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Attitudes to Shared Education: Findings from the 2024 Young Life and Times and Kids' Life and Times surveys

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**Attitudes to Shared Education:
Findings from the 2024 Young Life and Times
and Kids' Life and Times surveys
Final Report**



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1. Policy context

Shared Education

The legislative framework for the implementation of Shared Education is set out in the Shared Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 which places a duty on the Department of Education (DE) '(so far as its powers extend) to encourage, facilitate and promote Shared Education'. The Shared Education Act (NI) 2016 defines Shared Education as the education together of those of:

- (a) different religious belief, including reasonable numbers of both Protestant and Roman Catholic children or young persons; and
- (b) those who are experiencing socio-economic deprivation and those who are not, which is secured by the working together and co-operation of two or more relevant providers.

There is a clear commitment to Shared Education by the Northern Ireland Executive as exemplified in its document *New Decade, New Approach*¹ (2020, pg 7) which states that '*the Executive will support educating children and young people of different backgrounds together in the classroom*'. In the fourth '*Advancing Shared Education*' report produced by DE for the Northern Ireland Assembly, the Minister of Education states that Shared Education can '*...effect real and lasting change in Northern Ireland, allowing us to embrace difference, respect one another and helping to secure a peaceful and prosperous future for us all, regardless of who we are or where we come from.*' (DE 2024, page v)².

To ensure compliance with the Shared Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, and assess the impact of Shared Education, DE uses a number of sources, including regularly scheduled surveys of children and young people (DE 2024, page 6)³. To this end, DE commissions modules of questions on Shared Education in the Young Life and Times (YLT) which is an annual survey of 16-year-olds and the Kids' Life and Times (KLT), an annual survey of Primary 7 children aged 10/11 years. This report presents the findings from two modules of questions on Shared Education commissioned by DE and included in the 2024 YLT and KLT surveys.

While the main focus of this report is on the experiences and attitudes of children and young people attending education establishments in 2024, it will draw comparisons, where possible, with previous surveys and, in particular, with the 2022 YLT and KLT surveys to highlight any changes and trends that have occurred.

¹ NI Assembly

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/856998/2020-01-08_a_new_decade__a_new_approach.pdf

² DE 2024 (page v) www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/advancing-shared-education-4th-report-ni-assembly

³ DE 2024 (page 6) www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/advancing-shared-education-4th-report-ni-assembly

The report begins with an overview of the two surveys and the characteristics of the respondents. This is followed by two sections, the first of which presents the findings from the Shared Education and lessons and discussions about different groups of people in our society module that was included in the 2024 YLT and KLT surveys. The second section presents findings comparing data from the 2015, 2017, 2018, 2020/21, 2022 and 2024 surveys. Please note that throughout the report percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

The overall aims of this report are to:

1. Assess the impact of Shared Education on children and young people's attitudes to others;
2. Compare the views of Primary 7 children (10 and 11 year olds) with their older counterparts (16 year olds);
3. Explore changes in experiences of, and attitudes to, Shared Education in 2015, 2017, 2018 2020/21, 2022 and 2024.

Summary of key findings from the 2024 KLT and YLT surveys

The key findings from the 2024 surveys were that:

- Fifty-six per cent of YLT and 62 per cent of KLT respondents said they had been involved in Shared Education.
- Doing projects with pupils from other schools was the most common activity (71% of YLT and 48% of KLT respondents).
- Whilst very positive overall, YLT respondents enjoyed doing projects (77%) and sharing facilities (77%) with other schools slightly more than having classes (72%). KLT respondents also enjoyed sharing facilities (84%) and this was followed by doing projects (76%) and having classes (73%).
- Forty-five per cent of KLT and 35 per cent of YLT respondents had made at least one close friend from a different religion as a result of taking part in Shared Education.
- Approximately two thirds of KLT (65%) and 58 per cent of YLT respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that they were better able to respect the views of other people since taking part in Shared Education.
- Just over half of YLT (53%) and 44 per cent of KLT respondents said they were very favourable or favourable about Shared Education. However, more KLT respondents said they did not know (18% KLT) compared to their older YLT counterparts (5% YLT).
- In the primary school setting, in the lessons and discussions about different groups of people in our society, the topics the children were most likely to have had in school were gender and disability; least discussed was political opinion.

- Just over three quarters (76%) of YLT respondents said they have had lessons and discussions about different groups of people in our society either in school or in their youth project/centre. Over half (58%) said they have had these lessons and discussions in school only, 10 per cent said they have had them in the youth project/centre only, and 7 per cent have had them in both settings.
- The topic YLT respondents had covered most often in the school setting was religious beliefs (74%) and this was followed by ethnic groups (72%). Similarly, in the youth setting, the topic covered most often was religious beliefs (61%) followed by ethnic groups (58%).

2. Method

Young Life and Times (YLT) survey

YLT is a survey conducted annually by ARK among 16-year-olds in Northern Ireland and, in 2024, was carried out online (with optional phone and paper completion where respondents preferred this).

Each year, the sample for the YLT survey is taken from the Child Benefit Register (CBR). ARK receives the names and addresses of eligible YLT respondents directly from HMRC. Child Benefit is paid to people bringing up children in the UK. Although the UK government uses means testing for Child Benefit, for the purpose of undertaking the YLT survey, ARK has access to the addresses of all families in NI who have registered for Child Benefit even if they are not entitled to receive it due to their income. Therefore, for the YLT survey, the CBR provides the opportunity to select a random sample of 16-year-olds whose parents have registered for Child Benefit.

As in previous years, the sample for the 2024 survey was provided to ARK directly by HMRC. The sample included the names and addresses of young people who celebrated their 16th birthday in December 2023 and January and February 2024. In February 2022 a Service Level Agreement (SLA) and Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between ARK and HMRC about the sample provision. Within this agreement ARK laid out the arrangements for the safety and security of the personal data of respondents and included arrangements for a safe transport and storage of the files as well as destruction of the address file after completion of the data collection. The sample was received in January 2024.

All administration of the mailout for the survey was undertaken by an independent mailing company. Fieldwork was conducted from 27 March to 27 April 2024. In the week beginning 25 March each potential participant received a letter providing information about the survey, including the aims of the project; details on how to opt-out; GDPR clarification and contact details for the survey team, and the web link for the survey. The letter provided participants with a unique identifier code which was required for accessing the survey. The financial incentive was also detailed, namely that those who completed the survey online would receive a £10 gift voucher. In the second week of April 2024, a reminder letter was sent to all those who had not as yet completed or opted out of the survey. Postal completion was offered as an alternative mode of taking part in the survey.

After cleaning the dataset received from HMRC, i.e. removal of respondents with incomplete or incorrect addresses, 6,254 eligible names remained. Eighty-five initial mailings were returned as 'addressee unknown/gone away'. Twenty-six young people or their parents/carers opted out of completing the survey. If reasons were given, this was usually inability to complete due to a severe learning disability, or because

the young person was too busy with school exam preparations. This left an overall base sample of 6,143 16-year-olds. A total of 2,292 16-year-olds logged onto the survey platform with their ID. After removal of the most incomplete responses (i.e. responses where only very few or no questions were completed), 2,210 responses remained. This represents an overall response rate of 36%. The high level of interest in the YLT survey in 2024 and the respective number of questions included meant that a split survey, with two versions, was required. The response rates varied a little between survey version 1 (35%) and survey version 2 (37%).

Kids' Life and Times (KLT) survey

KLT is an online survey whose target population in 2024 was all Primary 7-aged children (10/11 years) attending mainstream and special schools in Northern Ireland. Approximately 25,430 children from 831 primary and special schools across Northern Ireland were invited to participate and 4,360 children from 169 schools logged on to the survey representing 17 per cent of children and 20 per cent of schools. The 2024 KLT survey had an over-representation of Controlled schools when compared to the DE figures (52% and 42% respectively).

Consent to participate in the 2024 KLT 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. Each school is allocated a unique three-digit identification number which is used to identify the school so that the principal can be sent a confidential school report. However, the children are anonymous.

Fieldwork started on 15 April and was anticipated to end on 17 May 2024 (extended to 24 May). A dedicated telephone line was set up so that principals or parents could contact the survey team for more information and a PDF version of the questionnaire was made available on the KLT website. The online questionnaire was designed and administered by the ARK team. Throughout the design of the questionnaire, the KLT team worked closely with the funders of the survey and with C2KNI which is the organisation responsible for the provision of an ICT-managed service to all schools in Northern Ireland. When the child logged on and confirmed that s/he wanted to take part, they were asked to enter the three-digit school identification number or their seven-digit DE number. When the code was entered, the full name and address of the school appeared on the screen, and the child confirmed that this was the correct school before progressing with the survey. No further identification codes or names of children were required. The questionnaire took about 20 minutes to complete and each question had a 'Skip' option which the children could use if they did not want to answer it.

Presentation of results: statistical significance and effect size

Data from survey samples are subject to sampling error (see Appendix 1 for further details) which means that some differences between groups (such as males and females) and over time (from one survey year to the next) may have occurred by chance rather than representing real differences. To test for this, statistical analyses have been carried out and the results reported at the 5% level of probability – this means that where a difference between groups or across survey years is found to be statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) we can be 95% confident that this is a real difference and has not occurred by chance. Throughout this report, statistically significant results have been identified using an asterisk (*) in the tables. However, in surveys with very large sample sizes, even small differences in percentages can be statistically significant while not having much 'practical' or 'real-world' significance. To address this, effect sizes are also presented. An effect size is a measure of how important the difference between groups actually is: large effect sizes (0.80 and above) mean the difference is important while small effect sizes (less than 0.20) mean the difference is not important (Cohen 1988).

3. Results

Demographic characteristics of KLT and YLT respondents

One hundred and sixty-nine schools took part in the 2024 KLT survey. There were 4,360 respondents and they completed the majority of questions on the Shared Education module. Their characteristics are presented in Table 1. Of note, more Controlled (52%) than Catholic Maintained (37%) schools took part in the 2024 survey compared to the figures reported by DE (42% and 42% respectively).⁴

Table 1: Characteristics of respondents to the KLT survey

Background variable	%
Gender	
Boy	49
Girl	49
Neither	1
I don't want to say	1
Who the respondent lives with	
Mum and dad in the same house	78
Mum for all or most of the time	12
Dad for all or most of the time	1
Half of the time with mum and half with dad	7
Someone else	2
Has long-term illness or disability	
Yes	14
No	66
Don't know	20
Family Affluence Scale	
Low affluence	13
Medium affluence	54
High affluence	33
School type	
Catholic Maintained primary	33
Controlled primary	57
Controlled Integrated primary	4
Grant Maintained Integrated primary	5
Other (including Special, Independent, Voluntary schools)	1
Council Area children attend school	
Antrim and Newtownabbey	7
Ards and North Down	11
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	10
Belfast	16
Causeway Coast and Glens	10
Derry City and Strabane	7
Fermanagh and Omagh	6
Lisburn and Castlereagh	6

⁴ DE School Enrolment data: www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/school-enrolment-school-level-data-202223

Mid and East Antrim	7
Mid Ulster	9
Newry Mourne and Down	12
Location of school children attend⁵	
Urban	72
Rural	28

The characteristics of the 2,210 young people who completed the 2024 YLT survey are presented in Table 2. As this was a split sample, and approximately half the respondents completed the Shared Education module, their characteristics are presented alongside. Please note that the figures presented in this report for YLT Shared Education results are for 1,146 16-year-olds.⁶

Table 2: Characteristics of respondents to the YLT survey

Background variable	%	
	All	SE Module
Gender		
Female	55	53
Male	42	44
Other (including gender-fluid and transgender)	2	2
Always lived in Northern Ireland		
Yes	90	90
No	10	10
Type of school/college currently (or recently) attended		
Formally Integrated post primary school	8	8
Grammar school (not formally Integrated)	47	46
Secondary school (not formally Integrated)	42	43
Other (Special, FE, Irish Med, Other)	3	3
Where the respondent lives		
A big city or outskirts of a city/suburbs	21	19
A small city or town	43	43
A country village or farm or home in the country	35	36
Don't know	2	2
Has physical or mental health condition		
No	82	83
Yes, but not limiting	4	4
Yes, a little limiting	9	9
Yes, limiting	5	5
Religious background⁷		
Catholic	37	36
Protestant	23	23
No religion	37	38

⁵ The Urban/Rural indicator used in this report is taken from the Department of Education's database of schools. The definition is based on the 2015 NISRA Report 'Review of the Statistical Classification and Delineation of Settlements'. Within this definition, settlements with a population of over 5000 are deemed urban and those with less than 5000 are deemed rural. <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/review-of-the-statistical-classification-and-delineation-of-settlements-march-2015%20%281%29.pdf>

⁶ The exception is for one question asking whether the respondent had ever done CRED which was asked in both versions.

	Other religion	3	2
Minority ethnic identity (self-assessed)			
	Yes	8	8
	No	92	92
Family financial background (self-assessed)			
	Well-off	31	31
	Average well-off	51	51
	Not well-off	12	11
	Don't know	7	7
Sexual attraction			
	Same-sex-attracted	17	16
	Opposite-sex attracted	78	79
	Never sexually attracted to anyone	5	5

Experience of Shared Education

Just over half (56%) of YLT respondents who completed the Shared Education module said they had been involved in Shared Education. The figure for KLT was 62 per cent.⁸ There were some differences in relation to the type of school the respondents attended across both surveys. As Table 3 shows, P7 children attending Controlled primary schools (64%) were most likely, and those attending 'Other' schools (33%), least likely to say they had been involved in sharing with other schools. Among the YLT respondents, more pupils attending Formally Integrated schools (72%) said they had done Shared Education than their peers from Secondary (non-Integrated) and Grammar (non-Integrated) schools (60% and 50% respectively). Slightly more KLT respondents whose schools were in rural (64%) than urban (60%) areas said they had been involved in Shared Education. In contrast, more YLT respondents living in the country said they had done Shared Education (63%) compared to their peers from big cities/suburbs (44%) or small cities/towns (56%).

Table 3: Whether respondents have been involved in Shared Education, by demographic characteristics

	%	
	Yes	No
Ever taken part in Shared Education?		
KLT	62	38
YLT	56	44
School type (KLT)***		
Catholic Maintained	59	41
Controlled	64	36
Integrated	59	41
Other (Including Other Maintained, Voluntary)	33	67
School type (YLT)***		
Grammar not formally integrated	50	50
Secondary not formally integrated	60	40
Formally Integrated post primary	72	28
Location of school (KLT)		
Urban	60	40
Rural	64	36
Location of respondent's home (YLT)***		
Big city/suburbs	44	56
Small city or town	56	44
Country	63	37

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001, Effect sizes range from 0.065 to 0.14 (small)

⁸ 5 YLT and 21 KLT respondents did not answer the question.

Friendships and empathy as a result of Shared Education

Respondents were asked about the number of close friends they had made who were from a different religion to themselves as a result of taking part in Shared Education. They were also asked whether they felt better able to respect the views of other people since taking part in Shared Education. Table 5 shows that 45 per cent of KLT and 35 per cent of YLT respondents said they had made at least one close friend from a different religion as a result of taking part in Shared Education.

Table 5: Number of close friends from a different religion made as a result of Shared Education

Close friends from a different religion	YLT %	KLT %
None	45	36
One	7	14
2-4	19	21
5-9	5	5
10 or more	4	5
I don't know the religion of the friends I made	10	9
I don't know how many close friends I made	9	10
Total	100	100

Approximately two thirds of KLT (65%) and 58 per cent of YLT respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that they were better able to respect the views of other people since participating in Shared Education (Table 6).

Table 6: Better able to respect the views of others as a result of Shared Education

	YLT %	KLT %
Strongly agree	22	22
Agree	36	43
Neither agree nor disagree	29	18
Disagree	6	2
Strongly disagree	2	2
I don't know	5	13
Total	100	100

Whether respondents liked or disliked doing projects, sharing classes or sharing facilities

Children and young people who said they had done projects, had classes, and shared equipment with other schools were asked how much they had liked or disliked these activities. Overall, respondents to both surveys were very positive about taking part in all three activities (Table 7).

Table 7: How respondents felt about sharing activities with other schools

	% saying liked it a lot or a little	
	YLT	KLT
Doing projects with other schools	77	76
Having classes with other schools	72	73
Sharing equipment/facilities with other schools	77	84

What respondents liked or disliked about other aspects of Shared Education

In addition to asking the respondents who had done Shared Education about three specific activities – doing projects, sharing classes and sharing facilities – they were also presented with a list of other things that they might have done and liked or disliked (Table 8). Generally, the respondents who said they had done each activity were very positive and the aspect of sharing that was liked the most was being with children and young people who had a different ethnic background to them (92% KLT and 88% YLT). This was followed by doing classes they did not normally get to do at their own school (88% KLT and 87% YLT). While still positive, the aspect of sharing they liked least was being taught by different teachers (70% KLT and 59% YLT).

Table 8: Activities respondents liked a lot or liked a little

	% saying liked it a lot or a little	
	YLT	KLT
Being taught by different teachers	59	70
Travelling to a different school	75	77
Doing classes we don't normally get to do at our school	87	88
Learning new things with pupils from another school	79	75
Making new friends	81	85
Being with young people (YLT)/children (KLT) who are a different religion to me	84	83
Being with young people who have a different ethnic background (YLT)/children who have a different skin colour or who speak a different language than me (KLT)	88	92
Being with young people who are a different social class to me (YLT)/children who are richer or poorer than me (KLT)	85	84

Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU)

Respondents to the KLT survey were asked whether they had ever had lessons on PDMU as part of Shared Education. As Table 9 shows, 39 per cent said they have had lessons on PDMU as part of Shared Education, 12 per cent had not and 49 per cent said they could not remember.

Table 9: Lessons on PDMU as part of Shared Education

	KLT %
Yes	39
No	12
I can't remember	49
Total	100

Learning for Life and Work/Citizenship

Respondents to the YLT survey were asked whether they had ever had lessons on Learning for Life and Work/Citizenship as part of Shared Education; 26 per cent said they had and 39 per cent said they had not. Just over one-third (35%) said they could not remember (Table 10).

Table 10: Lessons on Learning for Life and Work/Citizenship as part of Shared Education

	YLT %
Yes	26
No	39
I can't remember	35
Total	100

How respondents feel overall about Shared Education

The children and young people who had done Shared Education were asked how they felt about sharing classes, doing projects, or sharing equipment with other schools and, as Table 11 shows, 44 per cent of KLT and 53 per cent of YLT respondents said they were very favourable or favourable. Only a minority in both surveys were very unfavourable and more of the younger children said they did not know (18% KLT) compared to their older counterparts (5% YLT).

Table 11: How respondents felt overall about Shared Education

	YLT %	KLT %
Very favourable	13	11
Favourable	40	33
Neither favourable nor unfavourable	32	29
Unfavourable	6	5
Very unfavourable	3	4
I don't know	5	18
Total	100	100

Among YLT respondents, the main reasons given by those in favour of Shared Education were around meeting new people and giving young people from diverse backgrounds the opportunity to meet up and learn more about each other's cultures and traditions. This is demonstrated in the word cloud in Figure 4 and in some of the quotations provided below:

'I find that shared education is very valuable as it teaches us to respect and accept the religions of others and I enjoyed learning more about other religions and traditions. I found that shared education in primary school was more beneficial as I made friends who I am still friends with now and we had fun doing activities together. I think it is a good way of joining communities together.'

'You got an insight into diverse cultures, ethnic groups and personalities. With this I think it gave me a greater understanding that everyone deserves respect and it showed that at the end of the day everyone is equal.'

'I am in favour of shared education as I believe it promotes integration and inclusion in the community.'

'Young people's views on others can be widened and they can start to understand the point of views of other religions or ethnic groups. It makes young people realise there's more to the world than they thought.'

'It's important to introduce children of different religious, ethnic and social backgrounds to each other at a young age to prevent stigma and harmful beliefs developing.'

'I believe that it's a great idea and a great way to get kids to mix with others from different backgrounds and hopefully with more shared education and things like that religion won't be as big of an issue in N. Ireland in the future.'

Figure 4: YLT survey open-ended responses to why in favour of sharing with other schools



Some of the comments from the YLT respondents who were not in favour of Shared Education included the following:

'Didn't like a change in routine and being forced to go into a new environment with new unfamiliar faces.'

'It doesn't work and forces people who don't want to be there to get along with strangers who also don't care. Forcing people to speak and converse isn't the best way to do it.'

'The different schools that were brought together didn't mix and stay with their own people from their school.'

'Not like being forced in with strangers being made to befriend them and be nice to them especially when they're of different religion and race.'

'I don't see how compiling students from different schools who don't know each other and be taught by a teacher half of them never met can benefit anyone.'

Views of respondents who had not experienced Shared Education

Respondents who said they had not taken part in Shared Education were asked if they would like to be involved. As Table 12 shows, 29 per cent of KLT and 37 per cent of YLT respondents said they would like to be involved in Shared Education although around two in five respondents in each survey said they did not know (47% KLT and 39% YLT).

Table 12: Whether respondents would like to be involved in Shared Education

	YLT %	KLT %
Yes	37	29
No	24	24
I don't know	39	47
Total	100	100

Whether respondents would mind or not mind doing a project with children from schools with particular characteristics

All respondents were asked whether they would mind or not mind doing a project with a range of schools with different characteristics – *'Suppose a group of children from another school were coming to do a project with your class. Would you mind if they were from these kinds of schools?'* YLT respondents were, overall, more positive than KLT respondents about doing projects with pupils from other schools regardless of the characteristics of the school presented in the survey questions (Figures 5 and 6). For both groups of respondents, it was the age of the pupils that appeared to matter most: the 16-year-olds were least likely to want to do projects with primary school children (55% would not mind at all) while the reverse was true for the P7s; they were least likely to want to do projects with pupils from a secondary school (46% would not mind at all).

Figure 5: How much KLT respondents would mind or not mind doing a project with children from schools with particular characteristics

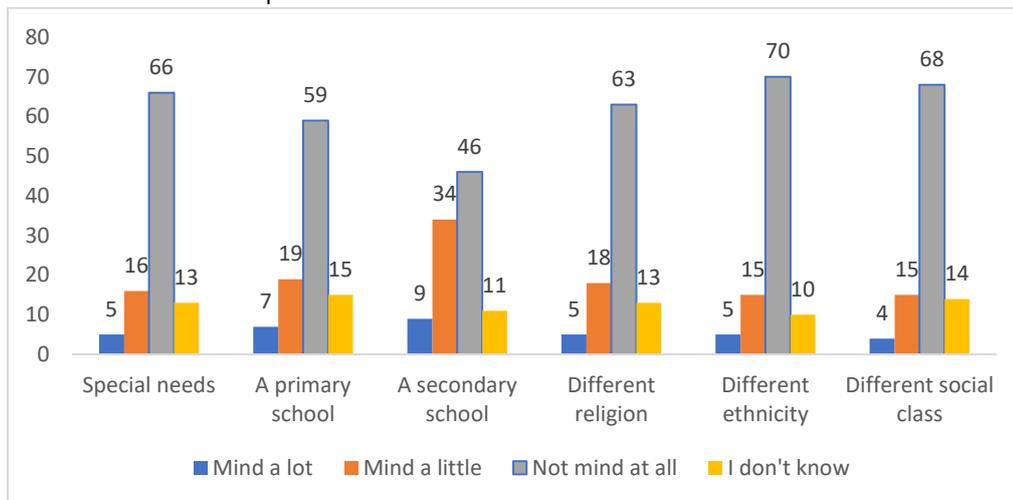
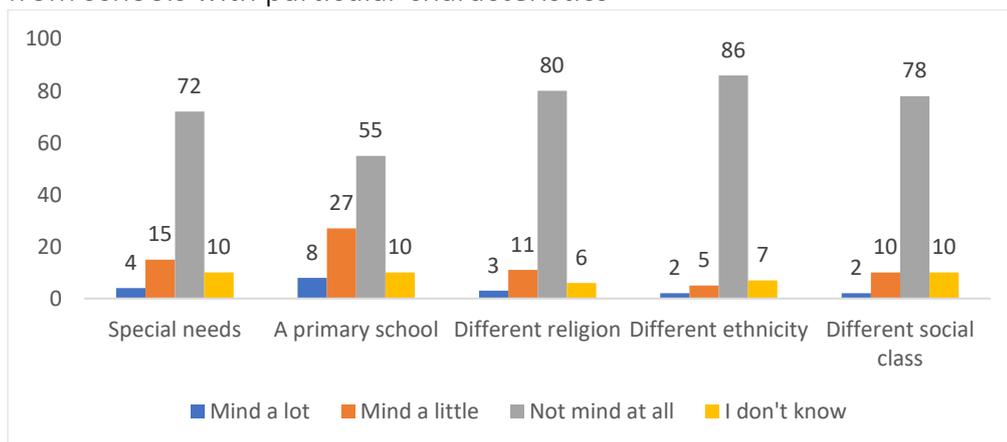


Figure 6: How much YLT respondents would mind or not mind doing a project with children from schools with particular characteristics



Whether KLT respondents would mind or not mind doing a project with children from schools with particular characteristics, by whether or not they have taken part in Shared Education

Table 13 shows that KLT respondents who have done Shared Education were slightly less positive overall than those who had not done Shared Education about sharing with children from all the schools with different characteristics presented in the survey. They were more likely to say they 'would mind a lot', and less likely to 'not mind at all'. The differences were statistically significant for schools with the following characteristics - primary school, secondary school, ethnicity and social class; however, all the effect sizes were small.

Table 13: How much KLT respondents would mind or not mind doing a project with children from schools with particular characteristics, by whether or not they have taken part in Shared Education

Mind or not mind sharing with children.....	% saying							
	Would mind a lot		Would mind a little		Would not mind at all		Don't know	
	Has done Shared Education	Has not done Shared Education	Has done Shared Education	Has not done Shared Education	Has done Shared Education	Has not done Shared Education	Has done Shared Education	Has not done Shared Education
With special needs	5	5	16	17	66	66	13	12
From primary school***	8	5	19	19	57	62	16	14
From a secondary school**	10	8	33	35	44	47	12	10
From a different religion	6	5	18	18	63	63	13	14
From a different ethnicity*	5	4	15	15	68	72	11	9
From different social class***	4	4	16	14	65	71	15	12

*p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001 Effect sizes range from 0.046 to 0.072 (small)

Attitudes towards a shared campus school

A shared campus school was defined in the 2024 KLT and YLT surveys in the following way:

'A SHARED EDUCATION CAMPUS is where two (or more) schools share one building or where there are facilities in each school building which both schools use. One school would usually have mostly pupils from a Catholic background and the other school would usually have pupils mostly from a Protestant background and they would share classes and facilities with each other.'

In light of this definition, respondents to YLT and KLT were asked whether they would like their school to be part of a shared education campus and more YLT (37%) than KLT (27%) respondents said they would (Table 14). However, a high percentage of respondents to both surveys said they did not know whether they would like their school to be part of a shared campus or not (45% KLT and 37% YLT). Table 15 shows that YLT respondents who had been involved in Shared Education were slightly more likely to say they would like their school to be part of a shared campus than those who had not. Among KLT respondents the difference was larger and statistically significant with 31 per cent of those who had done Shared Education saying they

would like their school to be part of a shared campus compared to 20 per cent of their peers who had not although the effect size was small (0.12).

Table 14: Whether respondents would like school to be part of a shared campus school

	YLT %	KLT %
Yes	37	27
No	26	28
I don't know	37	45
Total	100	100

Table 15: Whether respondents would like school to be part of a shared campus school, by whether or not been involved in Shared Education

	YLT %		KLT %	
	Has done shared Education	Has not done Shared Education	Has done shared Education***	Has not done Shared Education
Like school to be part of shared campus?				
Yes	38	36	31	20
No	25	27	27	30
I don't know	37	38	42	50
Total	100	100	100	100

***p<0.001 Effect size 0.12 (small)

The children and young people were asked if their school was part of a single building shared campus whether they thought there should be one entrance; one uniform; a shared bus; a shared sports hall, and shared dining facilities. The option selected most often by KLT respondents was shared sports facilities (54%) followed by shared dining facilities (42%). Least popular among the P7 respondents was a shared bus with 28 per cent of children ticking that option (Figure 7). Similarly, as Figure 8 shows, YLT respondents were most likely to say there should be shared sports facilities (71%), closely followed by shared dining facilities (70%) and least likely to say one school uniform (55%).

Figure 7: KLT survey attitudes to shared campus

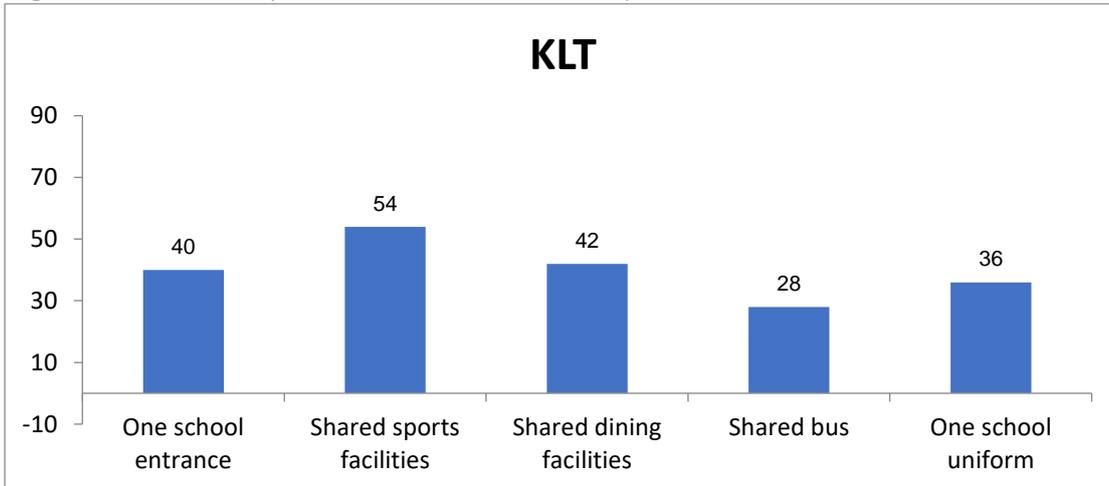
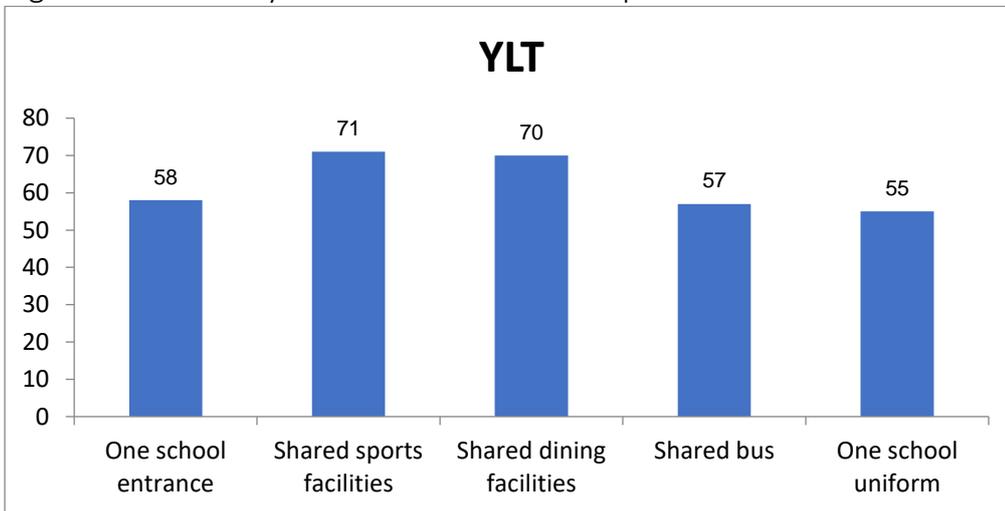


Figure 8: YLT survey attitudes to shared campus



Whether respondents would like or not like a shared campus school – open-ended

The respondents were given an open-ended question that asked what they would like or dislike about a shared campus school. Their responses are presented in Figures 9 and 10. As these word clouds show, for both KLT and YLT, many children and young people mentioned that they would like the opportunity to meet new people and make new friends. However, some were concerned about the potential size of the school, the possibility of bullying, and that it might highlight differences across groups.

discussions about the different groups in school. Reflecting their age, they were not asked about sexual orientation, marital status or people with dependants and the definition they were given is as follows:

*'In **your school** you might have lessons and discussions about the different groups of people living in our society and about treating people fairly and with respect. As a result of being involved in any of these activities in **your school** do you think your attitude towards any of the following groups has changed or has stayed the same?'*

Respondents who feel they have not had lessons and discussions in school about different groups of people in our society (KLT)

Table 16 shows the percentages of KLT respondents that feel they have not had lessons and discussions in school about different groups of people in our society. The two Section 75 groups that KLT respondents were least likely to say they had discussed in school were political opinion (27% had not done this) and religious beliefs (21% had not done this).

Table 16: Percentage of KLT respondents who feel they have not had lessons and discussions about different groups of people in our society

	Have not had lessons and discussions on this topic (%)
People with different religious beliefs	21
People from different ethnic groups	17
People of different ages (older and younger people/children)	16
Girls and boys	13
People with a disability and those without a disability	13
People with different political opinions	27

As Table 17 shows, across all Section 75 groups asked in KLT, more respondents who had not done Shared Education said they had not had lessons and discussions in school about different groups of people in our society than their peers who had done Shared Education although the differences were relatively small. The largest difference in percentages was for 'people with different religious beliefs' (19% and 24% respectively) and 'people with different political opinions' (25% and 30% respectively). In terms of school management types⁹, respondents who attended Integrated schools were least likely to say they had not had lessons and

⁹ The number of children from 'Other' schools is too small for inclusion in crosstabulation analysis (27).

discussions on all six groups than their counterparts in Controlled and Catholic Maintained schools (Table 18).

Table 17: Percentage of KLT respondents who feel they have not had lessons and discussions about different groups of people in our society, by whether or not they have taken part in Shared Education

	Have not had lessons and discussions on this topic (%)
People with different religious beliefs	
Has done Shared Education	19
Has not done Shared Education	24
People from different ethnic groups	
Has done Shared Education	16
Has not done Shared Education	19
People of different ages (older and younger people/children)	
Has done Shared Education	14
Has not done Shared Education	18
Girls and boys	
Has done Shared Education	12
Has not done Shared Education	15
People with a disability and those without a disability	
Has done Shared Education	12
Has not done Shared Education	15
People with different political opinions	
Has done Shared Education	25
Has not done Shared Education	30

Table 18: Percentage of KLT respondents who feel they have not had lessons and discussions about different groups of people in our society, by school type

	KLT
	Have not had lessons and discussions on this topic (%)
People with different religious beliefs	
School Type	
Catholic Maintained	21
Controlled	23
Integrated	14
People from different ethnic groups	
School Type	
Catholic Maintained	17
Controlled	17
Integrated	10
People of different ages (older and younger people/children)	
School Type	
Catholic Maintained	15
Controlled	16
Integrated	12
Girls and boys	
School Type	
Catholic Maintained	14
Controlled	13
Integrated	10
People with a disability and those without a disability	
School Type	
Catholic Maintained	13
Controlled	13
Integrated	11
People with different political opinions	
School Type	
Catholic Maintained	28
Controlled	27
Integrated	20

Respondents who feel they have had lessons and discussions in school about different groups of people in our society (KLT)

For KLT respondents who indicated that they have had lessons and discussions in school about different groups of people in our society, Table 19 shows whether or not they have changed their attitude as a result. Very few children said the lessons and discussions had made them feel more negative towards particular groups. While all groups of people in society benefitted from more positive attitudes from the children, a higher proportion expressed more positive attitudes towards people with and without a disability (52%). Where children indicated that their attitude had not changed, it is not clear whether their attitudes were already positive or negative towards any of these groups before having lessons and discussions in school about different groups of people in our society.

Table 19: Whether or not KLT respondents' attitudes have changed as a result of lessons and discussions about different groups of people in our society

	More positive (%)	Attitude has not changed (%)	More negative (%)
People with different religious beliefs	45	51	4
People from different ethnic groups	45	52	3
People of different ages (older and younger people/children)	44	52	4
Girls and boys	33	64	3
People with a disability and those without a disability	52	45	3
People with different political opinions	28	64	9

Table 20 shows that a slightly higher percentage of children who had done Shared Education said they had become more positive than their peers who had not done Shared Education in relation to five of the six Section 75 groups asked in the survey as a result of having lessons and discussions in school. The differences were statistically significant for one group – religious beliefs – although the effect size was small. Once again, however, where children indicated that their attitude had not changed it is not clear whether they were already positive or negative towards any of these groups before having had lessons and discussions in school.

Table 20: Whether or not KLT respondents' attitudes have changed as a result of lessons and discussions about different groups of people in our society, by whether or not they have taken part in Shared Education

	More positive (%)	Attitude has not changed (%)	More negative (%)
People with different religious beliefs***			
Has done Shared Education	48	48	4
Has not done Shared Education	41	55	4
People from different ethnic groups			
Has done Shared Education	46	51	2
Has not done Shared Education	44	53	3
People of different ages (older and younger people/children)			
Has done Shared Education	44	52	4
Has not done Shared Education	44	52	4
Girls and boys			
Has done Shared Education	34	63	4
Has not done Shared Education	31	66	3
People with a disability and those without a disability			
Has done Shared Education	52	45	3
Has not done Shared Education	51	46	3
People with different political opinions			
Has done Shared Education	29	63	8
Has not done Shared Education	25	66	8

**p<0.01 (Effect size 0.064 (small))

There were statistically significant differences between the type of primary school children attended and their attitudes towards all of the section 75 groups asked in the survey as a result of having lessons and discussions in school. As Table 21 shows, children who attended Catholic Maintained schools were slightly more likely to say their attitudes had become more positive towards all six of the Section 75 groups included in the survey than their counterparts from other school types.

Table 21: Whether or not KLT respondents' attitudes have changed as a result of lessons and discussions about different groups of people in our society, by school type

	More positive (%)	Attitude has not changed (%)	More negative (%)
People with different religious beliefs**			
School Type			
Catholic Maintained	50	47	4
Controlled	43	52	4
Integrated	42	56	2
People from different ethnic groups**			
School Type			
Catholic Maintained	50	47	3
Controlled	43	54	3
Integrated	45	54	2
People of different ages (older and younger people/children)**			
School Type			
Catholic Maintained	48	48	5
Controlled	43	54	3
Integrated	39	57	4
Girls and boys**			
School Type			
Catholic Maintained	37	60	3
Controlled	30	66	3
Integrated	33	63	4
People with a disability and those without a disability***			
School Type			
Catholic Maintained	58	39	3
Controlled	49	48	3
Integrated	48	48	4
People with different political opinions**			
School Type			
Catholic Maintained	32	59	9
Controlled	25	66	8
Integrated	26	67	7

* p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001 Effect sizes range from 0.044 to 0.062 (small)

Lessons and discussions about different groups of people in our society (YLT)

Respondents completing both versions of the YLT survey (N=2210)¹⁰ were asked about lessons and discussions about different groups of people in our society they may have had in school or in their youth project or youth centre. The definition they were given is as follows:

'School and youth work are required to help young people to have a better understanding of diversity in our society and to promote the equal treatment of different groups. There are many different ways that this can be done, including discussions, subjects taught in school (for example, Learning for Life & Work or Religious Education), taking part in sports with people from other communities, either through school or a youth group, learning about other communities in a youth group and through shared classes with other schools.'

Just over half (58%) of the young people taking part in YLT said they have had lessons and discussions about different groups of people in our society in school only, 10 per cent said they have had them in their youth project or youth centre only, and seven per cent have had them in both settings. Twenty-four per cent of YLT respondents said they had not done any lessons or had discussions about different groups of people in our society either in school or in their youth setting (Table 22).

Of the 1,409 young people who said they have had lessons and discussions about different groups of people in our society in school (either school only or both school and youth project), just over one half (51%) said they have had them as part of Shared Education, 44 per cent have had them but not as part of Shared Education and 5 per cent had covered them in both.

Table 22: Whether YLT respondents have had lessons and discussions about different groups of people in our society or not

YLT		
	%	(n)
School only	58	(1260)
Youth project only	10	(227)
Both school and youth project	7	(149)
Neither	24	(530)

¹⁰ 44 respondents did not answer the question.

The young people who took part in the Shared Education module were asked a series of follow-up questions and, therefore, the responses in the following sections relate to a total of 1,146 respondents. Of these, 752 said they have had lessons and discussions about different groups of people in our society (either in school only, or in school and in their youth setting). The topics they had covered most often in the school setting were 'people with different religious beliefs' (74%) followed by 'people from different ethnic groups' (72%). Least likely to be discussed in the school setting was 'people with dependants and those without dependants' (34%). Of the 220 respondents who said they have had lessons and discussions about different groups of people in our society either in a youth setting only or in school and as part of their youth setting, the topics covered most were 'people with different religious beliefs' (61%) and 'people from different ethnic groups' (58%). In youth settings, the topic least likely to have been discussed was in relation to 'people with dependants and those without dependants' (33%) (Table 23).

Table 23: Whether YLT respondents have had lessons and discussions about different groups of people in our society in their school/youth group for specific Section 75 groups

	% saying SCHOOL has done	% saying YOUTH CENTRE has done
People with different political opinions	55	46
People with different religious beliefs	74	61
People from different ethnic groups	72	58
People of different ages (older and younger people)	50	52
People who are single, cohabiting, married or divorced	44	35
People with different sexual orientations	56	44
Men and women	63	53
People with a disability and those without a disability	62	54
People with dependants (e.g. children) and those without dependants	34	33
People with, and those without, caring responsibilities	37	41

As Table 24 shows, across all Section 75 groups, there was little difference between YLT respondents who had done Shared Education and those who had not in relation to whether they said they had not had lessons and discussions in school about different groups of people in our society.

Table 24: Percentage of YLT respondents' who feel they have not had lessons and discussions about different groups of people in our society in school, by whether or not they have taken part in Shared Education

	Have not had lessons and discussions on this topic IN SCHOOL (%)
People with different political opinions	
All	45
Has done Shared Education	45
Has not done Shared Education	45
People with different religious beliefs	
All	26
Has done Shared Education	25
Has not done Shared Education	28
People from different ethnic groups	
All	28
Has done Shared Education	29
Has not done Shared Education	26
People of different ages (older and younger people)	
All	50
Has done Shared Education	53
Has not done Shared Education	47
People who are single, cohabiting, married or divorced	
All	56
Has done Shared Education	59
Has not done Shared Education	52
People with different sexual orientations	
All	44
Has done Shared Education	46
Has not done Shared Education	40
Men and women	
All	37
Has done Shared Education	39
Has not done Shared Education	34
People with a disability and those without a disability	
All	38

Has done Shared Education	39
Has not done Shared Education	35
People with dependants (e.g. children) and those without	
All	66
Has done Shared Education	67
Has not done Shared Education	65
People with caring responsibilities and those without caring responsibilities	
All	63
Has done Shared Education	65
Has not done Shared Education	60

YLT respondents who said they have had lessons and discussions about different groups of people in society were asked whether they felt more positive towards any of the Section 75 groups as a result of what was taught or discussed in their school or youth setting. As Table 25 shows, the majority said they felt just as favourable now as they did before towards all the groups. The figures ranged from 78 per cent for people who are single, cohabiting, married or divorced to 67 per cent for people with different religious beliefs. The young people were most likely to say they had become more favourable in respect of people with a disability and those without a disability (24%), followed by people with different religious beliefs (23%). Overall, very few respondents said they had become more unfavourable towards any of the groups. People with different sexual orientations was the Section 75 group that respondents were most likely to say they still held unfavourable views about after their lessons and discussions (13%).

Table 25: Whether or not YLT respondents' attitudes have changed as a result of lessons and discussions about different groups of people in our society

	Favourable		Unfavourable	
	More favourable (%)	No change – as favourable as I was (%)	No change – as unfavourable as I was (%)	More unfavourable (%)
People with different political opinions	20	68	10	2
People with different religious beliefs	23	67	8	1
People from different ethnic groups	20	72	7	1
People of different ages (older and younger people)	19	73	7	1
People who are single, cohabiting, married or divorced	15	78	6	1
People with different sexual orientations	17	68	13	3
Men and women	18	75	7	1
People with a disability and those without a disability	24	68	7	1
People with dependants (e.g. children) and those without	16	77	6	2
People with, and those without, caring responsibilities	20	73	7	1

As Table 26 shows, a higher percentage of YLT respondents who had done Shared Education said they had become more favourable towards all of the Section 75 groups as a result of having lessons and discussions about different groups of people in our society than their peers who had not done Shared Education. However, more of those who had not done Shared Education said they had not changed in their opinion: they were still as favourable as they were before having lessons and discussions. Overall, very few young people responding to YLT said they were more unfavourable towards all the Section 75 groups following

lessons and discussions about different groups of people in our society regardless of whether they had done Shared Education or not.

Table 26: Whether or not YLT respondents' attitudes have changed as a result of lessons and discussions about different groups of people in our society, by whether or not they have taken part in Shared Education

	Favourable %				Unfavourable %			
	More favourable		No change – as favourable as I was		No change – as unfavourable as I was		More unfavourable	
Attitudes towards people.....	Has done Shared Education	Has not done Shared Education	Has done Shared Education	Has not done Shared Education	Has done Shared Education	Has not done Shared Education	Has done Shared Education	Has not done Shared Education
With different political opinions	23	15	65	74	10	11	2	1
With different religious beliefs	27	17	64	73	8	8	1	2
From different ethnic groups	24	13	67	80	8	6	1	1
Of different ages (older and younger people/children)	22	14	70	78	7	7	1	1
Who are single, cohabiting, married or divorced	18	11	75	82	7	5	1	1
With different sexual orientations	20	12	64	73	14	12	3	3
Men and women	21	12	72	79	6	8	1	1
With a disability and those without a disability	28	18	63	76	8	5	1	2
People with dependants (e.g.								

children) and those without	18	12	74	81	6	6	2	2
People with, and those without, caring responsibilities	22	16	70	78	7	6	1	1

Shared Education experience 2015, 2017, 2018, 2020/21, 2022 and 2024

This section presents findings from the questions on Shared Education that were asked in 2015, 2017, 2018, 2020/21, 2022 and 2024 in both YLT and KLT (Tables 27 and 28). The question was worded in the same way in 2015, 2018, 2020/21, 2022 and 2024¹¹.

As Table 27 shows, the percentage of respondents involved in Shared Education was higher in 2024 than in 2022 for KLT respondents (62% and 60% respectively); however, the difference was not statistically significant. Among KLT respondents, there has been a decrease in the percentages who said they had done projects with pupils from other schools or had done something else. However, there was an increase in the percentages of KLT respondents who said they had shared classes and shared facilities with pupils from other schools between 2022 and 2024 (Table 27). While the differences were statistically significant, the effects sizes were small.

¹¹ In 2015, 2018, 2020/21, 2022 and 2024 there was a filter question asking whether the respondents had ever done shared activities while in 2017 the questions on sharing were asked as a 'tick all that apply', with one option being 'I have not done anything like this'.

Table 27: Whether KLT respondents have been involved in Shared Education, and have done particular activities in 2015, 2017, 2018, 2020/21, 2022 and 2024

	%					
	KLT					
	2015	2017	2018	2020/21	2022	2024
Has been involved in SE	58	69	63	67	60	62
Has done projects with pupils from other schools	56	50	51	74	53	48***
Has had classes with pupils from other schools	34	41	34	64	29	41***
Has used or shared sports facilities or equipment, like computers	44	33	34	56	33	40***
Has done something else	28	24	24	14	16	12***

Differences between 2022 and 2024 *** $p < 0.001$

Effect sizes 0.10 (Projects - small); 0.25 (Classes - small); 0.15 (Facilities - small); 0.12 (Something else - small)

As shown in Table 28, there has also been an increase in the percentage of YLT respondents who said they have done Shared Education between 2022 and 2024 (51% and 56% respectively). The difference for YLT respondents was statistically significant. However, the effect size was small (0.10). Among YLT respondents, there was an increase in the percentages of young people who said they had done projects, shared classes and shared facilities with pupils from other schools. The differences were statistically significant for sharing classes and sharing facilities (Table 28). Most notable is the increase in YLT respondents who said they had shared facilities with other schools – from 37 per cent in 2022 to 59 per cent in 2024. This difference was statistically significant and the effect size was moderate (0.45).

Table 28: Whether YLT respondents have been involved in Shared Education, and have done particular activities in 2015, 2017, 2018, 2020/21, 2022 and 2024

	%					
	YLT					
	2015	2017	2018	2020/21	2022	2024
Has been involved in SE	51	72	40	53	51	56*
Has done projects with pupils from other schools	69	70	67	81	66	71
Has had classes with pupils from other schools	55	60	50	48	40	53***

Has used or shared sports facilities or equipment, like computers	38	48	40	52	37	59***
Has done something else	6	4	12	4	8	10

Differences between 2022 and 2024 *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001
 Effect sizes 0.10 (SE - small); 0.26 (Classes - small); 0.45 (Facilities - moderate)

Involvement in lessons and discussions about different groups of people in our society 2012 to 2024 (YLT)

As Table 29 shows, the percentage of YLT respondents saying they had taken part in lessons and discussions about different groups of people in our society in their school or youth setting has increased from 72 per cent in 2022 to 76 per cent in 2024¹². The difference is statistically significant although the effect size is small.

Table 29: Whether YLT respondents have been involved in lessons and discussions about different groups of people in our society 2012 to 2024¹³

	2012	2014	2016	2017	2018	2020/21	2022	2024**
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
School only	40	46	51	48	50	53	52	58
Youth project only	10	10	5	6	7	10	12	10
Both school and youth project	20	16	23	19	12	8	7	7
Neither	30	27	20	27	30	29	28	24

Difference between 2022 and 2024 **p<0.01 (Effect size 0.09 - small)

¹² Figures rounded to 72% and 76% respectively

¹³ In 2018, 2020/21, 2022 and 2024, YLT respondents were asked two questions about having lessons and discussions about different groups in our society in school – part of/not part of Shared Education and these responses have been added together in the table.

4. Conclusions

Over the last two years (April 2022 to March 2024), Shared Education has continued its recovery from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. In acknowledgement of the benefits of, and the value placed on Shared Education, schools and other educational settings have maintained and built on their relationships, engaging pupils when funding and Covid-19 restrictions allowed. The Department of Education's Mainstreaming Shared Education (MSE) Strategy was launched in September 2022 with the aim of embedding Shared Education across our education system, so that it becomes a core feature of education provision.

The introduction of the MSE Strategy, and subsequent implementation of its first phase delivery plan and associated funding stream, alongside the PEACE IV Shared Education programme, have driven participation over the two-year period. Whilst there has been a small reduction in the number of settings involved, there has been a four-fold increase in the number of pupils with nearly 70,000¹⁴ children and young people, one fifth of pupils in the Northern Ireland education system, able to learn with and about their peers from different religious and socio-economic backgrounds.

The partnerships supported by the MSE funding models have been able to re-start pupil engagement following its suspension due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In the 2022/23 academic year, the Department was able to provide the funding to meet the inescapable additional costs of sharing, with over 41,000 pupils engaged. Due to a reduction in budget for the 2023/24 academic year (less than 50% of that available for the same period in the previous year), there has been a decrease in the number of pupils sharing with partnerships also reporting a negative impact on the level and quality of the shared activities.

Yet overall, the evidence from the 2024 YLT and KLT surveys suggests that, as in previous years, the majority of children and young people who had taken part in Shared Education were positive about their experiences. They particularly like the fact that sharing enables them to make new friends, mix with those from different backgrounds to themselves; enhance learning opportunities, and have access to a wider range of activities and subjects than they would otherwise have. Among respondents to both surveys, the aspect of sharing that was liked the most was being with children and young people who had a different ethnic background to them. A majority of children in both surveys also strongly agreed or agreed that they were better able to respect the views of other people since taking part in Shared Education. Taken together, these findings suggest that taking part in Shared Education has been beneficial for these children and young people, both

¹⁴ At June 2023. Data collected from Mainstreaming Shared Education funding stream and Peace IV Shared Education projects.

academically and socially, increasing their opportunities to mix with, and learn to respect the views of, people who have different backgrounds to them, one of the key purposes of Shared Education.

5. References

Cohen, J. (1988) *Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences*. New York, NY: Routledge Academic.

6. Appendices

Appendix 1: Response rates and representativeness of KLT and YLT

KLT survey

There were 831 schools with P7-age pupils on the database provided by DE, and of these 169 participated in the survey, representing 20 per cent of schools. The highest response rate was from Controlled schools (26%) and the lowest from Special schools (6%) (Table A1).

Table A1: Response rates, by school management type

	Number of eligible schools (Population)	Number of schools (KLT sample)	Response rate %
Controlled	351	88	25
Catholic Maintained	351	63	18
Controlled Integrated	24	7	29
Grant Maintained Integrated	23	8	35
Voluntary	11	-	-
Other Maintained	26	2	8
Special ¹⁵	33	1	3
Independent	12	-	-

A comparison of the sample of schools taking part in KLT with the school types having P7s in Northern Ireland is presented in Table A2. As can be seen, the 2024 KLT survey had an over-representation of Controlled primary schools when compared to the DE figures (52% and 42% respectively). The figures suggest that there may be slightly more bias in the KLT school sample in 2024.

Table A2: Comparison of the schools taking part in KLT with all schools with P7s in Northern Ireland

	Schools (DE and KLT)	
	DE %	KLT %
Controlled	42	52
Catholic Maintained	42	37
Controlled Integrated	3	4
Grant Maintained Integrated	3	5
Voluntary	1	-
Other Maintained	3	1
Special	4	1
Independent	1	-

¹⁵ Please note that of the 33 Special schools with P7 pupils, DE figures record 31 as Controlled, 1 as Catholic Maintained and 1 as Other Maintained.

There were approximately 25,430 P7-age children. This figure was compiled using the database provided by DE in January 2024. In total, 4,360 children logged on to the survey, a response rate of approximately 17 per cent.

Table A3 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 A3: Response, by gender (KLT)

	P7 children (DE and KLT)	
	DE %	KLT %
Boys	51	50
Girls	49	50

YLT survey

After cleaning the dataset received from HMRC, i.e. removal of respondents with incomplete or incorrect addresses, 6,254 eligible names remained. Eighty-five initial mailings were returned as 'addressee unknown/gone away'. Twenty-six young people or their parents/carers opted out of completing the survey. If reasons were given, this was usually inability to complete due to a severe learning disability, or because the young person was too busy with school exam preparations. This left a sample of 6,143 16-year-olds (Table A4). A total of 2,292 16-year-olds logged onto the survey platform with their ID. After removal of the most incomplete responses (i.e. responses where only very few or no questions were completed), 2,210 responses remained. This represents an overall response rate of 36%.

Table A4: Response rate (YLT)

	All	
Delivered sample	6261	
	Number	
Ineligible address removed	7	
Addressee unknown/Return to sender	85	
Opted out/Unable to complete	26	
	N	%
Base	6143	100
Logged on	2,292	37.3
Removed (incompletes)	75	3.3
Total/Response rate	2,210	36.0

School type

It is not possible to accurately compare the figures for YLT with school population figures given that some respondents are in College or have left the education system. However, of the 2,073 YLT respondents who were attending (or last attended) school (and provided information), 47% attended grammar schools and 50% attended secondary schools (including integrated and Irish medium¹⁶). There was a slight over-representation of YLT respondents attending Grammar schools compared to the figures for Year 12s reported by DE for 2023/24 (39% and 48% respectively).¹⁷

Gender

As Table A5 shows, the YLT sample has more female (55%) than male (42%) respondents than would be expected given the gender breakdown of people aged 16 years old (49% and 51% respectively) in the general population in Northern Ireland¹⁸

Table A5: Response, by gender (YLT)

	Mid-year estimates for 16-year olds in NI %	YLT %
Males	51	42
Females	49	55
Other	-	2

Weighting

Non-response bias in surveys is sometimes addressed by weighting the data. This can be done for variables for which the actual proportion of people in the target population is known. For KLT and YLT, gender and school type attended are such examples. Therefore, for the KLT survey (as shown in Tables A2 and A3) as the sample is fairly representative of gender and school management type, weighting is not done.

The 2024 YLT survey is slightly over representative of 16 year olds in terms of school type (with more attending grammars schools) and, as in previous years, there is an over-representation of females. However, due to the complexity of weighting, and the effects that creating weights to address non-response in some variables can have on other variables, the academic approach is to use caution when creating weights for non-response. For example, it is known that people with certain sensory disabilities or with complex needs are more likely to opt out of the survey; however, people with physical disabilities may be over-represented

¹⁶ Excluding Special, FE and Other.

¹⁷ Year 12 data extracted from the School level Post-primary enrolment data www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/school-enrolment-school-level-data-202324 Accessed 03 August 2024

¹⁸ NISRA: www.nisra.gov.uk/system/files/statistics/Statistical%20Bulletin%20-%202022%20Mid-year%20Population%20Estimates%20for%20Northern%20Ireland.pdf. Accessed 03 August 2024

– we cannot be sure. Even if several weight factors are applied to correct for some variables, non-response bias may still not be fully addressed. Therefore, the YLT data are not weighted. The issues associated with weighting for non-response are explained in Point 5.4 of this document produced by the National Centre for Research Methods: <http://www.restore.ac.uk/PEAS/nonresponse.php>.

Sampling Errors and Confidence Limits

When a sample is selected at random from a population, it is not possible to be 100 per cent certain that the findings derived from the sample reflect real differences in that population as a whole – there will always be error. An estimate of the amount of error which is due to sampling can be calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Where the standard error for a percentage, } p, = \pm \sqrt{\frac{p \times (100 - p)}{n}}$$

and where n is the size of the sample.

Using this formula, it is possible to create the sampling errors associated with percentages in YLT and KLT. To calculate a confidence interval for the population percentage the following formula is used:

$$95\% \text{ confidence interval} = p \pm (1.96 * se(p))$$

This means that if 100 samples were drawn from the populations of 16 year olds, and of P7 pupils, then 95 of them would produce an estimate for the percentage, p, within this confidence interval. Table A6 presents some examples of the confidence intervals associated with KLT and Table A7 presents some examples from YLT.

Table A6: Sampling Errors (KLT)

	% (p)	Standard error of (p) (%)	95% Confidence interval ±
Ever been involved in any Shared Education (n=4339)			
Yes	61.5	0.74	1.45
No	38.5	0.74	1.45
Would you like your school to be part of a shared education campus? (n=4340)			
Yes	26.9	0.67	1.32
No	28.4	0.68	1.34
I don't know	44.7	0.75	1.48

Table A7: Sampling Errors (YLT)

	% (p)	Standard error of (p) (%)	95% Confidence interval ±
Ever been involved in Shared Education (n=1141)			
Yes	56.2	1.47	2.88
No	43.8	1.47	2.88
Would you like your school, or the school you last attended to be part of a shared education campus? (n=1007)			
Yes	36.8	1.43	2.81
No	26.0	1.30	2.55
I don't know	37.2	1.43	2.81

Statistical significance of change in Shared Education (KLT and YLT) and lessons and discussions in school about different groups of people in our society (YLT) 2022 and 2024

Shared Education

As the percentages of children and young people who said they had done Shared Education increased between 2022 and 2024 confidence intervals have been calculated to provide an estimate of the margin of error for the two years using the formula below.

$$SE \text{ for difference between 2 sample percentages} = \sqrt{(SE \text{ Sample 1})^2 + (SE \text{ Sample 2})^2}$$

The YLT figure increased from 51 per cent in 2022 to 56 per cent in 2024. The 95% confidence interval for the difference in the two percentages (56%-51% = 5%) is 0.78 to 9.21. A chi-squared test indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the two percentages (Chi-squared=5.403, df=1, p<0.05). This means that the estimates from YLT across the two survey years have not occurred by chance and represent a real difference in terms of the percentage of children saying they had been involved in Shared Education in 2022 and 2024. The effect size is small (0.10).

The KLT figure increased from 60 per cent in 2022 to 62 per cent in 2024. The 95% confidence interval for the difference in the two percentages (62%-60% = 2%) is -0.02 to 4.02. A chi-squared test indicates that there no statistically significant difference between the two percentages (Chi-squared=3.75 df=1, p>0.05).

Lessons and discussions about different groups of people in our society (YLT)

Similarly, as the percentage of young people who said they have had lessons and discussions in school about different groups of people in our society rose from 72 per cent in 2022 to 76 per cent in 2024, confidence

intervals have also been calculated. The 95% confidence interval for the difference in the two percentages (76%-72% = 4%) is 1.33% to 6.67%. A chi-squared test indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the two percentages (Chi-squared=8.72, df=1, $p < 0.01$). This means that the estimates from YLT across the two survey years have not occurred by chance and represent a real difference in terms of the percentage of children saying they have had lessons and discussions about different groups of people in our society in 2022 and 2024. The effect size is small (0.09).

Appendix 2: KLT questions on Shared Education and Lessons and discussions about different groups in our society

The next few questions are about how you feel about doing classes or projects or sharing facilities with other schools where pupils are from a different religion.

Q1. Sometimes primary schools get together with other schools **where pupils are from a different religion**. Pupils might go to another school to use the computers or swimming pool, or to do classes or projects with the pupils from the other school. **This is called Shared Education**. Have you done anything like this?

Yes	1	Please skip to Q3
No	2	Please go to next question

Q2. Would you like to be involved in Shared Education?

Yes	1	Please skip to
No	2	Please skip to Q10
I don't know	3	Please skip to Q10

Q3. Please click on all the things you have done.

I have had classes with pupils from other schools	1
I have done projects with pupils from other schools	1
I have used or shared sports facilities or equipment, like computers with pupils from other schools	1
Something else, please type in what you did with pupils from other schools	1

Q4. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
Since taking part in Shared Education, I am better able to respect the views of others.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Q5. Since taking part in Shared Education, how many close friends have you made with children who are a different religion to you in the other school(s)?

None	1
1	2
2-4	3
5-9	4
10 or more	5
I don't know how many close friends I made	6
I don't know what religion the friends I made are	7

Q6. How much did you like or dislike doing any of the following? Please click one answer on each line.

	Liked it a lot	Liked it a little	Did not like it very much	Did not like it at all	I did not do this
Sharing classes	1	2	3	4	5
Doing projects together	1	2	3	4	5
Sharing sports facilities and computers or equipment	1	2	3	4	5
Being taught by different teachers	1	2	3	4	5
Travelling to a different school	1	2	3	4	5
Learning new things with pupils from another school	1	2	3	4	5
Doing classes we normally don't get to do at our school	1	2	3	4	5
Making new friends	1	2	3	4	5
Being with children who are a different religion to you	1	2	3	4	5
Being with children who have a different skin colour or who speak a different language than you	1	2	3	4	5
Being with children who are richer or poorer than you	1	2	3	4	5

Q7. Did you have lessons on Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU) as part of Shared Education? These lessons might include topics such as Similarities and Differences, Friendships, All about Me, Living in Our Community

Yes	1
No	2
I can't remember	3

Q8. Overall, how did you feel about sharing classes, projects or equipment with other schools?

Very favourable	1	
Favourable	2	
Neither favourable nor unfavourable	3	
Unfavourable	4	
Very unfavourable	5	
I don't know	6	Please skip to Q10

Q9. Why are you in favour of or not in favour of sharing with other schools? (Please type below.)

--

ALL RESPONDENTS

Q10. Suppose a group of children from another school were coming to do a project with your class. Would you mind if they were from these kinds of schools? Please click one answer on each line.

	I would mind a lot	I would mind a little	I would not mind at all	I don't know
A primary school near this school	1	2	3	4
A school for children with special educational needs or disabilities	1	2	3	4
A secondary school for older children	1	2	3	4
A school where most of the children are a different religion to you	1	2	3	4
A school where most of the children are richer or poorer than you	1	2	3	4
A school where most of the children have a different skin colour or speak a different language than you	1	2	3	4

A SHARED EDUCATION CAMPUS is where two (or more) schools share one building or where there are facilities in each school building which both schools use. One school would usually have mostly pupils from a Catholic background and the other school would usually have pupils mostly from a Protestant background and they would share classes and facilities with each other.

Q11. Would you like your school to be part of a Shared Education Campus?

Yes	1
No	2
I don't know	3

Q12. If your school was on a Shared Education Campus, do you think it should have the following.... (Click all that apply)

One main school entrance	1
Shared sports facilities	1
Shared lunchtime and dining facilities	1
A shared school bus	1
One school uniform	1

Q13. If you were in a shared campus school do you think you would...

Like it a lot	1
Like it a little	2
Not like it at all	3
I don't know	4

Q14. What do you think you would like or dislike about a shared campus?

Q15. In **your school** you might have lessons and discussions about the different groups of people living in our society and about treating people fairly and with respect. As a result of being involved in any of these activities in **your school** do you think your attitude towards any of the following groups has changed or has stayed the same? (Please click one answer on each line)

	I am more positive towards them	My attitude to them has not changed	I am more negative towards them	I have not had any lessons or discussions about this topic
People with different religious beliefs	1	2	3	4
People who have a different skin colour or speak a different language to you	1	2	3	4
People of different ages (older and younger people/children)	1	2	3	4
Girls and boys	1	2	3	4
People with a disability and those without a disability	1	2	3	4
People with different political opinions	1	2	3	4

Appendix 3: YLT questions on Shared Education and lessons and discussions about different groups of people in our society

SHARED EDUCATION encourages schools to work together and partner with other schools where the pupils are from a different religious background, to include both Protestant and Catholic pupils. Such sharing has to take place on a REGULAR AND CONTINUED BASIS over the academic year. It cannot just be a joint Christmas concert or joint sports day. To count as Shared Education pupils might, for example, have classes or do projects with pupils from another school, or share computers or sports facilities on a regular basis.

1. Have you ever been involved in Shared Education?

- Yes 1 (Please go to the next question)
- No 2 (Please skip to Question 9)

2. Please tick ALL the things you have done

- I have had classes with pupils from other schools 1
- I have done projects with pupils from other schools 1
- I have used or shared sports facilities or equipment, like computers 1
- Something else *(Please write in)* 1
-

3. How much do you agree or disagree with this statement: Since taking part in Shared Education, I am better able to respect the views of others *(Please tick ONE box only)*

- | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | I don't know |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 |

4. Since taking part in Shared Education, how many close friends have you made with young people who are a different religion to you in the other school(s)? *(Please tick ONE box only)*

- None 1
- 1 2
- 2-4 3
- 5-9 4
- 10 or more 5
- I don't know how many close friends I made 6
- I don't know what religion the friends I made are 7

5. How much did you like or dislike doing each of the following (Please tick ONE box in EACH row)

	Liked it a lot	Liked it a little	Did not like it very much	Did not like it at all	I did not do this
Sharing classes	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Doing projects together	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Sharing sports facilities and computers or equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Being taught by different teachers	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Travelling to a different school	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Learning new things with pupils from another school	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Doing classes we normally don't get to do at our school	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Making new friends	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Being with young people who are a different religion to me	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Being with young people who are a different ethnic background to me	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Being with young people who are a different social class to me	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
Something else, please write in	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

6. Did you have lessons on Learning for Life and Work/Citizenship as part of Shared Education?

(Please tick ONE box only)

- 1
 2
 3
- Yes 1
 No 2
 I can't remember 3

7. How do you generally feel about Shared Education?

(Please tick ONE box only)

- 1
 2
 3
 4
 5
 6 *Please skip to Question 10*
- Very favourable 1
 Favourable 2
 Neither favourable nor unfavourable 3
 Unfavourable 4
 Very unfavourable 5
 I don't know 6

8. Please explain below why you are in favour or not in favour of Shared Education? (Please write below)

PLEASE SKIP TO Q10

9. Would you like to be involved in Shared Education?

- ✓
- Yes 1
- No 2
- I don't know 3

10. Suppose a group of young people from another school/college were coming to do a project with your class, would you mind if they were from these types of schools?

(Please tick ONE box in EACH row)

	I would mind a lot	I would mind a little	I would not mind at all	I don't know
A school for young people with special educational needs or disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
A primary school	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
A school where most of the young people are a different religion to you	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
A school where most of the young people are a different ethnic background to you	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
A school where most of the young people are a different social class to you	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4

A SHARED EDUCATION CAMPUS is where two (or more) schools share one building or where there are facilities in each school building which both schools use. One school would usually have mostly pupils from a Catholic background and the other school would usually have pupils mostly from a Protestant background and they would share classes and facilities with each other.

11. Would you like your school, or the school you last attended, to be part of a Shared Education Campus?

(Please tick ONE box only)

- ✓
- Yes 1
- No 2
- I don't know 3

12. If your school was on a Shared Education Campus, do you think it should have the following:

(Please tick ALL that apply)

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|---|
| | ✓ | |
| One main school entrance | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| Shared sports facilities | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| Shared lunchtime and dining facilities | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| A shared school bus | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| One school uniform | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |

13. What do you think you would like or not like about being part of a Shared Education Campus? (Please write in below)

School and youth work are required to help young people to have a better understanding of diversity in our society and to promote the equal treatment of different groups. There are many different ways that this can be done, including discussions, subjects taught in school (for example, Learning for Life & Work or Religious Education), taking part in sports with people from other communities, either through school or a youth group, learning about other communities in a youth group and through shared classes with other schools.

14. Have you ever done any of the activities highlighted in the paragraph above?

(Please tick ALL that apply)

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | ✓ | |
| Yes, in school as part of 'Shared Education' | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| Yes, in school, but not as part of 'Shared Education' | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| Yes, in a youth project or youth centre | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| No, not in school or a youth project or youth centre | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 <i>(Please go to next section)</i> |

15. And do you think that your school or your youth project or youth centre has encouraged understanding and promoted equal treatment for the following groups through these activities? (Please tick ALL that apply in EACH column)

	Your School	Your youth project or youth centre
People with different political opinions	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
People with different religious beliefs	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
People from different ethnic groups	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
People of different ages (older and younger people/children)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
People who are single, cohabiting, married or divorced	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
People with different sexual orientations	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
Men and women	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
People with a disability and those without a disability	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
People with dependants (e.g. children) and those without	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 1

People with caring responsibilities and those without caring responsibilities 1 1

I have never attended a youth project or youth centre 1

16. As a result of being involved in any of these activities in your school or youth centre or youth project do you now feel more favourable, more unfavourable or just the same regarding equal treatment of the following groups? (Please tick ONE box in EACH row)

	I feel more favourable than I did before	No change - I feel just as favourable now as I did before	No change - I feel just as unfavourable now as I did before	I feel more unfavourable now than I did before
People with different political opinions	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
People with different religious beliefs	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
People from different ethnic groups	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
People of different ages (older and younger people/children)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
People who are single, cohabiting, married or divorced	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
People with different sexual orientations	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
Men and women	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
People with a disability and those without a disability	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
People with dependents (e.g. children) and those without	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4
People with caring responsibilities and those without caring responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4



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Research cannot make decisions for policy makers and others concerned with improving the quality of education. Nor can it by itself bring about change. But it can create a better basis for decisions, by providing information and explanation about educational practice and by clarifying and challenging ideas and assumptions.

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