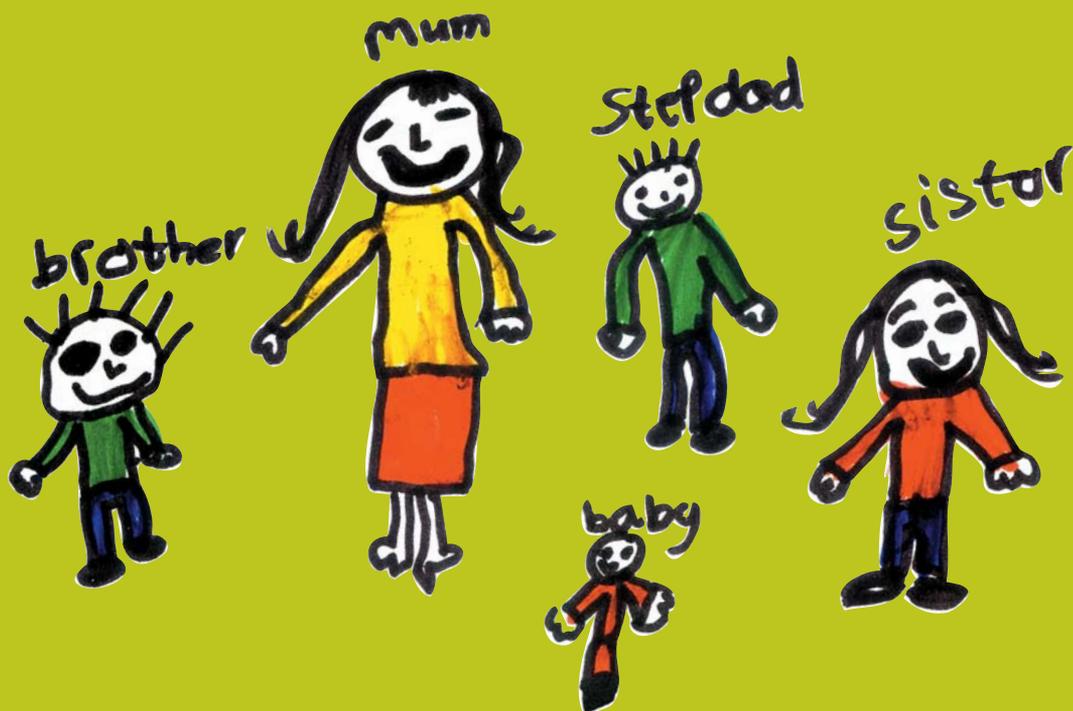


Love makes them happy



A report, on a consultation with primary school pupils in Falkirk about aspects of their sexual health and relationship education curriculum, by the TASC Agency for NHS Forth Valley Health Promotion Department and Falkirk Education Services.

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Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Thanks | 2 |
| Why the work was done | 3 |
| Who was involved | 8 |
| What we did and how we did it | 9 |
| A summary of what the children told us | 12 |
| What children told us | 18 |

1. Physical and emotional changes in growing up 18

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| P4/5 18 Girls understanding of physical and emotional changes in growing up for Girls | P4/5 19 Girls understanding of physical and emotional changes in growing up for Boys | P4/5 20 Girls questions of physical and emotional changes in growing up |
| P4/5 22 Boys understanding of physical and emotional changes in growing up for Boys | P4/5 23 Boys understanding of physical and emotional changes in growing up for Girls | P4/5 24 Boys questions of physical and emotional changes in growing up |
| P6/7 26 Girls understanding of physical and emotional changes in growing up for Girls | P6/7 27 Girls understanding of physical and emotional changes in growing up for Boys | P6/7 28 Girls questions of physical and emotional changes in growing up |
| P6/7 30 Boys understanding of physical and emotional changes in growing up for Boys | P6/7 31 Boys understanding of physical and emotional changes in growing up for Girls | P6/7 31 Boys questions of physical and emotional changes in growing up |

2. Relationships 34

Family Portraits
What can you tell us about these people's relationship?
Talking about relationships

3. Conception, Pregnancy and Birth 50

Overview of P4/P5 groups
Overview of P6/P7 groups

Concluding comments 60

Thanks

Thanks

A big thank you to all the children and school staff who worked with us in this project.

We agreed not to name schools or individuals, and as promised we have done our best to report on what the children told us accurately. We are very grateful for the warm welcome and support given to us across participating schools.

Why the work was done

Background

NHS Forth Valley Health Promotion Department and Falkirk Council Education Services have worked together over several years to enhance the skills and confidence of teachers and health professionals to deliver sex and relationship education in both primary and secondary schools in Falkirk. Staff have been supported to examine what they do and how they do it. Curricular materials have been improved. Schools have been supported to improve practice in a number of areas, including ongoing contact with parents about the purpose and content of sex and relationship education in school.

What has emerged from training with staff, the review of curriculum materials and ongoing communication with parents is a continuing and useful discussion about what children know, what children need to know, what they want to know (which we often find out about through their questioning) and how responsibility for supporting a child's learning in this area can be shared by teachers and parents. What often comes up in discussion is that children can make comments or ask questions which adults find surprising, shocking or embarrassing. Both parents and professionals worry that the information which children pick up, from television, movies, video games or magazines is either overtly sexual or gives children the wrong message when it comes to respect or valuing other people.

In a context where adults want to protect their child from the negative influences the questions we face might be:

- How can we respond to children's comments, questions or worries without then contributing to this erosion of their childhood?
- How can teachers, health professionals and parents be prepared and learn to react to children's questions positively, so ensuring that they feel comfortable to come to us for clarity and positive messages?
- In a culture where children hear, see or otherwise pick up on messages we may feel are inappropriate, how do we facilitate learning at school and in the home which is positive about promoting self esteem and self efficacy, loving relationships and good sexual health?

In the view of NHS Forth Valley Health Promotion Department and Falkirk Council Education Services it was vital to find out more about what children know, and what questions they have to be able to design and deliver effective and appropriate sex and relationship education in schools, and to support parents in their role at home. In knowing these things, it would then be possible for teachers, health professionals and parents to work together to develop information and learning opportunities appropriate to children's needs.

The project was commissioned to inform this process.

The approach

Our intention was to find out more about what children know (including levels of understanding and accuracy) and what they would like to know more about key aspects of sex and relationships. We structured the process by focusing on the following elements of the sex and relationship curriculum:

- The physical and emotional changes that happen to boys and girls as they grow up (what we might refer to as puberty),
- Some aspects of relationships
- What we called ‘the baby’s story’ i.e. conception, through pregnancy and birth.

The national context for sex and relationship education

Before we report on what was learned it is also worth noting that beyond the commitment in Forth Valley there is also a changing national context which progress in Forth Valley reflects.

In 2000 a Working Group on Sex Education in Scottish Schools was established by the Scottish Executive to review the range of curricular advice and support available to teachers on sex education. The group was chaired by Mike McCabe, and its subsequent report became known as the McCabe Report. The report established a number of principles on which sex and relationship education should be based in Scotland’s schools. These were as follows¹:

“Sex education could be defined as a lifelong process whereby children and young people acquire knowledge, understanding and skills, and develop beliefs, attitudes and values about their sexuality and relationships within a moral and ethical framework. The Working Group considers that the key principles are:

- Sex education should be viewed as one element of health education, set within the wider context of health promotion and the health promoting ethos of the school;
- Sex education should contribute to the physical, emotional, moral and spiritual development of all young people within the context of today’s society;
- Education about sexuality and relationships should reflect the cultural, ethnic and religious influences within the home, the school and the community;
- Sex education should be non-discriminatory and sensitive to the diverse backgrounds and needs of all young people;
- Sex education starts informally at an early stage with parents and carers, and continues through to adulthood both within the home and at all stages of school life.”

At the same time a review was taking place with regard to the National Guidelines for Health Education 5-14. Health Education was formally one of five elements within Environmental Studies but is now a free standing element within the 5-14 curriculum. The guidelines state that:

- “Health education within the curriculum should aim to provide opportunities for young people to value themselves, gain in confidence and develop skills and knowledge to take responsibility for their own health at an individual level and as participating citizens”².
- The Scottish Executive intend that this repositioning and higher profile for Health Education should strengthen existing links between sex education, Personal and Social Education and Religious and Moral Education. As a result, sex education should be embedded in a curricular package which emphasises good health, personal responsibility and positive relationships.

Finally, the Scottish Executive has also now published ‘Respect and Responsibility: Strategy and Action Plan for Improving Sexual Health’³ which recognises that “sexual health in Scotland is poor” and which seeks to “promote a broad understanding of sexual health and sexual relationships that encompasses emotions, attitudes and social context”. In terms of the role of schools the strategy states the following⁴:

- ‘Parents play a key role in all aspects of their children’s education. It is essential that parents and carers are consulted on the development and revision of sex and relationships education programmes as and when that arises; and parents and carers should be given the opportunity in advance to view key teaching materials and to ask questions about any aspect of a sex-education programme. Schools should also give pupils an opportunity to identify and express their own needs’
- Education Department Circular 2/2001 concerning the conduct of sex and relationships education in schools was developed following the McCabe Report. This was welcomed widely and sets out a framework for the development and delivery of sex and relationships education in Scotland. This along with the provisions of section 35 of the Ethical Standards in Public Life, etc. (Scotland) Act 2000, puts a duty on councils to have regard to ‘the value of a stable family life in a child’s development’ in developing sex and relationships education programmes. Circular 2/2001 places the values of respect and responsibility at the heart of sex and relationships education:

‘Pupils should be encouraged to appreciate the value of stable family life, parental responsibility and family relationships in bringing up children and offering them security, stability and happiness. Pupils should also be encouraged to appreciate the value of commitment in relationships and partnerships, including the value placed on marriage by religious groups and others in Scottish society. At the same time, teachers must respect and avoid causing hurt or offence to those who come from backgrounds that do not reflect this value. All pupils should be encouraged to understand the importance of self-restraint, dignity, respect for themselves and the views of others.’

The primary school curriculum

Sex and relationship education takes place in schools in the context of a wide and varied curriculum. In recognition of an already full curriculum, and the expectation on schools to ‘enable all children to develop their capacities as successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors to society’ the Scottish Executive has recently published A Curriculum for Excellence⁵, a report by the Curriculum Review Group. One of the key aims of the ongoing review which the Group will undertake is to ‘de-clutter’ the primary school curriculum and to ensure that there is more space in the curriculum for in-depth work to ensure that pupils develop the skills and knowledge they need for life.

It is also the intention of the Executive that every school in Scotland becomes a Health Promoting School by 2007. A Health Promoting School⁶ is one in which there is a whole school approach to the physical, social, spiritual, mental and emotional wellbeing of all pupils and staff,

Sex and relationship education must find its place within the initiatives detailed briefly here. It is the intention of the study reported on here to provide information for NHS Forth Valley and Falkirk Council Education Services which will help ensure that this part of the curriculum reflects the aspirations for improved skills, knowledge and health implicit in them.

The child’s voice/the rights of the child

Across services there is an increasing interest in what children, young people and adults have to contribute to the design, development and delivery of those services. People often talk about the ‘voice’ of service users, and whilst respecting that professionals bring a great deal of knowledge and expertise, the people they work with do too. In terms of working with children to engage them in discussions about services, including education, Priscilla Alderson has written:

- ‘Respect for children’s insights involves questioning the belief that professional academic knowledge is always superior to lay knowledge, feeling and experience.’⁷

The intention is that the voices represented in this report bring something to the consideration of how sex and relationship education will be developed in Falkirk schools.

The provision of sex and relationship education can also be seen in the context of the rights of the child. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the United Nations in 1989. It spells out the basic human rights to which every child, from birth to 18 years old, is entitled. These are set out in 54 sections called articles. The articles are holistic in their view of children’s lives, covering as they do civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights.

The Convention does not view children as dependent or weak but fosters the view that children are of equal worth with the capacity to play an active part in decisions made about them and in society generally. The Convention addresses rights such as the right to survival, the right to the development of the child’s full physical and mental potential, the right to protection from influences that are harmful to a child’s development and the right to participate in family, cultural and social life. The Convention protects these rights by setting minimum standards that governments must meet in providing health care, education, legal and social services to children.

Every country in the world has been asked to sign up to the Convention. This is called ratification. More countries have ratified the Convention than any other human rights treaty in history. The UK government ratified the Convention in 1991.

Signing up to the Convention means that governments must say what they are doing to make sure that children benefit from the rights in the Convention. Once a country has ratified the Convention they must then submit an initial report on progress on implementation of the rights contained within the Convention within two years, and then every five years. The last UK Government report was submitted in September 1999. Several of the articles of the UNCRC can help us consider the importance of the sex and relationship education we provide:

- **Article 3** states that ‘in all actions concerning the child, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration’.
- **Article 12** states that signatories ‘shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child’.
- **Article 13** states that children and young people ‘shall have the right to freedom of expression: this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child’s choice’
- **Article 24** states that signatories must ‘recognise the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health. State parties shall strive to ensure that no child is deprived of his or her right to access such health care services’

Having detailed some of the background and context for the work undertaken, we now report on the approach taken, and what children told us.

Who was involved

Project team:

The project was commissioned by a joint working group consisting of staff from both NHS Forth Valley Health Promotion Department and Falkirk Council Education Services. The group commissioned The TASC Agency to work with named staff to design and facilitate the work with children. The staff involved in the process were:

- **Colin Morrison** and **Daniel Clapton**: The TASC Agency
- **Pamela Vannan**: Senior Health Promotion Officer, NHS Forth Valley Health Promotion Department
- **Liz Love**: Teacher, Falkirk Council Education Services

Pupils:

Four schools in Falkirk were approached and agreed to take part. The schools reflected a range of different contexts, from urban to semi-rural, from larger to smaller schools, both denominational and non-denominational schools were involved.

The facilitators worked with children from P4, P5, P6 and P7 classes. Some were composite classes. The project took place at the beginning of the academic year before any of the P7 children had had the more concentrated sex and relationship education curriculum input which often comes well into their final year at primary school.

Both pupils and schools were guaranteed anonymity, so we have not named schools, nor give the names of children. We report on the children's comments in two age clusters – P4/5 and P6/7. Where findings show a difference in the comments or views of boys and girls we report on these separately.

A total of **208** pupils participated. Details of age and gender follow:

| | School 1 | School 2 | School 3 | School 4 | TOTAL |
|-------------------|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| P4/5 girls | 31 (2 classes: 17/14 girls in each) | 13 | 6 | 16 | 66 |
| P4/5 boys | 29 (2 classes: 13/16 boys in each) | 15 | 10 | 9 | 63 |
| P6/7 girls | | 11 | 14 | 16 | 41 |
| P6/7 boys | | 16 | 8 | 14 | 38 |

What we did and how we did it

This is a short description of the process followed with each of the classes. Firstly, a few key points about the format and experience of the process:

- All children were given an information leaflet in advance of the session. This leaflet was also shared with parents, or the content of the leaflet was used as a basis for a letter to parents written by the head teacher.
- Parents were given the option of removing their child from the session if they wished. 208 children participated. In one school 1 child was withdrawn, and in another school 4 children were withdrawn.
- An adult of the same sex facilitated small single sex groups.
- On some occasions, as described below, children worked individually, at other points they worked in small groups.
- The smallest group was 3 pupils, the largest was 8 pupils.
- Sessions lasted 2.5 hours, plus any time-tabled breaks.
- At the beginning of each session the adult facilitators reminded children about how confidentiality and child protection works: that we would not record any individual child's name, that we would only share information with their class teacher if we were concerned that they or someone they knew was at risk, or was being harmed.
- Class teachers were not present during the workshops, in one school a member of the senior management team was present but not directly participating in the individual or small group activities.
- Where children worked individually they recorded comments in the recording tool provided, they could ask for help with words although it was emphasised that for the session they need not worry about spelling.
- Where group exercises were undertaken the adult facilitator generally acted as scribe.
- A key element of the session was explaining to children that they could use any words they wanted to use, in every group this was returned to regularly as children were often keen to contribute but reticent to use words which they described as 'rude' for fear of being punished.
- All facilitators reported that children took the tasks very seriously, that although they were free to use words they might normally use in a classroom setting there was no sense of using the space to be deliberately provocative.
- In every setting our intention was to be purposeful, serious, and respectful but to encourage the children to be relaxed and engaged.

Outline of the session:

| Element | Narrative |
|---|---|
| 1. Introductions and getting to know each other | <p>Children made name badges. They organised themselves into 4 single sex groups.</p> <p>The children were reminded of the information leaflets they had been given. As one group, a member of the adult team explained the purpose of the session, including how confidentiality and child protection works. We played a game to emphasise the importance of communication and listening. Other important things about the day were explained to the whole group: no right or wrong answers, not to worry about spelling, to ask an adult for help if needed (you can whisper quietly to keep it confidential).</p> |
| 2. Thinking and talking about physical and emotional changes in growing up, | <p>Children worked through a booklet of 6 pages. Working individually but with a facilitator alongside each small group. Each group leader took their group through this. The exercise was introduced as being about the changes we all go through as we grow up.</p> <p>On page 1/Front page: the children wrote that they were a boy or girl and their age.</p> <p>On page 2 they wrote about what they remembered about being a baby, and they drew a picture of themselves as a baby.</p> <p>On page 3 they wrote about themselves now, thinking about things they like and like to do. They drew a picture of themselves now.</p> <p>On page 4 the facilitator reminded children that we were thinking about how we change as we grow up. Some changes are to do with our bodies and the way we look. Some changes are about our feelings. Continuing to work on their own the children were asked to write down some of the changes that happen to boys and girls as they grow up, remembering that some changes happen to them both.</p> <p>On page 5 the children were asked to write down any questions they had about the changes that happen to us as we grow up.</p> <p>On page 6 the children were asked to imagine that they were grown up, and to finish the sentence: When I am an adult I want to...</p> |

| Element | Narrative |
|---|---|
| 3. Thinking and talking about relationships | <p>This part of the workshop engaged children in drawing about and talking about family and relationships. The children worked individually to represent their families pictorially, they were asked to include all the people they considered had a role in caring for them.</p> <p>The children then worked individually and looked at a series of pictures of two people together, they were asked to respond to the question: what can you tell us about these people's relationship?</p> <p>Finally we asked the children to work in a small group and to give their responses to the questions:</p> <p>Why do people have a relationship?</p> <p>What makes people happy in a relationship?</p> <p>What makes people sad in a relationship?</p> |
| 4. "A baby's story": Thinking and talking about how babies start and are born | <p>Children worked in pairs or small groups. The facilitator described the task in their small group.</p> <p>The first task was to write down all the things they knew about how babies start, what they know about a Mum being pregnant, and then having a baby. Children were encouraged to write everything down and not worry about what order/sequence they wrote it in.</p> <p>Next the children organised what they had listed earlier and instructed the facilitator to record the order in which they understood the process from conception to birth.</p> <p>The children were then asked to raise any questions they had, or raise anything they wanted to know more about. The facilitator recorded all questions.</p> |
| 5. Last game and thank you | <p>Children were thanked for their contributions. They were asked to take a moment individually, and quietly, to think of someone they could talk to if they had a worry or a question.</p> <p>They were given a 'thank you' bag. Each bag contained information about ChildLine, the Children 1st booklet 'The big bag of worries', pencils and stickers.</p> |

A summary of what the children told us

Physical and emotional changes in growing up

P4/5 Girls (total:66)

Girls understanding of physical and emotional changes in growing up for Girls

Understanding of physical and emotional changes in that happen to girls as they grow up focused mostly on physical changes. Only 4 girls mentioned that girls get their period as they grow up. There were few references to emotional/intellectual development or changes. Other comments from Primary 4/5 included things girls can do when they grow up such as having children (12), getting married (10), getting a job (10).

Girls understanding of physical and emotional changes in growing up for Boys

In terms of the changes boys experience the Primary 4/5 girls again focused mostly on physical changes, particularly in terms of getting bigger, taller and stronger and the development of body hair. Girls (12) also wrote that a boys penis grows, for example: 'privates get bigger'. Some girls commented on boy's emotional/intellectual development, they said they get smarter (8), get more stupid (3), they think different (3). Girls also commented on body changes and smells: boys get smelly feet (7), they get body odour (4). The girls commented on things they think boys can do when they grow up, like getting married (10), changing their look (10), changing hair style (6)).

Questions Raised

The questions recorded from P4/5 girls focused on the issues of making a baby, child birth, developing breasts and sex.

P4/5 Boys (total:63)

Boys understanding of physical and emotional changes in growing up for Boys

Understanding of changes in growing up for boys focused mostly on physical changes: getting stronger (18) getting taller (15) and getting bigger (12). A few boys recorded changes to their penis in different terms: penis gets bigger (1), get a big willy (2), boys privates change (2), you get a seed (1). The development of body hair was also recorded, most commonly boys said 'grow hairy' (20). 5 boys mentioned that voices get deeper/change. Similarly the P4/5 girls comments about things boys and girls can do as they grow up boys also listed some changes such getting a job (8), having sex (3), getting married (3), changing hair style (3).

Boys understanding of physical and emotional changes in growing up for Girls

P4/5 boys understanding of physical and emotional changes for girls growing up focused on physical growth, with comments such as girls grow taller (9) they get bigger bums (7) and breasts (18). Boys also recorded that girls can get pregnant (3) or have babies when they get older (17). Boys commented on things that girls can do when they are grown up, such as: getting a job (5), changing hair style (4), getting married (3), kissing (2).

Questions Raised

P4/5 boys recorded questions that reflected a particular interest in physical development/body changes and about sex and relationships

P6/7 Girls (total:41)

Girls understanding of physical and emotional changes in growing up for Girls

Understanding of changes in growing up for girls focused mostly on physical growth: girls get taller (31), breasts grow (38) hips grow (7). Girls also listed the growth of more body hair (25) hair on the vagina (11), under the arms (7), on the legs (4). Girls identified the need to shave their body (7). Unlike the younger P4/5 girls periods featured in the P6/7 girls thoughts. 33 girls listed periods as a change, a further 6 girls mentioned that you start to use tampons as you grow up. The girls also commented on the emotional changes, they talked about girls being more moody (10), angry (6), stressed (6) and grumpier (5). Girls also said they get smarter (9). Some girls recognised the development of physical/emotional attraction: start to fancy boys (7) and fall in love (3). The other main changes listed by the girls were developing spots (12) and changes to hormones (16). 6 girls mentioned that as you grow older you begin to drink wine and vodka.

Girls understanding of physical and emotional changes in growing up for Boys

The P6/7 girls identified physical growth, being stronger and development of body hair as the main changes that happen to boys: bigger muscles (22), stronger (20). Girls also noted that boys grow more body hair (14) or develop pubic hair (8), chest hair (12), leg hair (5), under arm hair (3), facial hair (8). Others noted that boys start shaving (7). The girls also said that a boy's penis grows (10). 1 girl mentioned boys produce sperm.

The girls also commented on the emotional development of boys with comments such as: boys start to fancy girls (8), talk/think about girls (4) and like girls because of their breasts (6), boys are less sensitive than girls (3) and boys become more feminine (3). Some girls highlighted aspects of behaviours or attitudes of boys: they fight more (6), they swear (6), boys behave stupid when drunk (6), they drink beer vodka/wine and they smoke (6). A further 4 suggested that as boys get older 'they think that women should do everything'.

Questions Raised

The girls identified other body changes in boys as: they become smelly (7), get spots (18) and their voices get deeper. (19). 6 girls also stated that when two men kiss it means they are gay and that men wear condoms to stop having a baby (6).

P6/7 girls questions focused on the areas of hormones, periods, body changes, boys/gender, condoms, breastfeeding and emotions.

P6/7 Boys (total:38)

Boys understanding of physical and emotional changes in growing up for Boys

Understanding of changes for boys focused mostly on physical changes such as growing bigger (24), muscles develop (7). The most widely commented change related to the development of body hair (45 in total, listing different parts of the body). Boys recorded comments about a boy's penis growing (30). Other comments included testicles drop (6), wet dreams (3) and penis hardens (2). P6/7 boys also mentioned the term puberty (10). Others also stated that boy's voices get deeper (15). Spots (10) and body odour (4) were also listed. Boys also highlighted aspects of behaviours or attitudes towards others: behaviour changes (3), you get feelings for girls (2), you get grumpier (2)

Boys understanding of physical and emotional changes in growing up for Girls

P6/7 boys understanding of changes for girls focused on growth of breasts (19), hair 'on private parts' (15) getting taller/bigger (7) and periods (15). 7 boys directly stated that puberty was a change that happened to girls as they grow up. Boys also recorded that girls get spots (7). Changing behaviour or feelings were also noted, with comments such as: get more annoying (2), grumpier (2). The boys made no reference to pregnancy.

Questions Raised

P6/7 boys questions focused on physical development/body changes and sex and relationships.

Images of relationships

What can you tell us about these people's relationship?

The children were invited to comment on the relationships represented in photographs. They were encouraged to make as many comments or interpretations of the images as they wanted to, keeping in mind as with all the exercises undertaken that there were no right or wrong answers. The children's responses tell us about how they interpret the relationships they see, what assumptions they make about people who are together - whether they are old, young, have a visible disability, are of different races, or the same sex. The detail of the children's comments is presented in the main body of the report, alongside the images they saw. In general terms the children commented as follows:



Image 1 represented two older people, one male and one female, heads together smiling. The children mostly perceived the pair as a couple, married, happy and in love. Some also saw them as grandparents.

Image 2 represented two young women, smiling, one holding on to the other at the shoulders. The P4/5 children commented predominantly that the women were sisters or friends. 17 of the 66 girls of this age said the women were lesbians, 4 of the 63 boys said they were lesbians. The P6/7 girls said mostly they were friends and 23 of the 41 girls that they were lesbians. The most common relationship described by the boys (20 out of 38) was that the women were lesbians.

Image 3 represented a man and a woman, smiling, holding flowers, looking at each other. Most boys and girls interpreted the photograph as one of friends, with the next most common description being that the people are boyfriend/girlfriend, in love or married.

Image 4 represented a young man and woman, smiling, with the woman leaning into the man as they lie back on a seat/sofa. Across groups children perceived the relationship represented as being that of boyfriend/girlfriend or people in love and happy. Some of the children also commented that the couple have sex or have had sex.

Image 5 represented an older man and woman, with the man's arm around the woman. Both are smiling, the woman is sitting in a wheelchair. Most children perceived the pair as a couple, or married. Some of the children recorded comments about a caring relationship, and some about the woman's disability.

Image 6 represented two men, both smiling, one standing behind the other with his arm around the man in front of him. The majority of children across groups recorded that the men are gay. Other comments about their relationship included that they are in love, live together or married. Comments from P6/7 boys also included: poofs (4), bent (2), perverts (1) Children also commented that the men could be brothers and friends.

Why do people have a relationship?

Across the groups children of both genders and all ages talked about people having relationships because they like, care for or love each other. Some groups made comments about loving and caring in more detail, such as ‘people love you all the time no matter what’. The children talked about people ‘fancying each other’, and having crushes. Relationships were also a way to not be alone or lonely. Across groups children also talked about having a relationship so that you can have children or have a family. Both boys and girls of all ages said people have a relationship because they want to have sex, although boys mentioned this more.

What makes people happy in a relationship?

The children identified across groups that people are happy in relationships when they are in love, kissing, making babies, having children and having sex. Boys made more comments, in both P4/5 and P6/7 about sex. The children also recorded comments about doing things together in a relationship such as ‘take you out for romantic dinners’ and ‘walk along the beach’. The P6/7 boys and girls made more mention of emotional aspects of relationships with comments such as: ‘people are happy in a relationship because they have a friend and love each other’ and ‘for someone to turn to’ and ‘the other person is understanding’. Both boys and girls recorded the role of material things, such as ‘buying stuff’ and ‘the fancy house they live in’. The P6/7 boys and girls also recorded comments about happiness being dependent on not behaving in certain ways with comments such as: ‘don’t abuse people’ and ‘not cheating on each other’.

What makes people sad in a relationship?

Across groups the children identified fighting, arguing, shouting, not speaking to each other and splitting up as the main things that make people sad in a relationship. Loss was a recurring issue – in terms of losing a partner to someone else, or the death of a partner or baby. Miscarriage featured in several lists. Some children commented on the impact on children of divorce and separation: ‘divorce makes the children unhappy’. The P6/7 boys and girls listed specific problems or behaviours by a partner which can make people sad with comments such as: ‘partner drinking or being violent’, ‘assault people’, ‘abortion’, ‘leaving for another life’, ‘finding out your partner is gay’.

Conception, Pregnancy and Birth

In general terms the children in the P4/5 classes had an understanding of the baby’s story being about conception through pregnancy to birth. There were no significant differences between what girls and boys reported. Boys and girls in most groups recorded comments about men and women ‘having sex’, one group talked about ‘special cuddles’. The children talked about babies being made from eggs and seeds but few children had any notion about how this happened.

When considering pregnancy the children talked about the importance of being healthy when pregnant. The children were aware of the baby growing over a period of time, although where estimates were given for the duration of pregnancy these varied across groups. Children mostly talked about the baby coming out of the woman’s bum, between her legs, fanny or vagina, some groups mentioned that the Mum might need her tummy to be cut to allow the baby out. Some children recorded comments about birth being a time that could be life threatening for both Mum and baby.

Although the P4/5 children talked about sex, conception, pregnancy and birth it is clear from their questions which followed (again more detail later) that they often do not understand how or why things happen. Questions recorded by the P4/5 children were predominantly about pregnancy, birth and sexual behaviour.

In general terms P6/7 children have greater knowledge than their younger P4/5 counterparts but for some the detail is sketchy or misinformed. The children had many questions.

Boys and girls recorded comments about men and women having sex, some groups commenting that this would happen in a relationship. Both boys and girls had a good idea of conception requiring both sperm and egg, and that these come together when the man and woman have sex. There was some confusion about what actually happened at conception.

When considering pregnancy both boys and girls talked about the importance of being healthy when pregnant. The children talked about birth and that the baby would come out of the woman’s vagina or her tummy would be cut. Some groups recorded that birth was painful and that it could be life threatening for both Mum and baby.

Although there appears to be some knowledge about sex, conception, pregnancy and birth i.e. children can talk about these things and give what appears to be a factual understanding - it is clear from the questions which followed that the ‘why and how?’ questions have not been adequately addressed or explored. The P6/7 questions related to themes of body changes/puberty, menstruation, sexual behaviour/practices and relationships. Boys were more likely to ask questions about these areas. There were also some questions about abortion and gender identity.

Physical and emotional changes in growing up

The children worked individually, responding to a series of prompts/questions, which asked them to tell us what they knew about the physical, and emotional changes that happen to girls and to boys as they grow up. They were also given the space to write down any questions they had.

We report in this section firstly on P4/5 girls, then P4/5 boys, P6/7 girls and finally P6/7 boys.

P4/5 girls understanding of physical and emotional changes in growing up for girls

Working individually to identify the changes that happen when girls grow up the P4/5 girls (total:66) focused mostly on physical changes, particularly the growth of hair - 10 said they 'get hairy', others made specific reference to hair on legs (2), bum (3) or vagina (8) – and the development of breasts (20). Other girls recorded physical growth like 'getting fatter' (5). The girls also identified other physical changes which come with age, for example identifying that their feet will grow (8), or they will generally get bigger (15). Only 4 girls mention that girls get their period as they grow up.

There were few references to emotional/intellectual development or changes; though 5 stated that girls become smarter as they grow and similar comments included girls get wiser (1), think different (4) and don't play games anymore (1). 2 suggested that girls feel horrible when they grow and 1 stated that girls feel happy.

Other comments from the Primary 4/5 included things girls can do when they grow up. These include things such as having children (12), getting married (10), getting a job (10), changing your look (8), wearing make up (8), changing hair styles (4), having sex (2), drinking alcohol (1) and going to the pub (1).

Example: what P4/5 girls (school 1: class 2: total 14) told us when asked to write about changes that happen to girls as they grow up:

| | | | |
|--------------------|----|----------------------|---|
| Bigger breasts | 14 | They have babies | 2 |
| Get hairy | 10 | Change your look | 2 |
| Get bigger | 7 | Get stronger | 2 |
| Think different | 4 | Look different | 1 |
| They get a period | 4 | Drink alcohol | 1 |
| Get a hairy flower | 3 | Girls hate boys more | 1 |
| Longer hair | 3 | Our body will change | 1 |
| Eat different | 3 | Fatter tummy | 1 |
| Taste buds change | 3 | They get wiser | 1 |
| Hairy bum | 3 | Feel different | 1 |
| They buy bra's | 2 | | |

P4/5 girls understanding of physical and emotional changes in growing up for boys

The Primary 4/5 girls identified physical growth and development of body hair as the main changes that happen to boys with puberty.

Mostly this was about boys getting taller (19), or they grow bigger (10) and get stronger (10). The girls also commented that as boys grow they get bigger feet (1), bigger muscles (4), bigger bellies (4), bigger noses (1), fatter (2), skinnier (1) and get a six pack (5). 12 girls wrote that a boy's penis grows, for example 'privates get bigger'.

Girls (10) commented that boys 'get hairy' as they grow up. Other comments were more specific and included boys get hair on their chests (10), face (21), legs (9), nipples (3), armpits (7), noses (6) and privates (4). 2 girls commented that boys lose their hair as they grow up and 2 said that they go bald.

Some girls commented on boy's emotional/intellectual development or changes as they grow up. They said they get smarter (8), get more stupid (3), they think different (3) and they no longer play with action men (2).

Girls also commented on body changes and smells: boys get smelly feet (7), they get body odour (4) and they get spots (2).

The girls also commented on things they think boys can do when they grow up. These included things like getting married (10), changing their look (10), changing hair style (6), wearing aftershave (6), going to the pub (6), going on dates (5), becoming a dad (4), drinking alcohol (2), getting a ring (1), drinking beer (1), and having sex (1).

Example: what P4/5 girls (school 2: total 13) told us when asked to write about changes that happen to boys as they grow up:

| | | | |
|----------------------|---|---------------------------------|---|
| Get taller | 4 | My dad has a scar | 1 |
| Penis gets longer | 4 | They will stink | 1 |
| Start wearing boxers | 4 | Bigger noses | 1 |
| Nipples get hairy | 3 | Fatter | 1 |
| Grow a beard | 3 | Lip pierced | 1 |
| Hairy chest | 3 | Get a Rangers ring | 1 |
| Hair gets shorter | 3 | Wear Nike shoes | 1 |
| Stinky feet | 3 | Can do a handstand | 1 |
| Stronger | 3 | Have hair straightened | 1 |
| Gets grey hair | 3 | Get spiky hair | 1 |
| Get smarter | 2 | Taller | 1 |
| Hairy legs | 2 | Do a front flip on a trampoline | 1 |
| Hair changes colour | 1 | Have sex | 1 |

P4/5 girls questions about physical and emotional changes in growing up

Continuing to work on their own the Primary 4/5 girls recorded questions they had. The lists below include all questions asked across the groups and the numbers of girls who asked them. Making a baby, childbirth, developing breasts and sex were the issues, which they were most keen to know more about.

About how a baby is made

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| Why can't children have babies? | 7 | I'd like to know more about babies | 1 |
| How are babies made? | 3 | Do you have to have babies? | 2 |
| How does the egg appear in our belly? | 2 | How do you produce babies? | 1 |
| How is the egg made? | 1 | Do you need a boyfriend to have babies? | 1 |
| How do ladies get pregnant? | 2 | How do you ask for a baby? | 1 |
| How does the egg hatch in the woman's tummy? | 2 | Do you need to have sex to get a baby? | 1 |
| | | How does the baby grow? | 1 |

About contraception

| | | | |
|----------------------------|---|--|---|
| Why do women wear condoms? | 3 | There is a disease that kills you from sex | 1 |
|----------------------------|---|--|---|

About birth

| | | | |
|---|---|------------------------------------|---|
| Why do ladies scream when they are having a baby? | 8 | When you have a baby does it hurt? | 1 |
| How do babies come out? | 1 | How do babies get born? | 1 |
| How do we take a baby from our stomach? | 1 | | |

About growth of breasts and breast feeding

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Why do ladies wear bras? | 3 | Why do boobs grow? | 3 |
| When do you get breasts? | 1 | When you have a baby why do they suck on your breast to get milk instead of a bottle? | 1 |
| How does milk get into the breast? | 3 | | |

About sex

| | | | |
|--|---|----------------------|---|
| Why do you have sex? | 1 | How do you have sex? | 6 |
| How would you react when you have sex? | 1 | | |

About hair growth

| | | | |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| Why do women get hairy under their arms? | 2 | Will we get a hairy chest? | 1 |
| Why do boys get hairy armpits? | 1 | Why does your hair grow? | 1 |
| Why do you get hairs on your bum? | 1 | Why do you get hairs on your flower? | 1 |
| | | Will my hair get longer? | 1 |

About emotions

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------|---|
| Why do you get grumpy? | 1 | Will I feel horrible? | 1 |
| Why does our feeling's change? | 1 | | |

About boys

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|----------------------------|---|
| Why do men get bigger middles? | 3 | Why do boys get six packs? | 2 |
|--------------------------------|---|----------------------------|---|

About periods

| | | | |
|----------------------|---|----------------------------------|---|
| Is your period sore? | 1 | What age to you get your period? | 2 |
|----------------------|---|----------------------------------|---|

Other questions

| | | | |
|-------------------|---|--|--|
| Will I get spots? | 2 | | |
|-------------------|---|--|--|

P4/5 boys understanding of physical and emotional changes in growing up for boys

Working individually to identify the changes that happen with puberty the P4/5 boys (total: 63) focused mostly on physical changes. They identified getting stronger (18) and getting taller (15). Other comments included getting bigger (12), and that particular parts of their body grow: ears (2), bum (3), nails (1), feet (1), nipples (2), teeth (1) and organs (1). They also commented that boys get faster (6) as they grow and also that some become fatter (3) while others become thinner (3). Boys recorded changes to their penis in different terms: penis gets bigger (1), get a big willy (2), boy's privates change (2), you get a seed (1).

The development of body hair was also recorded. This was highlighted under the general phrase of, 'grow hairy' (20) and a few boys also mentioned hair growth in particular parts of the body: penis (3) face (8), chest (2), nose (2), bum (2) and legs (1).

Five P4/5 boys mentioned that voices get deeper/change.

Some boys commented on emotional/intellectual changes that occur as they get older. These included getting happier (3), getting sadder (2), getting paranoid (1), personality changes (1) and feelings change (1). 4 boys felt that you get smarter when you grow up, while 1 thought you get wiser and 2 felt that you get stupid.

Similar to the Primary 4/5 girls comments about things boys and girls can do as they grow up, boys also listed some changes such as getting a job (8), having sex (3), getting married (3), changing hair style (3), getting a house (1), living on own (1), driving (1), getting drunk (1), drinking alcohol (1) and eating junk food (1).

Example: what P4/5 boys (school 4: total 9) told us when asked to write about changes that happen to boys as they grow up:

| | | | |
|------------------|---|------------------|---|
| Stronger | 4 | Bigger muscles | 1 |
| Get a job | 4 | Better at sports | 1 |
| Get married | 2 | Get faster | 1 |
| Get bigger | 2 | Smarter | 1 |
| More hairy | 2 | Drink alcohol | 1 |
| Bigger organs | 1 | Bigger shoes | 1 |
| Get friends | 1 | Taller | 1 |
| Get a new house | 1 | Voice changes | 1 |
| Live on your own | 1 | Shorter hair | 1 |
| Drive | 1 | Grow | 1 |

P4/5 boys understanding of physical and emotional changes in growing up for girls

The Primary 4/5 boys identified physical growth as the main change that happen to girls with puberty. They said girls grow taller (9) and bigger (6), get fatter (6) or skinnier (3), they get bigger bums (7) ears (3) and noses (3). They recorded comments about breasts (18), such as girl's boobs get bigger. Other comments included girls get faster (2) and get stronger (1). The boys also identified that girls get longer hair (20), 1 boy said girls get hair on 'their privates'.

Boys also recorded that girls can get pregnant (3) or have babies when they get older (17). A few other comments were made about body changes: girls get vagina's (3), girls get seed's (1) and their willies grow (1).

Boys also commented on things that girls can do when they are grown up, such as: getting a job (5), changing hair style (4), getting married (3), kissing (2), buying underwear (2), talking on the phone (2), changing their look (2), wearing make up (1), cuddling (1), having a boyfriend (1), eating junk food (1), living on their own (1), driving (1) and getting their own home (1)

A few boys mentioned emotional developments in girls. These included, they love to cuddle (1), their feelings change (1), they get happier (1) they get sadder (1).

Example: what P4 boys (school 1, class 1: total 13) told us when asked to write about changes that happen to girls as they grow up:

| | | | |
|------------------------|---|------------------------|---|
| Get longer hair | 5 | Stronger | 1 |
| Get nicer | 3 | Cute | 1 |
| Get older | 2 | Use make up | 1 |
| Faster | 2 | Taller | 1 |
| They can have a baby | 2 | Smarter | 1 |
| Grow bigger | 2 | Look cool | 1 |
| They kiss | 2 | Love to cuddle | 1 |
| They get more exercise | 1 | Get their ears pierced | 1 |

P4/5 boys questions about physical and emotional changes in growing up

Continuing to work on their own the Primary 4/5 boys recorded questions they had. The lists below include all questions asked across the groups and the numbers of boys who asked them. The boy's questions reflect a particular interest in physical development and body changes and about sex and relationships

About girls' physical development/body changes

| | | | |
|---|----|---|---|
| Why do girls get boobs? | 12 | Why do girls have parts that boys don't have? | 1 |
| Why do girls scream? | 2 | Why do girls get longer hair? | 1 |
| Do girl's voices get deeper as they get older? | 1 | Can girls get hairy here? | 1 |
| Does girl's hair change colour as they get older? | 1 | Why do girls' vaginas get bigger? | 1 |
| | | Why are boys' bodies different from girls? | 1 |

About physical development/body changes

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Why do you get bigger? | 4 | Why do old people lose their hair? | 1 |
| Why are bones hard? | 3 | Why do old people grow into midgets? | 1 |
| How does your body grow? | 3 | How do we get grey hair? | 1 |
| Why do old people shrink? | 2 | Does your heart get bigger when you grow? | 1 |
| Why do you get a beard/moustache? | 2 | Why do boys' willies get bigger? | 1 |
| Why do boys' balls get hairy? | 2 | Do your muscles get stronger? | 1 |
| Do our bones become longer as we get older? | 1 | Why do we get hairy? | 1 |

About birth

| | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------------|---|
| I don't understand why girls have babies? | 3 | How sore is it to have a baby? | 1 |
| | | How are babies made? | 1 |

About sex and relationships

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|----------------------------|---|
| Why do people have sex? | 4 | Why does sex feel minging? | 1 |
| Is sex the same as relationships? | 2 | Why does sex feel gross? | 1 |
| What do you do in sex? | 1 | Why is sex funny? | 1 |
| How do we make babies? | 1 | Why is the word sex funny? | 1 |

About emotions

| | | | |
|------------------------|---|--|--|
| Does your mood change? | 1 | | |
|------------------------|---|--|--|

P6/7 girls understanding of physical and emotional changes in growing up for girls

Working individually to identify the changes that happen with puberty the P6/7 girls (41) focused mostly on physical growth. This included identification that girls get taller (31), breasts grow (38) as do hips (7), muscles (3), bum (1) and feet (3). There were also more general comments on changes which included: body changes (2), shape changes (2) grow bigger (2), face changes (3), older looking (1) and look different (1).

Girls also listed the growth of more body hair (25). In terms of specific parts of the body, girls mentioned hair growth on the vagina (11), under the arms (7), on the legs (4) and on the toes (2). Girls identified the need to shave their body (7).

Unlike the younger P4/5 girls periods featured in the P6/7 girls' thoughts. 33 girls listed periods as a change, a further 6 girls mentioned that you start to use tampons as you grow up.

The girls also commented on the emotional changes that you go through as you grow up. They talked about girls being more moody (10), angry (6), stressed (6) and grumpier (5). Girls also mentioned that as they get older they get smarter (9), think more old (2), get sensible (2), more serious (1) and play less (1).

Some girls also recognised the development of physical/emotional attraction to others. They commented that as you grow up you start to fancy boys (7) and fall in love (3). The other main changes listed by the girls were developing spots (12) and changes to hormones (16).

6 girls mentioned that as you grow older you begin to drink wine and vodka.

Example: what P6/7 Girls (school 2: total 11) told us when asked to write about changes that happen to girls as they grow up:

| | | | |
|--------------------|----|------------------|---|
| Get periods | 11 | Moods change | 3 |
| Get boobs | 9 | Nose gets bigger | 3 |
| Taller | 8 | Pubic hair | 3 |
| Get hair on vagina | 7 | Face changes | 3 |
| Hairy underarms | 6 | Get bigger feet | 2 |
| Get grumpier | 5 | Grow bigger | 2 |
| Adult teeth | 4 | Hairy toes | 2 |
| Spots | 4 | Get hairy | 2 |
| Bigger boobs | 4 | More mature | 2 |
| Hairy legs | 3 | Sleepier | 1 |

| | | | |
|------------------|---|--------------------|---|
| Sleepier | 1 | Lighter voice | 1 |
| Mature | 1 | Longer hair | 1 |
| Get more serious | 1 | Pregnant | 1 |
| Play less | 1 | Body shape changes | 1 |
| Think about boys | 1 | Faint more | 1 |
| You know more | 1 | | |

P6/7 girls understanding of physical and emotional changes in growing up for boys

The P6/7 girls identified physical growth, being stronger and development of body hair as the main changes that happen to boys. They noted the development of bigger muscles in boys (22), said they were stronger (20) or that certain parts of the body grew: the ears (4), feet (6) and bum (1). Some suggested generally that boy's bodies change (2), they become a different shape (1) and they get heavier.

Girls also noted that boys grow more body hair (14) or develop pubic hair (8), chest hair (12), leg hair (5), under arm hair (3), facial hair (8) and back hair (1). Others noted that boys start shaving (7). The girls also said that a boy's penis grows (10). 1 girl mentioned boys produce sperm.

The girls also commented on the emotional development of boys. They said that boys start to fancy girls (8), talk/think about girls (4) and like girls because of their breasts (6). In terms of emotions and feelings some girls identified that boys are less sensitive than girls (3) and that some boys become more feminine (3).

Some girls highlighted aspects of behaviours or attitudes of boys: they fight more (6), they swear (6), boys behave stupid when drunk (6), they drink beer vodka/wine and they smoke (6). A further 4 suggested that as boys get older they think that women should do everything.

The girls identified other body changes in boys as: they become smelly (7), get spots (18) and their voices get deeper. (19). 6 girls also stated that when two men kiss it means they are gay and that men wear condoms to stop having a baby (6).

Example: what P6/7 girls (school 3: total 14) told us when asked to write about changes that happen to boys as they grow up:

| | | | |
|---|----|---|---|
| Get muscles | 11 | Fight more | 6 |
| Get hair on their body | 8 | Watch more T.V. | 6 |
| Have to shave | 7 | Think girls are nice because of their breasts | 6 |
| Drink beer, vodka and wine | 6 | 2 boys who kiss are gay | 6 |
| Act stupid when they're drunk | 6 | Grow hair | 5 |
| Swear more | 6 | They think women should do everything | 4 |
| Smoke more | 6 | Get spots | 3 |
| Boys are different | 6 | Grow taller | 3 |
| Get stronger | 6 | Their 'things' will grow | 2 |
| Smelly feet | 6 | Think about girls | 2 |
| Bigger feet | 6 | They will grow a penis | 1 |
| Boys wear condoms to stop having a baby | 6 | | |
| Deeper voices | 6 | | |

P6/7 girls questions about physical and emotional changes in growing up

Continuing to work on their own the P6/7 girls recorded questions they had. The lists below include all questions asked across the groups and the numbers of girls who asked them. Questions from the P6/7 girls focused on the areas of hormones, periods, body changes, boys/gender, condoms, breastfeeding and emotions.

About hormones

| | | | |
|--|----|----------------------------------|---|
| What are hormones? | 12 | How do your hormones affect you? | 3 |
| Do hormones stop you growing older faster? | 6 | | |

About periods

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Are periods sore? | 8 | What is the most normal age to start your period? | 2 |
| Why do we get periods? | 5 | I want to know more about periods | 1 |
| How do your periods come? | 4 | When you start (periods) do you feel worried? | 1 |
| Why do we start periods? | 4 | | |
| How long do periods last? | 3 | | |
| What age will you be when your period ends? | 2 | | |

About puberty and body changes

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| Why do you get pubic hair/hair down below on girls? | 6 | What times does your body change? | 1 |
| What is puberty? | 4 | What do you do if your friends are changing and you stay the same? | 1 |
| How does your body change? | 2 | | |

About boys/gender

| | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| Why do some men turn into girls? | 6 | I would like to know more about boys | 1 |
| Why do boys not have boobs or periods? | 3 | Why can't boys be pregnant? | 1 |
| Why do boys not look the same as girls? | 2 | | |

About condoms

| | | | |
|----------------------|---|--|--|
| How do condoms work? | 6 | | |
|----------------------|---|--|--|

About breastfeeding

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| How does milk stay in the breast for the baby to feed? | 6 | | |
|--|---|--|--|

About emotions

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---|--|--|
| Why do you get moody? | 4 | | |
|-----------------------|---|--|--|

P6/7 boys understanding of physical and emotional changes in growing up for boys

Working individually to identify the changes that happen with puberty the P6/7 boys (total: 38) focused mostly on physical changes.

The most frequently recorded change related to the development of body hair (45 mentions in total, listing different parts of the body). This emerged most commonly in respect of pubic hair, but also in regard to facial hair, under arm hair, leg hair, bum and chest hair.

Boys then recorded comments about a boy's penis growing (30). Other comments included testicles drop (6), wet dreams (3) and penis hardens (2).

24 boys recorded general aspects of physical development such as 'grow bigger'. Other specific mentions about growth were as follows: muscles develop (7), you get taller (8), grow bigger (3) and get stronger (2)

P6/7 boys also mentioned the term puberty (10) when discussing changes that happen to them. Others also stated that boy's voices get deeper (15), they get spots (10) and body odour (4).

Boys also highlighted aspects of behaviours or attitudes towards others: behaviour changes (3), you get feelings for girls (2), you get grumpier (2), get angrier (1) and personality changes (1).

This example from one class is typical of the P6/7 boys responses:

| Example: what P6/7 boys (school 2: total 16) told us when asked to write about changes that happen to boys as they grow up: | | | |
|---|----|-----------------------|---|
| More pubic hair | 12 | Get feeling for girls | 2 |
| Deeper voice | 11 | Facial hair | 2 |
| Produce sperm | 9 | Penis hardens | 2 |
| Bigger penis | 8 | Hairy legs | 2 |
| More body hair | 7 | Grow bigger | 2 |
| Hair underarms | 6 | Grow a beard | 1 |
| You get spots | 6 | Get tired | 1 |
| Your testicles drop | 6 | Hairy bum | 1 |
| More smelly (B.O.) | 4 | Taller | 1 |
| Teeth change | 4 | Stronger | 1 |
| Develop muscles | 3 | Angrier | 1 |
| Wet dreams | 3 | Get more responsible | 1 |
| Get older | 3 | Face changes | 1 |
| Grumpy | 2 | Fail more | 1 |

P6/7 boys understanding of physical and emotional changes in growing up for girls

The Primary 6/7 boys identified the changes for girls as growth of breasts (19), growth of hair on private parts (15) and periods (15). 7 boys directly stated that puberty was a change that happened to girls as they grow up. And a further 7 responses related to the physical growth (get taller, get bigger) associated with getting older. Boys also recorded that girls get spots (7).

Changing behaviour or feelings was also noted. This could be negative: they get more annoying (2), grumpier (2), drama queens (1). Or it could be positive: they get feelings for boys (1), become more responsible (1), get more intelligent (1), start thinking about jobs and lifestyles (1). The boys made no reference to pregnancy.

This example from one class is typical of the P6/7 boys responses:

| Example: what P6/7 boys (school 3: total 8) told us when asked to write about changes that happen to girls as they grow up: | | | |
|---|---|------------------------|---|
| Boobs get bigger | 5 | Get more intelligent | 1 |
| Grow bigger | 4 | Change hair colour | 1 |
| Get hairy flower | 3 | Learn to drive | 1 |
| Get spots | 2 | Grow longer freckles | 1 |
| Behaviour changes | 2 | New teeth | 1 |
| Start thinking more about jobs and lifestyles | 1 | Develop hair on bodies | 1 |

P6/7 boys questions about physical and emotional changes in growing up

Continuing to work on their own the Primary 6/7 boys recorded questions they had. The lists below include all questions asked across the groups and the numbers of boys who asked them. The boy's questions reflect a particular interest in physical development/body changes and about sex and relationships

About puberty

| | | | |
|------------------------|---|---------------------------|---|
| Why do we get puberty? | 2 | When does puberty strike? | 2 |
|------------------------|---|---------------------------|---|

About growth of hair

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----|------------------------------------|---|
| Why do you get more hair? | 11 | Why do we get a hairy chest? | 1 |
| Why do you get pubic hair? | 4 | Why does our hair grow? | 1 |
| Why do you grow hair? | 4 | How much pubic hair will you grow? | 1 |
| Why do you get hair on your body? | 2 | Why do we get hairy willies? | 1 |

About the penis

| | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------------|---|
| Why do you get a hard on? | 1 | Why does your penis get bigger? | 1 |
| Why does your privates go hard and bigger? | 1 | | |

About spots

| | | | |
|-----------------------|--|--|--|
| Why do you get spots? | | | |
|-----------------------|--|--|--|

About boys' voices

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---|
| Why does your voice deepen? | 2 | Why does your voice change? | 1 |
|-----------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---|

About boys' bodies

| | | | |
|-------------------------|---|------------------------------|---|
| What makes us grow? | 3 | Why do boys get bigger arms? | 1 |
| What do Adam apples do? | 3 | Why do boys have nipples? | 1 |

About the differences between boys and girls

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Why are we different? | 4 | Why do men and women have different body parts? | 1 |
| Are boys more emotional than girls? | 2 | Are boys stronger than girls? | 1 |
| Why do we not get boobs? | 2 | Why do girls kiss that much? | 1 |
| Why do women not have willies? | 1 | | |

About girls' bodies

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|---|
| Why do ladies get bigger breasts? | 4 | Do girls get BO? | 1 |
| Why do girls get boobs? | 3 | Why do girls get hairy fanny's? | 1 |
| Do girls get spots? | 1 | | |

Other Questions

| | | | |
|----------------------------|---|-----------------------------|---|
| Where do babies come from? | 1 | How/why do people have sex? | 2 |
| Why are people gay? | 1 | | |

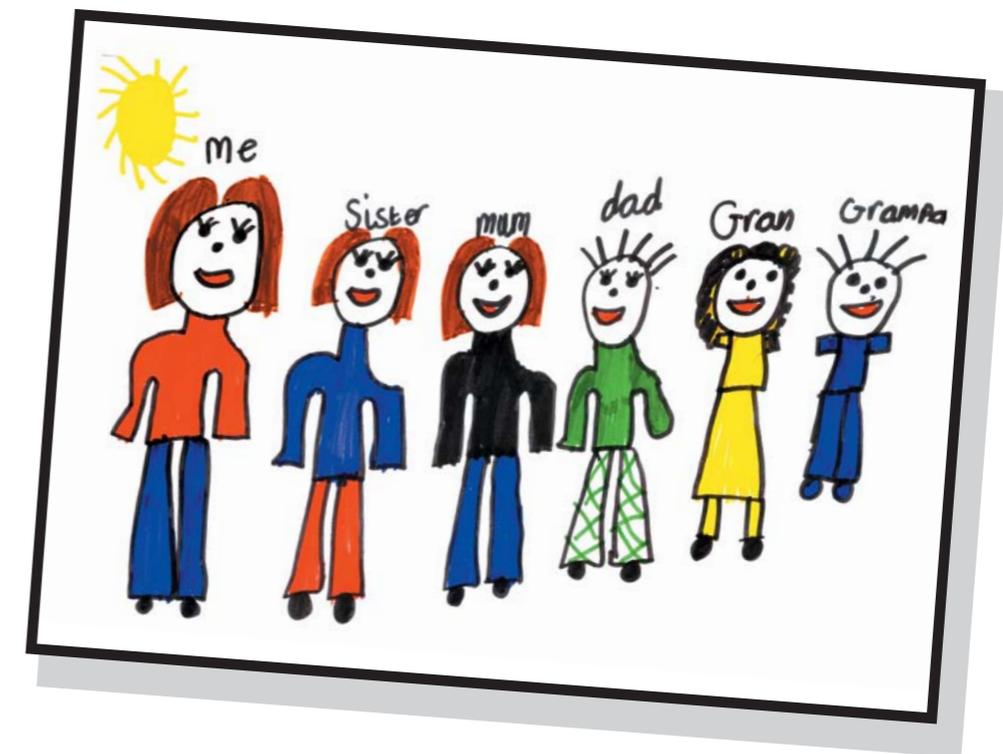
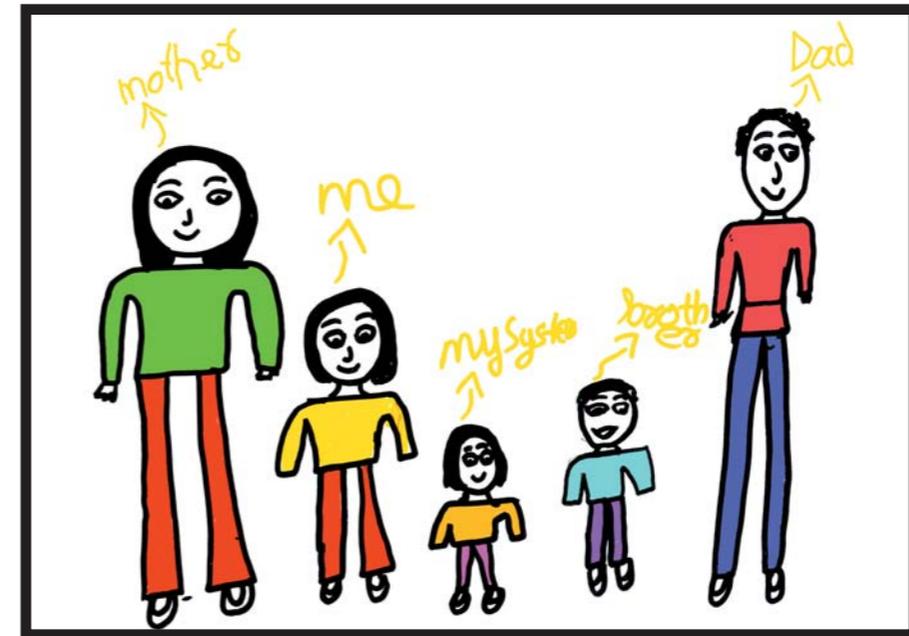
What children told us

Relationships

This part of the workshop engaged children in drawing about and talking about family and relationships. The children worked individually to represent their families pictorially, they were asked to include all the people they considered had a role in caring for them. Then the children worked individually and looked at a series of pictures of two people together, they were asked to respond to the question: what can you tell us about these people's relationship? Finally we asked the children to work in a small group and to give their responses to the questions: Why do people have a relationship? What makes people happy in a relationship? What makes people sad in a relationship?

Family Portraits

The children presented their families in portraits. The children represented the diversity of families and the mix of people who play a role in caring for them.



What can you tell us about these people's relationship?

The children worked individually and commented on relationships represented in photographs. The children were encouraged to make as many comments or interpretations of the images as they wanted to, keeping in mind as with all the exercises undertaken that there were no right or wrong answers. Children did not necessarily comment on all images, across the images the boys made fewer comments. The children's responses tell us about how they interpret the relationships they see, what assumptions they make about people who are together - whether they are old, young, have a visible disability, are of different races, or the same sex.



P4/5 girl's (total:66) comments

The Primary 4/5 girls overwhelmingly felt that the picture showed a married couple (53) who were happy (29), old (26) and in love (28). Some said they might just be friends (13) and a further 13 stated that they were boyfriend and girlfriend.

16 felt that they might be brother and sister. Other comments included that they are in their 50's (7), have kids (6) and are a granny and grandad (4).

P4/5 boy's (total: 63) comments

The most widely recorded comments were that the couple were married (18), in love (14) old (12) and happy (6). The boys also commented that the

couple has sex (5) and that they live together (1). Two commented that they are just friends and one suggested that they are brother and sister.

P6/7 girl's (total: 41) comments

36 of the girls in P6/7 stated that the couple were married. Other comments included that they are happy (29), they are in love (19), they are nice people (6) with a nice life (4) and that they have a strong and good relationship (1). 10 girls suggested that they have grandchildren and a further 8 referred to them as granny and grandad.

Other suggestions about their relationships included that they are friends (14), they are boy friend and girlfriend (10) and they are cousins (5) or brother and sister (6).

7 girls commented that they are on their honeymoon and others (7) that they had just won the lottery.

P6/7 boy's (total: 38) comments

Whilst fewer boys commented 11 of them stated that the couple are married, 9 suggested that they are happy and 7 that they are old. 5 commented that they are in love, 3 that they are a couple, one that they live together, one that they have sex and a further two stated that they think they have a good relationship. 4 referred to this couple as friends and another 4 suggested they are a granny and grandad.



P4/5 girl's comments

The majority of P4/5 girls felt that the women were sisters (55). 25 added that they were twins. Other family relationships, which were suggested, were cousins (13), mum and daughter (6) and aunts (1).

24 girls stated that they were happy, 12 added that they were young and 2 suggested that they were caring.

38 commented that they were best friends.

17 girls said that they were lesbians and 2 that they love each other. 5 said that they were married.

P4/5 boy's comments

From the boys comments, 13 stated that the women were friends, 10 commented that they were sisters and a further 4 added that they were twins. 2 recorded that they were related and one suggested that they were cousins.

7 boys stated that they were lesbians or gay. 3 said they are in love, a further 3 that they love each other. 1 boy said that they were going to get married.

The boys also mentioned that they were sexy (3) and cute (2).

P6/7 girl's comments

34 girls suggested that the women are friends.

30 commented that they are sisters with 11 adding that they are twins. Other family relationships mentioned by the P6/7 girls included cousins (19) and mum and daughter (2).

29 girls stated that the girls in the picture are lesbian or gay, 4 that they are going out together, 2 that they are girlfriends and a further one that they are married.

22 of the girls stated that the girls are happy, that they are in love (3) or that they love each other (11), in a strong relationship (1) and 3 said one of them might be pregnant.

P6/7 boy's comments

The most common response from the P6/7 boys was that the women are lesbian or gay (21). Other comments included that they are in love (1) or that they love each other (1). One boy suggested that they are lovers, one added that they are horny and on one occasion it was mentioned that they have a sexual relationship.

15 of the boys said that they are sisters and one boy said that they are twins. 10 suggested that the women are friends.



P4/5 girl's comments

27 of the P4/5 girls recorded that those pictured are boyfriend and girlfriend. 24 commented that they are married and others stated that they are happy (14), in love (8), love each other (5) and that love was in the air (2). 2 said that they fancy each other, 5 suggested that they are on a date, 2 stated they are at a dinner party and 1 noted that they are at a wedding. One commented that they are a couple.

Other relationships suggested by the girls included friends (26), cousins (10), brother and sister (8), aunt and uncle (1), mum and son (2) and dad and daughter (1).

6 noted that they are middle aged, 6 that the woman is black and 5 commented that the man is white.

P4/5 boy's comments

The boys commented that the people are boy friend and girlfriend (10) and that they are in love (9). 5 stated that they are married while one suggested that they were going to get married and

another that they are engaged. 5 noted that they are on a date and 1 suggested that they are having dinner in a posh restaurant.

Other relationships suggested by the boys included brother/sister (2), friends (1), mum and dad (1) and doctor/patient (1). 1 stated that they are not married.

One noted that the picture shows a brown lady and white man in love. 2 stated that they have sex and 1 that they are about to kiss.

P6/7 girl's comments

32 of the girls felt that the people pictured are friends. 19 added that they are happy, 3 stated that they are enjoying themselves, 4 that they are excited and 7 stated that they are at a wedding.

17 of the girls stated that they are married. 12 suggested that they are boyfriend and girlfriend, 2 that they are going out, 6 that they are engaged and 10 commented that they are in love. 5 recorded that they are on their honeymoon.

Other relationships suggested included cousins (6), brother and sister (11) and step brother and sister (7). 5 of the girls said they had fostered a child.

P6/7 boy's comments

Nine of the boys commented that the people in the picture are friends. 8 stated that they are boyfriend and girlfriend while a further 4 suggested that they are married. 5 recorded that they are in love and 2 commented that they are happy.

Other relationships suggested by the boys included cousins (1), and brother and sister (1). One boy suggested that the couple are about to divorce.



P4/5 girl's comments

36 of the Primary 4/5 girls suggested that those pictured are boyfriend and girlfriend and 33 stated that they are in love. 26 thought that they are married and 20 added that they are happy. 4 stated that they fancy each other and 1 commented that they are engaged. A further 4 stated that they are dreaming of getting married.

3 commented that they have kids/children, 8 said that they sleep together, 4 that they are in a relationship and 3 that they are made for each other. 4 commented that they are sex addicts, 5 recorded 'sexy' and a further 5 stated that they were about to kiss.

Other relationships suggested by the P4/5 girls included that they are brother and sister (8), friends (9), cousins (3), auntie and uncle (1) and baby sitters (1).

P4/5 boy's comments

21 boys stated that the people represented are in love, 10 that they are married and 8 that they are boyfriend and girlfriend. 2 said that they fancy each other and 3 that they are just married. None of the boys in P4/5 stated that the couple was anything other than romantically involved. 6 went on to comment that they have sex, 1 that they are happy and 1 that they have children.

P6/7 girl's comments

21 of the girls stated that those pictured are boyfriend and girlfriend. 20 suggested that they are married, 26 commented that they are in love. 23 noted that they are happy and 11 recorded that they are engaged. A further 7 felt that they had just had sex and 2 that they are drunk.

Other relationships the girls suggested included friends (2), room mates (1), sister and brother (3), and cousins (2). One of the girls suggested that the woman in the picture is pregnant.

P6/7 boy's comments

Twelve boys commented that those pictured are boyfriend and girlfriend. 5 noted that they are a couple, 3 commented that they are married, 6 that they are in love and 5 that they are happy. 1 suggested that they are engaged, 1 that they are going to get married and 1 that they are sensible lovers. One of the boys added that the couple are horny, 1 that they have just had sex.

Only two boys suggested that the people were anything but romantically involved. These were that the girl is gay (1) and that they are just friends (1).



P4/5 girl's comments

32 P4/5 girls commented that those pictured are married. 26 said they are old, 19 that they are happy and 9 that they are in love. 8 suggested that they are about to kiss.

Other relationships suggested by the P4/5 girls were that they are friends (9), mother and son (7), brother and sister (6), granny and grandad (5), doctor and patient (4), auntie and uncle and cousins (1).

Two girls said that they are always together, 1 commented that they don't want to be apart and 4 that they have a strong relationship. Others commented that the relationship was caring (2) and helpful (6).

Six girls commented that the people had a hard life and 1 added that they had a hard relationship. 3 of the girls pointed out that the woman is in a wheelchair.

P4/5 boy's comments

Ten boys observed that the people represented are married, 2 that they love each other and 5 stated that they are in love. 1 commented that they are a

couple, 8 recorded that they are old, 4 that they are happy and one boy suggested that they have sex.

Other suggested relationships included mother and son (1), granny and grandad (3), and that 'she can't walk and the man is a doctor and is looking after her' (1). A further boy stated that they are friends.

One boy commented that she is sad, one that she is not happy and another that they are a sad couple.

P6/7 girl's comments

The P6/7 girls commented that the people represented are married (20), happy (22), in love (18), love each other (3) and excited (6). 7 suggested that it is their wedding anniversary. One of the girls noted that they are boyfriend and girlfriend.

Other relationships suggested included brother and sister (16), mum and son (9), cousins (8), friends (6), twins (4) and granny and grandad (1).

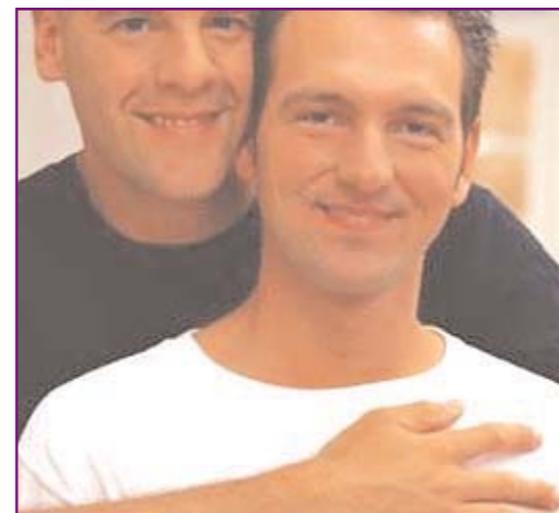
2 of the girls suggested that they care for each other and one added that they are in a helping relationship. 8 noted that the couple is old and 7 recorded the word disabled.

P6/7 boy's comments

The boys noted that they are married (14), happy (8), in love (6) and old (6). One added that they are boyfriend and girlfriend and that they are kind to each other (1). One boy stated that they are getting divorced.

Other relationships suggested by the boys in P6/7 included mother and son (2), friends (1), cousins (1) and brother and sister (1).

One boy stated that the couple keep each other from getting lonely and another commented that they are not lesbians. 3 boys recorded the word disabled.



P4/5 girl's comments

The most commonly recorded response by the P4/5 girls in respect of picture 6 is that the men are gay (34). 12 stated that they are in love, 8 suggested that they are married, 1 that they are husband and husband and 1 that they are boyfriends.

25 commented that they are happy, 5 that they are nice, 2 that they are caring, 4 that they live together and 3 that they are in a relationship. 2 stated that they are lesbians and 4 commented that they can't have sex.

Other suggestions included that they are brothers (31), that they are friends (18), that they are twins (6), that they are cousins (12) and that they are father and son (6).

P4/5 boy's comments

22 of the P4/5 boys commented that the men in the image are gay. 2 stated that they love each other and 2 added that they have sex. One commented that they have boy sex. 5 noted that they are in love.

16 suggested that they are brothers, 8 that they are friends, 4 that they are father and son and 1 that they are twins.

P6/7 girl's comments

31 of the P6/7 girls commented that the men in the picture are brothers. 11 added that they are twins. 3 added that they might be foster brothers.

The girls also noted that the men are gay (28), in love (19), happy (14), love each other (4), glad (5) and proud (4). 11 commented that they are getting married, 9 suggested that they are boyfriends and three that they are married. 2 stated that they are happy with who they are and 1 mentioned that they are 'happy homosexuals'.

Other relationships suggested by the girls included friends (15), cousins (11), father and son (3) and room mates (2).

Some girls said that the men might be posing (6) and that they might be models (3).

1 girl commented 'they are free from mum and dad' and another recorded the word 'freaks'.

P6/7 boy's comments

The most common response to the image from P6/7 boys was that those represented are gay (28). Other comments the boys made about homosexuality were as follows: in love (2), poofs (4), bent (2), perverts (1), weirdo's (1), cissy's (1), idiots (1) and gay boys (2). 2 boys suggested that the couple are lesbians.

Other relationships suggested included brothers (6), friends (4) and cousins (1).

Talking about relationships

In putting together this section of the report on our consultation we are reminded of the following quote:

“Children and young people live in the same world as adults – they have to cope with divorce, separation, illness, poor housing, bereavement, war, famine, pollution, crime, racism, abuse, and poverty, just like adults. They are not cocooned from making difficult decisions nor are they sheltered from life’s troubles.”⁸

Keeping this in mind this is what children recorded in their response to our questions:

- Why do people have a relationship?
- What makes people happy in a relationship?
- What makes people sad in a relationship?

Why do people have a relationship?

The **P4/5 girls** commented mostly on people having relationships because they like, care for or love each other. Some groups made comments about loving and caring in more detail, such as ‘people love you all the time no matter what’ and ‘so you have someone to look after you’ and ‘somebody always there for you’ and that ‘love makes you happy’. They also said people have relationships because ‘they want to get married’, ‘to be together’ and ‘because they want to live together’. The children said that people have relationships because of mutual attraction: comments included ‘they fancy each other’ and ‘they have a crush on each other’.

Across groups the girls, in all but one of the 5 classes of girls this age, said that people have a relationship because – as one group wrote - ‘they want to have sex, know how it is’. One group recorded the comment ‘meet at the pub and bring them home and sleep together’. Others mentioned that people have a relationship so that they have someone to kiss, snog or share a bath with. In two of the five classes girls recorded comments about having relationships so that you ‘don’t feel left out’ or so that you are ‘not alone’.

Example: what P4/5 girls (school 3: total 6) told us in answer to the question: why do people have relationships?

- Want to have babies or we’ll run out of people
- Love each other
- Want to have sex, know how it is
- Want to get married
- Love makes them happy
- Because they are in love
- They have a crush on each other

The **P6/7 girls** adopted a wider view on the question. Whilst they talked about relationships in terms of being in love, or a relationship with a partner; they also talked about being best friends, liking the other person and knowing people for a long time. As with the younger girls they too commented that people have a relationship because they are in love. They listed things that people in relationships can do together, such as ‘go for meals’ and ‘go on dates’. The **P6/7 girls** also identified that people have relationships ‘to make children, to make a family’. Only one of the three classes of girls this age mentioned having sex specifically. And they also talked about relationships providing ‘company’ and as a way of not ‘feeling lonely’.

Example: what P6/7 girls (school 4: total 16) told us in answer to the question: why do people have relationships?

- So they are not lonely
- Because they love them!
- Loving
- So they are not alone!
- People have a relationship because they love each other and want to make babies and they are not alone
- Because they love each other
- To make folk jealous
- Babies
- So they can make babies
- They may feel lonely
- Love each other
- Babies
- Happy
- Getting married
- Feeling lonely

The **P4/5 boys** stated that people have relationships ‘because they love each other’, and because ‘they want to get married’ and/or ‘have children’. They also identified that people ‘fancy each other’, ‘they want to have sex’ and ‘to have some fun in bed’.

Example: what P4/5 boys (school 1 class 1: total 13) told us in answer to the question: why do people have relationships?

- Because they are married
- Because they have sex
- Because they fancy each other
- They have kids
- They get married
- Because they like each other
- To make love in the world
- Because of the children
- So they can have sex
- Because they love each other
- They think each other is nice
- They have been friends
- Married
- Friends
- So they can get married and love happily ever after
- Have children

The P6/7 boys also commented on people having relationships because ‘they like each other’ and ‘because they love each other’. They recorded comments about people ‘want a family’ and ‘so they can have babies’. They identified that people have relationships ‘for company’ and ‘so as you’re not lonely’. The boys also commented, in two of the three classes of this age, about people having a relationships ‘because they fancy each other’, ‘to have sex’, ‘so they can snog/sex’. One of the groups made comments about people in relationships having ‘a good life’ and being together ‘so they can earn more money together to live on, pay mortgage etc.’

Example: what P6/7 boys (school 3: total 8) told us in answer to the question: why do people have relationships?

- So they can have babies
- So they can have happy families
- So they can snog/sex
- So they can be in love
- So they are not lonely
- So you can be married
- To be with each other
- To keep each other company
- Boys need girls/girls need boys
- To make a family
- Because they like each other
- So they can earn more money together to live on, pay mortgage etc.
- To have a good life
- If anything happens, someone dies, they have each other

What makes people happy in a relationship?

The P4/5 girls recorded that people are happy in relationships when they are in love, kissing and having sex. People were also happy when ‘they feel safe with this person’ and in relationships with ‘nobody fighting’. The girls also identified emotional aspects such as ‘having each other to comfort them’ and ‘because no matter what, they love you’ and ‘having someone to talk to when they are sad’. Having babies and getting married also featured in their lists. Giving and receiving gifts was also listed: comments included ‘the man gives the lady jewellery’ and ‘buying stuff’.

Example: what P4/5 girls (school 1 class 2: total 14) told us in answer to the question: what makes people happy in a relationship?

- Getting married
- Making people happy
- Nice to each other
- Being together
- Loving each other
- Having each other to comfort them
- They like them
- They feel safe with this person
- Sex
- Love
- Caring
- Sleep

- Snogging
- It makes people happy to have sex
- It makes people happy to snog each other
- Kissing
- Loving
- Flowers
- Hugging
- Chocolates
- Dates
- Going to fancy restaurants
- Helping
- Buying stuff
- Touching
- Having baths

The P6/7 girls also identified being ‘with the person you love’ and ‘loving each other forever’ as important, as was sex, ‘making love’ and having babies. The nature of the relationship was also highlighted, with comments such as ‘loved for who you are and not your looks’, ‘don’t abuse people’ and ‘people are happy in a relationship because they have a friend and love each other and for someone to turn to’. The girls also talked about doing things in a relationship which can bring happiness, such as ‘spending time with them’, ‘they talk’, ‘take you out for romantic dinners’ and ‘walk along the beach’.

Example: what P6/7 girls (school 2: total 11) told us in answer to the question: what makes people happy in a relationship?

- Have babies
- Because they are nice to each other
- Like each other
- They have sex
- Kiss
- Getting married
- Happy together
- Get on together
- Make each other laugh
- Go out for dinner
- They talk
- Walk along the beach
- Like the same things
- If you have kids
- You’re with the person you love
- There is someone there for you if you are lonely
- Pets

The P4/5 boys identified that people are happy in a relationship when there is love and they care for each other. There were more comments from the P4/5 boys relating to sex with comments such as ‘to have sex’, ‘to go naked’, ‘when they shag’. Getting married and having children was also identified as making people happy, as was doing things together such as ‘a romantic dinner’ and ‘giving something special to someone’.

Example: what P4/5 boys (school 1 class 1: total 13) told us in answer to the question: what makes people happy in a relationship?

- Going out for lunch
- When they get married
- Their marriage
- Love and being cared for
- Money to buy a computer and a T.V.
- If they go to a sex shop they want to have children
- Getting married
- Being happy
- Having sex
- Because they have been married
- Because they love each other
- They are sexy, sexy, sexy
- Fathers day
- Mothers day
- Because they lived happily ever after and had children
- Having kids

The P6/7 boys also identified the importance of love, having children and being in a family. The boys identified aspects of a happy relationship as ‘being kind to one another and giving TLC’, ‘helping each other’, ‘they like each other and like the same things’ and ‘the other person is understanding’. Sex was also identified as an aspect of happiness in a relationship, as was ‘not cheating on each other’ and ‘not falling out’. In one class material things were listed as making people happy, such as ‘the fancy house they live in’.

Example: what P6/7 boys (school 3: total 8) told us in answer to the question: what makes people happy in a relationship?

- When they are in love
- Getting married
- Having children
- Having a house together
- Love each other
- Friendship
- Having a family
- Helping each other
- Helping each other if they are in debt
- Buying a nice house
- Going places with each other and enjoying themselves
- Having sex

What makes people sad in a relationship?

The P4/5 girls identified fighting, arguing and splitting up as the main things that make people sad in a relationship. They wrote about not doing certain things as leading to sadness – for example ‘not caring’, ‘not helping’, ‘not having sex’. They said that arguing and fighting left people ‘sad’, and that people are sad when the other person ‘says that they don’t love you’.

Shouting and yelling was a common cause of sadness. Other comments included ‘When your husband sleeps with another girl’, ‘two timing’ and ‘cheating’.

A further common reason for sadness was identified as ‘trying to make babies, but the babies die’ and ‘miscarriage’. Other loss was also recorded in comments such as: ‘when their child dies’. The consequences of divorce and separation on children were recorded. Comments included: ‘divorce makes the children unhappy’ and ‘when one takes the child away’.

Example: what P4/5 girls (school 3: total 6) told us in answer to the question: what makes people sad in a relationship?

- Fighting
- Trying to make babies, but the babies die
- Splitting up
- Temper
- Dying
- Breaking up
- Hurting each others feelings
- Arguments and huffs
- A divorce
- If someone went out with someone else – a man has an affair

The P6/7 girls identified similar issues to the P4/5 girls – such as fighting, arguing, splitting up and partners having sex with other people. There were comments about the stress in relationships: ‘when they don’t speak to each other’ and ‘if they promise to do something but don’t’.

The older girls were more explicit about some of the issues, which can impact on relationships. These issues included: ‘when one of them is seriously ill’, ‘alcohol or drug addict’, ‘no sex’, ‘partner drinking or being violent’, ‘going to jail’, ‘if they get raped’, ‘assault people’, ‘abortion’, ‘abuse’.

The girls identified that sadness can be related to issues such as: ‘miscarriages’, ‘children moving away’, ‘having a baby that dies’, ‘argue over children’ and ‘depression if their child is disabled’.

Example: what P6/7 girls (school 4: 16) told us in answer to the question: what makes people sad in a relationship?

- When they are not together
- When they have a fight or argument
- When they don't have love
- When a fight happens
- No sex
- When they fall out
- When something happens to someone they love
- When they fall out or break up and don't love each other or had an affair
- Getting divorced
- Partner having an affair
- Partner dying
- Miscarriages
- Children being taken away
- Partner drinking or being violent
- People having affairs or if their baby is a miscarriage
- Arguing
- Depression if their child is disabled
- Splitting up
- Having another relationship
- Adoption
- Cheating
- Children moving away
- Children dying
- Abortion
- Partner dying

The P4/5 boys identified the main reasons for sadness as being associated with arguing, shouting and splitting up. Sadness can be because someone says 'something bad to people'. 'Not having children' and 'not having sex' was also recorded. The loss of a family member was also identified in some groups, with comments such as 'getting split up with their child' and 'someone could die'.

Example: what P4/5 boys (school 4: total 9) told us in answer to the question: what makes people sad in a relationship?

- Splitting up
- Hate
- Getting split up with their child
- If they fight or argue
- If the person you love dies
- Arguing
- Shouting
- Biting

The P6/7 boys focused on 'break ups' and 'when they want a divorce' as times of sadness. There were comments about 'fighting and arguing with one another' and 'one of them is getting battered by the other'.

Relationships, which are characterised by 'people not listening and being negative with each other', were also identified. The moving away of one partner was also recorded in comments such as 'if someone goes away with another person' and 'leaving for another life'. One of the groups recorded 'finding out your partner is gay'.

Example: what P6/7 boys (school 2: total 16) told us in answer to the question: what makes people sad in a relationship?

- When they break up
- When you see your girlfriend with another man
- When it hurts your feelings
- When one of them dies
- Affairs
- Not understanding
- No sex
- No hornyness
- Break ups
- Find out you are being cheated on
- Finding out your partner is gay/lesbian
- If they die
- Lost pets
- Leaving for another life
- Stress from pets/children
- They were trapped into marriage
- They hit each other
- When they want a divorce
- If the lady is an old bag
- They have a lot of arguments
- One of them is cheating
- One of them is getting battered by the other
- If they fall out and it makes their life miserable

What children told us

Conception, Pregnancy and Birth

The children worked in groups, responding to a prompt question which asked them to tell us what they knew about ‘the baby’s story’, from conception, through pregnancy to birth. They were then asked if they had any questions about the process.

We report in this section firstly on P4/5 groups, then P6/7 groups.

Overview of P4/P5 groups

In general terms the children in the P4/5 classes had an understanding of the baby’s story being about conception through pregnancy to birth. There were no significant differences between what girls and boys reported.

Boys and girls in most groups recorded comments about men and women ‘having sex’, one group talked about ‘special cuddles’. The children talked about babies being made from eggs and seeds but few groups had any notion about how this happened.

When considering pregnancy the children talked about the importance of being healthy when pregnant, for example most groups mentioned that a pregnant woman should not drink alcohol or smoke, and that they should have a healthy diet.

The children were aware of the baby growing over a period of time although where estimates were given for the duration of pregnancy these varied across groups. The children recorded comments about the experience of the baby inside the womb, how it would feed and how comfortable it was, and what the umbilical chord was for.

Children mostly talked about the baby coming out of the woman’s bum, between her legs, fanny or vagina, some groups mentioned that the Mum might need her tummy to be cut to allow the baby out.

The children talked about contractions or pains in the tummy, or labour and some mentioned waters breaking before birth. Most groups talked about the baby being covered in blood and being cleaned by the doctor or nurse. Some children recorded comments about birth being a time, which could be problematic, or life threatening for both Mum and baby.

Although the P4/5 children talked about sex, conception, pregnancy and birth it is clear from their questions which follow that they often do not understand how, or why things happen. For example one group (school 3) of girls recorded that the man and woman ‘need to have sex and dad gives you the thing to have a baby’ and then later in terms of questions asked: ‘what do you do in sex?’

As this exercise came at the end of our time together the session was also used by children to raise other questions, which for the P4/5 children were predominantly about pregnancy, birth and sexual behaviour.

These few pages give typical responses to the tasks set in the last part of the workshop. The tasks were in relation to describing ‘the baby’s story’ from conception through to birth, followed by an opportunity to ask any questions about any part of this story or other issues which had been raised in the day.

Children worked together in single sex groups for this element of the session, with an adult facilitator of the same sex recording what children said.

Example: what P4/5 girls (school 1, class 2: total 14) told us when asked to write about what happens from conception through to birth:

- Sex is when people go to bed and cuddle and take their clothes off
- By having sex
- Baby starts as a seed
- The woman is pregnant
- Doctor phones and tells you you’re pregnant
- They get a pregnant test thing
- The girl rests
- You have to tell your boyfriend he’ll freak out
- Go to hospital
- Baby grows
- You get pictures taken of your tummy
- You get blood tests
- The baby eats when the mum eats
- The baby kicks
- She can’t have beer or wine as the baby would get it
- Special food and drink for mum
- You can’t smoke when you have a baby
- Be careful not to fall
- The baby is growing and growing
- The baby gets food from the mummy
- When the water breaks they go to the hospital
- When the mummy goes to the toilet the baby does it as well
- When baby is big enough it’s time to come out
- Wait until the waters break
- Ambulance comes
- They get their tummy opened up or they squeeze it out
- They take the baby out
- When the baby is born they breast feed
- The baby comes out your flower

These girls then listed these questions:

About pregnancy:

- Why do they have the pregnancy test thing?
- How does it tell if you are pregnant
- Why do we take pictures of the baby?
- How does the baby feel?
- Why do they do a blood test?
- Why does the baby kick?
- Does the baby have to grow until it fills the tummy?
- How does the baby do the toilet?
- What are the waters?
- How many teeth does the baby have?
- Why does the baby have the thing on its belly button?

About sex and relationships:

- Why do people have sex?
- What is sex?
- Why do you have to tell your husband if you are having a baby?

Example: what P4/5 girls (school 4: total 16) told us when asked to write about what happens from conception through to birth:

- Mum has to find a dad/boyfriend
 - Egg in tummy
 - Mum gets pregnant – mum has to have sex and they snog each other
 - Mum finds out she's pregnant – takes a pregnancy test
 - Morning sickness
 - Water thing bursts
 - Egg hatches – tiny wee shape a baby
 - Baby grows for 8 weeks/9 months
 - Tummy get bigger
 - Mum gets pain
 - Mum feeds baby by eating healthy stuff and milk and water
 - Give it a name
 - See if it's a boy or girl
 - Mum screams
 - Wash baby – all blood
 - Calm it down so it doesn't cry
 - Doctor puts a tag on it's tummy
 - Cut cord
 - Comes out of mums bum – front part or you get your tummy cut
 - Baby gets weighed
- How do you have twins/quads?
 - If the mum drinks beer why does the baby not come out drunk?
 - Will your tummy be fatter with twins – is it 2 eggs or one?
 - Why do you faint when you're pregnant?
 - Why do babies sometimes come late or early?

About birth:

- How do both babies come out – is there 2 cords?
- How does the baby come out?
- Why does the baby come out the front bum and not the back?
- How is the cord attached to the baby?
- Why are babies born blue?
- Why do babies suck your breast?
- Why do the babies come out covered in blood?
- Why does the woman make a noise having the baby?
- Why do they need to put a tag on it?
- Why do babies not have any teeth when they're born?
- Why do babies have to be born in a hospital?
- Why do babies need to cry when they're born?
- Why do they need to get weighted?

About sex and relationships:

- Why do they have to have sex with a man?

About sexual behaviour:

- Do you need to have sex twice to have twins?
- If you have sex 5 times do you have 5 babies?
- Once you've had a baby do you need to have sex again to have another?

These girls then listed these questions:

About conception:

- How does the egg get into the mums tummy?

About pregnancy:

- How does it grow in your tummy?
- How can the baby eat the food that the mum eats?
- Why does she have to take a pregnancy test?
- Why do people have to have jags if they have twins?

Example: what P4/5 boys (school 1: 13) told us when asked to write about what happens from conception through to birth:

- Man and woman have sex.
- Man puts willy in woman's vagina
- Seeds get together with woman's egg
- The man's seed is like a monster like thing
- The baby grows
- The woman's tummy gets bigger
- When the baby comes out either from her bump or between her legs
- Baby is covered in blood and has to get washed
- The baby cries all night

These boys then listed these questions:

About puberty and bodies:

- How do the squiggly thing get in the man?
- Why do ladies have red bits on their boobs?

About conception:

- How do the seeds from the man get to the egg?

About pregnancy:

- What does the baby do in the mum's tummy?
- How do babies grow in the tummy?
- How does it feel to be pregnant?
- If the baby dies will the mum be okay?
- How does it feel if you are having a baby?
- Has a baby ever been dead in a mum's tummy?
- How can the baby not see?

About birth:

- Why is the baby covered in blood when it is born?
- What do they do to clean it?
- What's the first thing the baby does?
- Why can't the lady walk so well after having the baby?
- Why are babies soft?

About sexual behaviour:

- Why do people have sex?
- How does it feel?
- Does a man suck a lady's boobs?
- Why do they get naked and touch all over each other?
- What happens to your body when you have sex?
- Why are men obsessed with boobs?
- How do the man and women get together?
- Why do they put pictures of ladies on men's magazines?
- Why are people naked to have sex?

Example: what P4/5 boys (school 4: total 9) told us when asked to write about what happens from conception through to birth:

- Something from the mans body
- The woman has an egg
- The baby is growing inside the mum
- The baby kicks a lot
- The baby has a cord that is connected to the mum – this feeds the baby
- The baby comes out the front
- There is blood
- The cord get snapped
- The baby has a soft spot on its head
- Do baby’s bones grow in the mum?
- Can the baby cry inside the mum?
- What happens if the mum eats too much?
- Do you have to be pregnant for 40 weeks?
- Why does the baby kick?
- What age do babies have to be to kick?
- Do girls and boys have cords?
- Does the cord give food and water?

These boys then listed these questions:

About puberty and bodies:

- Why do men get hair?

About conception:

- Why does the man have something?
- What’s inside the lady that means she has the baby?
- Why does the woman have an egg?
- Why does the lady have sex to have a baby?
- How does the baby get into the woman?

About pregnancy:

- If the mum got drunk would the baby die?
- Why does the baby grow?

About birth:

- Does the baby come out the front or the back?
- Do they cut the woman’s tummy to get the baby out?
- How do they snip the baby’s cord – does blood come out?
- Does it hurt the baby or the mum?
- Why are some babies bald?
- Why does the baby have a soft spot?
- Why are some babies born without arms or legs?
- What does sextuplet mean?

About sex and relationships:

- Can two ladies have a baby?

Conception, Pregnancy and Birth

Overview of P6/P7 groups

In general terms P6/P7 children have greater knowledge than their younger P4/5 counterparts but for some the detail is sketchy or misinformed. The children had many questions.

Boys and girls recorded comments about men and women having sex, some groups commenting that this would happen in a relationship. Both boys and girls had a good idea of conception requiring both sperm and egg, and that these come together when the man and woman have sex. There was some confusion about what actually happened at conception in terms of understanding where the egg or sperm are/come from, how they come together and what happens when they do.

When considering pregnancy both boys and girls talked about the importance of being healthy when pregnant, most groups mentioned that a pregnant woman should not drink alcohol or smoke, and that they should have a healthy diet.

The children talked about birth, identifying that contractions would be the start of the process; that the Mums waters would break, then the baby would come out of the woman’s vagina or her tummy would be cut. Across groups children talked about the baby’s chord needing to be cut, and the baby needing to be washed as it would be covered in blood.

Some groups recorded that birth was painful for the woman, and that it could be a problematic or life threatening time for both Mum and baby.

Although there appears to be some knowledge about sex, conception, pregnancy and birth i.e. children can talk about these things and give what appears to be a factual understanding. It is clear from their questions which follow that the why and how questions have not been addressed or explored.

As this exercise came at the end of our time together the session was also used by the P6/7 children to raise many other questions, relating back to the themes of body changes/puberty, menstruation, sexual behaviour/practices and relationships. Boys were more likely to ask questions about these areas. There were also some questions about abortion and gender identity.

These few pages give typical responses to the tasks set in the last part of the workshop. The tasks were in relation to describing ‘the baby’s story’ from conception through to birth, followed by an opportunity to ask any questions about any part of this story or other issues which had been raised in the day.

Children worked together in single sex groups for this element of the session, with an adult facilitator of the same sex recording what children said.

Example: what P6/7 girls (school 4: total 16) told us when asked to write about what happens from conception through to birth:

- Have a relationship – man and woman have sex, his sperm goes into the woman and connects to the egg making her pregnant
- Egg grows woman has morning sickness
- Boobs get bigger and stomach too
- Hair grow longer quicker
- Baby grows in womb and woman get hormonal
- Mum gets cravings for food
- Baby kicks
- Checked in a medical scan to check if the baby is okay and whether it's a boy or girl
- Wriggles and kicks
- Mum has to eat certain foods – healthy, not spicy and not drink alcohol
- May go off tea or coffee – shouldn't smoke
- Waters break – gets pain
- Gets contractions
- Really hurts – lower stomach
- Go to hospital
- Has to push womb gets bigger
- Baby comes out of her vagina
- Baby gets checked it's covered in blood
- Gets cleaned and dressed
- Breast feed it or just with milk in a bottle
- Name the baby

These girls then listed these questions:

About conception:

- Do eggs come from ovaries?

About menstruation:

- How do you get your period?
- Does period flood get bigger?
- Do women get periods when they're pregnant?

About pregnancy:

- What's a craving?
- Why don't you eat spicy food?
- Would it hurt for the woman?
- Would you need special stuff for the bottle?

About sex and relationships:

- Why do people have under-age sex?
- Why are people gay/lesbian?

About sexual behaviour:

- What's a dildo?

Example: what P6/7 girls (school 2: total 11) told us when asked to write about what happens from conception through to birth:

- The lady has to have her period
- The man and woman have to have sex
- The penis goes into the vagina
- The man puts sperm in
- The egg is formed
- The eggs come from the sperm
- The egg grows in your vagina. It moves up to your stomach
- The baby starts to grow
- The baby develops into a boy or a girl
- You get a scan to see if it is healthy. It tells if it is a girl or boy
- Water for food is in your tummy
- You have to watch what your eating
- No alcohol
- Not to eat hard foods
- The baby has a cord
- The cord stops the baby floating about
- When the baby is big how does it have room to move?
- The waters break – feel baby coming out
- Kicking
- Go to hospital
- Midwife delivers baby cuts the cord
- The baby comes out of vagina
- Baby needs a bath to get rid of blood

These girls then listed these questions:

About conception:

- How is the baby made?
- Why does a lady need periods to have a baby?
- Do you mean I'm made of sperm?
- How are the eggs formed?
- What is the sperm for?
- How is sperm made?

About sex and relationships:

- Why do they want to have sex?

About pregnancy:

- How does your tummy stretch?
- The baby develops – how do you know if is a boy or a girl?
- When the baby is in your belly does it hit off your bones?
- How does the baby grow – how is there room?
- How can you tell from the scan if the baby is healthy or if it is a boy or a girl?
- Is it harder to walk about when you are pregnant?
- How does the baby know what to eat?
- How does the baby get oxygen?
- Can the baby see in your tummy?

About birth:

- How do you cut the cord?
- Does blood come out when you cut the cord?
- Why do they pull of the cord if it is born in the house?
- Why /how does the water break?
- Do you get drugs to make it come faster?
- How does it feel to deliver a baby?
- How do you know if the waters break?
- When you cut the cord does it make a belly button?
- How many people do you need to deliver a baby?
- How do you deliver a baby – gloves?
- What do they cut the cord with?
- Where do they cut?
- How do babies die after they're born?
- Does the vagina stretch?
- How do you get the lines on your tummy after the baby is born?

Example: what P6/7 boys (school 2: total 16) told us when asked to write about what happens from conception through to birth:

- People meet each other they fall in love or might not
- They have sex – man’s penis in vagina or don’t need to have sex can use a sperm donor
- Woman gets periods before pregnancy
- Sperm meets egg – can stop getting pregnant if man wears a condom
- Grows into baby
- The womb expands
- A woman can get an abortion
- Takes nine months but could be early or late
- Woman can feel nauseous or sick
- They wear loose clothes
- The baby moves it can hurt
- Woman can have a miscarriage
- Baby comes out of her vagina or cut open stomach if there is a problem
- Have to cut cord and measure baby. Is it a boy or girl?
- Have placenta removed
- A woman can die if there are problems

These boys then listed these questions:

About puberty and bodies:

- Does the sperm come from your balls?
- Do your testicles grow hairs?
- Why does your penis get hard and strong?
- What age are you when you are fully grown and have pubic hair?
- What age are you when you when you have a wet dream?
- Why do you get boners?
- Why do fanny’s fart?
- Are there different parts of a vagina?

- Are cow’s udders the boobs?

About sex and relationships:

- Do people shag just to have a baby?
- Do you have to have a baby or a marriage first?
- If parents are going to be cruel why have children?
- Is there a few or lots of gay people?
- Can gay people have babies?
- Is it hard for gay people to find each other?

About conception:

- How does the sperm get to the egg?
- If sperm goes up the girls bum would it make an egg?
- How does the sperm get into the woman?
- What are the chances of having twins? Is it because you have sex more than once?

About sexual behaviour:

- Why do people masturbate?
- If you are a lesbian do you use a vibrator?
- What’s it called when a girl wanks?
- What age is it legal to have sex?
- Can you get arrested if you have sex earlier?
- Can you do different things in sex? Does it affect having a boy or a girl?
- Why do people wank each other?
- What about spanking?
- Are blow jobs illegal?
- Is teenage sex high in Scotland?

About gender identity:

- Can people who change sex change back?
- Can women who change into men have babies?

About birth:

- Can having a baby hurt the woman?
- Why do breasts produce milk?
- What if a baby comes out the backside?
- Are babies a big hassle that affect your social life?
- Why are babies red at the beginning?

- What colour is a baby if mum and dad are both white?

About other aspects of sexual health

- Would circumcision put people off?
- Can you catch diseases from sex with people?
- Does sex make you sick?
- Can you get cancer?

Example: what P6/7 boys (school 3: total 8) told us when asked to write about what happens from conception through to birth:

- Having sex can use a condom
- Cells and eggs and nerves and stuff
- Pregnancy test
- Arms and legs grow
- Baby develops, swimming in mum’s tummy
- Baby is kicking
- Contractions start
- Baby comes out

These boys then listed these questions:

About sex and relationships:

- What is it like to have sex?
- Do people go to bed bare naked?

About contraception/abortion:

- If you don’t want your baby what is it you do to stop having it? What’s the word?
- What’s the operation that men get that stops them getting women pregnant?

About conception:

- How does a baby start out?

About pregnancy:

- What does ‘maternity’ mean?
- What happens in a pregnancy test?
- Can boys get pregnant? What would happen?
- How would the baby come out?
- Does the baby get fed in the tummy?
- What keeps the baby alive inside?
- How many months does it take to grow and come out?

About birth:

- How do babies get born?
- Where does the baby come out? Why?
- What’s an umbilical cord? When does it get cut?
- How does the cord make your belly button?
- When you are born how do you feel? Do you feel pain?
- How long does it take?
- How do you develop after you are born?
- What does it feel like to have a baby son?
- What did our dad’s feel like?

Concluding comments

The children have produced a great deal of information for teachers, health professionals and parents to consider.

In exploring the physical and emotional changes associated with puberty, perceptions and views on relationships and conception, pregnancy and birth, we have covered a number of areas which adults sometimes find difficult to engage in conversation with children about. What has emerged from our experience of facilitating the workshops, recording what children told us, and then analysing and writing up the information, is that children want to talk about these things. They have absorbed a lot of information about sex and relationships but they know that some of it is confused, 'bitty' or misinformed. In addition we adults might consider that some of what they have picked up along the way reflect attitudes towards sex and relationships that we consider unhelpful. It may be necessary to challenge these messages to promote children's positive sense of themselves in terms of self-esteem and the subsequent ability to look after themselves and their sexual health - something we might describe as self efficacy.

The key to understanding where children are at when it comes to learning is the questions they have asked. In our workshops we take the approach that all questions are good questions, we encouraged the children to use the language they know rather than worry about getting it wrong. While our workshops were about the what of sex and relationship education rather than the how, we tried to work with children in ways which modelled the kinds of learning environments and relationships that are crucial for learning about sex and relationships i.e. non judgmental, listening, caring and open to enquiry.

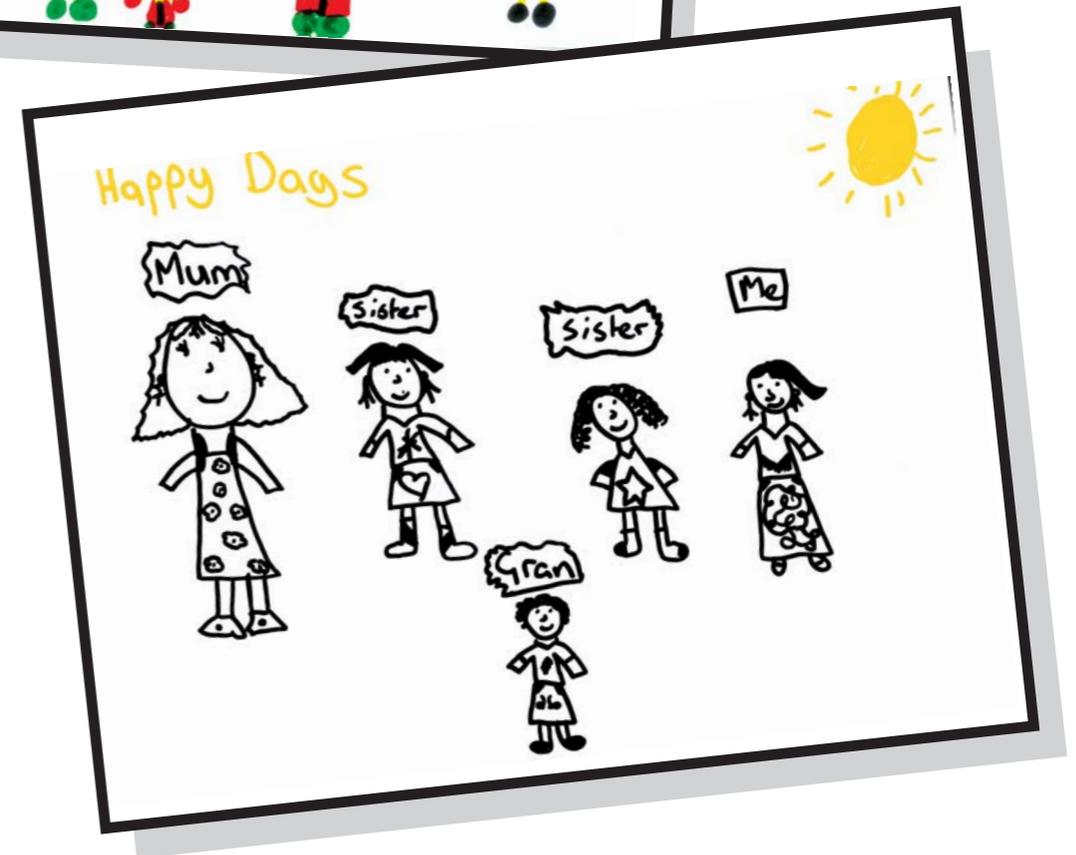
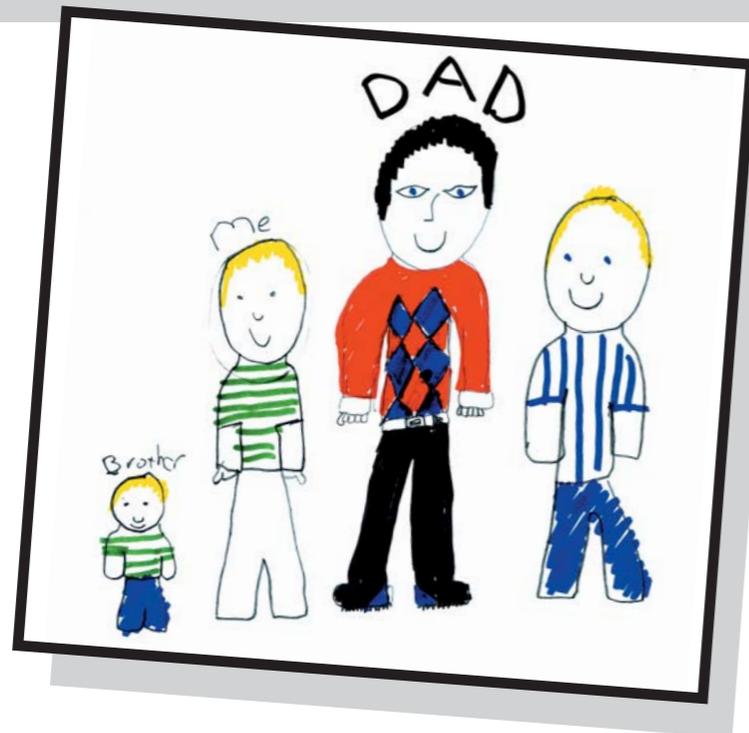
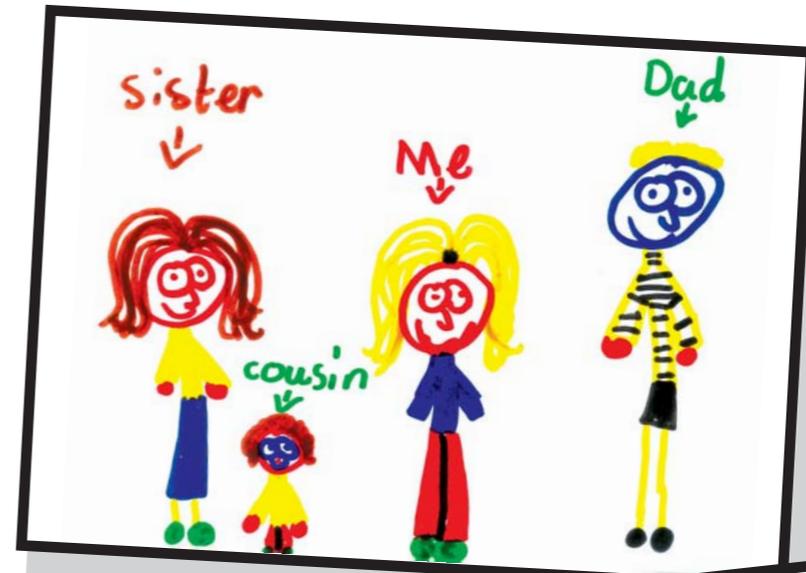
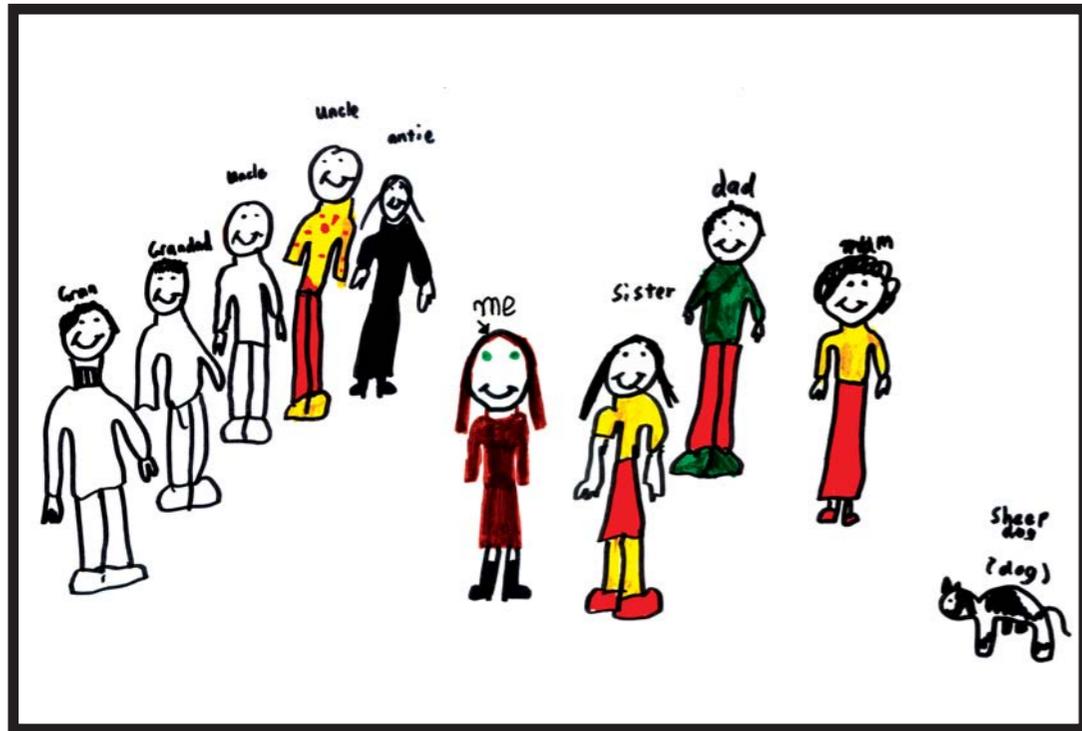
For those concerned with school based sex and relationship education the next stage in terms of learning from the information presented in this report is to reflect on what children have told us they know, and what questions they have, and put that alongside what is currently taught in school. Does it do what children need it to do?

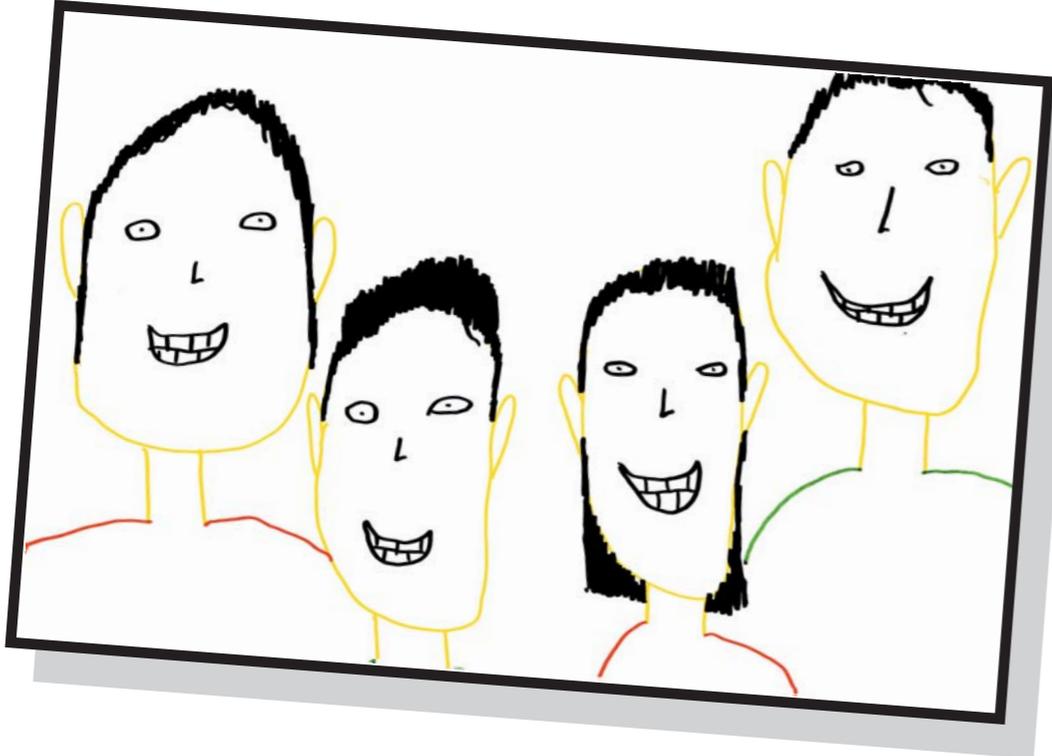
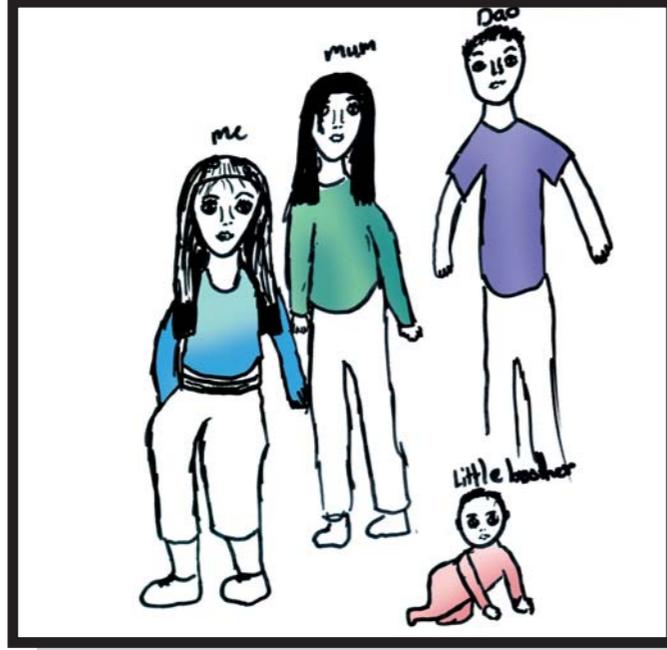
Is it impossible to ignore the fact that some professionals do not feel comfortable working in this area. Of course teachers and health professionals can be supported to take this area of teaching and learning on as a specialism, but we all have to be open to the fact that you cannot predict or control when a primary school age child will ask you a question. We all have to be aware that when a child asks you a question they may have picked you rather than anybody else they know; this is a special position to find yourself in.

Finally, parents could also usefully learn from the information in this report. Children learn about sex and relationships from many sources, some more positive than others. Parents need to be aware of what their child is hearing, reading, seeing, and be able to play the part they have in promoting good sexual health and a positive and respectful attitude toward relationships.

- 1 At <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library2/doc16/sess-05.asp>
- 2 More about the guidelines at:
<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/5to14/guidelines/healtheducation.asp>
- 3 At <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/health/shst-00.asp>
- 4 At <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/01/20603/51177> following the
- 5 A Curriculum for Excellence a report by the Curriculum Review Group available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/education/cerv-00.asp>
- 6 More about Health Promoting Schools at <http://www.healthpromotingschools.co.uk/>
- 7 From 'Listening to Children' Priscilla Alderson, Barnardo's (1995) ISBN 0 902046 22 5
- 8 From "Hear! Hear! Promoting Children and Young People's Democratic Participation in Local Government": Carolyne Willow, Local Government Information Unit/NCB (1997) ISBN 1 8979 57 25 4

More family portraits





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