



# Kids' Life and Times Survey 2024

## Technical Notes

Full details of all Kids' Life and Times surveys are available at:

[www.ark.ac.uk/kt](http://www.ark.ac.uk/kt)

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## **Background**

The 2024 Kids' Life and Times (KLT) survey is the sixteenth 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, also, 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, given that 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 2024 survey builds on the success of the previous KLT surveys and uses the same methodology to assess the views of Primary 7 (P7) children (aged 10/11 years) in Northern Ireland. The fieldwork for the 2024 survey was carried out between 15 April – 24 May 2024.

## **Acknowledgements**

The KLT team would like to thank the following organisations for funding modules in the 2024 KLT survey:

- Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY)
- Department of Education (DE)

We would also like to say thank you for the help, advice and support given by the following:

- The Department of Education (DE) for providing school contact details
- Education Authority for emailing reminders to primary schools.

We particularly appreciate the time and effort taken by everyone involved in each school and the P7 pupils who participated in the 2024 survey.

## Technical details of the 2024 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 25430 children in total which included P7-age pupils attending 831 primary schools (this included P7-age children in special and independent schools).

In January 2024 DE provided their most recent database (2022/23) 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 2024 these P6 pupils would, by then, be in P7.

### Communication with schools

On 10 April 2024 all principals of primary and special schools in Northern Ireland who had P7 pupils were sent a letter providing information on the KLT survey and advising that it would be available for completion from 15 April to 17 May 2024 (extended to 24 May). 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 2024 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.

### 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 funders. 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 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 2024 included:

- Home and family
- School and bullying
- Children's rights
- Shared Education and Community Relations Equality and Diversity (CRED)

### **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 831 schools with P7-age pupils on the database provided by DE, and of these 169 participated in the survey, representing 20 percent of schools.

There were approximately 25430 P7-age children. This figure was compiled using the database provided by DE in January 2024 (see details above). In total, 4360 children logged on to the survey, a response rate of approximately 17 percent.

Table 1 shows the response rate, by school (DE and KLT) and by children (KLT), for each Council area.

**Table 1: Response by Council Area**

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

Table 2 shows the response rate, by school (DE and KLT) and by children (KLT), for each school management type. In 2024, more Controlled (52%) than Catholic Maintained (37%) schools took part in the survey. No schools from the Independent or Voluntary sector took part in the 2024 survey. Table 3 suggests an over-representation of urban schools (56%) participated in the 2024 KLT survey compared to the figure for DE (47%).

**Table 2: Response by type of school management**

	Schools (DE and KLT)		Children (KLT) %
	DE %	KLT %	
Controlled	42	52	56
Catholic Maintained	42	37	33
Controlled Integrated	3	4	5
Grant Maintained Integrated	3	5	5
Voluntary	1	-	-
Other Maintained	3	1	1
Special	4 <sup>1</sup>	1	<1
Independent	1	-	-

**Table 3: Response by school location**

	Schools (DE and KLT)	
	DE %	KLT %
Urban	47	56
Rural	53	44

<sup>1</sup> Please note that of the 33 Special schools with P7 pupils in 2023/24, DE figures record 31 as Controlled, 1 as Catholic Maintained and 1 as Other Maintained.

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 for children identifying as boy and girl. However, respondents to KLT were given two additional options, 'Neither' and 'I don't want to say'. Taking this into account, the percentages for KLT responses are as follows: Boys - 49%, 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	50
Girls	49	50

### **Accessing the data**

Tables of results from the 2024 survey are available on the KLT website at [www.ark.ac.uk/klt](http://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/](http://www.ark.ac.uk/klt/help/)

### **Contact information**

For all queries relating to the KLT survey please contact:

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