# Children and young people's experiences during lockdown – Primary school response from survey

Just over 400 children and young people living in Barnet completed a questionnaire based on their experiences. The survey ran between July and August of 2020. 165 respondents were secondary age.

This report highlights what the children and young people said and what they felt would facilitate the return to school in September.

What you said

When asked 'How have you felt during lockdown?

7% said **very happy**

26% said **happy**

48% said **OK**

6% said **very unhappy**

12% said **unhappy**
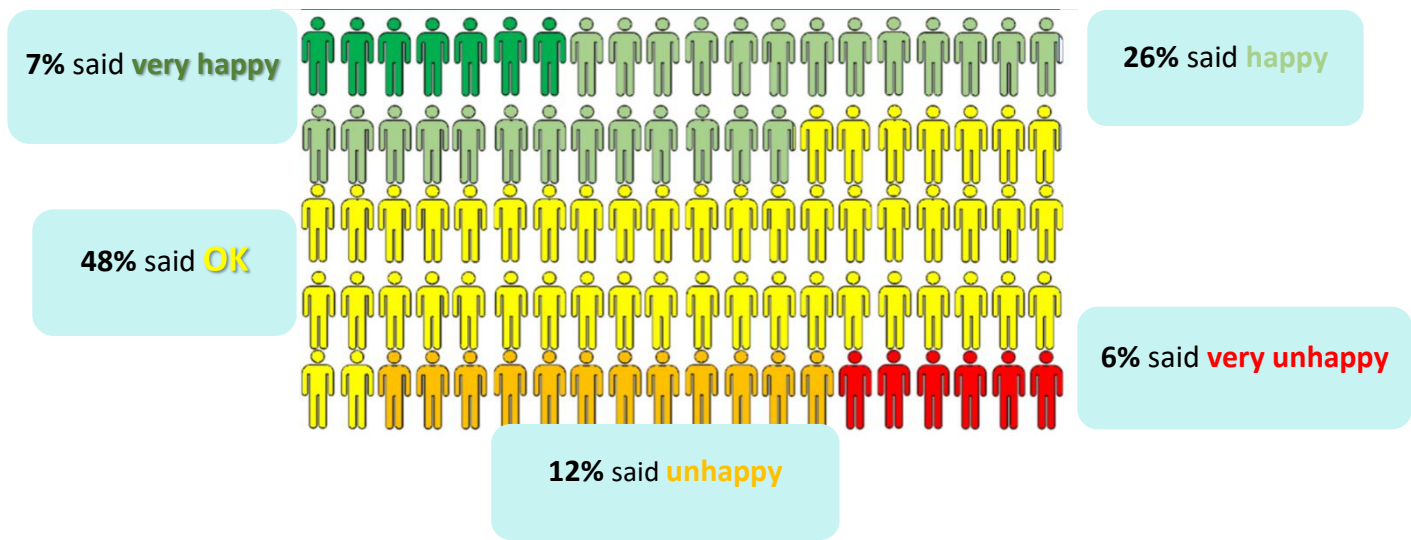
When asked 'How has it felt being *out of school* during lockdown?" there were six main themes:

Happy
"I have felt happy spending time with my mum and dad"

Safe
"I enjoyed being safe at home"

Mixed
"It has felt like a rollercoaster because you really want to be at school but you can't"
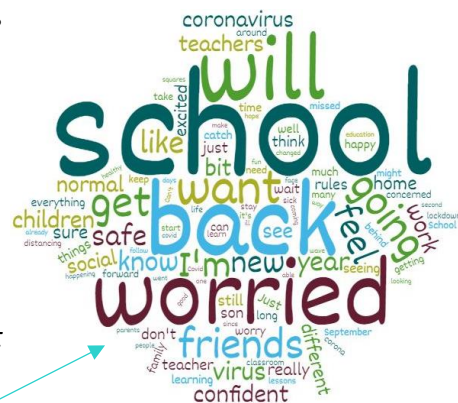
Bored and lonely
"It's been boring at home I miss school"

Confused, disappointed and annoyed
"I have felt ok but sometimes it has been annoying"

Sad
"Sad, because I don't get to see all of my friends and teachers at school. I miss them all!"

That they missed their friends
"I miss my friends and my teacher"

These pictures show the key words that came up in the children's responses. *The most common words are bigger.*

When asked 'How has it felt being *in* school during lockdown?" responses had themes:

<table>
<tr><td align="center">Children aged 5 to 7:</td><td align="center">Children aged 7 to 10</td></tr>
<tr><td align="center">86% said they really enjoyed school in lock down
"Happy to see my friends".
"Better than before "
"Fun and very happy"</td><td align="center">64% were happy to go to school in lock down
"Happy as I can see my friends"
"Safe, due to school's (excellent) organisation."</td></tr>
<tr><td align="center">Feeling Safe
"I enjoyed being safe at home"</td><td align="center">16% found the experience a strange one:
"Weird but Good cause I got to see some friends"
"It has felt weird and abnormal because of all of the safety measures that have been taken"</td></tr>
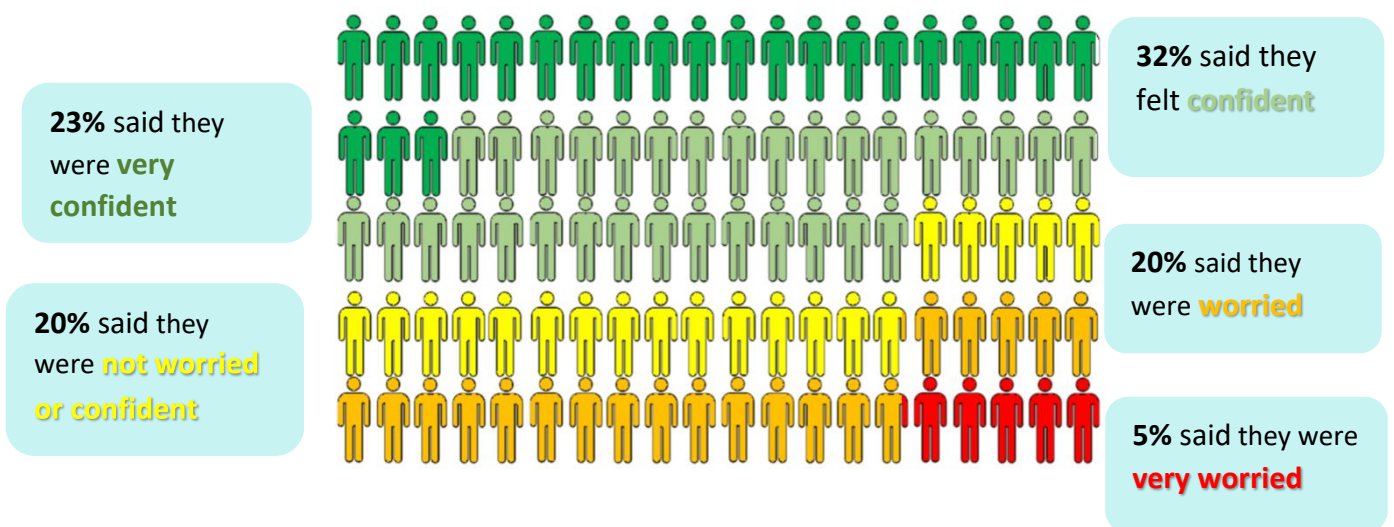<tr><td align="center">6% thought it was different but got a bit better
"'my friends started coming when other children were allowed to come"</td><td align="center">16% thought it was ok
"Fine"
"Not to bad"</td></tr>
<tr><td align="center">4% didn't like it
"Haven't learnt much"
"lunch is the same everyday"</td><td align="center">4% were sad
"sad as there was only 9 other children"
"none of my friends from school"</td></tr>
</table>

When asked 'Do you have any worries about going back to school?'

23% said they were **very confident**

20% said they were not worried or confident

32% said they felt confident

20% said they were **worried**

5% said they were **very worried**

Lots of children were confident about:

Seeing their friends
"I am very excited to go back to school and see all of my friends""

Going back to school
"I am not worried to go back to school. I can't wait"

But worried about:

Catching Coronavirus
"I worry about getting sick or giving the virus to my family"
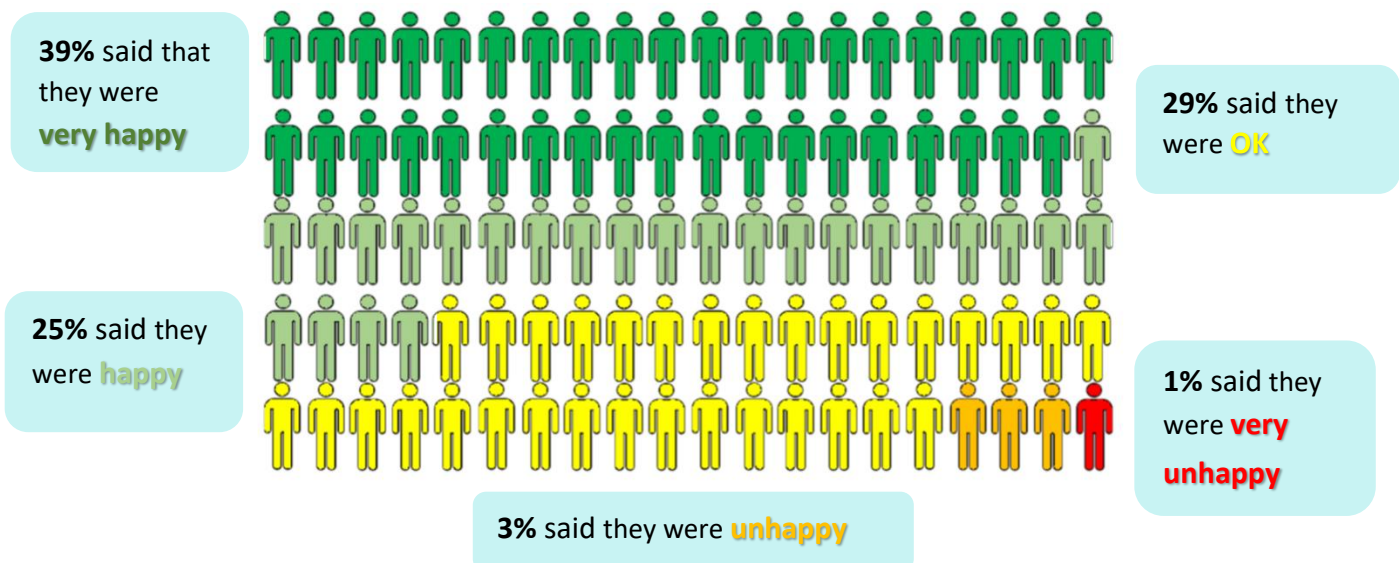
Social distancing
"Too many kids will be back in school and what if they don't social distance? I don't want to go back"

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Changes in school
"That school will be different. I won't be able to play with my friends. I will have too much work to do"

When asked 'How do you feel about going back to school?'

39% said that they were **very happy**

29% said they were **OK**

25% said they were **happy**

1% said they were **very unhappy**

3% said they were **unhappy**

These are the things children said they were looking forward to:

Seeing their friends
"I am looking forward to spending time with all of my friends."

Going back to routine
"Structure."
"Routine, learning, normality."

Learning in school again
"Not getting taught by my parents."
"Learning in a classroom setting."

Seeing their teachers again
"To going back to my old teacher & meeting my new one."

Having new experiences
"I am looking forward to a fresh start and meeting new friends."

These are the things children said they were not looking forward to:

Learning and the amount of work they would be asked to do
"The amount of work we will have to do."

Coronavirus worries, such as whether the virus would return and social distancing
"That the pandemic might come back."

The loss of their home routine
"I am not looking forward to having to wake up early to start the day and having a strict routine"
"Leaving my parents."
"School dinners."

Getting used to a new environment
"Getting lost on my first day."
"Going to secondary school not knowing anyone or not have met any of my new teachers or school."

What do children say will help the return to school?

Seeing friends
"Having the full class so I can have fun to play."

Having help with learning
"Maybe more time so we can catch up? Maybe 1 hour a day so school finishes at 430pm and we can catch up."

Adjusting the school day
"Not going back all day, every day straight away might help."

Ensuring Coronavirus safety procedures are in place
"If my teachers made sure the toilets are clean and they clean the school properly"
"Everyone washing their hands and being careful"

Summary

The questionnaire highlighted that many children who were not at school during lockdown had a mixed response with some feeling safe and secure at home, but also feelings of being confused, bored, lonely and isolated. However, most of the children felt OK, happy or very happy during lockdown. The children that did attend school noted that their experience was strange and different and any contact with teachers was valued.

Most children and young people said that they were happy and confident about returning to school and are looking forward to seeing their friends and teachers again. The opportunities for a predictable routine and new experiences are highlighted. Some young people were anxious about fitting back into school, especially with schoolwork, catching-up, routines, pressure and friendship groups. There were come concerns about catching coronavirus, how the school would ensure social distancing was adhered to and how school might change due to the outbreak. Those transferring to a new school were also concerned about how they would adapt to a new environment.

What schools can do

- Having structured activities that focus on building social relationships and catching up with friends and classmates.
- Having a very structured and clear transition back into school, with the children being told what they can expect and what their new school day will look like. Children will benefit from knowing there is a clear routine and timetable, preferably in advance.
- Opportunities for children to catch. Confidence to get back to tackling work and not feel over-whelmed about learning that they've missed. Encouragement and differentiated work.
- Reassuring children of the measures that have been put in place in the school to help control the spread of Coronavirus.
- Giving children opportunities to talk about their worries and concerns
- Prioritising children for additional social emotional support available in the school.