Education Report: Release of the 2019 National Monitoring Study of Student Achievement (NMSSA) Reports

To: Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education
    Hon Kelvin Davis, Associate Minister of Education
    Hon Jan Tinetti, Associate Minister of Education
    Hon Aupito William Sio, Associate Minister of Education

Cc: Pauline Cleaver

Date: 13 November 2020

Priority: Medium

Security Level: In Confidence

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Purpose of Report

The purpose of this paper is for you to:

a. **Note** the results of the 2019 National Monitoring Study of Student Achievement – Wānangatia Te Putanga Tauira (NMSSA) report for English, as well as the accompanying technical report.

b. **Note** the release of the reports on the Education Counts and NMSSA websites on 17 November 2020.

c. **Agree** to proactively release this Education Report.

Summary

- The National Monitoring Study of Student Achievement measures the achievement of Year 4 and Year 8 students in English-medium state and state-integrated schools across the entire New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) in a five-yearly cycle.
- The main purposes of NMSSA are to:
  - Provide a snapshot of English-medium student achievement at Year 4 and Year 8 against the NZC;
  - Identify factors that are associated with achievement;
  - Assess strengths and weaknesses across the curriculum;
  - Measure change in student achievement over time; and
• Provide high quality, robust data and information for policy makers, curriculum planners, researchers and educators.

• With the removal of National Standards, NMSSA is a key source of system-level achievement data which is tied to the NZC and provides valuable information in curriculum learning areas that are traditionally hard to measure, such as the arts and health and physical education.

• NMSSA includes a focus on priority learner groups: Māori students, Pacific students and students with additional learning needs.

• The NMSSA programme began in 2012, building on the strengths of NEMP (National Education Monitoring Project 1995-2010), and is a collaboration between the Educational Assessment Research Unit at the University of Otago, the New Zealand Council for Educational Research and the Ministry of Education.

• The first cycle of NMSSA took place from 2012-16, with the English curriculum covered by writing (2012), reading (2014), listening and viewing (2015). NMSSA 2019 measured all six modes of the English curriculum learning area together: reading, writing, speaking, presenting, listening and viewing.

• NMSSA 2019 gives us a rare opportunity to talk about how students are achieving across the entire curriculum learning area, using a variety of group activities, presentations and one-on-one interviews, focusing on written, oral and visual literary texts.

• To assess student achievement at Year 4 and Year 8, NMSSA measures the proportion of students achieving curriculum level objectives in the assessed learning areas in term three each year. At the end of Year 4 most students are expected to be achieving curriculum Level 2 objectives, and at the end of Year 8 most students are expected to be achieving curriculum Level 4 objectives.

2019 Key Findings

• Around 2,200 students from 100 schools at each of Year 4 and Year 8 took part in the assessment in 2019. Students, teachers, and principals also completed questionnaires about how they feel about English, how equipped they are to teach English, and the focus and resourcing for English in their schools, respectively.

• Proportionally more Year 4 students than Year 8 students achieve at the expected curriculum level, across all modes of English. This is consistent with what has been seen across the curriculum. The difference was greatest for writing (28 percentage points) and least for reading (7 percentage points).

• A greater percentage of Year 4 and Year 8 students met expected curriculum levels in listening and viewing than in the other modes of English.

• Despite the differing rates of achievement, subgroups of students (gender, ethnicity, and decile) make similar rates of progress between Y4 and Y8.
Table 1. Year 4 students are consistently more likely than Year 8 students to achieve at the expected curriculum level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year 4 (% achieving at least Curriculum Level 2)</th>
<th>Year 8 (% achieving at least Curriculum Level 4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viewing</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking*</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*not measured in cycle 1 of NMSSA.

- Between Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 there has been no significant change in the proportion of students achieving at the expected curriculum level. The proportion of students achieving at the expected level in Year 8 remains low, with more than half of Year 8 students not achieving at the expected level in English writing and speaking.

Figure 1. There has been no change in the proportion of students achieving at the expected level since cycle 1.
Recommended Actions

The Ministry of Education recommends you:

a. note the findings from the NMSSA 2019 key findings report (English) and the Technical Report.

Noted

b. note the release of the following two reports on the Education Counts website on 17 November 2020:
   i. English – Key Findings
   ii. Technical Information 2019 – English

Noted

c. note the release of flyers on the following areas in the Education Gazette in February 2021:
   • English

Noted

d. note that your offices have been provided with reactive comms for the release of the Technical Report.

Noted

e. note there is a briefing note on ‘Shifting the Dial’ on literacy coming to you shortly.

Noted

f. agree to proactively release this Education Report as per your expectation that information be released as soon as possible. Any information which may need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.

Agree Disagree

Alex Brunt
Acting Deputy Secretary
Evidence, Data and Knowledge
13/11/2020

Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister of Education
20/11/2020

Ellen MacGregor-Reid
Deputy Secretary
Early Learning and Student Achievement
13/11/2020
Background

1. The Ministry of Education’s goal is to shape an education system that delivers equitable and excellent educational outcomes. The New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) recognises that:

   Literacy in English gives students access to the understanding, knowledge, and skills needed to participate fully in the social, cultural, political, and economic life of New Zealand and the wider world. (NZC, p. 18).

2. The main purposes of NMSSA are to:
   - Provide a snapshot of English-medium student achievement at Year 4 and Year 8 against the NZC;
   - Identify factors that are associated with achievement;
   - Assess strengths and weaknesses across the curriculum;
   - Measure change in student achievement over time; and
   - Provide high quality, robust information for policy makers, curriculum planners and educators.

The NMSSA study

3. NMSSA measures the proportion of students achieving above the minimum scale score associated with achieving curriculum level objectives in the assessed learning areas. At the end of Year 4 most students are expected to be achieving curriculum Level 2 objectives, and at the end of Year 8 most students are expected to be achieving curriculum Level 4 objectives.

4. NMSSA 2019 gives us a rare opportunity to talk about how students are achieving across the entire English curriculum learning area. The assessments focused on written, oral and visual literary texts. See Annex 1 for a list of subjects included in cycle 1 and cycle 2 of NMSSA.

5. NMSSA has a particular focus on Māori students, Pacific students, and students with learning support needs.

6. Note that NMSSA takes place in term 3. We expect that more students will reach the expected curriculum level objectives by the end of the year.

7. Around 2,200 students from 100 randomly-selected schools at each of Year 4 and Year 8 took part in the NMSSA assessments during term 3, 2019. NMSSA used a range of methods to assess student achievement, including one-on-one interviews, group assessment tasks and questionnaires.

8. Responses to questionnaires were received from 139 principals of the participating schools, as well as 215 Year 4 and 203 Year 8 teachers.
NMSSA assessed achievement across the creating-meaning and making-meaning strands of the English curriculum. In creating-meaning students’ ability to use writing, speaking and presenting skills to construct and convey ideas, to express ideas with colour and detail, and to critically analyse and evaluate was assessed.

In making-meaning, NMSSA students’ ability to use reading, listening and viewing skills across a range of literary texts to locate and recall, integrate and interpret and critique and evaluate ideas and information was assessed.

The average score for Year 8 students is higher than for Year 4 students, across all modes of English (as expected since they are measured on the same scale).

However, proportionally more Year 4 students than Year 8 students performed above at or above the expected curriculum level in all six areas (see Tables 1 and 2).

Although there were no changes in the proportions of students achieving at the expected curriculum level since the first cycle, there were minor decreases in average scores for some students in writing, reading, and listening.

The average score for Year 4 English writing decreased (by two points) since this was last assessed in 2012. There was also a significant decrease in scores for boys (4 points), high decile students (4 points), and New Zealand European students (4 points) in Year 4 writing.

In listening there was a decrease for Year 8 boys (5 points), as well as New Zealand European (3-4 points) and high decile students (5 points) at both year levels. Year 8 girls scored lower in reading in 2019 than 2014 (by 3 points). Scores in the other modes remain unchanged.

Students showed low levels of achievement in Year 8 writing and speaking, compared with other modes of English. Year 8 students who achieved well in writing demonstrated the development of complex, engaging ideas, precise and extensive vocabulary, and insight into the wider world. Year 8 students who achieved well in speaking demonstrated clear, fluent, and logical speech, using descriptive vocabulary and non-verbal cues to ensure the engagement of their audience.

Students were generally positive about learning English, except for presenting, where less than half of students agreed ‘quite a lot’ or ‘totally’ that they like ‘giving talks or presentations’. Similarly, most students were confident in reading, writing, listening and viewing, but less confident about giving talks or presentations. Teachers also reported fewer opportunities for students to give prepared talks or presentations.

Teachers felt most confident teaching reading and writing, and least confident teaching viewing. Over 90% reported that they could plan lessons to match students’ individual needs, motivate students who show little interest in English, and provide an inclusive programme for students who need learning support in English.
Equity

19. Since NMSSA is not longitudinal and involves two different cohorts of students, measured in the same year, we use the average scores of Year 4 and Year 8 students to approximate an annualised rate of progress between the two year levels. We can then use these rates of progress to compare the scores of sub-groups of students, including differences between genders, ethnic groups and school decile levels.

Table 2. Average Year 4 and Year 8 score, and annualised progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average Year 4 score</th>
<th>Average Year 8 score</th>
<th>Annualised progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presenting</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viewing</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. Progress between Year 4 and Year 8 differs across the modes of English. On average, students make the least progress in speaking and presenting and the most progress in reading and viewing. Although students make the most progress in reading and viewing, average Year 4 scores were lower for those modes of English.

21. There remain persistent ethnic group, gender and socio-economic gaps in achievement, as well as gaps in achievement between those with learning support needs and those without.

22. All ethnic groups are well-represented in the group of students who are achieving at the expected curriculum level.
23. In particular, Māori and Pacific Year 4 students are achieving well in writing, listening and viewing. However, they are overrepresented in the group not achieving at the expected rate in reading and speaking. In writing Pacific students are achieving at the same rate as their non-Pacific peers.

24. Between 20 and 50 percent of Year 8 Pacific and Māori students achieved at the expected curriculum levels across the modes of English. However, these groups continue to be overrepresented in the low-achieving groups of students.

Table 3. Percentage of students achieving at the expected curriculum level across modes of English, by year level and ethnic group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 4 (at or above L2)</th>
<th>Pacific</th>
<th>Māori</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>NZ European</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viewing</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 8 (at or above L4)</th>
<th>Pacific</th>
<th>Māori</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>NZ European</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viewing</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25. In terms of average progress, on average, Pacific students were the equivalent of less than a year behind in writing, while they were more than two years behind in speaking. Māori students were around two years' progress behind their peers in speaking at both year levels, while only less than a year behind in Year 4 writing.

26. At both year levels, students with special education needs scored lower than students without special education needs, on average.

27. Girls scored higher than boys across all six modes of English. Girls were less than a year ahead in reading, around a year ahead in speaking and presenting, and viewing, and about a year and a half ahead in writing.

28. The gap between scores for students in low decile schools compared with students in high decile schools is large. The difference is equivalent to at least two years’ progress for both year levels in all modes except writing.

29. For speaking, the difference between scores for high and low decile students is equivalent to four years’ progress. This means that Year 4 students in high decile schools are scoring about the same as Year 8 students in low decile schools in speaking.
Despite the gaps in achievement, student progress is similar across ethnic, gender and decile groups, as shown in Figure 3 above.

The current differences in scores at the two year levels suggest that most students are not making enough progress to keep up with curriculum demands by Year 8, this view is supported by the low percentages of students achieving at the expected level at Year 8.

Student confidence correlates with achievement

Students were more positive and had more confidence in their ability in reading and writing in Year 4 than Year 8. The majority of students at both year levels who were not confident in reading, scored below their expected curriculum level. Students’ confidence in writing and reading was positively associated with their achievement at both year levels. The strength of this relationship was greater in Year 8 than in Year 4. This difference was more marked for Pacific and Māori students.

There are frequent opportunities for students to learn in English

Most students reported being frequently involved in a range of learning opportunities across the six modes of English. Most students reported ‘having time to read books of their own choice in class’, ‘having a teacher read to them’ and ‘talking about the main ideas in a book’.
34. However, less than half of students reported having frequent opportunities to ‘write about things that were important to them’; ‘talk about their writing’; and ‘get feedback from peers about how to improve their writing’. Less than 40% of students at both year levels reported frequently having the opportunity ‘to give talks or presentations’.

35. Students from low decile schools reported more frequent opportunities to learn in English, including having opportunities to write about things that were important to them, make links between what they read and what happens in their own lives, and talk about how the things they watched are made. Conversely, high decile students were more likely to report reading books of their own choice in class.

36. Pacific students reported more frequent opportunities to learn in some areas of English, including getting help from their peers and teachers about how to improve their writing, and getting ideas about new things to read from their teachers.

37. Teachers also reported that their students had frequent opportunities to engage in a range of reading and writing activities. However, only a minority of teachers reported that their students had frequent opportunities to ‘share their writing with people outside the class’, or ‘give prepared talks or presentations’.

38. The opportunities reported by Year 8 teachers differed across decile levels, with low decile teachers more likely to provide opportunities for students to write for purposes and audiences important to the students, while teachers from high decile schools reporting that their students were more likely to have opportunities to talk about their writing choices, and give feedback to peers on their writing.

39. More teachers reported receiving professional development (PLD) in writing and reading than in the other modes of English, but levels have dropped in these two areas since the first cycle (by 14-20 percentage points). About a third of teachers reported never having had PLD in viewing and/or presenting.

40. Almost all principals reported that their schools were places where teachers respond effectively to the learning needs of all students and provide effective and inclusive programmes in the English learning area for students who need support. Principals were most confident in their school curriculum, teachers’ PLD access, and reporting on progress and achievement for reading and writing than the other modes of English.

What is the Ministry doing to improve English learning?

41. The Ministry provides tools for teachers to assess where learners are, and the progress they’re making. These include the Learning Progressions Framework, the Literacy Learning Progressions, e-asTTle, Assessment Resource Banks, and PaCT. These tools enable teachers to monitor learning and respond with extra support if required.

42. The Ministry also provides a range of supplementary supports for those students who need additional help to meet curriculum expectations in English. These include:

a. an extensive catalogue of resources and guidance material designed to support and facilitate good practice in literacy (and numeracy) teaching and learning;
b. supplementary supports such as Reading Recovery, Resource Teachers of Literacy and Accelerating Learning in Literacy; and

c. strengthening teaching practice through the new priorities in Professional Learning and Development, all of which contribute to strengthening literacy teaching and learning.

43. The Ministry acknowledges that the current approaches to literacy learning are not working for all learners. To address this, the initial focus is on supporting and strengthening a universal teaching and learning approach at the beginning of the literacy pathway.

44. Work is under way with the sector to update The New Zealand Curriculum to ensure important learning is not left to chance. This involves providing greater clarity across the curriculum and providing support for designing schools’ local curriculum.

45. Additional options are being developed to ensure teachers know and use the right levels of support for individuals and groups within an effective, evidence-based practice framework providing quality advice, tools and resources that benefit all children. This will allow for early identification of learners who are not progressing as they should, and who can then be supported with more targeted or individualised approaches that meet their specific needs.

46. New texts are being developed to enhance the Ready to Read series, which will provide resources designed for the explicit and systematic teaching of phonics. These are based on the outcomes of the Massey University Early Literacy Research Project.

47. To ensure that all our young people leave school with the foundational literacy and numeracy skills to successfully navigate study, work and life, an NCEA literacy and numeracy co-requisite will be introduced for students from 2023. The co-requisite will be available from Year 9 and must be undertaken in order to be awarded a formal NCEA.

48. For some teachers and learners, it is not always clear what literacy and numeracy curriculum expectations are at Levels 4-5 of The New Zealand Curriculum (years 8-9). The new NCEA standards will support teachers and learners to understand the curriculum expectations at a crucial foundational level. This will ensure that important learning is not left to chance.

49. We are currently preparing a 'Shifting the Dial' briefing note on literacy, which you will receive in the coming weeks.

Communications Approach

50. The Ministry intends to release the NMSSA English 2019 Key Findings report and the NMSSA Technical Information 2019 - English report on the NMSSA and Education Counts websites on 19 November 2020. These reports have been sent to your office.

51. The flyer titled Achievement in English will be included in the Education Gazette in February 2021 (refer Annex 2).
52. It is intended that this Education Report is proactively released as per your expectation that information be released as soon as possible. Any information which may need to be withheld will be done so in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.

Annexes

Annex 1: Subjects included in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 of NMSSA
Annex 2: Education Gazette Flyer: English
Annex 1: Subjects included in Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 of NMSSA

Cycle 1 of the NMSSA programme

1. Data collected during the first cycle (2012 – 2016) provided the baseline for measuring change in student achievement over subsequent cycles, as well as the opportunity to monitor trends over time.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Year</th>
<th>Learning areas</th>
<th>Year 4 students who achieved above the minimum associated with achieving curriculum level 2 objectives</th>
<th>Year 8 students who achieved above the minimum associated with achieving curriculum level 4 objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Health and Physical Education</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Mathematics and Statistics</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>English Writing</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Viewing</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Other projects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>Technology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Arts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning Languages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. The learning areas assessed over the first five-year NMSSA cycle are detailed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Year</th>
<th>Learning areas</th>
<th>Year 4 students who achieved above the minimum associated with achieving curriculum level 2 objectives</th>
<th>Year 8 students who achieved above the minimum associated with achieving curriculum level 4 objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English: writing</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Mathematics and Statistics</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Health and Physical Education</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>English: reading</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>The Arts</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English: listening</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English: viewing</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning Languages¹</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ The learning languages programme involved three components. The first two components focussed on a range of contextual and attitudinal information about the learning languages area from students, teachers and principals using questionnaires. The third component assessed students’ knowledge and understanding of te reo Māori words and phrases.
Listening in the English Learning Area

How we assessed English listening
Students spent up to 30 minutes listening to recorded readings and answering selected-response and short constructed-response questions that followed each test. Audio files were recorded by native English speakers and were used in a variety of settings, including lessons, plays, and literature. The listening assessment was based on content from the English Language Learning Area (VELA) scale.

Key findings
- In 2019:
  - Year 4: 71% of students achieved at curriculum level 2 or above and at Year 8, 76% of students achieved at curriculum level 2 or above.
  - The difference between the scores on the VELA scale for Year 4 and Year 8 was 5 LELA units.
- Girls scored higher, on average, than boys by 4 LELA units at Year 4 and 6 units at Year 8.
- Māori students scored lower, on average, than non-Māori students by 17 LELA units at Year 4 and Year 8.
- Students from high decile schools scored higher, on average, than those from mid and low decile schools by 17 LELA units at Year 4 and Year 8.

Listening in the English Learning Area — contextual factors

Relationship between the amount of reading done at home and achievement
The amount of reading done at home by students who achieved positively correlated with their achievement at school. A greater proportion of Year 4 and Year 8 students who read 100% of their books scored in the top half (Level 4+) of the English Language Learning Area (VELA) scale compared to students who read less than 20%. For example, among Year 4 students who read 100% of their books, 65% scored at Level 4+ compared to 56% among students who read less than 20% of their books.

Achievement in English

Summary of results from the 2019 National Monitoring Study of Student Achievement for teachers and principals
The National Monitoring Study of Student Achievement (NMSSA) is designed to assess student achievement across the New Zealand Curriculum at Year 4 and Year 8 in English language and related achievement in the English Language Learning Area (VELA), which is assessed at Year 4 and Year 8 (in 2012 and 2019 respectively).

In 2019, NMSSA focused on the English learning area. The study followed a series of separate studies that were carried out in Cycle 1, writing in 2012, reading in 2014, and listening and viewing in 2015.

NMSSA English study
There are several national-level learning areas using nationally representative samples of about 2,200 students from 100 schools at each of Year 4 and Year 8. Separate assessors, using validated assessments, were trained and calibrated to work with a national sample of schools and to achieve high standards of reliability and validity. The assessments focused on literacy, numeracy, and visual and auditory modes of learning and teaching. The Key Findings report provides a detailed summary of the 2019 English study.

The Key Findings report provides a detailed summary of the 2019 English study.

Questions for teachers, principals, and curriculum leaders
- What opportunities do we give students to create and make meaning from a visual text?
- How are students encouraged to read in a variety of settings?
- What opportunities do we give students in posing questions, reflecting, exploring the perspectives of others, and thinking critically in English?
- How are students encouraged to write in a variety of settings, using a range of texts and genres?
- How do we support students in engaging with a wide range of texts and genres?
- What opportunities do we give students to present their understanding of a text?
- What opportunities do we give students to present their understanding of a text?
Proactively Released

Distribution of scores on the Speaking in the English Learning Area (SELA) scale.

Key findings:

- Approximately 80% of Year 4 students scored at or above curriculum expectations (level 4). In Year 8, this increased slightly, with 85% of students achieving at or above curriculum expectations (level 4).

- Students from high decile schools scored higher, on average, than those from mid and low decile schools. This indicates that students in more resource-rich environments may have had more opportunities to develop language skills.

- Pacific students scored lower than non-Pacific students by 10 SELA scale score units at Year 4 and 16 SELA scale score units at Year 8.

- Māori students scored lower, on average, than non-Māori students by 9 SELA scale score units at Year 4 and 17 SELA scale score units at Year 8.

- The average score for Year 8 students was 22 SELA scale score units higher than for Year 4 students. This indicates that students showed growth over the 4-year period.

Opportunities to learn and do writing:

Most students reported that each item on the test was clear and that they enjoyed writing in English. In general, girls reported lower levels of enjoyment than boys and were more likely to say they were not confident in their abilities to write in English.

How we assessed reading:

English reading was assessed with a 40-minute assessment using selected response and short answer questions, and a written response in which students talked about the reading text. Students read a text and then were given a set of comprehension questions to answer. Scores from the reading assessment were located on a scale called the Reading in the English Learning Area (RELA) scale.

Key findings:

- Approximately 50% of students achieved at or above curriculum level (level 3) by Year 4. In Year 8, this increased to 55% of students achieving at or above curriculum level.

- The average score for Year 8 students was 44 RELA scale score units higher than for Year 4 students. This indicates that students showed growth over the 4-year period.

- Girls scored higher, on average, than boys by 7 RELA scale score units at Year 4 and 5 units at Year 8.

- Students from high decile schools scored higher, on average, than those from mid and low decile schools.

Changes in achievement between 2014 and 2019:

- The change in average scores from Year 4 to Year 8 was statistically significant at 4.4 scale score units.

- Year 8 girls scored lower, on average, in 2019 compared with 2014 (4 RELA scale unit).

Students’ attitude to reading and confidence in reading:

80% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoyed reading. In general, girls were more likely to say they enjoyed reading and felt more confident in their reading abilities compared to boys.

Opportunities to learn and do reading:

Most students reported that the teacher gave them time to read and helped them to understand the text. Most students reported that they had enough time to read the text before answering the questions.
How we assessed English writing
Speaking in the English Learning Area

Distribution of scores on
The Writing in the English Learning Area (WELA) scale.

Key findings
Achievements 2014 - 2019
• About 65 percent of Year 4 students achieved at curriculum level 2 or above. In Year 8, 33 percent of students achieved at or above curriculum level 3.

Scores on the WELA scale for Year 4 and Year 8.
• Students from high decile schools scored higher, on average, than non-Māori students by 12 RELA units at Year 4 and 8 units at Year 8.
• Māori students scored lower, on average, than non-Māori students by 16 RELA units at Year 4 and 11 units at Year 8.

Changes in achievement between 2012 and 2019
• In 2019, the average score for Year 4 was 2 WELA units lower than in 2012.
• At Year 4, the average score had declined for boys (WELA units: New Zealand European/ European of European ancestry) and for high-decile schools in WELA units.

How we assessed English speaking
Speaking was assessed with four performance tasks. Students were assigned to groups of four and each group had an independent teacher assessor. The tasks included presentation, speaking and listening to a panel of judges and an independent teacher assessor. Students were given time to plan and practise their presentations.

Key findings
• Tu hierarchical analysis of variance (ANOVA) test was used to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in achievement across the levels of the curriculum.

Scores from the speaking assessment were located on the Speaking in the English Learning Area (SELA) scale.

How we assessed English listening
Listening was assessed with a four-part task. Students were given time to plan and analyse their responses to a prompt before delivering a presentation. Their responses were assessed for: ideas, structure and language features, organization, vocabulary, sentence structure, pronunciation and spelling.

Key findings
Achievement 2014 - 2019
• About 65 percent of Year 4 students achieved at or above curriculum level 2.

Scores on the presenting task Scale:
• Students from high decile schools scored higher, on average, than those from mid and low decile schools.

Changes in achievement between 2012 and 2019
• Students from high-decile schools scored higher, on average, than those from mid-decile schools.

How we assessed English reading
Reading in the English Learning Area

Distribution of scores on
The Reading in the English Learning Area (RELA) scale.

Key findings
Achievement 2014 - 2019
• About 65 percent of Year 4 students achieved at or above curriculum level 2.

Scores on the RELA scale:
• Students scored higher, on average, than boys by 7 RELA units at Year 4 and 5 units at Year 8.

Changes in achievement between 2014 and 2019
• The change in achievement in the average score reading between 2014 and 2019 was not statistically significant at the 4% level.

Opportunities to learn and do writing
Most students reported that each item on the assessment that was marked as having happened at least once, happened at least three times. One example for this was the opportunity to share things they wrote with people outside the classroom.

Opportunities to learn and do reading
Some students reported that they did not have much chance to practice reading, especially reading aloud to other people.

No. assessed Achievement 2019 Proportion meeting curriculum expectations Trend

How we assessed English reading
English reading was assessed with a 49-minute assessment using selected response and short answer questions, and a reading time interview in which students talked about the reading passages.

Key findings
Achievement 2014 - 2019
• About 65 percent of Year 4 students achieved at or above curriculum level 2.

Scores from the reading assessment were located on a scale called the Reading in the English Learning Area (RELA) scale.

Students’ attitude to reading and confidence in reading
About 60 percent of Year 4 students and about 50 percent of Year 8 students agreed totally or strongly that they were good at reading.

Students’ attitude to reading and confidence in writing
About 60 percent of Year 4 students and about 50 percent of Year 8 students agreed totally or strongly that they were good at writing.

Students’ attitude to learning and doing mathematics
In general, girls reported greater levels of enjoyment of and confidence in, learning and doing mathematics.
### Proactively Released

**Speaking in the English Learning Area**

Distribution of scores on the **Speaking in the English Learning Area (SELA) Scale**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>Level 2</td>
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**Key findings**

- **At Year 4**, 56 percent of students achieved at or above curriculum level 2 or above. In Year 8, 53 percent of students achieved at or above curriculum level 2 or above.
- **White students** scored higher, on average, than students from non-white ethnic groups at Year 4 and 8.
- **Students from high decile schools** scored higher, on average, than those from mid and low decile schools. This indicates that students make, on average, about 9 SELA units of 'progress' per year. The average score for Year 8 students was 36 SELA scale score units higher than for Year 4 students. This indicates that students make, on average, about 7 SELA units of progress per year.
- **Girls scored higher, on average, than boys by 5 SELA units at Year 4 and 4 units at Year 8.**

**Changes in achievement between 2012 and 2019**

- In 2019, the average scores for Year 4 students was 2 SELA units higher than in 2012.
- At Year 4, the average score had declined for boys (1 SELA units). New Zealand European/ Māori students and students from mixed ethnic schools in SELA units.

**Trend of scale scores**

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**Means and standard deviations**

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Listening in the English Learning Area

How we assessed English listening
Students spent up to 20 minutes listening to recorded material and answering selected-response and short constructed-response questions that followed each test. The design of the literacy non-fiction tests were used, including extracts from novels and plays, simple conversations, poems, and extended texts on culture and language. The listening assessment were located on a scale called Listening in the English Learning Area (LELA) scale.

Key findings
- In 2019, 63% of students achieved at curriculum level 2 or above and at Year 8, 60% of students achieved at curriculum level 4 or above.
- The difference between the average scores on the LELA scale for Year 4 and Year 8 students was 34.8 scale score units, which is similar to the difference observed in previous years.
- Girls scored higher, on average, than boys by 8 VELA units at Year 8 and 4 units at Year 4.
- Māori students scored lower, on average, than non-Māori students by 23 units at Year 4 and 11 units at Year 8.
- Students who reported they engaged in home reading of at least five hours a week scored 11 RELA units higher than those who did not.
- Year 8 boys scored higher, on average, than Year 4 boys by 17 units.
- Year 8 students scored higher, on average, than those from low-decile schools by 140 units.
- Change in achievement between 2015 and 2019:
  - Year 4 students scored lower, on average, than non-Pacific students by 23 units at Year 4 and 11 units at Year 8.
  - Māori students scored lower, on average, than non-Māori students by 23 units at Year 4 and 11 units at Year 8.
  - Girls scored higher, on average, than boys by 8 VELA units at Year 4 and 4 units at Year 8.
  - Students who reported they engaged in home reading of at least five hours a week scored 11 RELA units higher than those who did not.

Viewing in the English Learning Area

How we assessed English viewing
In 2019, we assessed the English learning area using nationally representative samples of about 2,000 students from 100 schools at each of Year 4 and Year 8. Separate assessments were undertaken for reading, writing, viewing and listening. The assessments for each language mode included two parts: a content-based part, designed to measure students’ achievement in all language modes, and a proficiency-based part, designed to test students’ ability to apply and reflect on knowledge and skills.

Key findings
- In 2019, the average score in viewing for Year 4 students was 15.4 scale score units lower than in the other modes.
- The majority of students (55%) reported that they did not engage in much home reading or viewing.
- About one third of students reported that they engaged in home reading of at least five hours a week.
- Students who reported they engaged in home reading of at least five hours a week scored 11 RELA units higher than those who did not.
- Boys scored higher, on average, than girls by 6 VELA units at Year 4 and 10 units at Year 8.
- Students who reported high levels of confidence tended to achieve more highly than those who were less confident.
- achievement in all language modes.

Relationship between the amount of reading done at home and achievement
The amount of reading students reported doing outside of school was positively associated with a achievement in all language modes.

The effect was greater for Year 8 than for Year 4, for example, on average, Year 4 students who read ‘for more than five hours a week’ scored 15.4 RELA units higher than those who did not read at all. Year 8, the difference increased to 34.8 units.

Student confidence and achievement
Most students were generally positive and confident about writing, reading, viewing and creating. However, those who knew their teachers were positive and confident about speaking and giving presentations.

Achievement in English
Achievement in English learning area—contextual factors
Summary of results from 2019 National Monitoring Study of Student Achievement for teachers and principals
The National Monitoring Study of Student Achievement (NMSSA) is designed to assess student achievement across the New Zealand Curriculum at Year 4 and Year 8 in English medium state and state-integrated schools, which were assessed in Cycle 1 (2012) and Cycle 2 (2019). In 2019, NMSSA focused on the English learning area. The study followed a series of separate studies from 2002 to 2019. The tests were carried out in Cycle 1 in 2012, reading in 2014, and listening and viewing in 2015.

NMSSA English study
There were some significant changes observed between 2012 and 2019:
- In 2019, the proportion of teachers who reported they had engaged in professional learning development (PLD) in reading and writing was markedly greater than in 2012.
- The assessments for each language mode included two parts: a content-based part, designed to measure students’ achievement in all language modes, and a proficiency-based part, designed to test students’ ability to apply and reflect on knowledge and skills.
- The study did not assess English used for learning in other learning areas.

Profile of achievement across the English learning area
Achievement across the curriculum
- Achievement in English learning area—contextual factors

Questions for teachers, principals and curriculum leaders
- What curriculum changes are in place to make and support a range of opportunities?
- How can we encourage students to read in their own time?
- How can we engage all students in reading, including those who have historically been reluctant to engage in reading and writing in English?
Proactively Released

Distribution of scores on the Viewing in the English Learning Area (LELA) scale.

Key findings
- In 2019:
  - Year 6: 7.6 percent of students achieved at curriculum level 2 or above and at Year 8, 4.6 percent of students achieved at curriculum level 4 or above.
  - The difference between the average scores on the LELE scale for Year 4 and Year 4 students was 21 units. This indicates that students at Year 4 scored lower than those at Year 8.
  - Girls scored higher, on average, than boys by 8 LELE units at Year 4 and 10 units at Year 8.
  - Māori students scored lower than non-Māori students by 6 LELE units at Year 4 and 8 units at Year 8.
  - Year 4 and Year 8 students scored lower on average than non-Pacific students by 10 LELE units at Year 4 and 14 units at Year 8.
  - Students from high decile schools scored higher, on average, than those from mid and low decile schools. On average, students from high decile schools scored higher than those from low decile schools at Year 4 and Year 8.

Changes in achievement between 2015 and 2019
- There were statistically significant changes in Year 4 and Year 8 for the overall average LELE score in 2019 compared with 2015.

Additional information from the 2019 study
- Several subgroups scored lower in 2019 than in 2015 (Year 8 boys; 8 LELE units; Year-White Auckland students; 4-15 LELE units; Year 8 and Year 8 students from high decile schools; 5-15 LELE units).

Achieving in English

Summary of results from the 2019 National Monitoring Study of Student Achievement for teachers and principals
The National Monitoring Study of Student Achievement (NMSSA) is designed to assess student achievement across the New Zealand Curriculum at Year 4 and Year 8 in English language and related areas. To provide insights into the study, the study data were collected between 2015 and 2019. In 2019, NMSSA focused on the English learning area. The study followed a series of separate studies that were carried out in Cycle 1 in 2012, in reading in 2014, and in writing and viewing in 2015.

NMSSA English study
The research reported in this study included a national representative sample of about 2,500 students from 100 schools at each of Year 4 and Year 8. Separate assessments were undertaken at all three language modes, reading, viewing and writing, from the reading focused study in 2012 to the all modes study in 2014. In 2019, NMSSA focused on the English learning area. The study followed a series of separate studies that were carried out in Cycle 1 in 2012, in reading in 2014, and in writing and viewing in 2015.

Insights for teachers, principals and curriculum leaders
- Questions for teachers, principals and curriculum leaders
  - NCES
  - How can we use insights from research to improve student outcomes?
  - How can teachers encourage students to read on their own time?
  - How can we engage student in writing, reading, engaging with challenging texts, and thinking critically in English?