

Consultation with primary pupils about their learning experiences during the COVID-19 lockdown, from January to March 2021

November 2021

From 1 June 2021 to 11 June 2021, the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) invited all pupils from year 6 to year 14 to tell everyone more about what it was like to be a young person learning from January to March 2021, while there was a second lockdown because of COVID-19.

A total of 28 790 year 6 to year 14 pupils from over half (51%) of all primary and post-primary schools in Northern Ireland completed the questionnaires. This document provides a summary of the responses from the 14 256 primary pupils and follows on from previous ETI publications¹.

Question/statement	Response options	Number of Responses	Percentage
Breakdown of responses	Boy	6 844	48.0%
	Girl	6 961	48.8%
	Other	156	1.1%
	I don't want to say	295	2.1%
School Year	Year 6	6 833	47.9%
	Year 7	7 423	52.1%
I enjoyed learning from home or in school during lockdown:	All of the time	944	6.6%
	Most of the time	5 191	36.4%
	Some of the time	6 456	45.3%
	Hardly ever or not at all	1 665	11.7%
My information and communication technology (ICT) skills improved during lockdown:	Yes	12 298	86.3%
	No	1 958	13.7%
I used the following digital device(s) at home and in school:	Laptop/Chromebook	7 929	55.6%
	Tablet or iPad	8 004	56.1%
	Desktop computer	2 812	19.7%
	Smartphone	5 983	42.0%
	Games console	901	6.3%
	Smart TV	525	3.7%
	None	248	1.7%

¹ Previous ETI publications include: 11 February 2021: [ETI consultation on the delivery of remote learning \(summary of the quantitative data from the responses\)](#); 25 March 2021: [Phase Reports](#); 14 May 2021: [Phase-specific thematic reports on Remote Learning](#).

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My learning was helped by the following approaches:	Working independently (on my own) on projects/finding out and researching tasks	6 391	44.8%
	A planner or timetable to help me with my learning	7 339	51.5%
	Being creative through music and art	5 996	42.1%
	Keeping active doing PE and physical activities	7 637	53.6%
	Learning outdoors	5 135	36.0%
	Completing online tasks using digital resources/programmes	6 696	47.0%
	Completing tasks using booklets, worksheets and exercise books	6 486	45.5%
	Live lessons (online) with my teacher or classroom assistant	4 697	32.9%
	Videos from my teacher or classroom assistant	7 205	50.5%
	Opportunities to work online in pairs/groups with other children (for example, reading groups)	1 896	13.3%
	Online assemblies and quizzes organised by the school	4 163	29.2%
I asked the following people for help:	A teacher or classroom assistant	6 627	46.5%
	A friend or member of my class	3 384	23.7%
	A parent or carer	11 362	79.7%
	A brother or sister	4 627	32.5%
	Another family member	4 205	29.5%
	I didn't ask anyone for help	591	4.1%
I had difficulty completing school work:	All of the time	384	2.7%
	Most of the time	1 752	12.3%
	Some of the time	8 415	59.0%
	Hardly ever or not at all	3 705	26.0%
I had difficulty completing school work because:	I did not have a computer or laptop or other digital device at home	281	2.0%
	I had to share a computer/laptop/smartphone with others at home	2 606	18.3%
	I did not have the correct equipment/resources I needed	643	4.5%
	I did not have a printer at home	1 811	12.7%
	My internet connection did not always work	4 193	29.4%
	I did not have a quiet place to work	3 944	27.7%
	I was unsure about how to do my work	4 345	30.5%
	I think I had too much work to complete	3 050	21.4%

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I received feedback on my work:	Yes	13 249	92.9%
	No	595	4.2%
	I did not submit any work	412	2.9%
My learning was helped by receiving the following feedback:	Video feedback	3 057	21.4%
	Audio (spoken) feedback/voice message	4 178	29.3%
	Written comments	11 795	82.7%
	Stickers/emojis	4 945	34.7%
I was able to register and log in by myself to the platforms:	Yes	13 042	91.5%
	No	1 214	8.5%
During live lessons or sessions online during lockdown, there were rules about how to behave:	Yes	7 409	52.0%
	No	1 553	10.9%
	I did not have any live lessons or sessions online	5 294	37.1%
I was taught about staying safe online:	By a teacher	12 294	86.2%
	By a parent or carer	10 531	73.9%
	By another family member	4 310	30.2%
	By a friend	1 849	13.0%
	By another adult	3 453	24.2%
	By Childline or the NSPCC	3 880	27.2%
	Through a talk/presentation	4 566	32.0%
	Through a Safer Schools App	974	6.8%
	Through TV programmes/Videos/websites	4 457	31.3%
	Other	1 183	8.4%
	I have not been taught about staying safe online	184	1.3%
I enjoyed the following aspects of school life on return:	Seeing my friends	13 404	94.0%
	Working with other children	6 356	44.6%
	Being taught in person by my teacher	9 208	64.6%
	Seeing adults who work in my school	4 653	32.6%
	Working with children from other schools (for example, Shared Education)	1 195	8.4%
	Literacy	4 185	29.4%
	Numeracy/mathematics	5 198	36.5%
	World Around Us	4 228	29.7%
	Art	8 804	61.8%
	Music	3 764	26.4%

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	Drama	2 511	17.6%
	PE and sport	10 745	75.4%
	Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU)	2 563	18.0%
	Learning outdoors	6 295	44.2%
	School dinners and eating lunch	7 271	51.0%
	Playtime	11 108	77.9%
I also enjoyed the following aspects of school life on return to my Irish-medium school/unit:	Hearing and speaking Irish again throughout the day	69	50.7%
	Irish Literacy	44	32.4%
I would like to continue the following practices on return school:	Online/paperless homework	6 257	43.9%
	Links to video clips to help with learning	5 151	36.1%
	Learning independently (by myself)	4 312	30.2%
	Doing projects and research activities	7 052	49.5%
	Having time to do activities and learn new skills with my family	6 330	44.4%
	Choosing when to do some of my learning and work in my own time	6 940	48.7%
	Deciding myself how I wanted to share some of my work with my teacher, such as, making a poster or model or recording a video	4 277	30.0%