

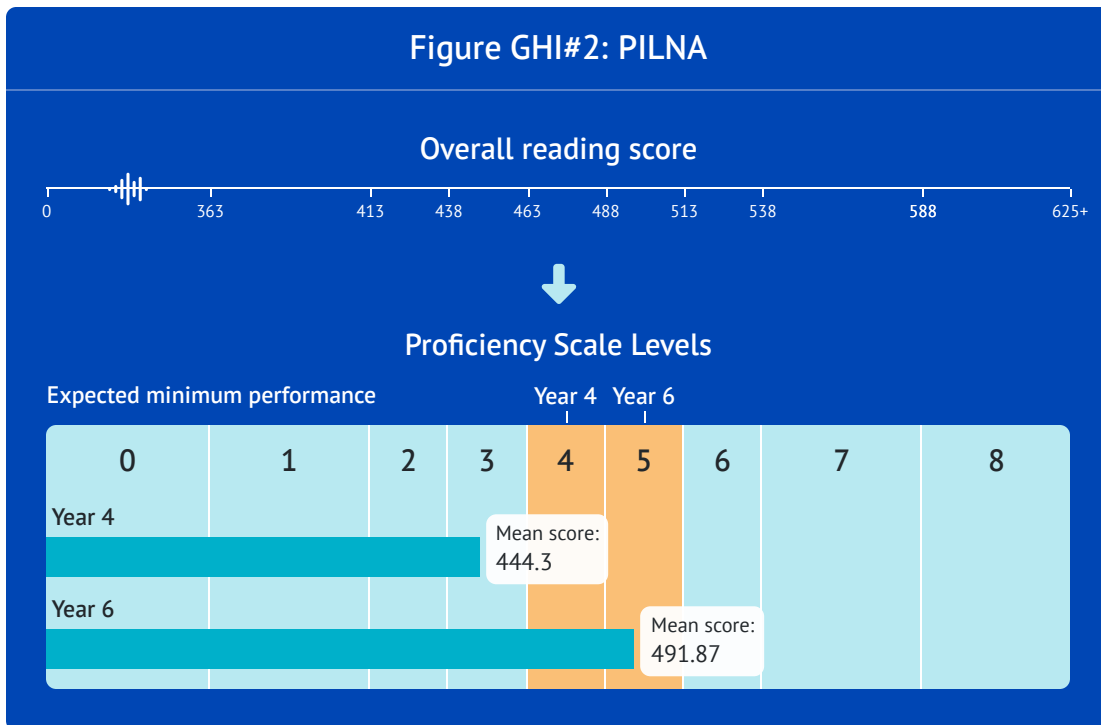
## Conclusions for reading performance

- Year four students are not, on average, meeting minimum expected reading performance levels.
- Small decreases in reading performance were found in PILNA 2021 compared with PILNA 2018 at both year levels but it is unclear whether these are significant.
- 43% of year four students met minimum expected reading performance standards in 2021.
- 53% of year six students met minimum expected reading performance standards in 2021.
- Girls scored higher than boys in average reading performance in 2021 at both year levels.
- A larger proportion of girls were meeting minimum expected reading performance standards than boys at both year levels.

On average, year four students are not meeting the minimum expected reading performance level while year six students are.

Year four students, on average, scored at reading proficiency level three while their expected minimum performance level is level four.

Year six students, on average, scored in reading proficiency level five which is their expected minimum performance level.



Small decreases in average reading performance were found in PILNA 2021 compared with PILNA 2018 for both year levels, but it is unclear whether these are significant.

Year four students' average reading performance decreased from 459 in PILNA 2018 (SD = 75) to 444 in PILNA 2021 (SD = 83).

Year six students' average reading performance decreased from 501 in PILNA 2018 (SD = 70) to 492 in PILNA 2021 (SD = 78).

Further analysis is required to establish whether these differences are statistically significant and how large they are.

When comparing the reading performance of year four students across 2015, 2018 and 2021, the scores appear to be relatively consistent, or, at least with no general positive or negative trends. It is noted that comparisons with PILNA 2012 are not possible as scores were analysed differently in that cycle.

Year four students, on average, are not meeting the minimum expected level of performance in reading (level 4). The average reading score for year four students in PILNA 2021 (444) was at the lower cut-off point of reading proficiency level three (Level 3 = 437.5–462.5).

In addition, only 43% of year four students are meeting the minimum expected standard in reading. Average year four reading performance is a lot lower than expected and less than half of year four students are meeting the minimum expected reading performance standards.

Year six students, on average, are meeting the minimum expected level of performance in reading. The average reading score for year six students in PILNA 2021 (492) was near the lower cut-off point of reading proficiency level five (Level 5 = 487.5–512.5). This is the proficiency level they are expected to meet or exceed.

A bit more than half (53%) of year six students are meeting the minimum expected reading performance levels, but a bit less than half are not (47%). This means that the average year six reading performance is at minimum expected levels but nearly half the year six students are not meeting minimum reading performance standards.

Two notable observations were made regarding the distribution of year four and year six reading scores that were otherwise relatively symmetrical. The first is that a large proportion of year four students (34%) scored at either reading proficiency level zero or level one, the lowest two levels. In contrast, a large proportion of year six students (28%) scored at either reading proficiency level seven or level eight, the highest two levels. Further analysis needs to be done here but it appears that the distributions of year four and year six proficiency level scores is not central or symmetrical.

These findings also need to be analysed in the context of the new [rotated test booklet design](#). PILNA 2021 collected more information about lower performing students than previous cycles, therefore, it is possible that performance differences are influenced by an increased accuracy of assessment.

Table RRF6.5

## Reading proficiency score distribution by cohort

Level	Year 4	Year 6
8	3.54% (0.39)	10.98% (0.73)
7	8.54% (0.5)	16.92% (0.55)
6	7.92% (0.33)	12.51% (0.53)
5	10.74% (0.33)	12.72% (0.37)
4	12.49% (0.38)	12.03% (0.3)
3	12.23% (0.31)	10.74% (0.43)
2	11% (0.38)	8.19% (0.29)
1	17.01% (0.55)	10.76% (0.46)
0	16.54% (0.78)	5.16% (0.39)

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses.

Girls scored higher than boys in average reading performance in PILNA 2021. This was consistent at both the year four and year six levels and continues a trend observed in both PILNA 2015 and PILNA 2018, when girls scored higher than boys in reading performance at both the year four and year six levels.

Higher proportions of girls also met the minimum expected reading performance standard in 2021 compared with boys in year four (girls, 49%; boys, 37%) and year six (girls, 60%; boys, 46%) levels.

Although these differences need to be analysed for statistical significance and size, girls appear to be ahead of boys in reading performance at these levels.