

Do we underestimate the influence of conspiracy theories? (Primary & Secondary) 03rd July 2020 – 10th July 2020

Question Primary KS1 (Key Stage 1):

“Are all lies bad?”

Question Primary KS2 (Key Stage 2):

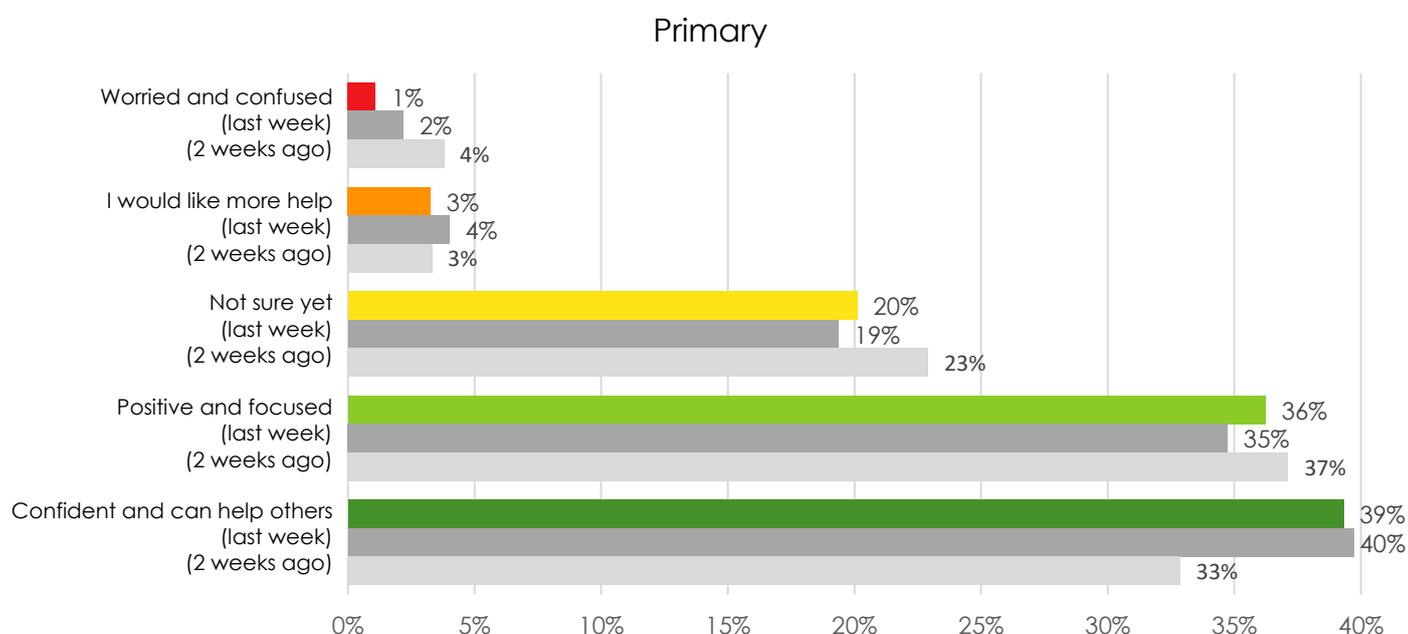
“Are conspiracy theories more dangerous than we realise?”

Question Secondary:

“Do we underestimate the influence of conspiracy theories?”

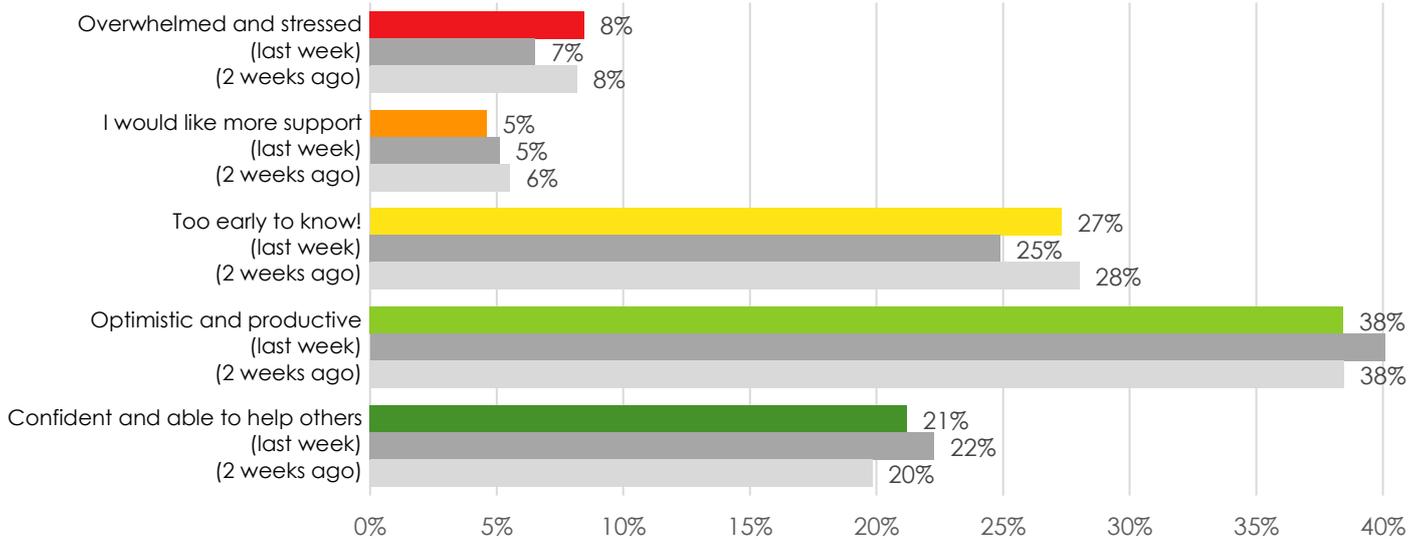
Due to the Coronavirus crisis, schools in the UK were mostly closed this week. As a result, students/pupils instead engaged with our content from home. While usually our votes are logged by teachers, we set up links for students/pupils and parents to vote independently. The response was overwhelming as many took the opportunity to have their voice heard from home.

As part of our vote this week, we encouraged students to share how they were feeling about learning from home with us. Here is an insight into what they said:





Secondary



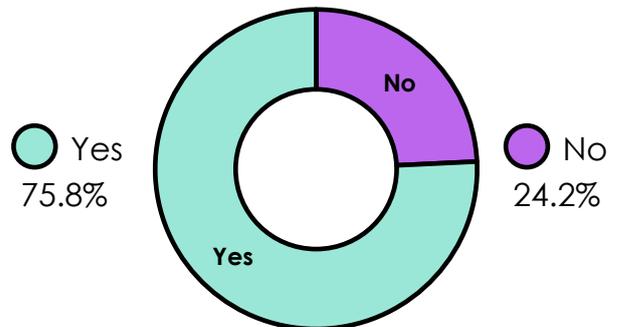
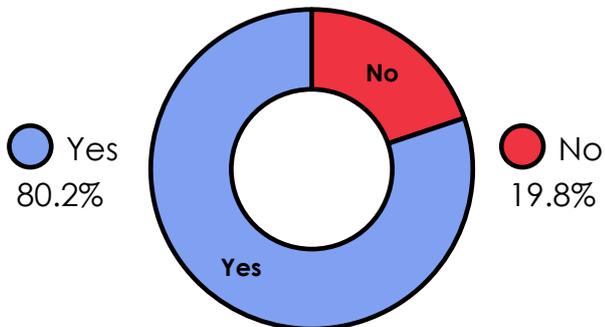
Grand Total

Primary KS2: "Are conspiracy theories more dangerous than we realise?"

Yes 80.19%
No 19.81%

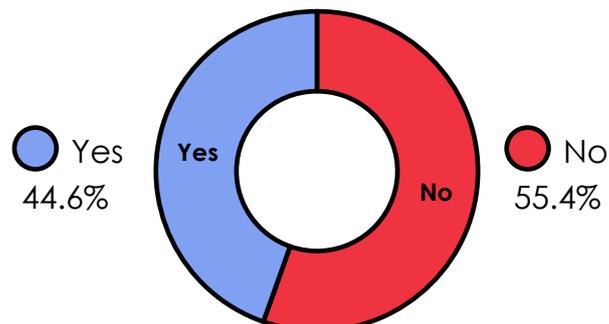
Secondary: "Do we underestimate the influence of conspiracy theories?"

Yes 75.76%
No 24.24%



Primary KS1: "Are all lies bad?"

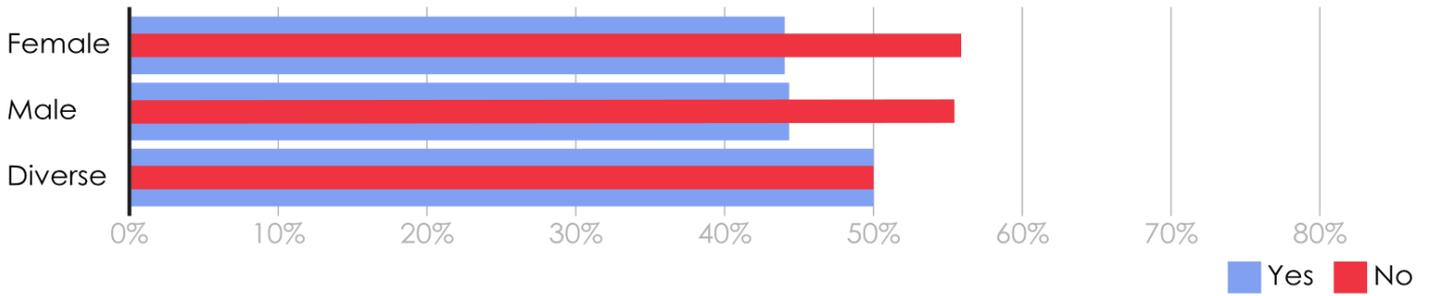
Yes 44.59%
No 55.41%



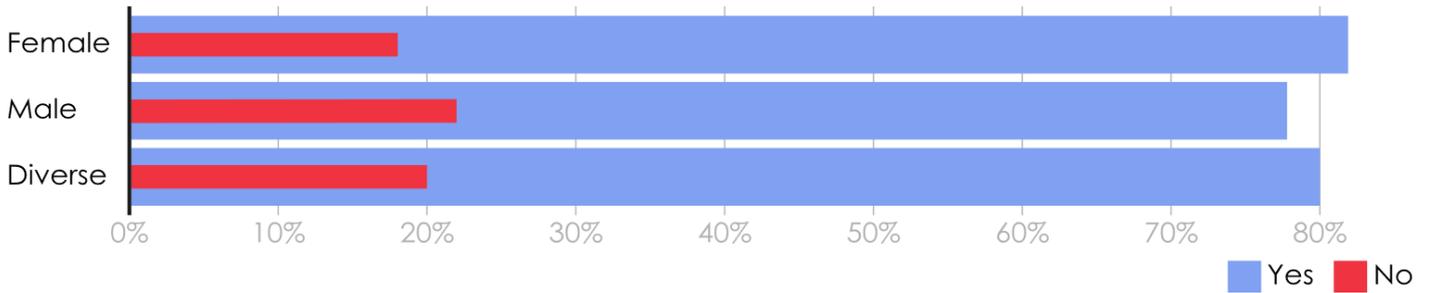


Gender

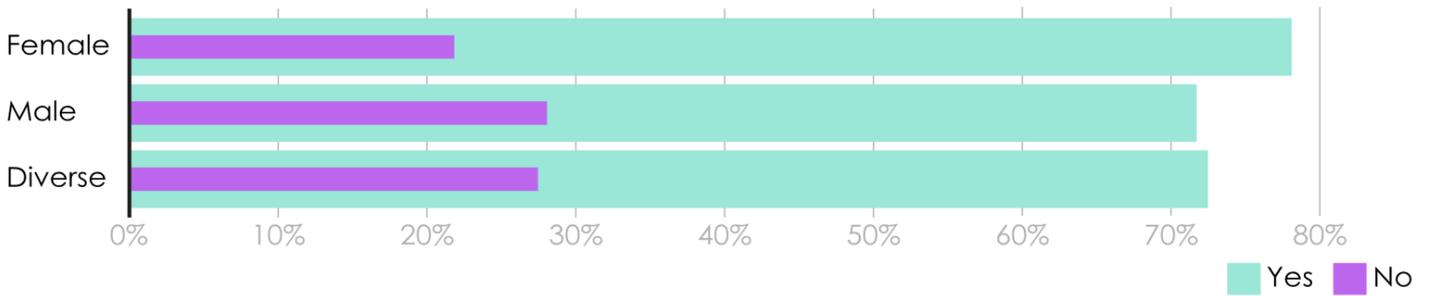
Primary (KS1)



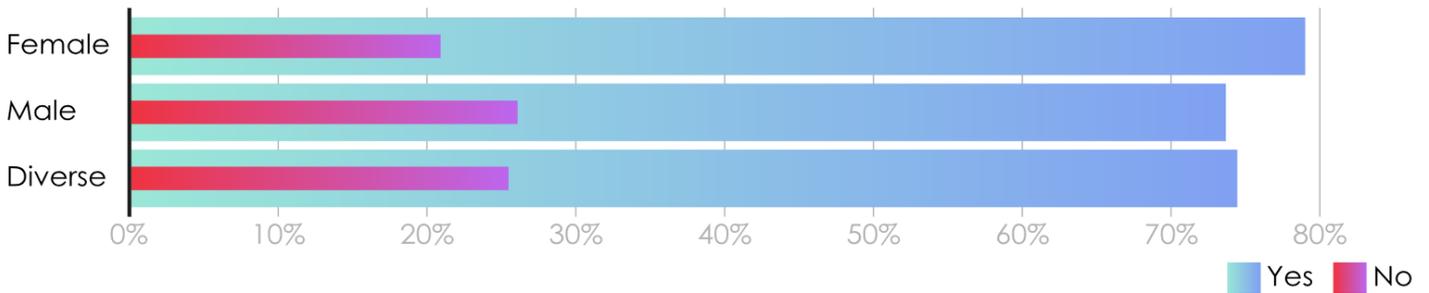
Primary (KS2)



Secondary



Primary (KS2) & Secondary Combined



Primary KS1:

	Yes %	No %
Female	44.04%	55.96%
Male	44.44%	55.56%
Diverse*	50.00%	50.00%

Primary KS2:

	Yes %	No %
Female	81.95%	18.05%
Male	77.91%	22.09%
Diverse*	80.00%	20.00%

Secondary:

	Yes %	No %
Female	78.09%	21.91%
Male	71.82%	28.18%
Diverse*	72.48%	27.52%

Primary KS2 & Secondary Total:

	Yes %	No %
Female	79.02%	20.98%
Male	73.78%	26.22%
Diverse*	74.50%	25.50%

*Votes collected as "Diverse" include students that identify as gender diverse, as well as students that wish not to disclose their gender.



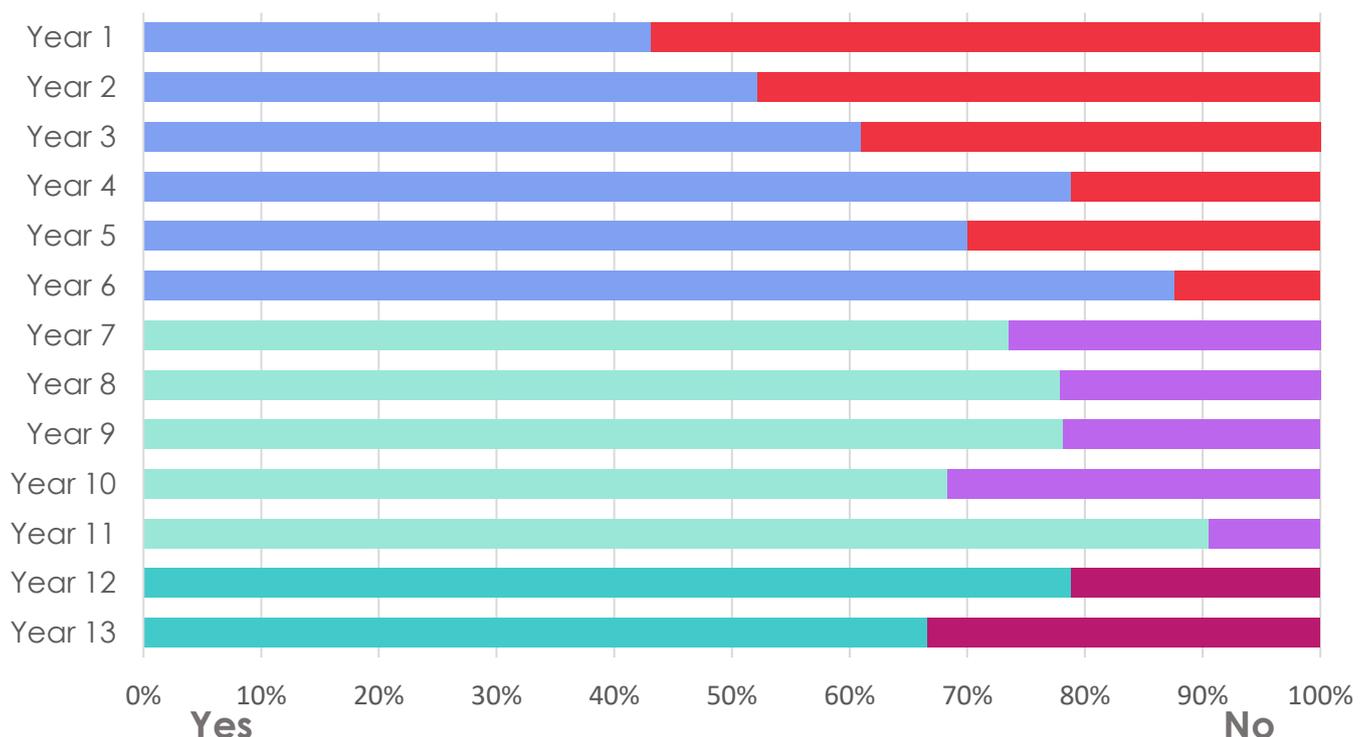
When asked about Conspiracy Theories, **both in Primary KS2 and Secondary schools, more female students said Yes** to the question “**Are conspiracy theories more dangerous than we realise?**” (Primary KS2) and “**Do we underestimate the influence of conspiracy theories?**” (Secondary) compared to male and gender diverse students.

In **Primary KS2, 81.95% of female pupils voted Yes**. This was followed by **gender diverse voters with 1.95% fewer voting yes** and **male voters with 4.04% fewer voting Yes**, compared to female pupils.

This order was identical among **Secondary students, where 78.09% of females voted Yes**, followed by **gender diverse students with 5.61% fewer Yes votes** and **male students with 6.27% fewer Yes votes**, compared to female voters.

Age

Year Group	Yes %	No %
1	43.14%	56.86%
2	52.22%	47.78%
3	60.97%	39.03%
4	78.87%	21.13%
5	70.06%	29.94%
6	87.67%	12.33%
7	73.52%	26.48%
8	77.86%	22.14%
9	78.19%	21.81%
10	68.36%	31.64%
11	90.57%	9.43%
12	78.85%	21.15%
13	67%	33%





Students' Comments: "Are all lies bad?" (Primary KS1)

"People won't **trust** you."

Primary School,
West Midlands

"If you lie your parents might find out and **things will get even worse** and if you lie, you'll **get people in trouble.**"

Primary School, London

"**Lies can hurt people** and I wouldn't like to be lied to. I think some white lies are ok, but **honesty is the best policy.**"

Primary School, Staffordshire

"Lies aren't good because they **cause trouble** and you can **hurt people's feelings** even if you are trying not to because **nobody wants to be lied to.**"

Primary School, Buckinghamshire

"It is always **good to be honest.** I would not like to be lied too. If people find out, you have said a lie you probably would get in **more trouble than if you tell the truth.**"

Primary School, London

"It is ok to lie sometimes **if it makes someone feel happy** and not sad to hear the truth. And if it is not something very important that you know will cause trouble."

Primary School, London

"**White lies** are harmless."

Primary School, Essex

"Some lies are good because they **save other people feelings from feeling bad.**"

Primary School, Buckinghamshire

"Some lies are **good if you are protecting someone.**"

Primary School, East Sussex



Students' Comments: "Are conspiracy theories more dangerous than we realise?" (Primary KS2) & "Do we underestimate the influence of conspiracy theories?" (Secondary):

"Conspiracy theories are **like wildfire and can spread quickly!**"

Primary School, West Midlands

"Conspiracy theories can **affect people's mental health** and it can worry them."

Primary School, West Midlands

"Too many people are **quick to just call the theories "crazy"**, when really they need to be taken seriously."

Primary School, Berkshire

"Not many people **care to check** if the theories are correct or wrong."

Primary School, Essex

"If there's something we need to be doing but people don't believe it because of a conspiracy theory than they **might get hurt or die.**"

Primary School, West Midlands

"It might make people believe something which is totally wrong and **could create hate.**"

Primary School, Surrey

"Even if they are outrageous, conspiracy theories **can make people re-evaluate and doubt the truth** they have been given, and the theories can influence other people and have a **negative impact on their lives.**"

Secondary School, Devon

"Many people just **dismiss conspiracy theories as "crazy"**, when actually it's much more complex than that. There are more people who believe these theories than we realise."

Secondary School, Devon

"Conspiracy theories, weather true or not, **create a sense of mystery and intrigue** around a topic. Creating **doubt which can be dangerous** in certain situations such as the current pandemic. Doubt leads to mistrust which **leads to people not following government advice.**"

Secondary School, South Yorkshire

"The idea from just **one person can spread and cause devastation.** Conspiracy theorists can harass and stress out others."

Secondary School, South Yorkshire

"People's ideas can be dangerous as they **might lead to actions** that are caused by the idea."

Secondary School, Dorset



"Most of them **are made up** and there is nothing to worry about."

Primary School, West Midlands

"**Conspiracy theories are funny stories** and the majority of conspiracy theories aren't a danger to us anymore."

Primary School, London

"Not many people believe in these theories, so they are **not dangerous to the majority of people.**"

Primary School, Leicestershire

"Most of them are **crazy and harmless.**"

Primary School, Surrey

"There are a lot of conspiracy theories and these days they **seem more laughable and untrue.**"

Primary School, Essex

"**People just make silly things up** to make life more interesting and we shouldn't be influenced by them."

Secondary School, South Yorkshire

"The majority of conspiracy theories I see are **people converting their own beliefs into false stories** so that they can gain supporters. I think conspiracy theories are **mostly made up to scare or excite others** and only influence those who are uncertain or easily convinced of ideas."

Secondary School, London

"People who make conspiracy theories are **only in it for attention** and go to extremes to **twist the truth with fake evidence.**"

Secondary School, South Yorkshire

"They can be influential but are **often inaccurate** meaning they **can't always be trusted.**"

Secondary School, West Yorkshire

"A lot of the times conspiracy theories are **made by people with no proper evidence or scientific proof.** Most of the time, there is actual scientific evidence that proves the theories wrong."

Secondary School, London