



Department of  
**Education**

[www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk)

AN ROINN  
**Oideachais**

MÁNNYSTRIE O  
**Lear**



*Northern Ireland*  
**Statistics &  
Research**  
Agency

# OMNIBUS SURVEY

## Education Module

May 2009

## **Background to the Omnibus Survey**

The Omnibus Survey is carried out on a quarterly basis by the Central Survey Unit (NISRA). It is designed to provide a snapshot of the behaviour, lifestyle and views of a representative sample of the population. Core questions are asked during each survey, including individual characteristics and circumstances such as gender and age, allowing analysis by a range of factors. The other questions are modules which are commissioned by clients, seeking information on specific issues, for example education.

## **Sample**

The sample for the May survey consisted of a systematic random sample of addresses selected from the Land and Property Services Agency, the most up-to-date list of private addresses. A total of 2,200 addresses were selected for interview, of which 1,956 were eligible for inclusion in the sample. One person over 16 years old was selected to complete the survey in each household. A total of 1,180 interviews were achieved between 1<sup>st</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> May 2009, giving a response rate of 60%.

## **Education Module**

This paper outlines the main findings from the Education module of the Omnibus Survey. Twenty one questions were asked of the public, primarily to ascertain the attitudes and perceptions of people in relation to education, as well as to find out about their own experiences or those of their children. It is anticipated that the module will be repeated regularly to produce a time series of comparable information.

## ALL RESPONDENTS

Do you agree or disagree that:

### Children in NI get a good education

In total, 89% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that children at school here get a good education – the majority agreed (57%) while a further 32% strongly agreed. This is similar to the total of 92% who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement in September 2008. In terms of overall percentage that either agreed or strongly agreed, there was little variation between age groups, gender and religion. In total, only 3% of respondents disagreed with the statement.

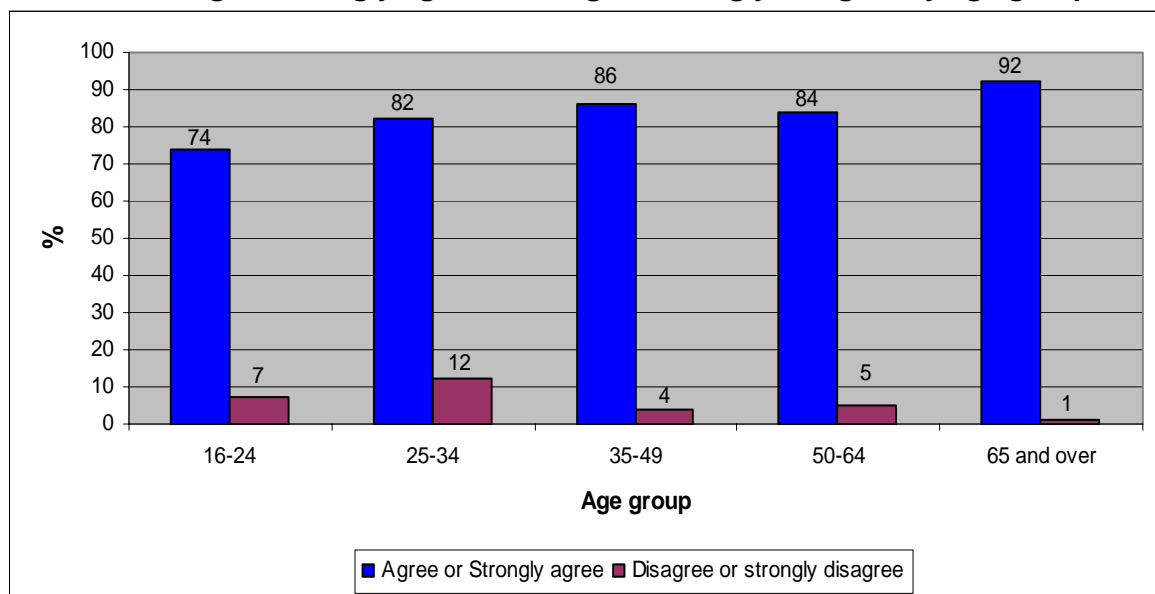
**Table 1 Do you agree or disagree that NI children get a good education?**

Response	% of respondents
Strongly agree	32
Agree	57
Neither agree or disagree	7
Disagree	3
Strongly disagree	0
Don't know	1

### Staying on at school is important if you want to get a good job

In total, 84% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that staying on at school is important if you want to get a good job, the same proportion as in 2008. As with last year, people aged 65 and over were more likely to strongly agree or agree (92%) with this than people in the 16-24 age group (74%) (Chart 1).

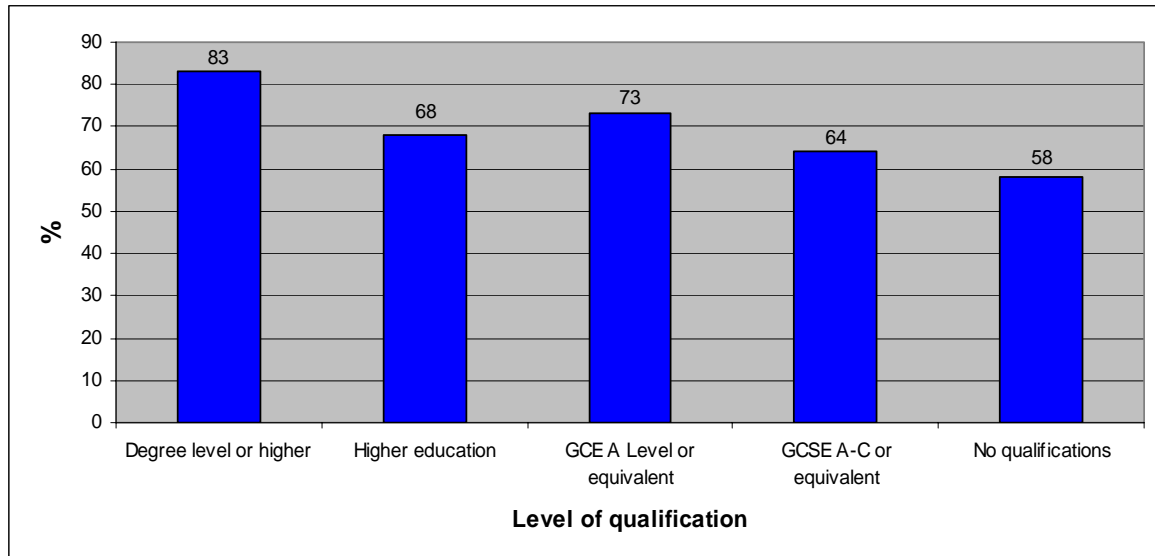
**Chart 1 'Staying on at school is important if you want to get a good job' – agree/strongly agree or disagree/strongly disagree by age group**



## I enjoyed my time at school

Overall, 67% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoyed their time at school, with females more likely to report this than males (70% and 62% respectively). Those educated to degree level or higher were more likely to agree or strongly agree that they enjoyed their time at school than respondents with no qualifications – 83% compared with 58% (Chart 2). These patterns were similar to those emerging from the 2008 survey.

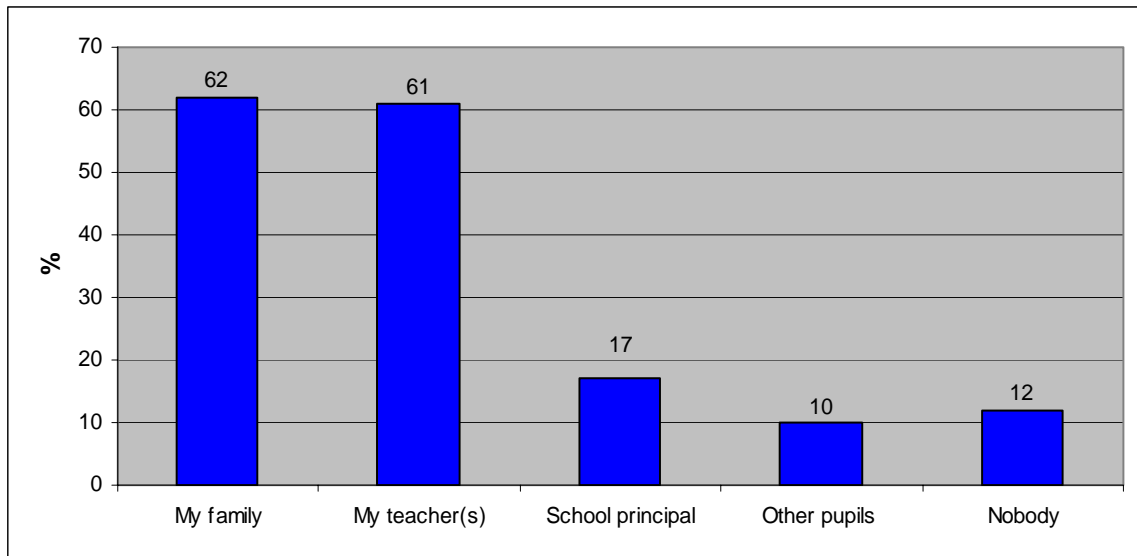
**Chart 2** 'I enjoyed my time at school' – agree/strongly agree or respondent's level of qualification



## Thinking about your own school experience, which, if any, of the following people encouraged you to do well

Similar proportions of respondents reported that their family and their teachers encouraged them to do well at school (62% and 61% respectively). These were also the two main influences emerging from last year's survey, with similar proportions of respondents citing them. The school principal and other pupils were other reported influences, with 12% saying that nobody influenced them (Chart 3). People aged 50-64 years were most likely to say that nobody encouraged them to do well at school (18%), as were people with no qualifications (22%). This compares with 2% of 16-24 year olds and 2% of those educated to degree level or higher.

**Chart 3 Which of the following people encouraged you to do well at school**

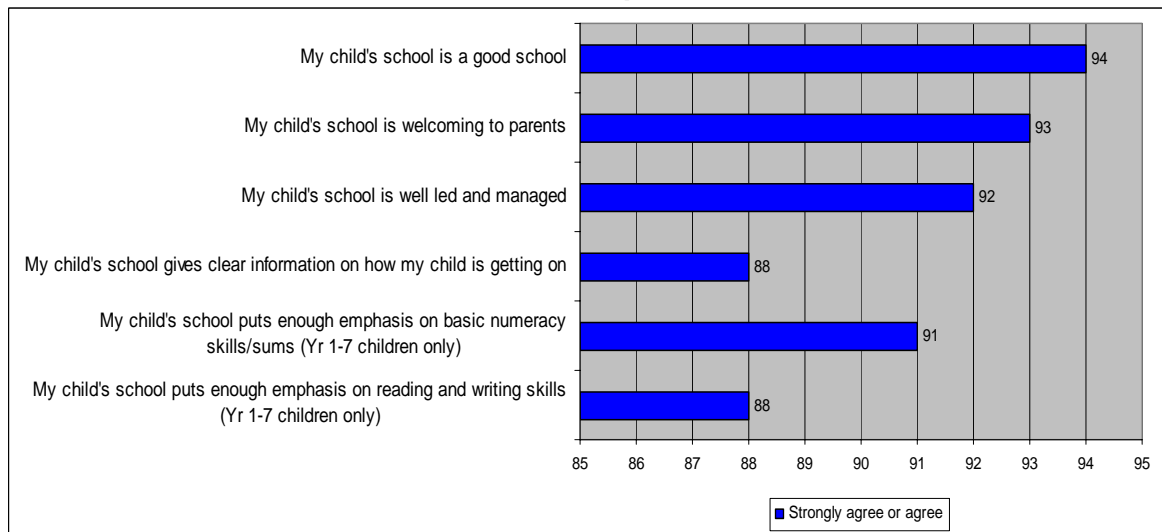


**PARENT QUESTIONS**

Of the 285 parents asked about their own child, 94% of parents either agreed or strongly agreed that their child’s school is a good school. Only 1% of respondents disagreed. Half of parents agreed that they find their child’s school welcoming to parents and a further 43% strongly agreed – a total of 93%. Again, 1% disagreed that they find their child’s school welcoming to parents.

Over 90% of parents strongly agreed or agreed that their child’s school is well led and managed. Eighty-eight per cent of parents questioned either strongly agreed or agreed that their child’s school gives clear information on how their child is getting on, while 4% of parents disagreed and 1% strongly disagreed. Of the 171 parents whose child was in Year 1 to 7, the majority strongly agreed or agreed that literacy skills and numeracy skills are given enough emphasis in their child’s school – 88% and 91% respectively.

**Chart 4 Parental views in relation to aspects of their child’s school**



Almost all parents interviewed (94%) felt that it was very important to ensure their child attends school regularly and on time. Four-fifths of parents felt that it was very important to help their child with schoolwork. A further 19% of parents considered it to be quite important to help their child with schoolwork.

In 2009, 27% of parents reported that they would be happy to take their child out of school during term time, for example, for a family break or holiday. This compares with 19% in 2008. Over half (54%) would not be happy to do so and the remainder felt that it depended on the circumstances.

### Parental Involvement

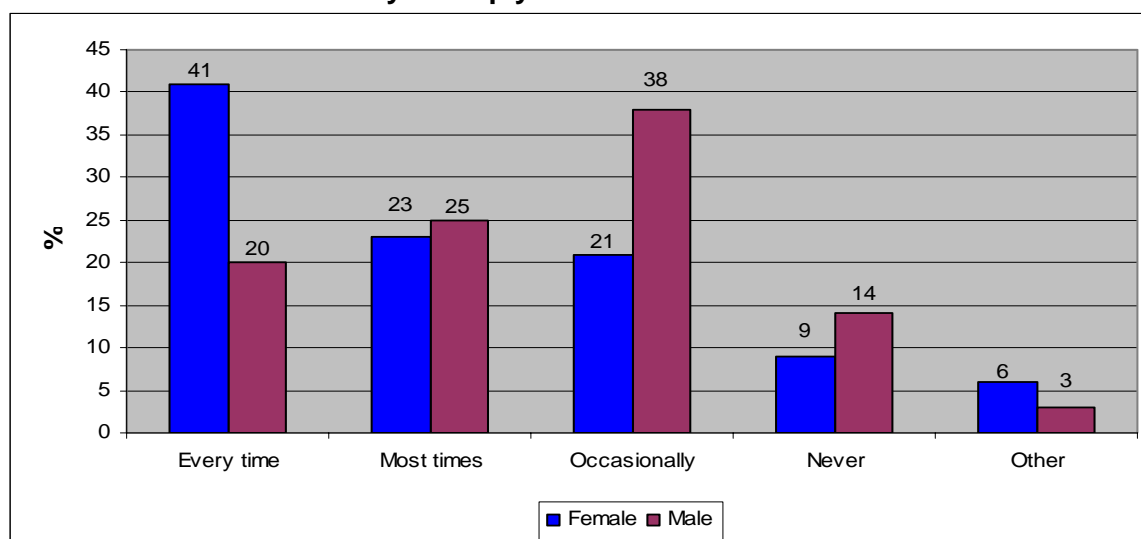
Just over two-fifths (41%) of parents felt very involved in their child's school life, compared with 54% in 2008. A further 44% felt fairly involved, an increase from 38% in 2008. Females were more likely to report that they feel very involved than males (51% compared with 28%). Parents reported different types of involvement in their child's school, for example, parent teacher meetings (84%); parent teacher association (20%); helping out with school clubs (6%). Thirteen per cent of parents reported none of these involvements with the school.

**Table 2 Type of parental involvement in their child's school**

Activity	% of respondents
Attending parent teacher meetings	84
Helping out in the classroom	4
Helping out with dinner duties/school trips and so on	9
Helping out with school clubs	6
Getting involved with the Parent Teacher Association	20
None of these	13

When asked how often they helped their child with their homework, almost one-third said every time; 24% most times and 11% never. Females were more likely to help every time than males (41% and 20% respectively). Chart 4 shows how often parents help with homework by gender.

**Chart 5 How often do you help your child with their homework?**



Twenty-eight per cent of parents reported that they were always confident in helping their children with their homework, while the majority (47%) felt confident most of the time. Three per cent were never confident and the same proportion said it depends what it is.

### **Further enquiries**

Requests for further information should be addressed to:-

Oonagh Cunning  
Statistics and Research Branch  
Department of Education  
Rathgael House  
Balloo Road  
BANGOR  
Co. Down  
BT19 7PR  
Telephone (028) 9127 9438  
e-mail: [oonagh.cunning@deni.gov.uk](mailto:oonagh.cunning@deni.gov.uk)