

Benchmarking Year 6 reading performance: Are standards being met?

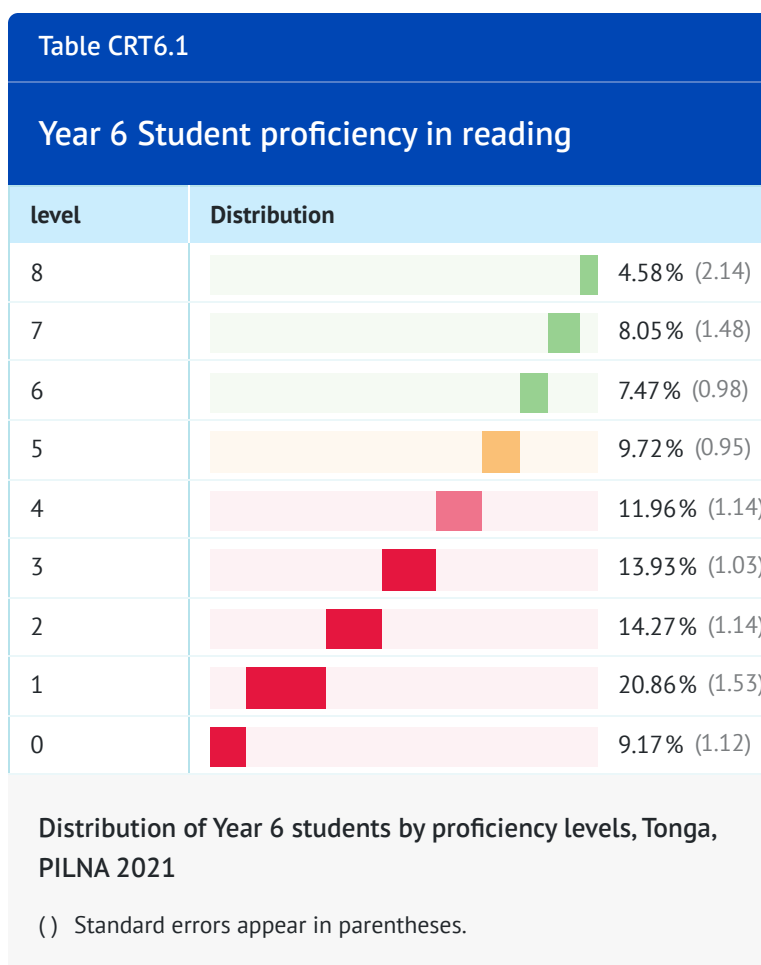
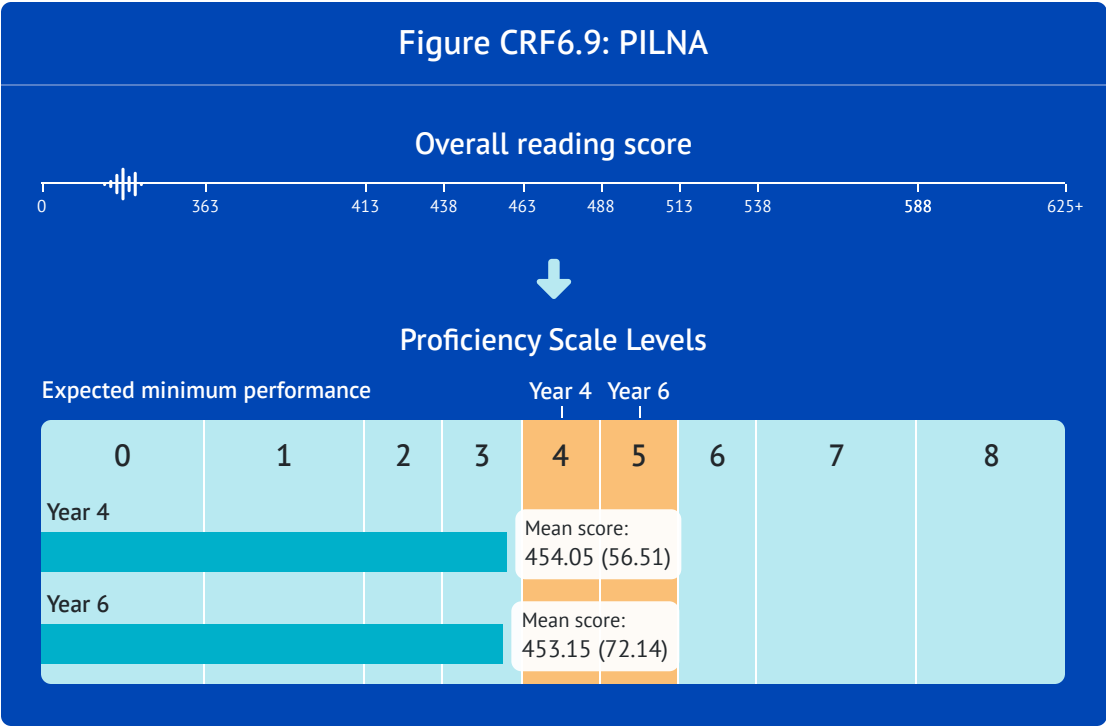


Table CRT6.1 shows the Tonga distribution of year six reading scores against the PILNA reading proficiency scale. This scale converts a student's reading performance into a level ranking from zero to eight. The expected minimum reading performance for year six students is **proficiency level five (Figure CRF6.9)** Pacific stakeholders expect these students to reach or exceed this proficiency level.

The average performance of year six students in Tonga in reading was 435.15 (SD = 72.14). This corresponds to the upper threshold of proficiency level two on the PILNA reading proficiency scale (level two is assigned to scores 412.5–437.5). On average, year six students in Tonga are not meeting the minimum expected standard in reading.



The average reading score does not tell us the whole story. The proportion of students who are meeting the minimum expected standard is also important. This is shown in Table CRT6.1. Approximately 30% of year six students in Tonga performed at or above the minimum expected level in reading (levels 5–8) but about 70% of year six students in Tonga did not meet this level (levels 0–4). This shows that about one out of three year six students assessed in 2021 are meeting the minimum expected standard but most are not. Also shown in Table CRT6.1, is the significant proportion of year six students who scored at level one (21%), the second lowest level on the reading scale.

Table CRT6.2

Year 6 student reading proficiency relative to the region

level	Region	Tonga
8	10.98 % (0.73)	4.58 % (2.14)
7	16.92 % (0.55)	8.05 % (1.48)
6	12.51 % (0.53)	7.47 % (0.98)
5	12.72 % (0.37)	9.72 % (0.95)
4	12.03 % (0.30)	11.96 % (1.14)
3	10.74 % (0.43)	13.93 % (1.03)
2	8.19 % (0.29)	14.27 % (1.14)
1	10.76 % (0.46)	20.86 % (1.53)
0	5.16 % (0.39)	9.17 % (1.12)

Distribution of Year 6 students' proficiency levels in Tonga, PILNA 2021

() Standard errors appear in parentheses.

On average, year six students in Tonga (435) are scoring lower in reading than year six students in the region (492). Also, only about 30% of year six students met or exceeded the expected minimum reading proficiency levels compared with 53% across the region (refer to Table CRT6.2).

Table CRT6.3

Year 6 Reading distribution by proficiency scores and gender

level	Girls	Boys
8	6.21 % (2.98)	3.15 % (1.51)
7	10.83 % (1.71)	5.60 % (1.63)
6	10.30 % (1.44)	4.95 % (0.92)
5	12.22 % (1.62)	7.51 % (1.11)
4	14.04 % (1.54)	10.35 % (1.54)
3	13.40 % (1.46)	14.27 % (1.42)
2	12.39 % (1.50)	15.84 % (1.38)
1	15.75 % (1.58)	25.21 % (2.01)
0	4.87 % (0.88)	13.12 % (1.80)

Distribution of Year 6 students by proficiency levels, Tonga, PILNA 2021

() Standard errors appear in parentheses.

When looking at the Tonga distribution of year six reading proficiency scores in 2021 by gender (Table CRT6.3), we can see differences in the scores. Approximately 40% of year six girls performed at or above the expected minimum proficiency level, but only about 21% of year six boys did so.