


SECTION 6:  
SCHOOLS  
AND SCHOOLS  
CLIMATE



Although the home and classroom both play an important role in developing children's literacy, there are features of schools as institutions which offer challenges for those responsible for their governance and leadership. This section presents an overview on the characteristics of New Zealand schools, including a cursory examination of some of the school climate information collected in PIRLS-05/06.

## Background

New Zealand has a national policy for what is expected of children in terms of their reading acquisition, but schools are responsible for interpreting the policy and sometimes establishing their own policies for reading. Differences in school characteristics such as location and size, as well as the socio-economic background and home language of students attending the school, may require schools to make variations in how a school is organised and how the curriculum is delivered. As well as the school 'demographics', creating a positive learning environment is also important for children's learning. A school's climate can be enhanced by how all the participants feel – the principal, teachers, parents, and students.<sup>47</sup>

## Reading literacy achievement and school location<sup>48</sup>

There were no significant differences between Year 5 students' mean reading achievement among the three locations of schools: urban (536), suburban (527), and rural (535). On average internationally, it was found that children attending urban or suburban schools generally achieved at a moderately higher level than those who attended schools located in rural areas. This finding was consistent with PIRLS 2001 (Caygill & Chamberlain, 2004).

## Reading literacy achievement and school size<sup>49</sup>

The 37 percent of Year 5 students who attended larger schools (an enrolment size of more than 400 students) achieved on average significantly higher scores (543) than the 27 percent of Year 5 students who attended smaller (less than 200 students) and the 36 percent in medium-sized (200 to 400 students) schools. There was no difference between the mean achievement of Year 5 students attending smaller (519) and medium-sized (529) schools. (Also see page 54 for discussion on school size and decile.)

## Reading literacy achievement and school decile<sup>50</sup>

Internationally, principals across countries were asked to estimate the proportion of their student body that came from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Based on their reports, New Zealand Year 5 students who attended schools where few schoolmates were from economically disadvantaged homes generally achieved at a higher level, with the difference between their average achievement and those attending schools where most came from disadvantaged backgrounds one of the highest among higher-performing countries (Chamberlain, 2007b; Mullis, et al., 2007).

A national-level variable of interest both to schools and to education policy makers, and which measures similar attributes of schools to that noted above, is the *decile*. Schools are ranked into 10 percent groupings, or deciles. The Ministry of Education then allocates funding to state and state-integrated schools based on their decile. Decile 1 schools are the 10 percent of schools with the *highest* proportion of students from socio-economically disadvantaged communities, while decile 10 schools are the 10 percent of schools with students from the *lowest* level of socio-economically disadvantaged communities. A school's decile does not indicate the overall socio-economic mix of the school.

In PIRLS-05/06, Year 5 students from higher decile state/state integrated schools (8 through 10) generally achieved significantly higher reading literacy scores than those attending medium decile state/state integrated (4 through 7) or lower decile (1 through 3) state/state integrated schools. See Figure 6.1 for details. Note that although 2 percent of students in PIRLS attended independent schools, the actual number of schools from which they were sampled was too small to be able to report their mean (less than 10 schools). See TN 7 in the Technical Notes for details.

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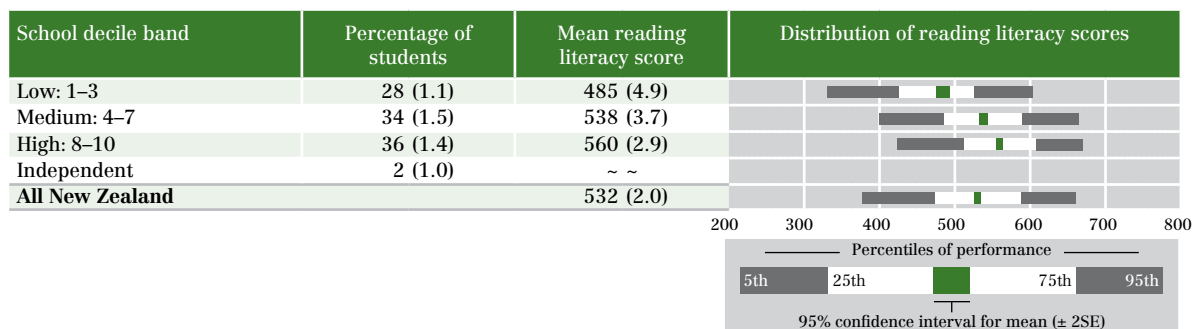
<sup>47</sup> For an overview of the class setting in which Year 5 students were learning and how their teachers typically approached the teaching of reading, readers should refer to *Reading literacy in New Zealand* (Chamberlain, 2007b).

<sup>48</sup> Based on the responses from New Zealand school principals, 41 percent of Year 5 students attended schools in an urban location, 39 percent attended suburban schools, and 21 percent attended schools in rural settings.

<sup>49</sup> Twenty-seven percent of Year 5 students in PIRLS were in smaller schools, 36 percent were in medium-sized schools, and 37 percent were in larger schools. (See Appendix A for details of how schools were sampled.)

<sup>50</sup> Deciles are used to provide funding to state and state-integrated schools, with schools with a lower decile being funded at a higher level than those with a higher decile. *Some* independent schools have requested that the Ministry of Education calculate their decile. However, for the purpose of this analysis, independent schools have been grouped separately, and so the decile bands reflect the deciles of state and state-integrated schools only.

Figure 6.1: Distribution of Year 5 students' mean reading literacy scores in 2005/2006, by school decile band\*



Notes

Standard errors appear in parentheses.

Tilde (~) indicates that there was insufficient data to report achievement. Although the (weighted) percentage of students in independent schools in PIRLS was 2 percent, the number of schools from which they were sampled was too small (less than 10 schools) to be able to report their mean. See TN 7 in the Technical Notes for details.

See Table B.14 for the 2001 means and Table B.15 for details of the percentiles and standard errors for 2001 and 2005/2006.

\* State and state-integrated schools only.

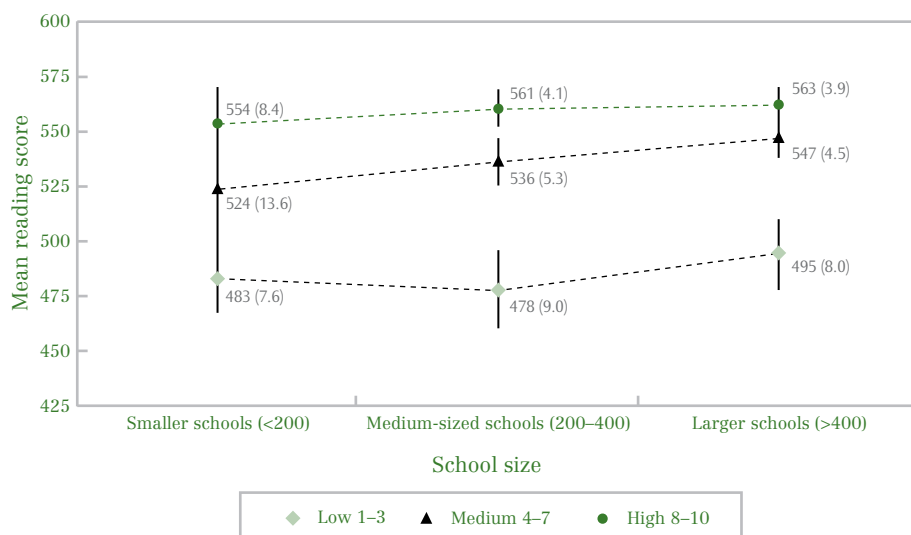
### Range of scores

As well as there being a considerable range in reading literacy achievement scores across all decile bands in 2005/2006, Figure 6.1 also shows that there are high-performing and low-performing students in all three decile band categories. However, the range was larger for Year 5 students in the 1 to 3 band schools (292) compared to those in the 4 to 7 and 8 to 10 bands (266 and 250 respectively).

### School decile and enrolment size

It was reported on page 53 that, on average, students attending larger schools had higher reading literacy achievement than students attending smaller schools. As Figure 6.2 shows, this relationship is clearly an artifact of the decile of the school. That is, students in lower decile schools tended to have lower achievement regardless of the size of the school they attended. Similarly, students in higher decile schools tended to have higher achievement regardless of the enrolment size of the school.

Figure 6.2: Year 5 students' mean reading literacy scores in 2005/2006, by size of school and school decile band\*



Notes

The ♦ data points are the mean reading scores for the Year 5 students in lower decile schools by school enrolment size. The ▲ data points are the mean scores for the Year 5 students in the mid-range decile schools by school enrolment size, and the ● data points are the mean scores for Year 5 students in higher decile schools by school enrolment size. Standard errors appear in parentheses.

The vertical lines extending from the data points show the 95 percent confidence interval around the mean (i.e., ± 2 standard errors).

\* State and state-integrated schools only.

## School decile and the PIRLS international benchmarks

Table 6.1 reports the percentages of Year 5 students reaching the PIRLS international reading benchmarks, by the decile of the schools they attended.

Table 6.1: Percentage of students reaching PIRLS international reading benchmarks in 2005/2006, by school decile band\*

School decile band	Percentage of Year 5 students reaching PIRLS international benchmark			
	Advanced (625)	High (550)	Intermediate (475)	Low (400)
Low: 1–3	5 (0.9)	24 (2.2)	57 (2.4)	82 (1.6)
Medium: 4–7	13 (1.1)	46 (2.1)	79 (1.8)	95 (0.8)
High: 8–10	19 (1.3)	58 (1.6)	87 (1.2)	97 (0.5)
All New Zealand†	13 (0.7)	45 (1.0)	76 (1.0)	92 (0.6)

### Notes

Standard errors appear in parentheses.

See Table B.16 in Appendix B for 2001 data.

\* State and state-integrated schools only.

† All students, including 2 percent of students in the independent schools.

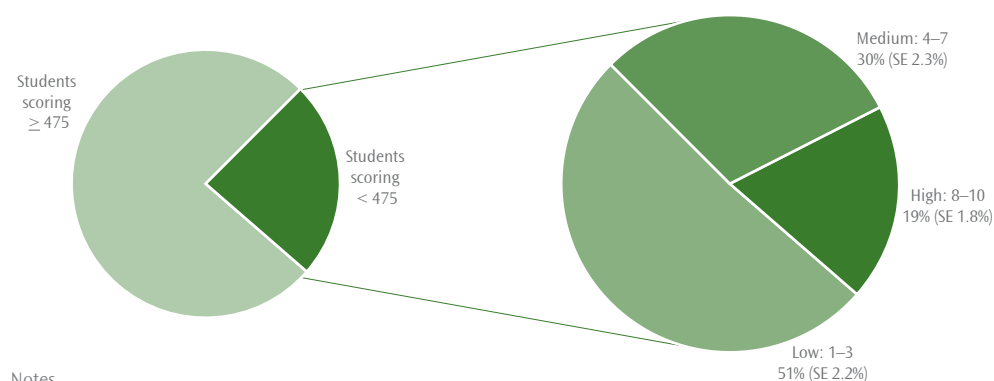
Proportionately few students in lower decile schools reached each benchmark compared with their counterparts in mid-range and higher decile schools. While not quite as striking, a similar pattern was observed when comparing the proportions of students from mid-range and higher decile schools.

## School decile and lower achievers

In Section 3, *lower achievers* were defined as students who did not reach the PIRLS *Intermediate International Benchmark* (i.e., scored below 475). About one-quarter (24%) of Year 5 students fell into this category. As well as looking at the student characteristics of this group, it is also important to consider the (socio-) economic character of the schools lower achievers attended.

Figure 6.3 shows the composition of the lower-achievers group according to the decile band of the schools the Year 5 students attended. The lower-achievers group comprised about one-half students from lower decile schools (51%), nearly double their proportion in the Year 5 population (28%). In sharp contrast, just under one-fifth of students from higher decile schools (19%) were in this lower-achievers group and yet they comprised 36 percent of the Year 5 population.

Figure 6.3: Composition of the Year 5 lower-achievers group in 2005/2006, by school decile band\*



### Notes

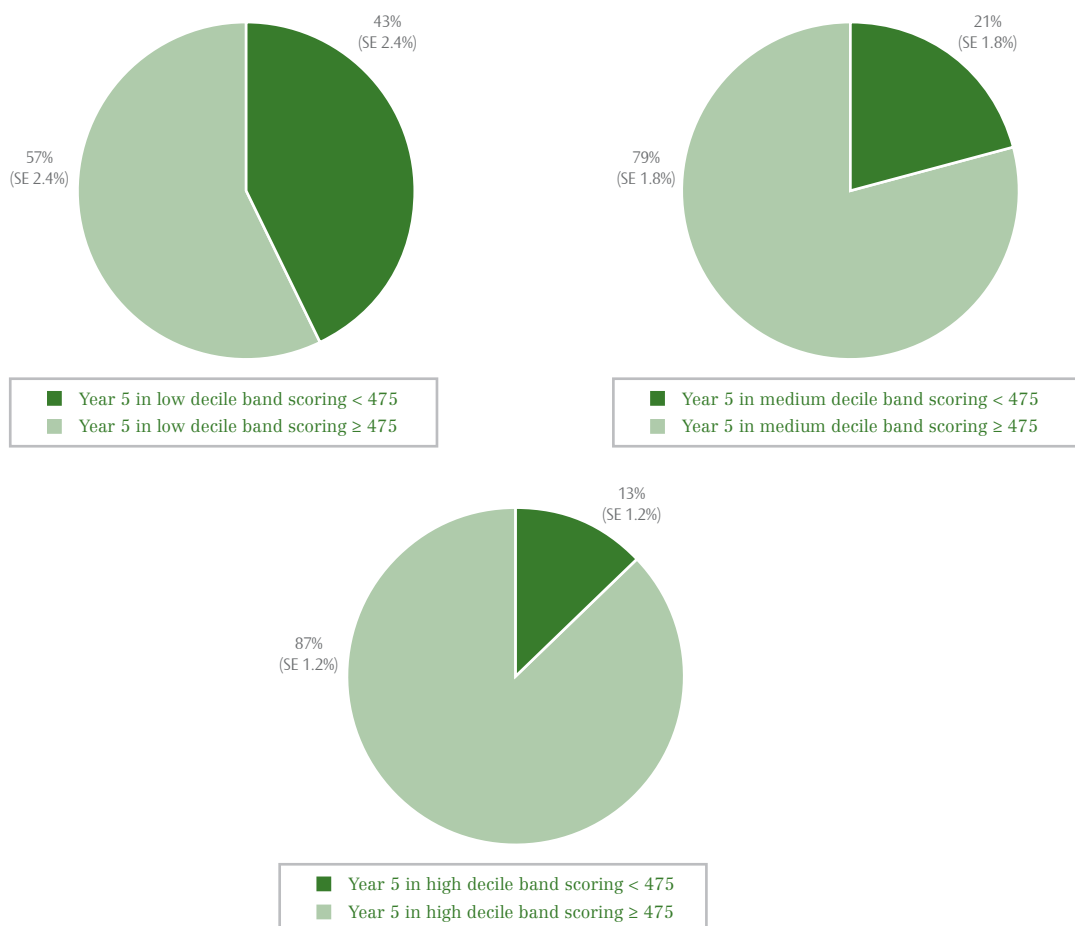
Standard errors (SE) appear in parentheses.

The proportion of all Year 5 students who reached the PIRLS *Intermediate International Benchmark* was 76 percent (SE 1.0%); the proportion who did not reach this benchmark was 24 percent (SE 1.0%).

\* State and state-integrated schools only.

The second approach used here is to look at the proportion of students in each school decile band that fell into this lower-achievers group. Figure 6.4 shows the proportions of students attending lower, mid-range, and higher decile schools who were in the lower-achievers group.

Figure 6.4: Percentage of Year 5 students in each school decile band\* who were in the lower-achievers group in 2005/2006



Notes

Standard errors (SE) appear in parentheses.

The proportion of all Year 5 students who reached the PIRLS *Intermediate International Benchmark* was 76 percent (SE 1.0%); the proportion who did not reach this benchmark was 24 percent (SE 1.0%).

\* State and state-integrated schools only.

### Odds ratios

Summing up the information noted above for school decile, the odds ratios (*ORs*) for Year 5 students attending mid-range and higher decile schools being in the lower-achievers group were both less than 1, indicating relatively low probabilities for the students in these schools being lower achievers. Of note is the *OR* – 3.81 – for lower decile schools. That is, the odds of a Year 5 student attending a lower decile school and being in the lower-achievers group was about 3.8 times higher than the odds of a Year 5 student who attended a mid-range or higher decile school (i.e., a non-lower decile school, 0.77 c.f. 0.20). See Table B.6A in Appendix B for details.

### Any change between 2001 and 2005/2006?

Details of the means, percentiles, and benchmarks for the 2001 Year 5 cohort in each decile band are reported in Tables B.14 through to B.16 in Appendix B. Consistent with the overall pattern observed for New Zealand, and for any of the Year 5 student sub-populations, there were *no* changes that were of statistical significance. Of interest here were decreases, albeit very small, in the proportions reaching the higher benchmarks in 2005/2006 than was the case in 2001, observed particularly among the band of higher decile schools. However, to reiterate, these decreases were not significant.

## Role of the school principal

New Zealand principals reported a similar use of their time in 2005/2006 as their counterparts in England and Scotland, but they were typically spending more hours, about 57 per week, doing these activities than their international counterparts. Table 6.2 presents the data for New Zealand school principals according to the location of their schools and school decile.

Table 6.2: Principals' estimates of their time spent on various school-related activities in 2005/2006, by location and school decile band\*

School category	Mean hours per week spent on the activities	Percentage of time						
		Developing curriculum and pedagogy for the school	Managing staff/ staff development	Administrative duties (e.g., hiring, budgeting)	Parent and community relations	Teaching	Interacting with individual students	Other
<b>Location</b>								
Urban	58 (1.5)	15 (1.1)	17 (1.1)	32 (2.0)	14 (0.9)	4 (0.6)	11 (0.6)	6 (1.0)
Suburban	57 (1.1)	15 (1.0)	18 (0.8)	34 (1.8)	12 (0.5)	5 (0.8)	11 (0.7)	5 (0.7)
Rural	57 (1.3)	15 (1.5)	13 (1.2)	27 (2.5)	10 (0.9)	21 (3.5)	10 (0.9)	4 (0.8)
<b>Decile</b>								
Low:1–3	54 (1.4)	17 (1.1)	17 (1.1)	32 (2.1)	13 (0.8)	6 (1.1)	12 (0.7)	4 (0.7)
Medium: 4–7	59 (1.3)	15 (1.1)	17 (1.1)	31 (1.2)	13 (0.8)	8 (1.6)	12 (0.8)	5 (0.7)
High: 8–10	57 (0.9)	15 (1.3)	16 (1.1)	33 (2.3)	12 (0.6)	9 (1.7)	9 (0.6)	6 (1.1)
<i>Independent</i>	<i>73 (9.1)</i>	<i>9 (1.2)</i>	<i>13 (4.8)</i>	<i>32 (19.0)</i>	<i>12 (5.0)</i>	<i>18 (14.6)</i>	<i>9 (1.2)</i>	<i>6 (7.3)</i>
<b>All New Zealand</b>	57 (0.7)	15 (0.7)	17 (0.6)	32 (1.2)	12 (0.4)	8 (0.8)	11 (0.4)	5 (0.5)

### Notes

Standard errors appear in parentheses.

The information reported for independent schools is shown only for illustrative purposes and should be regarded as indicative only. These data are drawn from the responses of the principals of fewer than 10 schools. The standard errors show the level of uncertainty.

\* State and state-integrated schools only.

In general, principals tended to spend about the same amount of time on the tasks regardless of the school locality and their school's decile. Not surprisingly, exceptions were mainly observed for rural school principals, where the percentage of time spent managing staff, performing administrative duties, and teaching differed from their counterparts in suburban and urban localities. Rural schools were more often than not smaller schools (60%), and school principals of these schools would most likely have a teaching role as well as the leadership role.

## Availability of school resources

The Availability of School Resources (ASR) Index was developed internationally to measure the extent to which shortages or inadequacies of school resources affect schools' capacity to provide instruction.<sup>51</sup> In 2005/2006 the majority of New Zealand Year 5 students (86%) attended schools where school principals reported that resource shortages or inadequacy of resources had little or no effect on schools' capacity to provide reading instruction (i.e., were at the high level of the index).<sup>52</sup> Thirteen percent of Year 5 students were at the medium level of the index, with just 2 percent at the low level.

Although very small, proportionately more principals of smaller schools and of lower decile schools reported that shortages or inadequacies affected their schools' capacity to provide instruction (i.e., at the low level) than principals of medium- or larger-sized schools and higher decile schools (4% of students in both cases.)

<sup>51</sup> The school resources covered by this index were: qualified teaching staff; teachers with a specialisation in reading; second-language teachers; instructional materials; supplies (such as paper and pencils); school buildings and grounds; heating/cooling and lighting systems; instructional space (such as classrooms); special equipment for physically disabled students; computers for instructional purposes; computer software for instructional purposes; computer support staff; library books; and audio-visual resources.

<sup>52</sup> A 4-point scale was used for each category: 1 = not at all, 2 = a little, 3 = some, and 4 = a lot. Responses for the activities were averaged for each principal. Students were assigned to the high level when the average was (1–<2); to the medium level when the average was (2–<3); and to the low level when the average was (3–4).

## Any change between 2001 and 2005/2006?

There was a small but significant increase (of 2 percentage points) in the proportion of Year 5 students at the *low* level of the Availability of School Resources Index between 2001 and 2005/2006. In 2001, all school principals indicated that shortages or inadequacies did not affect their schools' capacity to provide instruction (i.e., it was estimated that there were no students at the low level of the index.) Although just a small change, in 2005/2006 principals' from some schools indicated that shortages or inadequacies in resources did affect their schools' capacity to provide instruction, with about 2 percent of Year 5 students reportedly in schools where this was the case. Accompanying this change was a small non-significant decrease (3 percentage points) in the proportion at the medium level of the ASR Index for the same period. There was no change in the proportion of students recorded at the high level of the index.

The changes were largely a reflection of the views of principals of lower decile schools becoming more polarised. Accompanying a 9 percentage point increase in the proportion of lower decile schools' students at the high level of the ASR Index, there was a corresponding increase (4 percentage points) at the low level of the index. Similar changes were observed in the data for higher decile schools; no changes were observed for mid-range decile schools.

## School climate

Internationally, New Zealand principals were among the most positive in their views on the climate for learning in their schools. The Principals' Perceptions of School Climate (PPSC) Index summarised principals' characterisation of teachers' job satisfaction; teachers' expectations for student achievement; parental support for student achievement; students' regard for school property; students' regard for others' welfare; and students' desire to do well. Students were assigned to the high level of the PPSC Index if their principal typically responded 'high' or 'very high' and to the low level if their principal typically responded 'low' or 'very low'. The remainder were assigned to the medium level.<sup>53</sup>

Principals of mid-range and higher decile schools were generally more positive than their counterparts at lower decile schools, with more than three-quarters of students from each group of schools (78% and 83% respectively) at the high level of the index. By way of contrast, less than half of Year 5 students (46%) were in lower decile schools where their principals held positive views. A similar pattern was exhibited when looking at the size of schools: the principals of smaller schools tended to be less positive than their counterparts in larger schools.

The average achievement of Year 5 students in schools where principals were very positive about their school climate tended to be about 30 scale score points higher than that of their counterparts whose principals held less favourable views (541 compared with 512 for the high and medium levels respectively; there were too few observations to report the achievement at the low level).

## Students' view of school life

Students were asked for their views on school. Specifically, they were asked the extent to which they agreed with the following:

- I like being at school
- I think that teachers in my school care about me
- Students in my school show respect to each other
- Students in my school care about each other.

Across countries the relationship between levels of agreement with these statements and achievement varied, and so they were not summarised into an index. However, students' responses on their own do provide some important indication of what they feel about aspects of their school life as Year 5 students.

Internationally, middle primary school students were very positive about their teachers, with 89 percent of students on average agreeing a lot or agreeing a little that their teachers cared about them. Also, internationally most students liked being at school (84%). Students' level of agreement with the statement 'students in my school care about each other' and 'students in my school show respect to each other' did, however, vary across countries (also see Chamberlain, 2007b).

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<sup>53</sup> The 5-point scale is: 1 = very low; 2 = low; 3 = medium; 4 = high; and 5 = very high. Responses to the activities were averaged for each principal. Students were assigned to the high level when the average was greater than 3.67 through 5; the medium level when the average was 2.33 through to 3.67; and the low level when the average was 1 to less than 2.33.

The percentage of New Zealand Year 5 students who agreed a lot or a little with each statement is reported in Table 6.3.

**Table 6.3: Percentage of Year 5 students reporting their agreement with statements about aspects of school life in 2005/2006, by gender and ethnic grouping**

Year 5 student group	Percentage of students agreeing a lot or a little to the statement			
	I like being at school	I think that teachers in my school care about me	Students in my school show respect to each other	Students in my school care about each other
<b>Gender</b>				
Girls	89 (0.7)	93 (0.7)	82 (1.0)	83 (0.9)
Boys	76 (1.0)	86 (0.9)	77 (1.0)	77 (1.1)
<b>Ethnic grouping</b>				
Pākehā/European	79 (1.0)	90 (0.7)	80 (1.0)	81 (1.1)
Māori	86 (1.2)	88 (1.1)	77 (1.6)	77 (1.5)
Pasifika	89 (2.2)	89 (1.9)	80 (3.1)	77 (3.1)
Asian	90 (1.6)	90 (1.6)	83 (2.2)	84 (1.8)
<b>All New Zealand*</b>	<b>83 (0.7)</b>	<b>89 (0.6)</b>	<b>80 (0.8)</b>	<b>81 (0.8)</b>

Note

Adjusted percentages are reported. Standard errors appear in parentheses.

\* All Year 5 students, including students in Other ethnic groups.

About one in four Year 5 boys (24%) did not agree with the statement 'I like being at school' compared with about one in ten girls (11%). Pākehā/European boys (28%) were more likely to disagree with the statement than students from any other group boys (c.f. 19% of Māori boys, 15% of Pasifika boys, and 14% of Asian boys).

'Students in my school care about each other' also attracted some differing views. More than one in five Pākehā/European boys (21%), Māori girls and boys (21% and 24% respectively), Pasifika girls and boys (22% and 24% respectively) and, to a lesser extent, Asian boys (19%) did not endorse this statement. By way of contrast, Pākehā/European girls (17% did not agree) and Asian girls (12%) were more likely to agree with the statement. A similar pattern was observed with the statement 'Students in my school show respect to each other'.

In New Zealand, the relationship between Year 5 students' views on aspects of school and achievement is worth noting. Generally, the relationship was curvilinear. Year 5 students who were very positive (i.e., agreed a lot) tended to achieve about 15-20 scale score points *lower* than students who were more reticent with their views (agree a little or disagree a little). The group of Year 5 students who expressed very negative views (i.e., disagreed a lot), albeit proportionally few, generally had typically much lower achievement (an average of 50 scale score points lower) than students in the other categories.

## School safety

Two indices were developed internationally to measure school safety: one based on the ratings of principals on a series of statements and one based on the views of students on a different series of statements.

### Principals' perceptions

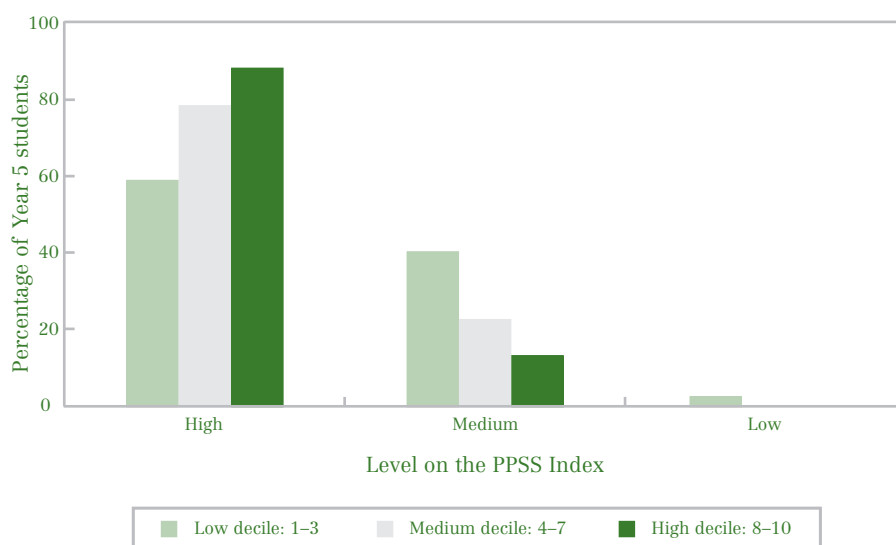
Information on principals' responses to the severity of seven student behaviours was summarised in the Principals' Perceptions of School Safety (PPSS) Index. These behaviours included classroom disturbances, cheating, profanity, vandalism, theft, intimidation or verbal abuse among students, and physical conflict among students. Although cross-national comparisons are difficult because of differing perceptions of what constitutes a serious problem, the seriousness of the student behaviours in most countries was generally low, with on average only 7 percent of students at the low level of the index (i.e., serious problem).

In New Zealand, the percentage at the low level of the PPSS Index was just 1 percent. More than three-quarters of Year 5 students (77%) were in schools where their principals generally viewed the behaviours as not a problem (i.e., at the high level) compared with 60 percent internationally; the remainder of Year 5 students (23%) were at the medium level (compared with 32% internationally).

School size and school location did not appear to affect the views of New Zealand’s principals. However, as Figure 6.5 illustrates, principals of lower decile schools were more likely to express some concerns about the behaviours in their schools than their counterparts in mid-range and higher decile schools. About 40 percent of Year 5 students in lower decile schools were at the medium level of the Principals’ Perceptions of School Safety Index compared with 22 percent of students from mid-range decile schools and 12 percent of students from higher decile schools. Principals of higher (88%) and mid-range (78%) decile schools on the other hand were more likely to view the negative behaviours as not being a problem (i.e., at the high level of the PPSS Index) than the principals of lower decile schools (58%).

The relationship between students’ reading literacy achievement and principals’ views on the severity of negative behaviours was relatively strong internationally, particularly between the high and low levels of the PPSS Index (61 scale score points). In New Zealand’s case there were too few students (1%) at the low level to reliably estimate their achievement. However, the average achievement difference between Year 5 students at the high and medium levels of 34 scale points was higher than the international average difference of 8 scale score points found for these two corresponding levels (i.e., 503 compared with 495).

**Figure 6.5: Principals’ Perception of School Safety (PPSS) Index in 2005/2006, by school decile band\***



**Notes**

The mean reading literacy scores for Year 5 students at each level of the PPSS Index in 2005/2006 were:

Low decile 1–3: High 495 (5.2) and Medium 479 (9.3).

Medium decile 4–7: High 543 (3.9) and Medium 522 (8.4).

High decile 8–10: High 561 (3.2) and Medium 551 (5.4).

There were too few students to report achievement at the Low level of the index.

Although not reflected in this graph, independent school principals were very positive with their ratings and therefore all students from independent schools were assigned to the high level of the index. There were too few schools to report their achievement.

\* State and state-integrated schools.

### Student Safety in School (SSS) Index

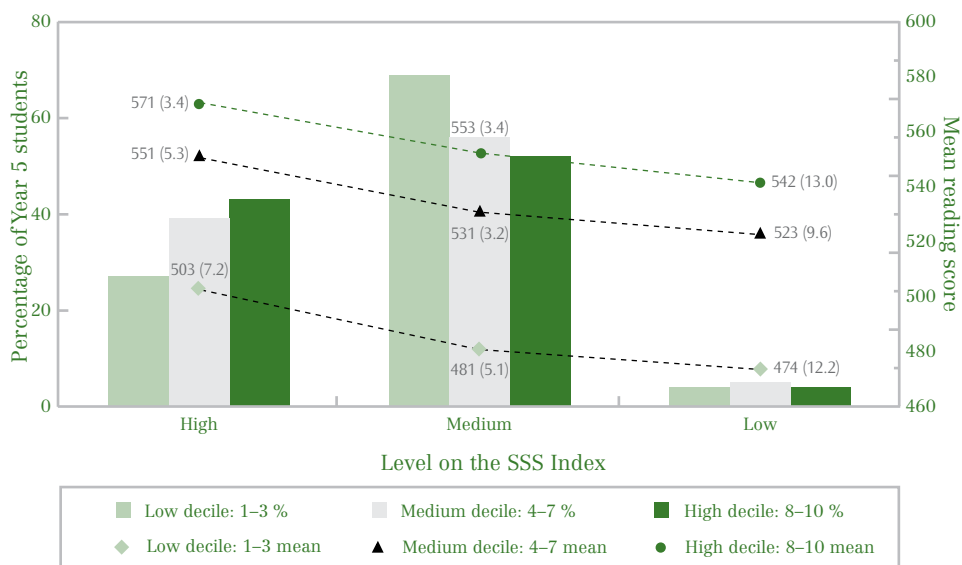
Students’ responses to the statement ‘I feel safe at school’ and to the statements on whether or not they had something stolen, been bullied or been injured by another student during the month prior to the PIRLS assessment were combined into the Student Safety in School (SSS) Index. The percentage of Year 5 students who reported feeling safe and had no incidents happening to them (i.e., at the high level of the index) was 37 percent, while 4 percent indicated they did not feel safe and had experienced two or more negative behaviours (i.e., the low level of the index). The remainder, 58 percent, typically gave a combination of responses (i.e., at the medium level).<sup>54</sup>

<sup>54</sup> On average internationally, 47 percent of students felt very safe and reported no incidents happening to them (i.e., at the high level of the SSS Index); 3 percent reported not feeling safe and had two or more incidents happen to them (and their classmates) (i.e., at the low level of the index). The remaining 50 percent typically gave a combination of responses (i.e., the medium level).

In terms of achievement, Year 5 students at the high level of the index (i.e., who reported feeling safe and had not experienced any incidents) achieved an average of about 28 scale score points higher than their counterparts at the medium level (551 c.f. 523), and about 35 scale points higher than those students at the low level (516).

The size of the schools of Year 5 students did not appear to be related to whether or not they had experienced negative behaviours, with the proportions of students at each level of the SSS Index about the same in smaller, medium-sized, and larger schools, as for New Zealand overall. Students' reports did, however, appear to be related to the decile of the school they attended (see Figure 6.6), which to some extent is consistent with the views of their principals.

Figure 6.6: Year 5 students at each level of the Student Safety in School (SSS) Index and reading literacy achievement in 2005/2006, by school decile band\*



Notes

Each set of bars represents the percentage of Year 5 students at each level of the SSS Index by school decile band. The high level of the SSS Index denotes students who feel very safe and reported no negative incidents, whereas the low level denotes students who do not feel safe and experienced two or more incidents.

The data points are the mean reading literacy scores for the students at each level of the SSS Index, by school decile band (\* state and state-integrated schools). Standard errors appear in parentheses.

More than half of Year 5 students in schools in each of the decile bands were likely to have experienced at least one negative behaviour (i.e., at the medium level of the SSS Index) with students in lower decile schools more likely to report this (70% of students) than their counterparts in mid-range (56%) or higher (52%) decile schools. A sense of *not* feeling safe, as measured by the index (i.e., low level of the index), was felt by the same proportion of students regardless of the decile band (about 5%).

Consistent with the overall pattern for New Zealand, and illustrated in Figure 6.6, there was a positive relationship between the level on the School Safety Index and mean reading achievement for students attending schools in each decile band.

Looking at the demographic characteristics of the students at each level of the index, proportionately fewer Year 5 boys than Year 5 girls were at the high level of the index (35% c.f. 40%), while the converse was observed at the low level (6% c.f. 3%). Proportionately fewer Māori (29%) and Pasifika (27%) students than Asian (41%) and Pākehā/European (40%) students reported feeling safe at school and having not experienced any incidents of negative behaviours, with higher proportions of Māori and Pasifika students (both at 66%) than Asian (58%) and Pākehā/European students (55%) at the medium level of the SSS Index. There were no differences among the proportions of students from the four main groupings at the low level (4–5% each). This information is consistent with the findings from other international studies (e.g., Chamberlain, 2001)