

Who Benefits from Sports Enrichment? Exploring Differences in Pupil Development

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Introduction

Sports enrichment has been associated with a range of developmental benefits, but less is known about whether these benefits are experienced equally by different pupil groups. This study examined changes in teamwork and adaptability following sports-enrichment programmes, with particular attention to pupils with FSM, EAL and SEND status.

SDGs



References



Methodology

A **pre-post study** across two Year 6 six-week sports-enrichment pilots.

- Region 1: 2 schools, 51 baseline pupil responses
- Region 2: 8 schools, 355 baseline pupil responses/302 endline responses

Data collection and analysis:

- Pupil and teacher **baseline/endline questionnaires** (Likert-scale)
- Survey responses from sports ambassadors who led sports activities.
- Numerical data analysis with R** for response distributions and comparing average scores for different subgroups of children.
- Regression analysis** used to determine statistically significant predictors of teamwork and adaptability changes.

Results

1. Teachers and Pupils Perceived Changes

Pupil self-report and teacher ratings demonstrated broadly similar trends, although **teachers consistently reported larger improvements than pupils themselves.**

2. Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regressions were conducted using matched pupil self-report data (Region 1 N = 39; Region 2 N = 249). In Region 2, lower baseline scores and Pupil Premium eligibility were significantly associated with change in both teamwork and adapting. EAL and SEND status were not significant predictors. In Region 1, neither regression model was statistically significant.

Key finding: Socioeconomic disadvantage was associated with smaller improvements in pupil-reported teamwork and adapting in Region 2, but this association was not detected in the smaller Region 1 sample.

3. Qualitative Feedback

Survey responses from student ambassadors leading sports activities in region 1. Consensus between answers pointed to sports sessions and overall programme being too short in length to yield meaningful influence but was enjoyed by the school pupils.

Discussion

Starting Point Matters

- Pupils with lower baseline scores showed greater gains in teamwork and adaptability.

Gains were not distributed equally

- In the larger pilot, students with pupil premium status showed statistically significant smaller gains.
- Barriers to participation such as lower confidence could explain this but were not directly measured in the scope of the study.

Perspective Matters

- Teachers generally reported greater improvements than pupils themselves, particularly for students with EAL, SEND or Pupil Premium Status.
- Whose assessment should we use in evaluating developmental outcomes?

Pupil self-report vs teacher rating (linked pupils, t2)

n = 19 linked pupils (School A only at t2) · dashed = perfect agreement; purple = best-fit line

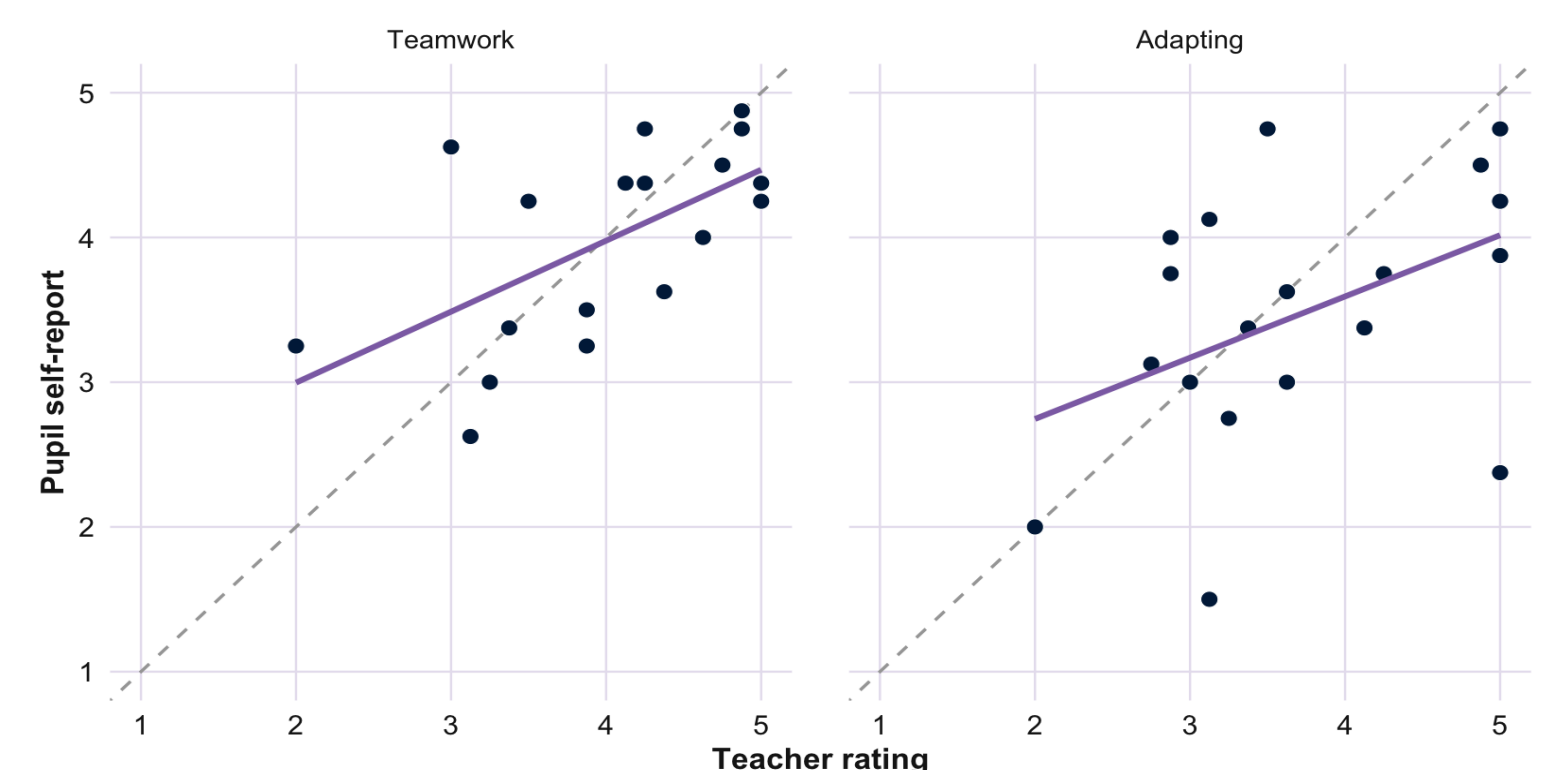


Figure 1: Pupil vs teacher self-report rating of Teamwork and Adaptability in location A.

Pupil self-report vs teacher rating (linked pupils, t2)

n = 273 · dashed = perfect agreement; purple = best-fit line

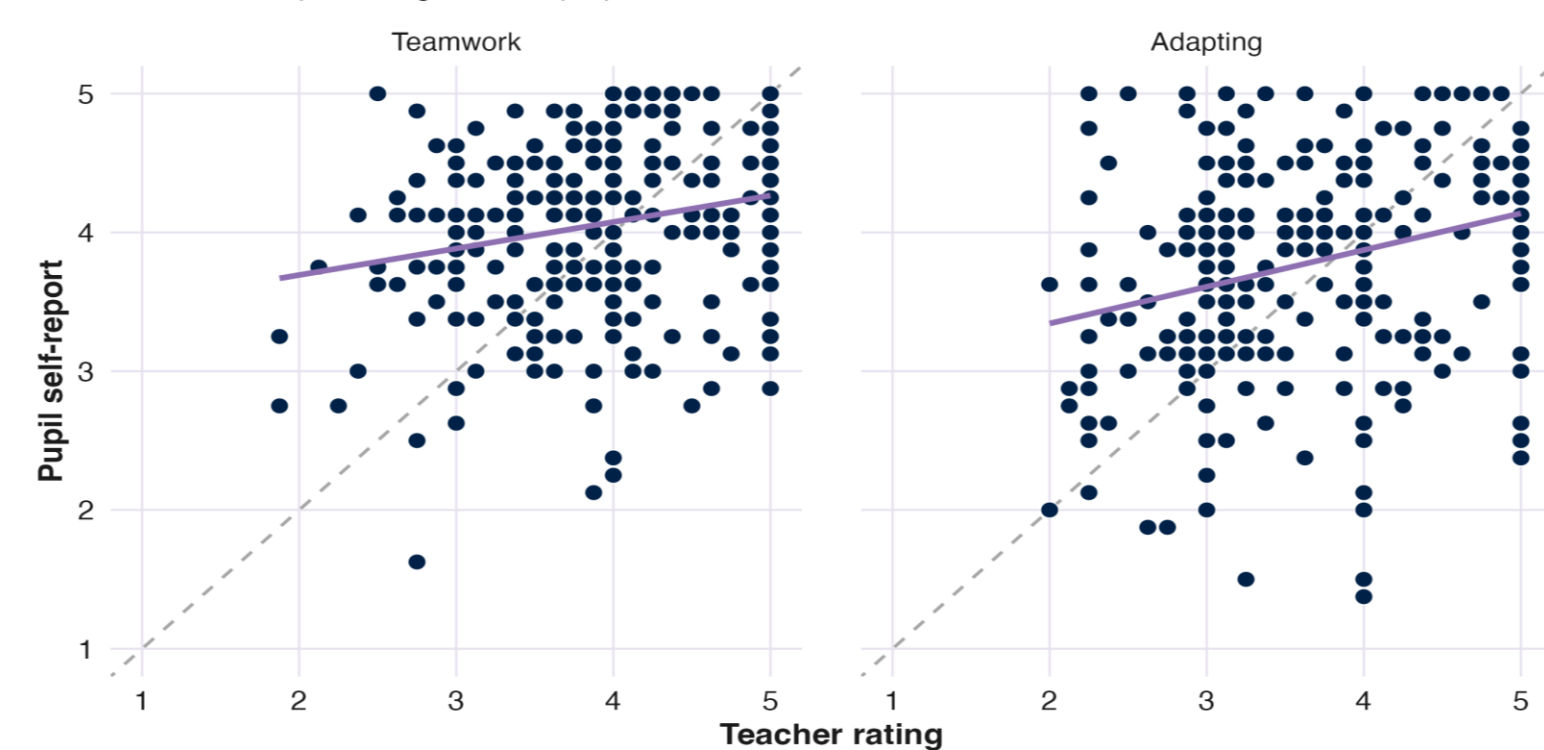


Figure 2: Pupil vs teacher self-report rating of Teamwork and Adaptability in location B.

Change as seen by pupils and by their teacher: FSM / disadvantaged

Mean within-pupil change on the two parallel scales - matched panel

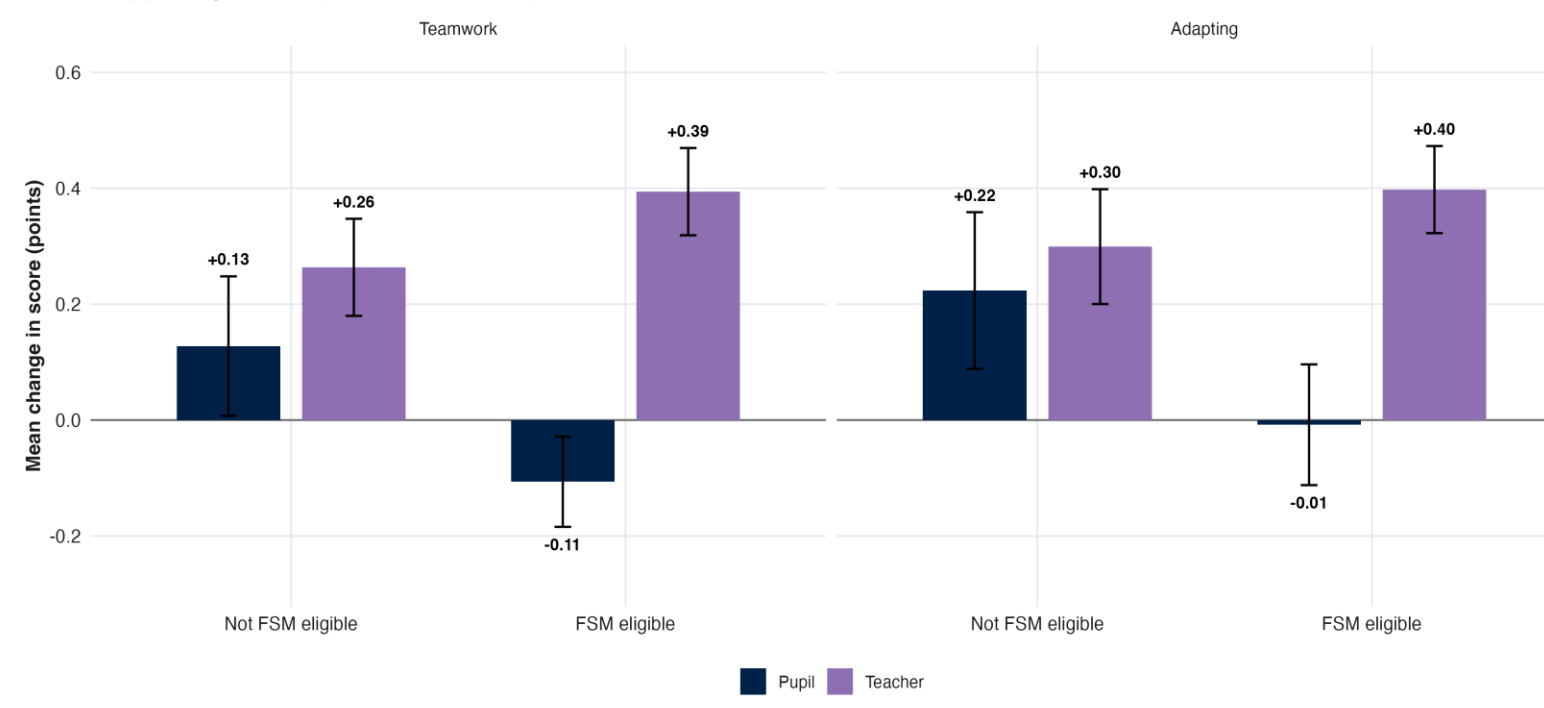


Figure 3: Change in teamwork and adaptability rating of FSM eligible students between teachers and pupils in location B.

Limitations

- Absence of control group; relationships can only point to correlation, not causation.
- Short intervention period; less time for meaningful influence/trends to appear in results.
- Small questionnaire scale; ceiling effects affect results and mask improvements.
- How well do can pupils reliably assess themselves?
- Possibility of attrition bias.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Kristen McCollum (impact advisor), Mihaela Pop (project lead), Benjamin Margetts (programme manager), the Oxford SDG Impact Lab, and the Laidlaw Foundation.