Te Ao Tangata
Social Sciences
English

Pūrongo mōhio ā-horopaki

Contextual Insights Report 2023: Social Sciences and English

2023

Curriculum Insights and Progress Study

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University of Otago
ŌTĀKOU WHAKAIHU WAKA

NZCER
Rangahau Mātauranga o Aotearoa

Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga
Ministry of Education

Kei te hirikapo o ngā tamariki,
te kairangitanga o te anamata

The future lies within the minds of our children

Tō mātou whakapono ki Te Tiriti o Waitangi
Our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi

We acknowledge He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni | The Declaration of Independence of 1835 that asserted mana and sovereignty of hapū.

We uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi which established kāwanatanga and acknowledges enduring Māori tino rangatiratanga. A duty of partnership flows from this relationship. Te Tiriti establishes equity for Māori and aspirations for the collective wellbeing of all in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Curriculum Insights and Progress Study team seeks to honour Te Tiriti in our structures, functions, responsibilities, and day-to-day work.

Ā mātou mahi
Our work

The Curriculum Insights and Progress Study gathers annual information about achievement, teaching, and learning from a representative sample of schools and is designed to generate insights into the implementation and impact of the refreshed New Zealand Curriculum. It builds on the National Monitoring Study of Student Achievement (NMSSA). In its inaugural year in 2023, the new study gathered data from 94 schools and focused on assessing student achievement in social sciences and English in relation to the 2023 draft version of the New Zealand Curriculum.

He Mihi
Acknowledgements

Ka toro te reo o mihi ki ngā kura, ngā tauira me ngā kaiako i whai wāhi ki a mātou te āta kohikohi raraunga. Nā tō koutou āwhina nui, kua mahea te kite me pēhea tātou e anga whakamua ngā ākonga puta noa i a Aotearoa.

The research team would like to acknowledge the kura | schools and kaiako | teachers involved in gathering the data. Their support enables us to provide insights into the ako | learning and achievements of ākonga across Aotearoa.

Contents

Introduction to the 2023 Contextual Insights Report

Introduction

Kia ora. Welcome to the Contextual Insights Report from the 2023 Curriculum Insights and Progress Study (*Curriculum Insights*). The data used to generate this report comes from questionnaires completed by 2692 students, 372 teachers, and 84 principals in 95 participating schools. The data was collected by teacher researchers as part of a series of school visits in Term 3. The research team would like to mihi to the many people who contributed to and supported the study. This includes the schools and kaiako | teachers involved in gathering of the data. This support enables us to provide insights into the achievement of ākonga | students across Aotearoa.

Curriculum Insights aims to answer three research questions relating to the implementation of the refreshed New Zealand Curriculum:

1. How are NZ students at Years 3, 6, and 8 in state and state-integrated English medium schools achieving in relation to the progression described by the refreshed New Zealand Curriculum?
2. What contextual variables at the student, classroom, and school level contribute to the broad notion of student progression described by the refreshed New Zealand Curriculum?
3. What insights, based on data related to student achievement and the context in which it occurs, can be generated to drive actionable steps that support the aspirations of the refreshed New Zealand Curriculum for all ākonga?

The purpose of this report is to provide contextual information to complement and help interpret the study's achievement data for the English and te ao tangata | social sciences learning areas. In doing so, it addresses the second research question. For the most part, this report presents descriptive statistics reflecting the perspective of students, teachers, and principals in relation to learning in schools. The 2023 study was informed by the relevant learning area statements from the 2023 draft version of the New Zealand Curriculum. At the time of data collection, schools were not required to use the draft learning area statements. The exception was the aspects of the te ao tangata | social sciences statement related to Aotearoa New Zealand histories (ANZH). Most schools would have been in the early stages of incorporating ANZH into their programmes. Please note that the 2023 draft learning statements have since been superseded by the 2024 reset of the curriculum refresh.

This chapter provides details about the conceptual framework that underpinned the questionnaires used in the study. It also describes how the report is organised and provides some comments on the methods used.

Questionnaire Conceptual Framework

To guide the development of the questionnaires, the research team created a conceptual framework. The framework was underpinned by the three key principles from the 2023 draft version of the New Zealand Curriculum:

Principle 1

Upholding Te Tiriti o Waitangi

This emphasises the need for curriculum interventions and initiatives to legitimise, include, and allow for the expression of student identities and cultural backgrounds, particularly for ākonga Māori, to address inequities and uphold the principles of Te Tiriti. We acknowledge that, in the first year of this project, our processes, and the data that we have collected through our questionnaires has not allowed us to fully meet this objective. Work is ongoing, in consultation with Māori educators, to ensure the study better addresses this in the future.

Principle 2

Holding a broad view of ākonga success

This principle highlights the interconnectedness of wellbeing and excellence as essential outcomes of schooling are emphasised, and the importance of promoting inclusive relationships, a sense of belonging, and recognising the open-ended potential of every learner are highlighted.

Principle 3

Maintaining high expectations for all ākonga

This principle underlines the need to provide rigorous learning experiences for every student, that foster the knowledge, skills, and capabilities for success in education and beyond. It also aims to cultivate the unique strengths, interests, and potential of each student.

Together these principles provided a foundation for design decisions regarding the content and use of questionnaires in the 2023 Curriculum Insights and Progress Study.

Development of the Framework

The development of the framework included reviewing the academic literature and previous educational assessment studies. We identified theoretical constructs that aligned with the principles and values of the 2023 draft version of the New Zealand Curriculum, and that could provide a strong foundation for the use of questionnaires in the study. Additionally, the review also identified existing scales for obtaining data on many of these constructs. From this review, six conceptual pillars were selected to underpin the questionnaires and support reporting.

Organisation of the report

This Contextual Insights Report describes findings relating to each of the pillars. Each chapter focusses on one pillar.

Chapter 1

Demographic and general information

Demographic and general information refers to the characteristics of the schools, principals, teachers, and learners involved in the 2023 study. Understanding and responding to the uniqueness and diversity of our educational communities is essential. This chapter provides an overview of the participants who took part in the study.

Chapter 2

Curriculum, content, and instruction

Curriculum is the overall plan for learning, content is the material to be taught, and instruction is the method of delivering that material to students. Together, curriculum, content and instruction contribute significantly to the quality of student learning. This chapter describes findings relating to: opportunities to learn, barriers to effective teaching, teachers' professional learning and development, and pedagogical approaches.

Chapter 3

Findings on wellbeing

Wellbeing includes both student wellbeing, which is related to their ability to learn, and the professional wellbeing of teachers and principals, which is directly related to the quality of the delivered curriculum. This is important as the wellbeing of students is inseparable from their progress, and the wellbeing of educational professionals is strongly connected with the quality of teaching. The notion of wellbeing as an outcome of schooling is clearly linked to Principle Two of the 2023 draft version of the New Zealand Curriculum, which is to hold a broad view of student success. This chapter describes students' responses to questions relating to aspects of their wellbeing, as well as the professional engagement of teachers and principals.

Chapter 4

Findings on self-efficacy

Academic self-efficacy refers to students' belief in their ability to successfully complete tasks and reach learning goals. In a similar way, principal and teacher self-efficacy reflects their confidence in planning, organising, and executing activities that promote student learning. Student self-efficacy is strongly connected to motivation and persistence. For principals and teachers, self-efficacy shapes their capability, engagement, selection of effective teaching methods, and involvement in professional development. Additionally, higher self-efficacy in principals and teachers is associated with improved wellbeing, leading to reduced stress, burnout, and attrition. This chapter describes students' confidence in their own ability in English and social sciences, and the professional self-efficacy of teachers and principals.

Chapter 5

Findings on collective efficacy

Collective efficacy is the shared belief among teachers in their collective ability to positively impact learning for all students, though individual teachers may hold differing levels of confidence in this shared capacity. This relates to the quality of the delivered curriculum as it predicts school-wide aspiration and engagement, and principal and teacher professional wellbeing (especially through a reduction in stress, plus improved engagement and optimism). This chapter compares the perceived collective efficacy of participating principals and teachers, making comparisons between demographic subgroups.

Chapter 6

Findings on academic attitudes

Academic attitudes refer to the beliefs, values, and mindsets that students, teachers, and school leaders hold about learning, education, and academic achievement. These attitudes influence how individuals approach learning and teaching, how they set goals, and how they respond to challenges and successes in the educational process. Academic attitudes encompass both collective perspectives within a school community and individual dispositions, and they play a crucial role in shaping the educational environment and outcomes. This chapter describes findings relating to students' reported enjoyment of English and social sciences, as well as teachers' and principals' perceptions of the general academic attitudes of their school communities.

Comments on methodology

Reporting socioeconomic differences

The Curriculum Insights and Progress Study uses the Ministry of Education's Schooling Equity Index (EQI) as a socioeconomic variable at the school level. The EQI is a statistical model that estimates the degree to which students face barriers to achievement. Schools are assigned an EQI score between 344 and 569, with higher scores indicating that students in those schools, on average, encounter more socioeconomic challenges compared to students in schools with lower scores. From the EQI, schools can be categorised into three groups representing those with fewer, moderate, or more socioeconomic barriers to achievement. This report uses these groups when examining how socioeconomic factors are associated with different contextual variables[1].

Notable differences

This report discusses how responses are related to demographic variables such as gender and socioeconomic status. Differences are reported as 'notable' when the pattern for a subgroup varies from the result for all respondents by at least ten percentage points.

[1] The EQI replaces the decile bands previously used to indicate the socioeconomic status of schools.

Demographic and general information

Pillar 1

This chapter outlines key demographic data from respondents to the student, teacher and principal questionnaires used in the 2023 Curriculum Insights and Progress Study (*Curriculum Insights*). We start by discussing what is meant by 'demographic data' and why the data is important. We then provide an overview of the demographics associated with the participating students, teachers, and principals.

Findings at a glance

Participating students are representative of students in English-medium schools nationally.

Participating teachers provide a snapshot of perspectives in New Zealand schools.

Participating principals have a broad range of ages and experience.

What is demographic data and why is it important?

Demographic data from a questionnaire provides information about the characteristics of respondents, enabling researchers to analyse trends, consider the representativeness of the sample, and draw more informed conclusions. The demographic information collected as part of *Curriculum Insights* supports an in-depth exploration of variables related to different educational communities and enables tailored reporting for various groups of students and staff. This is crucial for understanding and responding to the uniqueness and diversity of our educational communities and is aligned to the principles of the 2023 draft version of the New Zealand Curriculum. Furthermore, the demographic data gathered from the sample can be compared with population-level data to assess how representative it is of the wider population.

Demographics for students

Participating students are representative of students in English-medium schools nationally.

In 2023, *Curriculum Insights* surveyed nationally representative samples of students in Years 3, 6, and 8 from English-medium state and state-integrated schools. These samples were constructed through a two-stage process. Firstly, two sets of participating schools were selected using a stratified random sampling approach, allowing for socioeconomic status, geographic region, and school size. The first sample was of schools with students in Years 3 and 6, and the second was of schools with students in Year 8. A random sample of students, their teachers, and the principals from each school in the sample, were asked to complete contextual questionnaires focused on the six pillars listed in the introduction.

Questionnaire data was received from 48 schools with students in Years 3 and 6 and from 46 schools with students in Year 8. A total of 84 principals, 372 teachers and 2692 students responded to questionnaires.

In each school, 24 students from each participating year level were asked to complete student questionnaires. Table 1.1 shows the percentages of students by school equity index (EQI) group for each year level who completed a student questionnaire. It should be noted that nationally, schools in the "more barriers" group tend to have fewer students than other schools. Since the sampling process allowed an equal chance of selection by student, rather than by school, there were fewer participating students in the "more barriers" group. Percentages of students nationally within the sampling frame are included for comparison.

Table 1.1: Percentage of students responding to the contextual questionnaire, by school equity index group (EQI) and year level

	Percentage of students					
	Year 3		Year 6		Year 8	
EQI group	Sample n=957	National	Sample n=883	National	Sample n=852	National
More	18%	19%	19%	19%	15%	20%
Moderate	35%	37%	31%	36%	46%	47%
Fewer	47%	44%	50%	45%	39%	33%

The students' demographic data was provided by the Ministry of Education from their national student database. A small proportion of students could not be matched, resulting in slightly lower numbers in the following tables compared to the totals mentioned above.

Table 1.2 shows a relatively even split of student genders, with slightly more females in each year level[1].

Table 1.2: Percentage of students responding to the contextual questionnaire, by gender and year level

	Percentage of students		
Gender	Year 3 n=941	Year 6 n=874	Year 8 n=835
Male	49%	47%	48%
Female	51%	53%	52%

[1] Gender information provided by the Ministry of Education is binary.

Approximately 20% of the students in each year level were identified in the national student database as Māori, and approximately 12% were identified as Pacific students. In the Years 3 and 6 samples around 55% of students were identified as NZ European and 22% Asian, while in the Year 8 sample 65% were identified as NZ European and 13% as Asian. Note that students could be identified as belonging to more than one ethnic group so percentages sum to more than 100%. As shown in Table 1.3, these percentages are similar to the proportions of ethnicities within our sample frame, nationally.

Table 1.3: Percentage of students responding to the contextual questionnaire, by ethnicity and year level

	Percentage of students					
	Year 3		Year 6		Year 8	
Ethnicity	Sample n=941	National	Sample n=874	National	Sample n=835	National
NZ European	56%	57%	53%	57%	65%	59%
Māori	20%	25%	22%	24%	22%	26%
Pacific	13%	14%	11%	14%	12%	15%
Asian	22%	19%	22%	18%	13%	16%

Demographics for teachers

Participating teachers provide a snapshot of perspectives in New Zealand schools.

Within the schools involved, all teachers with students in the participating year levels were invited to complete the teacher questionnaire. All responses were anonymous. Table 1.4 shows the percentages of teachers by school equity index (EQI) group for each year level.

Table 1.4: Percentage of teachers responding to the contextual questionnaire by EQI group and year level

	Percentage of teachers		
School Equity Index (EQI) group	Year 3 n=87	Year 6 n=79	Year 8 n=206
More barriers	21%	28%	11%
Moderate barriers	37%	28%	53%
Fewer barriers	43%	44%	36%

Of the participating teachers, 287 (77%) were female, 83 (22%) were male, and two (1%) chose not to provide their gender. Teachers were also asked to indicate which ethnic group(s) they belong to. Table 1.5 shows that 75% of teachers identified as NZ European/Pākehā and 14% identified as Māori. Data provided on Education Counts[2], indicates that 71% of teachers nationally identify as European/Pākehā and 12% identify as Māori. Note that teachers could select multiple options so the percentages sum to more than 100%.

Table 1.5: Ethnicity of participating teachers

	Percentage of teachers
Ethnicity	Sample n=372
NZE/Pākehā	75%
Māori	14%
Pacific	7%
Asian	8%
Other	16%

[2] https://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/statistics/teacher-numbers

Teachers were asked to indicate their level of ability to speak te reo Māori in day-to-day conversation (Table 1.6). The majority of teachers (80%) indicated that they either speak no more than a few words or phrases or that they can only talk about simple things in Māori. Only four teachers (1%) indicated that they can talk about almost anything in te reo.

Table 1.6: Participating teachers' ability to speak te reo Māori

Ability to speak te reo Māori	Percentage of teachers
No more than a few words or phrases	41%
Not very well (I can only talk about simple things in Māori)	39%
Fairly well (I can talk about some things in Māori)	16%
Well (I can talk about many things in Māori)	4%
Very well (I can talk about almost anything in Māori)	1%
Total	369

Teachers were asked to identify what teaching qualifications they hold. The majority (73%) reported a bachelor's degree as their highest qualification. Eleven percent had a master's degree, while 15% had a teaching certificate as their highest qualification. Most of the participating teachers (93%) had at least one New Zealand qualification, with five percent of teachers having qualifications from both New Zealand and overseas.

Table 1.7 shows the decade of birth and number of years of teaching experience of the participating teachers. A wide range of ages and levels of experience are represented in the sample.

Table 1.7: Age and experience of participating teachers

	Years of teaching experience					
Decade of birth	Less than 1 year	1-2 years	3-5 years	6-10 years	More than 10 years	Total
1950-1959					15	15
1960-1969				5	50	55
1970-1979		5	9	10	77	101
1980-1989	1	4	11	26	49	91
1990-1999	12	8	33	33	10	96
2000-2009	5	4	1			10
Total	18	21	54	74	201	368

Limitations of the teacher sample

Because responses were anonymous it is not possible to link the responses of individual teachers directly to participating students. We also note that, due to the self-selecting nature of the sample, it may not sufficiently reflect the broader teaching population to make absolute claims about teachers' perspectives and beliefs. However, at the very least, our sample provides an indication of teachers' perspectives in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Demographics for principals

Participating principals have a broad range of ages and experience.

All principals from participating schools were asked to complete the principal questionnaire. Table 1.8 shows the percentages of principals by school equity index (EQI) group for Years 3 and 6, and Year 8 schools, respectively.

Table 1.8: Percentage of principals responding to the contextual questionnaire by EQI group and year level

School equity index group	Year 3 & 6	Year 8
More	20%	15%
Moderate	38%	54%
Fewer	42%	31%
Total	45	39

Of the participating principals, 47 (56%) were female, and 37 (44%) were male. Principals were also asked to indicate which ethnic group(s) they belong to. Table 1.9 shows that 89% identified as NZ European/Pākehā. Note that principals could select multiple options so the percentages sum to more than 100%.

Table 1.9: Ethnicity of participating principals

Ethnicity	Percentage of principals
NZ European / Pākehā	89%
Māori	10%
Samoan	2%
Niuean	2%
Indian	4%
Other	4%

Principals were asked to indicate their level of ability to speak te reo Māori in day-to-day conversation. The majority of principals (74%) indicated that they either speak no more than a few words or phrases or that they can only talk about simple things. Only one principal (1%) indicated that they can talk about almost anything in te reo.

Table 1.10: Participating principals' ability to speak te reo Māori

Ability to speak te reo Māori	Percentage of principals
No more than a few words or phrases	25%
Not very well (I can only talk about simple things in Māori)	49%
Fairly well (I can talk about some things in Māori)	22%
Well (I can talk about many things in Māori)	2%
Very well (I can talk about almost anything in Māori)	1%
Total	83

Of the participating principals, thirty-six (43%) had a master's degree. Ninety-two percent of the principals had at least a bachelor's degree.

Table 1.11 shows participating principals' decade of birth and their years of experience in the role. The sample included 14 first year principals, as well as 29 principals with more than ten years' experience.

Table 1.11: Age and experience of participating principals

Year of birth	Years of experience as a principal					
	Less than 1 year	1-2 years	3-5 years	6-10 years	More than 10 years	Total
1950-1959				2	10	12
1960-1969	2	1	6	8	13	30
1970-1979	11	4	6	3	5	29
1980-1989	1	2	4	3	1	11
Total	14	7	16	16	29	82

Findings on curriculum, content, and instruction

Pillar 2

This chapter describes key aspects of curriculum implementation in the schools that participated in the 2023 study. We start by describing what is meant by curriculum and why it is important and outline our methodology. After that, we present a detailed breakdown of results for students, teachers, and principals. Lastly, we briefly explore the possible implications of these results.

Findings at a glance

A key objective of our study in 2023 was to provide valuable insights on the delivery and experience of the curriculum, and particularly in English and te ao tangata | social sciences, in English-medium state and state-integrated schools. Our analysis highlights eight notable findings:

Teachers and principals indicated that a shortage of resources for students who need learning support affects capacity to teach.

88% of teachers and 86% of principals identified this as a factor affecting teaching.

Teachers in "More Barriers" schools were more concerned about access to resources.

The proportion of teachers reporting that a shortage of resources affected their teaching was highest in schools with more socioeconomic barriers to achievement.

The learning area most commonly included in inquiry teaching is social sciences.

87% of teachers include social sciences in their inquiry teaching.

PLD occurs more frequently in English than in social sciences or Aotearoa New Zealand's histories.

More than three times as many teachers had done 16+ hours of English PLD as had done 16+ hours in social sciences or ANZH.

English

Almost all teachers read aloud to their class.

All participating Year 3 and Year 6 teachers and 97% of Year 8 teachers read aloud to their classes.

Teachers indicated a high level of self-efficacy as English teachers.

More than 90% of teachers agreed with each capability statement.

Social Sciences

Students do not frequently visit places that are important to their history in social sciences

Both teachers and students reported this opportunity as the least common of those listed.

Teachers indicated a high level of self-efficacy in social science teachers.

More than 85% of teachers agreed with each capability statement.

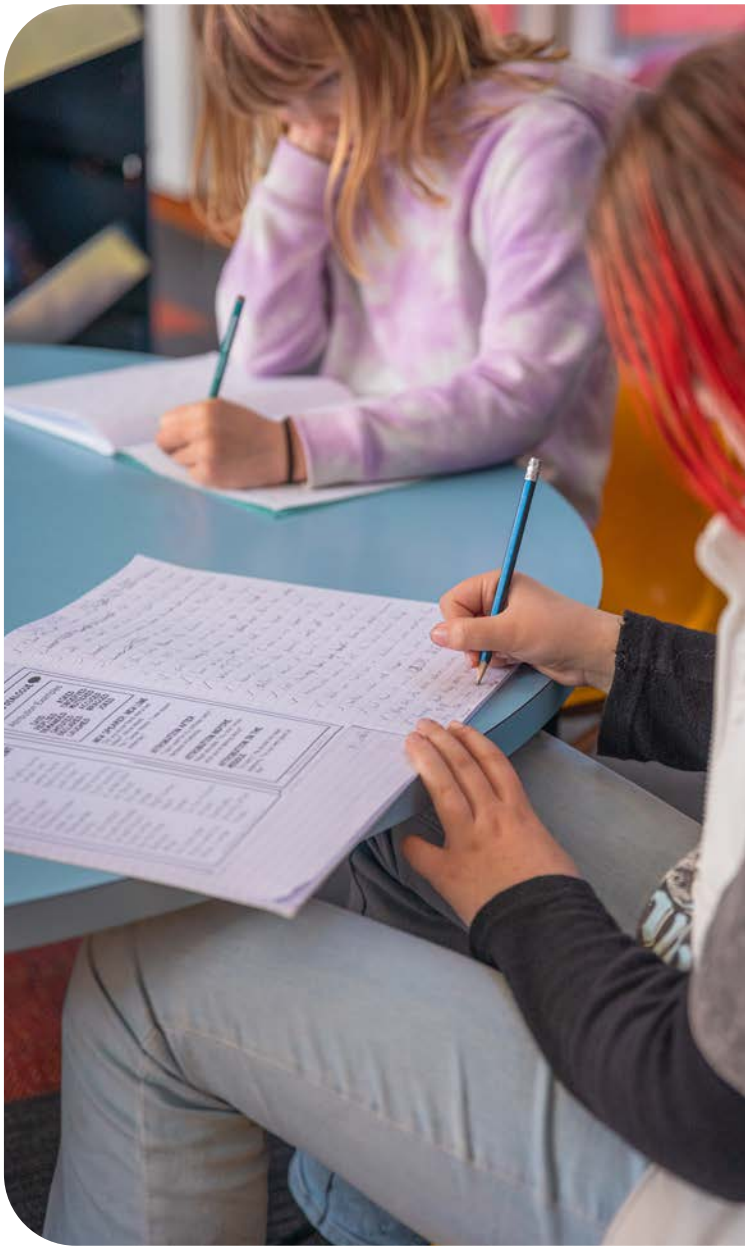
What is curriculum, content and instruction, and why is it important?

A key objective of the Curriculum Insights and Progress Study (*Curriculum Insights*) is to provide valuable observations on the implementation and impact of the refreshed New Zealand Curriculum in state and state-integrated schools. A sizeable portion of the contextual surveys were dedicated to questions that relate to the delivery and experience of curriculum, particularly within the English and te ao tangata | social sciences learning areas. This included gathering students', teachers' and principals' perceptions of: opportunities to learn, barriers to effective teaching, teachers' professional learning and development, and pedagogical approaches.

What did we do?

To ensure that surveys were concise and did not place an unreasonable burden on students, teachers, and principals, curriculum, content, instruction, and pedagogical content knowledge items were only included if we believed they:

- could generate unique and actionable insights for the Ministry of Education, schools, PLD, and ITE
- are relevant to the current policy climate
- are malleable attributes (such as availability of PLD, resources for instruction, etc.), and/or
- shed light on teachers' pedagogical content knowledge.



We asked Year 3 students fewer questions than Year 6 and 8 students and we reduced the number of response categories for Year 3 students to make completion more straightforward.

The teacher survey included sets of questions on:

- potential barriers to teaching
- implementation of inquiry learning
- opportunities to learn provided in the focus learning areas
- the teacher's classroom programme and confidence in teaching each of the focus learning areas
- access to professional learning and development.

The principal survey included questions on:

- potential barriers to teaching
- their school's resources and teachers' knowledge and behaviour with regard to teaching the focus learning areas
- access to professional learning and development.

What did we find?

We analysed how the participants in the study responded to the survey items and how these responses were related to a range of demographic and achievement variables. We identified eight notable findings. These findings are described below.

Findings relating to resourcing

This section describes teachers' and principals' perceptions of how resourcing affects teaching and learning within their schools.

Teachers and principals indicated that a shortage of resources for students who need learning support affects capacity to teach.

We asked teachers and principals to identify the extent to which their capacity to teach is affected by a shortage of different resources. Figures 2.1 and 2.2 summarise their responses.

Figure 2.1: Percentage of teachers responding to whether shortages impact on capacity to teach

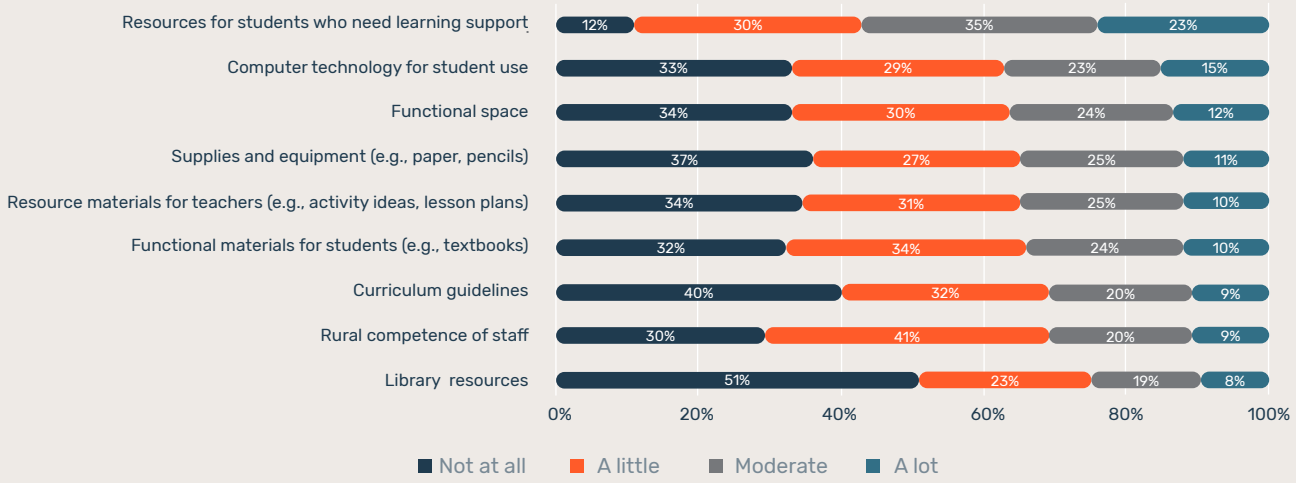
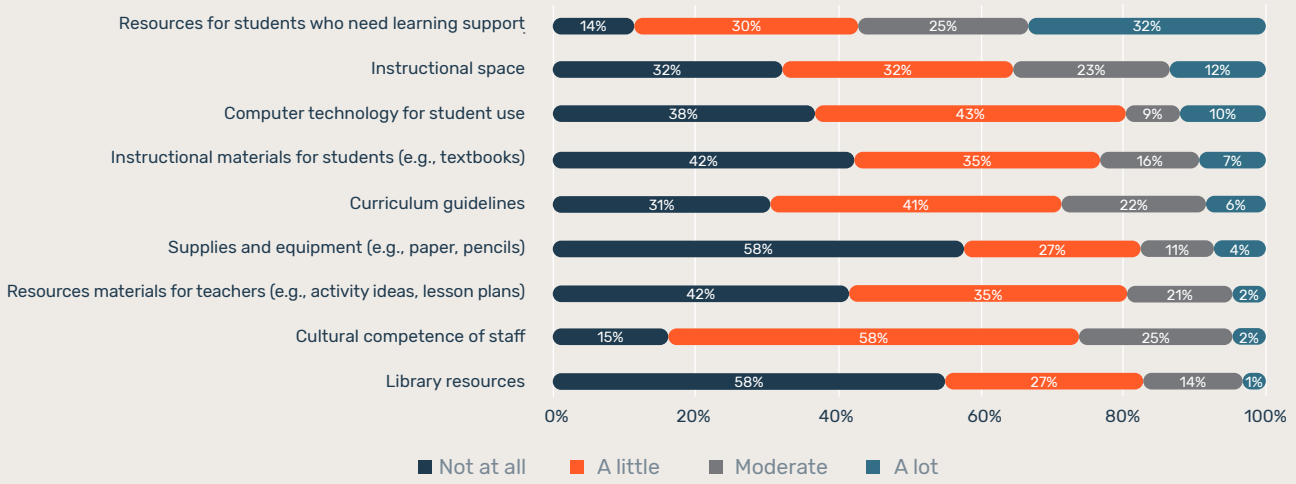


Figure 2.2: Percentage of principals responding to whether shortages impact on capacity to teach



Of the resources listed, the one identified most frequently by both principals and teachers was resources for students who need learning support. A shortage of these resources was identified as affecting their capacity to teach at least "a little" by 88% of teachers and 86% of principals. Over half of teachers and principals rated a shortage of resources for students with learning needs as impacting their teaching either "moderately" or "a lot".

While 30% of teachers indicated that cultural competence of staff was not a barrier, only 15% of principals agreed. Conversely, 58% of principals reported that a shortage of supplies and equipment were not a barrier, compared to 37% of teachers.

Teachers in "More Barriers" schools were more concerned about access to resources.

We compared the proportions of teachers who rated a shortage in each resource category as affecting their teaching to at least some extent, across different school equity index groups. The results are summarised in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Percentage of teachers rating a shortage of each category as affecting their teaching at least "a little"

	Equity index group			
	More	Moderate	Fewer	All
Resource materials for teachers (e.g. activity ideas, lesson plans)	80%	68%	58%	66%
Instructional materials for students (e.g. textbooks)	78%	70%	62%	68%
Supplies and equipment (e.g. paper, pencils)	78%	66%	52%	63%
Curriculum guidelines	73%	60%	55%	60%
Instructional space	73%	64%	66%	66%
Cultural competence of staff	73%	75%	62%	70%
Computer technology for student use	75%	69%	61%	67%
Library resources	62%	55%	38%	49%
Resources for students who need learning support	90%	90%	84%	88%

In nearly every category, a larger proportion of teachers from schools with more socioeconomic barriers indicated that access to the resource affected their teaching, compared to teachers from other schools. The exceptions were "cultural competence of staff" and "resources for students who need learning support" which were both rated similarly to teachers from schools with moderate socioeconomic barriers.

Findings relating to inquiry

This section describes findings related to the implementation of inquiry learning in the schools involved in the study.

The learning area most commonly included in inquiry teaching is social sciences.

We asked teachers how much time they spend on inquiry learning in a typical week, where several learning areas are addressed together. The results are summarised in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Time spent on inquiry learning in a typical week

Time per week	Percentage of teachers			
	Year 3 n=84	Year 6 n=79	Year 8 n=183	All n=346
No time	4%	1%	5%	4%
Less than 3 hours	43%	32%	38%	38%
3-5 hours	40%	52%	42%	44%
6-10 hours	11%	13%	10%	11%
More than 10 hours	2%	3%	4%	3%

Only 14 teachers (4%) indicated that they do not use inquiry learning in their class. Fifty-eight percent of participating teachers spend at least three hours per week, and 14% spend at least six hours. Year 6 teachers reported the most time spent on inquiry learning, with 67% reporting at least three hours per week compared to 54% of Year 3 and 56% of Year 8 teachers.

Those teachers that use inquiry learning were asked to identify which learning areas are typically included in inquiry learning in their classroom. The results are summarised in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Learning areas included in inquiry learning.

Learning area	Percentage of teachers			
	Year 3	Year 6	Year 8	All
Te ao tangata | social sciences	85%	83%	90%	87%
Science	81%	74%	76%	77%
English	68%	73%	76%	73%
Technology	70%	69%	47%	58%
The Arts	69%	64%	48%	57%
Mathematics and Statistics	40%	40%	48%	44%
Learning Languages	23%	23%	21%	22%
Health and Physical Education	14%	15%	23%	19%

For all year levels, te ao tangata | social sciences was the most included learning area, followed by science. English was also included by over two thirds of teachers in every year level. While most Year 3 and 6 teachers also included technology and the arts, fewer than half of Year 8 teachers did, possibly because these subjects are more likely to be taught by specialists in Year 8 than in Years 3 and 6. Mathematics and statistics was included by 40% of Year 3 and 6 teachers and 48% of Year 8 teachers, while learning languages and health and physical education were included by less than a quarter of teachers in each year level.

Findings relating to professional learning and development

This section presents findings on the professional learning and development (PLD) available to participating teachers in English and social sciences.

PLD occurs more frequently in English than social sciences or Aotearoa New Zealand's histories.

We asked principals to indicate whether each of the curriculum focus learning areas (English or te ao tangata | social sciences), or Aotearoa New Zealand's histories (ANZH) specifically, were a focus of PLD in their school in the last two years. They were also asked to indicate how much access teachers in their school have to PLD in each area. The results are summarised in Tables 2.4 and 2.5.

Table 2.4: PLD focus in the last two years

	No, not a focus	Yes, a minor focus	Yes, a major focus
English	8%	33%	59%
Social sciences	26%	47%	26%
ANZH	4%	53%	43%

Table 2.5: Principals' responses regarding teacher access to PLD

	No access	Little access	Moderate access	Extensive access
English	0%	12%	60%	28%
Social sciences	3%	30%	54%	13%
ANZH	0%	20%	58%	22%

Over half (59%) of principals indicated that English had been a major focus of PLD in their school in the last two years, and 88% indicated that their teachers had moderate or extensive access to English PLD. While 43% of principals said that ANZH had been a major focus in their school, and 80% said that they had moderate or extensive access to PLD, only 26% said that social sciences had been a major focus. We assume that some principals did not include PLD relating to the newly developed ANZH curriculum when considering access to PLD for the te ao tangata | social sciences learning area.

We asked teachers to estimate how many hours in total they have spent in formal professional development, including workshops, seminars, both school-led and externally facilitated for teaching each of the focus learning areas, and also for ANZH specifically. The results are summarised in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6: Estimated PLD time for focus learning areas in the last two years

	None	Less than 6 hours	6-15 hours	16-35 hours	More than 35 hours
English	7%	24%	32%	21%	15%
Social sciences	21%	45%	24%	7%	3%
ANZH	12%	49%	28%	9%	2%

Teachers reported more time spent on English PLD than either social sciences or ANZH, with over a third (36%) of teachers spending 16 or more hours on English PLD in the last two years, compared to 10% for social sciences and 11% for ANZH. Once again, we assume that some teachers did not include PLD relating to the newly developed ANZH curriculum when considering the te ao tangata | social sciences learning area.

Findings relating to the teaching and learning of English

This section summarises findings on the implementation of the English learning area.

Almost all teachers read aloud to their class.

We asked teachers a series of questions about the learning opportunities they provide their students in the English learning area. We also asked students similar questions about the English learning opportunities they experience in class. The results are summarised in Figures 2.3 to 2.6.

Figure 2.3: Percentage responses of Year 3 teachers regarding learning opportunities in English

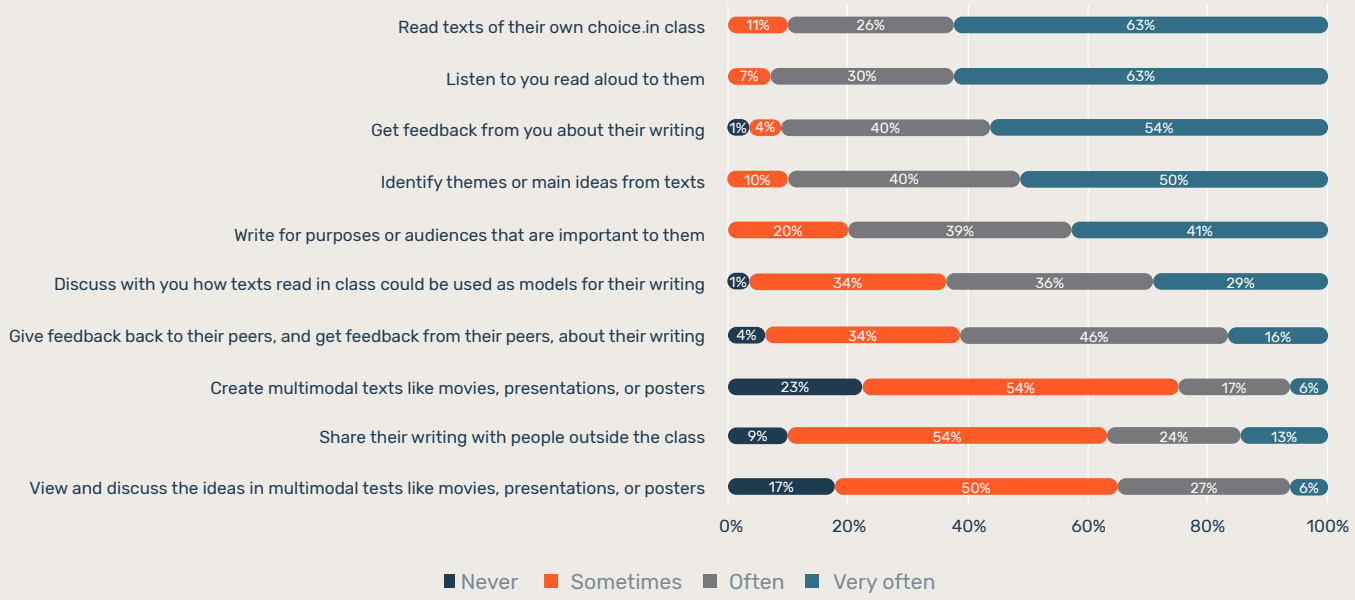


Figure 2.4: Percentage responses of Year 3 students regarding learning opportunities in English

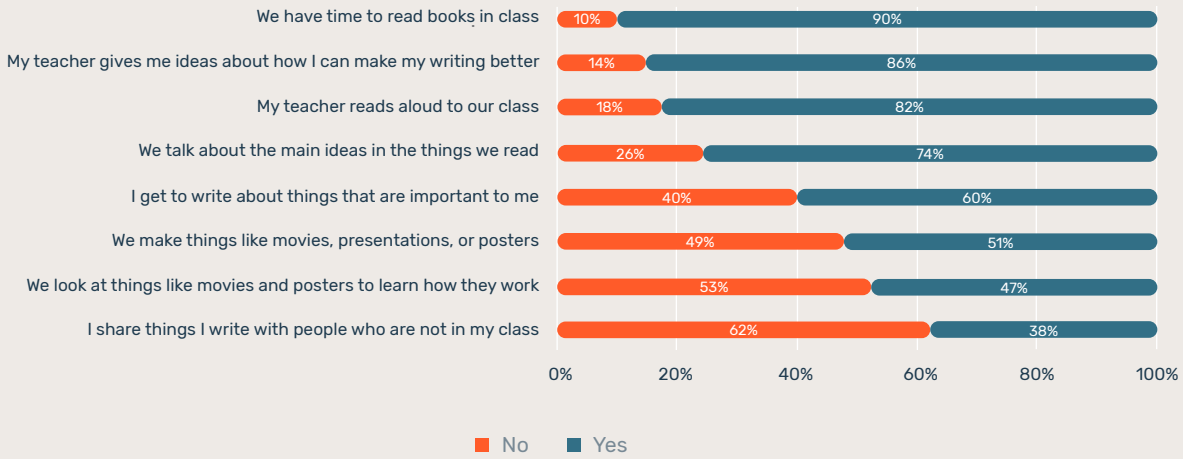


Figure 2.5: Percentage responses of Year 6 and 8 teachers regarding learning opportunities in English

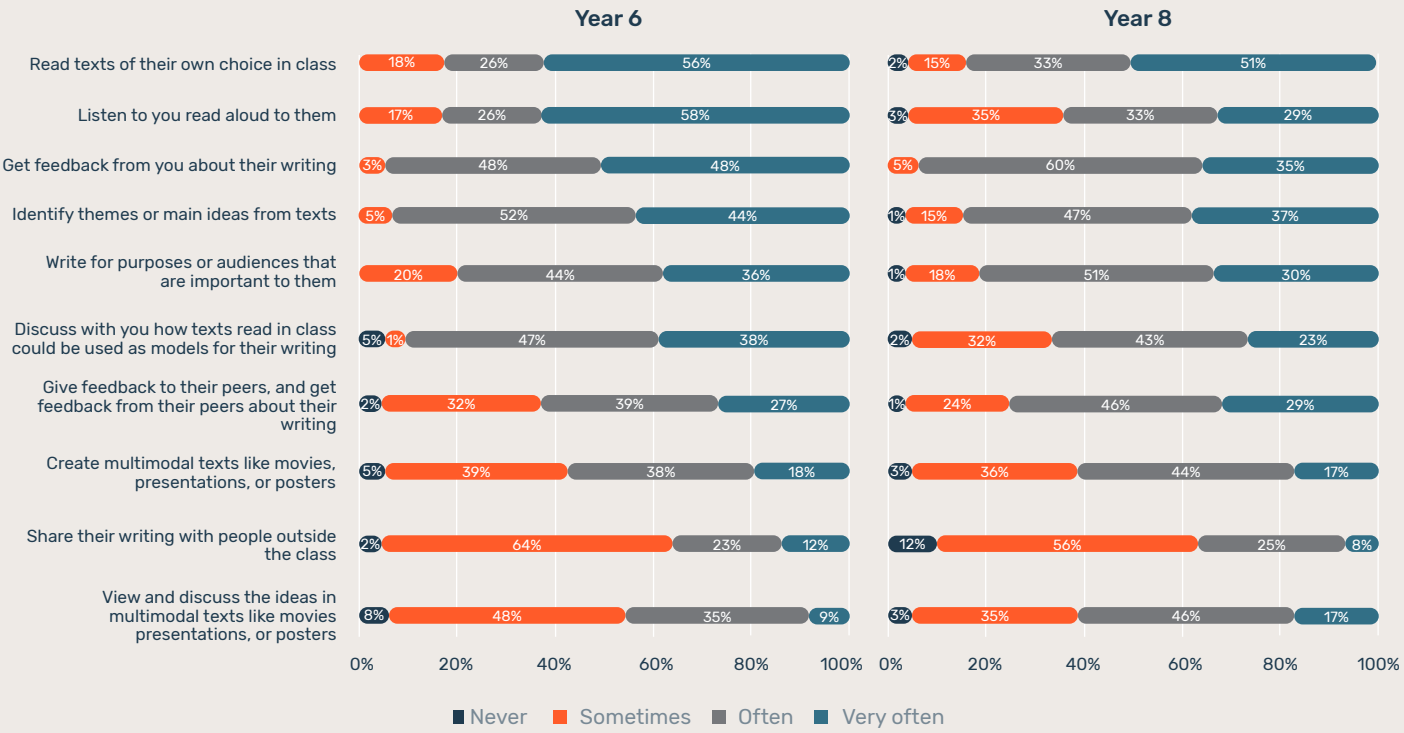
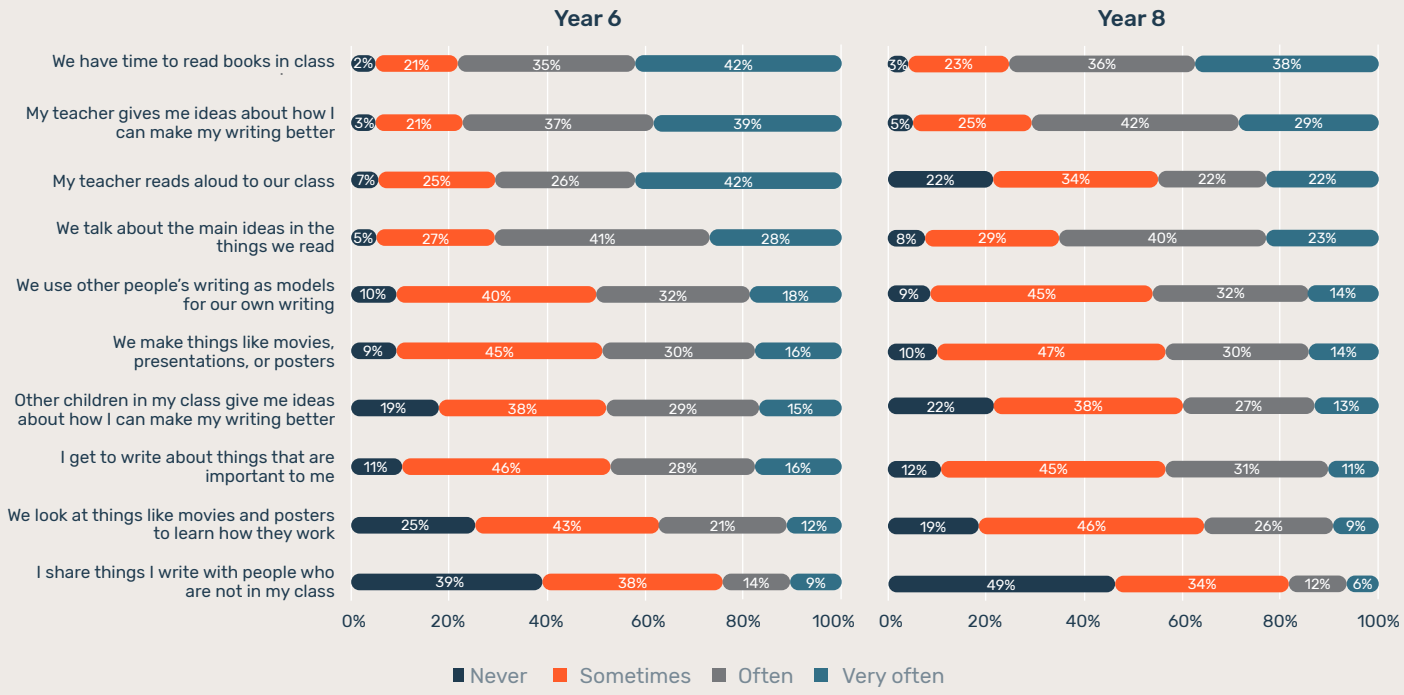


Figure 2.6: Percentage responses of Year 6 and 8 students regarding learning opportunities in English



Students and teachers, for the most part, ranked the opportunities to learn similarly to each other; however, teachers tended to identify opportunities as happening more frequently than students did. For example, while almost all teachers indicated that students had opportunities to share their writing with others outside their class (91% of Year 3, 98% of Year 6 and 88% of Year 8 teachers), the percentages of students that recalled doing so were lower (38% of Year 3, 61% of Year 6 and 51% of Year 8 students).

Teacher perspectives

We worked with teachers from the study's Research Panel of Schools[1] to find out more about the discrepancy between teachers and students related to the frequency of learning opportunities in English. Teachers from 20 schools in the panel participated in a series of focus groups. These teachers were in agreement that sharing writing outside their class is an opportunity that should be provided frequently, with some acknowledging that they don't do this as often as they believe they should.

> ***"This was a real eye opener and made me realise that I should be giving my students the opportunity"***
>
> *- Year 3 teacher*

They speculated that the discrepancy between students' and teachers' responses may be attributed, in part, to students not considering publishing work on digital platforms to be a way of sharing writing outside their class.

> ***"Students may not view loading/sharing work on digital platforms as being sharing to an audience"***
>
> *- Year 6 teacher*

Unsurprisingly, reading aloud to the class was less common for Year 8 students than for younger students. All Year 3 and Year 6 teachers and 97% of Year 8 teachers in the main study indicated that they read aloud at least sometimes. However, 22% of Year 8 students responded that their teacher never reads aloud to their class. Responses from our Rapid Research Panel indicated that the majority of teachers believe that regularly reading aloud to students in Years 1 to 8 is important.

> ***"Why is there such a mismatch between students and teachers who say 'never'?"***
>
> *- Year 8 teacher*

> ***"Teachers should be reading aloud to their class everyday!"***
>
> *- Year 8 teacher*

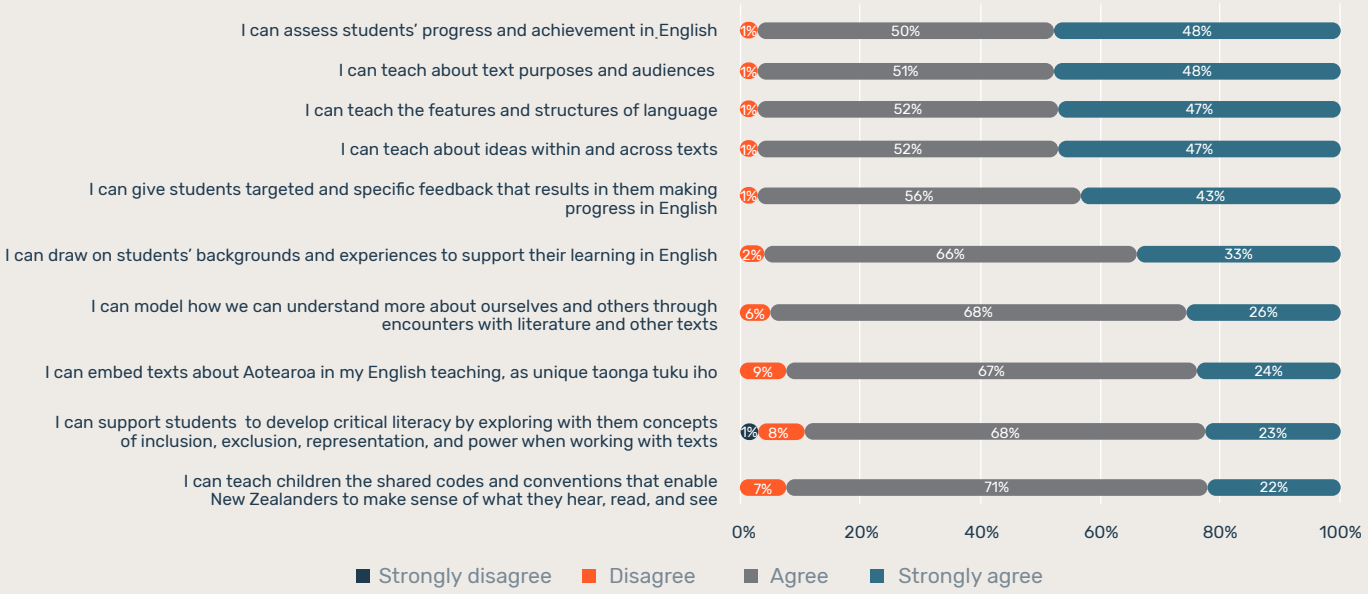
> ***"Modern learning environments make it a bit harder to read aloud to classes. I have noticed teachers do not have class novels on the go in their classes these days. My class absolutely love being read to, picture books, novels, anything!"***
>
> *- Year 6 teacher*

[1]The Research Panel of Schools includes 40 schools, broadly representative of schools nationwide. Panel schools participate in regular data collection activities focused on key aspects of the study, the New Zealand Curriculum, and student achievement.

Teachers indicated a high level of self-efficacy as English teachers.

We asked teachers to respond to a series of statements about their self-efficacy as an English teacher. Their responses are summarised in Figure 2.7.

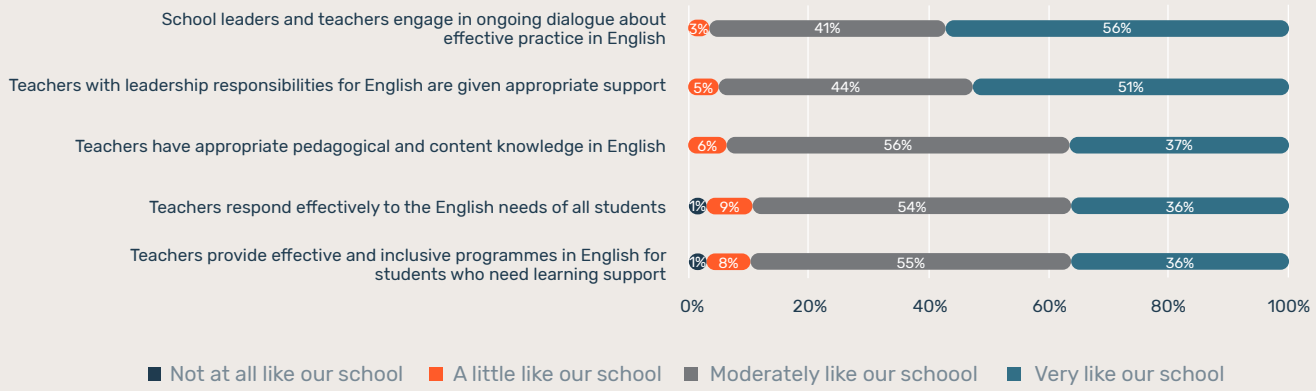
Figure 2.7: Percentage responses of teachers to English teaching statements



Teachers were generally confident in their ability to perform all the identified aspects of English teaching, with more than 90% of teachers agreeing with each statement. Teachers responded most positively to statements regarding core elements of English teaching, such as assessing progress and achievement. Over 40% of teachers strongly agreed with each of these statements. The statements with fewer positive responses were those that required targeting English teaching specifically to their students and linking this learning to New Zealand specific ideas and contexts.

Principals were asked a series of statements about their school's resources and teachers' knowledge and behaviour with regard to teaching English. The responses are summarised in Figure 2.8.

Figure 2.8: Percentage responses of principals to English teaching statements



The majority of principals responded that all statements were at least moderately like their school. There were three statements which fewer than 40% of principals described as "very like" their school. Two of these related to teachers' ability to meet the needs of every child in their class. The third statement was "teachers have appropriate pedagogical and content knowledge in English". While over a third of principals strongly agreed with this statement, most gave only moderate ratings, indicating a more measured level of confidence.

Findings relating to the teaching and learning of social sciences

This section summarises findings on the implementation of the te ao tangata | social sciences learning area.

Students do not frequently visit places that are important to their history in social sciences.

We asked teachers a series of questions about the social sciences learning opportunities they provide their students. The results are summarised in Figures 2.9 and 2.10.

Figure 2.9: Percentage responses of Year 3 teachers regarding learning opportunities in social sciences

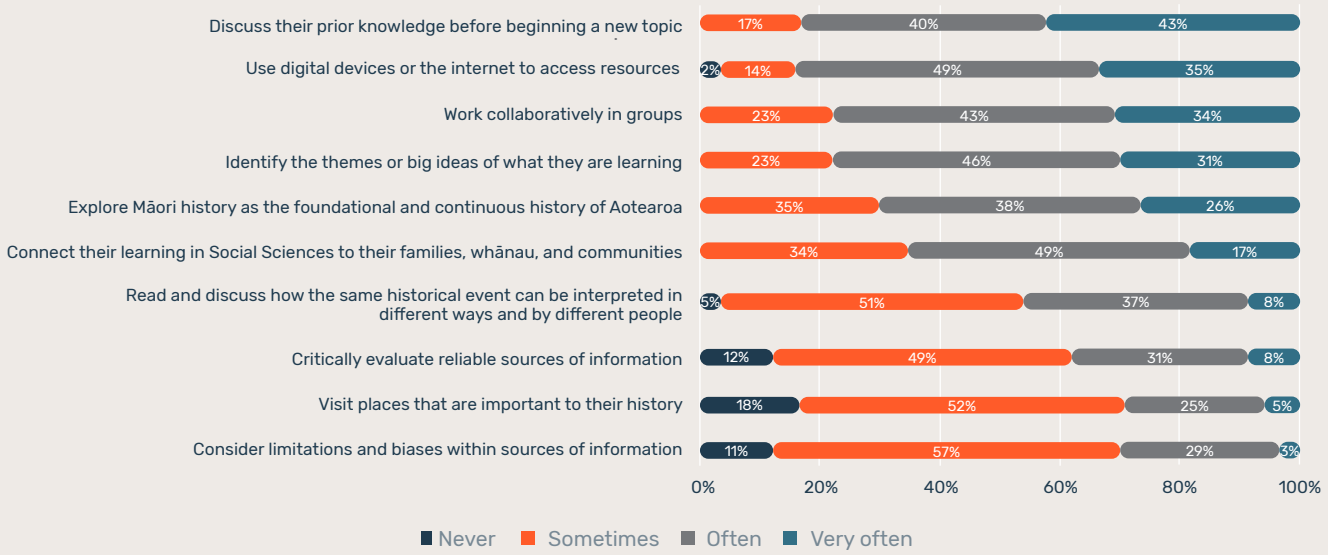
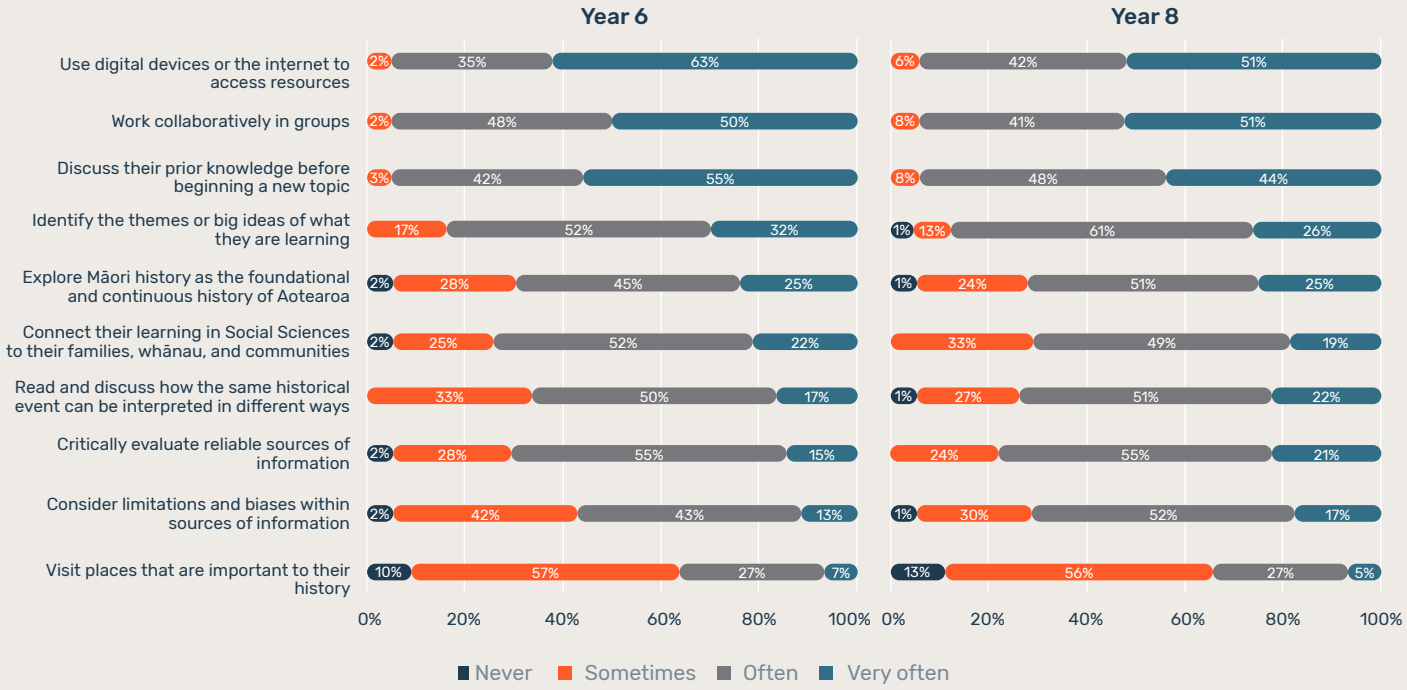


Figure 2.10: Percentage responses of Year 6 and 8 teachers regarding learning opportunities in social sciences



For all three year levels, the opportunity identified as least frequent was visiting places that are important to students' history, with 18% of Year 3 teachers, 10% of Year 6 teachers, and 13% of Year 8 teachers responding that they never provide this opportunity. We worked with teachers involved in our Rapid Research Panel to make sense of this finding. Teachers from 20 schools in the panel participated. They commented that it was unsurprising, noting that barriers included the health and safety requirements of leaving the school, as well as organisational, financial, and transport issues.

> ***"Challenge due to EOTC/health and safety constraints, financial and transport issues, lack of available supervision support as parents working."***
>
> *- Year 8 teacher*

We asked students to respond to statements about social sciences learning opportunities they experience in class. The results are summarised in Figures 2.11 and 2.12. Note that two of the questions were asked only to Year 8 students.

Figure 2.11: Percentage responses of Year 3 students regarding learning opportunities in social sciences

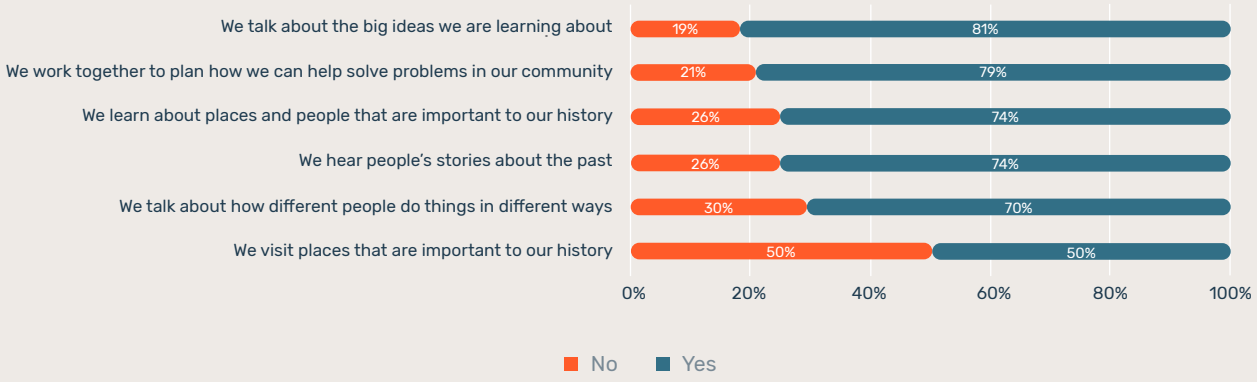
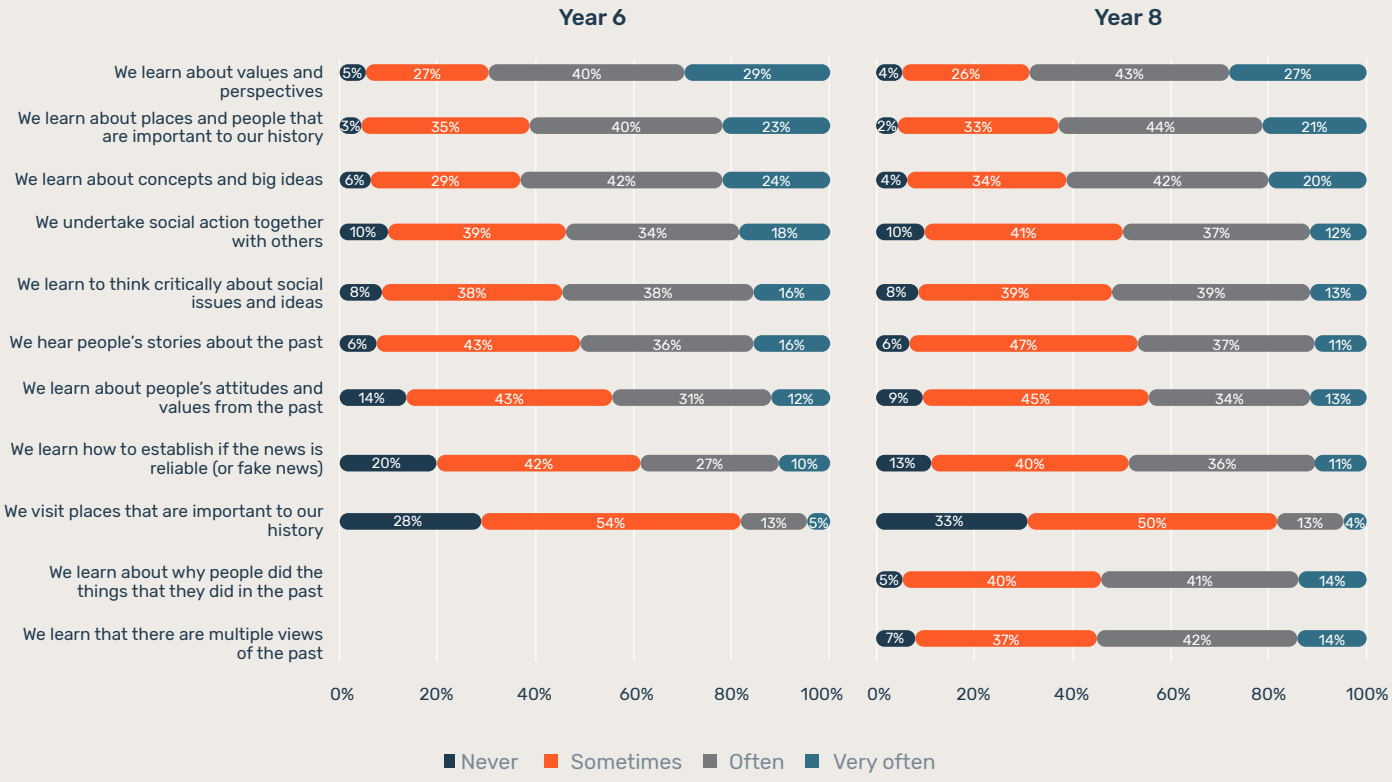


Figure 2.12: Percentage responses of Year 6 and 8 students regarding learning opportunities in social sciences

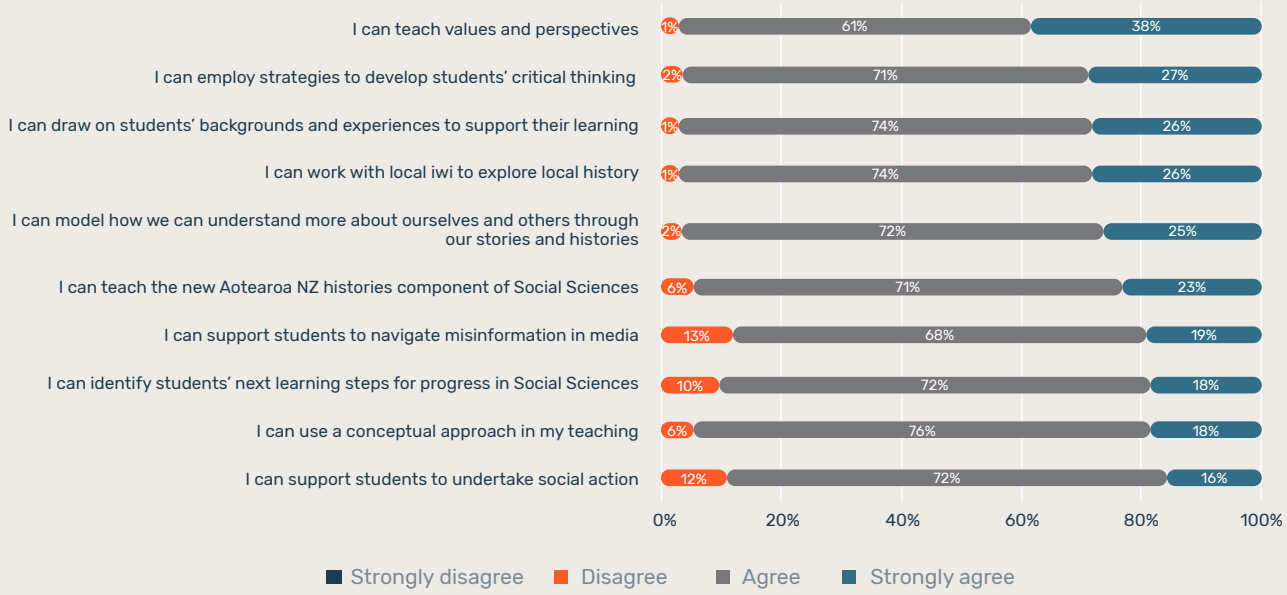


For all three year levels, the opportunity identified as least frequent was again visiting places that are important to students' history, with 50% of Year 3 students, 28% of Year 6 students and 33% of Year 8 students indicating that this never happened in their class.

Teachers indicated a high level of self-efficacy as social sciences teachers.

We asked teachers to respond to a series of statements about their self-efficacy as a te ao tangata | social sciences teacher. Their responses are summarised in Figure 2.13.

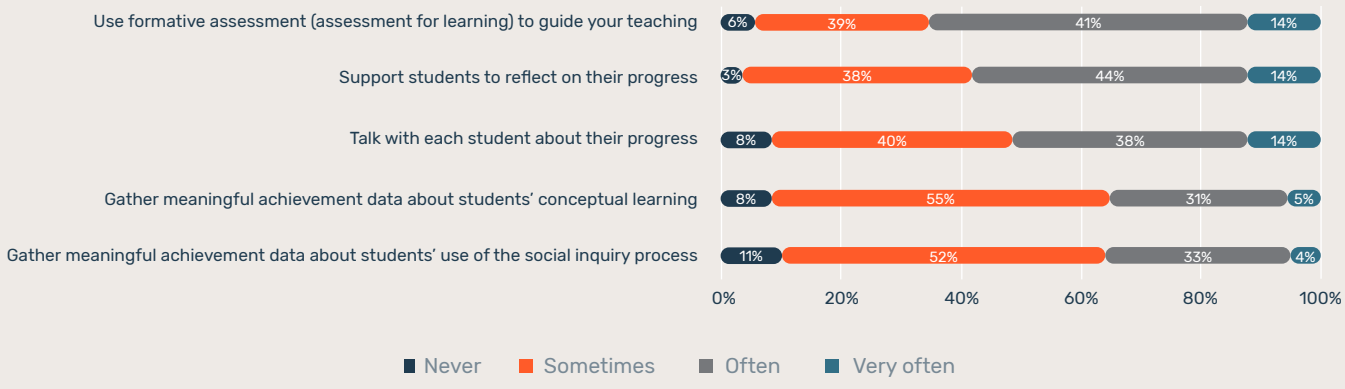
Figure 2.13: Percentage responses of teachers to social sciences teaching statements



Teachers were generally confident in their ability to perform all the identified aspects of social sciences teaching, with more than 85% of teachers agreeing with each statement. Teachers were particularly confident about teaching values and perspectives, with 38% of teachers strongly agreeing with this statement. The only two statements with more than 10% of teachers disagreeing were "I can support students to navigate misinformation in media" (13%) and "I can support students to undertake social action" (12%).

We also asked teachers to indicate how often they have the opportunity to use a range of assessment approaches in social science. Their responses are summarised in Figure 2.14.

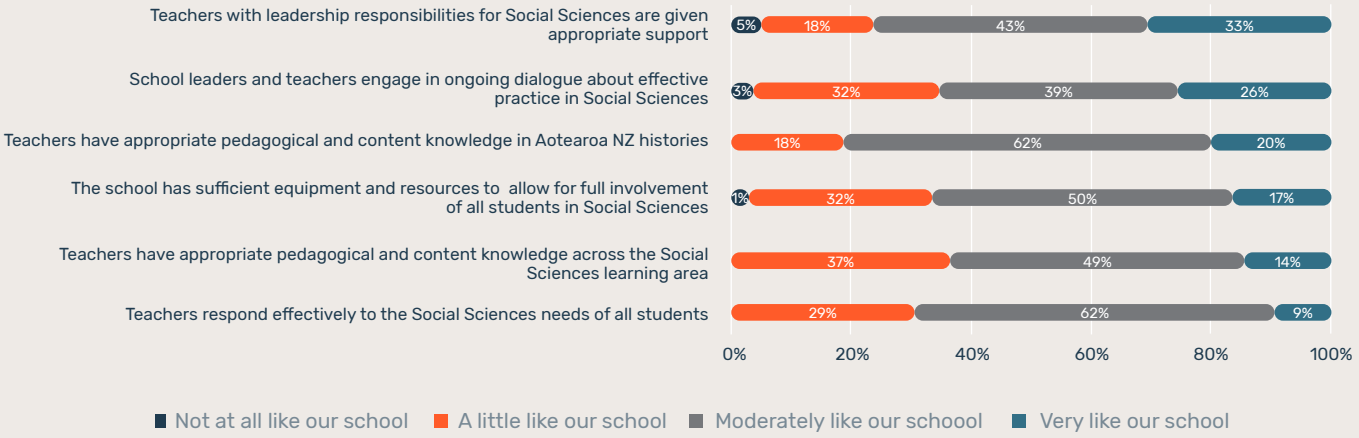
Figure 2.14: Percentage responses of teachers to social sciences assessment statements



Most teachers reported using all five approaches at least "sometimes". The three most commonly reported approaches were: formative assessment, supporting students to reflect on progress, and talking with students about their progress, with over 50% of teachers reporting "often" using each of these.

Principals were asked a series of statements about their school's resources and teachers' knowledge and behaviour with regard to teaching social sciences. The responses are summarised in Figure 2.15.

Figure 2.15: Percentage responses of principals to statements about the implementation of social sciences



We noted that one third of principals reported that teachers with leadership responsibilities for social sciences are given appropriate support was "very like" their school. This stands in contrast to answers to the same question in relation to the English learning area, where 51% of principals noted that it was "very like" their school.

What does it mean?

The study found several key findings regarding how the 2023 draft version of the New Zealand Curriculum is being implemented. Both teachers and principals pointed to a lack of resources for students needing learning support as a major barrier to effective teaching. This issue was particularly pronounced in schools facing more socioeconomic challenges, where a larger number of teachers expressed concerns about access to a variety of teaching resources.

Inquiry learning was used most often in social sciences, followed by science and English. Year 6 teachers spent more time on inquiry learning compared to those teaching Year 3 or Year 8.

Most teachers reported reading aloud to their classes, but there were noticeable differences between what teachers and students thought about the opportunities for learning English, particularly when it came to sharing writing outside of the classroom. Many teachers indicated confidence in teaching English, particularly in core areas, though only 37% of principals fully agreed their teachers have appropriate pedagogical and content knowledge in English.

Both teachers and students mentioned that they had limited chances to visit historically significant places. Even though teachers expressed confidence in teaching social sciences overall, more than 10% admitted they lacked the skills to help students deal with misinformation or engage in social action.

Many principals noted that English was a major focus of professional learning and development (PLD), with most reporting good access for their teachers. While some principals indicated that ANZH received significant attention, only a few highlighted social sciences as a priority. Teachers also reported spending more time on English PLD than on either social sciences or ANZH.

Findings on wellbeing

Pillar 3

This chapter describes our findings on the theme of wellbeing of students, teachers, and principals. We start by providing a background to the importance of wellbeing and a description of our methodology. After that, we present a more detailed breakdown of results for students, teachers, and principals. Lastly, we briefly explore the possible implications of these results.

Findings at a glance

Wellbeing is recognised as a significant outcome of schooling and as related to overall student success, both in the 2023 draft version of the New Zealand Curriculum and in the broader research literature. Wellbeing in schools is supported by environments where everyone can thrive, feel supported, and maintain a healthy balance in their lives. To better understand wellbeing and its impact on learning, we asked students, teachers and principals questions about aspects of their wellbeing. We analysed the resulting data in relation to demographic variables and student achievement. Our analysis highlights four notable findings:

Younger students like being at school more than older students.

85% of Year 3, 68% of Year 6, and 52% of Year 8 students expressed a positive attitude toward school.

Students in schools with more socioeconomic barriers to achievement are less positive about school.

Year 6 and 8 students in the More Barriers equity index group were less likely to report feeling like they belonged at their school.

Students who like being at school score more highly, on average, on academic measures.

Students who indicated that they like being at school were more likely to score highly on measures of academic achievement in social sciences, English, mathematics and reading.

Professional engagement is similar across gender, equity index, and student year levels.

All teachers and principals reported that they are at least "Sometimes" proud of their work. There were no statistically significant differences between demographic subgroups.

What is wellbeing and why is it important?

The term wellbeing describes how well people are functioning in their lives. Wellbeing is multidimensional: different researchers and fields have focused on different aspects of the concept, including belonging (Scarf et al., 2016), positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001), psychological, social, and emotional wellbeing (Keyes, 2002), or the related concepts of life satisfaction, happiness, resilience, purpose, and mental health (Blanchflower et al., 2024; Diener et al., 2013). Despite these differences in definition, research consistently finds that the best predictor of life satisfaction in adulthood is "subjective well-being and emotional health during childhood" (Marquez et al., 2024). Not surprisingly, principal and teacher wellbeing have broad consequences for school culture, staff retention, and job satisfaction, and academic outcomes for students (Liebowitz & Porter, 2019).

In this study, we drew from established items and questionnaires to ensure comparability with international education research, and appropriateness for the groups participating in the study. Importantly, our focus on student wellbeing aligns well with one of the three principles of the 2023 draft version of the refreshed New Zealand Curriculum: holding a broad view of success. This principle highlights the link between wellbeing and educational achievement, including belonging, identity, culture, and open-ended potential for all students.

What did we do?

We measured aspects of student wellbeing by adapting questions used previously in three studies: the National Monitoring Study of Student Achievement (NMSSA, 2018, 2022), Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS, 2016) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS, 2019). Key aspects of student wellbeing include belonging, having physical needs met, and experiencing positive feelings while at school. Year 3 students were asked to respond "yes" or "no" to three questions:

- Do you like being at school?
- Do you feel like you belong at this school?
- Do you feel proud to go to this school?

Year 6 and 8 students were asked to respond to four statements using a four-point Likert scale:

- I like being at school.
- I feel like I belong at this school.
- Teachers at my school are fair to me.
- I am proud to go to this school.

While these questions give a useful indication of students' wellbeing at school, it is important to recognise that wellbeing is a complex concept to measure, and that many aspects of wellbeing are not addressed in our survey.

We used a modified version of the nine-item Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES–9; Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006) to measure teacher and principal engagement. Engagement is a key aspect of professional wellbeing. This scale has been used extensively internationally to measure three key areas of work engagement: absorption, dedication, and vigour (de Bruin & Henn, 2013). We asked teachers and principals to use a seven-point Likert scale to respond to the following statements about how they felt at work:

- I am enthusiastic about my job.
- I am proud of the work I do.
- At my work I feel full of energy.
- My job inspires me.
- I feel happy when I am working intensely.
- At my job I feel strong and vigorous.
- When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.
- I am immersed in my work.
- I get carried away when I am working.

What did we find?

The study gathered extensive information about students, teachers, and principals, encompassing both demographic data and personal perspectives on their experiences at school. We analysed relationships between these variables and selected four notable findings on wellbeing to report. These findings are described below, focusing first on the findings for students and then for teachers and principals.

Younger students like being at school more than older students.

Figures 3.1 to 3.3 summarise how students responded to the wellbeing questions at Years 3, 6, and 8, respectively.

Figure 3.1: Year 3 student responses to wellbeing questions

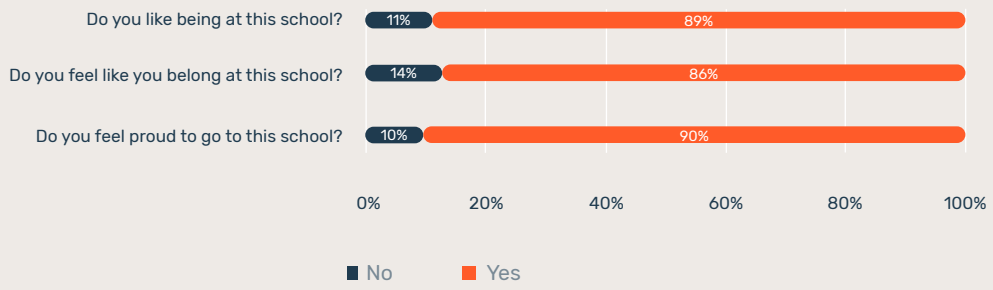


Figure 3.2: Year 6 student responses to wellbeing questions

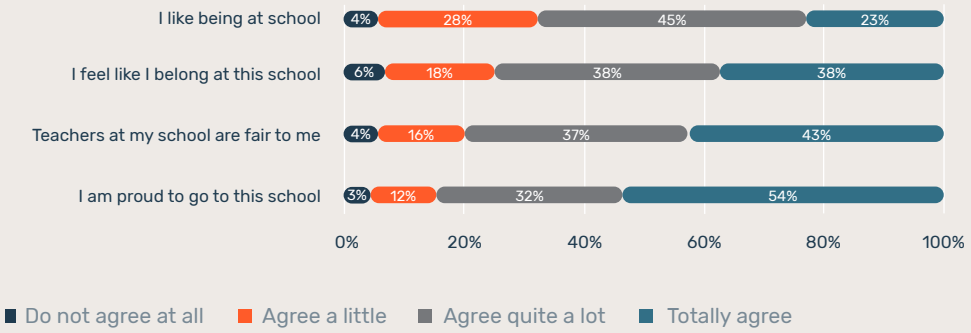
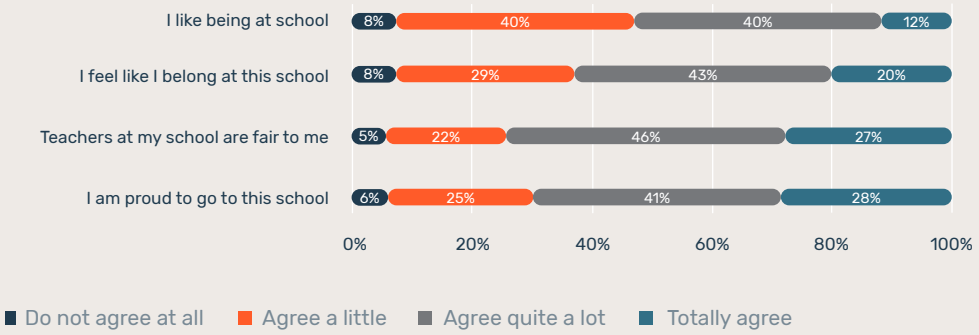


Figure 3.3: Year 8 student responses to wellbeing questions



Responses were generally positive, with at least 85% of Year 3 students responding "Yes" to each of the questions (Figure 3.1) and over 50% of Year 6 and Year 8 students agreeing either "quite a lot" or "totally" with each of the statements (Figures 3.2 and 3.3). The statement which Year 6 and Year 8 students were least inclined to agree with was "I like being at school", with less than a quarter (23%) of Year 6 and less than an eighth (12%) of Year 8 students indicating that they totally agree. Year 8 students were generally less likely to indicate that they totally agreed with the statements than Year 6 students.

Students in schools with more socioeconomic barriers to achievement are less positive about school.

We compared the percentages of Year 3 students answering yes to each of the wellbeing questions, broken down by gender, school equity index (EQI) group, and ethnicity (Table 3.1). For Year 6 and 8, we compared the percentages of Year 6 students agreeing either quite a lot or totally with each of the wellbeing statements for the same demographic subgroups (Tables 3.2 and 3.3).

Table 3.1: Percentage of Year 3 students responding yes to wellbeing questions by demographic subgroup.

	Gender		EQI Group			Ethnicity		
	Male n=465	Female n=476	More n=173	Moderate n=334	Fewer n=450	Māori n=190	Non-Māori n=751	All n=957
Do you like being at school?	84%	93%	88%	86%	91%	87%	89%	89%
Do you feel like you belong at this school?	84%	88%	85%	85%	88%	81%	87%	86%
Do you feel proud to go to this school?	85%	94%	89%	89%	91%	90%	90%	90%

Table 3.2: Percentage of Year 6 students agreeing either quite a lot or totally with wellbeing statements, by demographic subgroup.

	Gender		EQI Group			Ethnicity		
	Male n=412	Female n=462	More n=167	Moderate n=276	Fewer n=440	Māori n=194	Non-Māori n=680	All n=883
I like being at school.	67%	68%	62%	65%	71%	62%	69%	67%
I feel like I belong at this school.	75%	76%	66%	74%	80%	68%	78%	76%
Teachers at my school are fair to me.	78%	82%	73%	80%	82%	74%	82%	80%
I am proud to go to this school.	86%	86%	78%	88%	86%	83%	86%	85%

Table 3.3: Percentage of Year 8 students agreeing either quite a lot or totally with wellbeing statements, by demographic subgroup.

	Gender		EQI Group			Ethnicity		
	Male n=397	Female n=438	More n=126	Moderate n=396	Fewer n=330	Māori n=184	Non-Māori n=651	All n=852
I like being at school.	57%	49%	38%	54%	56%	47%	54%	52%
I feel like I belong at this school.	71%	56%	49%	63%	68%	63%	63%	63%
Teachers at my school are fair to me.	77%	71%	69%	79%	68%	73%	74%	73%
I am proud to go to this school.	74%	66%	55%	73%	70%	72%	69%	69%

Differences between the various subgroups were generally small. In Year 6, the most notable differences were that the proportions of Māori students and students from schools in the More Barriers equity index group who reported feeling a sense of belonging at their school were over 10 percentage points lower than the overall sample. In Year 8, for three of the statements, the percentage of students in schools in the More Barriers equity index group responding positively was more than 10 percentage points lower than for the whole sample.

Students who indicated they like being at school scored more highly on average, on academic measures.

Figures 3.4 to 3.7 illustrate how the distribution of students' academic achievement in social sciences and English differs based on the extent to which they indicated that they like being at school.

Figure 3.4: Distribution of Year 3 students' social sciences scale scores by extent to which they like being at school

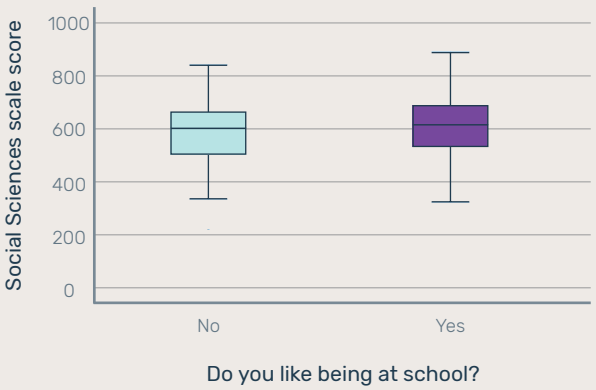


Figure 3.5: Distribution of Year 6 and 8 students' social sciences scale scores by extent to which they like being at school

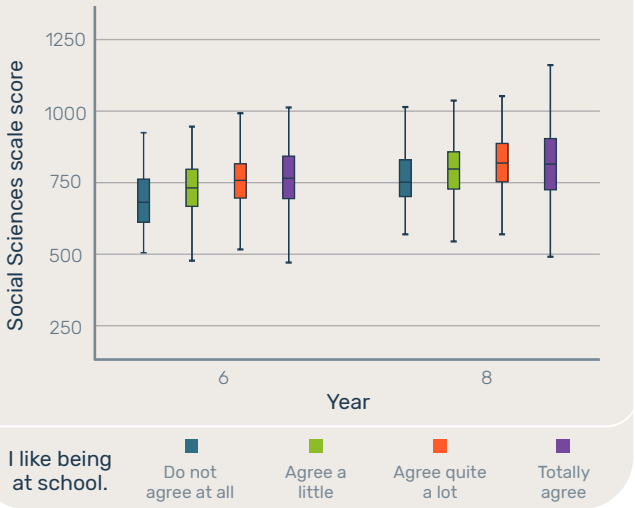


Figure 3.6: Distribution of Year 3 students' English scale scores by extent to which they like being at school

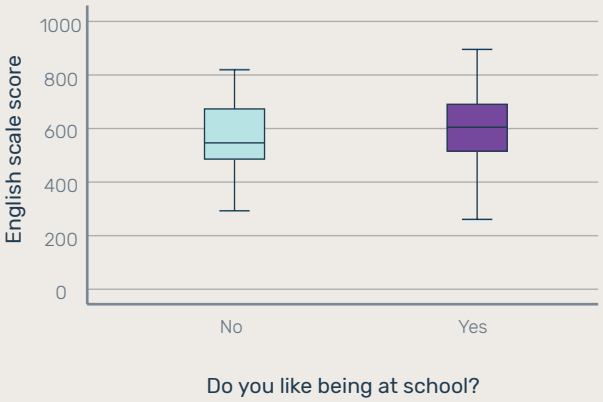
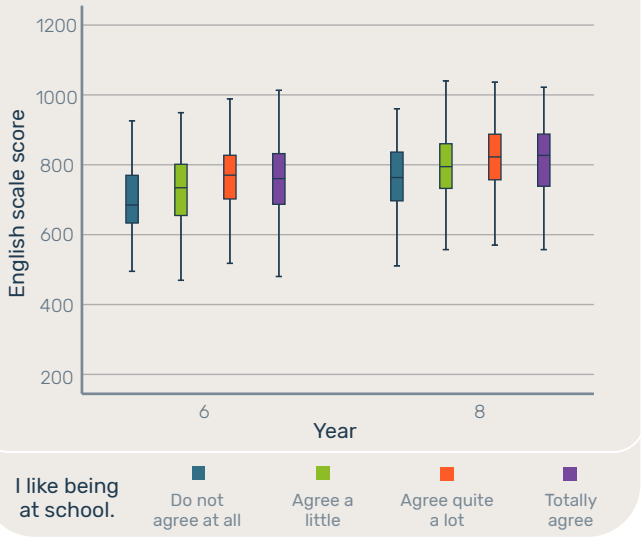


Figure 3.7: Distribution of Year 6 and 8 students' English scale scores by extent to which they like being at school



Year 6 and 8 students who indicated that they like being at school were more likely to score highly on both measures of academic achievement, though the profiles of achievement for students selecting "Agree quite a lot" and "Totally agree" were very similar. Any difference in achievement at Year 3 was less clear, though this may be due to the wellbeing question only allowing a yes/no response, with 90% responding positively. It is important to note that the patterns observed at Year 3 and Years 6 and 8 indicate overall differences; some students who did well on the achievement measures reported they did not like school at all and vice versa. We found similar associations between liking school and achievement based on results from the study's ongoing monitoring of mathematics and reading.

When we analysed the academic achievement of demographic subgroups of students, the pattern was consistent, with students that indicated that they like being at school being more likely to achieve better results regardless of ethnicity, gender, or the equity index group of their school.

Professional engagement was similar across gender, equity index, and student year levels.

Teachers and principals responded to the nine items on our modified Utrecht Work Engagement Scale. Figures 3.8 and 3.9 summarise their responses.

Figure 3.8: Teacher responses to items on the work engagement scale.

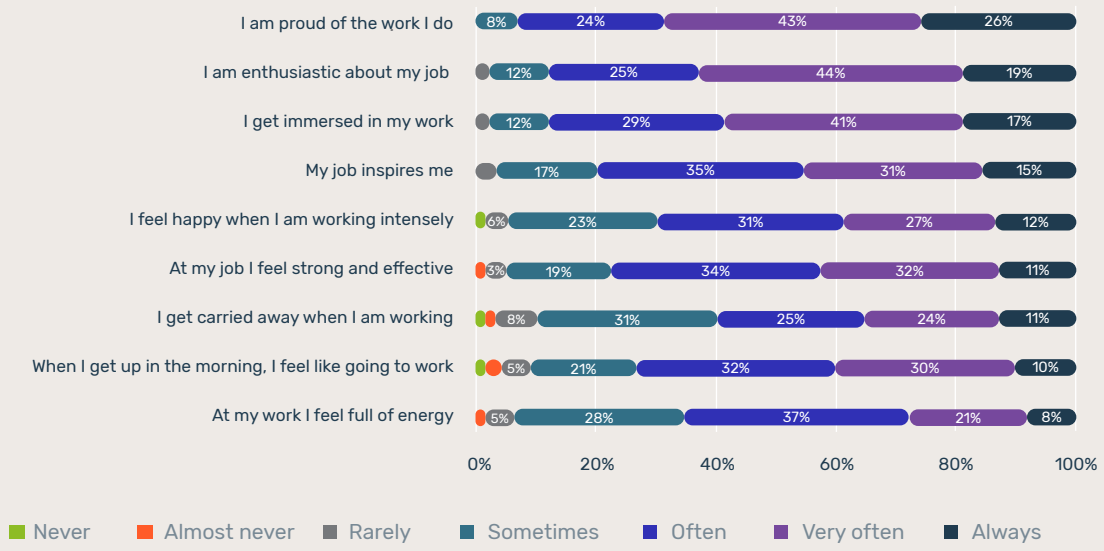
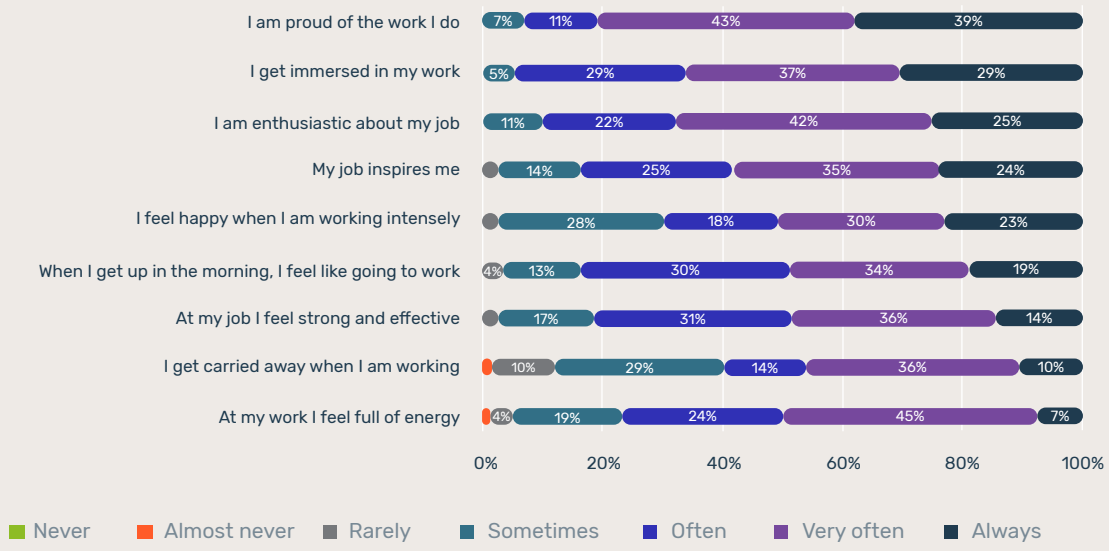


Figure 3.9: Principal responses to items on the work engagement scale.



Both teachers' and principals' responses to items on the scale were generally positive, with principals tending to be more positive than teachers. The item that was most positively responded to was "I am proud of the work I do", with all teachers and principals choosing at least "sometimes". A quarter of all teachers (26%) and over a third of all principals (39%) indicated that they are always proud of the work they do. Contrastingly, only 8% of teachers and 7% of principals indicated that they always feel full of energy at work.

Factor analysis (Brown, 2015) was used to estimate the relationships between the items in the scale and generate a single value estimating each teacher or principal's level of work engagement as indicated by their responses to those items. Comparisons between demographic subgroups found no statistically significant differences ($p<0.05$) in mean factor scores when we compared gender, equity index, and student year levels taught of teachers and principals (Figures 3.10 and 3.11).

Figure 3.10: Teacher work engagement factor score distributions by demographic subgroup

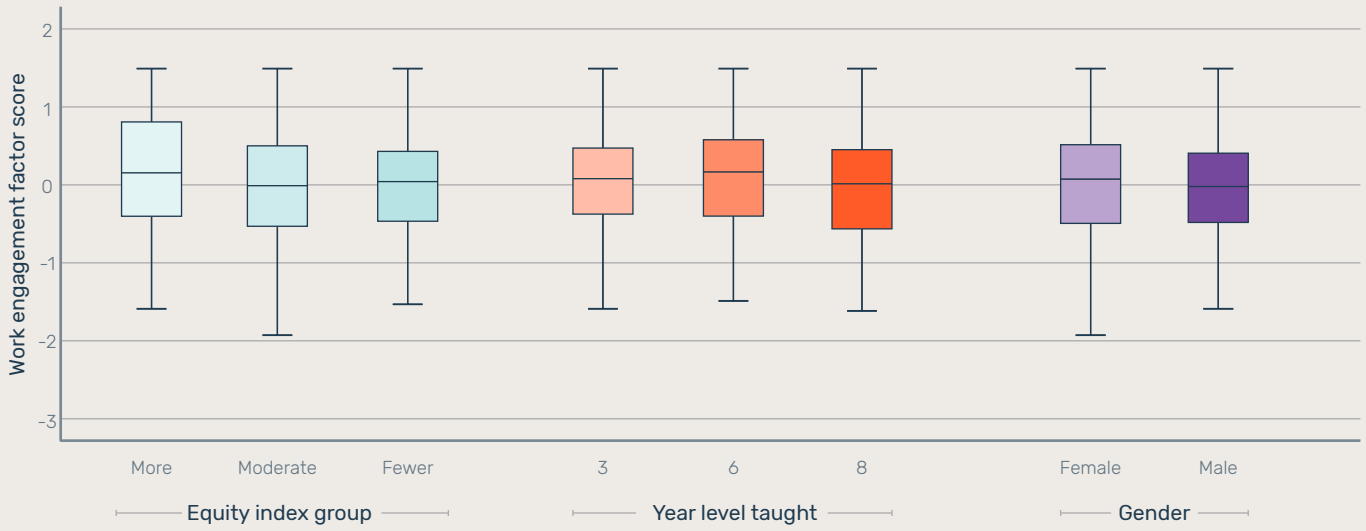
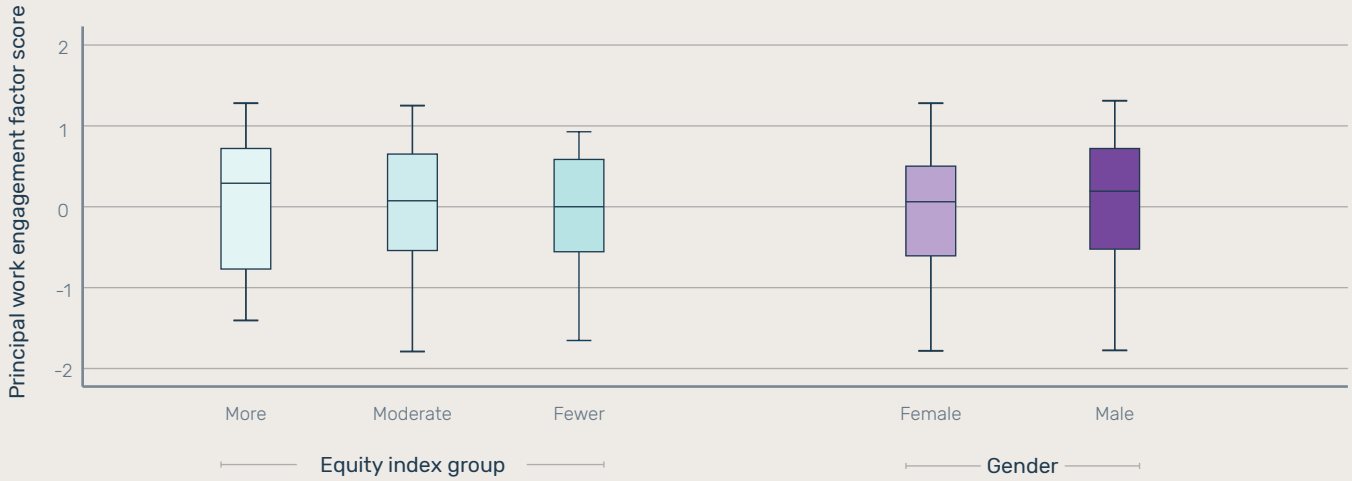


Figure 3.11: Principal work engagement factor score distributions by demographic subgroup



What does it mean?

The principles of the 2023 draft version of the New Zealand Curriculum explicitly signal that wellbeing and achievement are important, interrelated outcomes of schooling. Ensuring that students enjoy being at school and feel that they belong there is fundamental to ensuring their overall success. Our finding that students who like being at school score more highly on academic measures aligns with a growing body of research showing the importance of 'belonging' to educational outcomes (Korpershoek et al., 2020). Likewise, research suggests that when students feel good and like being at school, their engagement is higher, leading to increased learning and resilience (Reschly et al., 2008), although the mechanisms that link and promote these positive outcomes are still unclear.

While the generally positive responses of students in all year levels and for all demographic subgroups are encouraging, the decrease in students' reported wellbeing between Year 6 and Year 8 is notable. In line with our findings, international studies have also suggested that student wellbeing declines with age, although more research is needed to understand the causes and long-term outcomes of this finding (Blanchflower et al., 2024; Helliwell et al, 2024). It is a well-established finding that students in schools with more socioeconomic barriers have lower academic achievement than those facing fewer barriers (Hattie, 2023; Marks et al., 2006); our study has found that these students also report less-positive attitudes towards school. While it is clear that socioeconomic status, wellbeing, and achievement are interrelated, how these factors affect each other is unknown and worthy of further consideration.

The high level of work engagement of teachers and principals reported in this study is consistent with previous research. For example, in NZCER's 2019 National Survey (NZCER, 2020) 91% of teachers and 90% of principals in primary schools reported that they enjoy their job. The study's findings contribute to the sector's understanding of work engagement in schools and indicate that the high levels observed are not linked to teachers' and principals' gender, the equity index group of their school, or the year level of their students.

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Findings on self-efficacy

Pillar 4

This chapter describes our findings on the self-efficacy of students, teachers and principals. We start by providing a background to the importance of self-efficacy and a description of our methodology. After that, we present a more detailed breakdown of results for students, teachers, and principals. Lastly, we briefly explore the possible implications of these results.

Findings at a glance

Self-efficacy is the belief in one's own ability to successfully execute tasks and achieve goals. Student academic self-efficacy is important because it directly influences students' motivation, learning, and overall academic success. High levels of teacher self-efficacy are linked to greater job satisfaction, increased motivation, resilience in the face of difficulties, and a positive impact on student achievement and behaviour. To understand how this looked in the schools involved in the study, we asked students, teachers and principals questions about aspects of their self-efficacy. We analysed the resulting data in relation to demographic variables and student achievement. Our analysis highlights four notable findings:

Students of all ages are confident in their ability to read.

85% of Year 3 and 6 students, and 76% of Year 8 students think they can read well. Students' ratings of other areas were slightly lower.

Students in schools with higher socioeconomic barriers to academic achievement are less likely to believe they are good at English.

The percentages of students confident in their abilities were lower for this group.

Students who think they are good at a subject scored more highly on academic measures.

Students that were confident in their ability scored more highly on all our measures of academic achievement.

Professional self-efficacy is similar across gender, equity index, and student year levels.

There were no items for which more than 10% of teachers or principals were uncertain of their ability. There were no statistically significant differences between demographic subgroups.

What is self-efficacy and why is it important?

Self-efficacy, a concept from social cognitive theory, developed by Albert Bandura (1997), refers to an individual's belief in their own capabilities to successfully perform specific tasks or achieve desired outcomes. Having high self-efficacy in relation to specific tasks is different than being a confident person. For instance, a generally confident person may feel low self-efficacy for adding fractions, cooking a meal, or driving a car. Bandura argued that self-efficacy (efficacy beliefs) predicts aspirations, actions, effort, and persistence. In an educational setting, a student (or teacher) might welcome challenges that they believe they can overcome and experience success in, whereas they might avoid or not persist in those challenges in which they doubt their efficacy to overcome.

Student self-efficacy

Student self-efficacy refers to students' belief in their own ability to successfully complete tasks, solve problems, and achieve goals in academic contexts (Bandura, 1997). This belief influences how students approach learning, persist in the face of challenges, and develop resilience in academic settings. Students with high self-efficacy are more likely to take initiative, stay engaged in learning activities, and demonstrate perseverance when confronted with difficult tasks.

Teacher self-efficacy

Teacher self-efficacy refers to "individual teachers' beliefs in their own ability to plan, organize, and carry out activities that are required to attain given educational goals" (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010 (p. 1059). It is the confidence that a teacher has in their own skills, knowledge, and teaching abilities to successfully manage and instruct a class, and to help students overcome obstacles and achieve academic success. Self-efficacy is not a fixed trait, but rather a dynamic belief that is shaped by a teacher's experiences, successes, and specific challenges in the classroom (Bandura, 1997). A teacher with high self-efficacy is more likely to persist in the face of difficulty, be open to new teaching strategies and changes in curriculum, and have a positive attitude towards their students and their own ability to make a difference. Research has shown that teacher self-efficacy is related to use of pedagogical approaches associated with best practice in New Zealand (Berg et al., 2024), which has been identified as a key predictor of instructional quality, student engagement, and academic achievement (Berg, 2022). It has been found to have a significant effect on evaluated teaching performance (Klassen & Tze, 2014), and teachers' occupational wellbeing (Lauermann & ten Hagen, 2021). It is a malleable attribute with the power to improve professional and student outcomes.

Principal self-efficacy

Good school leaders are the cornerstones of good schools (Robinson et al., 2008). Without a principal's leadership efforts to raise student achievement, a school is unlikely to achieve its fundamental academic mission. The principal is a key agent at the school level, impacting teacher collaboration and collective efficacy (Meyer, A., et al., 2020a), initiating change by raising the level of expectations for both teachers and students, and enabling positive educational outcomes (Meyer, F., et al., 2020b). One promising approach for understanding principal motivation and behaviour is principals' sense of self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004).

Principal self-efficacy refers to the belief and confidence that principals have in their ability to successfully carry out their roles and responsibilities in educational settings. It is a specific form of self-efficacy that focuses on the leadership capabilities and skills of principals, incorporating their belief in their competence to effectively lead a school, manage staff, make decisions, foster a positive learning environment, and drive school improvement. When principals have a high level of self-efficacy, they are more likely to set ambitious goals, persevere in the face of challenges, and implement effective strategies to improve teaching and learning outcomes. On the other hand, low levels of self-efficacy can lead to self-doubt, hesitancy in decision-making, and a reduced ability to inspire and motivate teachers and students. Principals with high self-efficacy tend to be more proactive, resilient, and innovative in their leadership practices, and are better able to persuade others to perform at high levels (Hesbol, 2019). They navigate complex educational contexts more adeptly, build positive relationships with stakeholders, and create a supportive and inclusive school climate. Their belief in their own capabilities also influences their ability to effectively manage change, address conflicts, and promote continuous professional growth among staff members.

What did we do?

We measured aspects of student self-efficacy in English and social sciences by asking students to respond to the following items. It should be noted that the items developed for social sciences are not strictly self-efficacy items. When preparing for the study, the development team recognised that exploring the related area of student confidence in their understanding of a topic was less problematic and more likely to yield actionable insights than measuring self-efficacy for learning actions and behaviour in social science in a time of curricula change. However, for the purposes of this chapter, we are treating student's confidence in understanding as a proxy for self-efficacy.

Year 3 students were asked to respond "yes" or "no" to three questions:

- Do you think you can read well?
- Do you think you can write well?
- Do you think you have a good understanding of NZ history?

Year 6 and 8 students were asked to respond to four statements using a four-point Likert scale:

- I can read well.
- I can write well.
- I can make good videos and presentations.
- I can give interesting talks and speeches.
- I think I have a good understanding of NZ history.
- I think I have a good understanding of how the NZ government works.
- I think I have a good understanding of how people make decisions about limited resources (Year 8 only).

As there is currently no New Zealand specific measure of teacher self-efficacy, we used a modified version of the Norwegian Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (NTSES; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007) to measure teacher self-efficacy. The NTSES has been used successfully internationally to gain insight into the beliefs of teachers (Berg et al. 2023). We asked teachers to use a seven-point Likert scale to indicate how certain they are that they can do each of the following:

- Explain central themes in each learning area so that all students, including those with learning support, can understand.
- Ensure all students in class work hard with their schoolwork.
- Cooperate well with most parents and whānau.
- Successfully use any pedagogical approach that the school decides to use.
- Organise your planning to adapt instruction and assignments to individual needs.
- Manage behaviour in any class or group of students.
- Find adequate solutions to conflicts with other teachers.
- Provide good guidance and instruction to all students about their next steps in learning.
- Manage aggressive behaviour of children in class.
- Motivate the least engaged students.
- Provide realistic challenge for all students, even in mixed ability classes.
- Answer students' questions so that they understand difficult ideas and concepts.
- Collaborate constructively with parents and whānau of children with behavioural challenges.
- Ensure students with behavioural challenges follow classroom rules.
- Persuade students to do their best, even when working with difficult problems.
- Explain subject matter so that all students understand the basic principles.
- Manage instruction regardless of how it is organised (mixed aged groups, etc.).
- Adapt instruction to the needs of students with learning support, while also attending to the needs of the other students in the class.
- Get all children to behave politely and respect others.
- Manage instruction even if the curriculum is changed.
- Motivate students who show a low level of interest in school work.
- Collaborate effectively and constructively with other teachers.
- Organise classroom activities so that diverse students work with tasks that are adapted to their abilities.
- Teach well, even when you are told to use pedagogical approaches that would not be your choice.

We used a modified version of the Norwegian Self-efficacy for Instructional Leadership Scale (NSEILS; Skaalvik, 2020) to measure principal self-efficacy. We asked principals to use a seven-point Likert scale to indicate how certain they are that they can do each of the following:

- Develop clear and achievable goals for the school.
- Develop clear goals and expectations for teaching.
- Develop a strategic plan for achieving teaching goals.
- Guide teachers about educational matters.
- Observe teaching and provide helpful feedback.
- Use school based self-assessment to improve teaching and learning.
- Promote a safe school environment for students, which is free from bullying.
- Ensure a learning environment in which students feel safe.
- Promote good teacher-student relationships.
- Create enthusiasm and engagement among teachers.
- Motivate teachers for teaching and instruction.
- Motivate teachers to commit to school goals.
- Develop a collective culture in which everyone works to achieve shared goals.
- Develop a culture in which teachers support each other.
- Promote a shared understanding of what constitutes good teaching.

What did we find?

The study gathered extensive information about students, teachers, and principals, encompassing both demographic data and personal perspectives on their experiences at school. We analysed relationships between these variables and selected four notable findings on self-efficacy to report. These findings are described below, focusing first on the findings for students and then on those for teachers and principals.

Students of all ages are confident in their ability to read.

Figures 4.1 to 4.3 summarise how students responded to the self-efficacy items.

Figure 4.1: Year 3 student responses to self-efficacy questions

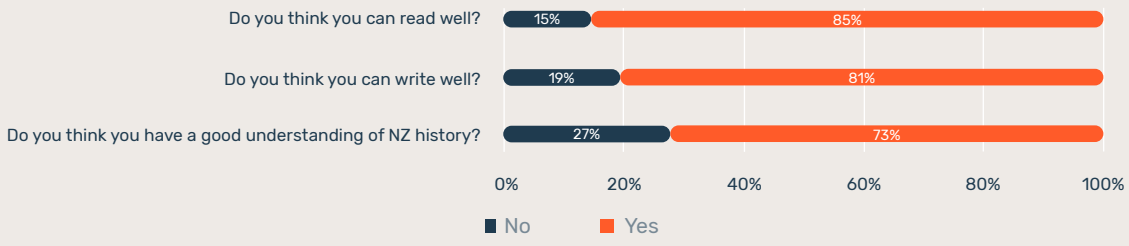


Figure 4.2: Year 6 student responses to self-efficacy questions

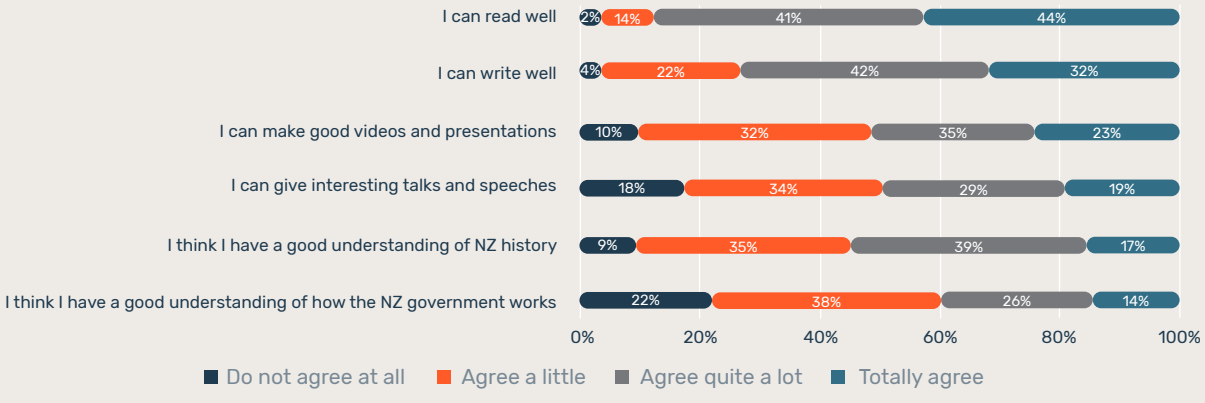
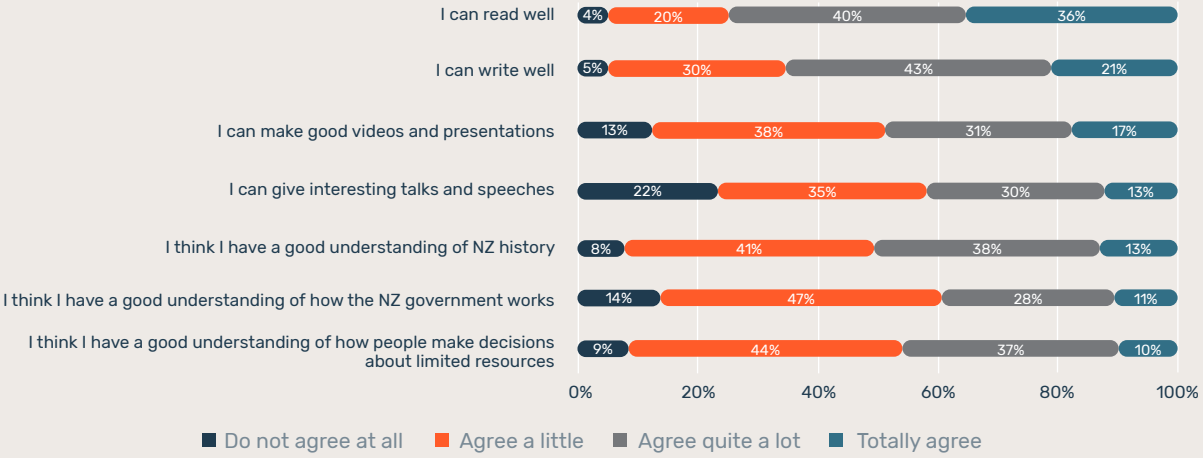


Figure 4.3: Year 8 student responses to self-efficacy questions



Responses were generally positive, with more than 70% of Year 3 students responding "Yes" to each of the questions (Figure 4.1) and over a third of Year 6 and Year 8 students agreeing either "quite a lot" or "totally" with each of the statements (Figures 4.2 and 4.3). In all year levels, students were most confident in their ability to read well, with 85% of Year 3 students responding "Yes" and 85% of Year 6 and 76% of Year 8 students agreeing either "quite a lot" or "totally". Year 6 and Year 8 students were less confident in their ability to make good videos and presentations, give interesting talks and speeches, and in their understanding of social sciences concepts.

Students in schools with higher socioeconomic barriers to academic achievement are less likely to believe they are good at English.

To explore how students' academic self-efficacy varied across demographic subgroups we compared the percentages of Year 3 students answering 'yes' to each of the self-efficacy questions, broken down by gender, school equity index (EQI) group, and ethnicity (Table 4.1). For Year 6 and 8 students, we compared the percentages of Year 6 students agreeing either quite a lot or totally with each of the self-efficacy statements for the same demographic subgroups (Tables 4.2 and 4,3).

Table 4.1: Percentage of Year 3 students responding 'yes' to self-efficacy questions by demographic subgroup.

	Gender		EQI Group			Ethnicity		
	Male n=465	Female n=476	More n=173	Moderate n=334	Fewer n=450	Māori n=190	Non-Māori n=751	All n=957
Do you think you can read well?	83%	86%	78%	83%	89%	77%	87%	85%
Do you think you can write well?	78%	83%	75%	80%	84%	77%	82%	81%
Do you think you have a good understanding of NZ history?	72%	75%	76%	73%	73%	77%	73%	73%

Table 4.2: Percentage of Year 6 students agreeing either quite a lot or totally with self-efficacy statements, by demographic subgroup.

	Gender		EQI Group			Ethnicity		
	Male n=412	Female n=462	More n=167	Moderate n=276	Fewer n=440	Māori n=194	Non-Māori n=680	All n=883
I can read well.	85%	85%	80%	83%	87%	78%	87%	85%
I can write well.	69%	79%	68%	76%	74%	69%	76%	74%
I can make good videos and presentations.	58%	58%	44%	53%	66%	48%	61%	58%
I can give interesting talks and speeches.	50%	47%	37%	49%	52%	42%	50%	48%
I think I have a good understanding of NZ history.	58%	53%	49%	60%	56%	55%	56%	56%
I think I have a good understanding of how the NZ government works.	44%	38%	42%	44%	38%	39%	41%	40%

Table 4.3: Percentage of Year 8 students agreeing either quite a lot or totally with self-efficacy statements, by demographic subgroup.

	Gender		EQI Group			Ethnicity		
	Male n=397	Female n=438	More n=126	Moderate n=396	Fewer n=330	Māori n=184	Non-Māori n=651	All n=852
I can read well.	76%	77%	66%	79%	76%	67%	79%	76%
I can write well.	57%	72%	54%	66%	66%	65%	65%	64%
I can make good videos and presentations.	50%	47%	32%	50%	52%	44%	50%	48%
I can give interesting talks and speeches.	44%	42%	35%	45%	43%	37%	45%	43%
I think I have a good understanding of NZ history	55%	49%	46%	53%	52%	59%	50%	52%
I think I have a good understanding of how the NZ government works.	44%	35%	31%	38%	44%	39%	39%	39%
I think I have a good understanding of how people make decisions about limited resources.	51%	44%	43%	48%	48%	47%	47%	47%

Differences between the various subgroups were generally small. In Year 6, the most notable differences were that the proportions of Māori students and students from schools in the More Barriers equity index group who reported being able to make good videos and presentations were more than 10 percentage points lower than for the whole sample. The same was true of the proportion of students in schools in the More Barriers equity index group that reported that they can give interesting talks and speeches.

In Year 8, for three of the four English statements, the percentage of students in schools in the More Barriers equity index group responding positively was at least 10 percentage points lower than for the whole sample.

Students who think they are good at a subject score more highly on academic measures.

Figures 4.4 to 4.11 illustrate the distribution of students' academic achievement in reading, English, and social sciences, based on the extent to which they indicated that they are good at them. The achievement scores represent the results from the assessments carried out by the project team in 2023.

Figure 4.4: Distribution of Year 3 students' reading scale scores by extent to which they think they can read well

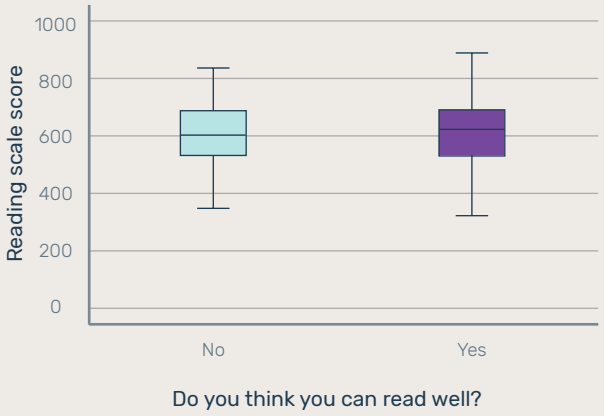


Figure 4.5: Distribution of Year 6 and 8 students' reading scale scores by extent to which they think they can read well

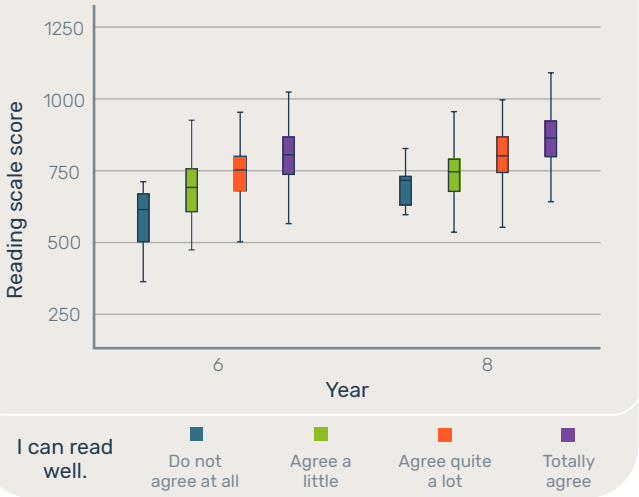


Figure 4.6: Distribution of Year 3 students' English scale scores by extent to which they think they can read well

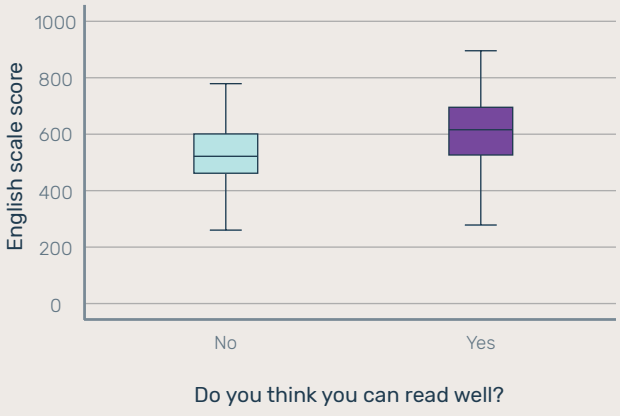


Figure 4.7: Distribution of Year 6 and 8 students' English scale scores by extent to which they think they can read well

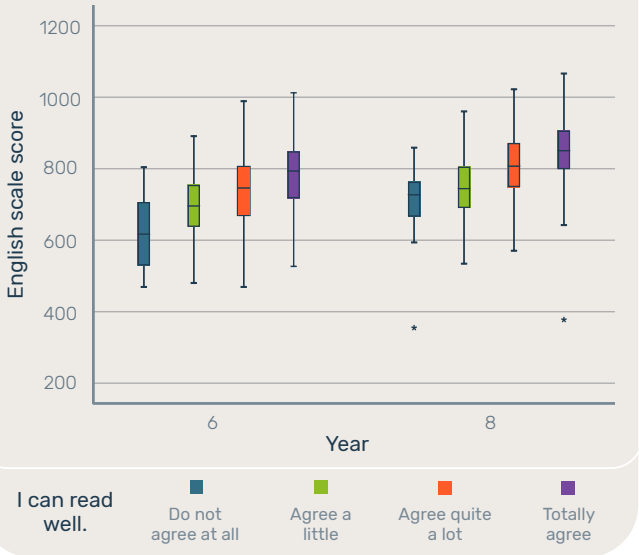


Figure 4.8: Distribution of Year 3 students' English scale scores by extent to which they think they can write well

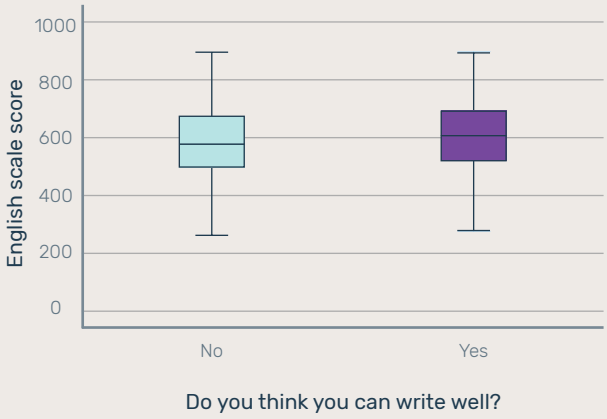


Figure 4.9: Distribution of Year 6 and 8 students' English scale scores by extent to which they think they can write well

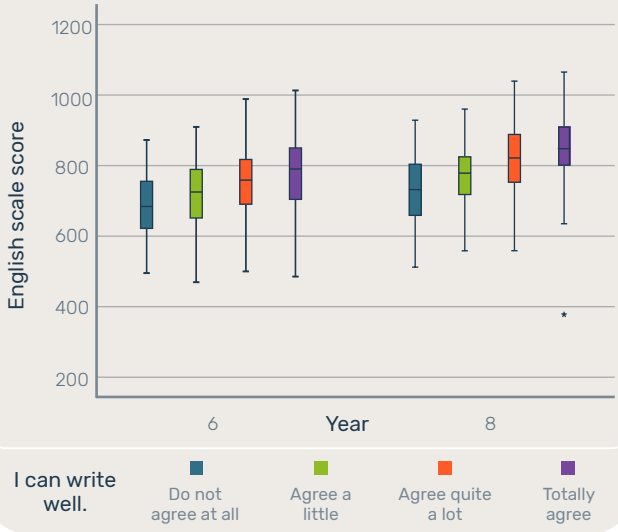


Figure 4.10: Distribution of Year 3 students' social sciences scale scores by extent to which they think they understand NZ history

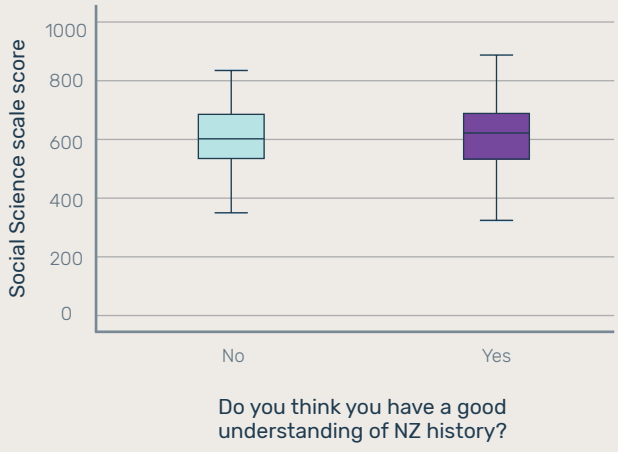
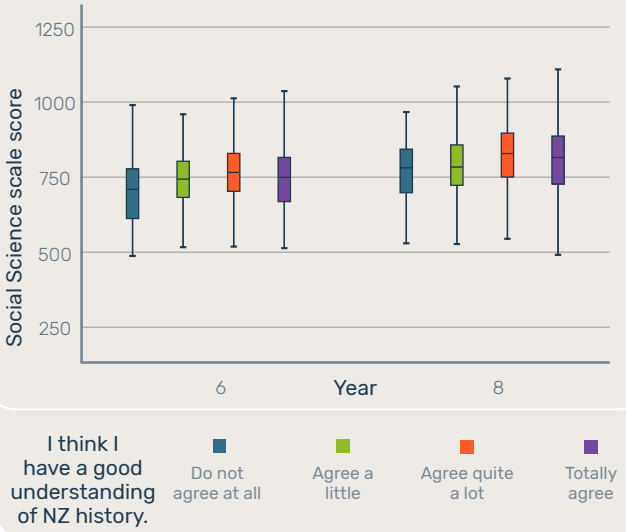


Figure 4.11: Distribution of Year 6 and 8 students' social sciences scale scores by extent to which they think they understand NZ history



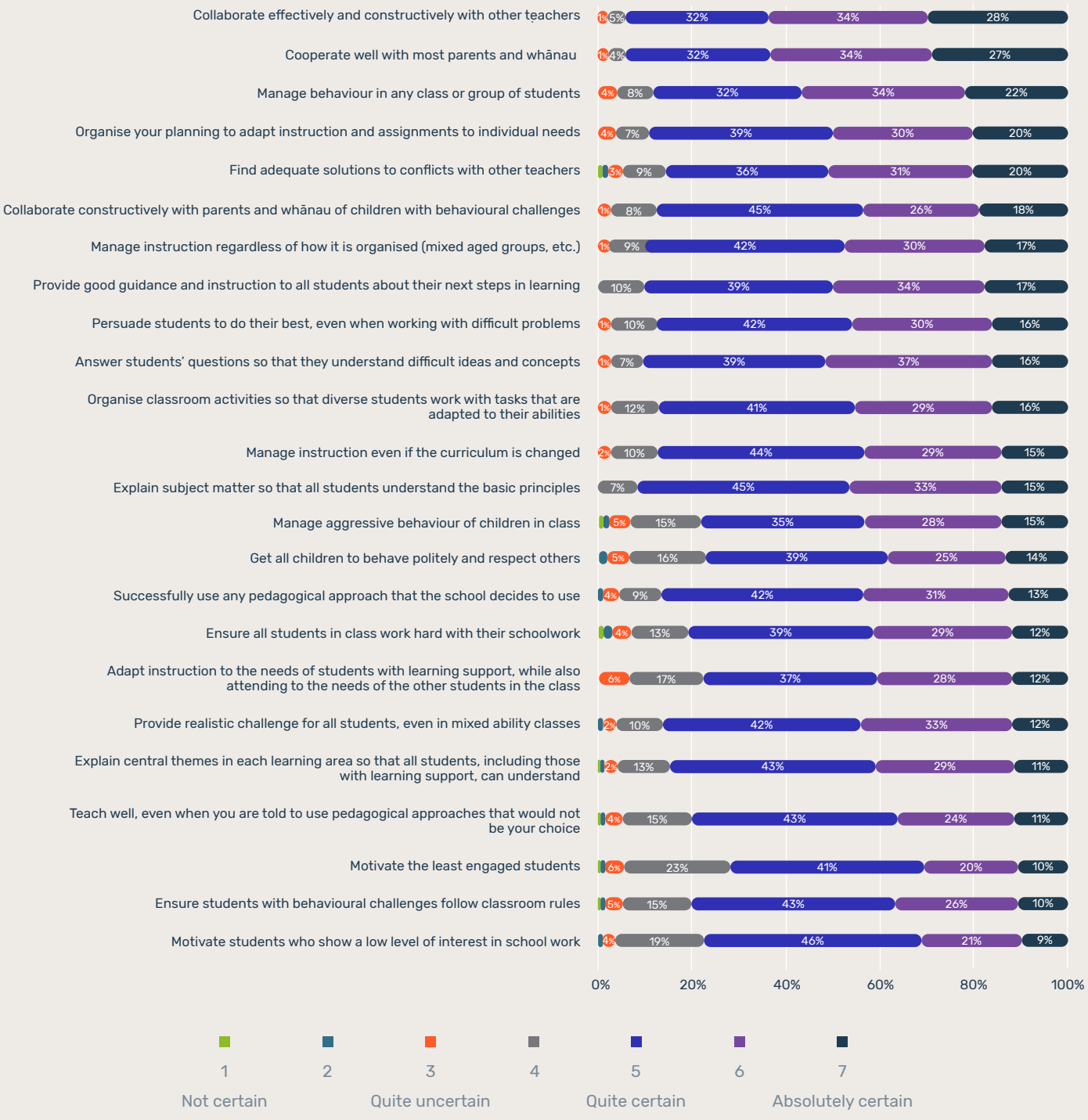
As anticipated, students' academic self-efficacy for reading and writing was generally correlated with their achievement in English. However, it is noteworthy that there was considerable overlap in achievement for those that believed they could read or write well and those that did not. This overlap is important as according to Bandura's (1997) theory, similarly performing students might respond to future challenge, engagement differently, with the more self-efficacious persisting in the face of adversity. Given equal previous achievement, self-efficacy is likely to be a key factor in shaping students' future learning trajectories.

We were not surprised that the relationship between students' confidence in understanding social sciences and their achievement in this area was less clear. The research team aimed to understand students' perceived comprehension of topics relevant to the ongoing New Zealand Curriculum revision. Students' confidence in their knowledge likely correlates with their exposure to these topics, which will vary across schools. Confidence in knowledge differs from self-efficacy in performing tasks, and thus we had no theoretical basis to expect it to predict achievement outcomes.

Professional self-efficacy is similar across gender, equity index, and student year levels.

Teachers responded to the 24 items on our modified teacher self-efficacy scale. Figure 4.12 summarises their responses.

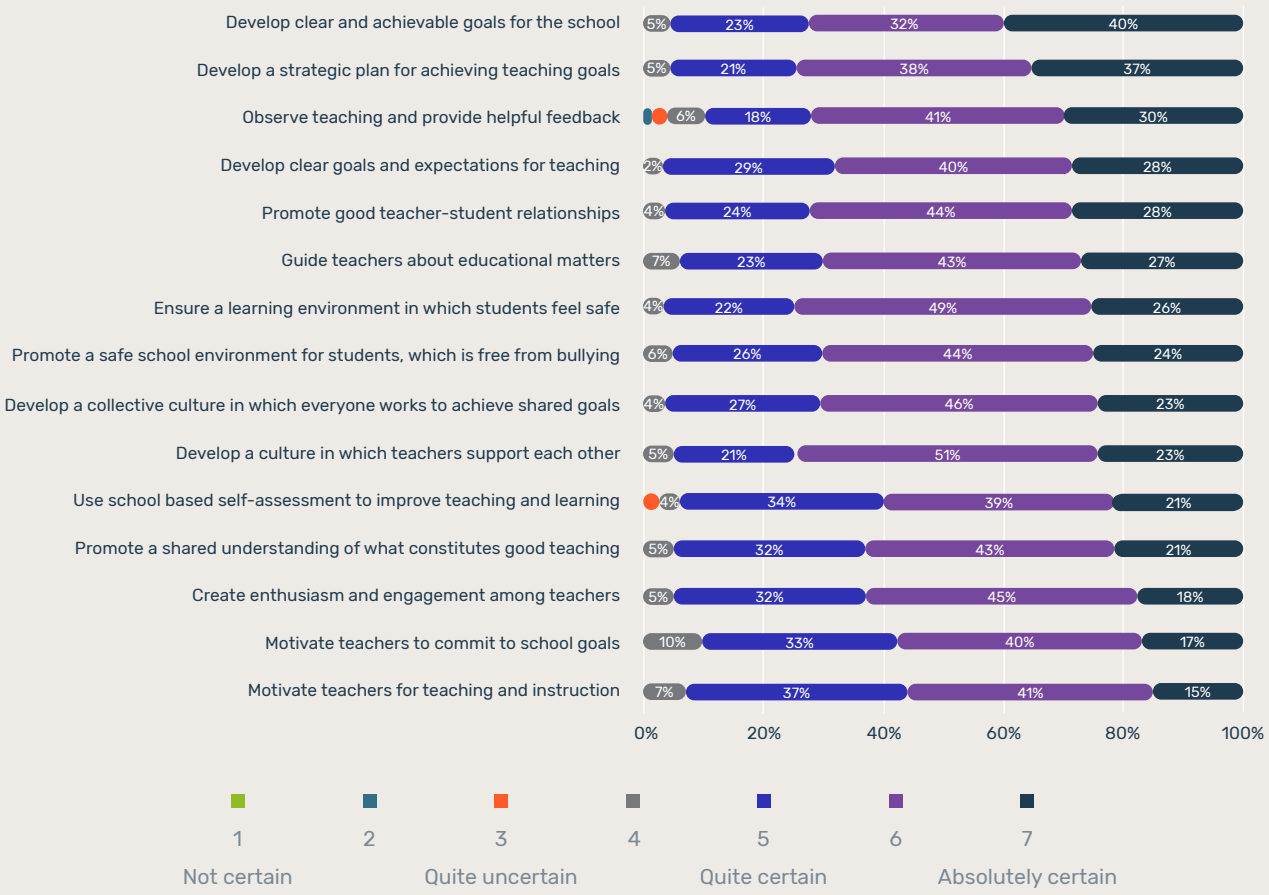
Figure 4.12: Teacher responses to self-efficacy items.



Teachers' responses to items on the scale were generally positive, with fewer than 10% of teachers responding to any item as "quite uncertain" or worse. The two most positive items related to professional relationships with other adults "Collaborate effectively and constructively with other teachers" and "Cooperate well with most parents and whānau". In both cases, over 25% of teachers were "absolutely certain, and fewer than 10% of teachers chose the middle option on the scale or worse. The three items where the fewest teachers (less than 10%) indicated that they were "absolutely certain" related to motivating students, and behaviour management. It is of note that that the third most positive response was "Manage behaviour in any class or group of students", while teachers were less positive in response to the seemingly related "Ensure students with behavioural challenges follow classroom rules". This suggests that teachers are differentiating between managing classes/ groups and individuals.

Principals responded to the 15 items on our modified self-efficacy for instructional leadership scale. Figure 4.13 summarises their responses.

Figure 4.13: Principal responses to self-efficacy items.



Principals' responses to the self-efficacy items were very positive. While up to 10% of principals selected the middle item of the 7-point Likert scale, there were almost no cases where principals indicated that they were "quite uncertain" or worse. The most positive items were "Develop clear and achievable goals for the school", with 40% of principals "absolutely certain" they can, and "Develop a strategic plan for achieving teaching goals" with 37% "absolutely certain". The three items where the fewest principals (less than 20%) indicated that they were "absolutely certain" related to motivating and guiding teachers. The item with the most varied responses was "Observe teaching and provide helpful feedback". While 30% of principals felt "absolutely certain" they were able to, two principals were "quite uncertain", and one was "not certain at all".

Factor analysis (Brown, 2015) was used to estimate the relationships between the items in the self-efficacy scale and generate a single value representing each teacher or principal's level of self-efficacy as indicated by their responses to those items. Comparisons between demographic subgroups found no statistically significant differences ($p<0.05$) in mean factor scores when we compared gender, equity index, and student year levels taught of teachers and principals (Figures 4.14 and 4.15).

Figure 4.14: Teacher self-efficacy factor score distributions by demographic subgroup

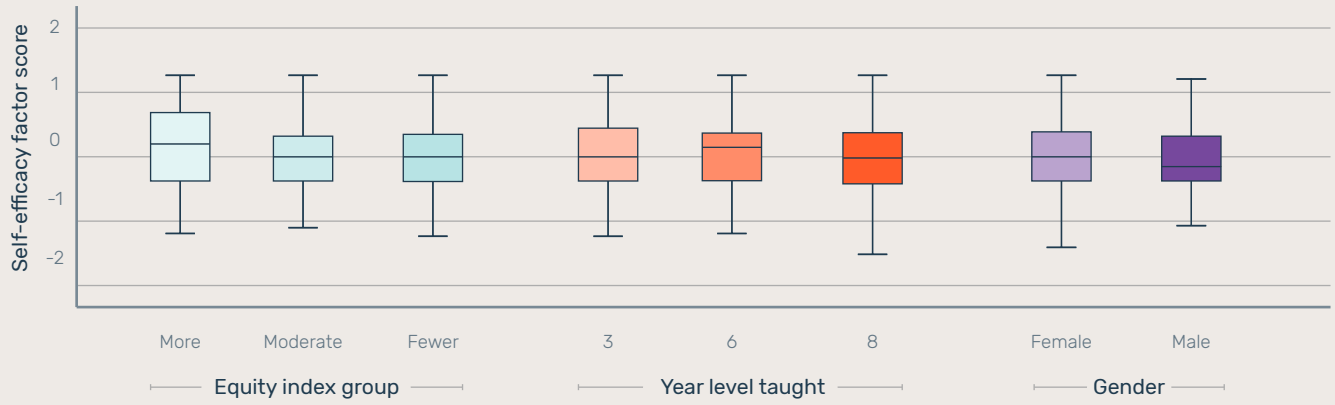
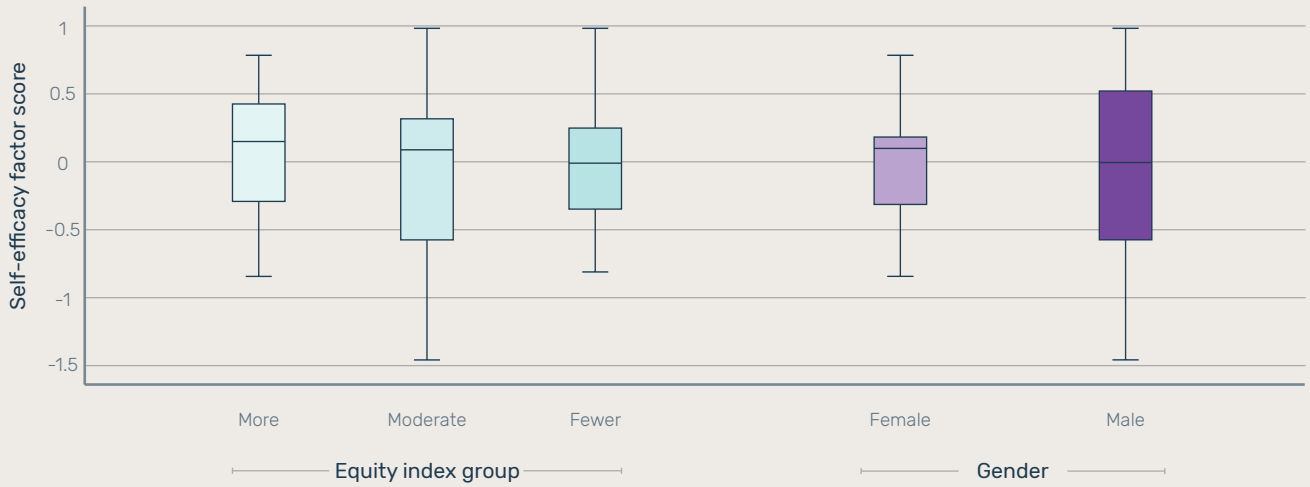


Figure 4.15: Principal self-efficacy factor score distributions by demographic subgroup



What does it mean?

Students

We have reported that students' responses to the self-efficacy items were generally positive. For example, many students were confident in their ability to read well, with 85% of Year 3 students responding "Yes" and 85% of Year 6 and 76% of Year 8 students agreeing either "quite a lot" or "totally". A caveat here is that we can't know how these individual students understood what it meant to do these things well. Such judgement it likely to be based on their experience of success, the feedback they receive from their teachers and others, and observation of others around them (Bandura, 1997).

Nevertheless, a learner's subjective belief that they can read well is likely to be a valuable source of motivation to read and persistence in reading things that are challenging. In comparison to reading, students reported lower self-efficacy for making videos and presentations and giving interesting talks and speeches. Again, such responses are likely to be informed by experience, feedback, and the perceptions of peers and role-models.

Earlier in this chapter, we observed that subgroup differences were generally minor. However, notable differences are evident in relation to priority learners. In Year 6, the proportions of Māori students and students from schools with higher equity barriers who reported being able to create good videos and presentations were over 10 percentage points lower than the overall sample. Similarly, fewer students from these schools felt confident in giving interesting talks and speeches. In Year 8, responses to the English statements showed a similar trend, with the More Barriers group responding positively at rates 10 percentage points lower or more than the entire sample to three out of four items. This is a concern as a convincing body of theoretical and empirical work supports the idea that self-efficacy beliefs are more than just a reflection of current capability but are strongly predictive of future action and outcomes.

We found that students' academic self-efficacy for reading and writing generally correlates with their achievement in English. However, within the sample we observed students with similar achievement levels reporting varying levels of self-efficacy. Given that self-efficacy is likely to influence future learning trajectories, positive self-efficacy beliefs are advantageous for student success and progress. Further research into raising the self-efficacy of diverse learners could support teachers in enhancing student progress.

Teachers

Teacher self-efficacy, defined as the belief in one's ability to plan, organize, and carry out educational activities effectively (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010), influences how teachers perceive and respond to challenges in their classrooms. The overall positive responses from the teachers from participating schools are heartening, given the positive outcomes for learners and teachers themselves that have shown to be associated with these (Berg, 2022).

High teacher self-efficacy was most evident in professional relationships with adults, suggesting teachers are confident in their abilities to collaborate effectively with colleagues and engage constructively with parents and whānau. We noted the variation in answers related to managing behaviour suggests a nuanced response reflective of the complex and varied work of teachers.

Teachers who reported confidence in managing class behaviour may feel less certain in responding to the diverse needs of individual students in their classes. The three items where the fewest teachers (less than 10%) indicated that they were "absolutely certain" related to motivating students, and behaviour management. It is perhaps not surprising that teachers would report comparatively lower self-efficacy for these things.

Further exploration of the profiles of those teachers who report low self-efficacy could allow for targeted support.

Principals

Principal self-efficacy refers to principals' belief in their capability to effectively lead and manage a school, influence staff performance, and drive educational outcomes. The positive responses from principals on the self-efficacy scale are pleasing given the relationship between this construct and important outcomes for students and teachers, as already discussed.

However, the variability in responses, particularly regarding motivating and guiding teachers is noteworthy. While most principals expressed high certainty in goal setting and relationship building, fewer were equally confident in motivating and guiding teachers, highlighting potential areas for targeted professional development and support. This variability underscores the complex nature of principal self-efficacy.

The consistency that we noted across demographic subgroups in principal self-efficacy scores is reassuring, as it suggests that students facing more barriers in their learning are as likely to be supported by self-efficacious principals and benefit from the positive associations related to this as those that face fewer barriers in their learning.

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Findings on collective efficacy

Pillar 5

This chapter describes our findings related to the collective efficacy of teachers and principals. We start with a discussion about the importance of collective efficacy and a description of our methodology. After that, we present a more detailed breakdown of results for teachers and principals. Lastly, we briefly explore the possible implications of these results.

Findings at a glance

Collective efficacy is the belief of a group of teachers in their collective ability to positively affect student learning and outcomes. It is the conviction of educators that, together, they can achieve desired educational goals and overcome challenges. This belief is related to teachers' job satisfaction, motivation, collaboration, and persistence (see Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2019), and to better student performance (Hattie, 2023).

We asked teachers and principals to respond to statements designed to measure their confidence in the ability of teachers at their school to perform their job effectively. We analysed the resulting data in relation to demographic variables. Our analysis highlights two notable findings:

Both teachers and principals were confident of the efficacy of teachers at their school.

Over 90% of teachers and over 95% of principals rated each statement about the efficacy of teachers as at least "more true than false".

Teachers' rating of collective efficacy is similar across gender and equity index, but differs by student year.

Year 8 teachers responded less positively to items rating their confidence in the school's staff as a whole. Year 6 teachers were the most positive.

What is collective efficacy and why is it important?

Collective efficacy refers to the confidence a group of teachers has in the ability of the teachers in their school to positively impact student outcomes (Guidetti et al., 2018; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2023). This collective belief is based on the group's past experiences, knowledge, and shared vision for the future, and can be measured within a team of teachers, a school, or a community of educators working together towards a common goal.

Collective efficacy in education is a strong predictor of student achievement (Hattie, 2023; Goddard et al., 2000; Tschannen-Moran & Barr, 2004) and is helpful for understanding the conditions to foster student achievement. When teachers within a particular school have a high level of collective efficacy, they are more likely to set ambitious goals for their students and to use instructional practices that support student learning. Collective efficacy is influenced by a variety of factors, including leadership, collaboration, and a positive school climate. When school leaders foster an environment of trust, respect, and open communication, teachers are more likely to share their knowledge and expertise with one another, which can increase collective efficacy. Similarly, when teachers collaborate on instructional practices and share student achievement data, they are more likely to develop a sense of collective efficacy in their ability to positively impact student outcomes. By fostering a sense of collective efficacy, schools and educators can work together to support student learning and success (Voekel & Chrispeels, 2017) and support each other in developing high self-efficacy and engagement (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007).

What did we do?

We used a modified version of the seven-item Perceived Collective Teacher Efficacy (PCTE) scale (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007) to measure individual teachers' and principals' perceptions of the efficacy of their school's faculty. The PCTE scale was developed in Norway and used in studies exploring the relationship between collective efficacy and important teacher factors such as perceptions of working in a supportive environment, shared values, engagement, burnout, autonomy, job satisfaction and desire to leave the teaching profession. We asked teachers and principals to use a six-point Likert scale to describe the extent to which they agree with the following statements about their school.

- As teachers at this school, we can support all students to become engaged in their schoolwork, including those with complex learning characteristics.
- Teachers in this school effectively prevent bullying.
- As teachers in this school, we handle conflicts constructively because we work as a team.
- At this school, we have a common set of rules and regulations that enables us to handle disciplinary problems successfully.
- Teachers at this school successfully address individual students' needs.
- At this school, we are able to create a safe and inclusive atmosphere, even in the most challenging classes.
- Teachers at this school succeed in teaching numeracy and literacy skills effectively to all students.

By aggregating the responses of the individual teachers and principals we were able to estimate the collective efficacy of respondents.

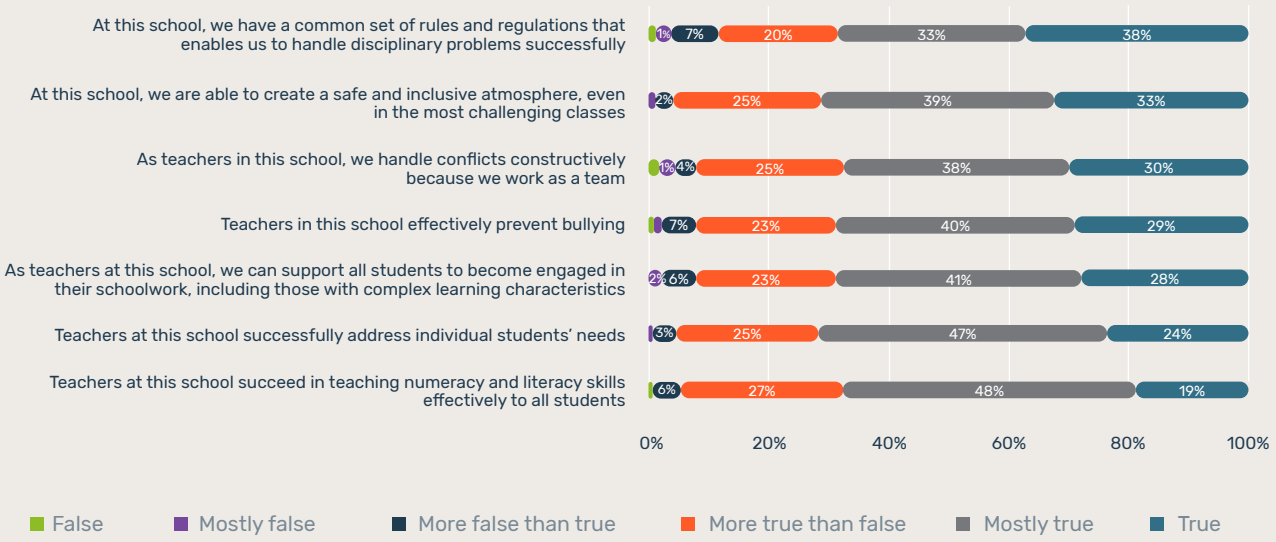
What did we find?

We analysed teachers' and principals' responses to the PCTE items and selected two notable findings to report. These findings are described below. Note that, for consistency with existing literature, when we refer to collective efficacy, we are describing individuals' perceptions of the collective efficacy of the staff of their school.

Both teachers and principals were generally confident of the collective efficacy of teachers at their school.

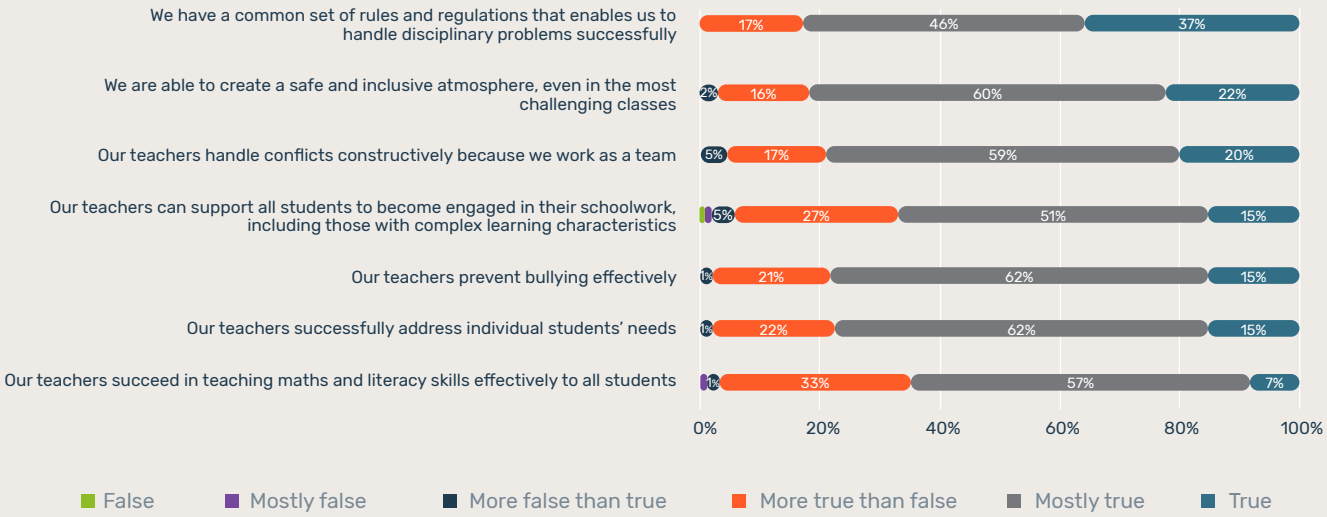
Teachers and principals responded to the seven items on our modified perceived teacher collective efficacy scale. Figures 5.1 and 5.2 summarise their responses.

Figure 5.1: Teacher responses to collective efficacy items.



Teachers' responses to the collective efficacy statements were positive, with over 90% of teachers rating each one as at least "More true than false" and between 67% and 72% rating each as at least "Mostly true". The only statement which fewer than 20% of teachers rated as "True" was "Teachers at this school succeed in teaching numeracy and literacy skills effectively to all students"; however, an additional 48% of teachers rated the statement as "Mostly true".

Figure 5.2: Principal responses to collective efficacy items.



Principals were similarly positive in their responses, with over 95% of principals rating each statement as at least "More true than false" and between 70 and 80% rating each as at least "Mostly true".

Teachers of Year 8 students had lower perceived collective efficacy than others.

Factor analysis (Brown, 2015) was used to estimate the relationships between the items in the PCTE scale and generate a single value representing each teacher or principal's level of "collective efficacy".

Distributions of collective efficacy factor scores for demographic subgroups of teachers and principals are shown in Figures 5.3 and 5.4.

Figure 5.3: Teacher collective efficacy factor score distributions by demographic subgroup

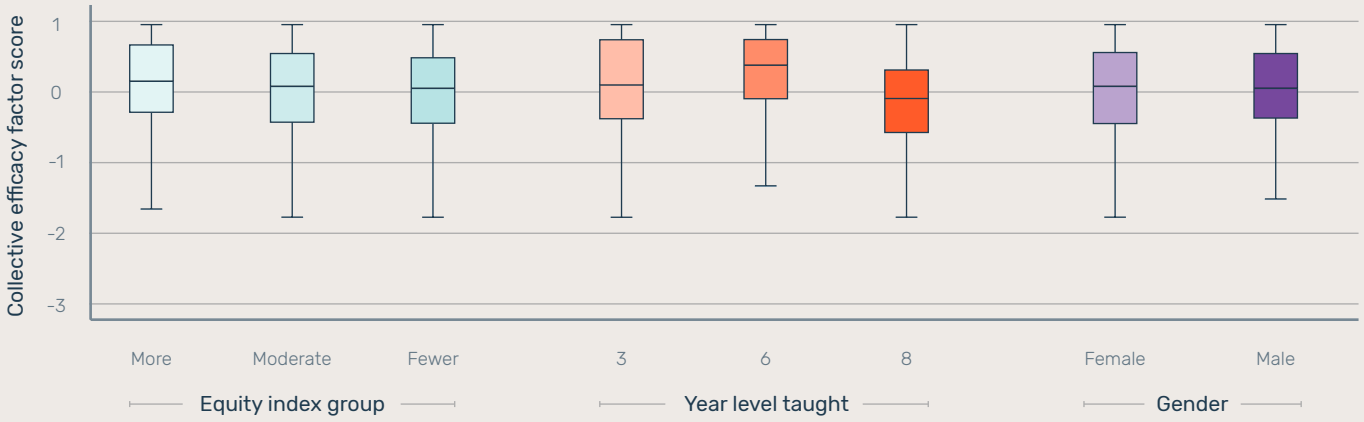
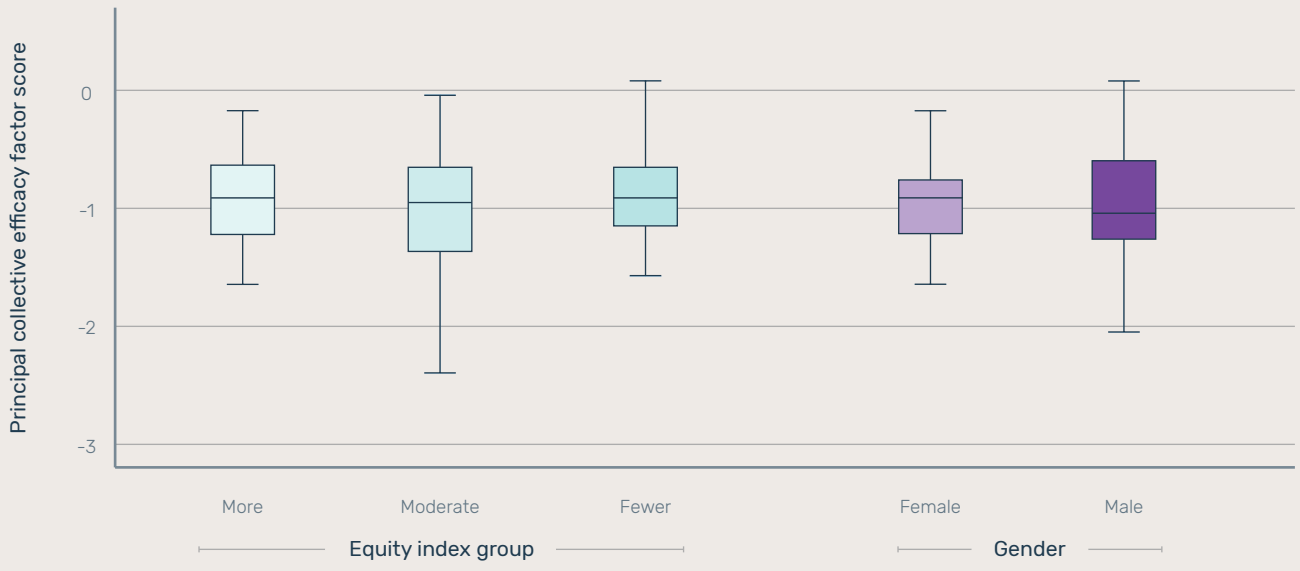


Figure 5.4: Principal collective efficacy factor score distributions by demographic subgroup



Comparisons between demographic subgroups found no statistically significant differences ($p<0.05$) in mean factor scores when we compared the gender and school equity index of teachers and principals. The mean perceived collective efficacy scores of Year 8 teachers was lower than that of both Year 3 and Year 6 teachers. This may reflect differences related to schools' structure and organisation in primary schools when compared with intermediate and secondary schools.

What does it mean?

The education outcomes identified in the 2023 draft version of the New Zealand Curriculum, such as academic achievement and enhanced well-being, are most likely to be effectively achieved through the collaborative efforts of educators within a school. Individual teachers are most likely to be motivated to play their part and persevere in the face of challenges when they believe their efforts will be effective. As noted earlier, collective efficacy, the belief among teachers in a school that as a group, they can make a difference, is associated with important outcomes for principals, teachers, and their students.

Given this, we are encouraged by the high levels of collective efficacy reported by teachers and principals, and that these high levels of collective efficacy are evident across school equity index bands and in both males and females. We did note that, on average, Year 8 teachers reported marginally, but statistically significant, lower perceived collective efficacy than their Year 3 and 6 colleagues. We have speculated that this may be the result of contextual factors such as school structure.

While it was disappointing that only 19% of teachers and 7% of principals rated the statement "Teachers at this school succeed in teaching numeracy and literacy skills effectively to all students" as "True", these responses should not be considered in isolation, as an additional 48% of teachers and 57% of principals, rated the statement as "Mostly true". Furthermore, we speculate that item's emphasis on "all students" may have resulted in a less emphatic response. These data form a useful baseline to allow ongoing comparison of teachers' and principals' collective efficacy beliefs over time and in the context of curriculum developments and reform.

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Findings on academic attitudes

Pillar 6

This chapter describes our findings relating to the academic attitudes present in the schools that participated in the 2023 study. We start by providing a background to the importance of academic attitudes and our methodology. After that, we present a detailed breakdown of results for students, teachers, and principals. Lastly, we briefly explore the possible implications of these results.

Findings at a glance

The academic focus of teachers and principals, and the academic engagement of students with subject material are key drivers of achievement. We asked students about their level of engagement with aspects of the two focus learning areas—English and te ao tangata | social sciences—and asked teachers and principals questions to gauge their perceptions of the extent to which their school community valued academic success. We analysed the resulting data in relation to demographic variables and student achievement. Our analysis highlights four notable findings:

Students like watching videos and presentations more than they like giving talks and speeches.

79% of Year 6 and 72% of Year 8 students like watching videos and presentations at least "quite a lot", compared to 42% and 31% for giving talks and speeches.

Demographic subgroups of students can have differing academic attitudes.

Year 6 students from the More Barriers EQI group, and Year 8 Māori students were more interested in learning about NZ history.

Academic attitudes and achievement are more strongly related for English than for social sciences.

Students who like reading have higher reading and English achievement scores. The pattern is less clear for social sciences.

Teachers and principals are less confident about parents and whānau supporting academic goals than they are about teachers and students doing so.

The three items on the scale with the least positive ratings from both teachers and principals related to parents and whānau.

What are academic attitudes and why are they important?

Academic attitudes encompass the commitment of teachers and principals to fostering a focussed learning environment, as well as the active engagement of students with the subject material. These attitudes have been found to be related to important student outcomes such as wellbeing and achievement. This relationship is likely to be bi-directional, where achievement and wellbeing bolster academic attitude, while academic attitude boosts achievement and wellbeing. Furthermore, a recent Education Review Office (ERO) report suggests community attitudes to school are malleable and strongly related to students' attendance. (ERO, 2023). There is a consensus that both students' attitudes and school academic focus can be changed and lead to positive outcomes for students.

International studies have shown that school emphasis on academic success correlates with higher mathematics and reading achievement among urban primary school students (Goddard et al., 2000). Additionally, related factors such as high academic standards, meaningful and engaging pedagogy and curriculum, and professional learning communities among staff have been shown to contribute to student success (Klem & Connell, 2004). Academic optimism, a school level construct which is underpinned by academic emphasis, has been found to make a significant contribution to student achievement even after controlling for demographic variables and previous achievement (Hoy et al., 2006), and primary and secondary students have shown more positive motivation and learning patterns when their school settings emphasise mastery, understanding, and improving skills and knowledge (Meece et al., 2006).

What did we do?

To better understand students' academic attitudes, we built on items from the NMSSA student questionnaires to ask students about their enjoyment of key aspects of learning in English and social sciences.

Year 3 students were asked to respond "yes" or "no" to four questions:

- Do you like reading?
- Do you like writing?
- Do you like learning about NZ history?
- Do you like learning about other people's ideas and values?

Year 6 and 8 students were asked to respond to seven statements using a four-point Likert scale:

- I like reading.
- I like writing.
- I like watching videos and presentations.
- I like giving talks and speeches.
- I like learning about NZ history.
- I like learning about other people's values and perspectives.
- I like learning about current issues in NZ and the world today.

To explore the general emphasis on academic success within schools we drew on questionnaire items used in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS, 2019). We asked teachers and principals to respond to 11 items using a seven-point Likert scale to rate how they would characterise each of the following within their school:

- Teachers' understanding of the school's curricular goals.
- Teachers' degree of success in implementing the school's curriculum.
- Teachers' expectations for student progress.
- Teachers' ability to inspire students.
- Involvement of parents and whānau in school activities.
- Commitment of parents and whānau to ensuring that children are ready to learn.
- Expectations of parents and whānau for student progress.
- Support from parents and whānau for student progress.
- Students' desire to do well in school.
- Students' ability to reach the school's academic goals.
- Students' respect for classmates who excel academically.

What did we find?

We analysed patterns of responses to our academic attitude measures and selected four notable findings to report. These findings are described below, focusing first on students and then on teachers and principals.

Students like watching videos and presentations more than they like giving talks and speeches.

Figures 6.1 to 6.3 summarise students' responses to items related to their enjoyment of English and social sciences for Year 3, Year 6, and Year 8, respectively.

Figure 6.1: Year 3 student responses to academic attitude questions

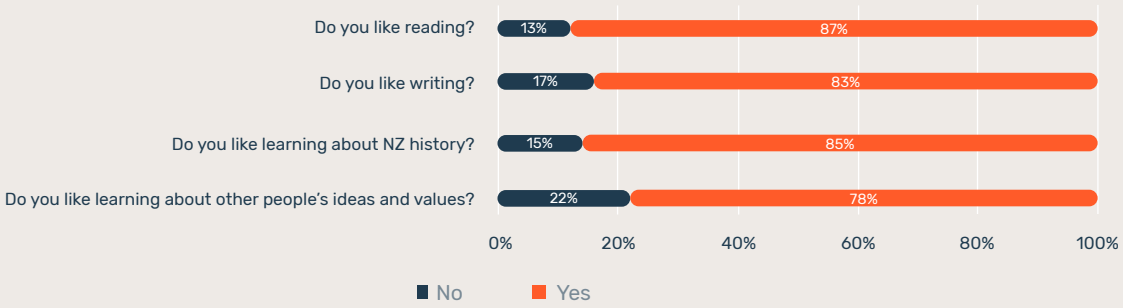


Figure 6.2: Year 6 student responses to academic attitude questions

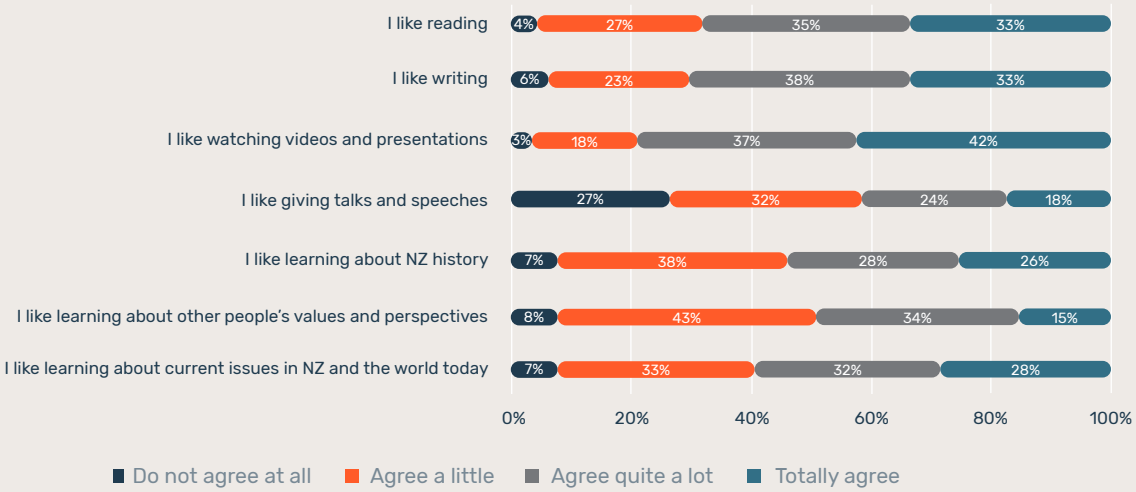
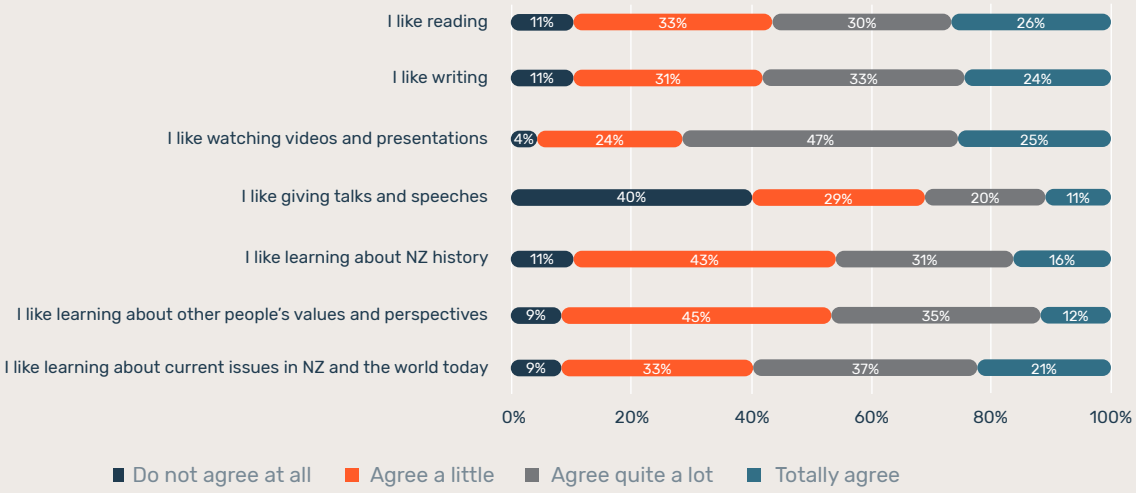


Figure 6.3: Year 8 student responses to academic attitude questions

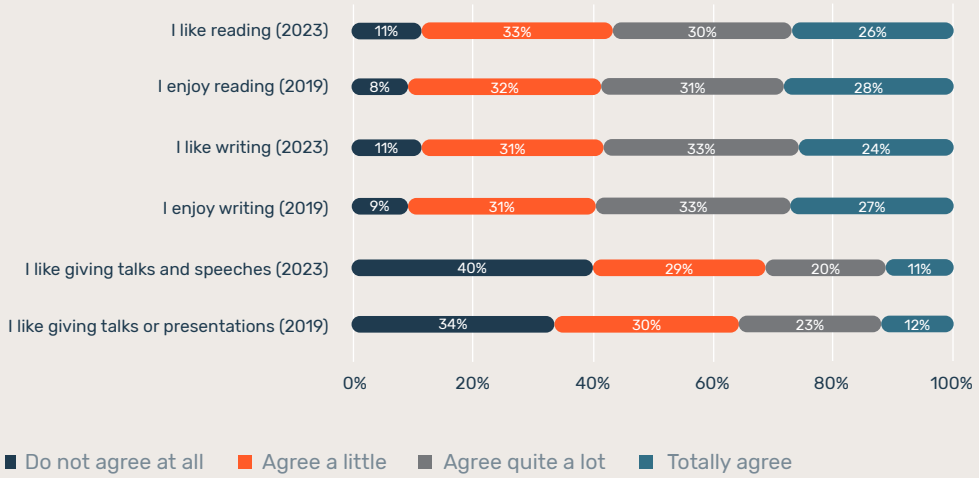


At Year 3, responses were generally positive, with over three quarters of Year 3 students responding "Yes" to each of the questions (Figure 6.1).

At Year 6 and Year 8, around half of students either agreed "Quite a lot" or "Totally" with most of the statements (Figures 6.2 and 6.3). The statement that students were most positive about was "I like watching videos and presentations", with 79% of Year 6 and 72% of Year 8 students agreeing "Quite a lot" or "Totally". Contrastingly, the statement that students were least positive about was "I like giving talks and speeches", with only 42% of Year 6 and 33% of Year 8 students agreeing "Quite a lot" or "Totally".

Similar questions were asked at Year 8 in the 2019 National Monitoring Study of Student Achievement (EARU & NZCER, 2020). A comparison of responses is shown in Figure 6.4.

Figure 6.4. Year 8 responses to attitude to English items in 2019 and 2023



The 2023 responses were very similar to those from 2019. For each item, the proportion of students responding positively in 2023 was slightly lower than in 2019. For example, 59% of Year 8 students Agreed either "Totally" or "Quite a lot" with the statement "I enjoy reading" in 2019, compared with 56% of Year 8 students in 2023.

Demographic subgroups of students can have differing academic attitudes.

We compared the percentages of Year 3 students answering yes to each of the academic attitude questions, broken down by gender, school equity index (EQI) group, and ethnicity (Table 6.1). For Year 6 and 8 students, we compared the percentages of Year 6 students agreeing either quite a lot or totally with each of the academic attitude statements for different demographic subgroups (Tables 6.2 and 6.3).

Table 6.1: Percentage of Year 3 students responding yes to academic attitude questions by demographic subgroup.

	Gender		EQI Group			Ethnicity		
	Male n=465	Female n=476	More n=173	Moderate n=334	Fewer n=450	Māori n=190	Non-Māori n=751	All n=957
Do you like reading?	82%	92%	83%	86%	90%	82%	89%	87%
Do you like writing?	78%	87%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%	83%
Do you like learning about NZ history?	82%	89%	84%	85%	85%	85%	85%	85%
Do you like learning about other people's ideas and values?	72%	83%	74%	78%	79%	76%	78%	78%

Table 6.2: Percentage of Year 6 students agreeing either quite a lot or totally with academic attitude statements, by demographic subgroup.

	Gender		EQI Group			Ethnicity		
How much do you agree with these sentences?	Male n=412	Female n=462	More n=167	Moderate n=276	Fewer n=440	Māori n=194	Non-Māori n=680	All n=883
I like reading.	67%	69%	64%	65%	71%	56%	72%	68%
I like writing.	65%	76%	70%	74%	69%	67%	72%	71%
I like watching videos and presentations.	82%	77%	69%	74%	85%	68%	82%	79%
I like giving talks and speeches.	39%	44%	38%	39%	45%	30%	46%	42%
I like learning about NZ history.	58%	51%	64%	56%	50%	62%	52%	54%
I like learning about other people's values and perspectives.	50%	47%	52%	49%	47%	46%	49%	49%
I like learning about current issues in NZ and the world today.	62%	59%	63%	60%	59%	56%	62%	60%

Table 6.3: Percentage of Year 8 students agreeing either quite a lot or totally with academic attitude statements, by demographic subgroup.

	Gender		EQI Group			Ethnicity		
How much do you agree with these sentences?	Male n=397	Female n=438	More n=126	Moderate n=396	Fewer n=330	Māori n=184	Non-Māori n=651	All n=852
I like reading.	56%	58%	47%	58%	57%	48%	59%	56%
I like writing.	49%	66%	57%	58%	58%	56%	59%	58%
I like watching videos and presentations.	80%	65%	66%	74%	72%	72%	72%	72%
I like giving talks and speeches.	31%	31%	20%	32%	34%	24%	33%	31%
I like learning about NZ history.	47%	46%	50%	53%	37%	61%	42%	46%
I like learning about other people's values and perspectives.	45%	48%	46%	52%	40%	54%	45%	47%
I like learning about current issues in NZ and the world today.	58%	59%	58%	58%	58%	62%	57%	58%

The percentages of Year 3 students responding positively to each question was similar for the various demographic subgroups. In Year 6, the percentage of students in schools in the More Barriers equity index group indicating that they like learning about NZ history was more than 10 percentage points higher than for the whole sample. The same was true for Māori students in Year 8.

In Year 6, the percentage of Māori students that like reading, the percentage of Māori students that like giving talks and speeches, and the percentage of students in schools in the More Barriers equity index group that like watching videos and presentations were more than 10 percentage points lower than for the whole sample. The percentage of Year 8 students in schools in the More Barriers equity index group that like giving talks and speeches was also more than 10 percentage points lower than for students in both the Moderate and Fewer Barrier equity index groups.

Academic attitudes and achievement are more strongly related for English than for social sciences.

We compared the distributions of students' reading and English achievement based on the extent to which they indicated that they like reading (Figures 6.5 to 6.8).

Figure 6.5: Distribution of Year 3 students' reading scale scores by extent to which they like reading

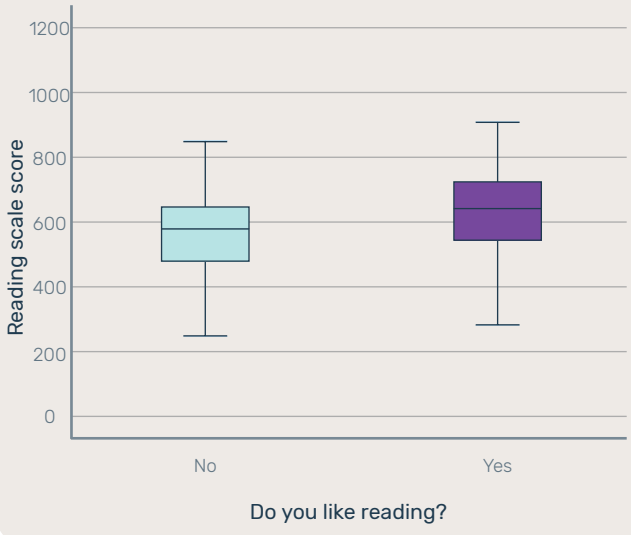


Figure 6.6: Distribution of Year 6 and 8 students' reading scale scores by extent to which they like reading

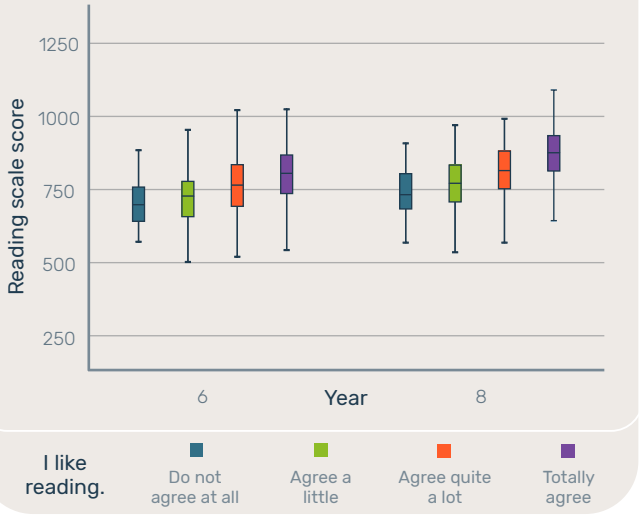


Figure 6.7: Distribution of Year 3 students' English scale scores by extent to which they like reading

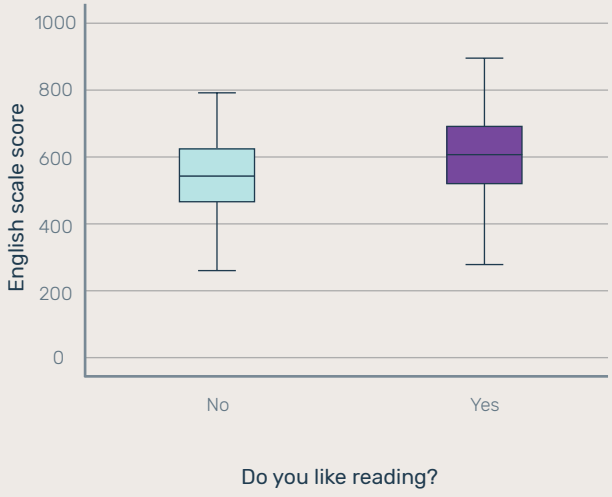
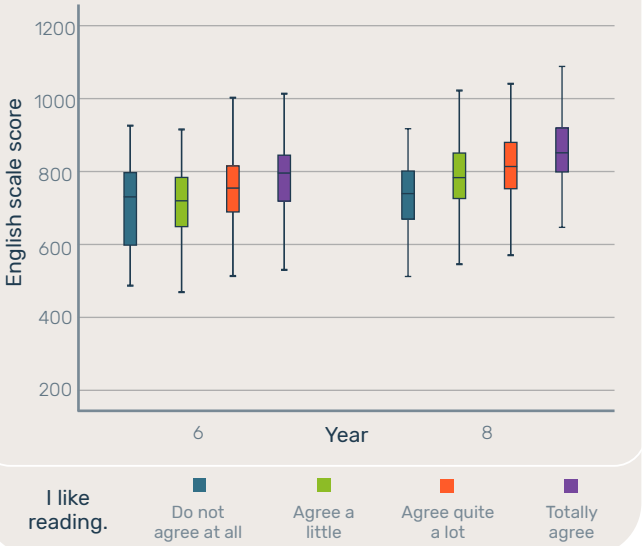


Figure 6.8: Distribution of Year 6 and 8 students' English scale scores by extent to which they like reading



Generally, those students that indicated that they like reading tended to score more highly on both measures of academic achievement, though the English achievement of Year 6 students that agreed "a little" that they like reading appears to have been slightly lower, on average, than that of Year 6 students who did not agree at all.

When we analysed the academic achievement of demographic subgroups of students, the pattern was consistent, with students that indicated that they like reading being more likely to achieve better results regardless of ethnicity, gender, or the equity index group of their school.

We compared the distributions of students' social sciences achievement based on the extent to which they indicated that they like learning about New Zealand history (Figures 6.9 and 6.10).

Figure 6.9: Distribution of Year 3 students' social sciences scale scores by extent to which they like learning about NZ history

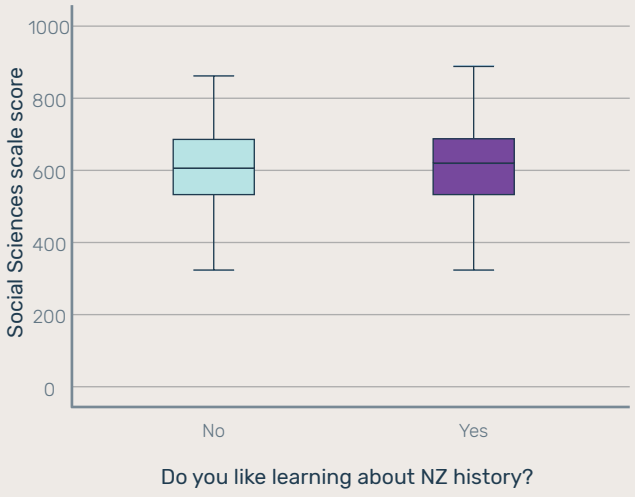
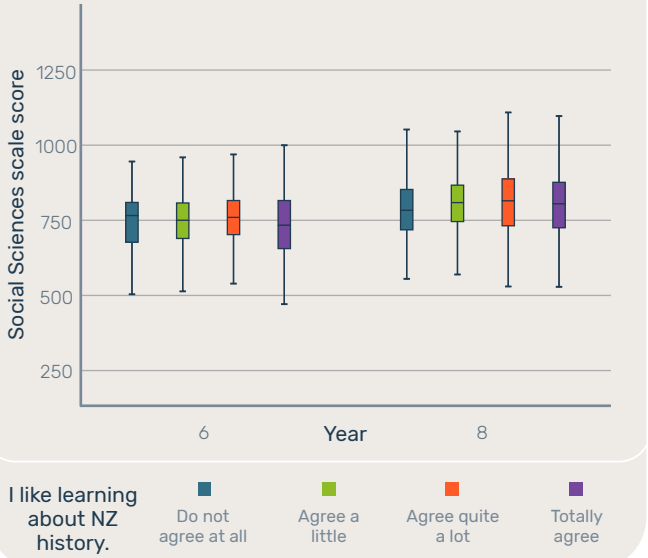


Figure 6.10: Distribution of Year 6 and 8 students' social sciences scale scores by extent to which they like learning about NZ history



There was very little difference in the distributions of achievement in social sciences between students based on the extent to which they indicated that they like learning about New Zealand history. This was consistent, regardless of ethnicity, gender, or the equity index group of the school.

Teachers and principals are less confident about parents and whānau supporting academic goals than they are about teachers and students doing so.

Teachers and principals were asked to characterise how well their school approached each of the 11 items on our "school emphasis on academic success" scale. Figures 6.11 and 6.12 summarise their responses.

Figure 6.11: Teacher responses to academic attitude items

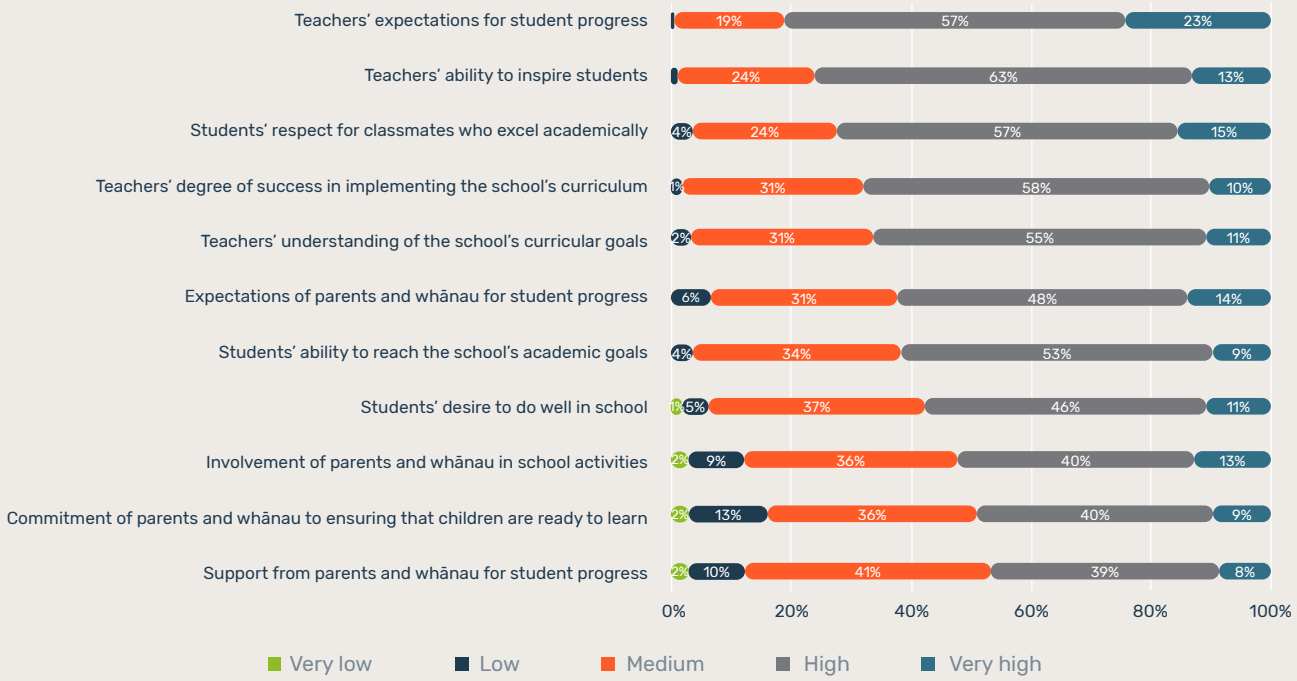
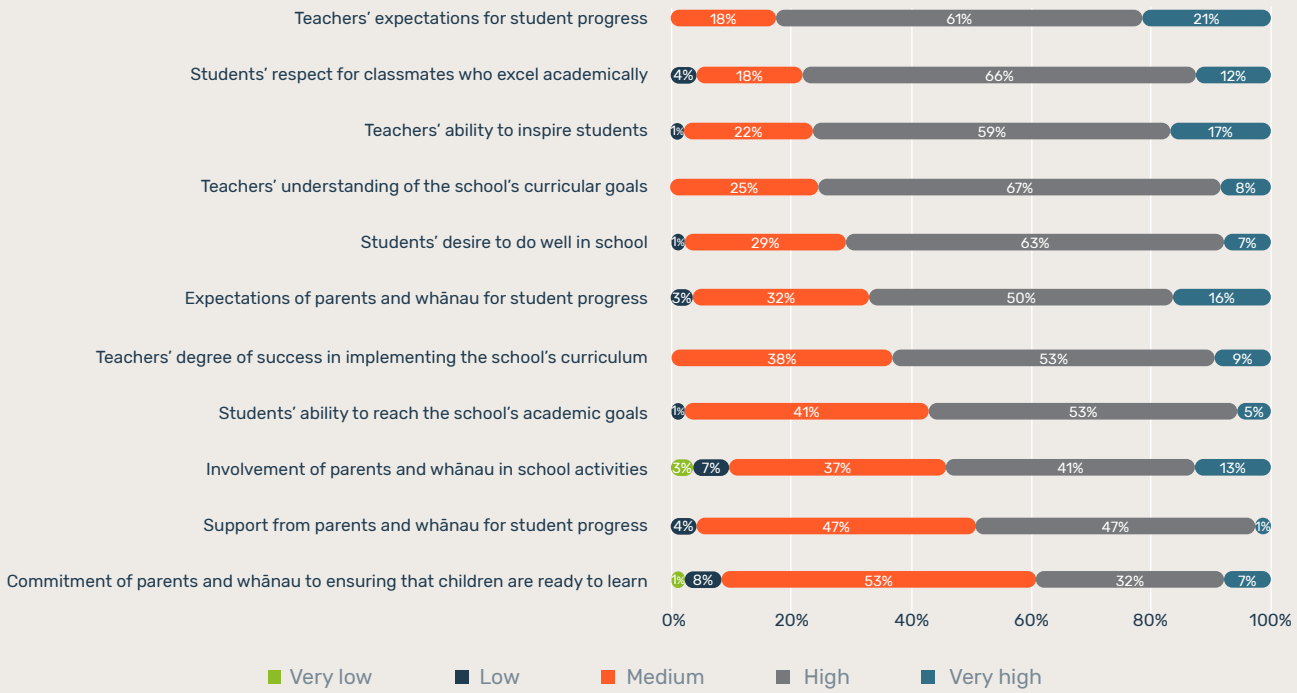


Figure 6.12: Principal responses to academic attitude items



Teachers' and Principals' responses to these items were generally positive, with most statements rated as either high or very high by more than half of respondents in each group.

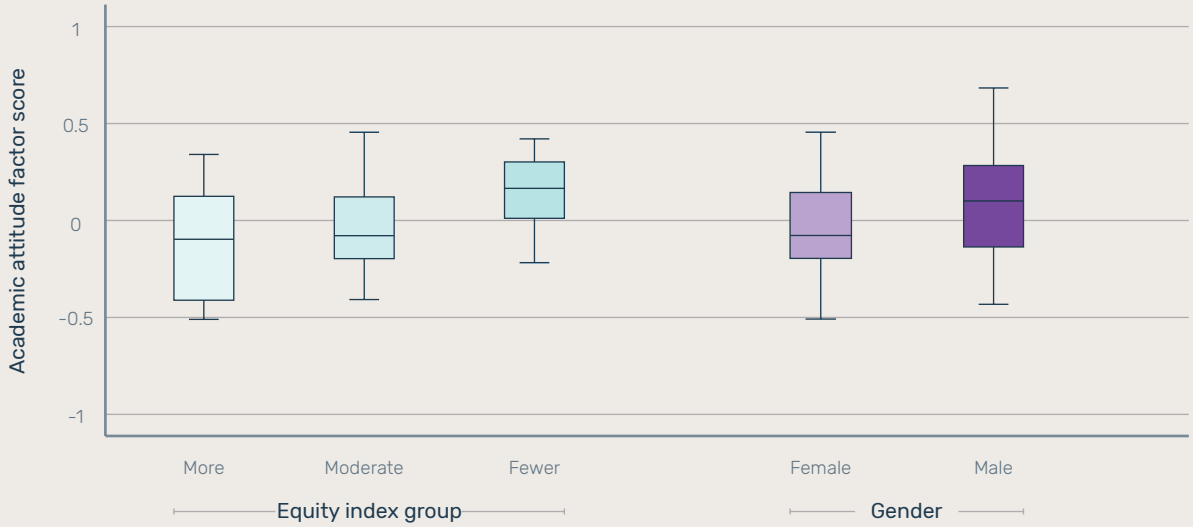
The only items which more than 10% of respondents rated very low or low were three items relating to parents and whānau. Ten percent of teachers rated the involvement of parents and whānau in school activities as low or very low, 15% of teachers rated the commitment of parents and whānau to ensuring that children are ready to learn as low or very low and 12% of teachers rated support from parents and whānau for student progress as low or very low. The first two of these statements were also rated as low or very low by 9% of principals.

We used factor analysis (Brown, 2015) to estimate the relationships among the items in the academic attitude scale and generate a single value representing each teacher or principal's "academic attitude". Figures 6.13 and 6.14 show the distributions of academic factor scores across various demographic subgroups for teachers and principals, respectively.

Figure 6.13: Teacher academic attitude factor score distributions by demographic subgroup

Teachers in schools whose students have fewer socioeconomic barriers to achievement had higher academic attitude scores, on average, than those in schools with more barriers. Year 8 teachers had lower academic attitude scores, on average, than Year 3 and Year 6 teachers. While the mean factor score for female teachers was higher than that for male teachers, the difference was not statistically significant.

Figure 6.14: Principal academic attitude factor score distributions by demographic subgroup



Principals in schools whose students have fewer socioeconomic barriers to achievement had higher academic attitude scores, on average, than those in schools with more barriers. While the mean factor score for male principals was higher than that for female principals, the difference was not statistically significant.

What does it mean?

The emphasis on academic achievement within schools, including students' interest and engagement with the subject matter, is crucial for driving student success. To understand this important contextual factor, we surveyed students about their engagement with English and social sciences, and collected data from teachers and principals regarding their perceptions of how much their school communities supported academic success.

Overall, students responded positively to questions about academic attitudes. However, it is concerning that the percentage of Māori Year 6 students who like reading is more than 10 percentage points lower than the overall sample. Given the relationship between liking reading and academic success, this discrepancy warrants further investigation.

In contrast, the percentage of Māori Year 8 students who enjoy learning about New Zealand history is more than 10 percentage points higher than the overall sample. Understanding the reasons behind this difference could inform future curriculum development and implementation, and promote greater equity in our educational system.

Teachers and principals generally perceived the academic attitudes in their communities positively, indicating that students, teachers, and whānau emphasise academic success. However, it is concerning that 15% of teachers rated the general commitment of parents and whānau in their schools to ensuring that children are ready to learn as low or very low, and 12% rated support from parents and whānau for student progress as low or very low. These findings align with concerns raised by the Education Review Office (ERO) in 2023, which noted that many parents don't value their child going to school regularly and argued that "attitudes towards school are key to solving the attendance crisis."

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More information

More information about achievement in te ao tangata | social sciences and English is available on the website of the Curriculum Insights and Progress Study. This includes access to a report on contextual information along with interactive data windows.

curriculuminsights.otago.ac.nz

The Curriculum Insights and Progress Study is conducted by the University of Otago's Educational Assessment Research Unit (EARU) and the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER), under contract to the Ministry of Education.

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