



# ESSEX DAILY MILE INSIGHT



Analysis of Essex Daily Mile Survey Responses. Constructed by the Active Essex Insight and Evaluation team.

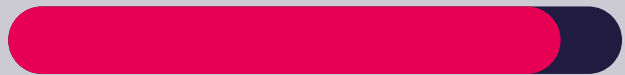
Responses and data correct as of March 2023.



# KEY INSIGHTS



56 schools responded to Active Essex's Daily Mile survey



90%

of respondents are involved in the Daily Mile



11,000 children and young people from 48 schools participate



50% of schools participate in the Daily Mile everyday

40% of schools take part on 2 or more days



90% of schools have been involved in the Daily Mile for more than 2 yrs

The Daily Mile can be completed by children of all ages and in most schools.

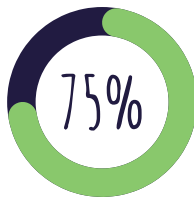
40% of the schools, complete the Daily Mile with reception and all primary children.

25% of schools involve young people in the organisation and leadership of the Daily Mile.

Involvement ranged from organising timings, areas/routes, to monitoring laps/distances and use student voice to improve the offer.



85% of schools are satisfied with the Daily Mile campaign, scoring it with a 6 or above.



75% of schools think it is engaging, actionable and interactive.

## Ways in which teachers saw the Daily Mile impacting pupils:



90% of schools reported on improvement in pupil's physical health and mental wellbeing



80% of schools saw an improvement in levels of concentration due to participation in the Daily Mile



80% of the schools reported an improvement in teacher-pupil relationships



60% of schools saw an improvement in relationships between peers due to taking part in the Daily Mile

# BACKGROUND

The UK's Chief Medical Officers' (CMO) recommends three physical activity guidelines for children and young people (5 – 18 years):

**1** Children and young people should engage in moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity for an average of at least 60 minutes per day across the week. This can include all forms of activity such as physical education, active travel, after-school activities, play and sports.

**2** Children and young people should engage in a variety of types and intensities of physical activity across the week to develop movement skills, muscular fitness, and bone strength.

**3** Children and young people should aim to minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary, and when physically possible should break up long periods of not moving with at least light physical activity.

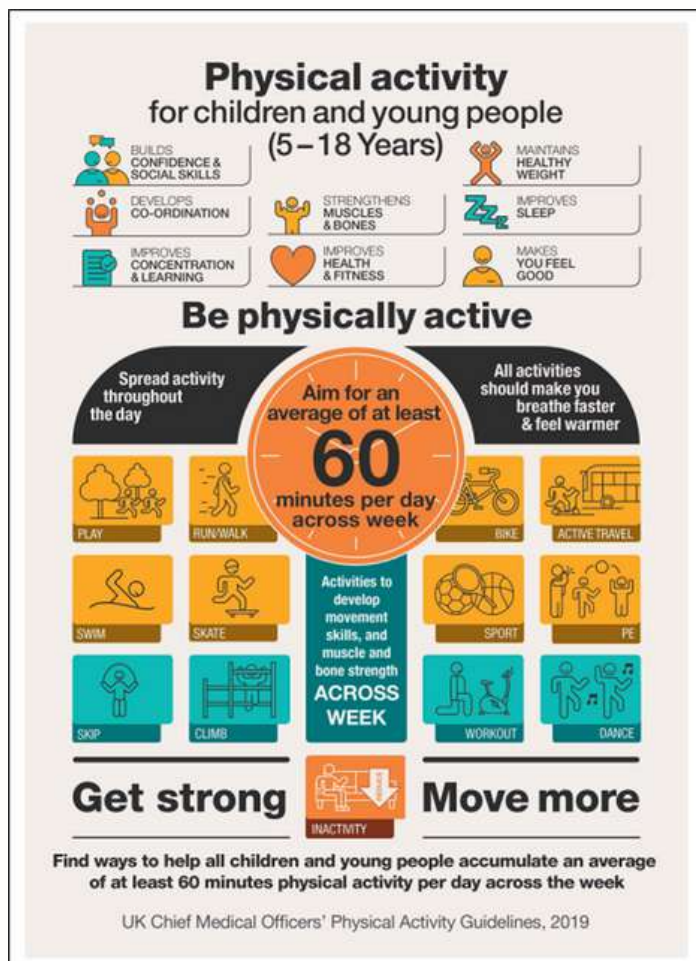
The infographic below, clearly shows the range of benefits associated with children and young people participating in physical activity.

Despite these benefits, between 20 – 44.6% of children aged 5 – 16 years are currently meeting the recommended level of physical activity in the UK. The Daily Mile (TDM) is one free and simple initiative that aims to increase the physical activity levels of school children to help them access the physical health, mental health and wellbeing benefits every day. There is also evidence indicating that TDM also benefits children's learning.

Practically, TDM is easy to set up, requires no additional equipment and can be implemented in a short amount of time (within 15 minutes) so can be integrated into the school day. Other core delivery principles are that it should be in addition to Physical Education (PE) time, carried out regardless of the weather, be inclusive and fun for all children. Since its inception in 2012, over 17,000 have signed up to TDM (with over 10,000 in the UK) and active mile approaches have been cited in Government policy.

A systematic review was conducted in 2022 to examine the evidence to support such widescale adoption and to guide future integration of TDM. 13 studies about the impact on TDM on children's physical activity levels, physical fitness, physical health, psychological wellbeing, academic performance, and cognition function were scoped, reviewed, and assessed. It was found that there is sufficient evidence to support that both acute and longer-term participation in TDM can increase moderate-to-vigorous physical activity and physical fitness of children and young people as well as increase their visual spatial working memory (i.e., the ability to retain and process an object's identity and spatial location). One fair-quality study also found that TDM can improve mental health in the short term. However, the impact of TDM on long-term improvement of physical activity as well as mental health, wellbeing, academic performance, and cognitive function requires further high-quality research with longer term follow-up to explore the interventions effects. Promisingly, a longitudinal study is currently underway and is hoped that this study and others will provide greater evidence base on the benefits of TDM.

[For more information on the infographic to the right, click here](#)



# RECOMMENDATIONS

---

The recommendations below are based on the analysis and feedback from schools that responded to the Active Essex Daily Mile survey, and have been devised by an expert panel:



Raise awareness of the Daily Mile to increase participation by all schools in Greater Essex, with messaging aimed at headteachers and/or sport leads. Messaging could include:

- Insight on the observed improvements (or impact) in pupil's physical health, mental wellbeing, and levels of concentration as well as improved relationships between teachers and pupils.
- Case studies that inspire and encourage more schools to take part, with example(s) of how the Daily Mile is included in the curriculum/timetable. Examples of how the Daily Mile has been adapted based on children's age, abilities or needs could also be beneficial to showcase.



Target re-engagement in the Daily Mile at schools based in northwest Essex e.g., Harlow, Epping Forest (some are inactive) and Uttlesford (not known).



Review and action (where possible) schools' recommendations for improving the Daily Mile, with particular focus on how to maintain and increase children's engagement and enjoyment in taking part.



Explore potential for future research about the impact of the Daily Mile on adults or school-based staff.

# RESEARCH PURPOSE

---

To examine Essex school's perceptions of The Daily Mile (TDM) with the following aims: to produce evidence that supports future development of TDM programme within Essex, and insight on the impact of TDM on children in Greater Essex.

Note, this research was not commissioned or influenced by or because of the national systematic review of the effect of TDM on children's physical activity, physical health, mental health, wellbeing, academic performance, and cognitive function.



# DATA COLLECTION

---

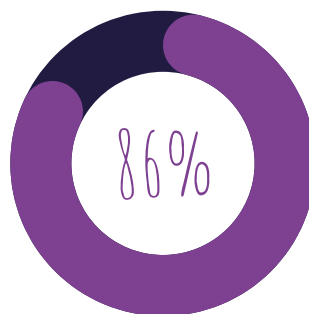
Two surveys were used for this research. The first survey collected data and information to meet the research aims outlined above, and the second survey was used to collect information from schools that indicated that they would be interested in being part of a case study highlighting the impact of TDM.

As of February 2023, the number of responses to each survey was as follows:

- There were 59 responses to the Daily Mile survey. Of these, 56 responses were from unique schools. Note, the survey was closed in early January.
- There were 5 responses to the Daily Mile case study survey.

# ANALYSIS OF THE DAILY MILE SURVEY

---



86% of schools reported that they take part in the Daily Mile campaigns led by Active Essex



14% of schools do not or didn't know if they currently take part in the Daily Mile

Due to this finding, the remainder of this report will provide insight from schools based on their participation.

# INSIGHT FROM SCHOOLS PARTICIPATING

---

The Daily Mile survey conducted by Active Essex received over 50 responses from schools based in 10 different local authorities in Essex and from the unitary authority, Southend-on-Sea (see table below).

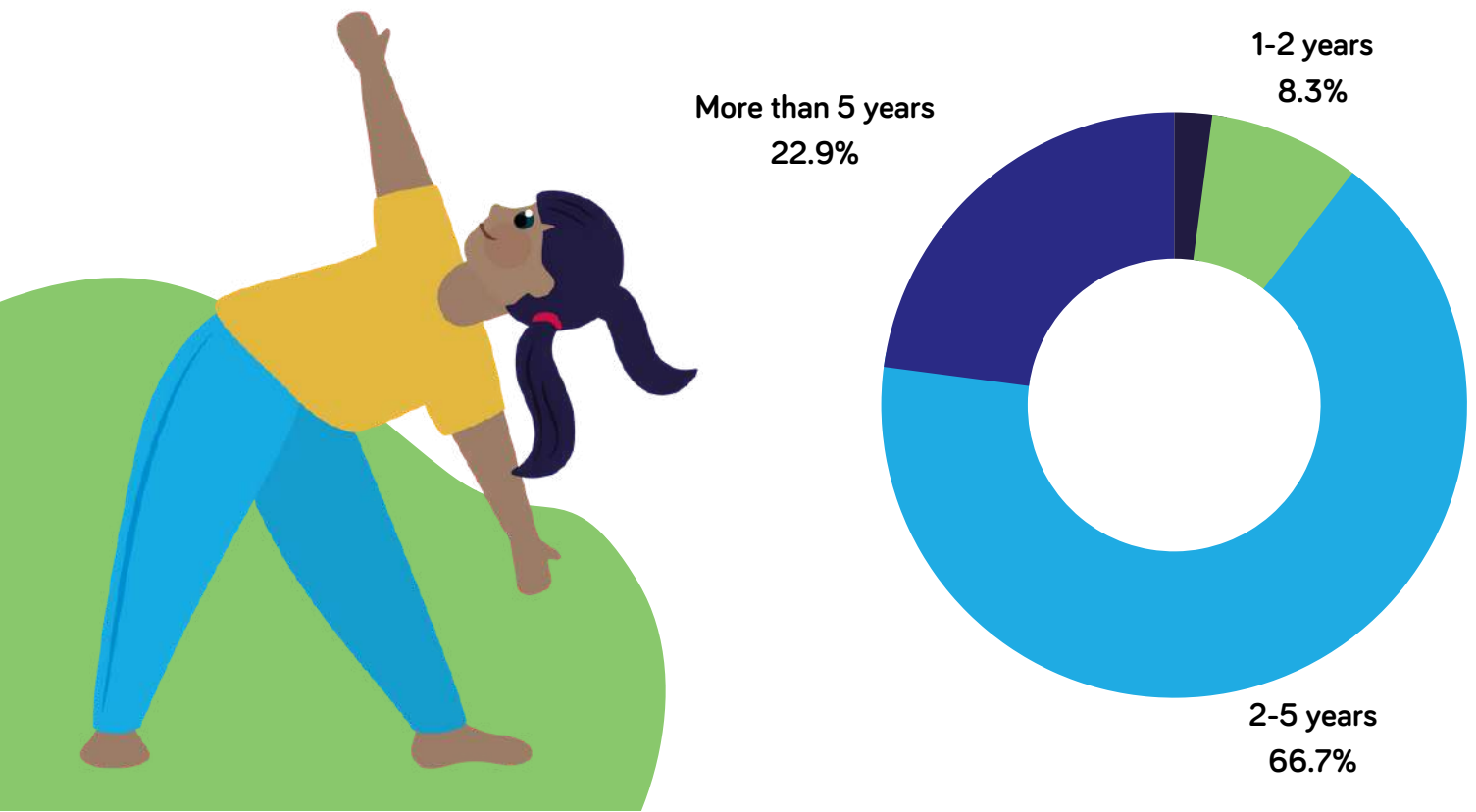
A key insight is that 25% (12) of the responses were received from schools based in Chelmsford district. However, at the time of reporting, it cannot be determined why this has occurred.

Also, there were no responses received from schools based in Rochford or Uttlesford.

Local Authority	Number of Schools Involved	Total Number of Children and Young People Involved	Average Number of Children and Young People Involved
Basildon	4	676	169
Braintree	2	720	360
Brentwood	2	568	284
Castle Point	3	670	335
Chelmsford	12	2493	208
Colchester	7	1140	163
Epping Forest	3	980	327
Harlow	7	1780	254
Maldon	1	420	420
Southend-on-sea	4	1420	355
Tendring	3	171	57
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>11,038</b>	<b>235</b>

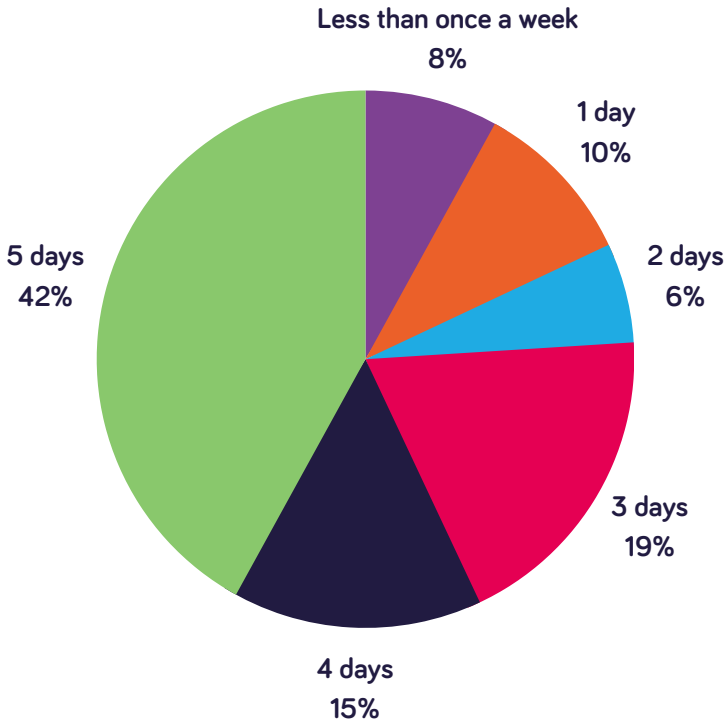
The table above also shows that over 11,000 children and young people take part in TDM campaigns led by Active Essex, with an average of 235 children and young people participating per school. Note, this is a lower estimate and average because school did not provide data about the number of young people taking part in TDM.

With regards to schools' duration of participation in the Daily Mile (see wheel below), 90% (43) reported that they had been taking part for more than 2 years, and 25% of these have been involved for more than 5 years.



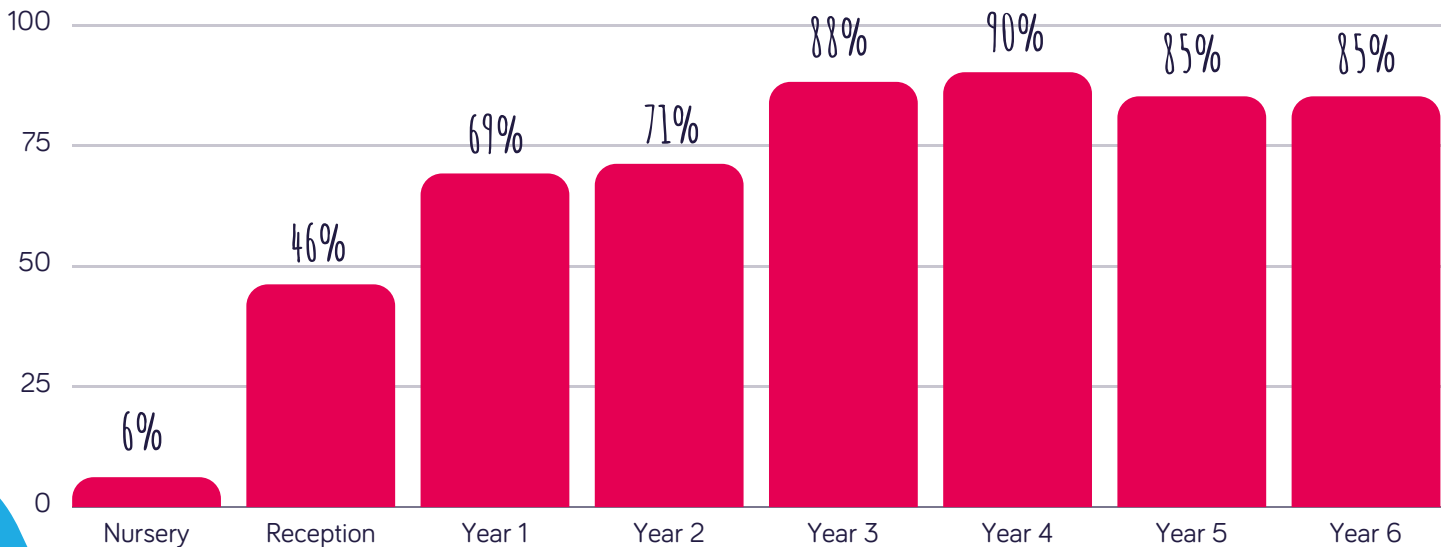
The pie chart below shows that 42% (20) of schools participate in the TDM for five days (a normal school week), and a further 40% (19) take part on 2 days or more.

**Frequency of school participation in Daily Mile**



The Daily Mile can be completed by eight-year groups, from reception to Year 6. Overall, 40% (19) of the schools reported that the TDM is completed by reception and all primary school-aged children and young people. The chart below shows that in most schools (85% or more), the Daily Mile is completed by children and young people in year groups 3 to 6 and with some schools (69%), year groups 1 and 2.

**Percentage of schools completing the Daily Mile by year group**



25% (12) of the schools reported that they involve young people in the organisation and leadership of TDM. Involvement ranged from:



**Pupils are given a leadership role**

e.g. sport leader, representative, or captain to oversee TDM at their school e.g., organising timings, areas/routes or gathering ideas for improvement from other pupils



**Pupils are given a role during TDM**

e.g., handing out tickets, ringing a bell to signal the end of the session, and monitoring laps (including timings)

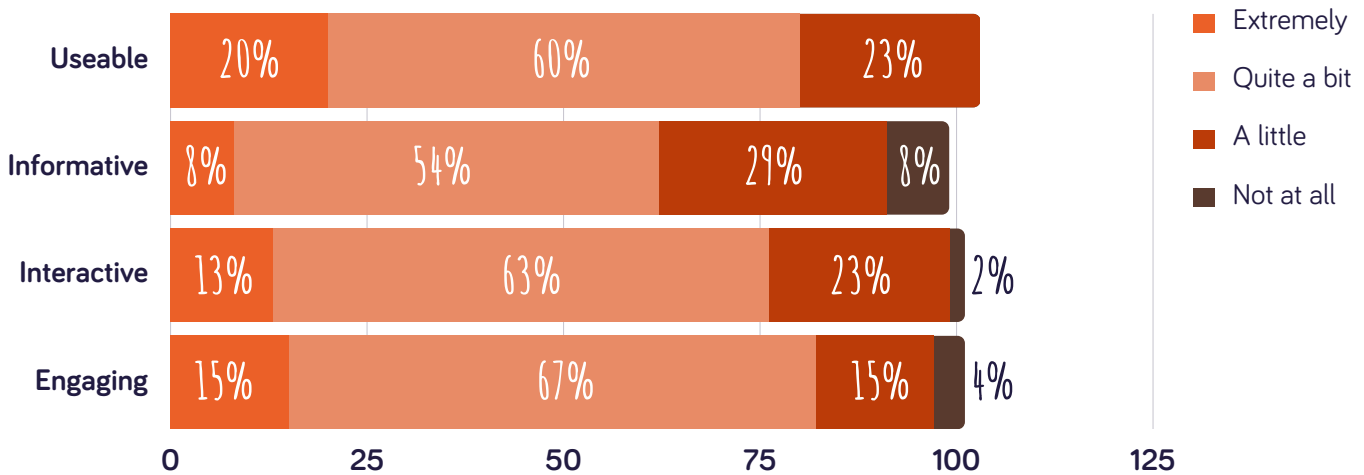


**Pupils help recognise completion of TDM**

e.g. runner of the week medal/certificate and add completed laps to challenge record.

85% (41) of the schools reported that they were satisfied (scored 6 or above, out of 10) with the TDM campaign. The chart below shows that 75% of schools reported (either extremely or quite a bit) that they think the Daily Mile is engaging, actionable and interactive, and over 60% thinking that it is informative.

**Schools Perception of the Daily Mile**



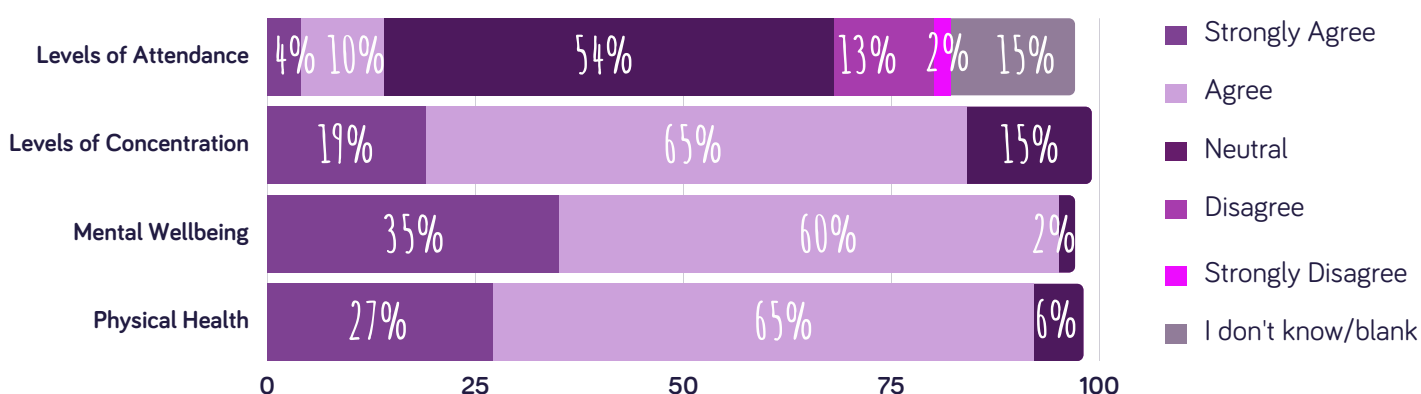
The chart on the following page shows the extent to which schools have seen an improvement in pupils' physical health, mental wellbeing, levels of concentration and attendance due to their participation in the Daily Mile.

The key insights are that over 90% of schools have seen an improvement in pupil's physical health (44) and mental wellbeing (46), and over 80% saw an improvement in levels of concentration (40).

A positive example provided by one school is that their pupils "love" the Daily Mile as it viewed a "brain break" and often walk instead of run (especially if more than one class is out at the same time), but this also provides opportunities for teachers and children to have an informal chat, which helps with mental well-being. However, schools have not seen a noticeable improvement in levels of attendance due to TDM with over 50% reporting 'neutral' or neither agree/disagree (26).



## Pupil Improvements

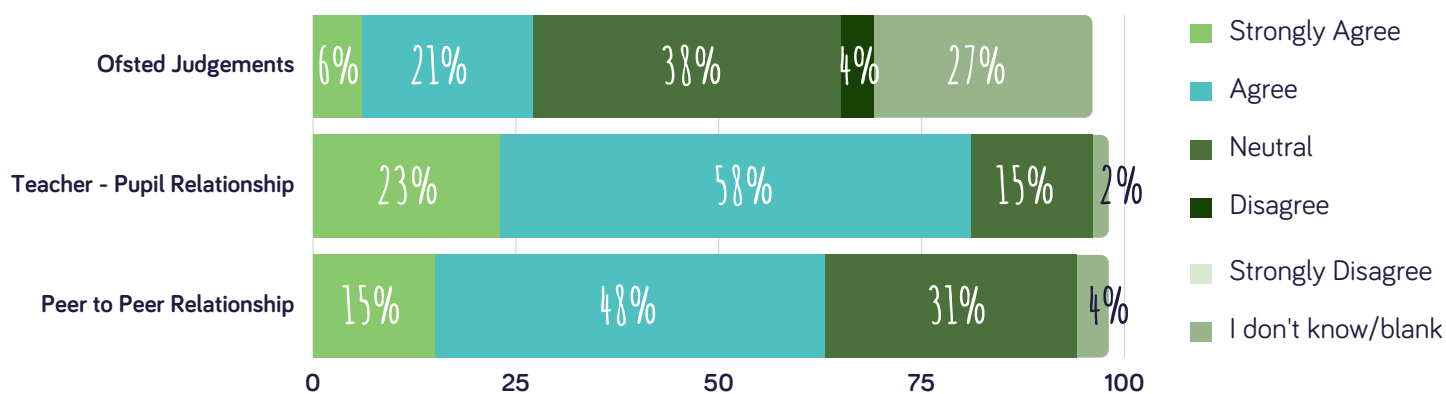


The chart below also shows other improvements observed by schools, these include peer-to-peer relationships, teacher-young person relationships and Ofsted judgements. Over 80% (39) of the schools reported an improvement in teacher-young person relationships and over 60% (30) agreed that peer-to-peer relationships have improved. These findings indicate that the Daily Mile is beneficial for building relationships between children and adults.

Two schools commented that both adults and children are invested and participate in TDM, with one school observing marked improvement of the behaviour of children during unstructured playtime, and the other stating that is “really enjoyed” by all because its “highly inclusive”.

The impact of TDM on adults (or school staff) could be explored in future research. The chart above also shows that most of the schools (38%, 18) reported a neutral stance on whether TDM had improved Ofsted judgements.

## Other Improvements



To make the Daily Mile campaigns more effective, schools suggested the following:



Promotional material, particularly for head teachers, to endorse participation and how to fit it into the school day



Recognition/rewards, or app-based technology to upload results, for children to see achievements



Reminders to school staff on participating in TDM



Different activities for children to do during TDM



Ideas for wet weather alternatives

Note, 94% (45) of schools indicated that they would like to receive resources for the next Active Essex led Daily Mile campaign and Daily Mile Destinations.

21% (10) of schools indicated that they would be interested in being part of a case study that highlighted the impact of the Daily Mile, which led to the second survey being created and sent to interested schools. Comments provided by schools as to why they would like to be interested in being part of a case study reinforced the research purpose and aims outlined previously. One school commented that they would like to inspire others to implement TDM due to the “power” of it “equipping and empowering” children to take part in physical activity at school and at local events e.g., Junior ParkRun. Many schools also indicated that they would like to understand how other schools have implemented TDM amid challenges faced by schools.

## INSIGHT FROM SCHOOLS NOT PARTICIPATING

---

16% (8) of the schools that completed the Daily Mile survey reported that they either, do not currently take part (7) or did not know (1) if they participate in the campaigns led by Active Essex. Five of these schools that do not participate are located in the northwest of Essex, with four based in Harlow and one in Epping Forest district. The other schools are based in Southend-on-Sea (2) and Chelmsford (1).

### The reasons for not being inactive with the Daily Mile are summarised below:

No time in the curriculum to include TDM due to additional subjects/initiatives being added (with no removal of others) which increases the workload of staff, as well as their requirement to close the gaps caused by the pandemic

Staffing is required to achieve the above or, used to run other clubs/activities

Schools have timetabled other physical activity e.g., swimming, but the Daily Mile is an alternative if pupils cannot attend the former

A change of staff so information about TDM didn't not pass on

School has adapted TDM to an alternative distance (kilometre) due to the age of the children and they teach metric units

Insufficient hard area set-up

Lack of awareness about the Active Essex led Daily Mile campaigns

### To re-engage these schools and make it more effective, the suggestions are:

Sharing insights from the Daily Mile survey(s) so schools can learn how others have implemented the TDM into their curriculum and the impacts observed

Recognise schools that have adapted the distance for younger children

Re-engage with teaching staff, particularly headteacher and PE/sport leads

Generate interest with pupils and plan route activities

Recognition and reward incentives that create a “wow factor” for children

Support school create a hardcourt area with engaging Daily Mile marking.

7 of the 8 schools not currently involved would like to receive resources for the next Active Essex Daily Mile campaign and Daily Mile Destinations.