

What kids think

Issue
11
2018

Results of the 2018 Kids' Life and Times Survey

What kids think???

Think about what???

Is this Kids' Life and Times survey anything to do with us?

Yes! Don't you remember a couple of months ago we did it on the computer in school? We were asked for our opinions on lots of different things - I thought it was really interesting.

Now I remember - kind of! There were questions on school and how we learn about what's happening in the world and social media.

Was it only our two schools that did it?

No silly, it's a big survey. Researchers from the universities do it every year because they say that our opinions matter and that the adults who make decisions about the things that affect us need to know what WE think. They put it online and tell all the primary schools in Northern Ireland about it, but they only want P7s to complete it.

KLT Survey 2018



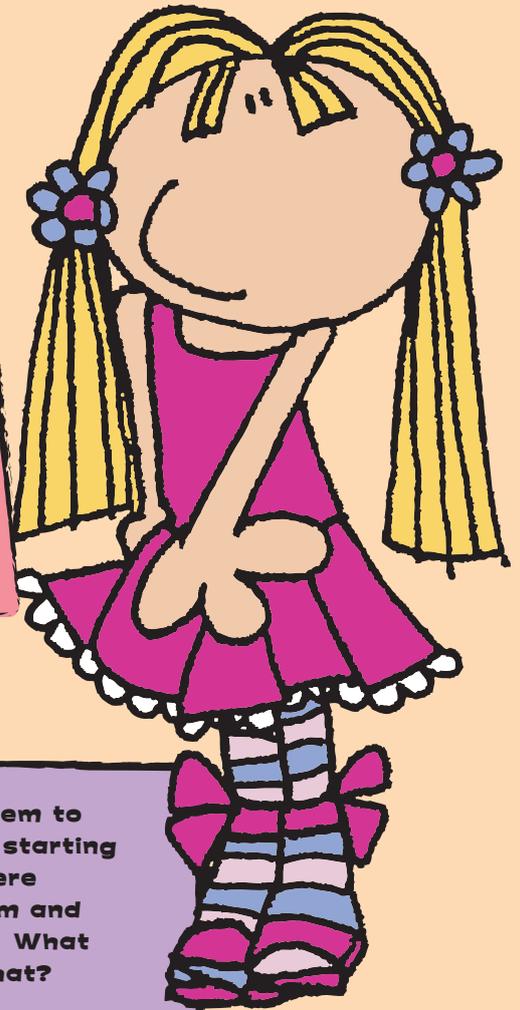
Just right too!

P7s are important people. So how many kids took part - about 500?

Nope, there were

5,300

- half of them were boys and half were girls!!



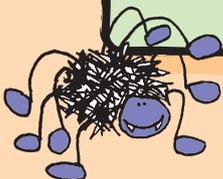
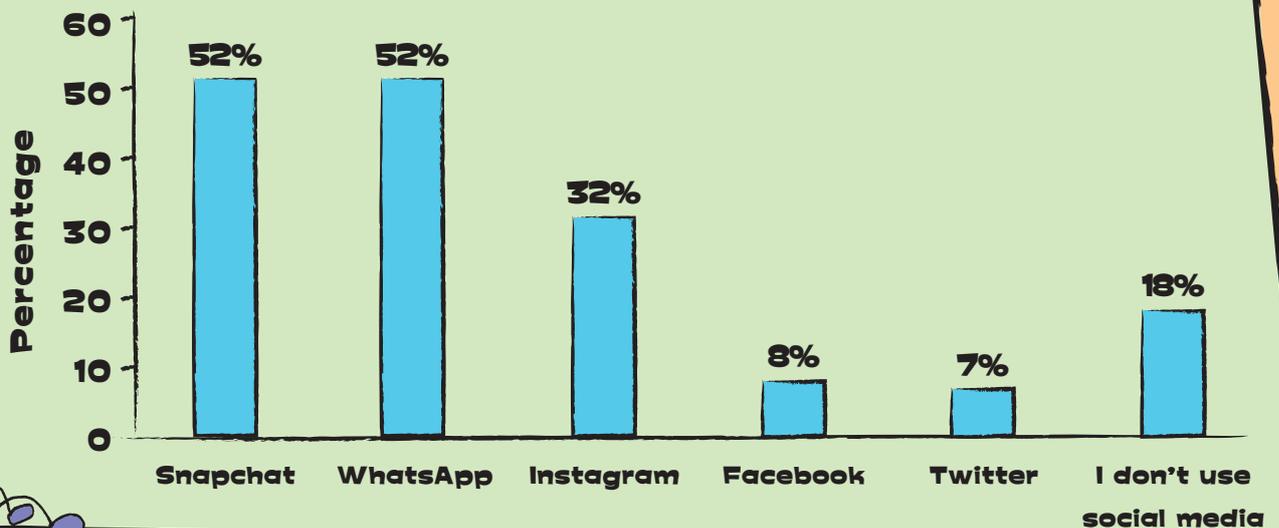
Wow that's a lot! You seem to know all about it, but I'm starting to remember. Weren't there questions about Instagram and other social media stuff? What did they find out about that?



Wouldn't you know that's the first thing you'd be interested in!! Well, 82% of P7s used social media, and most popular were WhatsApp and Snapchat and then Instagram.

Figure 1

Types of social media P7 children use

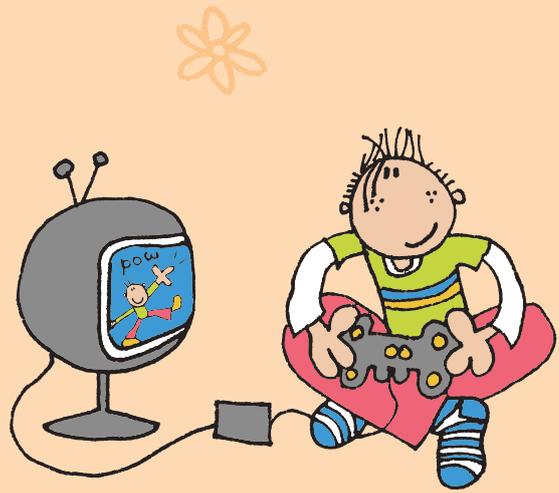




That's what I said on the survey. I bet not too many P7s use Twitter or Facebook?



You're right; only around 7% used them. So, if you're so clever can you guess what kids said they mostly used them for?



I would say staying in touch with friends; am I right?



Yes, nearly 80% of kids said that, and over half (55%) said they used them for keeping in touch with parents. Not many used them for sharing news stories which is interesting.



It is? Are you joking??



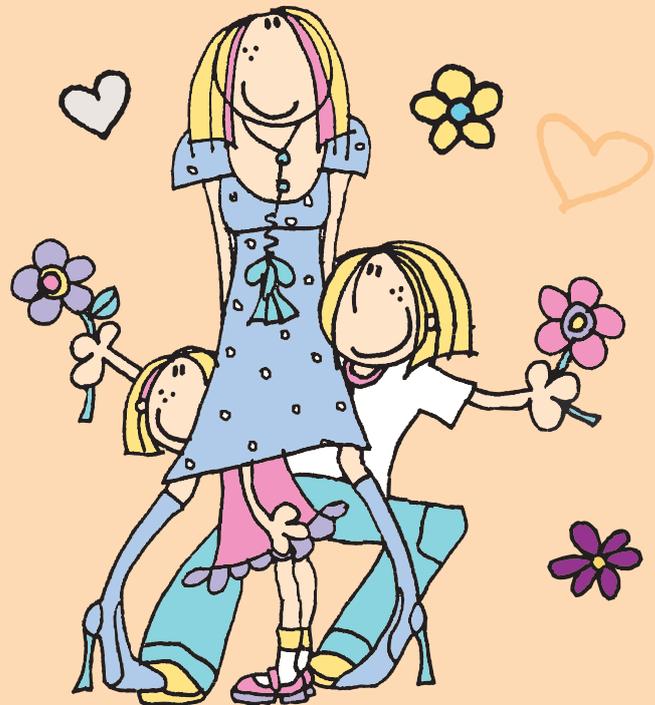
No, I think it's interesting because the survey asked us where we would go to get information that we would trust. And guess what - it wasn't social media, even though adults seem to think children believe everything they see on there! No, by far it was our parents, followed by teachers, TV radio and newspapers and friends.



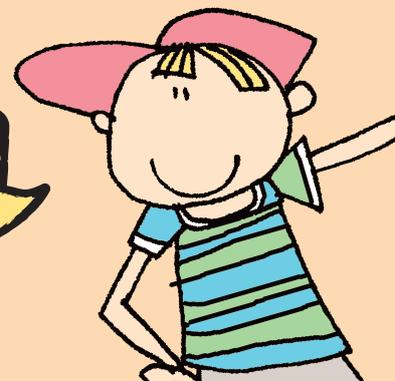
I wouldn't trust some of the things my friends say! But we do learn about being safe online and websites in school so maybe that helps.



Could be - 95% of P7s who did the survey said they learned about staying safe online in school.



I think the other 5% must have been asleep!!

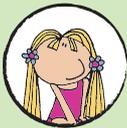




And do you remember they asked us about politics and whether we thought politicians were doing a good job?



That's right, I bet P7s didn't know too much about any of that - yawn!

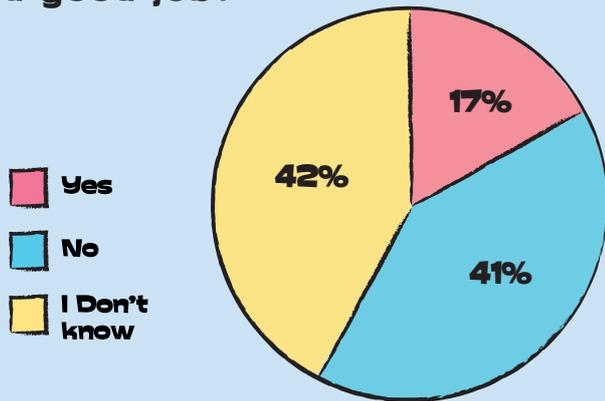


Wrong!! 71% said they knew a lot or a little about politics, and, while 42% didn't know if our politicians were doing a good job or not, only 17% thought they were!

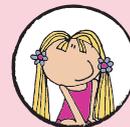


Figure 2

Do you think our politicians are doing a good job?



And they even asked us about Brexit, and what we thought about leaving the European Union didn't they? Or do I just think that because it's always on the TV??



No, you're right. Guess what - 40% of P7s didn't have an opinion about leaving the European Union or not, but 47% thought we should stay! You are right though - some kids were a bit fed up with politicians going on and on about Brexit. Here are some of the things they said:



'They're only talking about Brexit.'

'All they do is whine about Brexit, Brexit and more Brexit.'

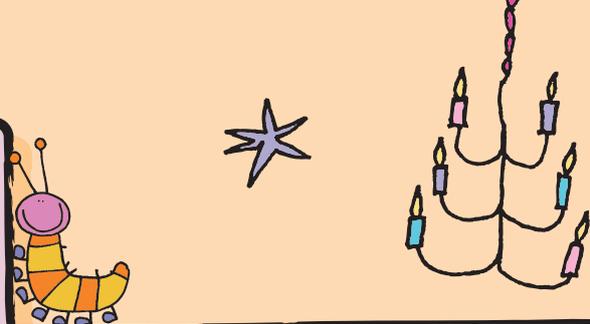
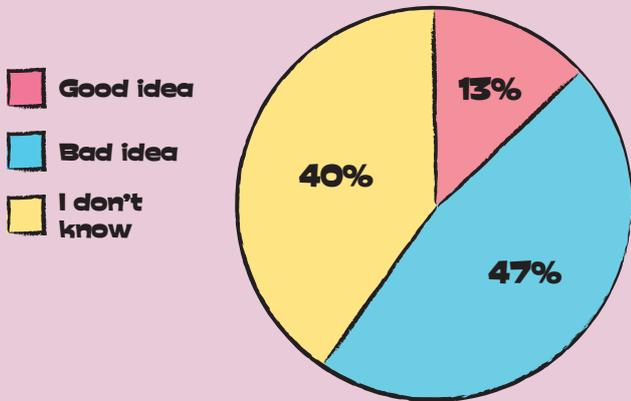
'They are constantly arguing about Brexit.'

'Because they are fighting about Brexit and it's boring and it's all they ever talk about now and they are not really doing anything about it.'



Figure 3

Whether children think it is a good idea or a bad idea to leave the European Union



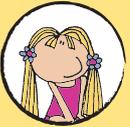
When I answered the Brexit question I said I didn't know if we should stay or leave the European Union, but at least the survey asked for our opinions. Adults should do that more often!!



I agree, and funny you should say that, nearly two thirds P7s thought that the voting age should be lower than 18 years of age - wouldn't that be a great way for younger people's opinions to be heard?



You're going to be impressed I've just remembered something else! ¿Eres feliz en la escuela?



I don't know what you're on about!



At last, I know something you don't! The survey asked us if we were happy in school and I have just asked you that in Spanish because I learn it in school!!



We don't learn languages in my school, but around half of P7s (46%) said they did in their school. Just like you, most children said they learned Spanish but some learned Chinese or Japanese - how cool is that? Maybe that will be me in Year 8. I'm really looking forward to learning a language - just like 83% of the P7s in the survey.

Table 1

Which language(s) do you learn at school?

Language learned in school	%
Spanish	42
Irish	34
French	29
German	3
Other language	18





So what about my Spanish question, can you remember what you said in the survey about being happy in school?



I said I was mostly happy at my school, just like 73% of children in the survey. 20% of kids couldn't decide if they were happy or not and 6% said they had been mostly unhappy. It seemed that girls were a bit happier than boys though the survey didn't ask why - maybe the researchers can ask the P7s that next year!

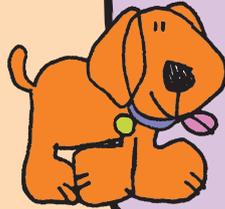
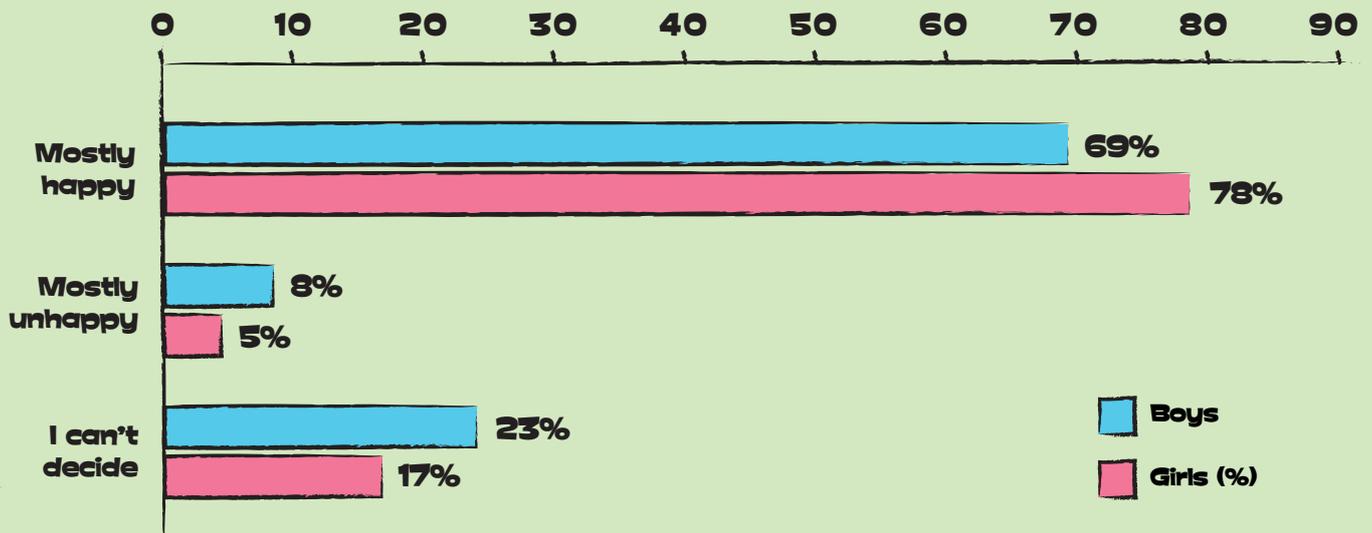


Figure 4

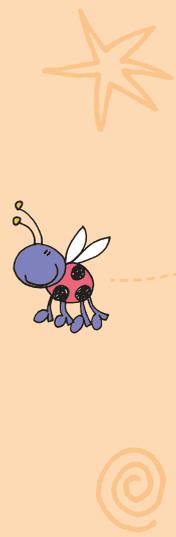
Whether children were mostly happy or unhappy at school



Wow, this survey really does give us lots of information doesn't it? Do you think many P7s had done surveys before? I know I hadn't.



You've forgotten that was on the survey too! They called it taking part in research and they told us there were lots of different ways you could do it - not just surveys but interviews and even drawing or taking photographs - so we can be researchers too!!





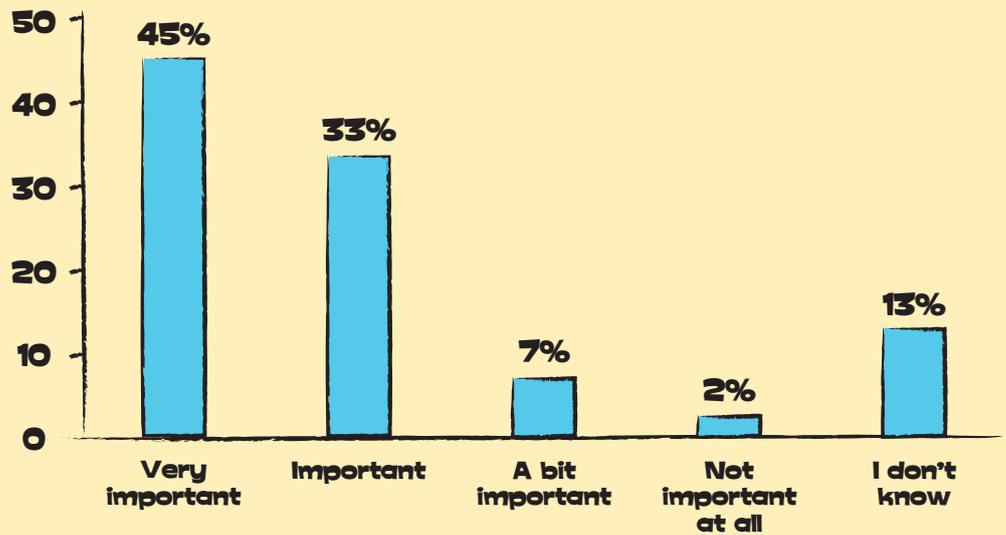
I like the idea of drawing as I am very creative!!



Hah, creating trouble is more like it! Just over half of kids had taken part in research before this survey and only 4% said they hadn't enjoyed it. 85% of the P7s taking part in Kids' Life and Times thought it was important that children had a chance to give their opinions when the research was about their lives although 13% said they didn't know.

Figure 5

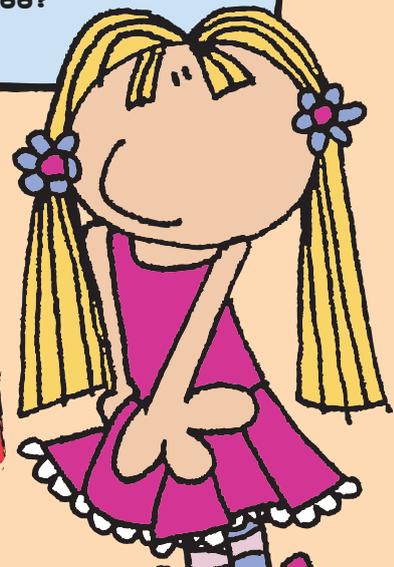
Whether important for research to ask children's opinions



I probably said I didn't know, but after chatting with you I've changed my mind and now I think it's really, really important. In fact, we should maybe email the researchers in the universities and tell them we want to be researchers too?

That way we can make sure that when adults are making decisions about things that affect children's lives they know what children think.

That's a great idea.



KLT Survey 2018



Kids' Life and Times is an annual online survey of P7 children in Northern Ireland carried out in school. In 2018, 5,300 children participated.

The Kids' Life and Times survey is a joint initiative between Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University and aims to provide an independent source of information on what children think about the social issues of the day. Check the website for more information on the survey findings (www.ark.ac.uk/klt) or call the Kids' Life and Times team on 028 9097 5962 with any queries.

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