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Out of school activities and the education gap

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Research aims and methods



Why investigate out of school activities

- Attainment gap at 11
- How children spend their time
- The role of schools in supporting learning and wider outcomes
- Understanding *how* activities can influence outcomes

Definition: organised activities with adult supervision



Research questions

How do children spend their time outside of school?

- Are there patterns in children's formal and informal time use?
- Does this vary according to background characteristics?

Does children's time use affect outcomes at age 11?

- What types of activities are associated with outcomes?
- What are the mechanisms?
- Does this vary according to background?

Methods

- Review of literature and theories of change
- Analysis of Millennium Cohort Study linked to NPD
- Qualitative case studies in primary schools in North East and South East

Out of school activities in the MCS

Age 5

Breakfast club
Afterschool club
Sports club/lessons
Formal childcare
Informal childcare
Religious class

Age 7

Breakfast club
Afterschool club
Sports club/lessons
Formal childcare
Informal childcare
Religious class
Extra tuition
Other club

Age 11

Breakfast club
Afterschool club
Sports club/lessons
Formal childcare
Informal childcare
Religious class
Extra tuition
Music lesson

Physical activity with friends and family, playing games with parents, seeing friends, watching TV, playing computer games, reading for enjoyment, doing homework, doing chores, caring, playing a musical instrument.

Outcome measures

Academic attainment outcomes

- Key Stage 2 total point score
- Achieved Level 5 in Maths
- Achieved Level 5 in English

Social, emotional and behavioural outcomes

- SDQ total difficulties score
- SDQ prosocial score

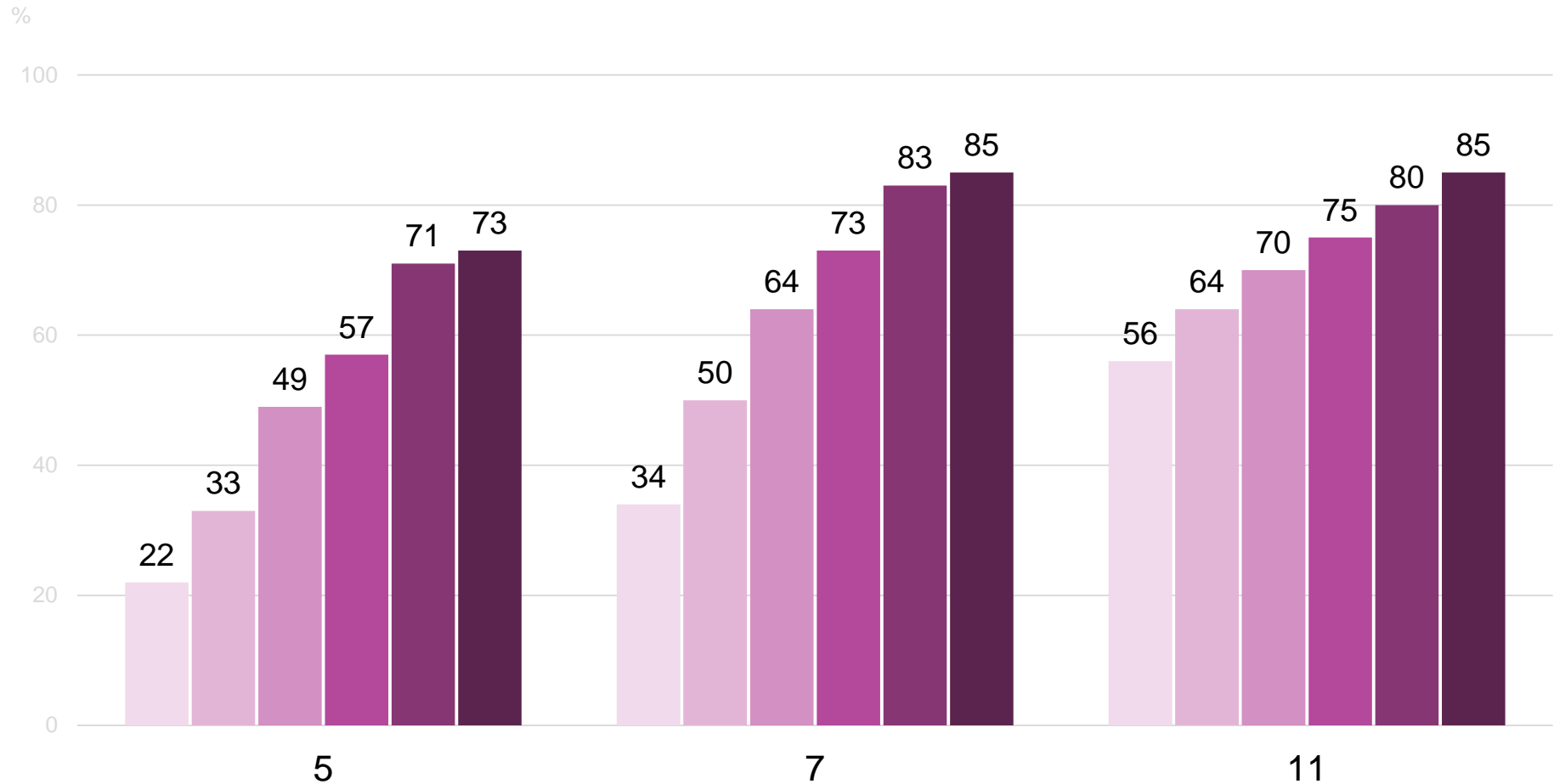
Variation in activity participation

2.

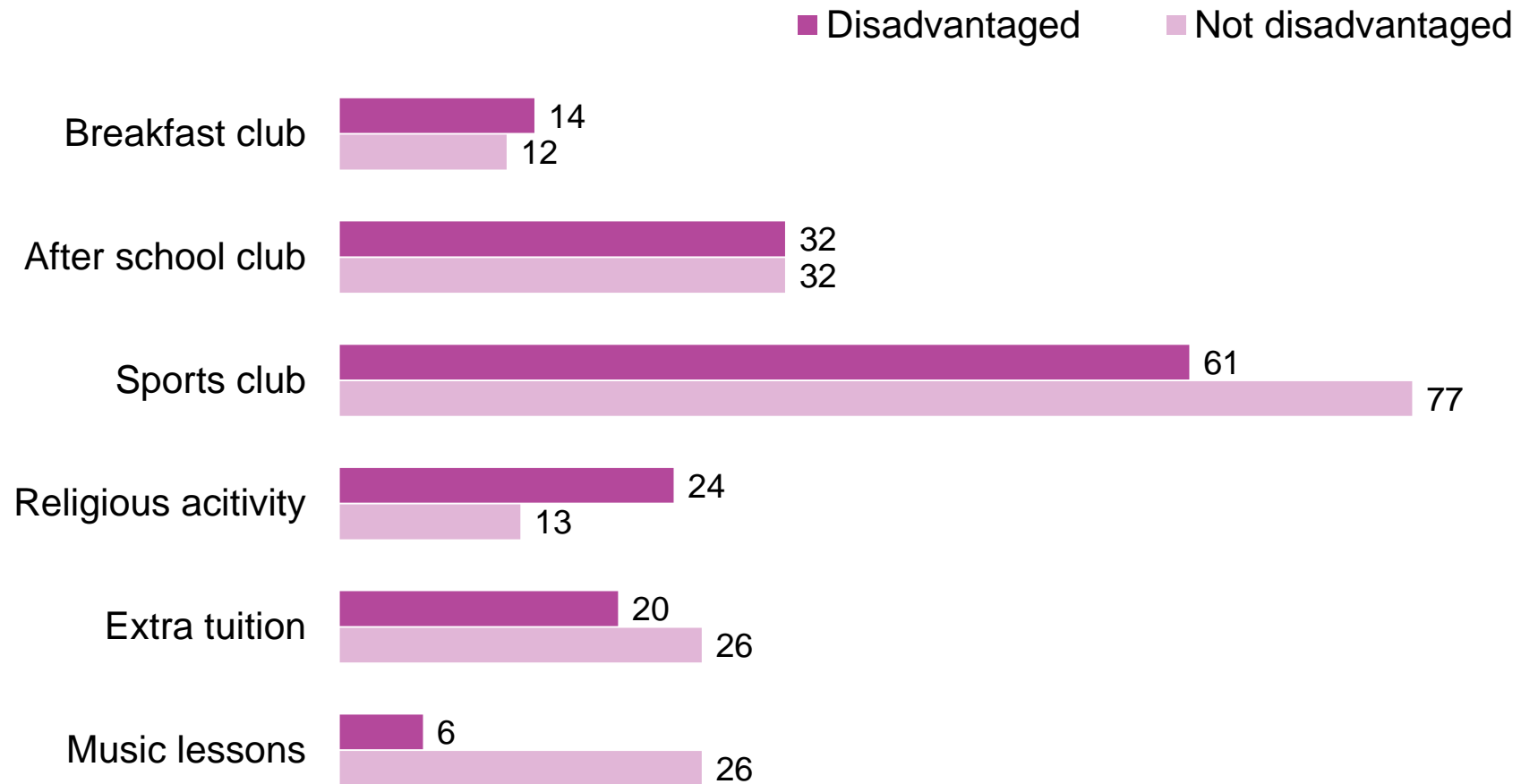
Sport participation by mother's education

Base: All children

None NVQ1 5 GCSE A-C A-levels Degree Postgraduate



Participation at age 11 and disadvantage



Facilitators: cost, convenience & familiarity

They're much more convenient for people who might not ordinarily take their children to a club because of either the cost of it or the time. It does take up a lot of your time to take children to clubs especially if you've got more than one.

Source: parent, North East

Some parents maybe aren't confident enough to take their children along to a club ... whereas here because it's after school it's a familiar environment ... I think a lot of the things here maybe the children wouldn't get to do if they weren't doing it at after school club.

Source: parent, North East

Activities and outcomes



3.

Findings for all children

Participation in **sport/physical activities** associated with higher attainment and better social, emotional and behavioural outcomes at age 11:

- Taking part in sports at age 7 and 11 associated with higher odds of achieving Level 5 in maths compared with children who didn't do sports.
- Frequency of informal sports activities at age 7 also positively associated with KS2 attainment, but not when controlling for KS1 attainment.
- Sport also associated with lower difficulties score and higher odds of achieving high prosocial score.

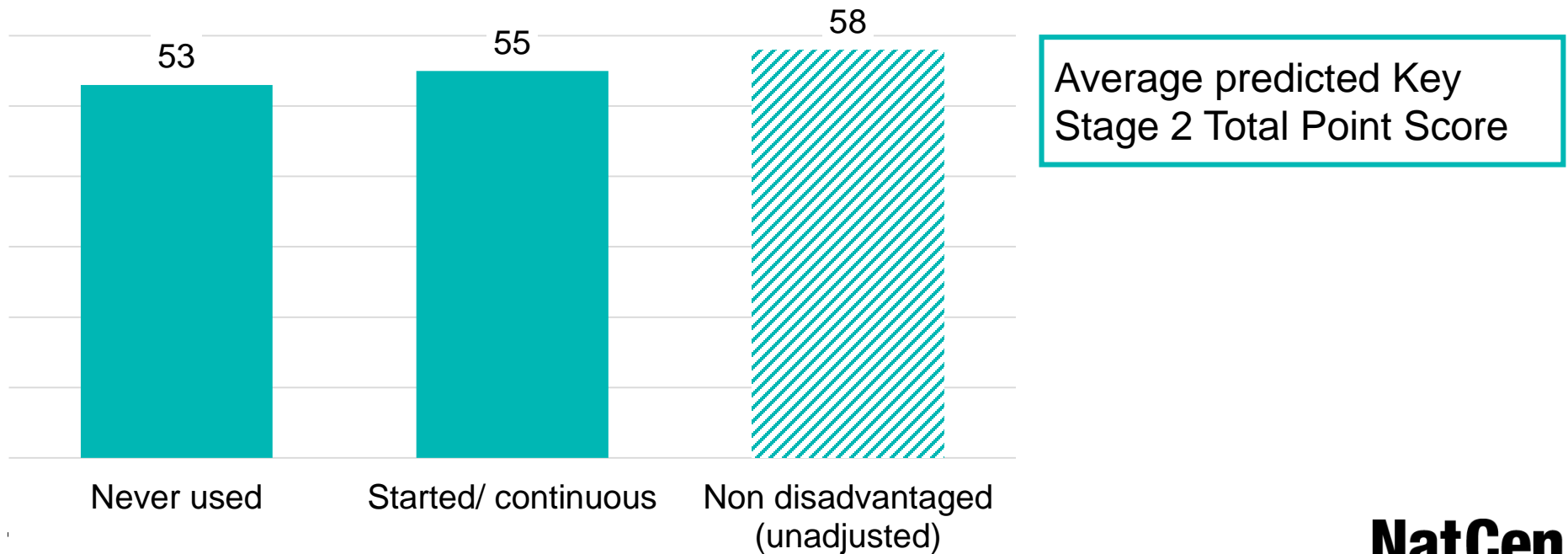
Participation in '**other clubs**' at 7 associated with higher attainment at age 11 (Level 5 maths and total points score)

Reading for enjoyment and hours per week on **homework** at age 11 positively associated with total point score at KS2 and prosocial skills.

Findings for disadvantaged children

Participation in after school clubs the only activity related to outcomes:

- Those attending at all 3 time points or age 7 and 11 had higher TPS on average.
- Effect strengthened when controlling for KS1 attainment.
- Also associated with prosocial skills



Implications



4.

Many childhoods?



46% children aged 11 play out unsupervised each week
21% hardly ever play out

46% read for pleasure every day
53% help with chores several times a week
32% attend after school clubs
73% attend sports clubs

26% children aged 11 not disadvantage have music lessons
6% disadvantaged children have music lessons

Grouping through participation at structured activities: % disadvantaged children

Self directed Social
47%

Hobbies
14%

Granny & sports
12%

Extra Instruction
37%

Extended School
7%

Busy Structured
4%

% in total sample: SDS 30%, H 26%, G&S 19%, EI 14%, ES 8%, BS 5%

Private tuition



Scholarisation of childhood?

Varies according to region, ethnicity, disadvantage at age 11:

42-48% Chinese, Black, Indian origin and other ethnic groups
20% White

26% Not disadvantaged
20% Disadvantage

London 43%
East Midlands 21%
North East 11%
Scotland 5%

Head teachers on clubs

... in order to do the writing in particular, if they haven't had these experiences, they can't write...

Its just about discipline and children sort of valuing the school...
'i'm going to try really hard for Mr such and such...

The easier we make it for them to access the services they need the more successful their children are going to be

What can we conclude about after school clubs?



After school clubs offered as part of multiple policy changes, from extended schools to pupil premium
All schools to offer clubs? Targetted? Subsidised? Theory of change to suggest causal link attainment?

For discussion

Does the evidence support interpretation beyond association?

What is it about after school clubs that may promote positive outcomes?

How important is the child's agency in participating in activities?

How much activity is too much?

What is/should the role of schools be in supporting out of hours learning?

Is there a case for a longer school day?

Thank you

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Research briefs and CLS working paper available:

<http://natcen.ac.uk/our-research/research/out-of-school-activities/>

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