than higher BAME participation, or vice versa. In the reporting of these data below, we have used the term 'net participation deficit' to describe the net difference between these two categories.

*Participation in OSH sports activities delivered by the schools, by year group*

The data showed lower participation by BAME pupils than non-BAME pupils in both year 9 and year 11, with the gap widening for the older pupils (see **Figure 2**).

- i. For Year 9 BAME pupils, participation levels overall were judged to be lower than those for white British pupils. Two-fifths (41%) of teachers reported that participation by BAME pupils was 'lower than that for white British pupils'; the same proportion (41%) reported that participation was 'about the same' as that for white British pupils; and 17% reported that participation by BAME pupils was higher. Offsetting the figures for 'lower' (41%) and 'higher' (17%) against each other shows that 24% more colleges reported low participation than high participation. There was therefore a 'net participation deficit' of 24% for BAME pupils in year 9.

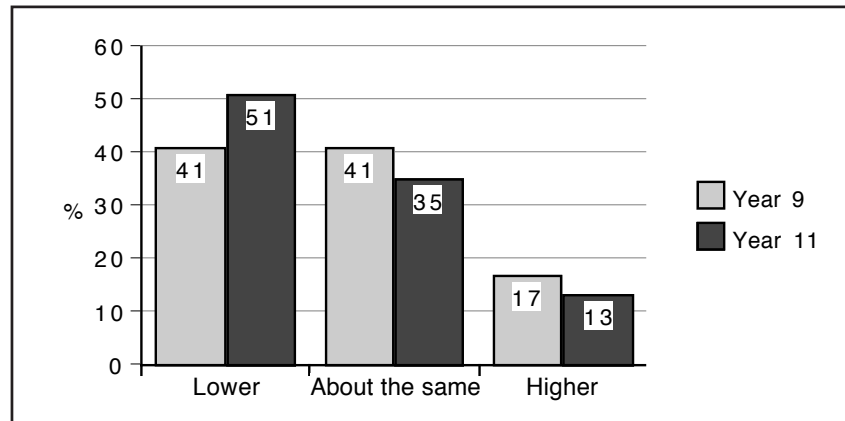


Figure 2 Participation in school-based OSH activities of BAME pupils compared to white British for Year 9 and Year 11

- ii. For year 11 pupils, respondents reported wider gaps in participation between BAME and white British pupils. A slight majority of respondents (51%) reported that participation was 'lower' for BAME pupils than that for white British pupils in their school; 35% reported that participation was 'about the same'; and 13% reported that participation was 'higher' for BAME pupils. Again, if we offset the values for lower and higher we are left with a net participation deficit, this time of 38%.

These data indicate a marked gap in participation between BAME and white pupils in OSH activities. In year 9, when pupils are around age 14, the gap in level of participation is already substantial, and widens significantly two years later when pupils are in Year 11 and aged 16, which marks the end of compulsory schooling in the UK. At this point almost two-fifths of colleges report that BAME pupils participate less in OSH sport than White British pupils.

*Participation in OSH sports activities, delivered by different methods*

OSH activities can be delivered in a variety of ways and it was felt important to investigate whether different forms were more or less effective in stimulating participation amongst pupils of different ethnic identity. The survey therefore obtained information about BAME participation in OSH sports activities provided through different delivery arrangements. The views of Directors of Specialism were obtained about whether the participation gap between BAME and white pupils was greater or less under these different forms of delivery.

The three ways in which OSH activities may be delivered are (i) by the school, at the school site; (ii) by local sports clubs, at the school site; and (iii) by local sports clubs, away from the school site. **Table 1** shows the reported participation rates for years 9 and 11 combined, for each of these three forms of delivery. The concept of the net participation gap is again used. As might be expected from the data previously seen, in all three instances the net participation gap is a participation deficit for BAME pupils, whose participation rates are lower than those of white British pupils in more schools than they are higher, across all three forms of delivery. What is particularly notable here is that the deficit grows as responsibility for activities moves from schools to clubs. For activities that take place at schools and are provided by schools, the deficit is 31%; for activities which take place at schools but are run by external clubs, the deficit increases by an additional 10% to 41%; and when clubs run activities away from the school site it rises again, to 46%.

These findings are interesting for two reasons. Firstly, they suggest that direct provision by schools is more successful in engaging BAME pupils than provision involving local clubs, which may reflect practical factors such as location and transport needs, but also social and cultural ones such as how familiar and/or welcoming the environment is perceived to be — i.e. the ‘comfort’ factor referred to above. If it is the case that school provision is more effective, this is an issue worth investigating in its own right. Secondly, however, this pattern is potentially significant because the development of school-club links is a core strategy for delivering increased sports participation and physical activity among children and young people. It is believed that sustainable participation instigated through school-based interventions needs to be supported by opportunities to participate in the community through

*Table 1 Schools’ reported participation rates delivered by different methods, year 9 and 11 combined.*

<i>Form of delivery for OSHL activities</i>	<i>% of schools reporting BAME lower</i>	<i>% of schools reporting BAME higher</i>	<i>Participation gap</i>
On school site + run by school	46%	15%	- 31%
On school site + run by local ‘linked’ sports club	46%	5%	- 41%
Off school site + run by local ‘linked’ sports club	52%	5%	- 46%

local clubs. This data suggests that this strategy may be more appropriate to some groups than others, and may be least suited to groups who are already relatively under-represented among sports participants. In this respect, some of the approaches used to deliver OSH sport may risk further exacerbating, rather than reducing, inequities in access to sport.

*BAME pupils' participation in leadership and coaching awards programmes*

The survey also obtained information on levels of participation in the opportunities to obtain coaching awards and sports leadership awards through OSHL. These opportunities were available to pupils in Year 11 (**Table 2**):

- i. Participation in coaching awards was the only element of sports involvement for which most schools (61%) reported participation to be 'about the same' for BAME and white British pupils. However, among colleges which reported a difference between the two categories, far more reported BAME participation to be lower than higher. The net participation gap was therefore a participation deficit of 28%.
- ii. The pattern of participation was different for sports leadership awards. The level of involvement of Year 11 pupils from BAME backgrounds was lower than for white British pupils, and the participation deficit (43%) was greater than for coaching awards.

*Participation patterns in majority-BAME colleges*

In most of the schools participating in the research, BAME pupils made up a minority of the school population, but in a small number they were in the majority. The research found that in these schools (defined as those in which 60% or more pupils were classed as BAME in the January 2006 school census), participation patterns were different from those in which BAME pupils were a minority (**Table 3, Table 4**):

- i. Across all indicators of participation, the proportion of BAME pupils taking part was reported as being either 'about the same' or 'higher' than white British pupils.
- ii. There were no reports from these schools of participation being lower in any setting, on school site, on school by club or off school site by club with links to school.

Table 2 Schools' reported participation rates in award programmes for year 11

Award programme	BAME Lower	BAME 'about the same'	BAME Higher	Part'n gap
Coaching award programmes	33%	61%	5%	- 28%
Leadership award programmes	48%	46%	5%	- 43%

Table 3 Majority-BAME schools' reported participation rates delivered by different methods, year 9 and 11 combined

Form of delivery for OSHL activities	BAME Lower	BAME 'about the same'	BAME Higher	Part'n gap
On school site + run by school	0	2	4	+4
On school site + run by local 'linked' sports club	0	2	2	+2
Off school site + run by local 'linked' sports club	0	2	3	+3

Table 4 Majority-BAME schools' reported participation rates in award programmes for year 11

Award programme	BAME Lower	BAME 'about the same'	BAME Higher	Part'n gap
Coaching award programmes	0	4	1	+1
Leadership award programmes	0	2	2	+2

*Barriers to BAME participation*

The survey also sought information on Directors of Specialism's' perceptions of barriers to participation by BAME pupils. Directors were asked to identify which barriers they considered affected OSH participation by BAME pupils in their school, and the proportion of BAME pupils they considered to be affected.

**Table 5** identifies the barriers most widely reported to affect 'some' (A: 26–50%) or 'most' (B:>50%) BAME pupils. A simple weighting system has been used to produce an overall summary score (C=A+B) to reflect which barriers were most widely experienced.

The most important barriers to participation are a combination of cultural factors, expressed through families' resistance to young people investing time in sport, and practical obstacles, especially transport. Some of these barriers are more acute for activities taking place away from school than at the school site, although the differences are not always high. Transport was however more of a problem for participating in activities that took place away from the school site, and parents were also slightly less likely to give permission for their children to participate for activities which were taking place away from school.

*Strategies to increase participation*

Information was obtained on strategies which schools had found effective in increasing participation in OSH activities by BAME pupils. Those considered 'moderately successful' (A) and 'very successful' (B) are listed in **Table 6**. A simple weighting score (C=A+2B) has again been used.

We can see from Table 6 that several practical steps have been important. Programming can be helpful — e.g. changing the type and

*Table 5* Barriers to BAME pupils' participation in OSH activities

	A Affecting some (26-50%) BAME pupils	B Affecting most (>50%) BAME pupils	C Weighted score (A+2B)
Parents' beliefs that other subjects are more important than PE/sport	17%	15%	47
Pupils' family commitments	29%	8%	45
Lack of transport to/from activities held at local clubs off the school site	21%	12%	45
Lack of transport from school to home following afterschool activities held on the school site	12%	12%	36
Lack of parental permission in activities off the school site at local clubs	5%	10%	25
Lack of parental permission for participation in OSHL activities on the school site run by local clubs	4%	9%	22
Pupils' lack of interest	10%	4%	18



timing of activities. For example, in some schools where students had to go to religious activities after school, the sporting activity had been very successfully moved to a suitable time over the weekend rather than after school. Schools which had been able to address transport issues also found that this could be a successful strategy for allowing more BAME pupils to participate.

It is interesting to note that the use of peer mentors to encourage BAME pupils to participate was considered a particularly successful strategy by those who used it. This approach addresses social aspects of pupils' sports experiences, as do a number of other strategies, including consultation with pupils and/or parents. 'Educating parents' about the value of sport also addresses attitudinal and cultural constraints. The emergence of these as relevant factors links with the

*Table 6 Strategies considered to have been effective in facilitating participation in OSH activities by BAME pupils*

	A Moderately successful	B Very successful	C Weighted score (A+2B)
Assigning peer mentors to pupils from BAME groups to encourage them to attend OSHL sports activities	20%	60%	140
Providing transport from school after school-based activity	33%	50%	133
Providing transport to/from local clubs for club-based activity	27%	46%	119
Changing the range of activities	54%	32%	118
Pupil consultation	42%	29%	100
Changing the times of activities to fit in with BAME pupils' commitments outside school	33%	30%	93
Parent Consultation	44%	22%	88
Developing links with clubs which offer the activities which BAME pupils have expressed an interest	41%	18%	77
Subsidising the cost of attending local clubs	31%	23%	77
Marketing activities specifically to pupils from BAME backgrounds	46%	15%	76
Parent Education	35%	12%	59
Introductory visits to local clubs	36%	9%	54

findings of other research on the importance of young people feeling 'comfortable' during their sports experiences, and the need for provision for BAME young people to take account of cultural factors. The following discussion explores some of these issues.

### **Discussion**

The findings presented in this paper are from research into a key area of sport policy — the provision of Out of School Hours sport as a mechanism to increase young people's participation in sport and physical activity. In focusing on pupils of BAME identity, this particular study addressed a key issue within such strategies: namely whether they are equally effective — or not — in reaching all types of pupils. The specific concern with ethnicity is particularly topical, given wider political and social policy debates about the position of minority communities within the UK.

The data discussed in this paper was obtained from the distribution of a self-completion questionnaire, implemented over a 2-month period. This method and scale of study is not likely to unpick the complexities of racialised experiences, and this paper does not claim to have done so. What it does provide is some significant pointers about the way in which a widely-adopted policy to promote young people's sport participation is less effective at engaging the key target group of BAME youth.

The findings indicate that OSH activities are typically less attractive to young people from BAME communities than those of white British ethnic origin; that the 'participation deficit' for BAME pupils increases as young people get older and as responsibility for provision moves from schools to outside (community club) providers; and that this is also the case for sports coaching and sports leadership awards. Different patterns are observed however where pupils classed as BAME are a local majority, i.e. make up the majority (60% or more) of the pupil population at their school.

These findings resonate with what is known of factors influencing BAME participation in community sport. Several studies have revealed, as this one did, that members of BAME groups may experience additional constraints to their participation compared to their white British counterparts. These may include material constraints, including low income and low levels of private transport, and cultural constraints. Research by Scott Porter Research (2001, 2002, in Long *et al.*, 2009) reported how individuals' own cultural beliefs (and those of their family/ community) exclude them from sport. Kay's (2006) study of young Muslim women's participation in sport drew attention to the more acute constraints experienced by females compared to males, and emphasised

the importance of family support, especially parental permission, in facilitating participation.

The results of this study also concur, however, with evidence that supply-side factors may offer additional constraints to BAME young people. Scott Porter Research (2001, 2002) reported that many felt excluded by what they perceive as the 'white nature' of sport, underpinned with a sense that BAME groups are not welcome. There was a concern that the specific needs of their ethnicity may not be accommodated, or that they may experience racism when participating in sport with people from other ethnic backgrounds (Scott Porter Research, 2001, 2002 in Long *et al.*, 2009: p. 18). This experience of sport as 'white' is applicable to the school context, where teachers have been found to have limited cultural knowledge of ethnic and religious diversity (e.g. Dagkas and Benn, 2006; Dagkas, 2007). Fimusanmi's in-depth research (in progress) into the experiences of BAME pupils within Sheffield schools provides particularly detailed evidence of the disjuncture between teacher understandings of ethnicity and identity, and their pupils' experiences. Fimusanmi highlights in particular teachers' limited understanding of the heterogeneous make-up of school BAME populations, and the fluid nature of the identities young people construct. In this study, a number of schools had addressed cultural issues, through strategies such as changing the content and timing of activity programmes to fit with young people's lifestyles and preferences, parent consultation and, in a very few cases, parent education. These approaches were not widespread however and the failure to address these issues may contribute to the participation deficit for BAME pupils in school-based OSH activities.

We have seen that BAME pupils in this study were less likely to participate in provision that was not delivered by the school, and this raises questions about whether OSH activities delivered through local clubs present additional barriers to BAME pupils. There is limited research that specifically addresses the issue of ethnicity in the club sport context, but what there is indicates that, in multi-ethnic areas, community club sport is often highly segregated. Bradbury and Kay (2006) showed this in their research on local football clubs in Leicestershire and Rutland, which found that BME participation was highly concentrated, with one-third (36%) of BME players belonging to just 5 'majority-BME' clubs, although these constituted only 2% of the clubs in the sample. Although the number of BME club workers and coaches was in proportion to local population figures, it was noticeable that the distribution of these was highly concentrated: for example, BME coaches only coached in clubs with at least some BME players, and most (68%) did so only at majority-BME clubs. Bradbury and Kay's qualitative data provided further evidence that BME players did not feel fully at ease participating in majority white clubs; in contrast, majority-BME clubs

not only provided a safe social space for sports participation, but played a wider role in supporting a variety of BME cultural identities within local communities.

The research suggests that the notion of 'comfort' may be especially relevant to participation in community contexts. A study of non-participants by Vector Research (n.d., in Long *et al.*, 2009: p. 31) indicated that 'feeling comfortable' entailed an absence of racism and that, beyond this, "non-participants wanted to see their own culture and peer group in evidence ... they did not want to stand out in terms of dress or language". Lowrey and Kay's (2005) analysis of the WATS project for Muslim youth concurs with this, attributing the success of the project to the central role played by community 'insiders' in its design and delivery. In similar vein, Snape (2005) and Snape and Binks (2008) found that young girls and women were more likely to enjoy participating in sport if a member of their BME group, who was known to the local Asian community, was facilitating sessions (in Long *et al.*, 2009: p. 31). Whether such conditions can easily be met in OSH club-based activities seems unlikely, however, especially where BAME groups make up only a small minority of local populations and are unlikely to have a strong presence in the very small proportion of local sports clubs with which schools are likely to develop links. In these instances the perceived 'whiteness' of local sports provision may be a discouragement to participation by BAME pupils in OSH activities that are not provided by schools themselves.

## Conclusions

The impact of policies on inclusion is neither straightforward (Long *et al.*, 2009: p. 17) nor well-documented (Coalter *et al.*, 2000). We believe this study has value in highlighting the gap in participation in OSH sporting activities between white British and BAME pupils, and throwing light on the particular problem of the school-club links strategy as a mechanism for establishing sustainable participation. For young members of BAME communities, the social and cultural characteristics of community provision may present barriers as well as opportunities.

## Note

- 1 Affiliation membership is available to all sports colleges for a small fee. Membership provides a unique range of support for the education and development of young people through PE and sport. At the time of the survey 84% of sports colleges were affiliated to the Youth Sport Trust.

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