

Children's University: Our reach



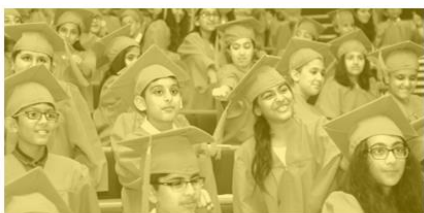
The State of The Nation 2023

A series of evidence-based reports examining the impact and importance of learning beyond the classroom in modern Britain

An annual research project from Children's University Trust

Written by Liam Nolan and Cordelia Howard with data analysis by Sukie Duhra

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This report is one of a series of evidence-based reports examining the impact of what goes on beyond the classroom on the lives of children and young people.

Based on extensive data collated from a bespoke digital platform, Children's University Online, the aim of the reports is to inform and improve provision by providing educators, policy makers and stakeholders of all kinds with a broad set of insights about the current state of learning beyond the classroom in contemporary Britain.

Our 2023 reports are informed by data from:

- 70,000 children
- 19,400 activities
- 704,000 hours of recorded participation.

Since 2021 our State of the Nation Reports have offered up an analysis of over 1 million hours of participation in learning beyond the classroom.

To download the rest of our reports, visit:

childrensuniversity.co.uk/stateofthenation

Learning beyond the classroom: Provision and Participation



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The role that learning beyond the classroom plays in skills development



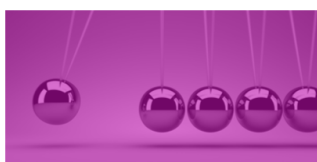
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The impact of learning beyond the classroom



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Learning beyond the classroom: links and recommendations for policy makers



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Introduction

Introduction

“We need to remain focused on capturing the insights and overviews of the learning environment beyond the classroom so that peers, policy makers, and educators of all stripes can call on us as the experts in our field and the holders of valuable live, and growing data sets.”

Children’s University is all about encouraging, tracking and celebrating children’s participation in learning beyond the classroom. “Learning beyond the classroom” is the term we use to describe participation in any structured learning activity outside of the timetabled curriculum. This is inclusive of school-based enrichment and extra-curricular activities, as well as those that take place outside of schools and are run by organisations and individuals with no links to formal education.

With a long-established paper passport scheme running since 2007, participants collect stamps for taking part in any activities that contain structured learning and take place beyond the formal classroom curriculum. This makes Children’s University unique in the breadth of our remit. We work closely with schools, for example, and validate and support extra-curricular provision, but we also work beyond schools. We work with charities, museums and education providers, but also businesses, retailers and more. Similarly, we celebrate all kinds of learning and don’t limit ourselves to any one subject area or theme. We use the term ‘thematically agnostic’ to describe our catch-all approach to learning.

In short, Children’s University is about recognising that learning takes place anywhere and that learning can take any form. As this report illustrates elsewhere, the impact of this is huge and is why we are committed to sharing all we know.

Our State of the Nation Reports

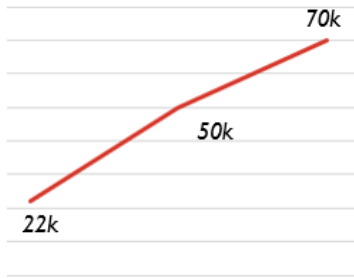
Since 2019 we have been running a bespoke online platform that works alongside our passport scheme. Children have a safe and secure place to record their participation, see their interests and skills develop, and schools and partners get an insight into the provision and participation levels in their area. Nationally Children’s University Trust publishes this report annually with the intent of informing and improving provision.

To date our three annual State of the Nation Reports have offered an analysis and breakdown of over 1,000,000 hours of learning beyond the classroom.

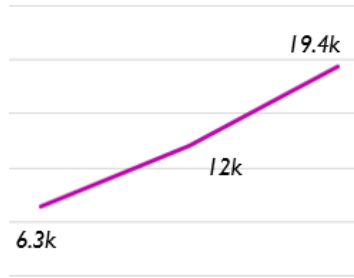
Introduction

Our growth

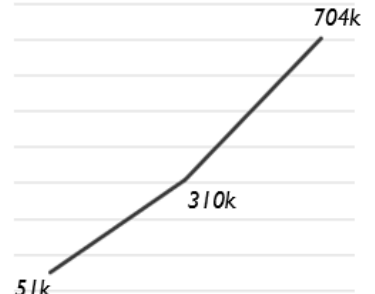
We published our first State of the Nation Report in 2021 using data from Children's University Online. Our annual growth in users, activities, and the number of hours we have recorded looks like this:



Children registered



Activities available



Hours of learning

With 2023 being the year that we introduced a new subscription model, allowing access to a version of our programme for children who attend a school that's not part of our network and children who are home educated, we expect to see further growth in the coming years. Children's University is now, for the first time, accessible to all children. The following pages give a greater insight into our reach and the users who generate the participation data we share.

The State of the Nation

Evidence and impact of the importance of learning beyond the classroom in 2021



An analysis of learning beyond the classroom participation and provision using data collected between May 2019 and May 2021 by Children's University.

Written by
Liam Nolan,
Cordelia Howard
with support from
Eloise O'Donnell



Learning Beyond the Classroom: The State of the Nation 2022

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An annual research project from Children's University Trust
Written by Liam Nolan and Cordelia Howard with data analysis by Sakie Dulra



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Headline figures

Children's University Online (CUO) gives us the opportunity to collect data that no one else is. The insights that feed into this report come from:



There are 70,000 children with active accounts on CUO. **This is an increase of 41% from last year's report.**



There are 1,002 schools registered on CUO.



There are 19,400 activities currently validated and available for children on CUO. **This is an increase of 59% from last year's report.**



In the past year children have registered 704,000 hours of learning beyond the classroom. **This is an increase of 127% from last year's report.**

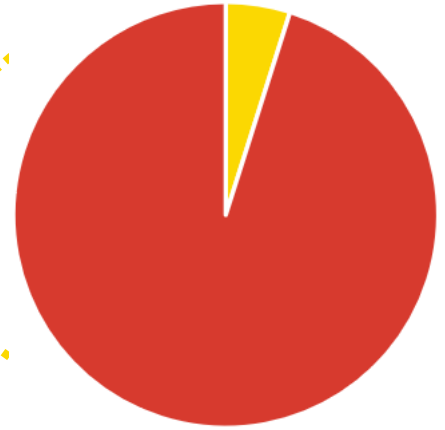
* Online account numbers accurate as of September 2023. In addition to these online users, we have participants not registered online

** Total hours recorded online accurate as of September 2023. In addition to these online hours, our partners not currently using CUO have recorded hours not eligible for full analysis in this report. Our aim is for all of our network of partners to use CUO.

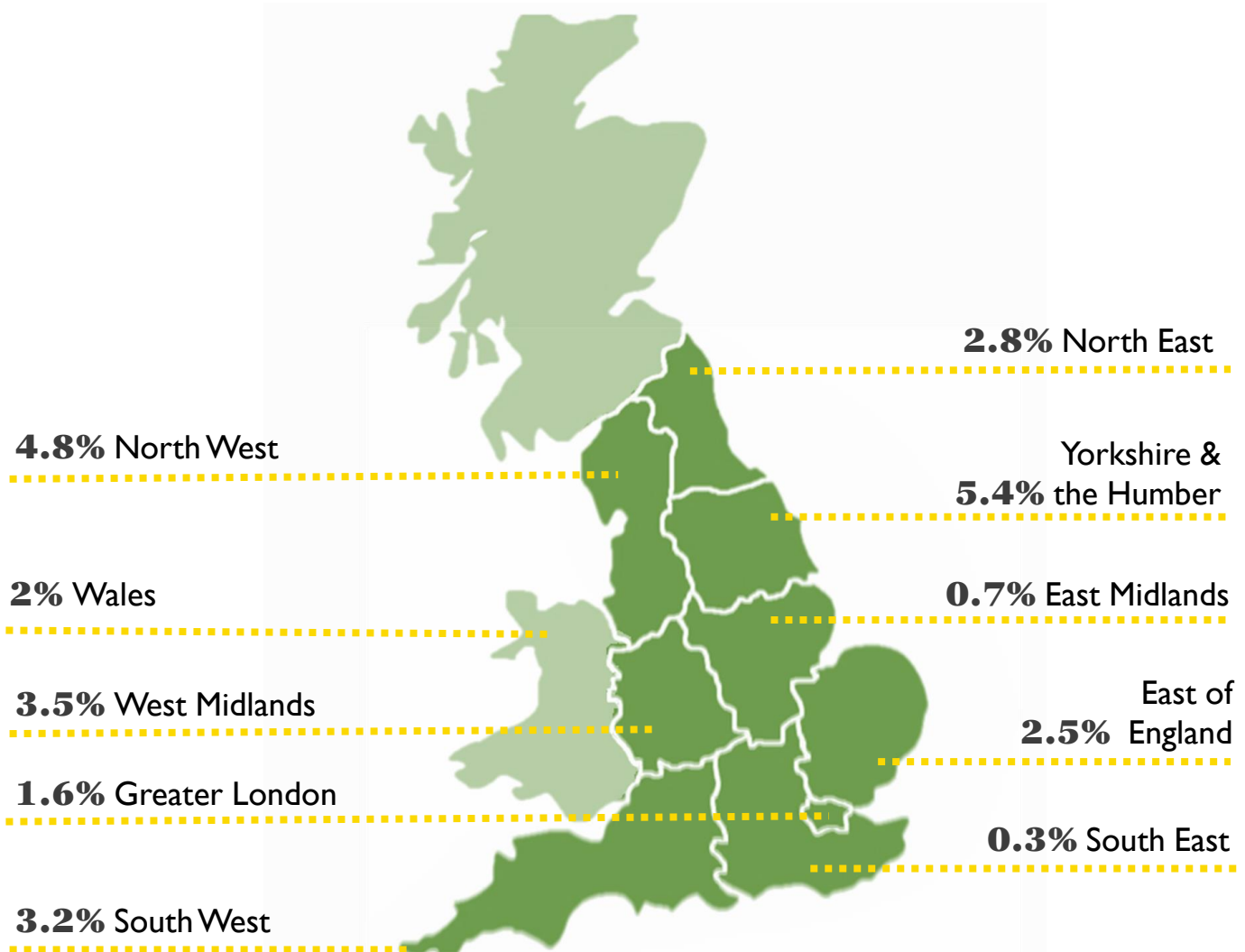
Children's University and our reach

In 2022-23 we had 69 partners running Children's University in 79 Local Education Authority Areas*

We worked in 1,002 schools. This is only 4.9% of the state primary and secondary schools in Britain



As a percentage of schools, our reach into the different regions is as follows:



This is Children's University's presence in each region as a percentage of the total of state primary and secondary schools in the region.

* Our LEA reach is down from last year's figure (96). Funding reductions have resulted in the closure of several of our local delivery partners.

Reaching those who need us

We focus our work where it is needed most. The areas in which we work are often those with unique challenges.

Our presence in English Local Education Authorities (LEAs) with a high proportion of pupils receiving free school meals (FSM)

We have a presence in 42% of the top 20% of LEAs where the primary school FSM rates are highest



We have a presence in 38% of the top 10% of LEAs where the primary school FSM rates are highest



We have a presence in 16% of the top 20% of LEAs where the secondary school FSM rates are highest



We have a presence in 6% of the top 10% of LEAs where the secondary school FSM rates are highest



We have a presence in 31% of the lowest scoring 10% of LEAs on the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI)

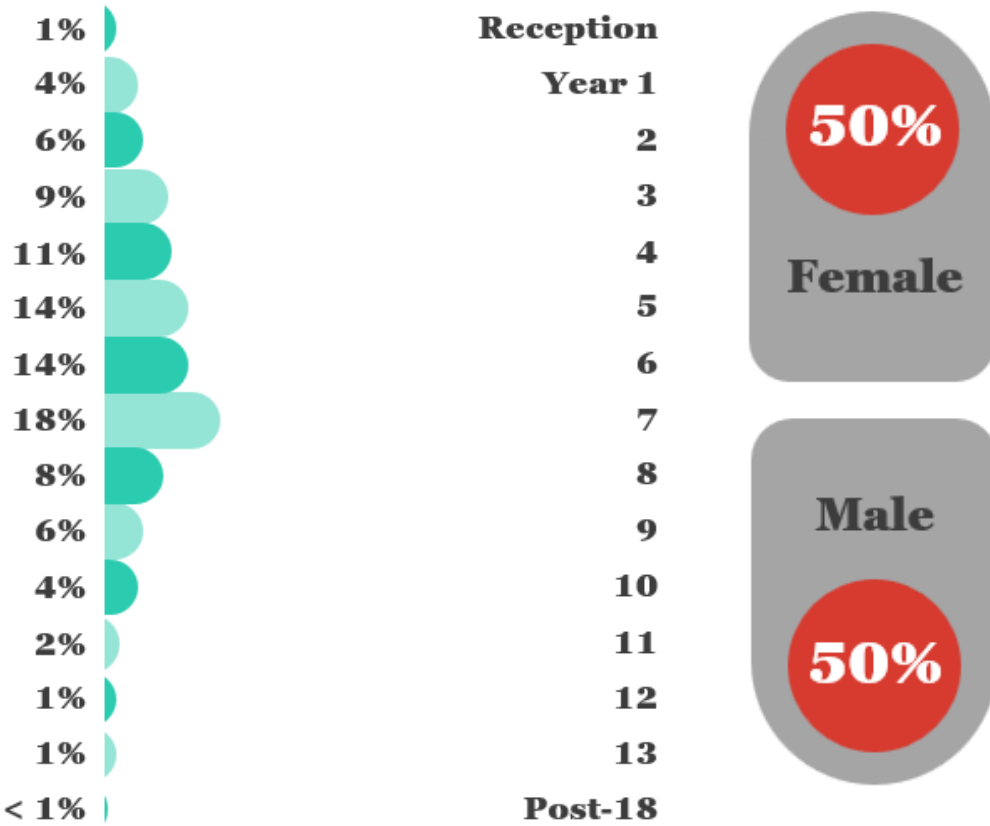


We operate in 10 out of the 12 Opportunity Areas as well as 78% of the Government's new Levelling Up Areas



Our participants

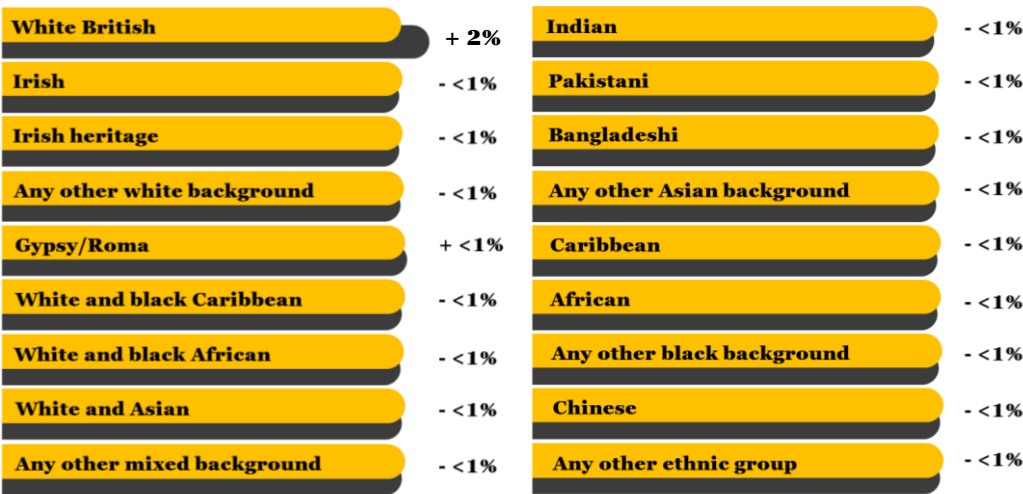
70,000 children from 1,002 schools have user accounts on CUO. This is what we know about them.



Age and Gender

All schools that register pupils with accounts on *Children's University Online* are able to record the gender of their participants. Not all of them choose to. For the pupils we have gender data for, we have a 50-50 male-female split.

Participant profiles extrapolated from school-level data



Ethnicity

We do not directly collect data on Free School Meal eligibility or ethnic background of participants. However looking at public DfE data, we can see at a school level the variances between Children's University participant levels compared to national averages.



+ 0.7

How participants feel about Children's University

“Childrens University means that all my extra work has counted for something bigger.”

During August 2023, we surveyed participants about Children's University. 462 respondents shared their views. As well as the questions that informed our 'Outcomes for Children' survey (see the results in the above section, The Impact of Learning Beyond the Classroom) we asked participants to respond to the question: **“What's been your favourite thing about Children's University this past year? A mixed selection of their responses is below:**

“

My favourite thing about Children's University?

“That all different kinds of learning can be appreciated.”

“The fact that I got my gold award. I felt very proud.”

“Knowing I'm learning all the time.”

“Getting recognition for the work I do and feeling proud.”

“Trying something I thought I wouldn't like. Just like drama and doing the high ropes on holiday.”

“My favourite thing is being able to log activities like kayaking and keeping a record of them.”

“I enjoyed getting stamps and building them up to get my bronze and silver. I liked filling in about 'my favourite things'.”

“I loved realising that all my fun is also learning!”

“[Children's University] helped me realise that I'm not doing it just for me I'm doing it for everyone”

“Learning new skills and checking progress.”

“Earning the points and feeling like a grown up at university.”

“It's inclusive. There is nothing too big or too small to add. Everything is a possibility to earn credits.”

”

Summary of findings

- 1. Usage of Children's University Online is rapidly increasing. As user numbers grow, so too does the robustness and value of our data on learning beyond the classroom.**
- 2. No one else is collecting the data that we are, as broadly and across such a spectrum of learning.**
- 3. Children's University's reach across the country is significant, but there is still a long way to go in order to best collate data for all educators and local areas.**
- 4. Children's University's presence is greatest in areas where its impact is needed most.**
- 5. Participation in Children's University remains predominantly in primary-aged settings. For the impact to grow, greater reach into secondary schools is key. We will be doing this through a pilot secondary rebrand called The Etc Programme.**

Want to take action or learn more?

Get your school involved

If you are a teacher or a parent of a child in an area with an operating Children's University, get in touch with them to find out how your school can get involved. Find your local contact [here](#)

Sign up your child

If your child's school is not already part of Children's University, you can still sign up your child through our online subscription service. Visit www.childrensuniversity.co.uk/subscribe

Contact your nearest Children's University

You can find your nearest Children's University online and contact them to find out more about the work they do locally. All Children's Universities are managed by socially-minded and community-based institutions who partner with local businesses, education providers and stakeholders of all kinds. Talk about how you could get involved and find your local contact [here](#)

Validate your activities

If you run activities for children and young people, or you know someone who does, you can get these activities validated and added to those that Children's University signposts participants to. This is a great way to add value to your activities and reward participation. Find out more and fill out a basic online form [here](#)

Read more

- Read more about *Children's University Online (CUO)*, the bespoke digital platform built to add value for all stake holders engaged with learning beyond the classroom. It is the user data from this platform that informs this report. Read more [here](#)

