

# 7 Reading and Speaking Survey

## Attitudes and Motivation

The national monitoring assessment programme recognises the impact of attitudinal and motivational factors on student achievement in individual assessment tasks. Students' attitudes, interests and liking for a subject have a strong bearing on progress and learning outcomes. Students are influenced and shaped by the quality and style of curriculum delivery, the choice of content and the suitability of resources. Other important factors influencing students' achievements are the expectations and support of significant people in their lives, the opportunities and experiences they have in and out of school, and the extent to which they have feelings of personal success and capability.

## Reading and Speaking Surveys

The national monitoring reading and speaking surveys sought information from students about their curriculum preferences and their perceptions of their achievement. Students were also asked about their enjoyment of and involvement in reading and speaking activities, within school and beyond. The surveys were administered in a session which included group and independent tasks, with a teacher reading the survey to year 4 students and available to help with writing. There were five questions that invited students to select up to three choices from lists of 8 to 10 options, one question that asked for very brief written responses, and 21 questions in a 4-or-5 option rating format, with students circling the option they preferred.

Students were asked to select their three favourite school subjects from a list of fourteen subjects. Among the year 4 students, physical education was the most popular subject, listed as first, second or third choice by 46 percent of year 4 students. Mathematics came second (43%), visual arts third (38%), reading fourth (34%) and writing fifth (24%). Music rated sixth (23%), and technology tenth (11%). The results for physical education, mathematics and reading are similar to those in the 1996 survey, but in 1996 art was first (70%) and music fourth (31%), just ahead of reading. The addition of drama and dance to the list, and the renaming of art as "visual art" might have had a substantial effect on the results for art and music.

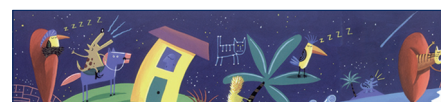


For year 8 students, physical education was first in popularity (69%), technology second (46%), visual art third (25%), mathematics fourth (23%), and music, drama, and dance fifth equal (20%). Reading was ninth equal (14%). Eight years earlier, in 1996, physical education was first (55%), art second (44%), mathematics third (40%), and technology fourth (23%), with music sixth (20%) and reading seventh (19%). Technology clearly has gained ground, while music has maintained its position (despite the addition of dance and drama) and reading has lost a little ground.

The students were presented with a list of eight reading activities and asked which they liked doing most at school. They were invited to tick up to three activities. The responses are shown above, in order of popularity for year 4 students.

#### PREFERRED READING ACTIVITIES AT SCHOOL

|                                      | year 4<br>2004 ('00) ['96] | year 8<br>2004 ('00) ['96] |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| silent reading                       | 57 (54) [62]               | 69 (66) [78]               |
| listening to the teacher reading     | 51 (50) [61]               | 42 (53) [58]               |
| reading with a buddy or partner      | 41 (41) [47]               | 35 (29) [29]               |
| reading with the teacher             | 35 (28) [30]               | 8 (7) [7]                  |
| looking at or browsing through books | 28 (19) [20]               | 33 (39) [35]               |
| written work                         | 20 (34) [31]               | 23 (34) [37]               |
| reading aloud                        | 15 (16) [12]               | 13 (12) [11]               |
| talking about books                  | 12 (20) [16]               | 15 (19) [16]               |



Year 4 and 8 students gave similar responses to most of the activities. However, year 4 students expressed much stronger preferences than year 8 students for reading with the teacher. Enjoyment of listening to the teacher reading has declined (especially for year 8 students) since 1996, and over the past four years written work has declined markedly in popularity for both year 4 and year 8 students.

Another question asked the students to select up to three "important things a person needs to do to be a good reader". They were given 10 approaches to choose from. The responses are shown adjacent, in order of indicated importance for year 4 students.

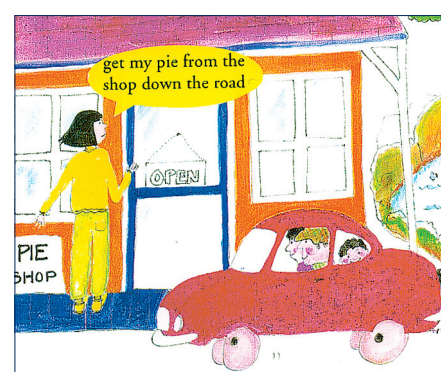
#### IMPORTANT THINGS TO BE A GOOD READER

|                            | year 4<br>2004 ('00) ['96] | year 8<br>2004 ('00) ['96] |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| learn hard words           | 56 (53) [44]               | 25 (21) [22]               |
| concentrate hard           | 39 (34) [42]               | 25 (28) [34]               |
| read a lot                 | 35 (35) [32]               | 39 (45) [35]               |
| go back and try again      | 35 (37) [45]               | 31 (32) [42]               |
| listen to the teacher      | 31 (33) [29]               | 14 (8) [9]                 |
| sound out words            | 30 (29) [31]               | 36 (39) [36]               |
| enjoy reading books        | 26 (29) [28]               | 58 (56) [52]               |
| practise doing hard things | 14 (15) [12]               | 8 (7) [6]                  |
| choose the right book      | 13 (15) [19]               | 29 (33) [28]               |
| think about what I read    | 12 (13) [13]               | 25 (21) [27]               |

The results show that year 4 students tend to think about reading as a technical task, requiring learning hard words, concentrating hard and listening to the teacher, whereas year 8 students place greater emphasis on enjoying reading (especially), choosing the right book and thinking about what they read.

In response to a list of seven types of reading material, students indicated up to three which they liked reading in their own time. The responses are shown below, in order of popularity for year 4 students.

| PREFERRED READING MATERIAL IN OWN TIME           | year 4<br>2004 ('00) ['96] | year 8<br>2004 ('00) ['96] |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| story books (fiction)                            | 61 (68) [69]               | 68 (80) [71]               |
| comics   | 49 (44) [48]               | 37 (27) [31]               |
| magazines  | 42 (31) [26]               | 72 (61) [64]               |
| books about real things and people (non-fiction) | 37 (35) [57]               | 39 (40) [46]               |
| poetry   | 33 (40) [38]               | 17 (14) [19]               |
| junk mail  | 18 (20) [18]               | 17 (16) [14]               |
| newspapers                                       | 15 (19) [20]               | 21 (14) [24]               |



The results reveal some important changes of voluntary reading activity between year 4 and year 8. In particular, year 8 students reported a considerably greater focus on reading magazines, and markedly less interest in poetry. Between 1996 and 2004, magazines have increased in popularity substantially for year 4 students, with a corresponding decline in the popularity of non-fiction books.

| PREFERRED ACTIVITY IN OWN TIME | year 4<br>2004 ('00) | year 8<br>2004 ('00) |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| play games or sport            | 46 (34)              | 47 (44)              |
| play with friends              | 39 (33)              | 38 (41)              |
| play video or computer games   | 40 (40)              | 40 (34)              |
| watch TV                       | 38 (44)              | 41 (41)              |
| do art                         | 31 (44)              | 11 (14)              |
| read                           | 28 (34)              | 22 (30)              |
| talk on telephone with friends | 23 (26)              | 33 (33)              |
| make things                    | 19 (14)              | 9 (12)               |
| music                          | 16 (14)              | 31 (25)              |

The students were presented with a list of nine activities that they might do in their spare time, and asked to tick up to three activities that they most liked to do. The responses are shown above, in order of popularity for year 4 students.

Comparative results from the 1996 survey are not included because a change in the ordering of the list of activities between 1996 and 2000 may have differentially affected the results between 1996 and the two later surveys.



The notable differences between year 4 and year 8 responses are the markedly lower interest of year 8 students in “doing art” and “making things”, and their higher interest in activities relating to music. The most notable changes between 2000 and 2004 are the increased popularity among year 4 students of playing games or sport, and a decline for year 4 students in the popularity of art activities. For both year 4 and year 8 students there was a noticeable decline in the popularity of reading. It may be relevant that in 2000 the Harry Potter books were enormously popular.

Students were also asked if they had a favourite author. Sixty-two percent of year 4 students said yes (compared to 61 percent in 2000 and 69 percent in 1996). There is evidence of a moderate decline among year 8 students, with 45 percent saying yes in 2004, compared to 53 percent in 2000 and 56 percent in 1996.

Responses to the 21 rating items are presented in separate tables for year 4 students (p61) and year 8 students (p62). Some interesting positive features were present in the responses of both year 4 and year 8 students:

- more than 80 percent were positive about reading at school, their own competence in reading, going to a library, having their teacher read a story out loud, and talking to a group in their class;
- more than 70 percent were positive about reading as an activity when not at school, getting a book for a present, looking at books in a bookshop, the books they read as part of their reading programme at school, and having their teacher read a story out loud.



Less positive features common to year 4 and 8 students were:

- substantial proportions (at least 18 percent) did not know how good their teacher thought they were at reading (but this has improved, especially for year 8 students), said their teacher never told them what they need to improve at in reading, and clearly disliked reading out loud to their class;
- more than 10 percent said they never read to others at school, disliked reading out loud to their teacher, and disliked talking to their whole class.

There were substantial differences between year 4 and year 8 students on some questions. Our experience with previous NEMP surveys (in all subjects) has shown that year 8 students are less inclined than year 4 students to use the most positive rating category. The comparisons used here are based on the percentages in the top two categories. Some noteworthy differences between year 4 and year 8 responses were:





- 15 percent more year 4 students liked getting a book for a present;
- 15 percent more year 4 students liked looking at books in a bookshop;
- 12 percent more year 4 students liked going to a library.

Looking at the most positive and least positive categories, there were some noteworthy changes from 1996 to 2004:

- the percentage of students who were very positive about how good they were at reading improved markedly, by 10 percent for year 4 and 11 percent for year 8 (question 2);
- 18 percent fewer year 4 and 10 percent fewer year 8 students were very positive about their teacher reading a story aloud;
- 11 percent fewer year 4 and 10 percent fewer year 8 students were very positive about getting a book for a present;
- 13 percent fewer year 8 students were very positive about looking at books in a bookshop, or about going to a library.



## YEAR 4 READING AND SPEAKING SURVEY 2004 (2000) [1996]

|   |  |  |  |  |              |
|---|---|---|---|---|--------------|
| 1. How much do you like reading at school?  | 47 (52) [50]  | 38 (33) [40]  | 11 (7) [8]  | 4 (8) [2]   |              |
| 2. How good are you at reading?   | 42 (50) [32]  | 47 (39) [56]  | 9 (9) [11]  | 2 (2) [1]   |              |
| 3. How good does your teacher think you are at reading?   | 42 (42) [33]  | 27 (27) [23]  | 7 (4) [7]   | 1 (3) [0]   | 23 (24) (37) |
| 4. How good does your Mum or Dad think you are at reading?  | 68 (70) [62]  | 17 (17) [22]  | 4 (3) [3]   | 1 (1) [1]   | 10 (9) (12)  |
|   | <b>heaps</b>  | <b>quite a lot</b>  | <b>sometimes</b>  | <b>never</b>  |              |
| 5. Does your teacher tell you what you are good at in reading?                                    | 14 (14)   | 26 (27)   | 52 (50)   | 8 (9)   |              |
| 6. Does your teacher tell you what you need to improve at in reading?                             | 12 (13)   | 16 (16)   | 54 (50)   | 18 (21)   |              |
| 7. How often do you read to others at school?   | 11 (14)   | 22 (21)   | 51 (51)   | 16 (14)   |              |
| 8. How much do you like reading in your own time – not at school?                                 | 60 (60) [56]  | 22 (24) [29]  | 11 (9) [10]   | 7 (7) [5]   |              |
| 9. How do you feel about getting a book for a present?  | 64 (63) [75]  | 24 (27) [19]  | 9 (7) [3]   | 3 (3) [3]   |              |
| 10. How do you feel about looking at books in a bookshop?   | 60 (62) [68]  | 31 (27) [23]  | 7 (8) [6]   | 2 (3) [3]   |              |
| 11. How do you feel about going to a library?   | 63 (74) [72]  | 30 (20) [21]  | 5 (4) [5]   | 2 (2) [2]   |              |
| 12. How do you feel about the stories/books you read as part of your reading programme at school? | 45 (46) [47]  | 38 (40) [40]  | 13 (9) [9]  | 4 (5) [4]   |              |
| 13. How do you feel when your teacher reads a story out loud?                                     | 60 (66) [78]  | 28 (21) [16]  | 6 (7) [3]   | 6 (6) [3]   |              |
| 14. How do you feel about how well you read?  | 59 (63) [53]  | 31 (27) [38]  | 7 (7) [7]   | 3 (3) [2]   |              |
| 15. How do you feel about reading in a group in the classroom?                                    | 39 (41) [43]  | 36 (35) [38]  | 15 (15) [12]  | 10 (9) [7]  |              |
| 16. How do you feel when you are asked to read out loud to the teacher?                           | 34 (32) [36]  | 34 (34) [34]  | 19 (16) [16]  | 13 (18) [14]  |              |
| 17. How do you feel when asked to read out loud to the class?                                     | 27 (28) [26]  | 24 (25) [26]  | 25 (19) [20]  | 24 (28) [28]  |              |
| 18. How much do you like talking to your whole class?   | 31 (38) [32]  | 34 (35) [39]  | 23 (16) [17]  | 12 (11) [12]  |              |
| 19. How much do you like talking to a group in your class?  | 49 (49) [57]  | 33 (33) [29]  | 12 (12) [11]  | 6 (6) [3]   |              |
|   | <b>heaps</b>  | <b>quite a lot</b>  | <b>sometimes</b>  | <b>never</b>  |              |
| 20. How often do you get to talk to your whole class?   | 10 (12) [10]  | 15 (19) [25]  | 70 (58) [61]  | 5 (11) [4]  |              |
| 21. How often do you get to talk to others in your class?   | 36 (35) [45]  | 35 (33) [31]  | 27 (30) [22]  | 2 (2) [2]   |              |

# YEAR 8 READING AND SPEAKING SURVEY 2004 (2000) [1996]



1. How much do you like reading at school?

31 (32) [31]

50 (50) [55]

16 (13) [12]

3 (5) [2]

2. How good are you at reading?

29 (31) [18]

54 (53) [56]

15 (14) [23]

2 (2) [3]



*don't know*

3. How good does your teacher think you are at reading?

21 (24) [10]

37 (26) [27]

7 (7) [8]

3 (2) [1]

32 (41) (54)

4. How good does your Mum or Dad think you are at reading?

40 (45) [27]

33 (27) [35]

8 (8) [9]

1 (3) [2]

18 (17) (27)

*heaps*

*quite a lot*

*sometimes*

*never*

5. Does your teacher tell you what you are good at in reading?

6 (6)

16 (15)

59 (58)

19 (21)

6. Does your teacher tell you what you need to improve at in reading?

7 (9)

18 (16)

52 (50)

23 (25)

7. How often do you read to others at school?

4 (3)

10 (15)

61 (59)

25 (23)



8. How much do you like reading in your own time – not at school?

37 (36) [39]

36 (36) [38]

17 (18) [18]

10 (10) [5]

9. How do you feel about getting a book for a present?

35 (35) [45]

38 (37) [39]

20 (22) [13]

7 (6) [3]

10. How do you feel about looking at books in a bookshop?

39 (42) [52]

37 (41) [37]

19 (14) [9]

5 (3) [2]

11. How do you feel about going to a library?

40 (43) [53]

41 (38) [32]

15 (14) [12]

4 (5) [3]

12. How do you feel about the stories/books you read as part of your reading programme at school?

21 (25) [24]

49 (42) [52]

23 (23) [18]

7 (10) [6]

13. How do you feel when your teacher reads a story out loud?

41 (42) [51]

41 (37) [36]

13 (15) [10]

5 (6) [3]

14. How do you feel about how well you read?

39 (43) [30]

45 (41) [49]

12 (12) [18]

4 (4) [3]

15. How do you feel about reading in a group in the classroom?

31 (24) [26]

35 (39) [41]

25 (28) [24]

9 (9) [9]

16. How do you feel when you are asked to read out loud to the teacher?

24 (20) [19]

35 (37) [36]

24 (26) [25]

17 (17) [20]

17. How do you feel when asked to read out loud to the class?

18 (15) [13]

29 (30) [25]

23 (24) [23]

30 (31) [39]

18. How much do you like talking to your whole class?

29 (24) [17]

37 (37) [41]

21 (26) [28]

13 (13) [14]

19. How much do you like talking to a group in your class?

51 (46) [51]

35 (38) [39]

13 (13) [8]

1 (3) [2]

*heaps*

*quite a lot*

*sometimes*

*never*

20. How often do you get to talk to your whole class?

11 (7) [3]

22 (25) [30]

61 (62) [65]

6 (6) [2]

21. How often do you get to talk to others in your class?

47 (40) [50]

35 (40) [37]

17 (19) [12]

1 (1) [1]