

Children's PLUS Survey Report **Survey undertaken 24/9- 30/9**

Background and Method

Public Library Services are required to survey their services via questionnaires to the public at least once every three years. The Children's PLUS survey, aimed at library users aged 0-15 years old, was last conducted in RBK in 2004.

The 2007 survey was done on a census basis, in which every child and young person aged 0-15 years of age who came into a borough library during the week was surveyed. For obvious reasons the younger the child, the more the parent/carer had to fill in the questionnaire on behalf of the child, but, as far as possible, the views and answers on the questionnaires were to be the child's.

To ascertain the number of questionnaires that would need to be published in order to meet the requisite target for numbers of respondents to the survey, a census was conducted in all the borough's libraries the week beginning Monday 9 July, through to Sunday 15 July. The numbers of questionnaires printed for the survey in September was equivalent to the numbers of children and young people who entered a library in RBK during the census, plus a number of extra questionnaires per library should they run out of them before the survey week had ended.

The Questionnaire

The Childrens PLUS questionnaire has undergone several revisions over the years, and the 2007 questionnaire, although sharing many similar features with the 2004 questionnaire, is markedly different. The 2007 questionnaire comprised 17 questions [see appendix 1]. Where comparisons could be made directly between the respondent's answers to the 2004 and 2007 questionnaires, the data for both have been placed side by side. It was decided that we use the questionnaire with the ethnicity question.

Preparing for the Survey

- Each library had a session with the Senior Childrens Librarian leading on the survey
- Posters and leaflets were disseminated to each library giving advance notice of the survey
- Notice of the survey was place on the Library Internet and Intranet
- RBK staff were informed of the survey through 'Staff Update'
- The press office were asked to submit an item to the local press giving notice of the survey
- The Young People's Team were asked to be on hand as much as possible to help with the survey

General Findings of the 2007 Children's PLUS Survey

- Of the 1330 children and young people surveyed, 85.6% rated the library service as 'Good', compared to 73% in 2004. 14.4% rated the service as 'OK'.
- 60.9% of respondents borrow books from the library because they like reading
- 31.9% of respondents borrow books to get better at reading
- 41.7% of respondents like people to read to them
- 78.5% of respondents come to the library to borrow things
- 82% of 1,298 respondents think the books are 'Good', 17.9% think they are 'OK' and just 0.2% think they are 'bad'
- 81.7% of respondents who use computers in the libraries think they are 'Good', 16.0% think they are OK and 2.2% think they are bad
- 63.6% of respondents think homework help in the libraries is 'Good', 33.6% think it is OK and 2.8% think it is bad
- 60.1% of respondents have been to the libraries for activities
- 98.9% of respondents think that their library is a friendly place
- 98.5% of respondents think that their library is a safe place
- 95.6% of respondents think their library is easy to get to
- 85.6% of respondents think that their library is open when they want to come and use it
- 91.8% of respondents think that their library is bright and cheerful inside
- 97.5% of respondents think that their library is a place that they want to come to
- 93.2% of respondents said that their library has lots of things to interest them
- 52.2% of respondents said that their library has helped them to read better, 32.4% said that it helps them do better at school, 55.6% said the libraries helped them learn and find things out

The Survey results in detail

Q.1 Are you a Girl/Boy?

Library	Girl 2004	Girl 2007	Boy 2004	Boy 2007
Surbiton	51.8	55.8	48.2	44.2
Kingston	51.5	58.4	48.5	41.6
New Malden	56.1	54.2	43.9	45.8
Hook	53.7	55.9	46.3	44.1
Tolworth	56.6	51.6	43.4	48.4
Tudor Drive	58.1	56.4	41.9	43.6
Old Malden	52.5	57.5	47.5	42.5
Weighted	54%	55.6	46.0	44.4

The weighted number of girl/boy respondents showed a slight difference between the 2004 and 2007 surveys. However the gap between the numbers of girls who responded and who came to a library during the survey week and those of the boys grew, albeit by only 1.6% in 2007 compared to 2004. However on an individual branch level some of the differences were quite marked. The stand out statistic in this respect is at Kingston, where the number of girl respondents increased by 6.9%, so that there was a 16.8% gap between girl and boy respondents in the 2007 survey. Overall the weighted total showed an 11.2% gap between girl and boy respondents

Q2 How old are you?

Library	Under 1 2004	Under 1 2007	1 2004	1 2007	2 2004	2 2007	3 2004	3 2007
ST	1.2	5.0	7.1	14.5	13	16.2	8.3	13.7
KN	1.2	5.9	8.4	10.8	15.6	13.0	16.8	11.4
NM	2.7	4.0	4.8	4.0	8.6	5.6	10.7	7.9
HK	0	7.0	4.2	5.6	4.2	9.1	9.3	7.0
TW	3.9	1.6	7.1	5.6	5.5	8.0	10.2	11.2
TD	2.1	2.1	5.3	4.3	16.0	10.1	6.4	9.6
OM	3.8	0	7.6	0	2.5	17.5	12.7	12.5
Weighted Total	1.9	4.5	6.5	7.3	10.6	10.6	11.4	9.9

Library	4 2004	4 2007	5 2004	5 2007	6 2004	6 2007	7 2004	7 2007
ST	12.4	7.1	6.5	5.8	5.9	4.6	8.9	5.0
KN	11.4	10.8	10.8	7.0	4.2	4.9	4.8	5.9
NM	8.6	4.0	5.3	5.2	6.4	6.3	10.7	5.2
HK	10.2	7.0	6.8	19.6	6.8	6.6	11.0	4.2
TW	11.0	8.8	3.1	4.0	9.4	7.2	8.7	5.6
TD	16.0	14.9	7.4	7.4	4.3	10.6	11.7	8.0
OM	11.4	17.5	7.6	7.5	2.5	5.0	10.1	12.5
Weighted total	11.0	8.6	7.0	9.0	5.8	6.5	8.8	5.7

Library	8 2004	8 2007	9 2004	9 2007	10 2004	10 2007	11 2004	11 2007
ST	7.7%	2.5	8.3	7.9	4.7	4.1	5.3	3.7
KN	5.4	4.9	3.0	6.5	6.6	5.4	4.8	3.8
NM	8.0	7.9	3.2	6.0	5.3	9.5	8.0	8.7
HK	6.8	4.5	7.6	3.5	5.9	5.6	6.8	8.0
TW	8.7	5.6	3.9	5.6	6.3	8.0	7.1	7.2
TD	7.4	7.4	4.3	6.9	5.3	5.9	4.3	5.3
OM	5.1	2.5	5.1	7.5	8.9	7.5	5.1	5.0
Weighted Total	7.1	5.3	4.7	6.0	5.8	6.4	6.1	6.2

Library	12 2004	12 2007	13 2004	13 2007	14 2004	14 2007	15 2004	15 2007
ST	5.9	4.1	3.0	.4	0	2.9	1.2	2.1
KN	1.8	3.8	.6	2.2	3.6	2.2	1.2	1.1
NM	4.3	8.3	7.5	7.9	3.7	4.4	1.1	4.0
HK	8.5	3.5	5.1	3.8	4.2	2.8	1.7	2.1
TW	5.5	8.0	6.3	7.2	0.8	3.2	0.8	2.4
TD	5.3	2.1	2.1	2.1	1.1	1.6	1.1	1.1
OM	6.3	2.5	5.1	2.5	6.3	0	0	0
Weighted Total	4.6	4.8	4.2	3.8	2.7	2.8	1.1	2.1

It may be significant that at Surbiton, Hook and Kingston, the large percentage increases in respondents aged less than 1 and 1 year old between 2004 and 2007 may be linked to the popularity of the rhyme times which have become a fixture of regular library events in the past 2/3 years. In Hook's case the new library facilities undoubtedly are having a beneficial effect on the increase in the respondents in the 0-2 category allied to the rhyme time. The lack of anyone aged under 1 or 1 year old entering Old Malden Library during the survey week is peculiar, whereas the same library had the highest response rate of any other RBK library among the 2 year old age group.

The under 1's who responded to the 2004 survey had a weighted total of 1.9%. Looking at the same group, but now aged 3, the weighted total of respondents is 9.9%. Clearly, between the ages of less than 1 and 3 we see a rise in library usage. New Malden has the highest percentage of respondents for each of the years from 10 to 15 years old, and also the highest for the age 8 year group (see also Q. 3).

The overall weighted figures for teenagers using RBK libraries has gone up and this is reflected in the Youth issue figures, which have gone up some 40% in the years between the 2004 and 2007 surveys.

Q3. Who did you come to the library with today?

	Someone from my family 2007	My Friends 2004	My Friends 2007	My school/Nursery/ Playgroup 2007	I came here on my own 2004	I came here on my own 2007	Someone else 2004	Someone else 2007
ST	86.3	7.8	4.6	2.5	6.6	4.1	10.2	6.2
KN	77.7	5.5	5.9	5.3	3.6	5.3	8.5	10.1
NM	74.1	16.8	9.8	3.1	12.6	14.1	8.9	7.1
HK	70.7	6.7	10.5	15.7	8.4	9.4	7.6	3.8
TW	76.8	3.1	8.0	0	12.5	9.6	10.2	8.0
TD	92	13.2	5.3	0.5	5.5	4.3	4.4	4.8
OM	82.5	8.8	5.0	7.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	5.0
Weighted Total	79.2	9.4	7.5	5.5	8.5	8.2	8.9	6.3

The categories available for respondents to choose from were different in the 2007 survey. The choice of 'Someone from my family' was offered in 2007. In 2004 there were two different options: 'Mum or dad' and 'Brother or sister'. It would not have been pertinent to have added those two categories together and then match it with the 'Someone from my family' in the 2007 survey, as the 2004 question excluded family members such as uncles, aunts and cousins. This may account for the fact that the 'Someone Else' figure in the 2007 survey is lower than the 2004 figure, as the option of 'Someone from my family' offered in 2007 would encompass uncles, aunts and so forth, not covered by the family options offered in 2004.

'I came here on my own' figures are similar for the 2004 and 2007 surveys. The option of 'My school/playgroup' was not offered in 2004. Hook had more school classes come in to the library than other libraries during the survey week in 2007 and that would account for the high percentage rate in that option. The school/playgroup option may possibly account for the lower 'With Friends' percentage for 2007 than 2004. New Malden was comfortably the library with the highest number of respondents answering that they came on their own. This would make sense as the same library also had the most respondents aged 10-15, an age group far more likely to be going to the library independently. Holy Cross School is very close to New Malden Library, and many girls from that school pass the library on the way home, stopping in to do homework, choose books and so on.

Q4 Overall do you think this library is...?

Library	Good	OK	Bad	Cases
ST	89.7	10.3	0	242
KN	77.0	23.0	0	187
NM	83.5	16.5	0	255
HK	90.6	9.1	0.3	287
TW	82.4	17.6	0	125
TD	85.6	14.4	0	188
OM	87.5	12.5	0	40
Weighted Total	85.6	14.4	0.1	1,324

In 2004 the overall satisfaction rating for Kingston Libraries was 73%. The same rating for 2007 is 85.6%. The bench mark had been raised by the Museum, Libraries and Arts (MLA) for the latest survey to 90%. However the Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians (ASCEL) and the Institute of Public Finance (IPF) have approached the MLA to suggest that the benchmark should include 'Good' plus 'OK'. This would give Kingston libraries an overall satisfaction rating of 100%. One respondent at Hook marked the library as 'bad', which is statistically insignificant.

Kingston Library rating of 77% good deserves closer scrutiny. Initially the adult and children's sections of the library were being treated as two distinct service points. However the number of respondents in the adult section was too low to be meaningful, so these were added with the children's sections

returns. Stripping out the adult library returns, the returns in the children's section gave a 'Good' rating of 79%, a marginal improvement. However, up to and including the Friday of the survey week, Kingston's 'Good' rating stood at 85%. Of the 36 responses on Saturday of the survey week, 15 rated the library as 'OK', which significantly affected the final rating.

Q.5 Do you come to the library to

	Look Around 2004	Look Around 2007	Play with toys 2004	Play with Toys 2007	Use the computers 2004	Use the computers 2007
ST	10.7	34.0	20.1	35.3	12.4	10.4
KN	13.2	33.3	15.6	27.4	10.2	12.9
NM	12.2	18.8	11.6	11.0	21.5	23.5
HK	8.5	33.4	5.1	36.9	14.4	24.7
TW	11.8	32.3	8.7	22.0	29.9	33.9
TD	8.7	27.5	3.3	12.7	6.5	7.4
OM	5.0	45.0	21.3	47.5	20.0	22.5
Weighted Total	11.2	30.1	13.2	25.7	16.2	18.6

	Wait for my parents/ Family 2007	Meet Friends 2004	Meet friends 2007	Borrow things 2007
ST	2.5	2.4	10.0	80.5
KN	3.8	4.8	10.2	76.3
NM	3.9	3.9	8.2	74.9
HK	5.6	0	9.8	75.6
TW	3.9	3.1	2.4	78.7
TD	2.6	3.3	2.6	87.8
OM	10.0	2.5	7.5	75.0
Weighted Total	4.0	3.3	7.8	78.5

Library	Read 2004	Read 2007	Do my homework 2004	Do my homework 2007	Have somewhere to go 2004	Have somewhere to go 2007	Something else 2004	Any other reason 2007
ST	30.8	45.2	8.3	10.8	7.7	11.6	2.4	10.8
KN	22.2	36.0	8.4	11.3	5.4	5.9	1.8	16.7
NM	22.7	38.8	14.4	20.8	8.8	8.2	5.0	12.5
HK	15.3	36.6	13.6	15.7	3.4	6.6	10.2	5.9
TW	18.1	47.2	17.3	18.9	1.6	5.5	7.1	5.5
TD	15.2	40.7	3.3	9.0	3.3	6.3	3.3	5.3
OM	11.3	27.5	12.5	15.0	3.8	7.5	7.5	10.0
Weighted Total	21.9	39.8	11.2	14.5	5.9	7.6	4.4	9.6

It was not possible to compare all the options available in the 2007 survey to the one conducted in 2004 for this question. Where it was possible to make direct comparisons both survey figures have been given. The 'Borrow things' option for the 2007 survey was more specific in 2004 with actual categories of stock listed and it was not possible to strike a comparison. In addition, and this is an oversight on the 2007 survey, an option was not given in this question for children attending story times, rhyme times, crafts and so on, whereas it was for the 2004 survey. Question 13 in the 2007 survey does ask whether the respondents have been to the library for events at any time, whereas in 2004 the question asked whether the respondents had come in for events specifically on that day. The higher figure for the 2007 option 'Any other reason', compared to 2004's 'Something else', may well include figures for people attending events in the library during the 2007 survey.

What is striking is that where comparisons can be made between the 2004 and 2007 surveys, the totals for 'Look around', 'play with toys', 'use the computers', 'meet friends', 'read', 'Do my homework', 'Have somewhere to go' and 'any other reason' (compared to 'something else' in 2004), are all higher in 2007, in some cases significantly higher. What this suggests very strongly is that not only are the children's libraries still strong in traditional areas such as 'reading', they are being seen as places to go to for other reasons that are both formal and informal. The gap between children who come to the library to read, and those who came to use 'computers' is actually widening, although in both cases the figures were higher in 2007 than in 2004.

The idea of a children's library as a place not just for reading and borrowing books, but for other activities, is borne out by comments respondents made e.g. more toys, more puzzles, more interactive games and so on (see Appendix 2). People are definitely looking at libraries to provide more than just traditional services.

Q.6 Why do you borrow books from this library?

There were several options given for this question and the weighted scores for each option were as follows:

- a) I like reading: 60.9%
- b) I want to get better at reading: 31.9%
- c) So someone else can read them to me: 41.7%
- d) I am in a reading group: 1.5%
- e) Library staff say they are good: 3.7%
- f) The library has good books: 42.7%
- g) For homework: 19.8%
- h) I want to find things out: 24.8%
- i) So I don't have to buy books: 22.8%
- j) I don't borrow books: 3.8%
- k) Any other reason: 4.0%

Overall 96.2% of respondents borrow books from the libraries

Q. 7. Overall do you think the books in this library are...?

Library	Good 2004	Good 2007	OK 2004	OK 2007	Bad 2004	Bad 2007
ST	90.2	84.4	9.1	15.6	.6	
KN	86.3	82.2	13.8	17.8		
NM	73.1	75.7	25.7	24.3	1.1	
HK	88.9	83.4	11.1	15.9		.7
TW	82.8	80.2	17.2	19.8		
TD	82.2	85.4	17.8	14.6		
OM	90.5	85.0	8.1	15.0	1.4	
Weighted total	83.4	82.0	16.1	17.9	.5	.2

The slight drop in the 'good' rating from 2004 to 2007 is disappointing, bearing in mind the new Hook Centre, and the extension built at Tudor Drive which expanded the children's section. However the percentage who thought the books were 'bad' has also dropped. There is therefore a slight bunching of the quality of the bookstock in the 'OK' range. The number of respondents, who thought the books were good in 2007 as opposed to 'OK', is still substantially more.

Q.8 Where do you use computers?

Library	At home	At school/nursery/ playgroup	At the library	Somewhere Else	Nowhere	No. of respondents
ST	66.8	39.7	14.0	2.2	21.8	229
KN	78.3	41.7	18.9	2.9	12.0	175
NM	84.7	49.6	31.4	7.4	5.0	242
HK	75.5	55.7	34.8	6.2	11.0	273
TW	65.0	52.8	39.8	8.1	9.8	123
TD	83.2	64.1	11.4	6.5	7.6	184
OM	78.9	44.7	26.3	5.3	10.5	38
Weighted Total	76.3	50.3	25.0	5.3	11.3	1,264

Q.9 What do you use computers in this library for?

Library	Email	Playing games	Messaging Services	Looking At Web sites	Word Processing
ST	7.6	16.2	4.3	10.8	4.3
KN	9.7	12.5	4.2	14.6	5.6
NM	20.5	23.8	13.8	28.6	15.2
HK	16.4	28.4	10.8	23.3	9.5
TW	16.2	27.9	3.6	17.1	6.3
TD	5.6	6.3	1.4	8.4	3.5
OM	12.5	28.1	9.4	15.6	9.4
Weighted Total	13.2	20.2	7.3	18.1	8.0

Q.9 What do you use computers in this library for? (cont)

Library	Homework	I don't use Library computers	Any other reason	No. of respondents
ST	11.9	71.4	5.9	185
KN	15.3	70.1	1.4	144
NM	33.3	46.2	4.3	210
HK	30.2	46.6	3.4	232
TW	29.7	45.0	4.5	111
TD	12.6	79.0	3.5	143
OM	12.5	50.0	6.3	32
Weighted Total	22.6	58.4	4.0	1,057

For the age group surveyed the high percentage 'Playing Games' is not surprising. Just over 1 in 5 respondents using the computers for homework is surprising as it would be expected that that figure would be higher. E-mail scored quite low and it would be interesting comparing that score with the Adult Plus as I suspect many more adults, particularly other nationals, use e-mail far more to keep in touch with family and friends back home.

Q.10 Overall do you think the computers in this library are...

Library	Good 2004	Good 2007	OK 2004	OK 2007	Bad 2004	Bad 2007
ST	66.3	58.2	32.6	39.8	1.2	2.0
KN	76.0	64.6	24.0	28.0	0	7.3
NM	75.2	69.8	23.9	28.4	0.9	1.8
HK	80.9	83.6	14.7	13.9	4.4	2.5
TW	79.5	67.9	19.3	32.1	1.2	0
TD	66.7	50.7	33.3	47.9	0	1.4
OM	88.6	66.7	11.4	23.8	0	9.5
Weighted Total	75.0	69.2	23.9	28.2	1.0	2.6

Q.10 Overall do you think the computers in this library are.... (Filtered by those who answered 'at the library' at Q 8)

Library	Good 2004	Good 2007	OK 2004	OK 2007	Bad 2004	Bad 2007
ST	66.3	80.6	32.6	19.4	1.2	0
KN	76.0	75.8	24.0	21.2	0	3.0
NM	75.2	78.9	23.9	18.4	0.9	2.6
HK	80.9	88.3	14.7	9.6	4.4	2.1
TW	79.5	83.3	19.3	16.7	1.2	0
TD	66.7	80.0	33.3	15.0	0	5.0
OM	88.6	60.0	11.4	30.0	0	10.0
Weighted Total	75.0	81.7	23.9	16.0	1.0	2.2

Although the overall satisfaction rating has gone up in 2007, more people rated the computers as 'bad' in 2007 than in 2004. Tudor Drive and Old Malden's rating of bad in 2007 compared with 2004 is surprising in light of the extra provision of computers and the introduction of homework help (although perhaps the latter has led to greater expectations from respondents). Hook rating is unsurprising comparing the old Hook library in 2004 with the improved facilities offered by the Hook Centre.

37 of the respondents across the libraries wrote comments on the computers or related topics. Most asked for better computer provision, better internet connections, getting rid of library filters and more time on the computers. One respondent at Old Malden asks for a public computer area with 5 computers, although there is that provision already there, so perhaps this is a case of making sure that people know what their local library has to offer.

Q11. Why do you use libraries to do your homework?

Library	There are staff To help me	There are books To help me	There are computers to help me	There is a homework centre/club	It is somewhere quiet to sit and work
ST	7.7	25.4	11.8	2.4	12.4
KN	9.2	25.0	15.8	0.8	15.0
NM	14.9	47.8	25.4	5.5	28.4
HK	16.4	32.7	27.6	10.7	14.5
TW	19.2	36.4	29.3	15.2	19.2
TD	6.2	20.8	13.1	1.5	16.2
OM	14.8	51.9	18.5	0	14.8
Weighted Total	12.5	32.9	20.8	5.8	17.8

Library	I do not use the library to do my homework	I do not have homework	Any other reason	No. of respondents
ST	26.6	42.6	3.6	169
KN	25.8	43.3	1.7	120
NM	27.9	16.4	2.5	201
HK	25.7	30.4	1.4	214
TW	30.3	15.2	2.0	99
TD	34.6	36.9	4.6	130
OM	18.5	33.3	3.7	27
Weighted total	27.8	30.6	2.6	960

The highest percentages where respondents said there were computers to help them came at libraries with established homework clubs with plenty of computers and consistent dedicated staff help. In particular the homework clubs at Tolworth, New Malden and Hook seem to have a more marked impact on respondents. Books still feature very strongly in the assisting with homework. The four libraries with the best attended homework clubs were the best scorers under the homework club/centre option.

Q12 Overall do you think homework help in this library is...

Library	Good 2004	Good 2007	OK 2004	OK 2007	Bad 2004	Bad 2007
ST	62.1	60.9	34.8	34.8	3.0	4.3
KN	63.8	58.5	36.2	35.4	0	6.2
NM	41.3	55.8	48.9	41.5	9.8	2.7
HK	64.4	75.9	30.5	22.1	5.1	2.1
TW	78.4	70.8	21.6	27.8	0	1.4
TD	57.1	50.8	32.1	47.5	10.7	1.7
OM	73.9	73.3	21.7	26.7	4.3	0
Weighted Total	58.2	63.6	36.7	33.6	5.0	2.8

The question in 2004 was slightly different in that it was 'Help I get from the library staff with my homework', whereas the 2007 survey asked a more general question. Nonetheless they are close enough to warrant some comparison. Where the answer 'Bad' was given as an option there have been a significant improvement in the rating in 2007 at 4 libraries: at New Malden, Tudor Drive, Hook and Old Malden. Old Malden has an IT suite, Tudor Drive now have a dedicated Homework Club on Mondays, New Malden has an IT suite and an IT training officer and Hook is a new build with more PC's and a dedicated Children's Librarian.

Surbiton and Tolworth Libraries scores are surprising as there is better homework provision with more computers and a homework club compared with 2004 at Surbiton, and Tolworth has a long established club with an excellent IT training officer. However in the latter case, the scores are close between 2004 and 2007 and the differences may reflect the views of only one or two respondents.

Q.13 Have you been to a library for any of the following?

Library	Under Five's Event	Holiday Activity	After School Activity	Book or reading activity	To take part in a reading group	None of these	No. of cases
ST	46.9	28.9	3.1	12.7	1.8	34.2	228
KN	37.6	18.5	4.0	17.3	2.9	43.4	173
NM	27.6	26.4	10.0	10.5	2.5	43.5	239
HK	36.5	27.4	8.0	14.8	2.3	41.1	263
TW	33.1	26.6	8.9	9.7	4.0	41.9	124
TD	42.9	31.4	5.1	15.4	2.9	38.3	175
OM	54.3	31.4	0	14.3	2.9	28.6	35
Weighted Total	37.9	26.8	6.4	13.5	2.6	39.9	1237

Over 60% of respondents stated that they been to an event or activity at the library; 39.9% had not. Clearly children's events and activities are a great draw for children attending libraries. Although it is not possible to assess from

this survey it is very likely many people enrolled their children as library members whilst taking them to library events and especially for those events aimed at the very youngest children. Respondents in all the libraries wrote comments requesting more events and activities for children.

Q. 14 Do you think the library is a friendly place?

Library	Yes	No	No. of cases
ST	99.1	0.9	234
KN	98.3	1.7	176
NM	97.1	2.9	238
HK	99.6	0.4	273
TW	99.1	0.9	116
TD	100.0	0	176
OM	100.0	0	37
Weighted Total	98.9	1.1	1,250

Q.14 Do you think the library is a safe place?

Library	Yes	No	No. of cases
ST	99.6	0.4	223
KN	98.8	1.2	162
NM	98.7	1.3	231
HK	97.7	2.3	263
TW	96.4	3.6	110
TD	98.8	1.2	163
OM	100.0	0	35
Weighted Total	98.5	1.5	1,187

All the comments made by respondents regarding safety revolved around how fears of children escaping from the library. It is understandable that those libraries regarded as less safe are all in close proximity to busy roads, although Surbiton's score of 0.4% in the 'No' category goes against the trend of connecting parental fears with the near proximity of roads and traffic. Several respondents at Kingston asked for measures to be put in place to prevent children from escaping, although the week before the survey took place a magnetic door lock was installed at Kingston Children's Library. It is likely that the respondents were unaware of this when they filled in the questionnaires.

Q.14 Do you think the library is easy to get to?

Library	Yes	No	No. of cases
ST	96.9	3.1	223
KN	96.9	3.1	163
NM	90.8	9.2	228
HK	97.7	2.3	257
TW	94.9	5.1	117
TD	96.5	3.5	171
OM	96.9	3.1	32
Weighted Total	95.6	4.4	1191

No comments were received from respondents regarding the accessibility of libraries in Kingston, except for one comment at Surbiton requesting that the car park be made bigger, so it is not possible to accurately state why respondents who said 'No' to this question found access to the libraries difficult. Issues almost certainly would surround ease of parking, especially in Kingston. New Malden Library in many ways is the most ill-positioned of the big libraries in relation to local shops, and is a fair way from the station, as well as only being served directly by one bus route. Parking can also be difficult in the nearby streets.

Q. 14 Do you think the library is open when I want to come in/use it?

Library	Yes 2007	No 2007	No. of cases 2007
ST	87.6	12.4	202
KN	86.2	13.8	138
NM	76.5	23.5	217
HK	90.5	9.5	241
TW	83.0	17.0	106
TD	89.3	10.7	150
OM	85.7	14.3	28
Weighted Total	85.6	14.4	1,082

The 2004 survey had a different question: 'What do I think of this library: Library Opening hours?' with the options being 'Good', 'OK', 'Bad', so it is not possible to make direct comparisons between the two surveys. Kingston Children's Library respondents are more positive than one would expect as the library shuts from 12-2 mid week and does not open until 10 am. Only 3 respondents mentioned the opening times. New Malden had a high percentage of respondents stating that the library is not always open when they want to use it, although only 4 respondents specifically mention the opening hours. It is hard to gauge why New Malden's score of 23.5% for those who answered 'No' is significantly higher than elsewhere, unless its teenagers from Holy Cross who are unable to access the library on a Wednesday.

Q.14 Do you think the library is bright and cheerful inside?

Library	Yes	No	No. of cases
ST	95.3	4.7	214
KN	94.5	5.5	146
NM	80.1	19.9	216
HK	96.5	3.5	255
TW	96.3	3.7	108
TD	88.9	11.1	153
OM	96.9	3.1	32
Weighted Total	91.8	8.2	1,124

The 2004 survey had a similar question but again, it is not possible to compare the two surveys as the options for 2004 were different. The weighted total of 91.8% for 'Yes' is a very good score as questions such as this are so subjective, so 9 out of 10 respondents stating that the library was

bright and cheerful is a sound achievement. In the 2004 survey 62.8% of respondents thought the libraries looked 'good'. However there are significant differences in the individual branch scores, with New Malden significantly higher among respondents who did not think the library looked cheerful, whilst the other libraries apart from TD scored above 90% in the good category. 4 NM respondents mentioned the library needing to be more colourful/cheerful

Q.14 Do you think the library is a place I want to come to?

Library	Yes	No	No. of cases
ST	100.0	0	211
KN	97.4	2.6	154
NM	93.5	6.5	217
HK	99.2	0.8	249
TW	97.3	2.7	113
TD	96.9	3.1	160
OM	100.0	0	34
Weighted Total	97.5	2.5	1,138

Kingston Libraries are generally regarded as places that people want to come to, with 100% of Surbiton and Old Malden respondents to this question all stating that this is the case. Somewhere in the region of 28 respondents did not think the library was a place they wanted to come to. Half of these were respondents at New Malden. Again it is not possible to know precisely why these respondents did not find libraries a place they would like to visit. New Malden also scored the lowest on the library being a friendly place to visit, and maybe these two scores are connected.

Q. 14 Do you think the library is a place with lots of things to interest me?

Library	Yes	No	No. of cases
ST	94.7	5.3	206
KN	95.3	4.7	149
NM	86.2	13.8	218
HK	95.1	4.9	245
TW	92.0	8.0	112
TD	96.8	3.2	156
OM	93.5	6.5	31
Weighted Total	93.2	6.8	1,117

The scores under 'Yes' are pretty even apart from at New Malden, where 13.8% of the respondents felt that the library had nothing to interest them. The fact that New Malden has the highest percentage of respondents in the 10-15 year old bracket and the highest number of those who come to the library independently may be a factor here. There is a case for looking at services for the 10-15 year old age group at New Malden.

Q.15 Using the library has helped me to...

Library	Read Better	Do better at school	Use computers better	Make friends	Join in and try new things	Learn and find things out	Anything else	No. of cases
ST	42.5	25.3	6.8	16.7	32.6	63.8	11.8	221
KN	50.0	27.4	8.3	15.5	35.7	55.4	8.9	168
NM	53.6	34.6	18.1	15.2	26.6	52.3	7.6	237
HK	47.3	36.3	21.0	22.1	34.7	51.9	5.0	262
TW	57.4	36.9	33.6	12.3	30.3	47.5	5.7	122
TD	63.5	34.1	6.8	7.4	30.1	61.4	10.8	176
OM	65.7	31.4	8.6	8.6	31.4	54.3	8.6	35
Weighted Total	52.2	32.4	15.0	15.4	31.7	55.6	8.3	1,221

The respondent's answers to what they feel the library has helped with them with are mixed, and highlights the wide appeal that libraries have with formal and informal learning and with social interaction. Literacy figures highly with 1 in 2 stating the libraries have helped them to read better. The idea of the library as a place of self discovery does well with about 1 in 3 respondents wanting to try new things, and more than 1 in 2 learning and finding out things. Just fewer than 1 in 6 respondents feel that the library has helped them make friends. The new Hook Centre figures high on this count which may reflect its status as a community hub. The libraries with the most concentrated IT help in terms of trainers and computer facilities (New Malden, Hook and Tolworth) are the libraries in which respondents felt that libraries helped them use computers better.

The lack of a dedicated IT officer at Surbiton, despite its IT provision' is reflected in the figures. However 71.4% of respondents who answered this question at Surbiton said that they did not use library computers.

Q. 16 Which one word describes you best?

Library	Asian 2004	Asian 2007	Mixed 2004	Mixed 2007	Black 2004	Black 2007	White 2004	White 2007	Other 2004	Other 2007
ST	7.3	10.7	10.4	13.4	1.8	1.8	75.6	71.9	4.9	2.2
KN	8.0	15.1	4.9	9.6	3.1	5.4	78.4	68.1	5.6	1.8
NM	25.0	32.8	8.5	11.6	2.4	4.3	53.7	47.8	10.4	3.4
HK	3.4	10.1	6.0	7.6	2.6	8.3	82.8	73.6	5.2	0.4
TW	19.2	28.1	3.2	12.4	3.2	9.9	68.8	46.3	5.6	3.3
TD	11.5	6.7	5.7	12.8	1.1	2.8	75.9	75.0	5.7	2.8
OM	10.5	22.2	11.8	25.0	2.6	2.8	67.1	50.0	7.9	0
Weighted Total	13.2	16.8	7.1	11.4	2.5	5.2	70.5	64.5	6.7	2.1

Clearly the number of people from minority groups using the libraries has increased in the years between the 2004 and 2007 surveys. The survey is now lacking as a tool ascertaining the ethnic mix of respondents as those who answered 'White' represent a diverse population including many people from Eastern Europe. As a service we need to take on board the *precise* nature of our audience in order that we can offer what they want.

Q. 17 What words describe you best?

Library	British 2004	British 2007	Indian 2004	Indian 2007	Irish 2004	Irish 2007	African 2004	African 2007	Caribbean 2004	Caribbean 2007
ST	82.1	82.7	3.7	4.4	4.3	2.2	1.9	2.2	2.5	1.3
KN	79.4	81.2	4.4	5.9	5.0	1.8	3.8	5.3	1.3	0.6
NM	71.0	66.0	4.3	6.6	4.3	2.1	3.1	2.9	1.9	0
HK	90.5	78.7	2.6	2.5	0	2.5	2.6	4.7	0.9	2.5
TW	75.2	58.5	7.4	21.1	3.3	1.6	2.5	4.1	0	3.3
TD	85.4	81.3	5.6	3.3	1.1	0.5	1.1	1.1	0	1.6
OM	84.4	73.0	3.9	5.4	1.3	2.7	2.6	0	0	2.7
Weighted Total	79.1	75.6	4.5	6.1	3.6	1.9	2.7	3.3	1.3	1.5

Library	Pakistani 2004	Pakistani 2007	Bangladeshi 2004	Bangladeshi 2007	Chinese 2004	Chinese 2007	Other 2004	Other 2007
ST	1.9	2.2	0.6	0.9	1.9	2.2	16.0	14.2
KN	0.6	1.2	1.3	0.6	2.5	2.9	16.9	15.9
NM	0.6	2.5	0	0.8	0.6	2.1	25.3	30.7
HK	0	2.9	0	1.1	0.9	2.2	6.9	9.4
TW	2.5	0.8	0.8	1.6	2.5	0.8	12.4	19.5
TD	1.1	0	2.2	0.5	0	3.8	18.0	17.6
OM	0	5.4	2.6	0	0	0	18.2	18.9
Weighted Total	1.0	1.9	0.8	0.9	1.5	2.3	17.5	17.7

This question is not precise enough really and in the future it may be worth asking CIPFA to provide this question in a way more suited to local needs. Clearly the 'other' population at New Malden will be largely Korean, and almost certainly the 17.7% of overall respondents who stressed 'other' in 2007 will be people from Eastern Europe, Turkey and other places. 17.7% is a significant number of people and the mix of these people ideally should be ascertained.

Conclusion

The Childrens PLUS 2007 survey certainly suggests that since the survey of 2004, the children's library service has improved in the eyes of the respondents. Clear correlation between the two surveys is not always possible but in significant areas the service has improved: in its overall rating, on its computer provision, and in key areas such as 'reading' where more respondents stated they come to the library to read in 2007 than in 2004, and in the provision of homework help.

Some areas, such as the bookstock, although the 'Good' rating has gone down slightly, less respondents thought the stock was bad in 2007 than in 2004, so overall the book stock is improving. There are clearly more issues at some libraries than others but many are of these can be tackled, and this

survey, especially the respondents comments [see appendix 2] will be used to help plan our children's library services to the local community in the next three years.