

Interpreting NAPLAN results

The National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) assesses students using common national tests in Reading, Writing, Language Conventions (Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation) and Numeracy. NAPLAN results are reported for:

- individual students—parents or carers receive a report on their child's results in September
- schools—schools receive a report with their test data in September of each year. School NAPLAN data is also published on the *My School* website.
- State and Territory jurisdictions and the nation as a whole—the NAPLAN Summary Report is published in September, followed by a full National Report. In 2010 this report will include, for the first time, information on student progress.

Common scale

Results for each of the five NAPLAN assessment domains of Reading, Writing, Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation, and Numeracy, covering Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, are reported on a common scale. Each domain has an average score of 500.

The common scale for each domain is divided into ten achievement bands with six bands reported for each year level. This is because each year group cohort is specifically tested for the range of six proficiency bands appropriate to the year level. For Year 3 the proportions of students in each of bands one to six are reported. For Year 5 students, bands three to eight are reported; for Year 7, bands four to nine; and for Year 9, bands five to ten.

Interpreting results

NAPLAN results provide an indication of students' achievements, but they provide only one snapshot of selected aspects of what students know and can do. In interpreting a school's results, there are three important considerations:

- Differences in student cohorts must be considered when comparing the performance of schools. The *My School* website uses a number of variables to identify schools which are statistically similar in terms of student backgrounds. Comparisons of schools that do not have statistically similar student populations can lead to misleading conclusions about their performance.
- NAPLAN tests sample only a part of what students learn during the year. It is important to find out more about the whole curriculum of the school and the school's performance across a range of areas. One of the best ways of doing this is to visit the school's website or contact school leaders and teachers.
- No test is able to perfectly measure a student's level of achievement and all tests are subject to a certain amount of measurement error. This means that there will always be a margin of error surrounding a school's average score. In general, the smaller the number of students tested, the larger the margin of error. Further explanation of statistical terms can be found in the website Glossary.

Reporting NAPLAN results on *My School*

Average achievement in NAPLAN for each school is presented on *My School* in graphs, in numbers and in bands.

Results in graphs: Average student achievement is displayed graphically for 2008, 2009 and 2010. The graph depicts the school average with clearly marked margins of error. This display provides information about a single domain (testing area) and year level at a time. The school average can be compared with the average scores of schools serving students from similar backgrounds and the Australian average. When making these comparisons, the graph icons will display in different colours. This provides an immediate visual representation of comparative performance.

Results in numbers: Average student achievement is displayed numerically for each of the three years of testing. A numeric range that shows margin of error is also provided. This display shows results for all test domains and all year levels at the same time. As in the graphic display, colours are used to compare the achievement at the selected school with the achievement at similar schools and Australian schools.

Results in bands: Student achievement is displayed across the bands of the NAPLAN scale. Each year level at the school is shown on the same page so that the spread of achievement within any one year level can be compared with that of the school's other year levels. Proportions of students achieving in the same bands at similar schools and all Australian schools are also shown.

Participation rates

Participation rates are provided for the selected school and for all Australian schools. For the selected school, percentages are shown for students who were:

- assessed
- exempt from testing
- absent from testing
- withdrawn from testing.

Students can be exempted from testing if they have a language background other than English and have arrived from overseas less than a year before the tests, or because they have significant intellectual disabilities. However, this is not automatic and parents may choose for their child to participate in testing.

Exempt students who are not assessed are deemed not to have met the national minimum standard. The percentage of students below the national minimum standard includes both students assessed at this level and exempt students for the purposes of the participation rate, however the results of exempt students are not included when calculating school average scores.

Students unable to do the test because of illness or some other acceptable reason are regarded as absent. They are not awarded a NAPLAN score. Students whose parents withdraw them from participating in NAPLAN for their own personal reasons are counted as withdrawn. Written consent for a student to be withdrawn is required.

Depicting student progress

The Student Gain page presents the change in results for students who have taken NAPLAN tests twice. This is measured by identifying those students who undertook NAPLAN tests in both 2008 and 2010 in the same school. No other students are included in this calculation.

For this reason the NAPLAN result shown on this graph may be different to the result for the whole school population shown on the other NAPLAN results pages. The percentage of the school's students in this group is clearly shown on the page. It is important to note that for some schools, such as high schools which start in Year 8, it is not possible to represent student gain.

Student gain is a measure of the influence of the school on student progress. That is, when the background of students is similar across schools, the more likely it is that the differences in gain made by schools are related to the teaching and learning capabilities of the school. It is important to consider that students show greater gains in literacy and numeracy in the earlier years than in the later years of schooling, and that students who start with lower NAPLAN scores tend to make greater gains over time than those who start with higher NAPLAN scores.

Support for interpreting graphs

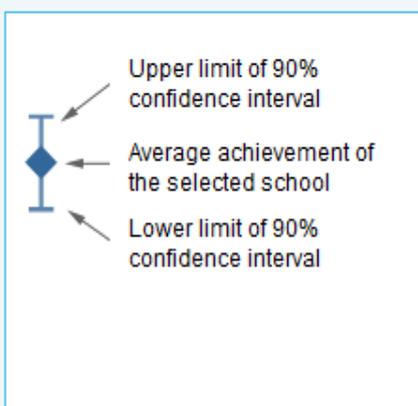
Legends and notes are provided at the bottom of each page depicting NAPLAN results, to aid interpretation of the graphs and tables presented.

◆ Average achievement of students in the school

I Margin of error at 90% level of confidence

◆ Margin of error at 90% level of confidence

How to interpret this chart



This graph shows the gains in scores for matched students at the selected school.

It compares the gains made by matched students in the selected school to the gains made by matched students in schools serving students from statistically similar backgrounds.



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