

Kids' Life and Times Survey 2022

Technical Notes

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Background

The 2022 Kids' Life and Times (KLT) survey is the fourteenth 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.

Prior to the introduction of KLT ARK had been running 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). Despite a growing interest in the area of children's rights and needs, the opinions of younger age groups had been 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 2022 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 2022 survey was carried out from 27th April to 27th May 2022.

Acknowledgements

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

- The Department of Education (DE) for providing contact details.
- C2kNI for emailing reminders to primary schools.
- DE for funding the Shared Education module.

We particularly appreciate the time and effort taken by everyone involved in each school and the P7 pupils who participated in the survey. We are especially grateful for participation in the 2022 survey given the exceptional circumstances that schools were continuing to experience as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Technical details of the 2022 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 25827 in total which included P7-age pupils attending 840 primary schools (this included P7-age children in special and independent schools).

In February 2022 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 April and May 2022 these P6 pupils would by then be in P7.

Communication with schools

On 25 April 2022 all principals of primary and special schools in Northern Ireland were sent a letter providing information on the KLT survey and advising that it would be available from 27th April to 27th May 2022. The letter contained an instruction document for teachers and parental consent forms. 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; no requests were received. 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 2022 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.

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

A number of schools requested an extension to the survey fieldwork. Therefore, the survey remained open until 6 June 2022.

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 in conjunction with the funder. 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.

Completing the questionnaire

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 school they attended. The class teacher or other staff members could phone the KLT helpline at any stage to confirm their school identification number, or get any clarification required. 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.

Questions on KLT 2022 included:

- Home and family;
- School and bullying;
- Shared Education;
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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 840 schools with P7-age pupils on the database provided by DE, and of these 187 participated in the survey, representing 22 percent of schools.

There were approximately 25827 P7-age children. This figure was compiled using the numbers of P6-age pupils from the DE database (February 2022) who at the time of the survey would be in P7. In total 4639 children logged on to the survey, a response rate of approximately 18 percent.

Table 1 shows the response rate, by school (DE and KLT) and by children (KLT), for each Council area. The highest response rate for schools came from the Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon and the Newry, Mourne and Down Council areas (14%).

Table 1: Response by Council Area

	Schools (DE and KLT)		Children (KLT) %
	DE %	KLT %	
Antrim and Newtownabbey	7	5	6
Ards and North Down	6	8	10
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	11	14	16
Belfast	13	11	14
Causeway Coast and Glens	10	9	6
Derry City and Strabane	8	9	8
Fermanagh and Omagh	10	10	4
Lisburn and Castlereagh	5	6	9
Mid and East Antrim	7	6	6
Mid-Ulster	12	7	9
Newry, Mourne and Down	12	14	11

Table 2 shows the response rate, by school (DE and KLT) and by children (KLT), for each school management type. The 2022 KLT survey had an over-representation of Catholic Maintained schools when compared to the DE figures (50% and 42% respectively). The figures suggest that there is slightly more bias in the KLT school sample for 2022 in terms of school management type.

Table 2: Response by type of school management

	Schools (DE and KLT)		Children (KLT) %
	DE %	KLT %	
Controlled	42	42	42
Catholic Maintained	42	50	50
Controlled Integrated	3	2	3
Grant Maintained Integrated	3	3	4
Voluntary	1	.5	.5
Other Maintained	3	2	1
Special	4 ¹	1	<1
Independent	1	.5	<1

Table 3 compares the distribution of all schools by location (urban/rural²) with the distribution of schools participating in KLT. Slightly more schools located in urban areas (50%) took part in the survey compared with the DE figures (47%).

¹ Please note that of the 34 Special schools with P7 pupils, DE figures record 32 as Controlled, 1 as Catholic Maintained and 1 as Other Maintained.

² DE website <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/school-enrolment-school-level-data-201920>

Table 3: Response by school location

	Schools (DE and KLT)	
	DE %	KLT %
Urban	47	50
Rural	53	50

Table 4 compares the gender of KLT respondents with the overall figure from across all P7 pupils in Northern Ireland; as can be seen, there is little difference between the DE and KLT figures. However, respondents to KLT were give 2 additional options, 'Neither' and 'I don't want to say'. Taking this into account, the percentages are as follows: Boys 47%, Girls 49%, Neither 1%, I don't want to say 2%.

Table 4: Response by gender

	P7 children (DE and KLT)	
	DE %	KLT %
Boys	51	49
Girls	49	51

Accessing the data

Tables of results from the 2022 survey are available on the KLT website at www.ark.ac.uk/klt.

Users can also download the data in SPSS 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 details below). Alternatively, you can use the help section on the KLT website at www.ark.ac.uk/klt/help/

Contact information

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