

Supporting the health of YOUNG PEOPLE IN BEDFORD

A summary report of the Health Related Behaviour Survey

These results are the compilation of data collected from a sample of middle and upper school pupils in Years 8 and 10 aged 12 to 15 in Bedford schools during the Summer term 2004. This work was commissioned by Bedford and Bedfordshire Heartlands Primary Care Trusts and was co-ordinated by the Healthy Schools team. A total of 1577 pupils took part in 16 middle and upper schools. The resulting data have provided the local health and education partnership with sound information about young people's lifestyles.

Teachers were briefed on how to collect the most reliable data and then pupils in schools anonymously completed the questionnaire.

Completed questionnaires were then returned to the Schools Health Education Unit in Exeter for processing.

A small number of pupils in primary school also completed the questionnaire but the sample was too small to include the data here.

1577 young people were involved in the survey

School Year	Bedford		Bedfordshire Heartlands		Total
	Year 8	Year 10	Year 8	Year 10	
Boys	182	223	264	125	794
Girls	174	227	231	151	783
Total	356	450	495	276	1577

Reference sample

AREA data have been compared with a compilation of survey areas that have completed similar versions of the questionnaire. These areas include East Sussex, Knowsley, Cambridgeshire, Peterborough, Croydon, Dudley, Solihull, Caerphilly, Luton, Southwark, and Worcestershire.

Topics include

Citizenship

Emotional Health and Well-being

Hygiene, Medication and Dental

Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco

Sex and Relationships

Safety

Healthy Eating

Emotional Health and Well-being

Leisure Activity

Physical Activity



**Schools
Health
Education
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Nationally Accredited Scheme

Bedford
Primary Care Trust

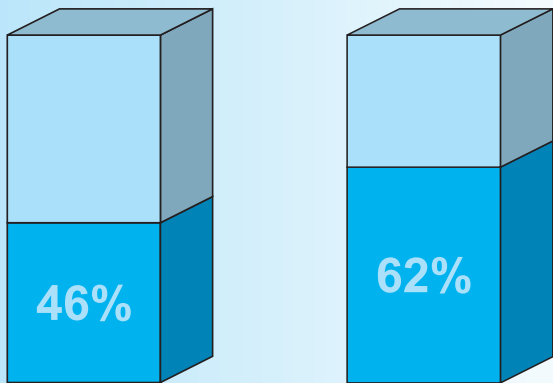
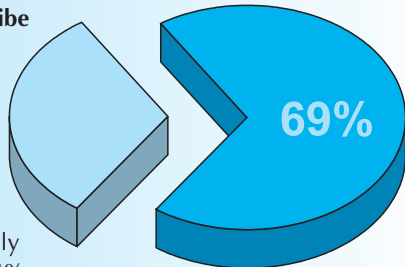


Bedford pupils in Year 8 (ages 12 to 13 years)

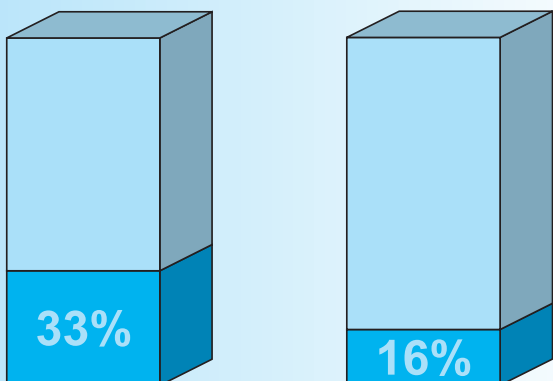
CITIZENSHIP

Background

- 69% of pupils describe themselves as white UK, 21% say Asian and 5% mixed.
- 69% of pupils describe themselves as white UK.**
- 58% of all pupils live with both parents. 19% live only with their mother, 14% live with mother and stepfather.
- 61% of pupils agreed with the statement that they were in control of their health. 79% agreed that if they took care of themselves they would stay healthy.
- 46% of boys and 62% of girls in the Bedford Year 8 sample spent time doing homework on the evening before the survey.**



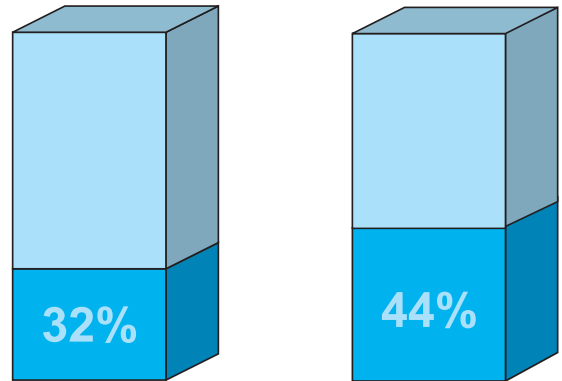
- 42% of pupils did no homework at all the night before the survey, 41% did up to an hour, and 17% did over an hour.
- 42% of pupils used the Internet after school the day before the survey, 31% used the computer to do homework.
- A third of the girls and 18% of the boys cared for family members, on the evening before the survey.**



What form of caring does this take? Do these children need any extra support?

EMOTIONAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

- 67% of pupils reported that, in general, they were 'quite a lot' or 'a lot' satisfied with their life:
- 32% of girls and 44% of boys had high self-esteem scores.**



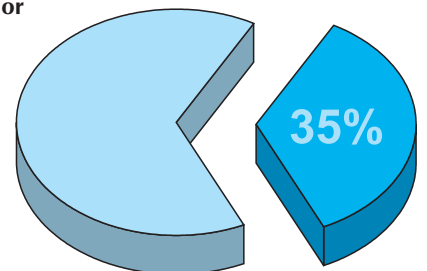
- 22% of girls and 15% of boys had low or medium low self-esteem scores.
- 57% of boys and 71% of girls reported that they worried about at least one of the problems listed in the questionnaire 'quite a lot' or 'a lot'.
- 42% worried about exams & tests, 26% about family problems, 24% about career problems and 12% about bullying.
- 23% of boys and 17% of girls said that they would keep any worries about bullying to themselves.

Can anti-bullying strategies be improved?

- Parents are the most popular sources of support for boys and girls for most problems.

HEALTHY EATING

- 21% of girls and 12% of boys had nothing to eat or drink for breakfast on the day of the survey.
- 10% of pupils said they had no fruit or vegetables on the day before the survey. 16% said they had 5 or more portions.
- 43% eat fresh fruit and 53% dairy produce on most days. 40% of pupils eat vegetables on most days.
- 50% of pupils have crisps, 45% sweets and chocolates and 26% 'non diet' fizzy drinks on most days.
- 35% said they rarely or never ate any fish.**
- 14% of pupils drank no water on the day before the survey. 60% drank between 1 and 5 cups and 27% about a litre or more.



Dental care

- 78% of pupils reported that they cleaned their teeth at least twice the day before (the recommended frequency).
- 82% had visited the dentist within the past 6 months this rises to 88% within the past year.

DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO

Drugs

- 15% of pupils are 'fairly sure' or 'certain' that they know someone who takes drugs.
- 12% of Year 8 boys and 9% of Year 8 girls have been offered cannabis.
- 5% of pupils reported that they had taken an illegal drug in the last year. 3% had taken one in the last month.
- The top four drugs thought to be most dangerous were:

Boys		Girls	
Heroin	66%	Heroin	61%
Cocaine	53%	Cocaine	46%
Solvents	49%	Cannabis	38%
Cannabis	32%	Solvents	39%

- The top four drugs thought easy to get hooked on were:

Boys		Girls	
Cannabis	60%	Cannabis	67%
Cocaine	64%	Alcohol	61%
Heroin	52%	Cocaine	59%
Alcohol	52%	Heroin	65%

- 39% of pupils (more boys than girls) correctly identified alcohol as the drug that kills most people in this country.



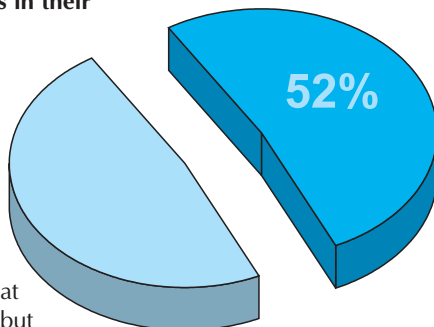
Can anything be done to improve the impact of school drug education while schools are so busy?

Alcohol

- 26% of pupils had at least one alcoholic drink in the week before the survey.
- Boys: 10% of Year 8 boys drank between 4 and 20 units of alcohol in the seven days before the survey.
- Girls: 3% of Year 8 girls drank between 4 and 20 units of alcohol in the seven days before the survey.
- 42% of pupils said that if they drink alcohol at home, their parents always know.
- Pre-mixed spirits, wine and beer were the most popular drinks.

Tobacco

- 52% of pupils reported that they have a parent or sibling who smokes indoors in their home (including themselves) most days:



- 5% of Year 8 pupils reported that they smoke occasionally or regularly.
- 6% of pupils said that they used to smoke but don't now.



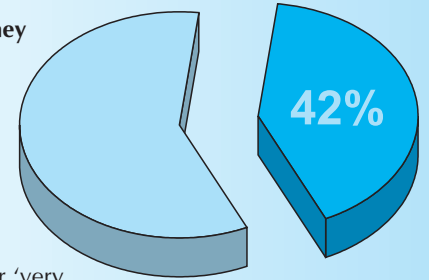
What impact does this have on future smoking habits? Can these be changed?

SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS

- When asked what was their main source of information about sex 58% of pupils said school lessons. 26% of the boys and 42% of the girls said their friends. 42% overall said their parents.
- When asked what **should be** their main source of information only 16% of pupils said their friends. 67% said it should be school lessons and 51% said their parents. 27% said it should be the school nurse.
- 26% of pupils said they believed there was a special contraception and advice service for young people available locally, 58% said that they didn't know.

SAFETY

- 42% of pupils said they were treated for an accident by a doctor or at a hospital within the last year.
- 24% of pupils rated the safety of their area, when going out after dark, as 'poor' or 'very poor'. 4% said this about going out during the day.
- 16% of the boys and 5% of the girls reported that they were fairly sure or certain that they had friends who carried weapons for protection when going out.
- 11% reported that they had been the victim of violence or aggression in the area where they live in the last 12 months.



Is this a cause for concern? Does this need further investigation?

LEISURE AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- 84% of pupils said they spent time watching television, after school, on the day before the survey.
- 51% met with friends, 59% of the boys and 29% of the girls played sport, on the evening before the survey.
- 67% of the boys played computer games, on the evening before the survey.
- 78% of pupils reported that they enjoyed physical activities 'quite a lot' or 'a lot'.
- 53% of the boys and 37% of the girls considered themselves 'fit' or 'very fit'.
- 47% of the boys and 35% of the girls reported that they had exercised hard, three times or more, in the last week.
- The top four physical activities were:

Boys		Girls	
Football	64%	Going for a walk	44%
Bike riding	57%	Bike riding	40%
Tennis	43%	Rounders	40%
Swimming	36%	Dancing	39%

(The table shows the proportion of pupils who said they did these activities at least weekly).

- When asked what activities they would like to do in school PE and games that they don't normally do, the girls' top answers were swimming, football, dancing and gymnastics. The boys' top answers were football, tennis and cricket.

Gender differences amongst Bedford Year 8 pupils

- ↑ **More** Bedford Year 8 boys record levels of high self esteem. 44% of the boys compares with only 32% of the girls.
- ↑ **More** Bedford Year 8 boys are likely to say that they are satisfied with their life, 'quite a lot' or 'a lot'. 72% of boys compares with 61% of girls.
- ↑ **More** Bedford boys are happy with their weight. 63% compares with 42% of girls saying the same. 53% of the girls say that they would like to lose weight compared with 29% of the boys saying the same.
- ↑ **More** Bedford boys agreed with the statement 'If I take care of myself I'll stay healthy'. 83% of boys compares with 75% of girls who said the same.
- ↑ **More** boys are fairly sure or certain that they, or their friends carry weapons for protection when going out. 16% of boys compare with 5% of girls who say the same.
- ↓ **Boys** in Bedford are **less likely** to eat fresh fruit and salad 'on most days' compared with the girls eating the same. They are also less likely, however, to eat sweets and chocolate bars 'on most days'. The girls are less likely than the boys to have sugar coated cereals and drink fizzy drinks.
- ↓ Bedford girls are **less likely** to have ever tried smoking. 70% say that they have never tried, compared with only 58% of boys who said the same.
- ↓ 28% of boys in year 8 said that solvents are easy to get hooked on. This compares with 49% of girls who said the same.
- ↓ Bedford boys are less likely to have cleaned their teeth twice or more. 74% compares with 82% of the girls saying the same.

Differences between Bedford Year 8 pupils and SHEU wider databank figures

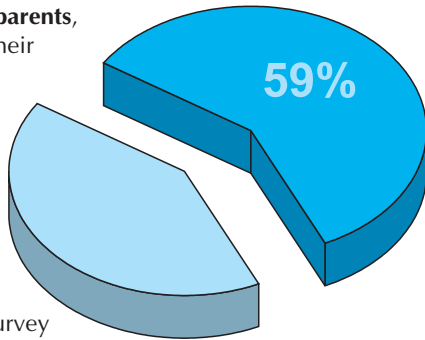
- ↑ Pupils in the Bedford survey are **more likely** to eat vegetables and fresh fruit on most days than are those pupils saying the same in the wider sample.
- ↑ They are also more likely to drink water during the day and appear to be more aware of the '5 a day' messages as they record higher percentages eating portions of fruit and vegetables on a regular basis.
- ↑ Pupils in this survey are **more likely** to eat a packed lunch, this would help to explain the higher proportions saying that they eat crisps 'on most days' compared with the wider sample.
- ↑ Year 8 boys in this survey are **more likely** to say that they want to lose weight compared with the same group in the wider sample.
- ↓ Year 8 pupils in Bedford are more likely to have drunk alcohol in the past week compared with Year 8 pupils saying the same in the wider sample.
- ↓ Boys in Year 8 are **less likely** to say that they have **never smoked at all** compared with the same group in the wider sample.
- ↓ The Year 8 pupils are also **less likely** to say that they are satisfied with their life at the moment.
- ↓ Pupils in the Bedford survey are **less likely** to take measures to avoid sunburn than are those pupils saying the same in the wider survey.


Bedford pupils in Year 10 (ages 14-15 years)

CITIZENSHIP

Background

- 62% of pupils describe themselves as white UK. 5% said that they were white non-UK, 17% describe themselves as Asian.
- 59% live with both parents, 19% live only with their mother.
- 52% of pupils did homework on the evening before the survey and 20% did over an hour.
- 54% of pupils used the Internet after school the day before the survey.
- 69% of pupils say that they use the Internet for finding out about their hobbies & interests. 68% use it for chatting and 26% use it for help and advice.
- 79% of pupils are never supervised when they use the Internet.

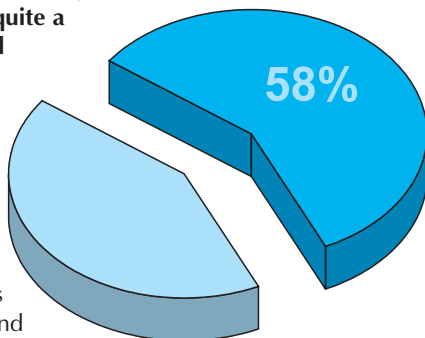


 **Should parents be more concerned about the material their children have access to via the Internet?**

- 35% of pupils cared for family members after school the day before the survey.

EMOTIONAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

- 58% of pupils reported that, in general, they were 'quite a lot' or 'a lot' satisfied with their life:



- Parents are the most popular sources of support for boys and girls.
- 43% of boys and 41% of girls had high self-esteem scores.
- 63% agreed with the statement that they were in charge of their health.
- 76% of pupils say they are 'never' afraid of going to school because of bullying. 3% say that they think others may fear going to school because of them.
- 81% of pupils reported that they worried about at least one of the problems listed in the questionnaire 'quite a lot' or 'a lot'

 **Is there enough support available for young people?**

- The top four worries were:

	Boys		Girls
Exams and tests	51%	Exams and tests	60%
Career problems	39%	Their looks	48%
Family problems	32%	Family problems	41%
School-work problems	30%	Career problems	41%

(The table shows the proportion of pupils who said they worried about the problems 'quite a lot' or 'a lot'.)

HEALTHY EATING

- 15% of boys and 25% of girls reported having nothing to eat or drink for breakfast on the day of the survey.
- 18% of boys and 20% of the girls also reported having no lunch on the day before the survey.
- 27% of boys and 58% of girls say that they would like to lose weight.
- 22% of boys say they never consider their health when choosing what to eat.
- 16% of pupils reported that they had no portions of fruit or vegetables on the day before the survey.
- 38% of pupils eat crisps, 'on most days', 34% fresh fruit and 46% sweets or chocolate bars.
- 17% of girls and 13% of boys had no water to drink on the day before the survey. 22% of pupils had about a litre or more.

DRUGS, ALCOHOL & TOBACCO

Drugs

- 38% of pupils are 'fairly sure' or 'certain' that they know someone who takes illegal drugs.
- 37% of Year 10 boys and 32% of Year 10 girls have been offered cannabis. 18% of pupils have been offered other drugs.
- 19% of pupils reported that they had taken an illegal drug in the last month.
- The top four drugs thought to be most dangerous were:

	Boys		Girls
Heroin	80%	Heroin	78%
Cocaine	65%	Cocaine	58%
Solvents	36%	Solvents	35%
Amphetamines	29%	Amphetamines	26%

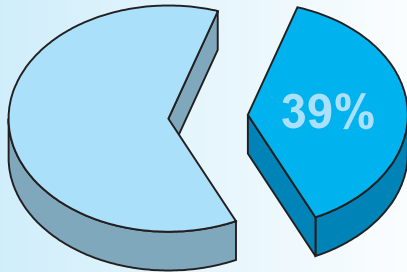
- The top four drugs thought easy to get hooked on were:

	Boys		Girls
Heroin	68%	Heroin	72%
Cocaine	65%	Cocaine	68%
Cannabis	53%	Cannabis	59%
Alcohol	52%	Alcohol	56%

- 38% of pupils (more boys than girls) correctly identified alcohol as the drug that kills most people in this country.

Alcohol

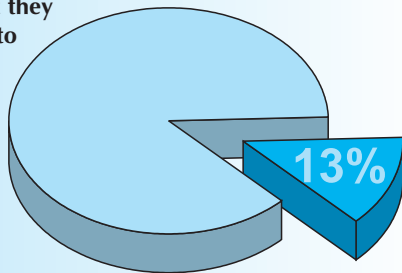
- 39% of pupils had at least one alcoholic drink in the week before the survey.



- 17% of pupils drank on only one day, 22% drank on more than one day.
- 27% of pupils drank between 4 and 20 units of alcohol in the seven days before the survey.
- 8% of Year 10 boys and 2% of Year 10 girls said they drank 21 or more units of alcohol in the seven days before the survey.
- 10% of Year 10 pupils were able to buy alcohol from an off-licence that should sell only to over-eighteens.
- Pre-mixed spirits, beer and wine were the most popular drinks.

Tobacco

- 53% of pupils reported that there is someone who smokes indoors in their home (including themselves) most days.
- 20% of boys reported that they smoke occasionally or regularly. 28% of girls reported that they smoke occasionally or regularly.
- 13% of pupils say that they smoke but would like to give up.



How can we help these young people to give up?

SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS

- When asked what was their main source of information about sex 44% of pupil said school lessons. 55% of the girls said their friends. 16% of the boys said the Internet and 29% said TV, films.
- When asked what should be their main source of information only 20% of pupils said their friends. 57% said it should be school lessons and 42% said their parents.
- 24% of Year 10 boys and 38% of Year 10 girls said they believed there was a special contraception and advice service for young people available locally, 61% of pupils said they didn't know.



Can young people's knowledge of contraception services be increased, particularly among the boys?

SAFETY

- 40% of pupils said they were treated for an accident by a doctor or at a hospital within the last year. 17% of the boys had an accident playing sport, 10% of the girls had an accident at home.
- 92% the dentist in the twelve months before the survey.
- 17% of pupils said that they have asthma. 19% of pupils say they never do anything to avoid sunburn.
- 26% of pupils rated the safety of their area, when going out after dark, as 'poor' or 'very poor'. 7% said this about going out during the day.
- 14% of pupils reported that they were fairly sure or certain that they had friends who carried weapons for protection when going out. When asked what weapons were carried, 16% of the boys reported 'weapon with blade'.



Is this a cause for concern? Does this need further investigation?

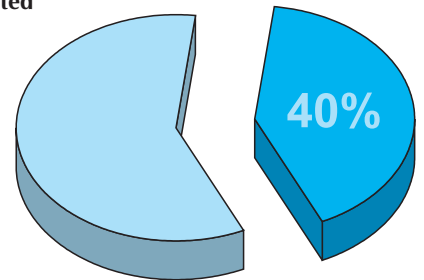
- 19% of boys and 11% of girls said that they had been the victim of violence or aggression in the last 12 months in the area where they lived.

LEISURE

- The most common after school leisure activities on the day before the survey were watching television, listening to music and meeting with friends.
- 14% of girls and 24% of boys spent more than 2 hours playing computer games after school on the evening before the survey.
- 78% had used the Internet at home in the last month and 82% at school.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- 45% of the boys consider themselves 'fit' or 'very fit' compared with only 31% of the girls.
- 40% of pupils reported that they had exercised three times or more, in the week before the survey, which made them breathe harder.



- Outside school hours, soccer and bike riding were the most popular form of physical activity for the boys and, for the girls, it was going for a walk.
- When asked what physical activities they would like to start doing more of, the girls expressed an interest in cricket, rounders and rollerblading, the boys were interested in climbing/ abseiling.
- When asked what they would like to do in PE/Games sessions, the girls asked for swimming, the boys – football.



What local facilities are available for youngsters to be active? What more can be done to encourage girls to be active?

Gender differences between Bedford Year 10 pupils

- ↑ **More** Bedford Year 10 boys said that they never consider their health when choosing what to eat. 22% of boys compares with 10% of girls for this question.
- ↑ Bedford Year 10 boys are **more likely** to drink at least a litre of water during the day. 26% of boys drank at least a litre of water compared with only 18% of girls who said the same.
- ↑ **More** Bedford Year 10 boys said that they knew someone personally who took the drugs listed in the questionnaire. 54% of boys said that they didn't know anyone. This compares with 60% of girls who said the same.
- ↑ Bedford Year 10 boys are **more likely** to say that they have been the victim of violence or aggression in the area where they live in the last 12 months. 19% of boys compares with 11% of girls who said the same.
- ↓ Bedford Year 10 boys are **less likely** to say that they are afraid of going to school because they might be bullied. 82% of boys say that they are 'never afraid'. This compares with 71% of girls who said the same.
- ↓ Bedford Year 10 boys are **less likely** to worry about exams and tests, the way they look, or problems with family and friends when compared with the percentages of girls who worry.
- ↓ Bedford boys are **less likely** to say that they smoked a cigarette in the last week. 26% of girls smoked last week compared with 18% of boys who said the same.
- ↓ Bedford boys are **less likely** to say that school lessons should be their main source of information about drugs. 59% of boys compares with 66% of girls who said that school lessons should be the main source.
- ↓ Bedford Year 10 boys are **less likely** to say that know where they can get condoms free of charge. 42% of boys know where to get fee access to them compared with 55% of girls who say the same.
- ↓ Bedford Year 10 boys are **less likely** to have done homework the evening before the survey compared with girls saying the same. 48% of boys compares with 56% of girls who said they did homework the night before. They are more likely than the girls to have played sport, met with friends and played computer games.

Differences between Bedford Year 10 pupils and SHEU wider databank figures

- ↑ Pupils in Bedford are **more likely** to say that they live with mainly or only mother, rather than both mother and father together.
- ↑ Pupils in Bedford are more likely to say that they had nothing to eat or drink for breakfast that morning.
- ↑ Bedford pupils are more likely to have eaten portions of fruit and vegetables the day before the survey. They are also more likely to have drunk water than pupils saying the same in the wider sample.
- ↑ Pupils in Bedford are **more likely** to say that they have trouble breathing when running compared with pupils in the wider sample who said the same.
- ↑ Pupils in Bedford are **more likely** to say that they have had cannabis in the last month compared with pupils in the wider sample who said the same.
- ↓ **Fewer pupils** in Bedford are aware of a special contraception and advice centre available to them locally, compared with pupils in the wider survey who said the same.
- ↓ Pupils in Bedford are **less likely** to say that safety during the day is 'very good' in the area where they live compared with pupils in the wider survey, although similar levels report being the victims of violence or aggression in the last 12 months.
- ↓ Pupils in Bedford are **less likely** to say that they are satisfied with their lives 'a lot' compared with pupils saying the same in the wider sample.

The Way Forward – over to you

The work was funded by Bedford and Bedfordshire Heartlands Primary Care Trust; Bedfordshire Drug Action Team; Bedfordshire LEA; Bedfordshire Teenage Pregnancy Strategy and the Luton and Bedfordshire Healthy Schools Scheme. As a result of their work we have excellent data to be used by schools, the Education Authority, the PCTs as well as other statutory and voluntary agencies that support the health of young people in the county. This work will inform action plans for joint working between and within organisations involved in improving the health and well-being of pupils in schools.

Our thanks go to the staff and pupils of the schools involved:

**Abbey Middle
Biddenham Upper
Harroden Middle
John Bunyan Upper
Lincroft Middle
Mark Rutherford Upper
St. Thomas More RC Upper
Westfield Middle**

For further information about the survey contact:

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Luton and Bedfordshire Healthy Schools Programme Current Priorities and Programmes

Promoting Emotional Health and Well-being

Promoting Emotional Health and Well-being is a priority for the scheme this year. A simple audit form was sent out to all schools in October. This will enable us to collect information relating to the good practice, which already exists in our local schools to promote and support the emotional health and well-being of young people. The information will help us to plan a package of support for schools and inform the content of the 2005 Healthy Schools Conference which will focus on this theme.

Sex and Relationships Education (SRE)

The new SRE Information and Guidance and Curriculum Framework has been sent out to all schools in November. This will be followed up by a comprehensive training programme for teachers, governors and parents co-ordinated by the Education Consultant for SRE and The Lodge

Healthy Eating

Have you received your updated version of the Healthy Eating Folder? This was sent out to all schools in September 2004 and contains very useful information to help schools to promote healthier eating habits.

Physical Activity

A key objective for the Healthy Schools Scheme this year is to work closely with schools to develop and

support family based obesity intervention projects. The Healthy Schools Physical Activity Sub-group will be developing a set of good practice standards for schools on which new projects can be based.

PSHE Teachers' Certification Programme

30 teachers from across the County are taking part in this exciting new programme. 20 teachers are completing an extension module in SRE and 10 are focusing on Drug and Alcohol Education. Funding is available for the next two years to support the DfES targets to have at least one teacher with a PSHE certificate in all secondary schools by 2006. The next course will be starting in April 2005.

PSHE Community Nurses' Programme

Luton and Bedfordshire will be joining the next cohort of this programme in April 2005, and will offer community nurses the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills in PSHE, and specifically SRE and Drug and Alcohol education. This will complement the ongoing teachers' continuing professional development programme.

Useful websites

www.healthy-schools.co.uk
www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk

**For more information about any of the above contact
Barbara Rooney, Healthy Schools Co-ordinator,
Tel. 01234 792629**