

Insight produced by...



**Active  
Black Country**

Creating a healthy, active region

# Primary School Swimming

in the **Black Country**

In partnership with Association for Physical Education (afPE) and Swim England

## Section 1: Introduction

### Foreword

We're delighted to produce our first insight report into **Primary School Swimming in the Black Country**.

The latest Active Lives CYP data show that 34.1% of Black Country 5 to 16-year olds are *less active* (doing less than an average of 30 minutes of daily activity), so the need to ensure that the next generation are fully equipped with the tools and motivation to develop an activity habit for life has never been greater.

Why have we done this report? Swimming is still one of the most popular ways in which people like to be active, perennially in the top 5 amongst walking, running, gym sessions and fitness classes, therefore it's crucial that we understand the opportunities available to our young people in this important activity. A more active child is a healthier child and there is a growing body of evidence to indicate healthy children are better learners.



**Michael Salmon**

**Head of Insight, Health and Wellbeing  
Active Black Country**

This report has been developed to collate the information we have at our disposal in a way that is helpful to schools in the Black Country and to stimulate debate amongst decision makers about the findings to inform future focus and approaches.

We hope you find this inaugural report informative. We plan on making this an annual analysis, allowing for more in-depth scrutiny of trends and patterns over longer periods of time.

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### Our Approach

The geographical region called the 'Black Country' covers 365 square kilometres, and is made up of 30 towns and four strategic centres.

Sitting at the heart of England, it forms the west part of the West Midlands Metropolitan Area and is the largest conurbation outside of London, comprising the Metropolitan Borough Councils of Walsall, Dudley and Sandwell and the City of Wolverhampton Council.

The Black Country contains some of the most deprived ward areas in the country, with over 500,000 people residing in the most deprived areas nationally. There is a significant challenge to the health of the Black Country with 32.5% of all residents classed as physically inactive

In a region where adult activity rates are amongst the lowest in the country, the health and wellbeing of our region's children and young people is in a perilous state, with childhood obesity amongst the highest in England and one in three pupils in the region failing to achieve a good level of development by the end of reception.

There is a strong body of evidence that illustrates the positive impact being active at an early age can have on school readiness, academic performance, health & wellbeing and economic prosperity.

Significant work has been undertaken by Schools, Black Country Local Authorities, Community Organisations and Regional Agencies to get Children & Young People active. We must provide the best possible environment and opportunities for future generations to be active and work collectively across Community and Education partners to create healthy, happy childhoods that allow our children to flourish.

## Contents

The following report has been produced as a result of Primary School swimming insight developed across a number of works areas and with partners in 2019 and 2020. The report has the following sections:

**Section 1:** Introduction

**Section 2:** Using the Primary PE and Sport Premium

**Section 3:** Swimming facilities across the Black Country

**Section 4:** Headline Findings:

**Section 5:** Local Analysis

**Section 6:** Comparative Analysis- Including Childhood Obesity, BAME and PESSP Funding findings

**Section 7:** Conclusions and Further Reading

## Primary School Requirements

### Standards

All Primary Schools are required to provide swimming and water safety instruction to their pupils in either Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2. 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 able to:

- swim competently, confidently and proficiently over a distance of at least 25 metres
- use a range of strokes effectively
- perform safe self-rescue in different water-based situations

### Reporting

Since 2017, schools are required to publish their swimming and water safety attainment levels as part of their reporting requirements for the PE and Sport Premium. This should be on their website, completed by July 31<sup>st</sup> each year, and state the percentage of their Year 6 cohort that can achieve each of the three minimum requirements.

As some swimming and water safety programmes are delivered in years 3, 4 or 5, it is accepted that the data for some schools may need to be held until they reach Year 6. In addition, it is accepted that some of the information may be out of date however, the emphasis is on what schools know about their pupils' attainment in relation to the national curriculum, and the impact of the swimming and water safety programmes.

It is recommended schools report both their PESSP funding and swimming attainment using the DFE commissioned afPE and YST reporting template. This is available to download at: <https://www.activeblackcountry.co.uk/what-we-do/education/primary-pe-and-sport-premium/>

**Please Note:** All data referenced in this report is self-reported by Primary schools in the Black Country with no formal validation process. The information provided should be regarded as indicative rather than definitive.



## Section 2: Using the PE and Sport Premium

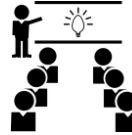
The PE and Sport Premium is provided to schools to make additional and sustainable improvements to the quality of PE and Sport and Physical Activity that is offered. It cannot be used to cover costs of delivering swimming and water safety lessons as part of the national curriculum programme. However, schools are able to utilise their funding to provide additionality. Examples of how schools could utilise the PE and Sport Premium to support swimming and water safety lessons include:



**Top up swimming lessons**



**Enhancing National Curriculum swimming attainment**



**Upskilling teachers and support staff in lesson delivery**



e.g. Lifeguard award for school staff

## The Role of Active Black Country

Since the inception of the PESSP funding Active Partnerships have been required to sample and review school websites, collating this information into a national picture. This exercise constitutes advice for Ministers and is shared with the Department for Education (DfE) and each of the Primary PE and Sport Premium national partners to help inform policy, support and priorities for investment moving forwards in line with the 5 key indicators schools should expect to see improvement across.

As part of this remit ABC reviews all primary and special school (353) websites across the Black Country each year, with the review taking place between 31<sup>st</sup> July 2019 and 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019. As a result of the review, ABC found 73% of schools had their most recent offer (academic year 18/19) published on their website.

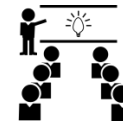
The adjacent infographic highlights some of the headline findings, approximately £423,000 is spent by Primary and Special Schools on additionality for swimming in the 2018/2019 academic year. This is likely to rise to around £500,000 when considering the figures account for £4.7m of the £5.6 million allocated to schools in the Black Country, in addition to the funding already received for curriculum Physical Education. Across the region 38% of all primary and special schools are utilising some of the Primary PE and Sport Premium funding to support their Swimming provision.

### Deploying Additional Coaches



**£929,470**

### Professional Learning



**£918,915**

### Extra-Curricular Clubs



**£686,333**

### Inclusion



**£603,575**

### Equipment



**£521,297**

### Swimming

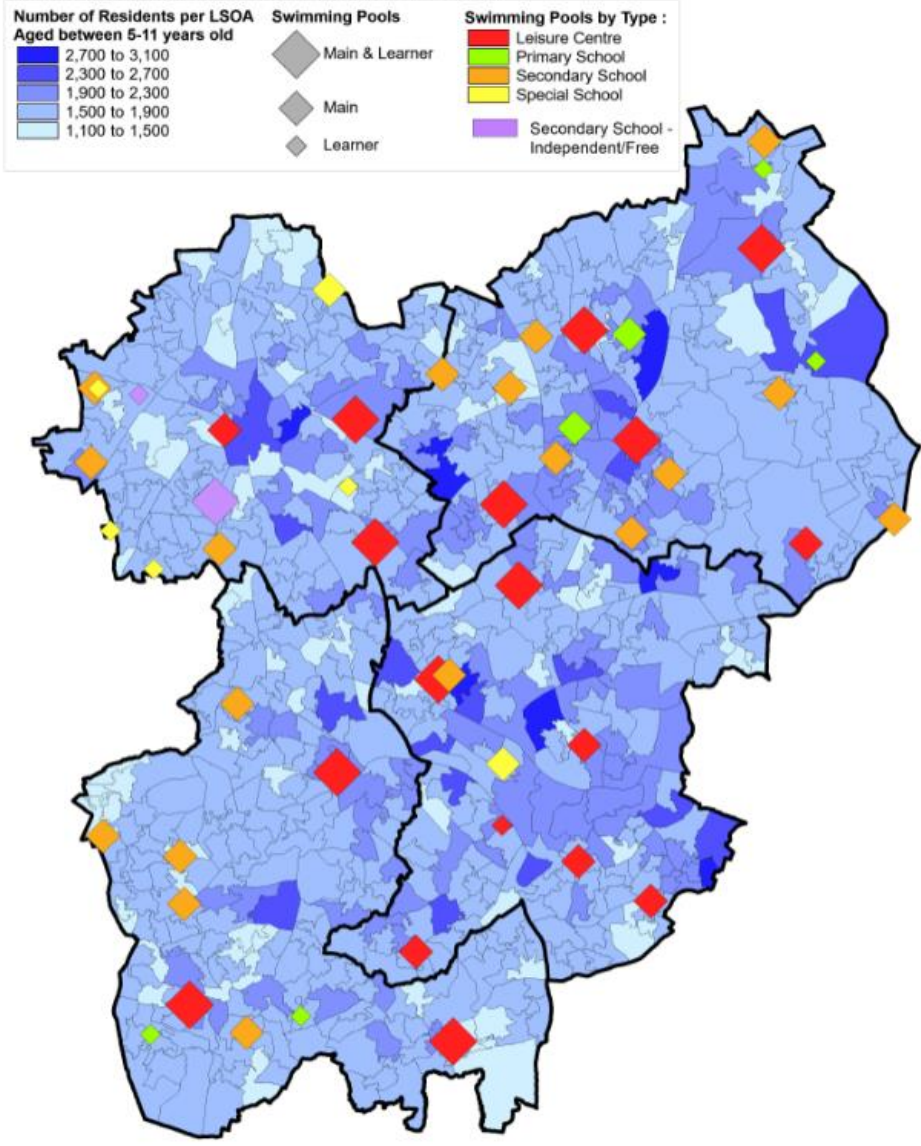


**£423,435**

**Section 3: Swimming Facilities**

There are a range of facilities available for Primary schools to access across the Black Country for their swimming provision. The majority of these are located at Secondary Schools. The map below demonstrates the spatial distribution of existing water space (excluding private facilities) in relation to the prevalence of children and young people across the Black Country.

**BLACK COUNTRY SWIMMING POOLS**



0 1.471  
kilometres  
Scale: 1:82,990

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## Section 4: Headline Findings

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. This section summarises the collective findings published by schools across the 3 key indicators.

### 25m Proficiency

**59% of Black Country Year 6 pupils can swim 25 metres.** Figures from across the region range hugely with the lowest data provided by one school at 3% with a number of schools in the Black Country reporting all pupils being able to swim a minimum of 25 metres. Correlations between proficiency and other indicators is covered in Section 6.

As a result of fluctuations across Local Authorities, Black country data has fallen by one percentage point over the course of the last 12 months.

**Dudley**

67%

**Sandwell**

53%

**Walsall**

59%

**W'ton**

56%

### Barriers to Swimming

Through regular engagement with primary schools across the Black Country, combined with national insight provided by the Association for Physical Education (afPE) and other local intelligence, ABC have identified a number of barriers for schools that are negatively impacting on swimming provision for children and young people across the region.



**Access to Facilities**



**Transport**



**Teacher confidence / capability**



**Timetabling**



**Cultural reasons**



**Assessment and Reporting**

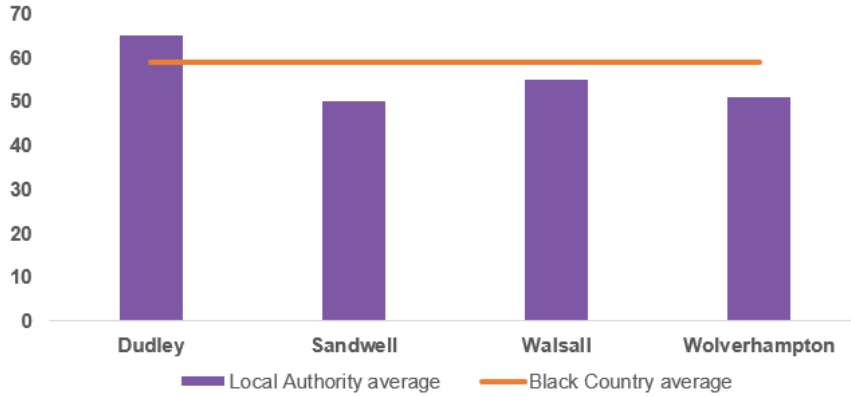


Other factors identified as barriers across the rest of the country include;

- Supporting pupils with SEND
- Use of the PE Premium

## Using a Range of Strokes

What percentage of your current Year 6 cohort use a range of strokes effectively?



Pupils are expected to be able to;

- make choices about the strokes they use to achieve different outcomes
- experience both alternating and simultaneous strokes
- adapt strokes for a range of purposes and outcomes

**55% of Black Country Year 6 pupils can use a range of strokes effectively.**

## Water Safety

Pupils are required to have;

- Knowledge and understanding of water safety key messages
- Knowledge of how and when to use appropriate survival and rescue skills
- Understanding of local and national water hazards
- Knowledge of what to do if others get in trouble



There is a critical need to focus on the importance of water safety. **Less than half (48%) of Black Country Year 6 pupils meet the required standard** of being able to perform safe self-rescue in different water-based situations.

Swim England's key messages regarding water safety include;

- Always swim in a safe place
- Always swim with an adult
- If you fall in, float, breathe, relax
- If someone else is in trouble, call 999 / 112.

For further information around water safety guidance see;

<https://www.swimming.org/schools/resource-pack/>





**Section 5: Local Analysis**

**Dudley**

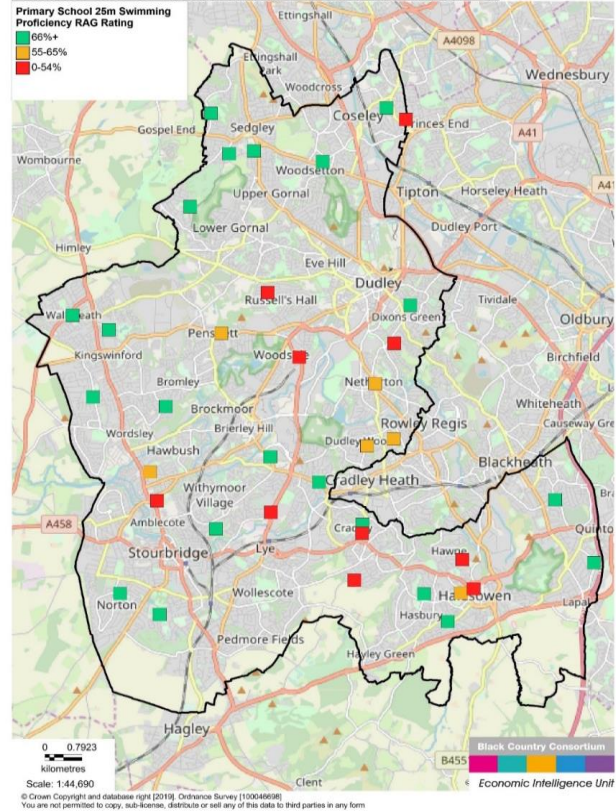
The Authority has seen an increase in the number of children able to swim 25 metres in Year 6 moving from 61% (2018) to 67% (2019).

The map highlights the geographical spread of Primary Schools, of which currently 77% have an above Black Country average number of Year 6 pupils who can swim a minimum of 25 metres. These schools fall largely around the border of the authority and in the more affluent areas. This is further supported when looking at the demographic correlations covered later in *Section 6*.

There are a number of Primary Schools (such as The Glynne and Church of Ascension) where all pupils are able to meet the 25-metre requirement.

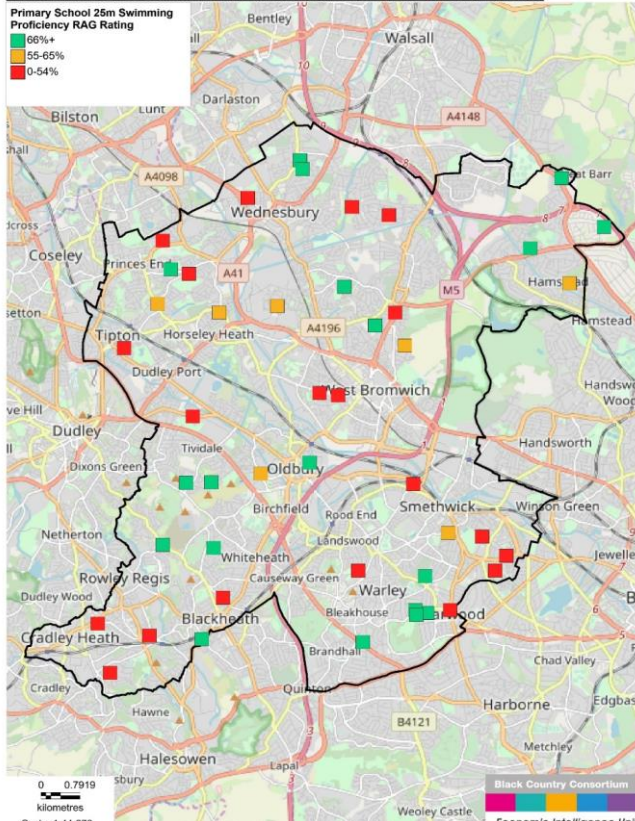
Schools in Dudley currently spend £77,911 of their Primary PE and Sport premium on additionality for swimming, accounting for 32% of schools in the borough.

**PRIMARY SCHOOL 25M SWIMMING PROFICIENCY IN DUDLEY**



**Sandwell**

**PRIMARY SCHOOL 25M SWIMMING PROFICIENCY IN SANDWELL**



Sandwell has seen an increase in the number of children able to swim 25 metres in Year 6, increasing from 51% (2018) to 53% (2019).

The map highlights the geographical spread of Primary Schools, with 47% of schools having an above Black Country average number of Year 6 pupils who can swim a minimum of 25 metres.

Schools in Sandwell currently spend £148,299 of their Primary PE and Sport premium on additionality for swimming accounting for 52% of Primary Schools in the borough.

In line with the rest of the Black Country authorities, water safety remains the area with the lowest percentage across the 3 criteria although this is in line with Black Country average (48%).





**Walsall**

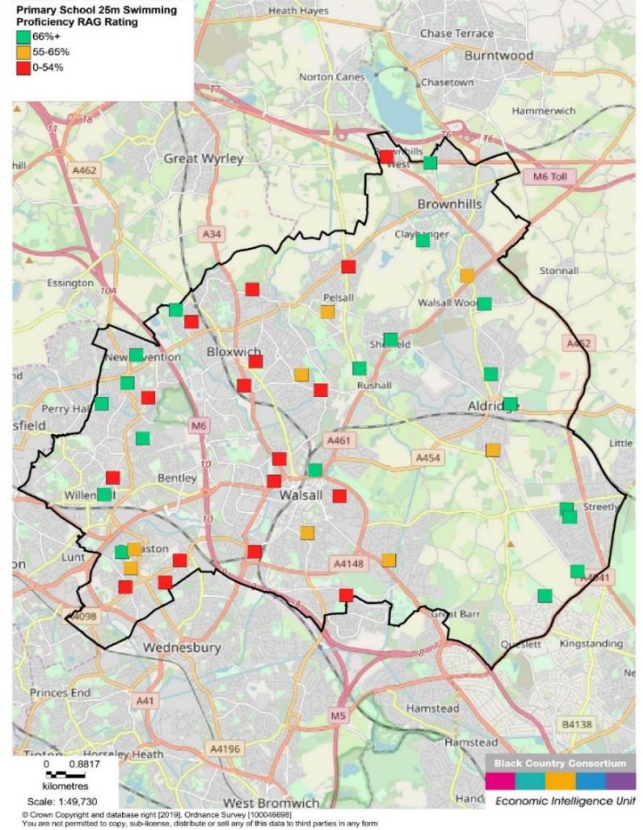
Walsall has seen a reduction in the number of children able to swim 25 metres in Year 6, falling from 69% (2018) to 59% (2019). This could be attributed to more accurate reporting from schools as 2018 was the first year that requirements were introduced.

The map highlights the geographical spread of Primary Schools, with 43% of schools having an above Black Country average number of Year 6 pupils who can swim a minimum of 25 metres. These schools fall largely around the border of the authority and in the more affluent areas. There are a number of Primary Schools (e.g. Holy Trinity and Lindens) where all pupils can are able to meet the requirement.

Water safety remains the area with the lowest percentage across the 3 criteria. Walsall's figure remains above the Black Country average despite it being the only authority of the 4 to see this figure fall (from 56%)

Schools in Walsall currently spend £75,359 of their Primary PE and Sport premium on additionality for swimming.

**PRIMARY SCHOOL 25M SWIMMING PROFICIENCY IN WALSALL**



**Wolverhampton**

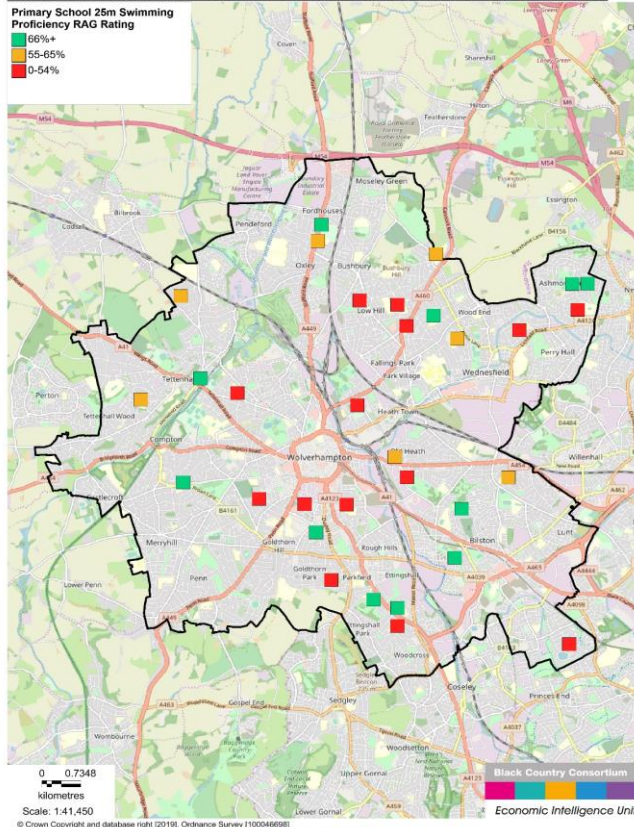
Wolverhampton has seen a fall in the number of children able to swim 25 metres from 61% (2018) to 56% (2019).

Water safety remains the area with the lowest percentage across the 3 criteria with Wolverhampton's figure remaining significantly below the Black Country average at 37%.

Schools in Wolverhampton currently spend £121,865 of their Primary PE and Sport premium on additionality for swimming, accounting for 25% of schools in the City.

The map highlights the geographical spread of Primary Schools, with 54% of schools having an above Black Country average number of Year 6 pupils who can swim a minimum of 25 metres. These schools fall largely around the border of the authority and in the more affluent areas although there are a number of Primary Schools where swimming proficiency is considerably above Black Country average including St Luke's (84%) which falls within one of the most deprived areas of the city.

**PRIMARY SCHOOL 25M SWIMMING PROFICIENCY IN WOLVERHAMPTON**



## Section 6: Comparative Analysis

Active Black Country’s unique hosting arrangement provides us with access to a wide range of data and intelligence courtesy of the Black Country Economic Intelligence Unit and allows for cross-correlation between the data collected as part of PE and Sport Premium Funding mapping and a number of related indicators.

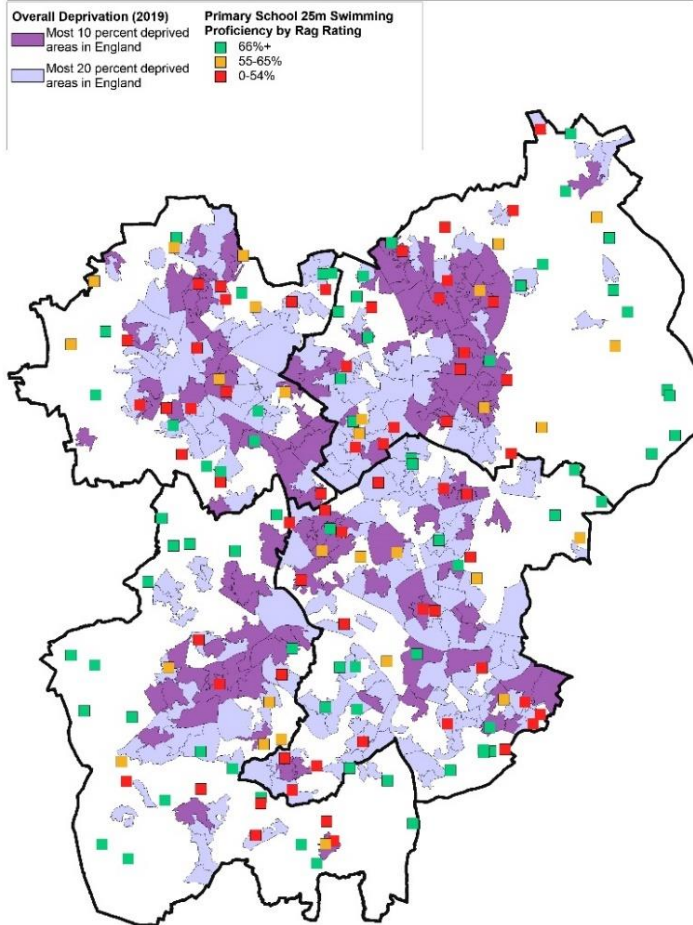
This section will examine the relationship between swimming proficiency and;

- Deprivation
- Child obesity
- BAME population
- The additionality of PE and Sport Premium funding

### Deprivation

The following map demonstrates the small areas within the Black Country that fall within the 20% most deprived in the country with 25m Year 6 proficiency plotted alongside. Schools plotted in **Green** denote those performing considerably higher than the Black Country average (66%+), schools in **Orange** performed 5 percentage points approximately either side of the of the Black Country average (55%-65%) whilst schools in **Red** performed considerably below the Black Country average (less than 55%).

**PRIMARY SCHOOL 25M SWIMMING PROFICIENCY IN BLACK COUNTRY**



#### Proportion of Schools in Each Category

	In Deprived Areas (75 schools)	Non-Deprived Areas (85 schools)
<b>Green</b>	33%	53%
<b>Amber</b>	16%	20%
<b>Red</b>	51%	27%

Schools located in deprived areas are considerably more likely to have lower 25m proficiency scores than those in non-deprived areas. A third of Black Country schools within the 20% most deprived areas are rated **Green** whilst more than half of schools in comparatively more affluent areas hit this mark.

For comparison, the table below demonstrates the discrepancy in terms of the average proportion of pupils in schools achieving 25m proficiency across both groups.

#### Average 25m Proficiency

Schools in Deprived Areas	<b>51.4%</b>
Schools in Non-Deprived Areas	<b>65%</b>

0 1.471  
kilometres

Scale: 1:82,970

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**Child Obesity**

The following map demonstrates levels of Year 6 Child Obesity in the Black Country with 25m Year 6 proficiency plotted. Darker areas indicate the highest levels of prevalence of obese pupils. Schools are plotted using the same RAG coding as the Deprivation map.

Proportion of Schools in Each Category		
	In Area of High Child obesity (16 schools)	Not in Area of High Child Obesity (144 schools)
<b>Green</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>46%</b>
<b>Amber</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>Red</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>35%</b>

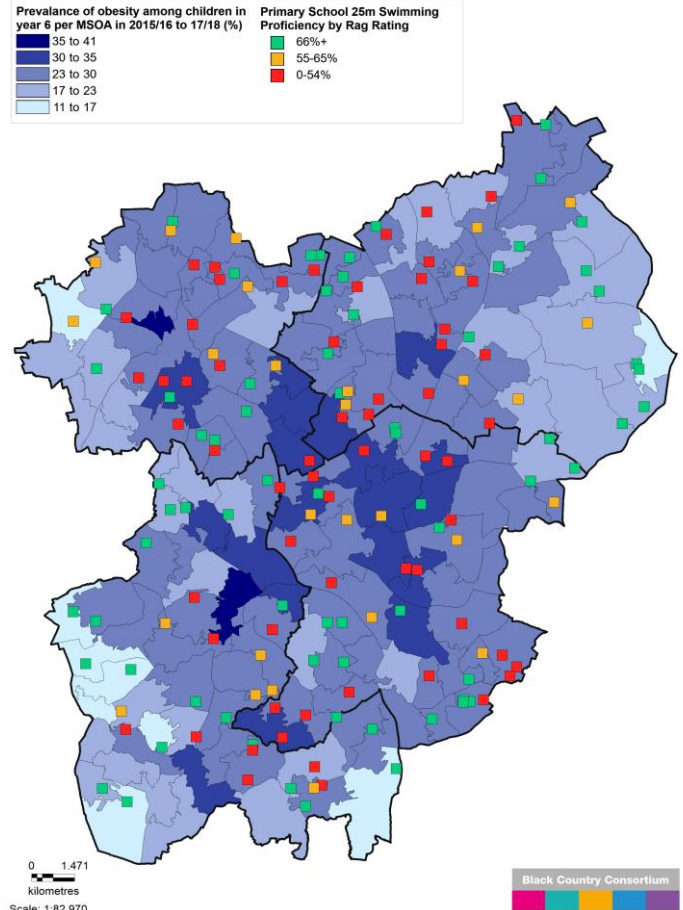
The number of schools located in areas of high child obesity (MSOA has a rate of 30% or higher) that published swimming proficiency results is relatively low (only 16 fall into this category) however 63% of these schools are rated **Red** due to 25m proficiency being considerably lower than the Black Country average. By comparison, only 35% of schools outside of areas of high child obesity are rated in this way.

Similarly, a higher proportion of schools located outside areas of high child obesity have **Green** RAG ratings, indicating a higher 25m proficiency than the Black Country average.

The table below demonstrates the average 25m proficiency scores across school in both groups.

Average 25m Proficiency	
Schools in Areas of High Child Obesity	<b>48%</b>
Schools Not in Areas of High Child Obesity	<b>60%</b>

**PRIMARY SCHOOL 25M SWIMMING PROFICIENCY IN BLACK COUNTRY**



The data should be treated with caution due to the small number of schools within areas of high child obesity that have provided data. However, taken as an indication of the potential pattern, the proportion of pupils who are able to swim 25m in year 6 is considerably higher in schools outside these areas.

**373** Primary Schools in the Black Country

**160** Published swimming performance data



## Use of Premium

The mapping exercise carried out by Active Black Country into the use of Primary PE and Sport Premium funding by schools allows for analysis into the relationship between schools who allocate funding for top up swimming provision and levels of attainment.

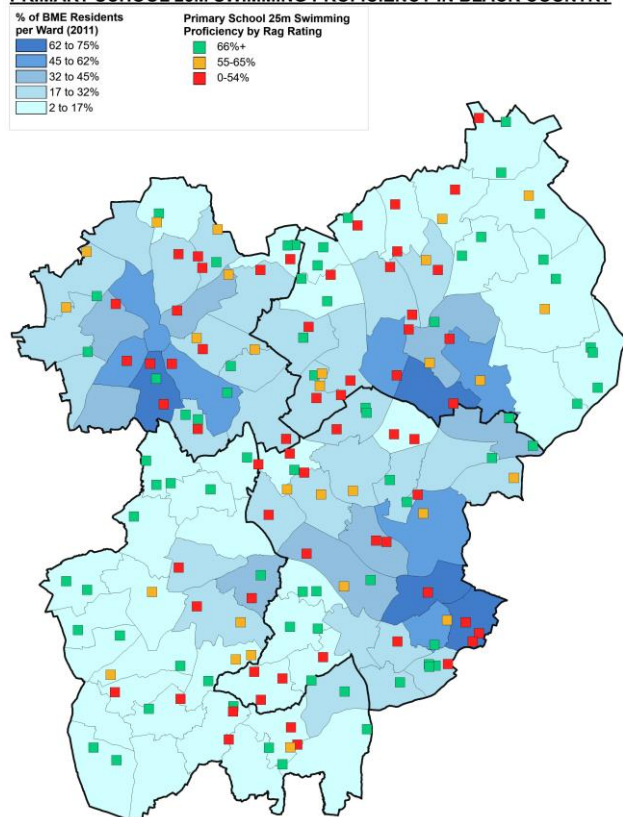
Of the schools that are rated **Green** (considerably above the Black Country average) for *25m Proficiency* 55% of schools reported use of premium funding for swimming whilst 45% of schools didn't. Similarly, for *Use of a Range of Strokes* 56% of schools invested in top-up provision compared to 44% who didn't.

The discrepancy is less stark in relation to the ability to perform safe self-rescue. 51% of schools rated **Green** allocated funding for swimming, compared to 49% who invested the premium elsewhere.

## BAME Population

The following map spatially demonstrates areas with higher proportions of BAME residents in the Black Country with 25m Year 6 proficiency plotted. Darker areas indicate the highest levels of prevalence of residents from a BAME background. Schools are plotted using the same RAG coding as the Deprivation and Obesity maps.

**PRIMARY SCHOOL 25M SWIMMING PROFICIENCY IN BLACK COUNTRY**



### Proportion of Schools in Each Category

	In Area of High BAME Prevalence (17 schools)	Not in Area of High BAME Prevalence (143 schools)
<b>Green</b>	18%	47%
<b>Amber</b>	18%	18%
<b>Red</b>	65%	35%

Only 17 schools that provided results are located in areas of high BAME prevalence (45% or more of the resident population) however 25m proficiency in these schools is considerably lower than other parts of the Black Country. 65% of schools in high BAME areas are rated **Red** compared to 35% elsewhere.

The table below shows the average proficiency scores across both groups.

### Average 25m Proficiency

Schools in Areas of High BAME Prevalence	48%
Schools Not in Areas of High BAME Prevalence	60%

As with the Obesity analysis, the data should be treated with caution due to the small number of schools within areas of high BAME prevalence that have provided data.

Whilst schools outside these areas are broadly in line with the Black Country average for 25m proficiency at 60%, schools located inside areas of high BAME prevalence have a considerably lower average 25m proficiency score.

## Section 7: Conclusions

### Findings

The information provided within this report is presented as a summary of self-reported data produced by schools in relation to swimming proficiency and there is scope to work closely with schools to support them in the moderation of reporting. This is a relatively new requirement and there will be more value in analysing this information over a longer period of time to better understand patterns and trends.

The discrepancies evidenced in Section 6 suggest further analysis needs to be carried out into;

- The swimming opportunities provided to pupils in these areas
- Other opportunities to be active in these areas
- Proficiency rates of schools who have not reported data

The data produced by schools in relation to **Water Safety** is of particular concern with less than half of pupils able to perform safe self-rescue. Local intelligence implies there are still some schools across the region unfamiliar with the requirements. Swim England have developed resources for Primary Schools that provide support in this area and it's important these are circulated and utilised.

<https://www.swimming.org/schools/resource-pack>

#### SEND Schools

For those special schools challenged to achieve the 25 metre targets due to the difficulties of young people with severe learning difficulties, there are some examples of good practice across the region taking place. Examples include schools reporting data through charts to outline progress made over time towards the National Curriculum ambition of 25 metres.

#### Transition

Active Black Country recommend Primary Schools and partners share their swimming data with local Secondary schools as part of key transition information. ABC recognises the importance of sharing key information and the value and role this could play in continuing to drive swimming standards across the region beyond Primary School.

#### Active Black Country Schools Hub

The hub provides examples of best practise (case studies, videos and summaries) from across the region in relation to Primary schools use of the Primary PE and Sport Premium. Within the Hub a dedicated section exists providing examples of successful approaches Schools have undertaken in both meeting national curriculum Swimming requirements and additional provision for swimming and water safety funded through the Primary PE and Sport Premium.

<http://blackcountryschoolshub.co.uk>



**SCHOOLS HUB**

#### Active Black Country Insight Hub

Active Black Country are one of the most insight-led Active Partnerships in the country and our new Insight Hub collates primary research, secondary data and softer thematic learnings in relation to tackling inactivity across the sub-region. The site is full of helpful information to help partners understand their area, evidence need and make decisions in relation to physical activity.

<http://blackcountryinsighthub.co.uk>



**INSIGHT HUB**



## Next Steps

This report has been developed to enable schools to benchmark their performance across the three key indicators against the rest of the Black Country. It should be used to generate a better understanding of the reporting requirements of schools and to stimulate debate regarding;

- The use of Primary PE and Sport Premium funding
- The swimming opportunities and interventions available to pupils who go to schools located in deprived areas
- The potential impact a lack of swimming provision has on developing an activity habit for life and promoting inequalities.
- Encouraging Schools to publish accurate timely data on the 3 reporting requirements
- Encouraging schools to share/promote best practise so this can be cascaded across the region.
- How as a region can we raise standards around water safety, particularly given the density of canals and open water across the region.

## Advice for Schools

Whilst the specific advice for schools will differ depending on their current swimming offer, as alluded to throughout this report there are certain standards that all schools should aspire to. The following graphic breaks this down and provides extra information that schools could follow.

All Schools	Some Schools	Schools Requiring Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure all 3 areas of swimming data is reported on the school website each year.</li> <li>• Ensure this is updated each year by July 31<sup>st</sup> at the latest.</li> <li>• Share best practice with ABC so this can be cascaded across the region.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilise PESSP funding to increase the number of children achieving the 3 national curriculum swimming requirements by Y6.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact <b>Tim Aldred</b>, Education Partnership Officer at ABC who will be able to coordinate and signpost to local support, key contacts (see contact details on back page)</li> </ul>

## Local Action Plans

Moving forward, Active Black Country will work with our Local Authority partners and education networks to agree a coherent plan to address the issues raised in this report. We will develop an action plan for each Local Authority area in consultation with key partners including Local Authorities, Swim England, schools and leisure providers.

The action plans should seek, as a region, to coordinate a reduction in some of the barriers for schools that have been identified in this report and to encourage and improve swimming attainment. This could include, but not be limited to, an audit of where schools are currently swimming and how and where efficiencies could be driven across centres in relation to transport, improved communication between leisure providers and schools around reporting requirements and the targeting of support to those schools who need this the most.



# Creating a **healthy, active** region



Creating a healthy, active region



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