

# BLACK COUNTRY SWIMMING INSIGHT – SUMMARY OF 2022 PRIMARY SCHOOL SWIMMING DATA

## Introduction

This is the latest edition of our annual *Primary School Swimming in the Black Country* dataset, pulling together information from a range of sources including Key Stage 2 performance data and primary research conducted by Active Black Country and partners.

### Key Stage 2 Swimming Measures

Schools should provide sufficient swimming opportunities to ensure all pupils make progress and achieve their very best in swimming and water safety. By all pupils this includes those with special educational needs, those with a disability or impairment and those whose first language is not English. The requirement is for all Year 6 pupils to meet the statutory minimum standard of capability and confidence in swimming and safe self-rescue, as set out in the national curriculum. The minimum requirement is that, by the time they are ready to leave Key Stage 2, every child is proficient across three key areas;

#### 25m Proficiency



*Every child, by the time they are ready to leave Key Stage 2 is able to swim confidently, competently and proficiently over a distance of at least 25m*

#### Range of Strokes



*Pupils should be able to make choices about the strokes used to achieve different outcomes, evidence alternating and simultaneous strokes and adapt strokes for a range of outcomes*

#### Water Safety



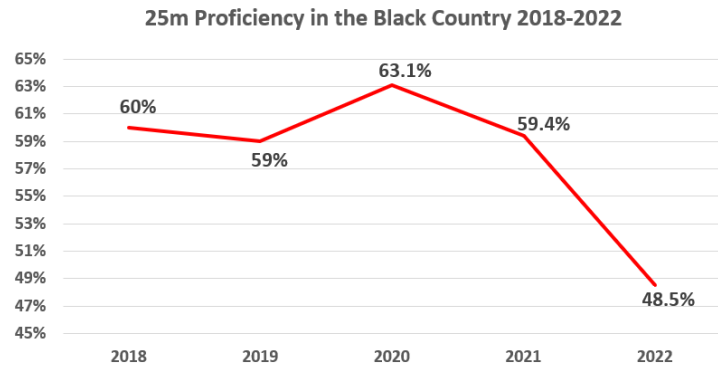
*Every Year 6 pupil should be able to demonstrate safe self-rescue and evidence this in different water-based situations.*

Active Black Country undertake desk-based research every year along with ongoing stakeholder engagement to collate information for all primary schools, providing us with a robust time-series dataset against which decisions can be made.

## 25m Proficiency



COVID 19 has had a considerably negative impact on the ability of Year 6 pupils to swim 25m in 2022. Whereas an average of 6 in 10 pupils across previous years' cohorts were able to attain the required proficiency, in 2022 this dropped substantially to less than 5 in 10, as demonstrated in the following information.

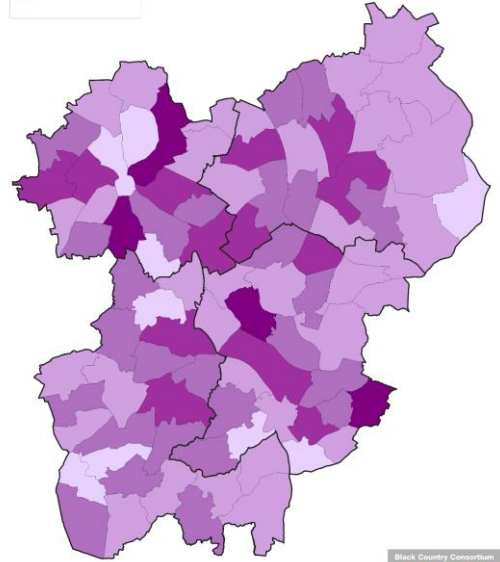


**2022 Rate 25m Proficiency**  
**48.5%**

**Change over last 12 Months**  
**10.9 Points**



The darkest purple areas on the map are indicative of those geographies with the most pupils who are *not* able to swim 25m.



	% of Year 6 Pupils able to swim 25m	Number of Year 6 Pupils unable to Swim 25m
Dudley	48.3%	2,547
Sandwell	42.1%	2,877
Walsall	52.9%	2,249
W'ton	52.2%	2,496
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>48.6%</b>	<b>10,169</b>

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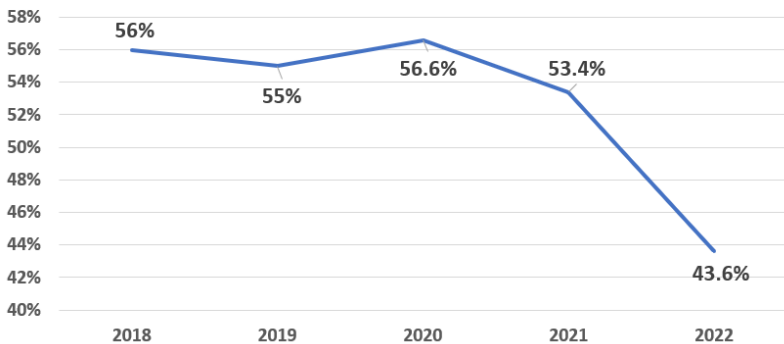
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## Range of Strokes



Consistent with other KPI data, the 2022 Year 6 cohort had the lowest percentage of pupils able to demonstrate a range of strokes out of all the years this information has been collated in the Black Country.

Ability to Demonstrate a Range of Strokes 2018-2022



2022 Rate  
25m Proficiency

**43.6%**

Change over last 12  
Months



**9.8  
Points**

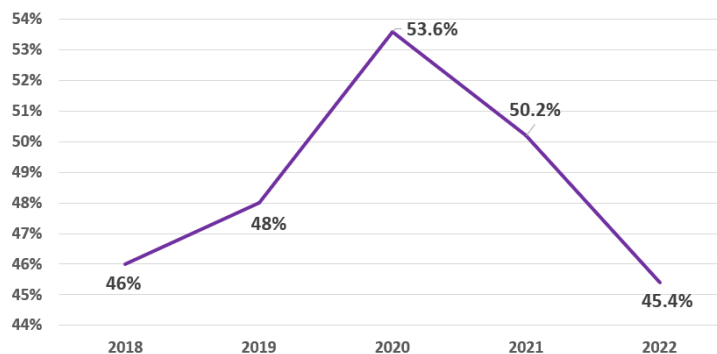
	% of Year 6 Pupils able to effectively use a range of strokes
Dudley	43%
Sandwell	35.2%
Walsall	47.5%
W'ton	50.2%
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>43.6%</b>

## Water Safety



Of the three KPIs that schools report on in relation to the Sport Premium funding, *Safe Self-Rescue* rates have been the least affected by COVID, however the percentage of Year 6 leavers at the required level has fallen by 4.8 percentage points over the last year.

Ability to Demonstrate Safe Self-Rescue 2018-2022



2022 Rate  
Water Safety

**45.4%**

Change over last 12  
Months



**4.8  
Points**

### SWIMMING

Top up programme pupils  
(water safety) per ward

200 to 260

170 to 220

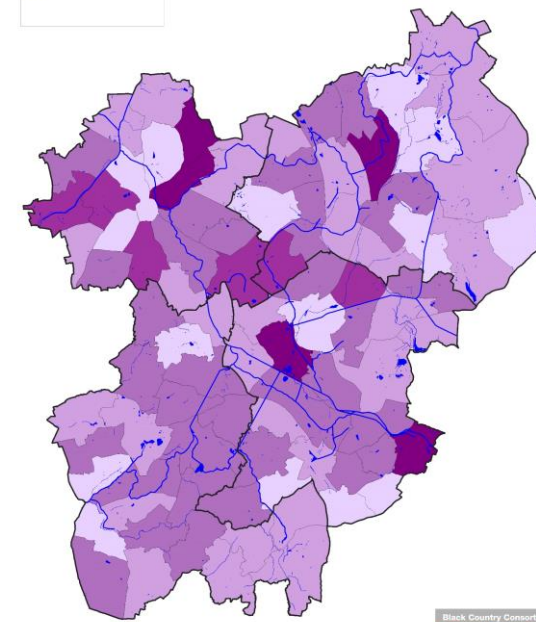
120 to 170

70 to 120

20 to 70

Open Water

The darkest purple areas on the map are indicative of those geographies with the most pupils who have *not* reached the requisite water-safety level on leaving primary school. Areas of open water are denoted in blue.



	% of Year 6 Pupils able to perform safe self-rescue	Number of Year 6 Pupils unable to perform safe self-rescue
Dudley	39.4%	2,768
Sandwell	42%	3,001
Walsall	50.3%	2,245
W'ton	55%	2,523
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>45.4%</b>	<b>10,537</b>

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## Further Insight

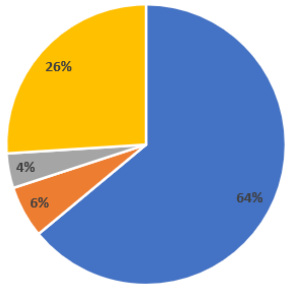


To supplement the Key Stage 2 swimming data, collated from information schools are required to publish on their websites, Active Black Country undertake an annual survey with primary schools to understand some of the context that underpins the numbers. This sections provides a summary of the insight we've developed

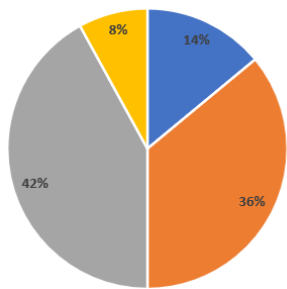
### Learn to Swim

In total, the majority of Black Country schools (36%) do more than 25 hours of learn to swim whilst in Primary School, when taking into account dry side tuition and pool time

### Dry Side

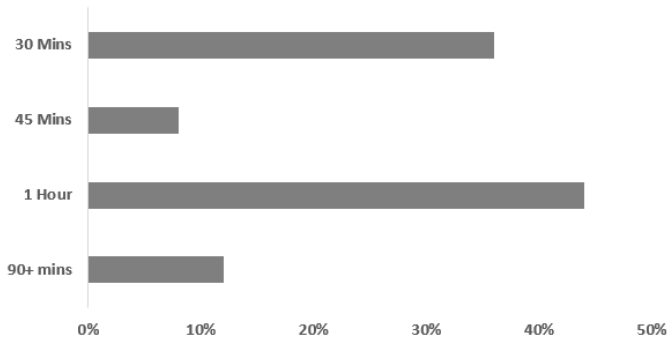


### Pool Time



■ Under 10 hours ■ 10-20 hours ■ Over 20 hours ■ Not sure

### Average Length of Lessons



### Year in which schools start swimming lessons

Yr R-3 24% Yr 4 26% Yr 5 20% Yr 6 30%

### Top Up Swimming

**44%** of Black Country Primary Schools intend to use PE and School Sport Premium funding for Top Up and Additional Swimming lessons

### Swimming Offer

**76%** of our Primary Schools would like to increase the amount of swimming that they currently offer to pupils

### Teaching Staff

**52%** of Schools say that one or more member of their staff have a swimming qualification  
**48%** use their own teachers for swimming lessons

## The Ambition

### Current Situation

5 in 10 Year 6 pupils can't swim 25m

Over Half of Year 6 pupils can't demonstrate safe self-rescue



### Active Black Country Ambition

For **ALL** Year 6 Pupils to be able to swim competently and demonstrate safe self-rescue

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## Addressing the Issues Identified

There are a number of issues identified in this report that are actively being addressed through partnership working in the Black Country. The information below provides a snapshot of each intervention, however for further information please contact the relevant named officer.

### Swimming Action Groups

60 partners across the Black Country regularly engage across 4 Local Swimming Action Groups (one in each local authority area), incorporating representation from primary schools, swimming teachers, Swim England, Local Authorities and leisure centres.

The groups meet throughout the academic year to utilise the insight and intelligence that we hold to address local challenges, identify, share and disseminate best practice to support the drive around improving attainment levels across all 3 indicators.



### Aquatics Workforce Group

The shortage of swimming teachers and other aquatic roles across the Black Country is having an ongoing negative impact on people having the opportunity to learn how to swim. Swim England surveyed swimming pool operators, owners and swim schools and found more than four in five (84 per cent) are still struggling to meet the demand for swimming lessons, almost 12 months after pools reopened after the COVID 19 Pandemic.

The Black Country Aquatics Workforce group was created to welcome the opportunity to discuss the challenges and the opportunities that this presents. The working group aims to facilitate career and employment opportunities across the Black Country and have a workforce that has the right skills and behaviours in the right place with the right development support. The Commonwealth Games provided us with critical learning in establishing and mobilising an effective workforce across short timescales and we need to draw from that experience and expertise to address this pressing issue. The group looks at;

1. The current landscape and emerging need
2. What are the offers that are currently available and identify what might be missing
3. Discuss and agree how partners can work together to address the challenges

### Pop Up Pools

The evidence demonstrates that a large proportion of Black Country pupils are leaving Primary School unable to swim 25m or demonstrate safe self-rescue. This is a concerning pattern given the majority of schools across the region are within walking distance of open water. As such, Active Black Country have partnered with Speedo (as part of their Swim United campaign) and Aspire to design and deliver the Black Country Pop-Up Pools programme with a view to addressing this issue.

The programme will bring portable swimming pools to selected school grounds as part of a test and learn intervention, developing a scalable blueprint for reaching and teaching young people to swim in socially disadvantaged and ethnically diverse communities, thereby driving systemic change. The programme will provide children with daily access to swimming, making them water safe and confident in an aquatic environment. This is an additional Learn to Swim intervention for those that most need the targeted support and provides a stepping stone to signpost more young people to established local aquatics opportunities.

### Black Swimming Association

The Black Swimming Association and Active Black Country are piloting a community-based approach to tackling inequalities in aquatics. The pilot aims to generate learnings to inform future planning and policy, strengthening collaboration amongst local stakeholders to develop future place-based work to work towards a future with ethnic diversity in aquatics.

This partnership will include dedicated capacity through a Community Delivery Manager providing connectivity to the wider local system and developing and activating local area action plans.

