

Kids' Life and Times Survey 2018

Technical Notes

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Background

The 2018 Kids' Life and Times (KLT) survey is the eleventh to be carried out by ARK. ARK is a joint resource between Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University. Its goal is to make social and political information on Northern Ireland available to the widest possible audience.

ARK had run two annual attitudes surveys for a number of years: the Northern Ireland Life and Times survey for adults aged 18 years and over (1998 to date) and the Young Life and Times (YLT) survey for 16 year olds (2003 to date). However, despite a growing interest in the area of children's rights and needs, the opinions of younger age groups were mostly ignored when decisions were being made about many issues involving them. Conscious of this, ARK recognised the need for a regular and rigorous children's survey that would provide easily accessible, quality research data for the academic, voluntary and government sectors, and promote the participation of children and young people in decisions that affect their lives.

Given this context, in 2007 ARK investigated the feasibility of running a survey of children in Northern Ireland and consulted with school principals, parents and children. Several survey methodologies were considered. However, in order to maximise coverage and response, an online survey based in schools was seen as the most appropriate; all primary schools in Northern Ireland have internet access as part of the Classroom 2000 (C2k) initiative (<http://www.c2kni.org.uk/>). The first KLT survey took place in 2008.

The 2018 KLT survey builds on the success of the previous KLT surveys and uses the same methodology to assess the views of P7 children in Northern Ireland. The fieldwork for the 2018 survey was carried out from 10 December 2018 to 15 February 2019.

Acknowledgements

The KLT team would like to acknowledge the help, advice and support given by the following individuals and organisations:

- The Department of Education and the Education Authority for providing contact details and/or sending out information on our behalf.
- C2kNI and CCMS for emailing reminders to primary schools.
- Bang on the door for allowing us to use their characters.
- Our Funders for 2018: Department of Education (DE); UNESCO Centre, Ulster University; Ian Collen, Queen's University Belfast.

We particularly appreciate the time and effort taken by everyone involved in each school and the P7 pupils who participated in the survey.

Technical details of the 2018 survey

Ethical permission

Ethical permission was sought, and obtained, from the Ethics Committee based in the School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work, Queen's University Belfast.

Target population

The target population was all P7-age children in Northern Ireland. There were approximately 25561 in total which included P7-age pupils attending 852 primary schools (this included P7-age children in hospital, special and independent schools), and children in this age group who were being taught at home.

Within Northern Ireland, the overall administration of the education system is carried out by the Department of Education (DE), and the Education Authority (EA) which provides education, library and youth work services. The data required to access the target population was provided by them and, as such, the KLT team were able to target as many P7-age children throughout Northern Ireland as possible.

In June 2018 DE provided a database containing the names and addresses of all primary schools in Northern Ireland and the number of P6 pupils in each - as the questionnaire would be completed between December 2018 and February 2019, these P6 pupils would by then be in P7. .

A small number of children living in Northern Ireland are educated at home, and registration of this group is undertaken by the EA who facilitated access to this group of children.

Communication with schools

On 3 December 2018 all principals of primary and special schools in Northern Ireland were sent a letter providing information on the survey and advising that the fieldwork would begin on 10 December 2018 and run until 15 February 2019. The letter contained an instruction document for teachers, a copy of the parental consent form, a KLT bookmark for every P7 pupil in the school and a child-friendly comic with key findings from previous surveys. A contact telephone number and an email address were provided so that principals could contact the survey team for more information. Principals could contact the KLT helpline to request translations of the consent forms and requests were received for Lithuanian and Polish versions. The letter also offered schools an anonymised, confidential summary report based on their school's responses and directed principals and teachers to the KLT website where they could access the results of previous surveys and, importantly, view the content of the 2018 questionnaire. Each letter included a unique three-digit identification code for that school allocated by the KLT team for administrative purposes. A trouble-shooting document was also made available on the KLT website.

On 5 December 2018 C2kNI emailed all primary schools reminding them that the survey would be available for completion from 10 December 2018. In addition, CCMS contacted schools on our behalf. On 8 December 2018 the relevant documentation relating to the survey and postage paid envelopes were sent to the contact in the EA who posted the documentation on our behalf to the parents/guardians of each child who was on elective home education inviting them to take part in the survey. Reminder emails were sent by C2kNI, which is the organisation responsible for the

provision of an ICT-managed service to all schools in Northern Ireland, on 16 January and 5 February 2019.

Follow-up telephone calls were made in January to schools that had not participated in KLT and, as in previous years, this helped to boost the response rate.

Consent

Consent to participate involved three levels:

- Firstly, the school principal agreed that the school could participate.
- Secondly, a parent or guardian of each P7 pupil within the participating schools received a consent form which they were asked to complete and return to the school if they **did not** wish their child to take part.
- Thirdly, at the start of the questionnaire, each child was asked if s/he agreed to take part.

Online questionnaire

The online questionnaire was designed and administered by the ARK team. The survey began with an animated, audio introduction voiced by Professor Gillian Robinson, Director of ARK. Since 2008, ARK has had permission to use characters from 'Bang on the Door' to make the survey fun and interesting to complete. The questions were presented in different ways to try to maintain interest, for example, clicking on words or writing into a text box. Before the survey went live, testing was done by members of the KLT team to ensure that all links/questions were working correctly.

Throughout the design of the questionnaire, the KLT team worked closely with C2kNI.

Completing the questionnaire

As noted above, schools were advised that the fieldwork period would run from 10 December 2018 to 15 February 2019 and most completed within this period. However, some schools requested an extension and the survey remained open until 22 February 2019.

Once the child agreed that s/he wanted to take part, s/he was asked to enter the three-digit school identification number. This number was printed on all documentation sent to the school by the KLT team. However, the child was also able to enter the seven-digit school code used by DE. When the code was entered, the full name and address of the school appeared on the screen, and the child was asked to confirm if this was the correct school. The class teacher or other staff member was able to phone the KLT helpline at any stage to confirm their identification number. No further identification codes or names of children were required.

Survey content

The questionnaire took about 20 minutes to complete. Each question had a 'Skip' option which the children could use if they did not want to answer it. The questionnaire was designed by the KLT team in association with funding organisations and children.

Questions on KLT 2018 included:

- Home and family;
- Bullying in school;
- Shared Education;
- Community Relations, Equality and Diversity (CRED) Education;

- Citizenship education;
- Wellbeing;
- Languages in school;
- Participation in research.

The 2018 KLT survey had a split sample; approximately half the children completed Version 1 and the other half Version 2. The children were randomly assigned to either Version 1 or Version 2 when they logged on. All respondents completed the core questions including home and family, happiness and bullying at school; they also completed the Shared Education module. Half the children completed Version 1 that included citizenship education and languages in school while the other half completed Version 2 that included wellbeing and participation in research.

Response rate

Fairly accurate information on the number of pupils in primary and special schools is available from the database provided by DE although the figures will not be exact given that some children will leave, or join, schools throughout the year.

There were 852 schools with P7-age pupils on the database provided by DE, and of these 209 participated in the survey, representing 25 percent of schools.

There were 25,561 P7-age children. This figure was compiled using the numbers of P6-age pupils from the DE database (June 2018) who at the time of the survey would be in P7 and children who were on Elective Home Education. In total 5,300 completed the survey, a response rate of approximately 21 percent. Of these, 2,697 completed Version 1 and 2,603 completed Version 2.

Table 1 presents the response rate within the Council areas for schools and for children. The highest response rate for schools came from the Belfast area (14%), with the lowest being Lisburn and Castlereagh (4%). Table 2 shows the response rate by school and by children, for each school management type.

Table 1: Response by Council

	Schools %	Children %
Antrim and Newtownabbey	6	8
Ards and North Down	7	7
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	10	12
Belfast	14	19
Causeway Coast and Glens	7	5
Derry City and Strabane	10	8
Fermanagh and Omagh	12	6
Lisburn and Castlereagh	4	6
Mid and East Antrim	6	7
Mid-Ulster	12	9
Newry, Mourne and Down	13	13

Table 2: Response by type of school management

	Schools %	Children %
Controlled	43	43
Catholic Maintained	49	50
Controlled Integrated	3	3
Grant Maintained Integrated	2	2
Voluntary	1	1
Other Maintained	2	1
Special and Elective Home Education	1	<1

Table 3 compares the data distribution of all schools by the school location with the distribution of schools participating in KLT.

Table 3: Response by school location

	DE school figures %	KLT %
Urban	46	50
Rural	54	50

Table 5 compares the gender of KLT respondents with the overall figures from across all P7 pupils in Northern Ireland.

Table 4: Response by gender

	DE figures %	KLT %
Boys	51	50
Girls	49	50

Accessing the data

Tables of results from the 2018 survey are available on the KLT website at www.ark.ac.uk/klt. Users can also download the data in SPSS portable file format from the website to carry out their own statistical analyses. However, all identifying information, and open-ended variables have been removed from this dataset.

Using the data

This document is intended to provide background information on the survey and the survey methodology; if you require any further technical information please contact us (see details below).

The data have been tested extensively, but if you find anything that looks like an error please let us know as soon as you can.

A helpline service is available for anyone who has a query about the survey or the results (see contact details below). Alternatively, you can use the help section on the KLT website (www.ark.ac.uk/klt/help/).

Contact information

For all queries relating to the survey please contact:

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