

PIRLS 2021

Ireland: Results

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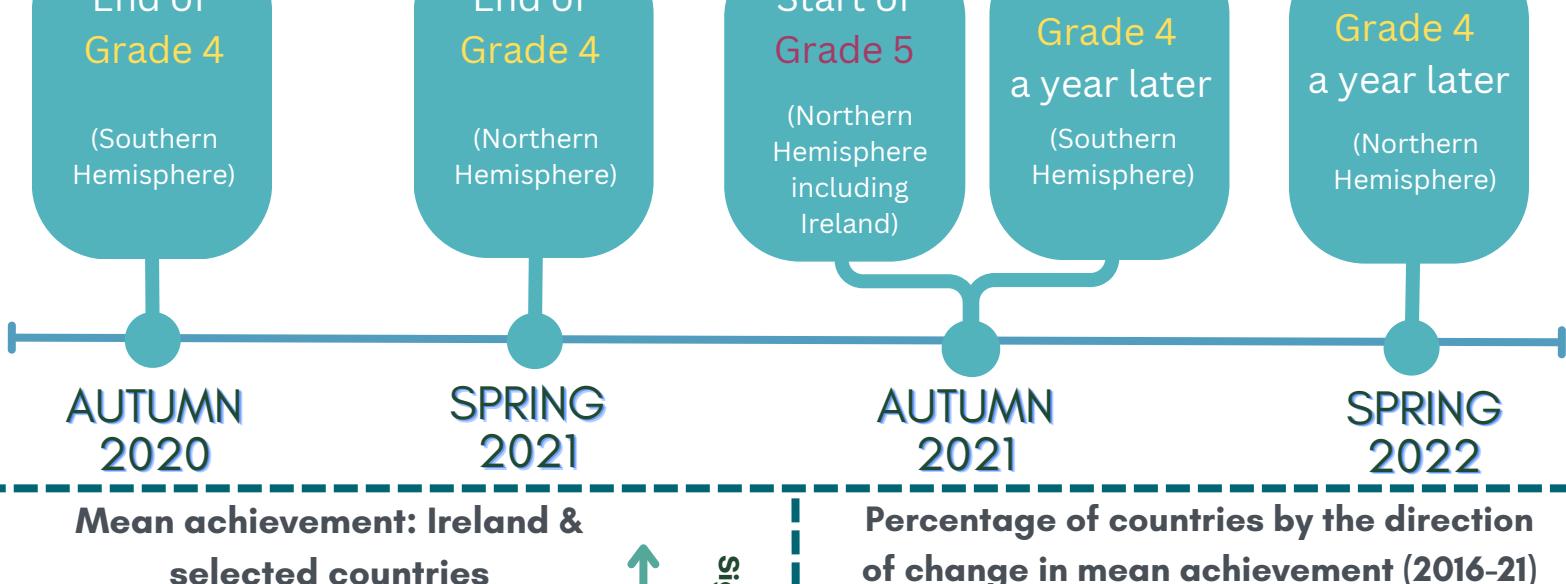
The *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study* assesses the reading of pupils around the world.

End of Grade 4

In Ireland, testing was delayed to autumn 2021 due to COVID-19. Therefore, pupils in Ireland (and 13 other countries) tested at the **start of 5th Grade**, while the remaining (43) PIRLS countries tested at the **end of 4th Grade**.

Start of Grade 5

PIRLS 2021 testing timeline



Mean achievement: Ireland & selected countries

Singapore (587)

Ireland (577)

Hong Kong (573)

Northern Ireland (566)

England (558) Croatia (557)

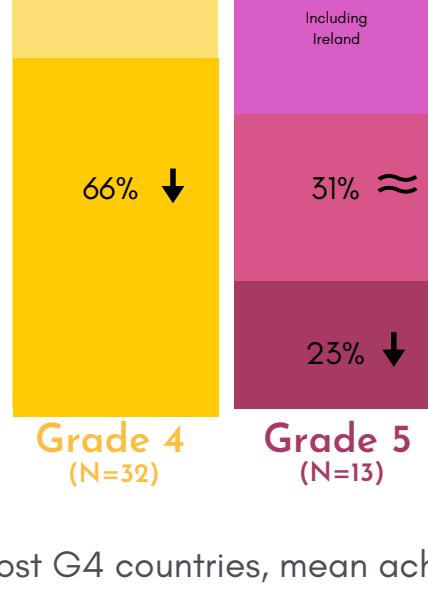
Lithuania (552) Finland (549)

Poland (549) Australia (540)

New Zealand (521)

↑ significantly higher
No significant difference from Ireland
↓ significantly lower

Percentage of countries by the direction of change in mean achievement (2016-21)



↑ Significant Increase From 2016
≈ No Significant Change From 2016
↓ Significant Decrease From 2016

Most countries, excepting Singapore and Hong Kong, achieved significantly lower mean scores than Ireland. However, **caution** is needed when comparing Ireland's results with those of G4 countries.

In most G4 countries, mean achievement declined relative to 2016. This was not the case among G5 countries, which suggests that, internationally, there was some advantage associated with G5 testing.

Benchmarks in Ireland

Advanced (625 Points)

27%

High (550 Points)

67%

Intermediate (475 Points)

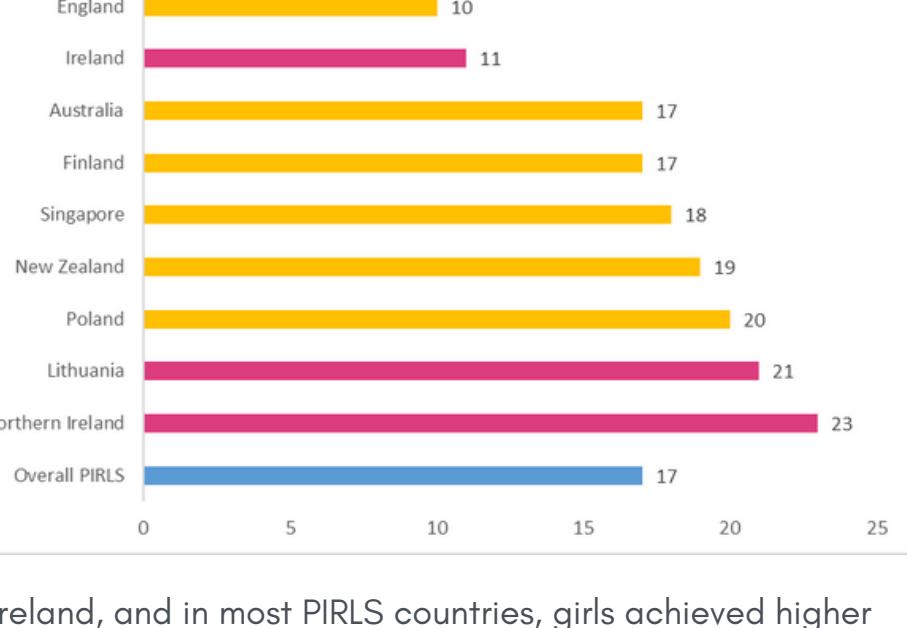
91%

Low (400 Points)

98%

While most pupils in Ireland reached the Low and Intermediate Benchmarks, substantial proportions also reached the High and Advanced Benchmarks, demonstrating sophisticated critical reading skills.

Mean advantage of girls over boys



In Ireland, and in most PIRLS countries, girls achieved higher reading scores than boys, on average. Among selected reference countries, Ireland has one of the smaller gender gaps (11 points).

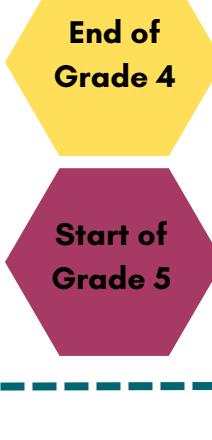
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The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study assesses the reading of pupils around the world.

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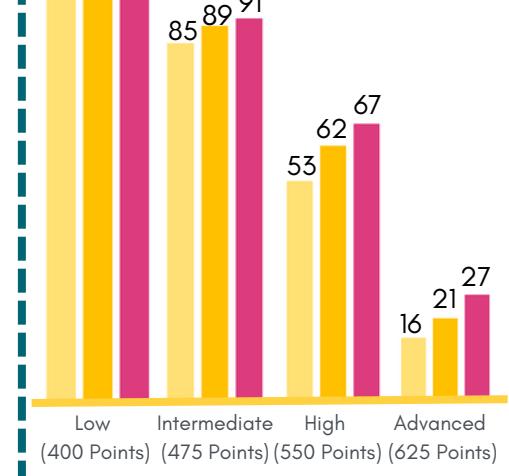


Ireland's achievement across cycles



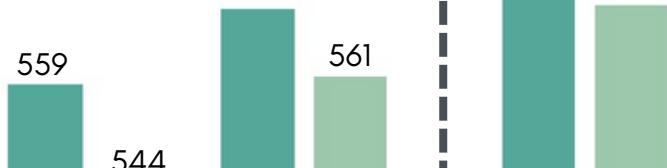
Average reading achievement in Ireland is significantly higher in 2021 than in previous cycles. However, as pupils in 2021 were 6 months older, on average, this must be interpreted **cautiously**.

% 2011 (G4) % 2016 (G4) % 2021 (G5)

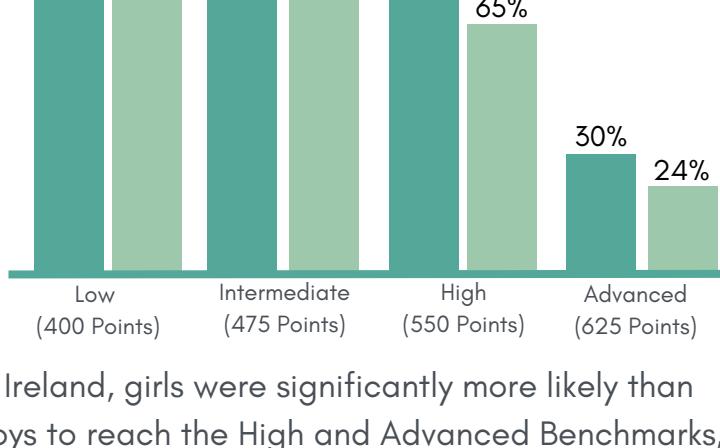


The proportion of pupils in Ireland reaching the High and Advanced Benchmarks has increased since 2016, although this may be at least partly due to Start G5 testing.

Spotlight on gender



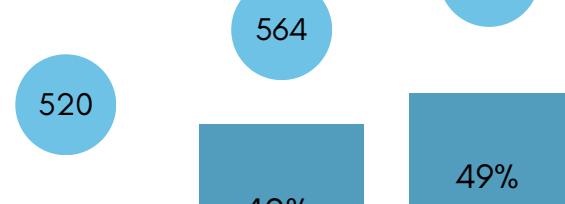
Girls Boys



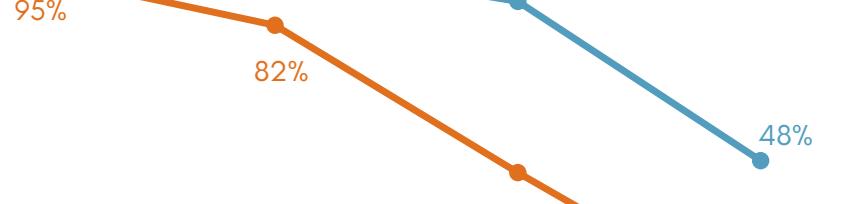
In Ireland, girls were significantly more likely than boys to reach the High and Advanced Benchmarks,

although there was no notable gender gap at the lower benchmarks.

Spotlight on socioeconomic status (SES)



The overall level of SES was relatively high in Ireland with most pupils having "Middle" or "Higher" SES (as defined internationally).



Within Ireland, pupils with lowest SES were less likely than peers with highest SES to reach all four benchmarks. At the High and Advanced Benchmarks, these gaps were very pronounced.

Reading purposes & processes in Ireland



Literary Purpose
Mean 584



Informational Purpose
Mean 574



Retrieve/Infer Process
Mean 571



Interpret/Evaluate Process
Mean 582

Relative to their own overall mean score (577), pupils in Ireland performed particularly strongly when reading Literary texts and using Interpret/Evaluate processes.

Produced by the Educational Research Centre, Dublin, 2023.

To find out more about PIRLS 2021, visit:

www.erc.ie/pirls/reports

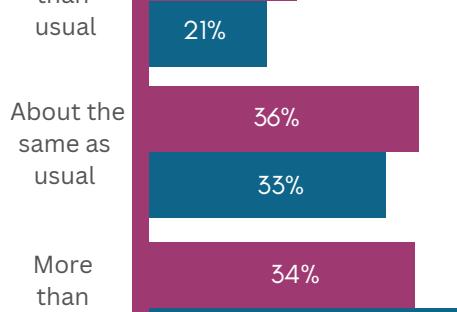
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As part of PIRLS 2021, pupils, their parents, their teachers, and their principals were asked questions about reading habits and the impact of the COVID-19 school closures.

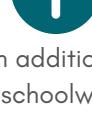
Reading during COVID-19 school closures



Most pupils in Ireland said they had read as often as usual or more often during the closures, both on paper and on screens.



As part of schoolwork



In addition to schoolwork

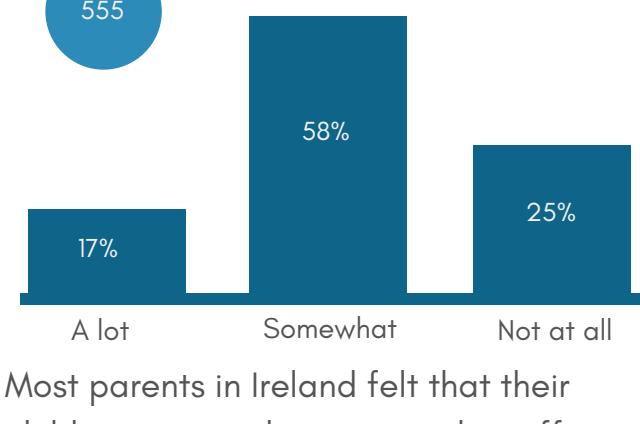


Almost all pupils in Ireland read regularly for schoolwork during the closures, and many read regularly for other purposes too.

Pupils negatively affected by school closures?

Mean Score

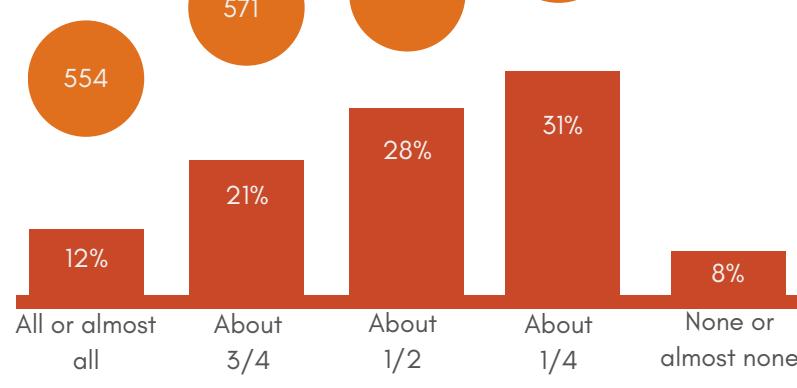
Parents' view



Most parents in Ireland felt that their children were at least somewhat affected by closures. Average PIRLS achievement was lower for those deemed more affected.

Mean Score

5th class teachers' view of their class



Literacy learning was impacted for some proportion of most classes, according to teachers. Average PIRLS achievement was lower in more affected classes.

Reading attitudes after COVID-19 Lockdown

Very Much Like Reading

Mean 593

31%

Very Confident

Very Confident

Very Confident

Somewhat Like Reading

Mean 578

45%

Somewhat Confident

Somewhat Confident

Do Not Like Reading

Mean 556

23%

Not Confident

Not Confident

Most pupils in Ireland liked reading either somewhat or very much. On average, those who liked reading more had higher PIRLS scores.

Overall, pupils in Ireland reported high levels of confidence about reading. Higher confidence was associated with higher PIRLS achievement, on average.

Mean 609

49%

Very Confident

Mean 564

34%

Somewhat Confident

Mean 516

17%

Not Confident

Every day or almost every day

38% (Mean 604)

Reading for Fun

Once or twice a week

Mean 571

Once or twice a month

16% (Mean 565)

Never or almost never

16% (Mean 543)

Most pupils in Ireland read for fun regularly. Doing so daily was associated with higher PIRLS achievement, on average.

Daily time reading outside school

8% Mean 610

11% Mean 617

38% Mean 588

43% Mean 554

Outside school, most pupils in Ireland read for less than an hour per day. Average achievement was lower for pupils who spent less time reading.

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