

Student attitudes

Attitudes to school and to certain subjects can shape students' interactions as they progress through their education. For this reason, it was important to collect information about students' attitudes to learning. The PILNA programme took an approach that incorporated students' opinions to school overall and to each of the three cognitive domains covered by PILNA: reading, writing and numeracy.

Students were provided with a list of statements (such as "I enjoy going to school") and asked to rate how much they agreed with each statement. Students could respond with 'Agree a lot', 'Agree', 'Disagree', or 'Disagree a lot'. The statements covered:

- whether students enjoyed the activity;
- whether students did the activity in their own time;
- whether students thought it was important to be good at the activity;
- whether students found the activity easy; and
- whether students thought they did well in the activity.

Additionally, students were asked whether they thought it was important to go to school, if they felt safe at school, and if they felt like they belonged at school.

Student attitudes to subjects and school

Most students in the region, both year four and year six, reported agreement with all the attitude statements ('Agree a lot' or 'Agree') about the cognitive domains and school. This shows overall positive attitudes to reading, writing, mathematics and school.

On average, more than 90% of students in Solomon Islands reported that they enjoyed going to school (year four, 94%; year six, 96%) and felt that it was important to do so (year four, 94%; year six, 96%). Additionally, more than four out of five students reported that they felt safe at school (year four, 90%; year six, 90%) and safe travelling to school (year four, 86%; year six, 85%). Most year four and year six students in Solomon Islands enjoy schooling, value schooling, and feel safe at school and travelling to school.













































When it came to literacy, about nine out of ten students reported that they enjoyed reading (year four, 90%; year six, 94%) and writing (year four, 91%; year six, 92%). About four out of five students reported that they found reading easy (year four, 79%; year six, 85%) and found writing easy (year four, 83%; year six, 86%).

There were small differences in agreement by year level for mathematics. At the year four level, 80% of students agreed that they found mathematics easy and 81% agreed that they did well in mathematics. At the year six level, 72% of students agreed that they found mathematics easy and 72% agreed that they did well in mathematics. Slightly fewer year six students were confident in mathematics compared with year four students.

The full breakdown of these results can be seen in Table STT1.7

Table STT1.7

Percentage of students agreeing with statements reading, writing, mathematics and school

Statement	Year 4	Year 6
Reading		
Enjoy reading	 90% (1.4)	 94% (0.7)
Read in my own time	 85% (1.6)	 92% (0.9)
Think it is important to be a good reader	 90% (1.1)	 92% (1.1)
Find reading easy	 79% (1.9)	 85% (1.5)
Do well in reading	 79% (2.0)	 85% (1.6)
Writing		
Enjoy writing	 91% (1.2)	 92% (0.9)
Do writing in my own time	 87% (1.5)	 90% (1.0)
Think it is important to be a good writer	 89% (1.1)	 91% (1.2)
Find writing easy	 83% (2.1)	 86% (1.6)
Do well in writing	 80% (1.9)	 82% (1.5)
Mathematics		
Enjoy doing mathematics	 92% (1.0)	 84% (1.5)
Do mathematics in my own time	 85% (1.8)	 83% (1.5)
Think it is important to be good at mathematics	 89% (1.2)	 88% (1.5)
Find mathematics easy	 80% (2.0)	 72% (2.3)
Do well in mathematics	 81% (2.0)	 72% (2.0)
Schooling		
Enjoy going to school	 94% (0.7)	 96% (0.6)
Think it is important to go to school	 94% (0.8)	 96% (0.8)
Think it is important to do well in school	 92% (0.9)	 94% (1.0)
Find school easy	 85% (1.8)	 86% (1.6)
Feel like I belong at this school	 88% (1.2)	 89% (1.7)
Feel safe at the school	 90% (1.0)	 90% (1.0)
Feel safe travelling to school	 86% (1.5)	 85% (1.5)

Percentage of students agreeing with statements about reading, writing, mathematics, and school, Solomon Islands, PILNA 2021

() Standard errors appear in parentheses.

Student attitudes and student performance

Using the results above, regional scales for student attitudes on school, reading, writing, and numeracy were established. Higher scores on the scales indicated more positive attitudes to these areas. The scales were then compared to student performance in reading and numeracy. It should be noted that comparisons were not made to writing performance because the proficiency scale for writing performance has not yet been established.

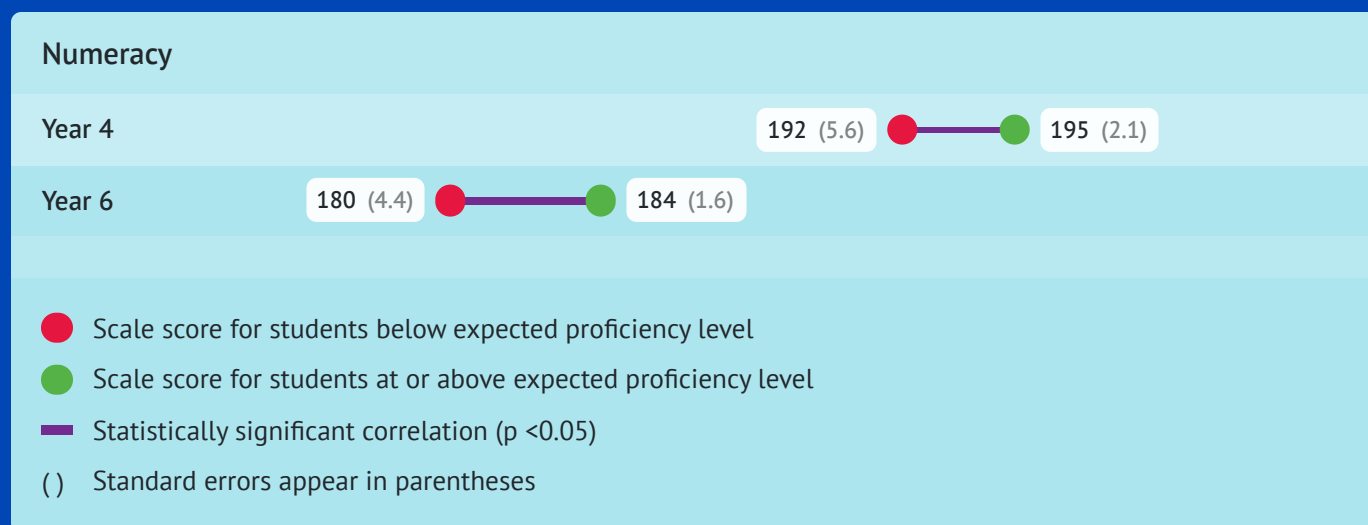
The PILNA scales for attitudes to school, reading, writing, and numeracy all have an average of 200 and a standard deviation of 40. Most scores on these scales are expected to be within 40 points of 200 (160–240). The attitudes to reading, writing, and numeracy scales were formed from answers to the five questions students were asked in each area. The attitude to school scale was formed from the seven answers to questions students were asked in this area.

Comparisons to student performance were made between the average attitudes of students who were at or above expected levels of performance and students who were below these levels of performance.

There were no differences in attitudes to mathematics for students who performed at or above the expected proficiency levels and those who did not. Year four and year six students who performed at or above the expected level in numeracy had similar attitude scores on average (year four, 195; year six, 184) to students in the same year groups who did not (year four, 192; Year six, 180). These results are presented in Figure STF1.3

Figure STF1.3: PILNA Scale: Student attitudes to numeracy

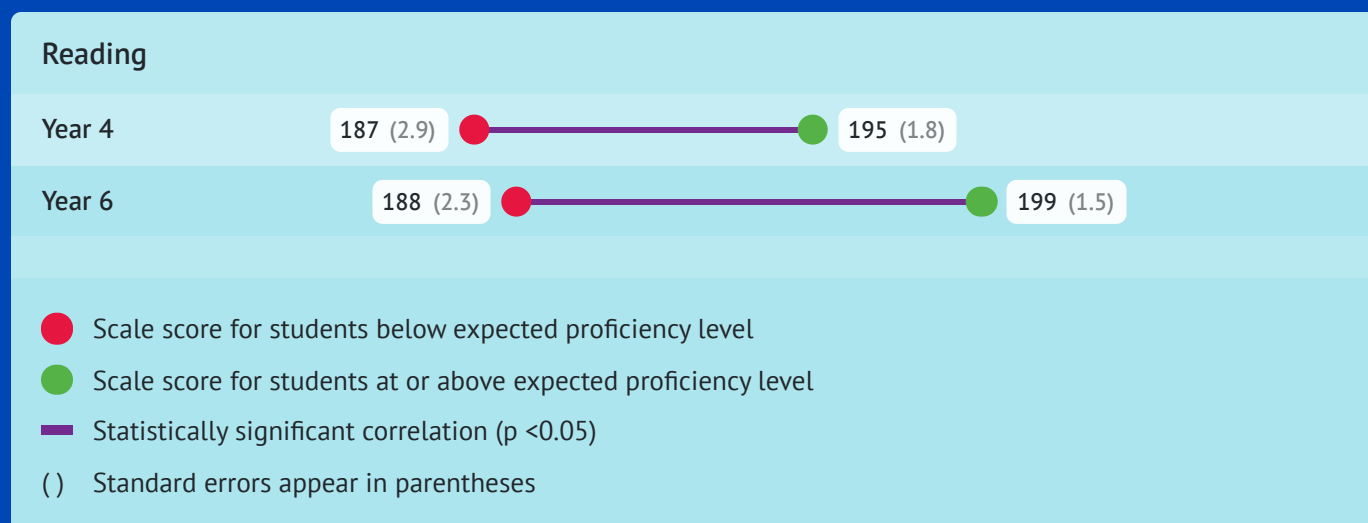
Average scores of students on attitude towards mathematics scale by year level and proficiency



Differences were found, however, in attitudes to reading. Year four and year six students who performed at or above the expected level in reading had higher attitude scores on average (year four, 195; year six, 199) than students in the same year groups who did not (year four, 187; year six, 188). These comparisons are shown in Figure STF1.4

Figure STF1.4: PILNA Scale: Student attitudes to reading

Average scores of students on attitude towards reading scale by year level and proficiency

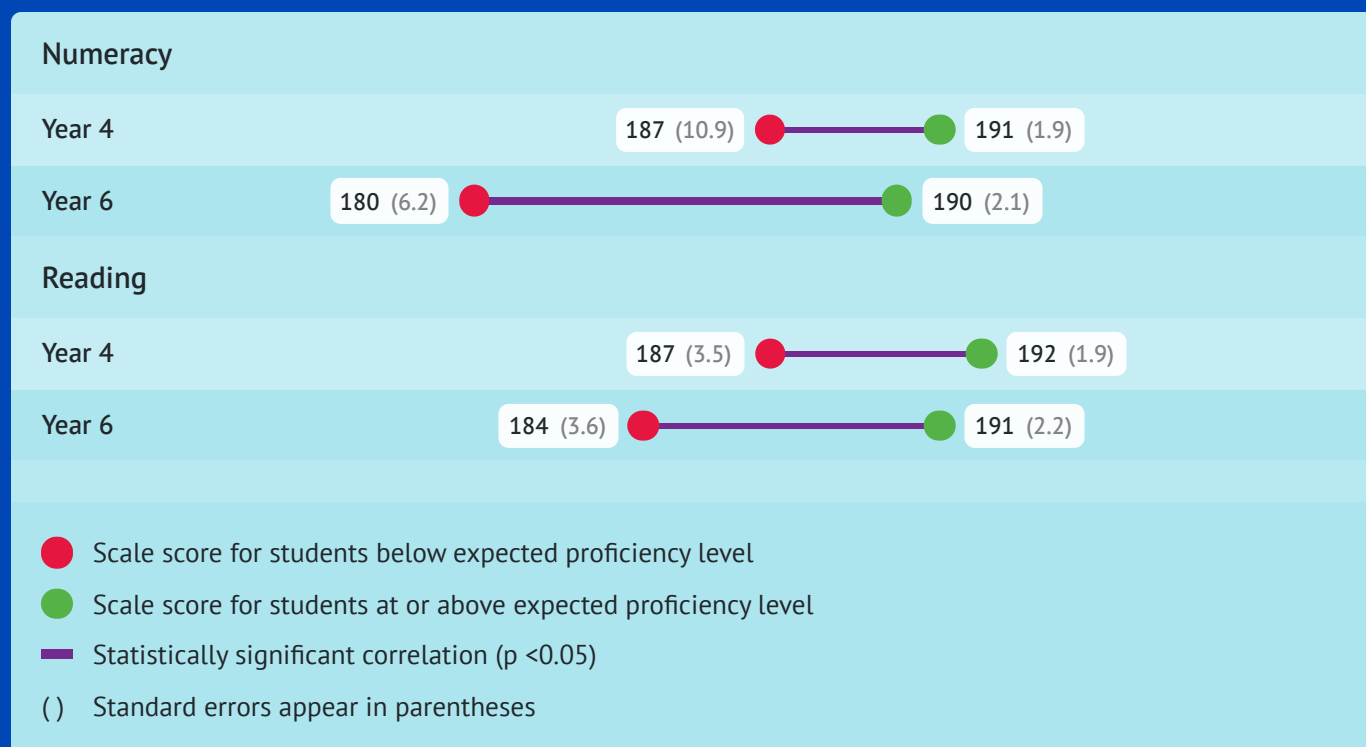


Comparisons were also made between student performance and attitudes to school in general. Across both year four and year six levels, students who were performing at or above the expected level in reading had higher attitude scores to school

in general than students who did not. For numeracy, differences in attitudes to school were found only at the year six level. Year six students who performed at or above the expected proficiency level in numeracy tended to have higher attitude scores to school in general than those who did not perform to this level. Figure STF1.5 shows these comparisons.

Figure STF1.5: PILNA Scale: Student attitudes to schooling

Average scores of students on attitude towards schooling scale by year level and proficiency



What does this mean?

The findings from this PILNA cycle show that a high proportion of students in Solomon Islands in both year levels are enjoying reading, writing and mathematics and identify them as being important.

Reading performance may be associated with attitudes to reading, but numeracy performance was not associated with attitudes to mathematics. Reading performance may be associated with attitudes to school at both year levels; but numeracy performance may only be associated with attitude to school at the year six level.

Importantly, any associations here are not clear and causality cannot be determined. For example, do positive attitudes to reading make someone more likely to be a better reader or is it those who are already good at reading who develop positive attitudes to reading because it is easier for them?