

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- members of the Project's Reading and Speaking Advisory Panel
- principals and children of the schools where tasks were trialled
- principals, staff, and Board of Trustee members of the 294 schools included in the 2000 sample
- the 3217 children in the 2000 sample, and their parents
- the 108 teachers who administered the assessments to the children
- the 44 senior tertiary students who assisted with the marking process
- the 188 teachers who assisted with the marking of tasks early in 2001

2 SUMMARY

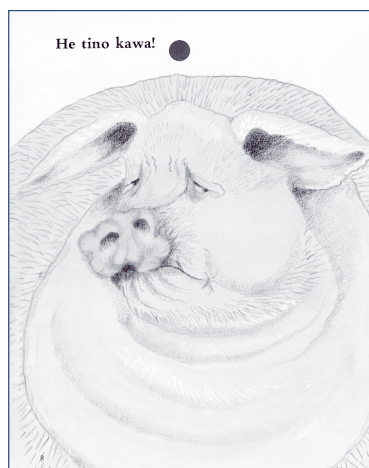
New Zealand's National Education Monitoring Project commenced in 1993, with the task of assessing and reporting on the achievement of New Zealand primary school children in all areas of the school curriculum. Children are assessed at two class levels: year 4 (halfway through primary education) and year 8 (at the end of primary education). Different curriculum areas and skills are assessed each year, over a four year cycle. The main goal of national monitoring is to provide detailed information about what children can do so that patterns of performance can be recognised, successes celebrated, and desirable changes to educational practices and resources identified and implemented.

Each year, small random samples of children are selected nationally, then assessed in their own schools by teachers specially seconded and trained for this work. Task instructions are given orally by teachers, through video presentations, on laptop computers, or in writing. Many of the assessment tasks involve the children in the use of equipment and supplies. Their responses are presented orally, by demonstration, in writing, in computer files, or through submission of other physical products. Many of the responses are recorded on videotape for subsequent analysis.

The use of many tasks with both year 4 and year 8 students allows comparisons of the performance of year 4 and 8 students in 2000. Because some tasks have been used twice, in 1996 and again in 2000, trends in performance across the four year period can also be ana-

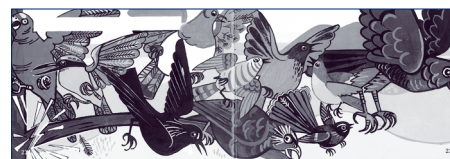
lysed.

In 2000, the second year of the second cycle of national monitoring, three areas were assessed: music, aspects of technology, and reading and speaking. This report presents details and results of the assessments of reading and speaking.



Frameworks for reading and speaking assessment are presented in **Chapter 2**. These frameworks highlight the importance of constructing and communicating meaning for a variety of purposes, and identify particular understandings, insights, skills, processes, and motivational factors that contribute to effectiveness in reading and speaking.

Chapter 3 examines achievement in oral reading, with particular emphasis on reading accuracy. Four tasks related to reading in English. On average across the three *Reading Record* tasks (fiction, non-fiction and non-book), 35% more year 8 than year 4 students were judged to be in the highest of the 6 reading bands. The average gain on 10 components of the *Word Power* task was 36%. These results indicate very substantial progress in reading between year 4 and year 8.

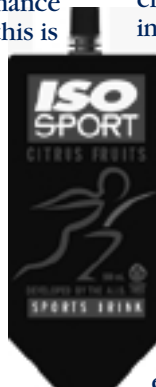


Dramatic improvement in oral reading between 1996 and 2000 was apparent for year 4 students, with smaller improvement for year 8 students. For year 4 students, we describe placement in bands 4 and 5 as

representing performance well above normal expectation and placement in band 0 as representing performance well below expectation. Averaged across the three tasks, 32% of year 4 students were in band 4 or 5 in 1996, and this rose dramatically to 48% in 2000. At the bottom end of the performance range, 11% were in band 0 in 1996, but only 6% in 2000. Again, this is an important improvement.

For year 8 students, we describe placement in band 5 as representing performance above expectation, and placement in bands 0, 1 or 2 as representing performance well below expectation. Averaged across the three tasks, 51% of year 8 students were in band 5 in 1996, rising to 56% in 2000. Most of the increase was due to a 12% increase on *Reading Record Non-Book*. At the bottom end of the performance range, 8% were in band 0, 1, or 2 in 1996, dropping to 5% in 2000.

Two tasks involved reading in Māori. Averaged across 13 oral reading components in these two tasks, 13% more year 8 than year 4 students read successfully in Māori.



Chapter 7 includes nine tasks that involved students in making oral presentations for various purposes: telling stories, developing and presenting puppet plays, talking on allocated topics and planning to interview a visitor. The performances of year 4 and year 8 students were compared on 40 components of seven tasks. On average, 15% more year 8 than year 4 students succeeded on these components.

Averaged across 13 components of three tasks, 2% more year 4 students succeeded in 2000 than

in 1996, but 6% fewer year 8 students succeeded in 2000 than in 1996. This decrease was due mainly to 16%

fewer year 8 students in 2000 succeeding on the components of *Puppet Play*. It is appropriate to conclude that between 1996 and 2000 the performance of year 4 students did not change, but there was a small decline in the performance of year 8 students.



Chapter 4 focuses on reading comprehension, predominantly using silent reading tasks.

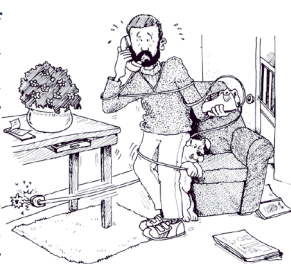
Year 8 students demonstrated consistently higher levels of reading comprehension than year 4 students. Averaged across 115 components of 9 tasks, 25% more year 8 than year 4 students succeeded with the components. Many of the students did not appear to be very efficient at scanning for information under time constraints.



Comparative results for 1996 and 2000 were consistent with the trends reported in Chapter 3: year 4 students made very substantial gains and year 8 students slight gains. Averaged across 34 task components, 11% more of the year 4 students succeeded in 2000 than in 1996. The corresponding gain for year 8 students was 3%.

Chapter 5 includes six tasks exploring students' oral responses to written material. Both reading and speaking skills were required, to varying degrees.

The performances of year 4 and year 8 students were compared on 15 components of four tasks. On average, 15% more year 8 than year 4 students succeeded on these components, with similar gains on all four tasks. This represents a

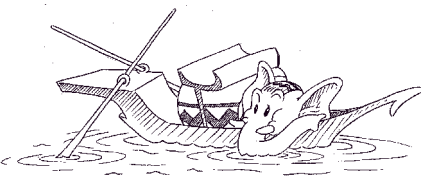


change from 1996, when year 4 and year 8 students performed similarly on tasks requiring oral presentation and dramatisation.

Trends in performance between 1996 and 2000 could be examined on two play reading tasks.

Averaged across five marking components, 12% more year 4 students succeeded in 2000 than in 1996, and 5% more year 8 students. This is

consistent with the patterns reported in Chapters 3 and 4: large gains for year 4 students and small gains for year 8 students.



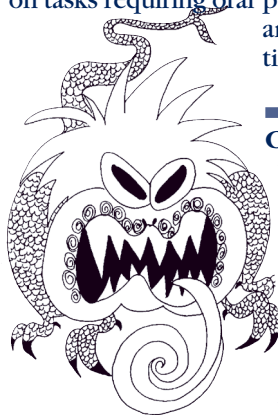
Chapter 8 presents the results of the reading and speaking surveys. These sought information from students about their involvement in reading and speaking activities, in school and beyond, and about their enjoyment of these activities.

Year 4 students appeared to think about reading as a technical task, requiring learning hard words and listening to the teacher, whereas year 8 students place greater emphasis on enjoying reading, reading a lot, and choosing the right book. This difference increased between 1996 and 2000.

Reading was a moderately frequent leisure activity, with more than two thirds of year 4 and year 8 students enjoying reading fiction. Comics were second in popularity for year 4 students, followed fairly closely by poetry, non-fiction and magazines. For

Chapter 6 presents the results for five tasks that involved students in giving oral descriptions. The performances of year 4 and year 8 students were compared on 50 components of four tasks. On average, 17% more year 8 than year 4 students succeeded on these components.

Averaged across the 16 components of one task, there was no change in the performance of year 4 students between 1996 and 2000, while 2% fewer year 8 students succeeded in 2000 than in 1996.



year 8 students, magazines were second in popularity followed by non-fiction, with poetry and newspapers only attracting 14% followings.

High proportions of year 4 and year 8 students were positive about their own competence in reading, reading at school, having their teacher read a story out loud, talking to a group in class, reading when not at school, looking at books in a bookshop, going to a library, and getting a book for a present.



There were some noteworthy changes from 1996 to 2000:

- the percentage of students who were very positive about how good they were at reading improved markedly, by 18% for year 4 and 13% for year 8 (question 2) and by 10% for year 4 and 11% at year 8 (question 14);
- 12% fewer year 4 and 10% fewer year 8 students were very positive about getting a book for a present;
- 10% fewer year 8 students were very positive about looking at books in a bookshop, or about going to a library;
- 12% fewer year 4 and 9% fewer year 8 students were very positive about their teacher reading a story aloud;
- 12% fewer year 4 and year 8 students said that they got to talk to others in their class "heaps".

Chapter 9 reports the results of analyses that compared the task performance and survey responses of different demographic subgroups. School size, community size, and school type (full primary or intermediate) did not seem to be important factors predicting achievement on reading and speaking tasks. Students from the South Island scored highest on 12% of the tasks at both year levels, but were lowest on the two Māori reading tasks.

At year 4 level, girls performed better than boys on 53% of the reading and speaking tasks and recorded more positive responses on 8 reading survey questions. At year 8 level, the advantage of girls over boys had dropped to 12% of the reading and speaking tasks, but they still recorded more positive responses on 6 reading survey questions.

Non-Māori year 4 students performed better than Māori year 4 students on 94% of the English language reading tasks and 67% of the speaking tasks. The corresponding figures for year 8 students

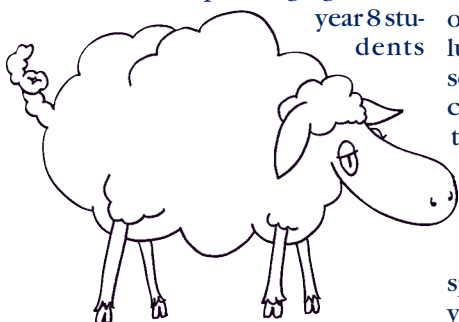


were 53% of reading tasks and 43% of speaking tasks. Year 8 Māori students scored higher than non-Māori students on both Māori language reading tasks.

There were differences between the three SES (decile) sub-

groups for 88% of the reading and speaking tasks at year 4 level, dropping to 57% at year 8 level. Students from low decile schools generally scored lowest.

Given the importance of reading in other aspects of the school curriculum and in life in our community, some of these patterns must be of concern. It is encouraging, however, to note that the gaps narrowed from year 4 to year 8, and that lower performance on tasks did not generally seem to be accompanied by negative attitudes to reading and speaking activities in school and beyond.



Chapter 10 reports the results of analyses of the achievement of Pacific students. Additional sampling of schools with high proportions of Pacific Island students permitted comparison of the achievement of Pacific

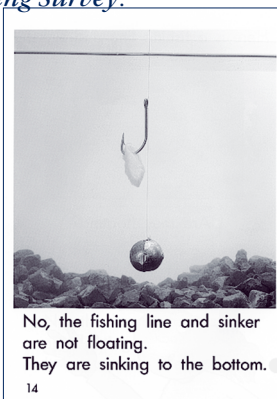
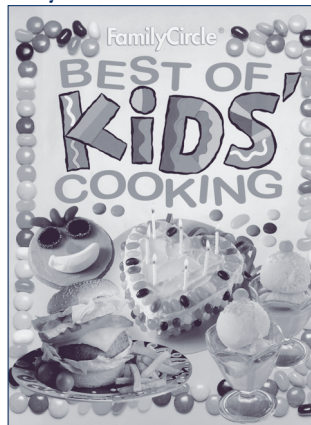
Island, Māori and other children attending schools that have more than 15% Pacific Island students enrolled. The results apply only to such schools.

For year 4 students, there were statistically significant

differences in performance among the three groups on 8 of the 23 tasks. The Pacific students scored significantly higher than the Māori students on one task but lower than the "other" students on five tasks. The Māori students scored significantly lower than the "other" students on seven tasks. It is noteworthy that both Pacific and Māori students scored significantly lower than the "other" students on all three tasks included from Chapter 7 (*Oral Presentations*). Pacific students gave significantly more positive ratings than "other" students on five items of the *Year 4 Reading and Speaking Survey*.

For year 8 students, there were statistically significant differences in performance among the three groups on 7 of the 26 tasks. Both

Pacific and Māori students scored significantly lower than the "other" students on 2 tasks. The Pacific students scored significantly lower than the "other" students on 5 further tasks, and than the Māori students on 1 task. The Pacific students gave more positive ratings on 4 items of the *Year 8 Reading and Speaking Survey*.



No, the fishing line and sinker are not floating. They are sinking to the bottom.