

# Ireland's 2021 National Assessments of Mathematics and English Reading: Exploring the home backgrounds, classrooms and schools of pupils in Urban DEIS schools



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# Table of Contents

<b>Preface</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>Acronyms and Abbreviations</b>	<b>xviii</b>
<b>Chapter 1 Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
About NAMER '21	2
Achievement of pupils in Urban DEIS schools in NAMER '21	5
Research context for this report	6
Aim, analyses and structure of this report	9
<b>Chapter 2 Pupil characteristics and achievement</b>	<b>11</b>
Pupil background and achievement	12
Frequency of homework and access to resources at home	14
Second class pupils' attitudes to school and reading	18
Sixth class pupils' school belonging and parental support	20
<b>Chapter 3 Teachers, Classrooms, and Pupil Achievement</b>	<b>23</b>
Teacher background and experience	24
Classroom context	28
Literacy and Numeracy	30
<b>Chapter 4 School resources: Access and use</b>	<b>33</b>
Financial resources	34
Human resources: Teachers and principals	36
Initiatives and supports for pupil wellbeing, literacy or numeracy	38
<b>Chapter 5 Discussion</b>	<b>42</b>
Pupil characteristics and achievement	43
Pupil attitudes	45
Teachers, classrooms and achievement	48
School resources: Access and use	50
Limitations to NAMER '21	53
Conclusions and implications	54
<b>References</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>61</b>
Appendix 1: Supports provided under the DEIS School Support Programme: Primary Schools	61
Appendix 2: NAMER '21 scales and statistics	63
Appendix to Chapter 2	65
Appendix to Chapter 3	76
Appendix to Chapter 4	86

# Preface

This report follows on from *Ireland's National Assessments of Mathematics and English Reading 2021: A focus on urban DEIS schools* (Nelis & Gilleece, 2023). It is also designed to be read in conjunction with the *National Assessments of Mathematics and English Reading 2021: Performance Report* (Kiniry et al., 2023) which provides more detail on the administration of NAMER '21 and overall findings for achievement. Further findings from NAMER '21 including findings related to teaching and assessment practices, pupil characteristics and school factors, will be described in a forthcoming report (Kiniry et al., Report in preparation).

A key purpose of this report is to look at pupil characteristics and school and classroom factors that may be associated with achievement of pupils in Urban DEIS schools. More broadly, analyses in this report are intended to support policymakers and school communities striving to improve equity in education. NAMER '21 was administered in Spring 2021. Since then, there have been developments in policy, practice and supports. This report was completed in late 2023 and focuses primarily on findings from NAMER '21 rather than how findings may link to developments that occurred following the study.

# Acknowledgements

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Finally, we appreciate the detailed review of earlier drafts of this report carried out by colleagues in the Department of Education's Social Inclusion Unit, Special Education Section, and Inspectorate.

## ***Disclaimer***

*Findings and opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the analyses presented, we cannot guarantee the accuracy or completeness of the material. We make every effort to minimise disruption caused by technical errors. If errors are brought to our attention, we will try to correct them. Neither the authors nor the Educational Research Centre are liable for losses, damages, liability or expense arising from the work in this report.*

# Executive Summary

## About NAMER '21

- The National Assessments of Mathematics and English Reading 2021 (NAMER '21) were carried out in Spring 2021 by the Educational Research Centre (ERC) on behalf of the Department of Education (DoE), under the guidance of a national advisory committee. Administration of NAMER '21 was postponed by one year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In NAMER '21, English reading achievement at Second class and Mathematics achievement at Sixth class were assessed. In addition to the achievement tests, NAMER '21 collected background and contextual information on the home, classroom and school environments of participating pupils via questionnaires completed by pupils, teachers and principals. Questionnaires were not administered to parents or guardians of pupils at either class level as modifications were made to NAMER '21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>1</sup>
- Over 10,000 pupils in 188 primary schools participated in NAMER '21. Of participating schools, 58 were DEIS Urban Band 1, 30 were Urban Band 2, 5 were DEIS Rural, 50 were Urban Non-DEIS and 45 were Rural Non-DEIS schools. The numbers of Urban Band 1 and Urban Band 2 schools participating in 2021 represented an increase over the corresponding numbers of DEIS schools in NAMER '14 when pupils participated from 13 Urban Band 1 and 12 Urban Band 2 schools.
- The focus of this report is on the home backgrounds, classrooms and schools of pupils in Urban DEIS schools compared to pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools. The additional resources provided to schools in the DEIS programme are outlined in Appendix 1. Readers interested in further detail on the English reading and Mathematics achievement of pupils in Urban DEIS and Non-DEIS schools are directed to Nelis and Gilteece (2023).
- A cross-sectional study such as NAMER '21 does not allow causal inferences to be drawn. Nonetheless, the contextual information collected as part of NAMER '21 allows us to describe differences and similarities in context, experiences and opportunities across participating schools. This report presents results of bivariate analyses but does not take into account joint relationships between variables and achievement (multivariate analysis).
- The wider context in which NAMER '21 took place is relevant when interpreting the findings of the study. Participants in NAMER '21 had experienced remote learning and teaching in January and February 2021 as well as extended periods of school closures/ remote learning between March and June 2020.

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<sup>1</sup> In this report, the term 'parent(s)' is used as shorthand for parent(s)/guardian(s).

## Key findings: Pupils

- Findings from NAMER '21 show that at Second class, the percentages of pupils born outside Ireland ranged from 12% to 22% across school contexts, with a significantly higher percentage in Urban Band 2 schools compared to Urban Band 1 or Urban Non-DEIS schools. The percentages of Sixth class pupils in NAMER '21 who indicated that they were born outside Ireland ranged from 8% in Urban Non-DEIS schools to 17.3% in Urban Band 2 schools.
- No significant differences in Second class reading achievement were associated with place of birth for pupils in Urban DEIS schools. In contrast, pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools who were born in Ireland had a significantly higher mean reading score than their counterparts born outside Ireland.
- In Urban Band 1 schools, Sixth class pupils who were born outside Ireland had a significantly higher average Mathematics score than those born in Ireland, with a difference of almost 10 points in favour of pupils born outside Ireland. The corresponding differences were not statistically significant in Urban Band 2 schools or in Urban Non-DEIS schools.
- Looking at language use in the home, the majority of pupils in all school contexts reported 'always or almost always' speaking English at home, although percentages in this group ranged from 57% of Second class pupils in Urban Band 2 schools to 82.4% of Sixth class pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools. At Second class, the percentages of pupils who 'never' spoke English at home ranged from 5.4% (Urban Non-DEIS) to 9.1% (Urban Band 2). Corresponding percentages at Sixth class were 2.9% and 4.1%, respectively.
- The associations between pupils' home language and average achievement in reading and Mathematics varied across DEIS bands. In general, across school contexts, higher mean scores in Second class English reading were associated with speaking English more frequently at home.
- Conversely, Sixth class pupils in DEIS schools who spoke English at home less frequently were found to have an advantage in Mathematics over their peers who spoke English at home more frequently. In Urban Band 1 schools, those who indicated that they 'never' spoke English at home significantly outperformed those who reported 'always' speaking English at home by an average of 31 points. Furthermore, Sixth class pupils who indicated that they 'sometimes' spoke English at home had an 18-point advantage in average Mathematics achievement over pupils who 'always' spoke English at home. Gaps were of a similar magnitude in Urban Band 2 schools but the difference was statistically significant only for the 'sometimes' versus 'always' groups.
- At both Second and Sixth class levels, pupils reported that they were actively engaged in English and Mathematics homework.<sup>2</sup> A substantial proportion of Second class pupils (at least four-fifths) and over three-quarters of Sixth class pupils across all school contexts

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2 Pupils were asked about the frequency of 'doing' homework rather than the frequency with which homework was assigned by the teacher. Information was not gathered in NAMER '21 regarding the frequency with which homework was assigned by the teacher.

indicated that they did homework on 'most school days'. In Urban DEIS schools, at both Second and Sixth classes, pupils who reported doing homework on 'most school days' had significantly higher levels of average achievement than pupils who reported 'hardly ever' doing homework. In Urban Non-DEIS schools, the frequency of doing homework was significantly associated with average achievement in English reading but not Mathematics.

- In both DEIS and Non-DEIS schools, high percentages of pupils reported having access at home to a computer, tablet or games console. There was almost universal access to the internet ( $\geq 96\%$  at Second class;  $\geq 98\%$  at Sixth class across all school contexts). Both Second and Sixth class pupils in DEIS schools were more likely to have a TV in their bedroom, and more likely to have access to their own mobile phone, than pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools.
- Access to educational technology and the internet at home was positively associated with average achievement. In general, pupils had a higher average reading or Mathematics score when they reported access to certain resources at home such as a computer, access to the internet, books to read for fun, or a calculator. In contrast, lower average achievement in English reading or Mathematics was associated with pupils having a TV in their bedroom or their own mobile phone. Patterns of association were broadly similar across Urban Non-DEIS and DEIS schools.
- About one-sixth of Second class pupils reported not liking school. Percentages in this group were very similar across Urban Band 1, Urban Band 2 and Urban Non-DEIS schools. There was some variation across Urban DEIS and Non-DEIS schools in the association between reported liking of school and average achievement.
- Pupil self-reported enjoyment of reading was significantly related to reading achievement. Second class pupils who 'disagreed' that they liked reading had lower average reading scores than their counterparts who 'strongly agreed' in all school contexts; the difference between the mean scores of the two groups was almost three times larger in Urban Non-DEIS schools compared to Urban Band 1 schools.
- Pupils who expressed confidence in their abilities in English demonstrated higher reading achievement scores on average. Both in DEIS and Non-DEIS schools, Second class pupils who reported that they 'need to improve' in either English reading, speaking English or writing a story in English had lower average reading scores than pupils with higher self-rated skills.
- Second class pupils were asked about the frequency with which they read alone or with others at home. There was some evidence that more frequent individual reading of books for fun (but not magazines or comics) was associated with higher average reading scores; i.e., those who reported reading books on their own for fun on 'most days' had a significantly higher average score than those who 'never' read books on their own for fun. In contrast, more frequent reading with an adult (either a parent or another adult) was associated with lower average reading achievement although this likely reflects the need for support on the part of weaker readers who are less capable of independent leisure reading. The pattern of association between reading achievement and frequency of individual online reading was less clear-cut.

- Large majorities of Sixth class pupils agreed with each of several statements regarding their sense of school belonging. Across Urban DEIS and Non-DEIS schools, almost all Sixth class pupils (>95%) agreed that they have friends in their school. Large majorities (>80%) in each context agreed that they are proud to go to their school, that teachers are fair, that they feel safe in the playground at school or that they feel safe in their classroom.
- Nonetheless, more than one-in-ten Sixth class pupils disagreed that they feel safe in their classroom. A similar percentage disagreed that they feel safe in their school playground. It is not possible to determine the impact (if any) of COVID-19 protocols or risks on pupils' perception of safety at school. More than one-quarter of Sixth class pupils disagreed that they like being at school. The percentages that disagreed that they feel safe or like school were very similar in Urban DEIS and Non-DEIS schools.<sup>3</sup>
- Sixth class pupils' sense of belonging at school was positively associated with Mathematics achievement. Across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools, pupils who agreed that they feel like they belong at their school had significantly higher average Mathematics scores than pupils who disagreed with the statement. In general, more favourable attitudes towards school were associated with higher average achievement in Mathematics.
- Sixth class pupils were asked to indicate the frequency with which various activities involving the pupil and their parent(s) took place at home. Across Urban DEIS and Non-DEIS schools, high percentages of pupils reported that several times a week, they ate dinner with parent(s) around the table or spent time chatting with parents. Somewhat lower percentages of pupils indicated that they discussed with parents several times a week how well they were doing at school.
- The frequency of such activities was not consistently associated with Mathematics achievement. While pupils who reported eating dinner with parent(s) around the table on a more frequent basis tended to have a higher average Mathematics score, this was statistically significant in Urban Non-DEIS schools only.

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<sup>3</sup> The administration of NAMER '21 preceded the issuing of guidance by the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) on fostering resilience and promoting safety and belonging in schools. The guidance was issued in response to the return to schools post COVID-19 lockdowns and as part of the wider wellbeing strategy (Department of Education, 2022a). The administration of NAMER '21 also preceded the publication of the *Cineáltais: Action Plan on Bullying*, published in December 2022 as Ireland's whole education approach to preventing and addressing bullying in schools (Department of Education, 2022b).

## Key findings: Teachers and classrooms

- There were no statistically significant differences between DEIS and Non-DEIS schools in the average years of teaching experience of Second and Sixth class teachers participating in NAMER '21. Across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools, Second class pupils had teachers with an average of 9.8 to 11.2 years of teaching experience. Sixth class pupils were taught by teachers with an average of 11.0 to 12.2 years of teaching experience. A majority of pupils at both class levels were taught by female teachers, with percentages exceeding 80% in both DEIS and Non-DEIS schools at Second class. One-third to two-fifths of Sixth class pupils were taught by male teachers.
- The majority of pupils were taught by teachers with permanent posts. Three-fifths to three-quarters of Second class pupils and over four-fifths of Sixth class pupils were taught by teachers with permanent posts. There were no significant differences in average English reading or Mathematics achievement associated with teacher employment status.
- Approximately 30-45% of pupils were taught by teachers who indicated that they had completed an additional qualification related to their teaching such as a Certificate/Diploma, Masters or Doctoral degree. The percentages with additional qualifications did not differ across school contexts. Additional qualifications on the part of the teacher was not significantly associated with average achievement in reading at Second class. In contrast, some statistically significant associations were observed at Sixth class but the direction of the association was not consistent across school types.
- Teachers were asked to report on their participation in continuing professional development (CPD)/teacher professional learning (TPL) for English at Second class and Mathematics at Sixth class in the two years prior to NAMER '21. However, the timing of the study should be borne in mind as it is likely that teacher participation in CPD/TPL, particularly in-person CPD/TPL, was significantly impacted by the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, over 80% of pupils were taught by teachers who indicated that they had participated in planning activities. About 70% of Second class pupils across school contexts were taught by teachers who indicated that they had participated in online CPD/TPL; percentages were somewhat lower at Sixth class. At least half of pupils were in classes where teachers reported that they had engaged in professional self-directed reading or study related to English or Mathematics.
- In line with commitments of reduced class sizes for DEIS schools made in the *DEIS Plan 2017* (Department of Education and Skills, 2017), findings from NAMER '21 show that average class size was highest in Urban Non-DEIS schools. Second class pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools had a total of 26.3 pupils on average in their classrooms and an average of 25.1 Second class pupils. Average numbers of Second class pupils were significantly lower in Urban Band 1 and Urban Band 2 schools, where average numbers of Second class pupils were 19.7 and 22.9, respectively. At Sixth class, pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools had a total of 26.4 pupils on average in their classrooms and an average of 26.1 Sixth class pupils. Corresponding values were significantly lower in Urban Band 1 schools (22.2 and 20.9) but not significantly different in Urban Band 2 schools.
- Teachers reported similar levels of perceived adequacy of access to classroom resources across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools. The majority of pupils were in classrooms where teachers

reported that they considered they had sufficient access to interactive whiteboards and to high-speed internet that usually worked. In contrast, two-thirds to three-quarters of pupils were in classrooms where teachers reported that they perceived access to electronic books to be insufficient. Over one-fifth of Second class pupils in Urban Band 1 schools were in classrooms where teachers reported insufficient access to an adequate number of print-based novels for pupils to read. One-quarter to two-fifths of pupils across Urban DEIS and Non-DEIS schools were in classrooms where teachers reported insufficient access to print-based information books for pupils to read. Insufficient access to computers or computing devices was identified as a problem by teachers of one-quarter to one-third of pupils, with no significant differences between Urban DEIS and Non-DEIS schools.

- Approaches to learning support were reported to be similar in DEIS and Non-DEIS schools although it is important to note that it is not possible to determine the impact of COVID-19 on the provision of learning support or the availability of Special Education teachers at the time of NAMER '21 administration.<sup>4</sup> Based on teachers' responses to a 'select all that apply' item, a widely used approach for the provision of learning support was the withdrawal of pupils in groups. Over 80% of Second and Sixth class pupils were in classes where this approach was used according to their teachers. There was little variation in percentages between Urban Band 1, Urban Band 2 and Urban Non-DEIS schools. Teachers of at least three-fifths of pupils across Second and Sixth classes and across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools identified individual withdrawal as a strategy used to support specific pupils during the school year in which NAMER '21 was conducted. Just over half of Second class pupils and about two-fifths to half of Sixth class pupils were in classes where in-class support by the learning support/special education team was used to provide additional support for English. Not more than 5.5% of pupils were in classrooms where teachers reported that no additional support was provided for English.
- Teachers implemented a range of programmes designed to improve the performance of pupils in English reading.<sup>5</sup> Guided Reading and Drop Everything and Read were widely implemented across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools with 80-95% of pupils in classrooms where these were reported to be used. In contrast, teachers' reported use of some classroom initiatives, programmes or approaches to improve literacy varied by DEIS status. For example, higher percentages of pupils in DEIS schools, compared to Non-DEIS schools, were in classrooms where teachers reported use of First Steps Reading, First Steps Writing, First Steps Oral Language or Reading/Literacy Stations.<sup>6</sup>
- In terms of teachers' use of programmes designed to improve numeracy, Paired Maths with another pupil was very widely used across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools. Paired Maths with another pupil was reported to be used by teachers of over 80% of Sixth class pupils. High percentages of pupils were in classrooms where teachers reported use of Maths for Fun or Maths stations; three-fifths to two-thirds of pupils were in classrooms where these were used.

4 Analyses in this report do not examine the alignment between practices as reported by teachers for the provision of additional support and the Continuum of Support framework. See [https://www.sess.ie/sites/default/files/inline-files/neps\\_special\\_needs\\_guidelines%20primary.pdf](https://www.sess.ie/sites/default/files/inline-files/neps_special_needs_guidelines%20primary.pdf)

5 This teacher questionnaire item referred to reading/language initiatives implemented in the classroom in contrast to initiatives delivered to individual pupils (e.g., Reading Recovery) or wider school-level initiatives.

6 The teacher questionnaire referred to First Steps Oral Language which is also called First Steps Speaking and Listening (<https://pdst.ie/node/378>).

## Key findings: Schools

- Across Urban DEIS and Non-DEIS schools, all or almost all Sixth class pupils were in schools where principals reported that a textbook rental scheme was provided.<sup>7</sup>
- Relative to pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools, Sixth class pupils in Urban Band 1 or Urban Band 2 schools had principals who were significantly less likely to indicate that the school requested voluntary contributions from parents. While two-thirds of pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools had principals who indicated that voluntary contributions were requested, the corresponding values in Urban Band 1 and Urban Band 2 schools were about 22% and 30%, respectively.
- The provision of breakfast clubs and school meals varied by school DEIS status. About half of Sixth class pupils in Urban Band 1 schools had principals who indicated that the school provided a Breakfast club for some or all pupils. The percentage was very similar in Urban Band 2 schools but considerably lower (6.2%) in Urban Non-DEIS schools. COVID-19 restrictions impacted on the provision of breakfast clubs as about one-quarter of Sixth class pupils in Urban Band 1 schools had principals who reported that the breakfast club was not running at the time of NAMER '21 administration because of COVID-19 restrictions. All Sixth class pupils in DEIS schools had principals who reported that some or all pupils had access to free school meals at lunchtime compared to fewer than one-in-ten in Urban Non-DEIS schools.<sup>8</sup>
- Pupils in Urban Band 1 schools were less likely than those in Urban Non-DEIS schools to have principals who reported that buildings and facilities were available to the local community at weekends or out of term-time.
- Difficulties in teacher recruitment and difficulties in the sourcing of qualified substitutes were widely identified as challenges by principals across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools. About half of Sixth class pupils across Urban DEIS and Non-DEIS schools had principals who reported difficulties with teacher recruitment in the twelve months prior to NAMER '21. Difficulties in sourcing qualified substitute teachers were reported to be very widespread; all or almost all Sixth class pupils had principals who reported difficulties in this area. Lower percentages of pupils (17%-23%) had principals who reported difficulties with teacher retention. There was no evidence of variation across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools in the challenges associated with teacher retention.
- While many principals indicated that they found their job rewarding and fulfilling, they also reported experiencing significant levels of stress. A positive finding was that all Sixth class pupils in Urban Band 1 and Urban Band 2 schools had principals who indicated that they found the role 'very' or 'fairly' satisfying; the corresponding value in Urban Non-DEIS schools was 97.1%. However, high percentages of Sixth class pupils across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools had principals who indicated that they found the role 'very' or

<sup>7</sup> Since the administration of NAMER '21, the Free Primary Schoolbooks Scheme has been introduced in Ireland removing the cost from families of funding schoolbooks for children enrolled in primary and special schools. The scheme commenced in the 2023/24 school year.

<sup>8</sup> The School Meals Programme was expanded following the administration of NAMER '21 (Department of Social Protection, 2023).

'fairly' stressful (89.2% to 97.1%). Two-thirds to four-fifths of pupils were in schools where principals indicated they felt 'very' or 'fairly' supported in their role (66.9% in Urban Non-DEIS schools; 76.3% in Urban Band 1 schools; 81.3% in Urban Band 2 schools).

- Principals were asked to rate teacher engagement in a number of areas. While over 90% of Sixth class pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools had principals who rated teachers' job satisfaction as 'high' or 'very high', corresponding percentages in Urban Band 1 and Urban Band 2 schools were 78.3% and 71.0% respectively. According to principals, teachers in Urban Band 1 schools were less likely to have 'high' or very high' understanding of the school's targets and goals, success in achieving the school's targets and goals, or expectations for pupil achievement.
- Parent engagement was rated less favourably by principals in Urban DEIS schools. About one-tenth of pupils in Urban Band 1 schools and just over one-quarter of pupils in Urban Band 2 schools had principals who rated as 'high' or 'very high' parental support for pupil achievement. The corresponding value in Urban Non-DEIS schools was 84.2%. Parental involvement in school activities was regarded as 'very high' or 'high' by principals of just 1.8% of pupils in Urban Band 1 schools, principals of 12.3% of pupils in Urban Band 2 schools and principals of 48.8% of pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools. In spite of the strong focus on partnership with parents in the *DEIS Plan 2017*, NAMER '21 shows that this remains a challenging area for at least some DEIS schools.
- Principals' ratings of pupil engagement were also less favourable in DEIS schools. While 93.6% of pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools had principals who indicated that pupils' regard for school property was 'high' or 'very high', the corresponding percentages in Urban Band 1 and Urban Band 2 schools were 67.6% and 77.6% respectively. Principals in DEIS schools were also less likely than their Non-DEIS counterparts to rate as 'high' or 'very high' pupils' desire to do well in school. While almost 90% of Sixth class pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools had principals who rated as 'high' or 'very high' pupils' desire to do well in school, the corresponding percentages in Urban Band 1 and Urban Band 2 schools were 53.3% and 47.1%, respectively.
- Principals reported on the availability and perceived value of the Friends and Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management (IYTCM) programmes. Focusing on schools where principals reported that Friends was available, about one-quarter of Sixth class pupils in Urban Band 1 schools had principals who considered the programme to be of 'low value' although this percentage was not significantly higher than the corresponding percentage in Urban Band 2 or Urban Non-DEIS schools.
- The percentages of Sixth class pupils with principals rating IYTCM as 'high value' ranged from almost one-third in Urban Band 1 schools to over two-thirds in Urban Band 2 schools. Again, differences in percentages across school contexts were not statistically significant.
- School participation in initiatives or programmes designed to promote enjoyment of reading or enjoyment of Mathematics was reported to be high. At least three-quarters of Second class pupils in Urban Band 1 and Urban Band 2 schools and over 80% in Urban Non-DEIS schools had principals who reported that the school had participated in initiatives or events designed to promote the enjoyment of reading.

Similarly, high percentages of Sixth class pupils had principals who reported that the school had participated in initiatives or programmes designed to promote enjoyment of Mathematics; percentages exceeded 75% across Urban Non-DEIS and DEIS schools. There were no statistically significant differences in the average English reading or Mathematics achievement of pupils in schools that did not participate in any initiatives compared to those that did.

- Compared to Urban Non-DEIS schools, higher percentages of Sixth class pupils in Urban Band 1 and Urban Band 2 schools had principals who indicated that the school received some literacy or numeracy support from the voluntary/charity sector (e.g., Suas, Barnardos). About one-quarter of Sixth class pupils in Urban Band 2 schools and two-fifths in Urban Band 1 schools had principals who indicated that such support was received by the school to help develop literacy in the senior classes. Principals of about one-quarter of Sixth class pupils in Urban Band 1 and Urban Band 2 schools indicated that voluntary/charitable support was received to support numeracy in the senior classes.
- Principals were asked to report on the strategies used by the school to support parents to help their children at home. Across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools, over three-quarters of Sixth class pupils had principals who indicated that the school shared resources with parents (e.g., reading lists, websites). There was some variation between English and Mathematics and across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools in the extent to which principals reported implementing a programme. Almost one-third to two-fifths of Sixth class pupils had principals who reported using this strategy for English; corresponding values for Mathematics were one-sixth to two-fifths of pupils. Lower percentages of pupils had principals who reported facilitating a once-off workshop or information session with a group of parents. Percentages range from 4% of Urban Non-DEIS pupils whose principals indicated that this approach was used for reading to 27% of Urban Band 1 pupils whose principals reported that this approach was used for Mathematics. In general, there were no statistically significant differences in average achievement between pupils in schools where strategies were reportedly used and those where these strategies were not used.

## Conclusions, implications, and future research

Findings from NAMER '21 show some variation across Urban DEIS and Non-DEIS schools on a range of home, classroom and school characteristics. With respect to some other issues, such as problems associated with identifying substitute teachers, challenges are very similar in DEIS and Non-DEIS schools.

Pupil achievement in English reading and Mathematics are associated with a range of pupil, teacher, classroom and school factors that may vary across school contexts. This report aims to shed some light on the characteristics of pupils' homes, classrooms and schools known to support pupil engagement and achievement. Future research can usefully consider these factors in a multivariate context and a multilevel model of achievement will be presented in the forthcoming NAMER '21 contextual report (Kiniry et al., Report in preparation). In addition, the forthcoming report will provide more in-depth information on teaching and assessment practices related to reading and Mathematics.

A number of issues are identified in this report as meriting further attention from schools, policy makers or researchers. These are:

- Findings from NAMER '21 show that pupils had higher average English reading or Mathematics scores when they reported access to certain resources at home such as a computer, access to the internet, books to read for fun, or a calculator. In contrast, lower average achievement in English reading or Mathematics was associated with pupils having a TV in their bedroom or their own mobile phone. Patterns of association were broadly similar across Urban Non-DEIS and DEIS schools and are similar to previously reported patterns in earlier national assessments (Eivers et al., 2010; Kavanagh et al., 2015). **The NAMER '14 recommendation remains valid regarding awareness raising on the part of schools among parents about behaviours and practices that are supportive of children's academic development (such as reading books at home for pleasure) and those that are not (unmonitored television access, large amounts of technology).**
- NAMER '21 findings show the despite COVID-19 disruptions to teaching and learning, high percentages of pupils demonstrate high levels of connections with their school community. Nonetheless, there is a continued need to focus on the minorities of pupils who report that they do not like school or feel safe in the classroom or playground. **These findings underscore the need to further enhance a sense of school belonging for all pupils and the importance of relevant policy developments.<sup>9</sup> They also point towards an ongoing need for schools and teachers to be supported to effectively access pupil voice to understand the types of learning experiences preferred by pupils.**
- High percentages of Sixth class pupils reported that parents/guardians ate dinner with them around the table several times a week. Also, almost three-quarters of pupils across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools indicated that parents spent time chatting with them several times a week. According to pupils, supportive engagement on the part of parents

<sup>9</sup> For example, the *Cineáltais: Action Plan on Bullying* – published since the administration of NAMER '21 (Department of Education, 2022b).

was equally prevalent in DEIS and Non-DEIS schools. However, according to principals, parental support for pupil achievement, particularly in Urban Band 1 schools, was very low. **These findings show that while there may be scope to further encourage parental/guardian engagement in their children's learning, there may also be scope to more fully recognise the 'funds of knowledge'<sup>10</sup> or wider experiences brought by all pupils to the classroom.**

- Principals in DEIS schools were less likely to rate teacher engagement as 'high' or 'very high' on several areas than their Non-DEIS counterparts. According to principals, teachers in Urban Band 1 schools were less likely to have 'high' or 'very high' understanding of the school's targets and goals, success in achieving the school's targets and goals, or expectations for pupil achievement. **The importance of high teacher expectations for all pupils is emphasised by the work of the Inspectorate through their support for DEIS Action Planning and School Self-Evaluation and current findings point towards an ongoing need for this work. These findings also point towards a need for all schools to emphasise and implement whole-school approaches across the key areas of DEIS action planning and to be proactive in ensuring that all teachers are aware of DEIS-related targets and interventions.**
- While principals reported high levels of job satisfaction, the role was also reported to be associated with high levels of stress, with no statistically significant differences in this regard between DEIS and Non-DEIS schools. **These findings underscore the need for greater support for principal wellbeing and further consideration for how this may be improved through professional development opportunities and greater balance in the role across all aspects of leadership and management.**
- Widespread difficulties with the sourcing of qualified substitute teachers were apparent across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools. Teacher recruitment difficulties were also evident. Teacher retention problems were deemed to be less widespread relative to the other areas. There was no evidence of differences between DEIS and Non-DEIS schools in the extent of these difficulties. **These findings provide further evidence of widespread problems with teacher supply across school contexts and emphasise the importance of ongoing work designed to address this issue by the Department of Education and the Teaching Council.**
- Findings from NAMER '21 show that pupils in Urban Band 1 schools were less likely than pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools to have principals who reported that buildings and facilities were available to the local community at weekends or out of term-time. The *DEIS Plan 2017* (Department of Education and Skills, 2017) includes reference to improving community links, including through developing and building relationships with local community organisations and businesses to support the work of schools. **There may be merit in considering how the opening up of school buildings and facilities outside of school time could contribute to building school-community links.**

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10 The Funds of Knowledge approach (González et al., 2005) is based on the assumption that all pupils bring valuable knowledge and skills to the classroom, based on their life experiences outside of school. It has been employed to avoid deficit theorising in educational research and practice ('t Gilde & Volman, 2021).

- In Mathematics, Sixth class pupils in Urban Band 1 schools who were born outside Ireland had a significantly higher mean score than their counterparts born in Ireland. Similarly, Sixth class pupils in DEIS schools who spoke English less frequently were found to have an advantage in Mathematics over their peers who spoke English more frequently. The mean Mathematics scores of pupils in Urban DEIS schools who reported 'never' speaking English at home were about as high as the mean scores of pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools who reported 'always or almost always' speaking English at home. **Future research could usefully examine the relative strengths in Mathematics of pupils born outside Ireland and/or speaking home languages other than English or Irish in order to support the highest levels of achievement amongst these pupils. Also, the relative disadvantage in Mathematics of pupils born in Ireland and/or regularly speaking English at home may merit further attention.**
- One-fifth to one-third of Second class pupils reported 'never' reading books on their own for fun. Such pupils had a significantly lower average reading score than those pupils who reported reading books on their own for fun on 'most days'. **Given trends pointing towards reduced leisure reading in Ireland and internationally, schools are encouraged to promote leisure reading amongst pupils and continue to raise awareness amongst parents of its value. Future research may usefully give further detailed consideration to the leisure reading activities of boys and girls in DEIS primary schools and monitor trends over time in this area.**

# Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>ABS</b>	Absolute
<b>BC</b>	Bonferroni correction
<b>CI</b>	Confidence interval
<b>COVID-19</b>	Coronavirus disease 2019
<b>CPD</b>	Continuing Professional Development
<b>DEIS</b>	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
<b>DoE</b>	Department of Education (formerly Department of Education and Skills [DES])
<b>EAL</b>	English as an Additional Language
<b>ERC</b>	Educational Research Centre
<b>GUI</b>	Growing up in Ireland, National Longitudinal Study of Children
<b>HSCL</b>	Home School Community Liaison
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communications Technology
<b>IEA</b>	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
<b>IPPN</b>	Irish Primary Principals Network
<b>NAC</b>	National Advisory Committee
<b>IYTCM</b>	The Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management Programme
<b>NAMER '09</b>	The 2009 National Assessments of Mathematics and English Reading
<b>NAMER '14</b>	The 2014 National Assessments of English Reading and Mathematics
<b>NAMER '21</b>	The 2021 National Assessments of Mathematics and English Reading
<b>NEPS</b>	National Educational Psychological Service
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>PDST</b>	Professional Development Service for Teachers
<b>PIRLS</b>	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
<b>PLC</b>	Primary Language Curriculum
<b>PT 2011</b>	PIRLS and TIMSS studies administered jointly in 2011
<b>SE</b>	Standard Error
<b>TIMSS</b>	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
<b>TPL</b>	Teachers' professional learning

# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

In Ireland, educational disadvantage is defined in Section 32(9) of the Education Act (Government of Ireland, 1998) “the impediments to education arising from social or economic disadvantage that prevent students from deriving appropriate benefit from education in schools”. Since 2005, the main policy response to educational disadvantage in Ireland has been the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) programme (Department of Education and Science, 2005; Department of Education and Skills, 2017). As part of the monitoring of student outcomes in DEIS schools, gaps in average student achievement between DEIS and Non-DEIS schools have been described at both primary and post-primary levels, (see e.g., Delaney et al., 2023; Gilleece et al., 2020; Kavanagh & Weir, 2018; Nelis & Gilleece, 2023; Weir et al., 2018). This report draws on pupil, school and teacher questionnaire data gathered in the National Assessments of Mathematics and English Reading 2021 (NAMER '21) to provide further information on some of the factors known to be associated with pupil achievement. Analyses in this report are intended to support policymakers and school communities striving to improve equity in education.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into four sections. The first provides an overview of NAMER '21. The second summarises the average achievement of pupils in Urban DEIS schools, described more fully in the *National Assessments of Mathematics and English Reading 2021: A focus on urban DEIS schools* (Nelis & Gilleece, 2023). The third section briefly reviews some relevant research findings on factors associated with the achievement of primary school pupils in Ireland, focusing on pupil, home, teacher and school characteristics. The final section describes the analyses underpinning this report and the structure of the remaining chapters.

## About NAMER '21

The National Assessments are undertaken periodically by the Educational Research Centre (ERC) on behalf of the Department of Education (DoE), guided by a NAC. They examine pupil achievement in English reading and Mathematics and are based on the Irish primary school curriculum. The purpose is to describe broad population characteristics, rather than those of individual pupils, teachers or schools. NAMER '21 is the ninth in the series of national assessments conducted in Ireland. Originally due to be administered in 2020, the study was postponed to Spring 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This resulted in a seven-year interval between national assessment cycles. Participating pupils had experienced remote learning and teaching in January and February 2021 as well as an extended period of school closures/remote learning between March and June 2020. The remainder of this section is intended to provide an overview of NAMER '21. More detailed technical information on test development, sampling, administration and overall achievement are provided in *The National Assessments of Mathematics and English Reading 2021: Performance report* (Kiniry et al., 2023) and readers interested in further detail are directed to that report. Readers are reminded that NAMER '21 was conducted prior to the roll out of the refined version of the DEIS identification process in 2022 (Department of Education, 2022c) that resulted in an extension of the DEIS programme to 322 additional schools, with a large majority of these at primary level.<sup>11</sup>

## Who took part in NAMER '21?

A representative sample of pupils at Second and Sixth classes participated in NAMER '21. The 2021 cycle involved for the first time an oversampling (i.e., a larger sample for a subpopulation) of pupils in Urban DEIS schools in order to gather more reliable estimates of average pupil achievement in these schools than had previously been possible. To achieve a sufficiently large

<sup>11</sup> This extension comprised 42 new Urban Band 1 schools, 81 new Urban Band 2 schools, 161 new Rural DEIS schools, and 38 new DEIS post-primary schools. A further 39 primary schools were reclassified from one DEIS band to another (e.g., Urban Band 2 to Urban Band 1 or DEIS rural to an Urban band).

effective sample size,<sup>12</sup> the initial sampling plan for NAMER '21 allowed for the sampling of a total of 320 schools, of which 80 would be Urban Band 1, 80 Urban Band 2, 80 Rural DEIS and 80 Non-DEIS schools. In light of costs and logistics, a subsequent decision was taken to select 60 Urban Band 1 schools, 30 Urban Band 2 schools<sup>13</sup> and 80 Rural DEIS schools. On further review of costs and logistics, a decision was made by the DoE<sup>14</sup> in October 2019 that Rural DEIS schools should not be oversampled for the NAMER '21 main study.

A total of 195 primary schools were selected to participate in NAMER '21. In a two-stage process, a representative sample of schools was first selected and then intact classes were selected within these schools. Up to two Second and two Sixth classes were selected in each school. Sometimes a 'half-class' was selected (e.g., multi-grade Second-Third). Private (fee-paying) schools and special schools were excluded.

To facilitate the oversampling of Urban DEIS schools, the sampling frame was split into several explicit strata based on DEIS category, enrolment size and whether the school was junior, senior or vertical. Within each explicit stratum probability proportional to size (PPS), systematic sampling was used with implicit stratification (sorting) by area/language of instruction, school gender mix, and school size at the relevant grade.

Response rates were very high at school, principal, teacher and pupil levels. Of the 195 selected schools, 188 took part in the main study. A total of 185 of 188 principals responded to the school questionnaire, representing an unweighted response rate of 98.4%. Very high percentages of Second class (unweighted 96.6%) and Sixth class (unweighted 98.9%) teachers responded.

Response rates were also very high at pupil level at both Second and Sixth classes and in both English reading and Mathematics. Pupil absence was 6.2% at Second class and 7.1% at Sixth class. Very small numbers of pupils were exempted<sup>15</sup> from participation by their class teachers or refused to take part. For NAMER '21 a participant is defined as a pupil who completed both the relevant test (English reading at Second; Mathematics at Sixth) and the pupil questionnaire. The total number of pupils classed as participants was 5044 at Second class (out of a total enrolment of 5670) and 5396 at Sixth class (out of a total enrolment of 6036) and all analyses were conducted using data from these pupils. Appropriate sampling weights were calculated prior to the analysis of the test data.

## *How was NAMER '21 conducted?*

Pupils were required to complete paper tests of English reading literacy (Second class) and Mathematics (Sixth class). School coordinators for NAMER '21 were responsible for the administration the assessments in each school. Inspectors from the DoE observed testing in a proportion of schools. Administration of each of the tests by teachers in a class setting took approximately 90 minutes.

In addition to the achievement tests, NAMER '21 collected a range of contextual information on the home, classroom, and school environment via questionnaires completed by pupils, teachers, and principals. Paper versions of the questionnaires were provided to respondents. As a response to school closures and remote learning associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, online versions

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12 The effective sample size takes into account the sample size as well as the design effect associated with the clustering of pupils within schools; for a relevant introduction, see Rutkowski et al. (2010).

13 One consequence of the lower number of Urban Band 2 schools is that estimates for pupils in Urban Band 2 schools are less precise than would be the case if a larger number of pupils was included in the study. This means that throughout the report, the standard errors associated with estimates for Urban Band 2 schools are typically larger than those associated with estimates for Urban Band 1 schools.

14 The name of the Department changed from the Department of Education and Skills to the Department of Education in late 2020. When referring to the Department in this report, DoE is used throughout except in citations, where DES is retained for accuracy.

15 Pupils could be exempted from NAMER '21 if, in the professional judgement of the teacher, participation by the pupil would create upset for the pupil (or their classmates) or create major logistical difficulties.

of the questionnaires were made available through an online survey platform (Qualtrics).<sup>16</sup> All questionnaires were available in English and/or Irish. Pupils in schools where the medium of instruction was Irish received bilingual (Irish/English) questionnaires, while teachers and principals received Irish-language versions. A data management company, external to the ERC, conducted the data entry for all questionnaires.

Questionnaire items were drawn from NAMER '14 with some modifications and a number of additions. In NAMER '14, the focus was on teaching and learning of Mathematics. For NAMER '21, the emphasis shifted primarily to English reading, coinciding with the introduction of the new Primary Language Curriculum (Department of Education and Skills, 2019).

In light of the decision to oversample Urban DEIS schools, specific questionnaire content was developed regarding the teaching and learning context in DEIS schools, the home background of pupils attending DEIS schools, and items on the supports offered through DEIS. These questions were designed with advice from the NAC (Primary Schools) overseeing the assessments, and in consultation with relevant sections of the DoE (i.e., the Inspectorate, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy unit [CAP], and the Social Inclusion Unit [SIU]). Permission was sought from the IEA for questionnaire items drawn from, or based on PIRLS (2016) and TIMSS (2019).<sup>17</sup>

A brief overview of the questionnaire content for each respondent is as follows:

- **Pupils** answered questions about home languages; resources at home; homework activities; attitudes towards English reading and Mathematics; attitudes to school and involvement in activities outside of school; educational resources at home; and the use of digital devices such as smartphones, laptops and tablets at home and at school. Sixth class questionnaires included some additional items that were not asked of pupils in Second class including questions pertaining to learning activities with parents at home; educational aspirations; parental rules for pupil use of digital devices; school belonging; and pupil wellbeing.
- **Teachers** answered questions about their own teaching background, e.g., qualifications, length of teaching experience, and continuing professional development related to the teaching of literacy or numeracy. There were questions on classroom organisation; teaching and assessment strategies for English and Mathematics; access and use of resources (e.g., digital tools); planning and organisational activities, and teachers' use of literacy or numeracy programmes or initiatives.
- **Principals** provided some information on school infrastructure, resources, staffing and the socio-economic profile of pupils in the school. Information on school resources included the school's provision of additional supports for pupils such as school meals and/or breakfast clubs and after-school clubs. A number of questions were included on the organisation of additional supports in the school and the range of assessment, evaluation, and planning activities. Principals were also asked some questions about their own background and job satisfaction. Some questions were included for principals of DEIS schools only which referred to specific DEIS-related issues such as spending of the DEIS grant and the perceived impact of supports received under DEIS.
- **Parent** questionnaires were *not* administered at either class level as modifications were made to NAMER '21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This loss of data means that relative to earlier national assessments, NAMER '21 has much reduced information on aspects of the family and home background.

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16 Copyright © 2023 Qualtrics <https://www.qualtrics.com>

17 <https://www.iea.nl/studies/ieastudies>

The contextual information from these NAMER '21 questionnaires allows examination of:

1. some characteristics and circumstances of pupils who participated
2. some teacher-related factors that may be relevant to pupil achievement in English reading and Mathematics
3. some school-related factors that may be relevant for the development of English reading and Mathematics.

Some of the factors may be considered to represent important processes or outcomes in their own right while some are primarily of relevance because of known associations with achievement in reading and Mathematics.

## Achievement of pupils in Urban DEIS schools in NAMER '21

Second class pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools had a significantly higher mean score in overall reading (265.4) than their counterparts in Urban Band 1 schools (236.9) and Urban Band 2 schools (252.3). Pupils in Urban Band 2 schools had a significantly higher mean score in overall reading than pupils in Urban Band 1 schools. These patterns of results were also evident for both the Reading Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension areas of the test. Girls outperformed boys in overall reading in both Urban Non-DEIS schools and Urban Band 1 schools; there were no significant gender differences in English reading in Urban Band 2 schools.

The target set out in the *DEIS Plan 2017* (Department of Education and Skills, 2017), which aimed to reduce the percentage of low achievers in reading (At or Below Level 1) in Urban Band 1 schools to 40% by 2020 was not met. In NAMER '21, 43.2% of Urban Band 1 pupils had reading scores At or Below Level 1, similar to the proportion of pupils at this level in NAMER '14 (43.9%). The percentage of very low achievers in reading (defined as Below Level 1 on the reading test) was significantly higher in Urban Band 1 schools (12.9%) than in Urban Non-DEIS (5.0%) or in Urban Band 2 schools (7.1%).

The target of 25% for high reading achievers (At or Above Level 3) in Urban Band 1 schools specified in the *DEIS Plan 2017* (Department of Education and Skills, 2017) was met. However, the percentage of Urban Band 1 pupils (25.0%) performing at this level in NAMER '21 did not represent a statistically significant increase over the corresponding percentage in 2014 (17.7%). The percentage of high achievers in reading (defined as scores at Level 4 on the reading test) was higher in Urban Non-DEIS schools (14.0%) than in Urban Band 1 schools (4.1%) or Urban Band 2 schools (7.4%).

Trend analysis showed that the average levels of Overall reading, Vocabulary or Comprehension in 2021 did not differ significantly from those in 2014 in any of the school contexts considered. The difference in mean reading scores between Urban Non-DEIS schools and Urban Band 1 schools narrowed slightly from 2014 to 2021, but the change was not statistically significant.

Sixth class pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools (262.3) significantly outperformed their counterparts in Urban Band 1 schools (233.3), but did not significantly outperform pupils in Urban Band 2 schools (251.9). The mean score achieved by pupils in Urban Band 2 schools was significantly higher than that of pupils in Urban Band 1 schools. Statistically significant gender differences in overall Mathematics in favour of boys were evident in both Urban Non-DEIS schools and Urban Band 2 schools but not in Urban Band 1 schools.

The target set out in the *DEIS Plan 2017* which aimed to reduce the percentage of low achievers (At or Below Level 1) in Mathematics in Urban Band 1 schools to 42% by 2020 was not met. In NAMER '21, 48.6% of Sixth class pupils in Urban Band 1 schools had Mathematics scores At or Below Level 1. The percentage of very low achievers in Mathematics (defined as Below Level 1) was considerably higher in Urban Band 1 schools (16.7%) compared with the percentages in Urban Non-DEIS schools (5.9%) or Urban Band 2 schools (8.2%).

For high achievers, the *DEIS Plan 2017* target was to increase the percentage of pupils in Urban Band 1 schools performing At or Above Level 3 in Mathematics from 19% to 27% (Department of Education and Skills, 2017). In NAMER '21, 22.4% of pupils in Urban Band 1 schools had scores at this level; a value which is below the target value. The percentage of very high achievers in Mathematics (defined as scores at Level 4 on the reading test) was significantly lower in Urban Band 1 schools (5.3%), compared to Urban Non-DEIS schools (15.1%). In Urban Band 2 schools 11.1% had Mathematics scores at this level in 2021.

Average performance in Sixth class Mathematics was broadly similar in 2014 and 2021 with no significant differences between 2014 and 2021 in the mean Mathematics scores for each of the three school groups examined (Urban Non-DEIS, Urban Band 1 and Urban Band 2 schools). The gap in average achievement between Urban Non-DEIS and Urban Band 1 schools was very similar in 2014 and in 2021 (circa 30 points in both cycles). There was a slight narrowing of the achievement gap between Urban Non-DEIS and Urban Band 2 schools between 2014 and 2021 due to an 11-point increase in the mean score of pupils in Urban Band 2 schools. In summary, findings from NAMER '21 provide no evidence of an overall decline in average reading or Mathematics scores between 2014 and 2021. Furthermore, the achievement gap between DEIS and Non-DEIS schools did not widen in the period, which is welcome given the COVID-19 disruption to education.

## Research context for this report

There is a large body of national and international research which highlights the individual pupil, home background, family, teacher and school factors that are associated with pupil learning and achievement (e.g., Broer et al., 2019; Sirin, 2005). There is a specific body of work focusing on factors associated with pupil success in disadvantaged contexts (e.g., Harris & Chapman, 2004; Muijs et al., 2004). Weir et al. (2017) describe some of the approaches to overcoming educational disadvantage that were successful internationally and many of these underpin supports provided through DEIS (Department of Education and Skills, 2017). A list of supports available to primary schools under DEIS is provided in Appendix 1.

The National Assessments provide an opportunity to gather data on the contextual factors within pupils' homes, classrooms, and schools that may relate to pupil achievement (Greaney & Kellaghan, 2008; Shiel & Cartwright, 2015). As noted above, some contextual data were gathered in NAMER '21 from pupils, teachers and school principals. In this section, we outline some earlier findings related to characteristics associated with achievement, focusing on pupil, home, teacher, and school factors.

### Pupil affective and home factors

Many studies have reported positive associations between pupil achievement and affective factors, such as pupil attitudes and motivation, with higher levels of interest or enjoyment typically associated with higher levels of achievement. Findings from NAMER '14 show that at Second class, liking school was significantly related to achievement in both reading and Mathematics. Liking reading and wanting to do well at it were also positively related to reading achievement at Second class. At Sixth class, educational expectations and aspirations were significantly related to achievement in both reading and Mathematics. Also at Sixth class, favourable attitudes towards reading, higher reading confidence, and willingness to expend effort on reading were associated with higher reading scores. Mathematics self-concept scores were significantly and positively correlated with achievement in Mathematics at Sixth class (Kavanagh et al., 2015).

A number of Irish studies have shown no significant differences in attitudes and engagement between primary pupils in DEIS and Non-DEIS schools. For example, in the PT 2011 joint administration of the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), pupil engagement in Fourth class did not

differ by DEIS status with similar reports of liking school, belonging to school, feeling safe at school and liking reading (Clerkin & Creaven, 2013). Similarly, in PIRLS 2016 there were no significant differences between the extent to which pupils in Urban DEIS schools and pupils in other schools (Non-DEIS or Rural DEIS) liked reading or were confident in reading (Delaney et al., 2022). In the Children's School Lives (CSL) study, primary pupils' liking of school did not differ significantly by school DEIS status (Devine et al., 2023).

Previous studies have emphasised the importance of pupil proficiency in the language of instruction, particularly for achievement in reading. For example, in NAMER '14, at both Second and Sixth classes, pupils who mostly spoke English at home had significantly higher mean reading scores than those who mostly spoke another language (excluding Irish) at home. While at Second class, frequency of speaking English at home was also positively associated with achievement in Mathematics, no such advantage was evident at Sixth class (Kavanagh et al., 2015). In the DEIS longitudinal study, findings from the 2016 wave of data collection showed that pupils whose families spoke a language other than English or Irish at home had lower average English reading achievement than their peers. In contrast, these pupils had higher average Mathematics achievement than their English/Irish-speaking peers at all class levels, except Second class (Kavanagh & Weir, 2018).

In line with international research (e.g., Sirin, 2005), findings across studies and age-groups in Ireland show an association between pupil achievement and family background characteristics such as parents' education and income, and family support for learning (Kavanagh et al., 2015; Kavanagh & Weir, 2018; McGinnity et al., 2022). Focusing on NAMER '14, a range of home and family characteristics were shown to be associated with pupil achievement (Kavanagh et al., 2015). For example, pupils from two-parent homes had a significant advantage in average reading and Mathematics over pupils from one-parent families, although this was not statistically significant in multivariate analyses. Similarly, in bi-variate analysis pupils with fewer siblings significantly outperformed pupils with higher numbers of siblings (four or more) in both reading and Mathematics. Pupils from financially better-off families and those whose parents had higher levels of education had significantly higher mean achievement scores in both reading and Mathematics; these associations remained statistically significant in multivariate analyses. In the DEIS longitudinal study, aspects of the educational climate in the home were associated with achievement as pupils whose parents were employed outside the home, whose parents who had high expectations of academic performance, and whose parents read to them frequently had significantly higher average reading and Mathematics achievement than those who did not (Kavanagh & Weir, 2018).

Findings from the Growing up in Ireland (GUI) study also show higher levels of performance amongst children of parents with higher occupational status compared to children of parents who were not in employment (McGinnity et al., 2022). Earlier findings from GUI showed fewer books on average in the homes of pupils in Urban Band 1 schools where 36% of pupils had a substantial number of children's books at home (30 or more) compared to 59% of pupils in Non-DEIS schools (McCoy et al., 2014). Positive associations have been found in several studies between the number of books in the home and achievement in reading and Mathematics (Kavanagh & Weir, 2018). More recent studies show an ongoing gap in the availability of books in the homes of pupils attending Urban DEIS schools compared to those of pupils attending other schools (Delaney et al., 2022). Furthermore, when questioned about their own reading habits, parents of pupils in Urban DEIS schools were more likely than parents in other contexts to report that they did not like reading (Delaney et al., 2022).

## *Teacher and School factors*

It is argued that schools play a critical role in addressing educational disadvantage and creating a more equitable learning environment. Schools that provide a positive, inclusive, and supportive environment tend to foster higher levels of achievement. School factors recognised as central to supporting the success of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds include a strong focus on

teaching and learning; leadership; creating an information-rich environment; creating a positive school culture; building a learning community; continuous professional development; involving parents; and access to external support and resources (Muijs et al., 2004). The role of reduced class sizes, preschool provision, professional development, parental involvement, summer learning programmes and high teacher expectations have been considered in Ireland (Weir et al., 2017) and many of these form part of the DEIS programme.

Schools that actively engage with parents and the local community can help create a supportive network and enhance pupil outcomes. In Ireland, the Home-School Community Liaison scheme is designed to encourage greater involvement of parents in their child's education. Findings from a survey of Home-School Community Liaison Coordinators have shown that Coordinators are very positive about the impact of the scheme on parental participation (Weir et al., 2018). Nonetheless, considerable differences in parental involvement between DEIS and Non-DEIS schools have been described. Parental involvement in school activities, as reported by school principals, has been shown to be lower in Urban Band 1 or Urban Band 2 schools compared to Non-DEIS schools. In contrast, there is evidence that Urban Band 1 and Urban Band 2 schools hold parent workshops and courses much more frequently than other school types (Eivers & Creaven, 2013).

The school environment has also been shown to play an important role in pupils' achievement. Factors such as school leadership, class size, and availability of resources can affect pupils' learning experiences (Weir et al., 2017). The OECD highlights that school leadership is important for supporting pupils in disadvantaged schools, and school leaders need to be supported to enable change (OECD, 2012). While there is a growing recognition that disparities in access to teacher quality may contribute to the achievement gap (OECD, 2018), cross-country comparisons show variation in the extent of this issue. In the UK, disadvantaged pupils were more likely to have unqualified, inexperienced, or out-of-subject teachers (Allen & Sims, 2018). In contrast, recent longitudinal analysis of 32 countries in TIMSS noted that the gap between the qualifications and experience of teachers in schools serving low-income pupils versus those serving high-income students was an issue in only a few of the education systems examined. Both novice and out-of-subject teachers were evenly distributed amongst most of the schools serving pupils from different socio-economic backgrounds (Glassow & Jerrim, 2022).

There has been some debate in the literature about the relationship between school resources and pupil achievement with some studies showing that increased investment in school resources can improve performance (Card & Payne, 2002). Others argue that simply increasing school resources, such as funding or materials, may not guarantee improved achievement but other factors, such as how resources are allocated and used, might play a more critical role (Hanushek, 1997).

International results from PISA have consistently shown that although disadvantaged schools across participating countries may have smaller class sizes, they are more likely to have fewer educational materials and poorer physical infrastructure than advantaged schools (OECD, 2014).

In Ireland, principals of children participating in GUI rated the school infrastructure and resources more favourably in Non-DEIS schools compared to DEIS schools (McCoy et al., 2014). A lack of classroom resources was identified as an issue by teachers in Urban Band 1 and Band 2 schools participating in PT 2011 (Clerkin, 2013). However, in NAMER '14 the average ratio of pupils to computers was more favourable for pupils in Urban Band 1 schools and the ratio of books in school libraries was more favourable for pupils in Urban Band 2 schools compared to other school contexts (Kavanagh et al., 2015). The more favourable picture in DEIS schools likely reflects the additional resources provided under DEIS. In the CSL study, teachers in DEIS schools reported having less time to effectively prepare and plan lessons but also identified planning to be more important (Devine et al., 2023). Some differences in teachers' job satisfaction have been noted between DEIS and Non-DEIS primary schools (e.g., Clerkin, 2013).

# Aim, analyses and structure of this report

Greater understanding of the factors and causes of educational disadvantage is essential for policy makers. It is recognised that pupil achievement in English reading and Mathematics is influenced by a range of contextual factors including pupil characteristics, classroom, teacher, and school factors. There is variation in the extent to which these factors can be influenced by policy. This report aims to draw on the NAMER '21 data to provide descriptive analyses to inform policy and strategies targeting equity in education.

## Analyses in this report

- The achievement scores of pupils in Rural DEIS and Non-DEIS schools were provided for reference in the DEIS achievement report (Nelis & Gilleece, 2023) but contextual/questionnaire data are not included in this report for Rural schools as this would involve further breakdown of the groups resulting in the presentation of findings for very small groups of pupils.<sup>18</sup>
- The IEA International Database Analyzer V5.0.5, a software programme specifically designed for large scale educational assessments with clustered samples, was used for analyses.<sup>19</sup>
- Throughout this report, the “reference group”, identified with an asterisk (\*), refers to the score or value against which others are compared. For example, the most common comparison in this report uses pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools as the reference group (identified with \*) against which to compare pupils in Urban Band 1 or Urban Band 2 schools. In some instances, a comparison is made between levels of achievement in the different DEIS bands while in others, a comparison is made between levels of access to resources at home or the frequency of engaging in particular behaviours (such as reading for fun). Where the score/value associated with a particular group is statistically significantly different from that of the reference group, this score/value is emphasised using **bold** font.
- Results of statistical significance testing are shown in Appendix Tables which accompany the main tables in each chapter. Absolute differences (*Abs difference*) are provided, disregarding whether these are positive or negative.
- Appendix 2 provides further information on NAMER '21 scale scores, proficiency levels and statistical terms.
- For charts in this report that represent percentages, Y axes start at 0. For charts with scale scores, the Y axes start at 100. In some tables due to rounding, percentages do not always add to 100.
- The focus of this report is on the percentages of pupils, even when describing school or teacher characteristics. This approach is in line with that adopted in other national and international studies (e.g., Clerkin & Creaven, 2013; Clerkin et al., 2020; Delaney et al., 2023) and is used because the pupil is the unit of interest, not the school or teacher. This means that throughout the report, statements are phrased as, for example, “...40% of pupils had teachers who reported that...” rather than “...30% of teachers reported that...”.
- Chapters 2 to 4 present the results of bivariate analyses. Such analyses consider the association between two variables but do not account for the potential influence that

<sup>18</sup> The recruitment of a larger number of Rural schools for the National Assessments would be required to provide reliable estimates of the performance of pupils in Rural DEIS and Rural Non-DEIS schools.

<sup>19</sup> IDB Analyzer [www.iea.nl/data-tools/tools](http://www.iea.nl/data-tools/tools)

a third variable (e.g. socio-economic status) may play in this relationship. The joint (multivariate) relationships between variables and achievement are not considered in this report.

The remainder of this report is organised as follows. Chapter 2 describes pupil background and attitudinal factors. Chapter 3 outlines aspects of the Second and Sixth class teachers and classrooms of pupils participating in NAMER '21. Chapter 4 presents findings on school access to, and use of, various resources. Throughout, some linkages are made with achievement although all analyses are bivariate in nature which means that multiple factors are not considered simultaneously. Chapter 5 summarises key findings and considers policy implications.

# CHAPTER 2

## PUPIL CHARACTERISTICS AND ACHIEVEMENT

This chapter provides some information on the home backgrounds and attitudes of pupils who participated in NAMER '21 with a focus on the extent to which these characteristics vary between pupils in DEIS and Non-DEIS schools.<sup>20</sup> There were some differences in the items presented in the Second and Sixth class pupil questionnaires so direct comparisons between the two grades are not possible for all items.

The first section of this chapter describes pupil background (place of birth and home language) and considers how achievement varies across pupils with different characteristics. Secondly, homework practices and access to home resources are described and consideration is given to how achievement varies in association with these. Thirdly, attitudes and engagement of Second class pupils are examined. The fourth section outlines the sense of school belonging and parental support experienced by Sixth class pupils.

## Pupil background and achievement

### Place of birth

Pupils at both class levels were asked whether or not they were born in Ireland. At both Second and Sixth class, a large majority of pupils indicated that they were born in Ireland with some differences between DEIS and Non-DEIS schools.

In Urban Non-DEIS schools, one-in-eight Second class pupils and one-in-twelve Sixth class pupils indicated that they were born outside Ireland (Table 2.1). Percentages were generally somewhat higher in Urban DEIS schools. At Second class, over one-fifth of pupils in Urban Band 2 schools (21.9%) indicated that they were born outside Ireland, a percentage which was significantly above that found in Urban Non-DEIS schools (12.4%). The percentage in Urban Band 1 schools (14.6%) was not significantly different to that in Urban Non-DEIS schools (12.4%). At Sixth class, pupils in Urban Band 1 schools (13%) and in Urban Band 2 schools (17.3%) were more likely than their counterparts in Urban Non-DEIS schools (8.0%) to report that they were born outside Ireland (Table A2.1). There were no significant differences between Urban Band 1 schools and Urban Band 2 schools at either class level in the percentages of pupils born outside Ireland (Table A2.1).

**Table 2.1: Percentages of pupils who reported that they were *not* born in Ireland, by pupil grade and school DEIS status**

DEIS status	Second Class %	Sixth Class %
Urban Non-DEIS*	12.4	8.0
Urban Band 1	14.6	<b>13.0</b>
Urban Band 2	<b>21.9</b>	<b>17.3</b>

Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

The mean English reading and Mathematics achievement scores by place of birth and school DEIS status are shown in Table 2.2. At Second class, the difference in mean reading achievement between pupils born in Ireland and those not born in Ireland was statistically significant in Urban Non-DEIS schools only, with a difference in favour of pupils born in Ireland. No significant differences in reading achievement were associated with place of birth for pupils in DEIS schools (Table A2.2).

<sup>20</sup> It is important to note that analyses in this chapter are bivariate which means that the relationship between achievement and each characteristic of interest is considered one at a time.

In contrast, at Sixth class, pupils who were born outside Ireland had a significantly higher mean score in Mathematics in Urban Band 1 schools than their counterparts born in Ireland, with a difference of almost 10 points in favour of pupils born outside Ireland. There was no significant difference in mean Mathematics scores by place of birth for pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools. While the difference in Urban Band 2 schools was not statistically significant, the magnitude of the gap (12.2 points) was about the same as that in Urban Band 1 schools and in favour of pupils born outside Ireland (Table A2.2).

**Table 2.2: Pupil place of birth and mean achievement scores, by grade level and DEIS status**

DEIS status	Second Class English reading		Sixth Class Mathematics	
	Born in Ireland	Not born in Ireland*	Born in Ireland	Not born in Ireland*
Urban Non-DEIS	<b>267.4</b>	252.3	262.8	258.6
Urban Band 1	237.1	237.1	<b>232.2</b>	242.0
Urban Band 2	251.9	252.8	249.8	262.0

Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

### *Speaking English at home*

Pupils were asked to indicate their frequency of speaking English in the home (Table 2.3). The majority of pupils reported 'always or almost always' speaking English, with somewhat higher percentages at Sixth class compared to Second.<sup>21</sup>

At Second class, the percentages of pupils who reported that they 'never' spoke English at home ranged from 5.4% (Urban Non-DEIS) to 9.1% (Urban Band 2). At Sixth class, the percentages of pupils who 'never' spoke English at home were somewhat lower and ranged from 2.9% (Urban Non-DEIS) to 4.1% (Urban Band 2).

**Table 2.3: Percentages of pupils who speak English at home, by grade and DEIS status**

DEIS status	I always or almost always speak English at home %		I sometimes speak English and sometimes speak another language at home %		I never speak English at home %	
	Second	Sixth	Second	Sixth	Second	Sixth
Urban Non-DEIS	67.7	82.4	26.9	14.7	5.4	2.9
Urban Band 1	64.2	70.7	27.3	26.2	8.5	3.0
Urban Band 2	56.9	69.1	34.0	26.8	9.1	4.1

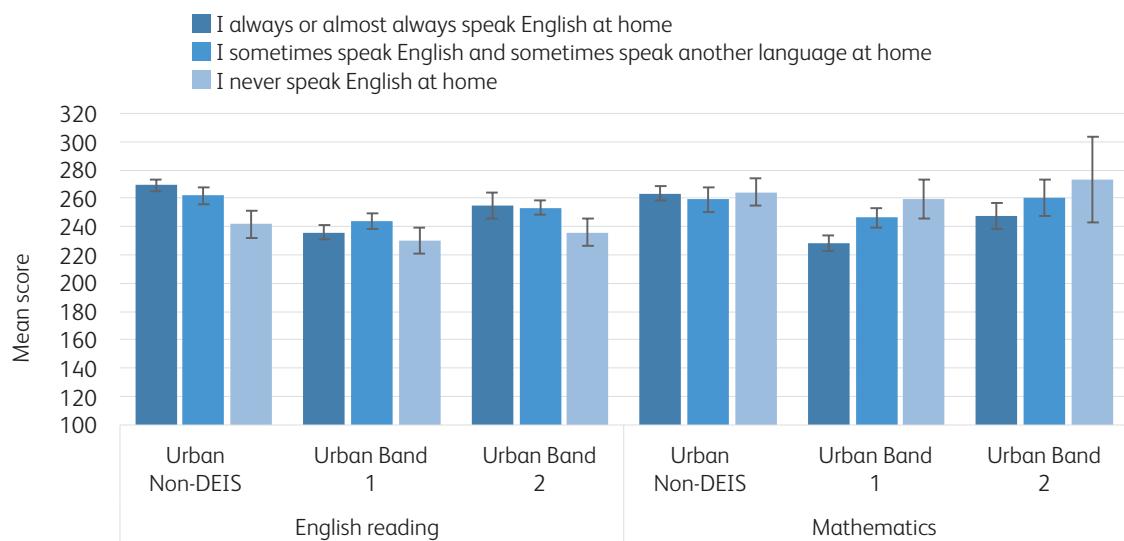
For Urban Non-DEIS schools, Urban Band 1 schools and Urban Band 2 schools, Figure 2.1 shows the mean reading scores in NAMER '21 of Second class pupils and mean Mathematics scores of Sixth class pupils by frequency of speaking English at home. In Urban Non-DEIS schools, pupils who reported that they 'always' spoke English at home had a significantly higher mean score in English reading than pupils who reported 'sometimes' speaking English and sometimes speaking another language. A larger achievement gap in English reading was found between pupils who 'always' spoke English and those who indicated that they 'never' spoke English at home (Table A2.3).

This pattern was not fully replicated in DEIS schools. In Urban Band 1 schools, pupils who 'always' spoke English at home significantly outperformed pupils who 'sometimes' spoke English

21 Item adapted with permission from: IEA's Progress in International Reading Literacy Study – PIRLS 2016 Assessment Framework Copyright © 2015 International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). Publisher: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center, Lynch School of Education and Human Development, Boston College.

at home. In contrast, in Urban Band 2 schools, there was no significant difference in mean reading achievement between those who 'always' spoke English at home compared to those who 'sometimes' spoke English at home. In Urban Band 1 schools, there was no significant difference in mean reading achievement between those who 'always' spoke English at home and those who 'never' did while in Urban Band 2 schools, the achievement gap between these two groups was statistically significant (Table A2.3).

**Figure 2.1: Frequency of speaking English in the home and mean English reading scores of Second class pupils and Mathematics scores of Sixth class pupils by DEIS status**



Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Turning to Sixth class Mathematics, frequency of speaking English at home is not significantly associated with achievement in Urban Non-DEIS schools (Table A2.3). In contrast, in DEIS schools, lower frequency of speaking English is associated with higher average achievement (Figure 2.1). Specifically, in Urban Band 1 and Urban Band 2 schools, pupils who reported 'sometimes' speaking English at home significantly outperformed those who reported 'always' speaking English at home. Furthermore, those who indicated that they 'never' spoke English at home had higher scores than those who reported 'always' speaking English at home; the difference was statistically significant in Urban Band 1 schools only (Table A2.3).

## Frequency of homework and access to resources at home

### Homework

At Second and Sixth class, pupils were asked to indicate the frequency with which they did homework in English and Mathematics by selecting between 'most school days', '2-3 times a week', 'once a week' or 'hardly ever'. A large majority of Second class pupils reported that they did English homework on 'most school days' (Urban Non-DEIS 87.9%; Urban Band 1 80.1%; Urban Band 2 81.1%). The majority of Sixth class pupils reported that they did Mathematics homework on 'most school days' (Urban Non-DEIS 83.5%; Urban Band 1 77.7%; Urban Band 2 82.1%). Note that this question asked pupils about the frequency of 'doing' homework and did not ask about the frequency with which homework was assigned by the teacher; i.e., for some pupils, 'hardly ever' doing homework may result from infrequent assignment of homework by their teacher although

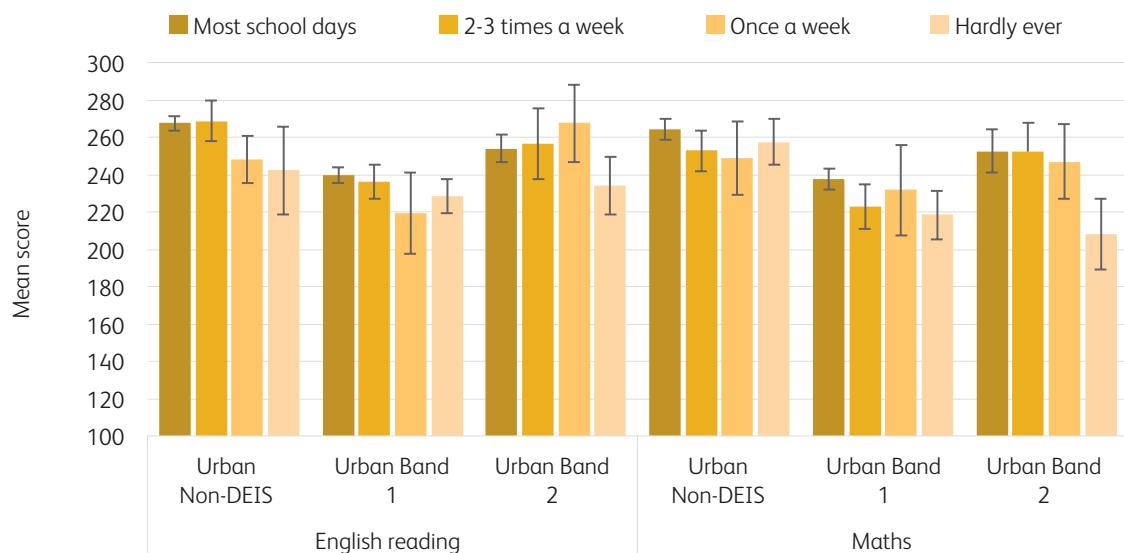
international studies have shown that nearly all pupils in Ireland receive homework (at least in reading) on a very regular basis (Delaney et al., 2022). Teachers in NAMER '21 were not asked about the frequency of homework assignment.

The association between frequency of doing homework and achievement in English reading (Second class) and Mathematics (Sixth class) is shown in Figure 2.2. In Urban Non-DEIS schools, pupils who reported a higher frequency of doing homework had higher reading scores on average than pupils who reported a lower frequency of doing English homework. Specifically, those who indicated that they completed English homework 'on most school days' had a significantly higher mean reading score than those who reported completing English homework 'once a week'. Those who completed English homework 'on most school days' also had a higher mean score than those who indicated that they 'hardly ever' did homework, although this difference was not statistically significant (Table A2.4).

In DEIS schools (both Urban Band 1 and Urban Band 2), pupils who reported that they 'hardly ever' did English homework had a significantly lower mean reading score than their counterparts who reported doing English homework on most school days (Table A2.4).

Turning to Mathematics, frequency of doing Mathematics homework was not significantly associated with mean achievement in Urban Non-DEIS schools (Figure 2.2). In DEIS schools (both Urban Band 1 and Urban Band 2), pupils who 'hardly ever' did Mathematics homework had significantly lower mean Mathematics scores compared to pupils who did homework 'on most school days' (Table A2.4).

**Figure 2.2: Frequency of homework and mean English reading scores of Second class pupils and Mathematics scores of Sixth class pupils by DEIS status**



Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

## Resources at home

Pupils where asked if they had access to a range of technologies and other resources at home. Second and Sixth class pupils were asked if they had access to a computer, tablet, Internet, a TV in their bedroom or their own mobile phone. Some additional items were asked at each grade, pertaining to English reading at Second class and Mathematics at Sixth class (Table 2.4).

A large majority of Second class pupils across DEIS categories indicated that they had access to a computer at home, a tablet or a games console. Similarly, very high percentages of Sixth class

pupils reported having access to these items at home. Almost all Second class ( $\geq 96\%$ ) and Sixth class ( $> 98\%$ ) pupils across DEIS categories indicated that they had Internet access at home.

Greater variation is noted across DEIS categories in the percentages of Second class pupils with a TV in their bedroom or with their own mobile phone. At Sixth class, at least half of pupils reported having a TV in their bedroom across DEIS categories and most indicated that they had their own mobile phone.

Second class pupils only were asked about access to books to read for fun and access to e-books at home. A large majority of pupils across DEIS categories indicated that they had access to books to read for fun. It was comparatively less common for Second class pupils to report having access to e-books at home.

Most Sixth class pupils reported that they had access to a calculator at home and almost all indicated that they had access to a streaming service (e.g., Netflix, Now TV, Amazon Prime) at home.

**Table 2.4: Percentages of pupils who had access to technology and other resources at home, by class and DEIS status**

Technologies	Class	Urban Non-DEIS	Urban Band 1	Urban Band 2
Computer	Second	87.0	73.7	81.8
	Sixth	92.1	82.3	88.7
Tablet	Second	90.5	82.6	83.7
	Sixth	81.4	78.2	80.2
Games console	Second	73.4	75.7	72.5
	Sixth	87.6	86.4	81.6
Internet	Second	96.5	96.5	96.0
	Sixth	99.1	99.1	98.6
TV in your bedroom	Second	36.3	62.3	48.5
	Sixth	47.9	69.2	54.1
Own mobile phone	Second	37.9	60.9	49.6
	Sixth	87.4	91.2	88.7
Books to read for fun	Second	83.5	71.7	73.9
E-books	Second	34.7	27.0	34.5
Calculator	Sixth	92.2	80.8	83.8
Streaming service	Sixth	94.8	92.1	92.7

Table 2.5 shows the mean reading achievement score for Second class pupils and mean Mathematics achievement score for Sixth class pupils by access to the listed resources at home. It should be borne in mind that for many of the items, very low percentages of pupils indicated that they cannot access the item at home. Colours are intended to provide a general visual indication of whether access to the item is positively (green) or negatively (red) associated with achievement; detailed information is available in Tables A2.5a and A2.5b.

For several of the listed items, pupils with access to the resource at home had a significantly higher mean score than pupils without access. For example, at both class levels and across DEIS categories, mean achievement scores were significantly higher for pupils with access to a computer at home compared to those without computer access (Table A2.5a, A2.5b). Similarly, access to the Internet at home was associated with a significantly higher mean reading score in Urban Non-DEIS schools and Urban Band 2 schools. Across the three DEIS groups (Urban Non-DEIS, Urban Band 1 and Urban Band 2), Second class pupils who reported having access to books to read for fun at home had a higher mean reading score than pupils who indicated not having such access.

At Sixth class, pupils who reported having access to a calculator at home had a significantly higher mean Mathematics score than pupils without calculator access.

**Table 2.5: Access to resources at home and mean pupil achievement (Second class English reading and Sixth class Mathematics), by school DEIS status**

Technologies	Achievement	Urban Non-DEIS		Urban Band 1		Urban Band 2	
		Yes*	No	Yes*	No	Yes*	No
Computer	Reading	268.2	<b>251.6</b>	239.8	<b>232.1</b>	255.4	<b>243.5</b>
	Mathematics	264.6	<b>239.6</b>	237.2	<b>219.8</b>	254.0	<b>234.5</b>
Tablet	Reading	266.5	259.7	238.9	231.6	252.5	256.1
	Mathematics	263.7	258.5	233.7	233.9	251.0	255.4
Games console	Reading	264.0	<b>270.9</b>	237.5	237.6	254.1	251.3
	Mathematics	262.2	265.6	232.9	239.3	251.2	252.0
Internet	Reading	266.8	<b>241.9</b>	237.9	224.5	254.0	<b>228.5</b>
	Mathematics	262.6	242.1	234.0	<b>198.9</b>	252.0	221.1
TV in your bedroom	Reading	250.4	<b>274.5</b>	231.2	<b>247.7</b>	244.2	260.8
	Mathematics	249.5	<b>274.7</b>	229.0	<b>244.6</b>	240.6	<b>263.2</b>
Own mobile phone	Reading	252.7	<b>274.1</b>	233.0	<b>244.1</b>	246.9	<b>258.5</b>
	Mathematics	260.5	<b>276.3</b>	233.4	239.6	249.8	<b>265.7</b>
Books to read for fun	Reading	271.0	<b>239.6</b>	244.9	<b>220.5</b>	257.9	<b>240.0</b>
E-books	Reading	270.0	264.2	239.4	238.2	254.2	252.4
Calculator	Mathematics	264.4	<b>240.5</b>	237.0	<b>222.3</b>	254.0	<b>240.9</b>
Streaming service	Mathematics	262.9	257.2	232.5	<b>247.5</b>	251.3	259.1

Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

 Access to the item is typically associated with a higher mean score  Access to the item is not consistently associated with achievement  Access to the item is typically associated with a lower mean score

In contrast, no significant differences in achievement were observed between pupils with access to a tablet at home and those without (Table A2.5a, 2.5b) or between pupils with access to e-books and those without (Table A2.5a). Few significant differences were noted between those with access to a games console and those without or between those with access to a streaming service and those without (Table A2.5b).

For a number of listed items, having access to the item was associated with a significantly lower level of achievement. Across DEIS categories, pupils with a TV in their bedroom had significantly lower mean scores than pupils without a bedroom TV. A similar pattern of findings was noted for reading at Second class (Table A2.5a) and Mathematics at Sixth class (Table A2.5b). Also, pupils who indicated that they had their own mobile phone had lower levels of achievement on average than their counterparts without a phone.

## Second class pupils' attitudes to school and reading

### Liking school

Second class pupils were asked to what extent they liked school. Across all school types, about half of pupils reported that they 'liked' school. Between one-quarter and one-third of pupils across school types indicated that they were 'not sure' while about one-sixth of pupils reported 'not liking' school (Table 2.6).

In Urban Non-DEIS schools, pupils who reported 'not liking' school had significantly lower English reading scores on average compared to those who indicated that they 'liked' school. There were no significant differences in the average reading achievement of pupils in DEIS schools who reported 'liking' schools and those who reported 'not liking' school (Table 2.6). In Urban Band 2 schools only, pupils who reported that they were 'not sure' if they liked school had significantly higher reading scores than their peers who indicated that they 'liked' school (A2.6).

**Table 2.6: Second class pupils' liking of school and English reading performance, by DEIS status**

DEIS status	Yes, I like school*		I'm not sure		No, I don't like school	
	%	Mean reading	%	Mean reading	%	Mean reading
Urban Non-DEIS	49.1	269.4	35.1	267.5	15.8	<b>249.8</b>
Urban Band 1	54.7	236.8	27.7	243.9	17.6	229.0
Urban Band 2	52.8	250.0	31.1	<b>258.7</b>	16.1	248.2

Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

### Enjoyment of reading

Across school contexts, large percentages of Second class pupils either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that they liked reading.<sup>22</sup> The percentages of pupils in Second class who 'disagreed' that they liked reading ranged from 13% to 19% (Table 2.7). These pupils had significantly lower reading scores than their counterparts who 'strongly agreed' that liked reading; findings were comparable across DEIS and Non-DEIS contexts (Table A2.7).

**Table 2.7: Second class pupil enjoyment of reading and mean reading scores, by DEIS status**

I like reading	Strongly agree*		Agree		Disagree	
	%	Mean reading	%	Mean reading	%	Mean reading
Urban Non-DEIS	40.0	279.3	46.8	<b>261.1</b>	13.2	241.9
Urban Band 1	31.3	239.0	49.3	242.1	19.4	<b>225.6</b>
Urban Band 2	36.9	260.2	44.2	252.3	18.9	<b>239.5</b>

Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

22 Response options presented to pupils were 'strongly agree', 'agree', and 'disagree'. Pupils were not provided with the option of 'strongly disagree'.

## Self-assessment of English abilities

Second class pupils were asked to rate as either 'very good', 'good' or 'need to improve', their own ability in English reading, speaking and writing a story. Across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools, pupils who reported that they 'needed to improve' in these areas had significantly lower mean reading scores than pupils who rated their abilities as 'very good' (Table 2.8; Table A2.8).

**Table 2.8: Mean reading score by pupil self-assessment of English abilities (reading, speaking and writing a story), by DEIS status**

Abilities	Very good*		Good		Need to improve	
	%	Mean reading	%	Mean reading	%	Mean reading
<b>English reading</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS	56.3	278.0	37.7	<b>254.5</b>	6.0	<b>229.5</b>
Urban Band 1	54.5	249.8	36.8	<b>230.2</b>	8.7	<b>200.7</b>
Urban Band 2	57.0	260.3	36.1	249.7	6.9	<b>215.9</b>
<b>Speaking English</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS	81.8	269.7	14.4	<b>253.0</b>	3.7	<b>231.8</b>
Urban Band 1	80.4	241.2	15.7	<b>226.2</b>	3.9	<b>204.6</b>
Urban Band 2	78.4	257.3	17.9	<b>240.6</b>	3.7	<b>219.6</b>
<b>Writing a story in English</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS	40.7	270.8	41.5	267.9	17.8	<b>252.0</b>
Urban Band 1	46.9	243.3	34.1	238.1	19.1	<b>227.5</b>
Urban Band 2	50.0	258.4	33.1	253.7	16.9	<b>237.8</b>

Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

## Reading activities

Second class pupils were asked about the frequency with which they read (alone or with others) at home (Table 2.9). Second class pupils who indicated that they 'never' read with a parent or another adult had significantly higher reading scores on average than pupils who reported that they read with others on 'most days'. Also, pupils who reported reading books on their own for fun on 'most days' had significantly higher mean scores than those who reported that they 'never' read books on their own for fun. These findings suggest that higher achieving pupils are more likely to read on their own and less likely to read frequently with other adults. No such differences in mean achievement were associated with the frequency of reading magazines or comics at home.

Turning to online reading at home, findings show that pupils who reported 'never' reading online with an adult had significantly higher mean reading scores than pupils who reported reading online with an adult 'on most days' (Table 2.9). Furthermore, across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools, pupils who reported reading online with an adult at home on 'some days' had significantly higher mean scores than those who engaged in online reading with an adult on 'most days' (Table A2.9a and A2.9b). The association between reading achievement and independent online reading was less clear-cut and not statistically significant in Urban Band 1 schools.

**Table 2.9: Frequency of reading activities in the home and mean English reading scores, Second class by DEIS status**

At home how often do you...	Most days*		Some days		Never	
	%	Mean reading	%	Mean reading	%	Mean reading
read with your mam or dad?						
Urban Non-DEIS	28.7	260.9	43.0	266.3	28.3	<b>269.9</b>
Urban Band 1	28.5	229.4	40.7	<b>241.2</b>	30.7	<b>242.6</b>
Urban Band 2	22.0	243.5	45.8	<b>255.9</b>	32.3	<b>255.3</b>
read with another adult?						
Urban Non-DEIS	8.3	246.1	29.7	<b>270.1</b>	62.0	<b>266.2</b>
Urban Band 1	11.6	221.3	27.6	<b>238.6</b>	60.8	<b>240.7</b>
Urban Band 2	7.8	229.7	25.9	<b>257.1</b>	66.3	<b>254.3</b>
read books on your own for fun?						
Urban Non-DEIS	42.3	278.0	36.2	<b>266.1</b>	21.5	<b>241.3</b>
Urban Band 1	31.2	241.3	35.3	245.6	33.5	<b>226.7</b>
Urban Band 2	34.9	263.7	33.7	255.2	31.4	<b>237.5</b>
read magazines or comics on your own for fun?						
Urban Non-DEIS	17.0	267.9	24.0	275.2	58.9	261.6
Urban Band 1	14.4	237.6	18.5	242.3	67.1	237.4
Urban Band 2	15.3	254.9	17.7	258.4	67.0	251.3
read something online at home with another adult?						
Urban Non-DEIS	9.6	245.9	23.0	<b>263.3</b>	67.4	<b>269.8</b>
Urban Band 1	11.6	225.6	23.5	<b>242.2</b>	65.0	<b>238.8</b>
Urban Band 2	8.9	241.9	22.3	<b>253.5</b>	69.0	<b>254.2</b>
read something online at home on your own?						
Urban Non-DEIS	17.1	257.9	27.2	<b>265.8</b>	55.7	<b>268.7</b>
Urban Band 1	18.7	239.5	25.3	243.9	56.1	234.8
Urban Band 2	18.3	247.7	27.7	<b>261.9</b>	53.9	249.9

Values in bold are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

## Sixth class pupils' school belonging and parental support

### School belonging

Sixth class pupils were asked to indicate the extent to which they 'agreed' or 'disagreed' with a series of general statements about school belonging, including feeling safe at school, having friends at school and being proud to attend the school (Table 2.10). Response options provided were 'agree a lot', 'agree a little', 'disagree a little' and 'disagree a lot'; these have been collapsed to 'agree' or 'disagree' for discussion in this section.<sup>23</sup> It is not possible to determine any impact of COVID-19 protocols on pupils' feelings of safety or the impact of school closures on pupils' sense of belonging.

23 Item adapted with permission from: IEA's Progress in International Reading Literacy Study – PIRLS 2016 Assessment Framework Copyright © 2015 International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). Publisher: TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center, Lynch School of Education and Human Development, Boston College.

**Table 2.10: Sixth class pupils' sense of belonging at school and mean Mathematics achievement, by sense of belonging and DEIS status**

Statements on school belonging	Agree*		Disagree	
	%	Mean Mathematics	%	Mean Mathematics
<b>I like being at school</b>				
Urban Non-DEIS	70.0	266.4	30.0	<b>253.0</b>
Urban Band 1	66.1	238.2	32.6	<b>225.1</b>
Urban Band 2	70.4	254.2	28.6	247.1
<b>I feel safe when I am in my classroom at school</b>				
Urban Non-DEIS	88.1	264.6	11.0	<b>246.2</b>
Urban Band 1	86.7	235.4	11.7	<b>222.7</b>
Urban Band 2	88.2	253.5	10.5	240.0
<b>I feel safe when I am in the playground at school</b>				
Urban Non-DEIS	87.5	264.6	11.4	<b>246.2</b>
Urban Band 1	84.1	235.4	14.5	222.7
Urban Band 2	86.1	253.5	12.5	<b>240.0</b>
<b>I feel like I belong at this school</b>				
Urban Non-DEIS	82.4	266.1	16.3	<b>244.5</b>
Urban Band 1	79.7	236.8	17.5	222.3
Urban Band 2	79.8	255.0	18.4	<b>240.3</b>
<b>Teachers at this school are fair to me</b>				
Urban Non-DEIS	87.7	263.7	11.1	254.9
Urban Band 1	87.1	235.4	11.1	<b>222.5</b>
Urban Band 2	88.8	253.5	10.0	<b>243.2</b>
<b>I am proud to go to this school</b>				
Urban Non-DEIS	87.7	264.1	11.0	<b>251.5</b>
Urban Band 1	87.4	235.4	10.8	<b>222.1</b>
Urban Band 2	86.9	253.3	11.0	242.5
<b>I have friends in school</b>				
Urban Non-DEIS	95.5	263.4	3.7	<b>238.4</b>
Urban Band 1	95.2	234.4	3.5	220.2
Urban Band 2	95.2	253.1	3.4	<b>225.8</b>

Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

A large majority of Sixth class pupils 'agreed' with each of the statements regarding school belonging (Table 2.10). Nonetheless, one-quarter to one-third 'disagreed' that they like school. One-in-ten to one-in-eight 'disagreed' that they feel safe in the classroom or in the playground (Table 2.10). On each of the items, percentages that 'agreed' were very similar in Urban Band 1, Urban Band 2 and Non-DEIS schools.

In general, across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools, pupils who 'disagreed' with statements regarding school belonging had lower levels of average achievement in Mathematics than their counterparts who 'agreed' with the statements. For example, in both DEIS and Non-DEIS schools, pupils who 'disagreed' that 'I feel like I belong at this school' had significantly lower mean Mathematics scores than pupils who 'agreed'; a 14-point gap in mean Mathematics achievement was observed between the two groups in both Urban Band 1 and Urban Band 2 schools and a somewhat larger gap in Urban Non-DEIS (21 points) (Table A2.10).

## Parental support for learning at home

Sixth class pupils were asked about current parental support for learning at home. Specifically, they were asked how frequently their parents discussed how well they were doing at school; discussed books, films or TV programmes; ate dinner with them; or spent time chatting with them (Table 2.11). Response options were 'several times a week'; 'several times a month'; 'about once a month'; 'a few times a year'; and 'never or hardly ever'. In this section, pupils who indicated that activities happen 'about once a month', 'a few times a year' or 'never or hardly ever' are grouped into a single category 'less often'.

**Table 2.11: Sixth class pupils' frequency of parental support and mean Mathematics achievement, by frequency of parental support activities and DEIS status**

How often do your parents?	Several times a week*		Several times a month		Less often	
	%	Mean Maths	%	Mean Maths	%	Mean Maths
<b>Discuss how well you are doing at school</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS	41.7	261.7	24.4	265.0	33.7	262.0
Urban Band 1	47.4	231.8	22.6	239.0	30.0	233.0
Urban Band 2	44.7	248.1	26.5	<b>258.5</b>	28.8	250.0
<b>Discuss books, films, or TV with you</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS	30.5	263.0	30.7	268.5	38.8	257.4
Urban Band 1	35.0	230.3	23.2	236.1	41.8	235.9
Urban Band 2	30.6	248.7	29.7	257.0	39.7	249.5
<b>Eat dinner with you around the table</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS	80.4	266.2	10.4	<b>252.6</b>	9.3	<b>240.9</b>
Urban Band 1	74.1	235.8	11.1	230.2	14.8	227.8
Urban Band 2	76.4	252.9	11.2	250.3	12.4	242.8
<b>Spend time just chatting with you</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS	73.1	263.5	16.5	261.7	10.4	256.7
Urban Band 1	73.3	234.4	14.6	237.7	12.2	<b>224.2</b>
Urban Band 2	73.9	251.0	15.5	253.5	10.6	251.2

Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

In general, the frequency with which the listed activities took place was not statistically significantly associated with achievement in Mathematics. An exception to this was in Urban Non-DEIS schools where pupils who reported eating dinner with parents 'several times a week' had a significantly higher mean score in Mathematics than their counterparts who ate dinner with parents 'several times a month' or 'less often'. Notably pupils in Urban Band 1 schools who reported spending time chatting with parents 'several times a week' had a significantly higher mean score in Mathematics than those who reported spending time chatting 'less often' (Table A2.11).

# CHAPTER 3

## TEACHERS, CLASSROOMS, AND PUPIL ACHIEVEMENT

In NAMER '21, Second and Sixth class teachers of participating pupils were invited to answer a teacher questionnaire. This chapter draws on data from this questionnaire. Firstly, teacher characteristics, including gender, teaching experience, qualifications and participation in continuing professional development, are described. The second section of the chapter describes the classrooms of Second and Sixth class pupils drawing on teacher questionnaire data and outlines how the provision of learning support is organised. The final section focuses specifically on the learning and teaching of literacy and numeracy, looking at some of the initiatives, programmes or approaches used to support the development in literacy and numeracy. Comparisons are made between Urban Non-DEIS, Urban Band 1, and Urban Band 2 schools. As noted in Chapter 1, the focus is on the percentages of pupils whose teachers reported various characteristics, behaviours and experiences rather than the percentages of teachers. The rationale for this is that the pupil is the unit of interest and the sample is designed in this way.

While some limited consideration is given in this chapter to the association between achievement and some characteristics of interest, in many instances, these associations are not presented. The rationale for including some examination of associations with achievement is to maintain consistency with reporting from NAMER '14. However, as a cross-sectional study does not allow for causal conclusions regarding the impact of variables on achievement, analyses of associations are limited in this chapter. Furthermore, it is likely that many of the classroom and teacher factors presented in this chapter are interrelated. Thus, multivariate analyses would be required to consider the unique contribution of each variable to the outcome of interest.

## Teacher background and experience

### Gender

At Second class, about one-in-ten pupils in Urban Band 1 schools, compared to about one-in-five in Urban Non-DEIS schools, were taught by a male teacher<sup>24</sup> (Table 3.1). At Sixth class, the corresponding percentages were considerably higher, with over one-third of Urban Band 2 pupils and two-fifths of Urban Non-DEIS pupils taught by a male teacher (Table A3.1).

**Table 3.1: Teacher gender, Second and Sixth class, by school DEIS status**

DEIS status	Second class		Sixth class	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Urban Non-DEIS*	81.0	19.0	59.1	40.9
Urban Band 1	89.8	10.2	61.2	38.8
Urban Band 2	86.9	13.1	64.5	35.5

Second & Sixth class databases. No significant differences from the reference group\*.

### Teaching experience

A very small minority of pupils were taught by newly qualified teachers, i.e., those who completed their initial teacher education (ITE) in 2020. Up to 60% of Second class pupils and two-fifths to half of Sixth class pupils were taught by teachers who completed their ITE in the period 2010-2019 (Table 3.2). Percentages of pupils in each category of teacher ITE completion were very similar in DEIS and Non-DEIS schools (Table A3.2).

<sup>24</sup> Teachers were asked to indicate if they were female, male or other. Other gender was not selected by any respondents.

**Table 3.2: Percentages of pupils by time of completion of initial teacher education, by grade and school DEIS status**

Date of completion initial teacher education	Grade	Urban Non-DEIS*	Urban Band 1	Urban Band 2
Before 1990	Second	2.9	4.0	9.3
	Sixth	3.0	3.1	2.8
1990-1999	Second	10.3	5.2	7.4
	Sixth	10.8	5.9	13.5
2000-2009	Second	20.7	24.4	22.5
	Sixth	32.2	44.4	30.3
2010-2019	Second	60.7	61.0	55.3
	Sixth	49.3	41.9	52.1
2020	Second	5.5	5.4	5.4
	Sixth	4.8	4.6	1.4

No significant differences from the reference group\*.

The average years of teaching experience by school DEIS status are shown in Table 3.3. Pupils in Second class were taught by teachers with about 10 years' experience on average, ranging from 9.8 years in Urban Band 1 schools to 11.2 years in Urban Band 2 schools. Sixth class pupils were taught by teachers with at least 11.0 years' experience on average, ranging from 11.0 in Urban Band 1 schools to 12.2 in Urban Band 2 schools; for further detail (Table A3.3).

**Table 3.3: Average years teaching experience, by DEIS status and grade level**

DEIS status	Second class	Sixth class
Urban Non-DEIS*	10.0	11.3
Urban Band 1	9.8	11.0
Urban Band 2	11.2	12.2

No significant differences from the reference group\*.

**Table 3.4: Percentages of pupils with teachers who previously taught in DEIS school, by DEIS status and grade level**

DEIS status	Second class	Sixth class
Urban Non-DEIS*	24.6	30.2
Urban Band 1	<b>96.1</b>	<b>100</b>
Urban Band 2	<b>98.1</b>	<b>98.4</b>

Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

Almost all pupils in DEIS schools had teachers who indicated that they had taught in a DEIS school for at least one academic year prior to the NAMER '21. In Urban Non-DEIS schools, one-quarter of Second class and nearly one-third of Sixth class pupils had teachers who reported previous teaching experience in a DEIS school (Table 3.4; Table A3.4).

## Teacher employment status

At Second class, approximately 75% of pupils were taught by teachers with permanent employment status; this percentage was lower in Urban Band 2 schools where 60% of pupils were taught by permanent teachers. At Sixth class, over 80% of pupils in Urban Non-DEIS, Urban Band 1 and Urban Band 2 schools were taught by teachers with permanent positions. The percentages of pupils taught by temporary and substitute teachers are also shown in Table 3.5. There were no

significant differences in English reading or Mathematics achievement associated with teacher employment status (Table A3.5).

**Table 3.5: Percentages of pupils with permanent, temporary, and substitute teachers, and mean achievement scores, by grade and DEIS status**

DEIS status	Second class English reading						Sixth class Mathematics					
	Permanent*		Temporary		Substitute		Permanent*		Temporary		Substitute	
	%	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean	%	Mean
Urban Non-DEIS	75.6	267.6	17.0	260.8	7.4	257.5	80.6	262.2	13.8	264.8	5.6	258.1
Urban Band 1	75.5	238.5	20.1	234.1	4.4	233.6	84.0	233.4	12.6	232.4	3.4	229.1
Urban Band 2	60.1	254.2	26.5	253.0	13.4	244.5	86.1	252.0	12.3	253.1	1.6	236.9

No significant differences from the reference group\*.

## Qualifications

Teachers were asked to indicate if they had an additional qualification at the level of Certificate/Diploma, Masters (M.Ed. or M.A. [Ed]), or Doctoral degree (Ph.D/Ed.D); the subject areas of these qualifications were not specified and they may or may not have related to the teaching of reading or Mathematics. The percentages of pupils taught by teachers with additional qualifications did not differ significantly across school contexts and ranged from about 30% of Second class pupils in Urban Band 2 schools to 45% of Sixth class pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools (Table 3.6; Table A3.6).

**Table 3.6: Percentages of pupils whose Second class and Sixth class teachers had an additional qualification, by DEIS status**

DEIS status	Second class		Sixth class	
	%	%	%	%
Urban Non-DEIS*	44.3		44.8	
Urban Band 1	37.6		41.6	
Urban Band 2	29.9		34.3	

No significant differences from the reference group\*.

At Second class, there were no significant differences in the average English reading performance of pupils who were taught by teachers with additional qualifications and those whose teachers had no additional qualifications (Table 3.7). At Sixth class, while additional teacher qualifications were significantly associated with achievement in Mathematics, these patterns were not consistent across school DEIS categories. For example, pupils in Urban Band 1 schools who were taught by teachers with additional qualifications had significantly higher average Mathematics scores than pupils taught by teachers without additional qualifications. In contrast, the average Mathematics performance of pupils in Urban Band 2 schools was significantly lower in classrooms where teachers had additional qualifications (Table A3.7).

**Table 3.7: Mean achievement scores of pupils whose teachers had an additional qualification, by grade level and DEIS status**

DEIS status	Second class Reading		Sixth class Mathematics	
	Yes*	No	Yes*	No
Urban Non-DEIS	263.5	267.4	261.9	262.7
Urban Band 1	233.4	239.9	243.8	<b>225.6</b>
Urban Band 2	255.2	251.5	243.1	<b>256.5</b>

Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

## Continuing professional development (CPD)/teacher professional learning (TPL)

Teachers were asked to report on the frequency of their engagement with CPD in the two years prior to NAMER '21. For several nominated areas of CPD/TPL, teachers were asked to indicate whether they had done 'none', 'a half day', '1 to 4 days', '5 to 8 days', '9 to 14 days', or '15 days or more'. For each nominated area, teachers who indicated that they had done any CPD/TPL were grouped into a single category and percentages presented in Table 3.8 show the percentages of pupils whose teachers indicated that they had done at least some CPD/TPL in the two years prior to NAMER '21; this may have been as little as a half day or as much as 15 days or more.<sup>25</sup> For comparison, about 20% of Second and Sixth class pupils in NAMER '14 had teachers who reported that they had not attended any CPD in the two years prior to that study (Kavanagh et al., 2015).

**Table 3.8: Percentages of pupils whose teachers reported that they had attended some CPD/TPL in English (Second) and Mathematics (Sixth), by DEIS status**

CPD/TPL	Grade	Urban Non-DEIS*	Urban Band 1	Urban Band 2
Attendance at external CPD/TPL courses on teaching and learning	Second	47.3	50.8	50
	Sixth	29.5	31.1	30
Participation in in-school CPD/TPL: <i>outside 'Croke Park Agreement hours'</i>	Second	45.4	63.1	56.2
	Sixth	35.1	42.4	36.3
Participation in in-school CPD/TPL: <i>inside 'Croke Park Agreement hours'</i>	Second	64.6	54.6	75.6
	Sixth	51.4	54.9	54.3
Participation in planning activities ( <i>inside/outside 'Croke Park Agreement hours'</i> )	Second	89.8	87.5	85.7
	Sixth	82.1	81.1	83.1
Online CPD/TPL	Second	71.2	71.9	68.4
	Sixth	53.4	46.8	39.1
Professional self-directed reading/study related to English or Mathematics	Second	62	55.7	71.4
	Sixth	54.6	54.7	48.6
Specific training in distance learning in relation to English or Mathematics	Second	47.2	32.2	46.3
	Sixth	34.9	36.1	32.1

No significant differences from the reference group\*.

Colour gradient from red to green is used to indicate increasing percentages.

Over 80% of Second and Sixth class pupils were taught by teachers who reported participation in planning activities (either inside or outside 'Croke Park Agreement hours'; Table 3.8). Participation in online CPD/TPL was more commonly reported by teachers of Second class pupils (68.4% to 71.9% across DEIS categories) compared to teachers of Sixth class pupils (39.1% to 53.4% across DEIS categories).

Across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools, lower percentages of pupils had teachers who reported participation in external CPD/TPL courses; participation in in-school CPD/TPL; self-directed study related to English or Mathematics; or specific training in distance learning related to English or Mathematics. There were no significant differences in teachers' reported CPD/TPL engagement by DEIS status (Table A3.8).

<sup>25</sup> The timing of NAMER '21 should be borne in mind when interpreting results in this section. It is likely that teacher participation in CPD/TPL, particularly in-person CPD/TPL, was significantly impacted by the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Classroom context

This section outlines teachers reports of the numbers of pupils in the classes they teach, access to resources in the classroom and the organisation of learning support. Particularly with respect to the organisation of learning support, it is possible that some adjustments were made in response to COVID-19.

### Class size

Teachers were asked to indicate the numbers of pupils they taught in total and at the grade (Second or Sixth) participating in NAMER '21 (Table 3.9; Table A3.9). At Second class, pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools were in classrooms with an average of 26.3 pupils in total. The corresponding average in Urban Band 1 schools was significantly lower at 20.3. The average in Urban Band 2 schools (23.1) was also significantly lower than that in Urban Non-DEIS schools. Across DEIS categories, the average numbers of Second class pupils were very close to the corresponding averages for total numbers of pupils, suggesting limited use of multi-grade teaching. At Second class, the percentages of pupils in multi-grade classrooms were as follows: Urban Non-DEIS (6.4%); Urban Band 1 (7.5%); Urban Band 2 (5.1%).

At Sixth class, pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools were in classrooms with an average of 26.4 pupils in total; the corresponding value in Urban Band 1 schools (22.2) was significantly lower. In contrast to findings at Second class, Sixth class pupils in Urban Band 2 schools were in classrooms where the average class size was very similar to that of pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools (Table 3.9; Table A3.9). At Sixth class, the percentages of pupils in multi-grade classrooms were as follows Urban Non-DEIS (3.3%); Urban Band 1 (15.4%); Urban Band 2 (0.9%).

**Table 3.9: Mean class size, by DEIS status and grade level**

DEIS status	Teachers at Second class		Teachers at Sixth class	
	Total number of pupils	Second pupils class	Total number of pupils	Sixth class pupils
Urban Non-DEIS*	26.3	25.1	26.4	26.1
Urban Band 1	<b>20.3</b>	<b>19.7</b>	<b>22.2</b>	<b>20.9</b>
Urban Band 2	<b>23.1</b>	<b>22.9</b>	27.0	26.9

Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

## Access to classroom resources

Second and Sixth class teachers were asked if they had sufficient access (Yes/No) to a range of resources for use in the classroom. The percentages of pupils whose teachers said they did 'not' have sufficient access are shown in Table 3.10. A colour gradient from green to red is used in Table 3.10 with red indicating higher levels of perceived shortages; green indicates lower levels of perceived shortages.

**Table 3.10: Percentages of pupils who did not have access to classroom resources, by grade and DEIS status**

Resources	Grade	Urban Non-DEIS*	Urban Band 1	Urban Band 2
An interactive whiteboard	Second	4.4	7.1	6.6
	Sixth	8.9	11.2	4.1
Computers/computing devices	Second	24.3	34.5	26.5
	Sixth	26.6	24.9	30.2
High-speed Internet that usually works	Second	5.7	14.2	7.9
	Sixth	9.0	14.8	16.2
Electronic books for pupils to read	Second	68.1	66.8	62.3
	Sixth	76.4	76.4	66.1
An adequate number of print-based novels for pupils to read	Second	14.7	21.4	16.1
	Sixth	6.8	11.3	5.2
An adequate number of print-based information books for pupils to read	Second	22.9	38.3	31.4
	Sixth	27.9	42.2	23.3

No significant differences from the reference group\*.

Colour gradient from green to red is used to indicate increasing percentages with higher percentages indicating lower levels of access.

It was comparatively rare for teachers to report insufficient access to an interactive whiteboard or high-speed internet; percentages of pupils with insufficient access to these resources ranged from 4% to 16% across grade levels and DEIS categories (Table 3.10; Table A3.10).

Higher percentages of pupils had teachers who indicated insufficient access to computers or computing devices; at least one-quarter of pupils across grades and DEIS categories had teachers who reported insufficient access to these resources.

Turning to pupils' reading materials, three-fifths to three-quarters of pupils across grade levels and DEIS categories had teachers who reported insufficient access to electronic books for pupils to read. While teachers were less likely to indicate that pupils had insufficient access to print-based novels, more than one-fifth of Second class pupils in Urban Band 1 schools had teachers who reported insufficient access in this category. Access to print-based information books for pupils was deemed insufficient by teachers of about one-quarter to two-fifths of pupils across grades and DEIS categories.

## Learning support

Teachers at both Second and Sixth class were asked how pupils receive learning support for English from the learning support/special education team in their school; i.e., to select from a list all the approaches which applied in their school, including ‘no additional support provided’.<sup>26</sup>

**Table 3.11: Percentages of pupils in receipt of various forms of learning support for English, by grade and DEIS status**

Learning support	Grade	Urban Non-DEIS*	Urban Band 1	Urban Band 2
In-class support	Second	52.4	55.9	54.7
	Sixth	43.5	43.0	51.8
Withdrawal from class – in a group	Second	90.0	85.6	81.0
	Sixth	80.9	84.5	85.9
Withdrawal from class – individually	Second	76.9	63.9	64.7
	Sixth	63.0	59.8	69.7
No additional support provided	Second	0	<b>2.1</b>	1.5
	Sixth	5.0	1.4	5.5

Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

Withdrawal from class of groups of pupils was reported to be widely used, with over 80% of Second and Sixth class pupils in classes where teachers indicated that this approach was used for the provision of additional support for English (Table 3.11). Individual withdrawal of pupils from class was also widely used, with more than three-fifths of pupils across grades and DEIS categories in classrooms where this approach was used. Somewhat lower percentages of pupils were in classrooms where teachers indicated that in-class support was used as a means of providing additional support in English. About half of pupils were in classes where teachers reported that in-class support was used for this purpose. Very low percentages of pupils were in classrooms where teachers indicated that no additional support was provided for English (Table A3.11).

## Literacy and Numeracy

### Initiatives to Improve Literacy

Teachers of Second class pupils were asked to indicate the frequency with which they implemented a variety of reading/language initiatives, programmes or approaches in their classrooms.<sup>27</sup> For some of the listed initiatives, programmes or approaches, DEIS schools receive priority for professional development provided by the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST), prior to their integration into Oide.<sup>28</sup> There is likely some degree of overlap between some of the listed approaches, not all of which are fully distinct (e.g., Power Hour and Literacy Stations).

For each of the listed initiatives, programmes or approaches, Table 3.12 shows the percentages of pupils whose teachers indicated that they used it (whether ‘weekly’, ‘monthly’, ‘once a term’, or ‘once or twice a year’). As might be expected given the emphasis on evidence-based programmes

26 Information on learning support for Mathematics was not collected in NAMER '21.

27 Initiatives presented in the questionnaire were selected for continuity with the earlier NAMER '14 questionnaire and/or identified through the NAMER '21 Field Trial questionnaire review process.

28 <https://pdst.ie/node/378>. From September 1st 2023, the PDST and three other existing support services have integrated with professional learning for teachers and school leaders now provided by the new support service Oide (<https://oide.ie/>).

for literacy and numeracy in DEIS, findings show that pupils in DEIS schools were more likely to experience several of the initiatives, programmes or approaches than their counterparts in Urban Non-DEIS schools. Specifically, significantly higher percentages of pupils in DEIS schools compared to Urban Non-DEIS schools had teachers who reported using First Steps Reading, First Steps Writing, First Steps Oral Language<sup>29</sup>, or Reading/Literacy stations.

**Table 3.12: Percentages of Second class pupils taught by teachers using each of several reading initiatives, programmes, or approaches, by DEIS status**

Reading/language initiatives or approaches	Urban Non-DEIS*	Urban Band 1	Urban Band 2
Paired/shared reading with a parent or adult volunteer	30.4	32.9	33.1
Peer tutoring/Paired reading with another pupil	37.5	45.7	48
Paired reading with another member of teaching staff	51.2	<b>75.9</b>	63.1
Paired Writing	63.7	70.3	71.6
First Steps Reading	18.2	<b>71.6</b>	<b>79.7</b>
First Steps Writing	29.7	<b>74.4</b>	<b>83.4</b>
First Steps Oral Language	20.9	<b>70.3</b>	<b>72.3</b>
Reading/Literacy Stations	52.1	<b>75.9</b>	<b>73.6</b>
Power Hour	27.5	31.7	21.1
Guided Reading	80.8	91.7	81.5
Drop Everything and Read	94.5	93.8	95.8
Literacy Lift-Off	20.6	17.9	27.7
Jolly Phonics	74.5	70.4	61.9
Write to Read	13.4	25	13.9

Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

Colour gradient from red to green is used to indicate increasing percentages.

Across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools, high percentages of Second class pupils had teachers who reported using Guided Reading, Drop Everything and Read, Jolly Phonics, Paired Writing, or paired reading with another member of staff. Over 80% of Second class pupils were in classrooms where teachers reported using Guided Reading or Drop Everything and Read. Half to three-quarters of pupils were in classrooms where teachers reported using Jolly Phonics, Paired Writing, or paired reading with another member of staff (Table 3.12; Table A3.12).

### *Initiatives to Improve Numeracy*

Teacher of Sixth class pupils were asked to indicate the frequency with which they implemented numeracy initiatives, programmes or approaches in their classrooms. For each initiative, programme or approach, Table 3.13 shows the percentages of pupils in classrooms where teachers indicated that they used the approach.<sup>30</sup>

Paired Maths with another pupil was the most widely implemented of the listed initiatives or programmes. Over 80% of Sixth class pupils across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools were in classrooms where teachers reported this approach to be used. Other approaches or initiatives which were reported to be widely used included Maths for Fun and Maths stations with at least three-fifths of pupils in classrooms where teachers reported their use.

29 The teacher questionnaire referred to First Steps Oral Language which is also called First Steps Speaking and Listening (<https://pdst.ie/node/378>).

30 The PDST outlines the Mathematics programmes prioritised for implementation in DEIS schools. See <https://pdst.ie/node/378>

Other strategies and approaches which were reported to be less widely used included Coding, Lesson Study, and Paired Maths with a parent or adult volunteer. Pupils in Urban Band 2 schools were less likely to experience Paired Maths with a parent or adult volunteer compared to pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools; just 1.9% of Sixth class pupils in Urban Band 2 schools were in classrooms where teachers reported use of this approach compared to 21.4% in Urban Non-DEIS schools.

**Table 3.13: Percentages of Sixth class pupils taught by teachers using each of several numeracy initiatives, programmes, or approaches, by DEIS status**

Numeracy initiatives or approaches	Urban Non-DEIS*	Urban Band 1	Urban Band 2
Paired Maths with a parent or adult volunteer	21.4	18.5	<b>1.9</b>
Paired Maths with another pupil	87.6	86.1	83.9
Maths for Fun	66.8	67.7	66.7
Maths stations	62.4	65.3	60.3
Coding	42.3	38.8	30
Lesson Study	37.5	41.9	31.7

Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

Colour gradient from red to green is used to indicate increasing percentages.

# CHAPTER 4

## SCHOOL RESOURCES: ACCESS AND USE

This chapter examines some resource-related and operational issues, with a focus on those deemed to be of particular salience in DEIS schools. The chapter draws mainly on responses provided by school principals to the NAMER '21 principal questionnaire. Most of the analyses in this chapter were conducted using the Sixth class database; where reference is made to pupil reading achievement, Second class data were analysed.<sup>31</sup> As outlined in Chapter 1 and in line with other large-scale national and international assessments, findings are reported as the percentages of pupils whose principals provided various responses (e.g., Clerkin et al., 2020; Kavanagh et al., 2015).

The first section of this chapter presents findings pertaining to financial resources – provision of a book rental scheme, financial contributions by parents, and availability of school meals. The second section outlines the extent to which school buildings and facilities are available for use outside of school hours. The third section examines human resources, focusing on recruitment and retention of teachers and principals' perceptions of their role. The fourth section presents findings on teacher, pupil and parent engagement as reported by principals. Fifthly, school uptake of, and participation in, selected initiatives or supports for pupil wellbeing, literacy or numeracy are described. The literacy and numeracy initiatives described in this section are distinct from the classroom-based initiatives or strategies used by teachers outlined in Chapter 6. Finally, the sixth section shows the extent to which principals report use of various approaches by the school to support parents with helping their children at home with English reading and Mathematics.

## Financial resources

This section examines school provision of book rental schemes; principals' reports on voluntary contributions from parents; and availability of school meals.

### *Book rental*

Principals of all Sixth class pupils in Urban Band 1 schools, and virtually all in Urban Band 2 and Urban Non-DEIS schools, reported that their school offered a textbook rental scheme (Table 4.1, Table A4.1).<sup>32</sup>

**Table 4.1: Percentages of Sixth class pupils whose principal reported the availability of a book rental scheme, by DEIS status**

DEIS status	Book rental scheme available %
Urban Non-DEIS*	97.7
Urban Band 1	100
Urban Band 2	96.5

Sixth class database.

<sup>31</sup> As outlined in Chapter 1, a large majority of schools sampled for NAMER '21 were vertical schools (n = 150). In addition, 23 junior schools and 22 senior schools were selected to participate. Of these, 145 vertical schools, 22 junior schools and 21 senior schools participated in the assessments. As this chapter focuses primarily on responses of principals of vertical schools and senior schools, readers should bear in mind that some variation in findings would be likely if responses of principals from junior schools were included. This variation is expected to be small, based on findings of Chapter 4 in Kavanagh et al. (2015).

<sup>32</sup> Since the administration of NAMER '21, the Free Primary Schoolbooks Scheme has been introduced in Ireland removing the cost from families of funding schoolbooks for children enrolled in primary schools and special schools. The scheme commenced in the 2023/24 school year.

## *Financial contributions by parents*

Principals were asked to indicate whether or not the school asked parents for a school contribution. While 66% of pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools had principals who reported that the school asked parents for a contribution, percentages were significantly lower in Urban Band 1 schools (21.5%) and Urban Band 2 schools (30.0%) (Table 4.2, Table A4.2).

**Table 4.2: Percentages of pupils in schools where parental contribution was requested, by DEIS status**

DEIS status	Parental contribution requested %
Urban Non-DEIS*	66.0
Urban Band 1	<b>21.5</b>
Urban Band 2	<b>30.0</b>

Sixth class database. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

## *School meals*

Principals were asked whether or not the school provided free school meals for 'all' pupils, for 'some' pupils, or not at all. They were also asked whether the school normally provided a 'breakfast club' for 'all' pupils, for 'some' pupils, 'not at all', or 'not running as a result of COVID-19 restrictions'. In this section, a school is considered to provide a breakfast club (or free school meal at lunchtime) if the principal indicated that breakfast (or lunch) is provided for 'all' or for 'some' pupils.

Over 50% of Sixth class pupils in Urban Band 1 schools had principals who reported that the school provided a breakfast club for some or all pupils; the percentage was very similar in Urban Band 2 schools (Table 4.3). All Sixth class pupils in Urban Band 1 schools and all in Urban Band 2 schools had principals who reported that free school meals were provided to some or all pupils at lunchtime. Corresponding percentages were significantly lower in Urban Non-DEIS schools where less than 10% of Sixth class pupils had principals who reported that some or all pupils received free school meals at lunchtime and 6% had principals who indicated that the school had a breakfast club (Table A4.3). Principals of about one-quarter of Sixth class pupils in Urban Band 1 schools and one-sixth in Urban Band 2 schools indicated that the breakfast club was not running at that time because of COVID-19 restrictions.

**Table 4.3: Percentage of pupils in schools with school meals, by DEIS status**

School meals	Urban Non-DEIS*	Urban Band 1	Urban Band 2
Breakfast club	6.2	<b>54.7</b>	<b>52.4</b>
Free school meals at lunchtime	9.3	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Sixth class database. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

## *Use of school buildings and facilities*

Principals were asked if, notwithstanding restrictions related to COVID-19, the school building(s) and other facilities (e.g., playing fields) were open to the local community in the evenings, at weekends or out-of-term time. Across the three items, percentages were lower in Urban Band 1 schools than in Urban Non-DEIS schools; differences were statistically significant for 'at weekends' and 'out of term time' only.

While almost two-thirds of Sixth class pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools had principals who indicated that school buildings and facilities were open to the local community in the evening during the week, two-fifths of pupils in Urban Band 1 schools had principals who reported that to

be the case (Table 4.4). About one-quarter of Sixth class pupils in Urban Band 1 schools, compared to more than half in Urban Non-DEIS schools, had principals who reported that buildings and facilities were open to the local community at weekends.

**Table 4.4: Percentages of Sixth class pupils in schools where principals reported that facilities were open to the community at various times, by DEIS status**

School building(s) and other facilities open to the local community	Urban Non-DEIS*	Urban Band 1	Urban Band 2
In the evenings during the week	64.5	42.1	59.0
At weekends	57.7	<b>27.9</b>	46.7
Out of term-time	62.1	<b>24.4</b>	56.1

Sixth class database. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

Community access to school buildings and facilities out of term-time was also reported to be lower in Urban Band 1 schools where one-quarter of pupils had principals who reported community access at that time; the corresponding value in Urban Non-DEIS schools was over 60% (for further detail, see Table A4.4). Percentages in Urban Band 2 were similar to those in Urban Non-DEIS schools.

## Human resources: Teachers and principals

### Teacher recruitment and retention

Principals were asked whether their school had experienced difficulties in teacher recruitment, retention or sourcing of qualified substitute teachers in the 12 months prior to NAMER '21. Teacher recruitment difficulties were reported by principals of just under 50% of pupils in all school contexts (Table 4.5). Teacher retention difficulties were experienced by 17%-23% of principals across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools.

**Table 4.5: Percentage of pupils in schools experiencing teacher recruitment and retention difficulties, by DEIS status**

Difficulties over the last twelve months	Urban Non-DEIS*	Urban Band 1	Urban Band 2
Teacher recruitment difficulties	49.1	47.4	48.0
Teacher retention difficulties	22.9	16.6	22.8
Sourcing qualified substitute teachers when required	97.6	100	85.0

Sixth class database. No significant differences from reference group\*.

Almost all Sixth class pupils had principals who reported difficulties in sourcing qualified substitute teachers when required. The percentages of pupils in schools where principals reported difficulties with these three issues did not differ significantly by DEIS status (Table A4.5).

### Principals' views on role

School principals were asked to answer questions regarding their job satisfaction, stress experienced, and support received, in their role as principal.<sup>33</sup> All or almost all pupils in DEIS and Non-DEIS schools were in schools where the principal reported that their role was 'very' or 'fairly'

33 The questionnaire item 'How supported do you feel in your job?' did not specify the source of support.

satisfying (Table 4.6). Nonetheless, very high percentages of Sixth class pupils were in schools where the principal reported that the role was 'very' or 'fairly' stressful. A majority of pupils were in schools where principals indicated that they felt 'very' or 'fairly' supported in their role with percentages ranging from 66.9% in Urban Non-DEIS schools to 81.3% in Urban Band 2 schools. Differences between DEIS and Non-DEIS schools were not statistically significant (Table A4.6).

**Table 4.6: Percentages of Sixth class pupils in schools where the principals found their role 'very/fairly' satisfying, stressful, or supported, by DEIS status**

Question	Urban Non-DEIS*	Urban Band 1	Urban Band 2
How satisfying is your job?	97.1	100	100
How stressful is your job?	89.2	97.1	96.9
How supported do you feel in your job?	66.9	76.3	81.3

Sixth class database. No significant differences from reference group\*.

### *Teacher, parent, and pupil engagement*

On a scale of 'very low' to 'very high', principals were asked to characterise the engagement of teachers, parents, and pupils in various aspects of school life. For each statement, the percentages of Sixth class pupils whose principals rated engagement as 'high' or 'very high' are shown in Table 4.7.

On several of the statements, principals in DEIS schools were less likely to rate engagement as 'high' or 'very high' than their Non-DEIS counterparts. While over 90% of Sixth class pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools had principals who rated teachers' job satisfaction as 'high' or 'very high', corresponding percentages in Urban Band 1 and Urban Band 2 schools were 78.3% and 71.0% respectively. According to principals, teachers in Urban Band 1 schools were less likely to have 'high' or very high' understanding of the school's targets and goals, success in achieving the school's targets and goals, or expectations for pupil achievement.

There were sizeable differences in the percentages of pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools and in DEIS schools whose principals reported 'high' or 'very high' levels of parental support for pupil achievement. Fewer than one-in-ten Sixth class pupils in Urban Band 1 schools and about one-quarter in Urban Band 2 schools had principals who rated as 'high' or 'very high' parental support for pupil achievement. The corresponding value in Urban Non-DEIS schools exceeded 80%.

Parent involvement in school activities was considered to be 'high' or 'very high' by principals of just 1.8% of pupils in Urban Band 1 schools and 12.3% of pupils in Urban Band 2 schools. The corresponding value in Urban Non-DEIS schools was 48.8%.

**Table 4.7: Percentages of pupils whose principal teachers characterised aspects of teacher, parent, and pupil engagement as 'very high/high', by DEIS status**

	Urban Non- DEIS* %	Urban Band 1 %	Urban Band 2 %
<b>Teacher-related</b>			
Teachers' job satisfaction	93.6	78.3	<b>71.0</b>
Teacher morale	81.7	72.5	68.9
Teachers' understanding of the school's targets and goals	96.0	<b>78.5</b>	77.6
Teachers' success in achieving the school's targets and goals	93.8	<b>74.8</b>	70.4
Teachers' expectations for pupil achievement	97.7	<b>76.3</b>	93.6
<b>Parent-related</b>			
Parental support for pupil achievement	84.2	<b>9.0</b>	<b>28.1</b>
Parental involvement in school activities	48.8	<b>1.8</b>	<b>12.3</b>
<b>Pupil-related</b>			
Pupils' regard for school property	89.8	<b>67.6</b>	77.6
Pupils' desire to do well in school	88.1	<b>53.3</b>	<b>47.1</b>

Sixth class database. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

Turning to pupils' attitudes and behaviours, principals in Urban Band 1 schools were less likely than their counterparts in Urban Non-DEIS schools to indicate that pupils' regard for school property was 'high' or 'very high'. While two-thirds of Sixth class pupils in Urban Band 1 schools had principals who rated their regard for school property as 'high' or 'very high', the corresponding value in Urban Non-DEIS schools was just under 90%.

Pupils' desire to do well in school was rated less favourably by principals in DEIS schools. In Urban Band 1 and Urban Band 2 schools, principals of about half of Sixth class pupils rated as 'high' or 'very high' pupils' desire to do well in school. Almost 90% of Sixth class pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools had principals who considered them to have a 'high' or 'very high' desire to do well in school (Table A4.7).

## Initiatives and supports for pupil wellbeing, literacy or numeracy

This section examines principals' reports on the availability and perceived value of two wellbeing initiatives: Friends programmes ('Fun Friends', 'Friends for Life' and 'My Friends Youth'),<sup>34</sup> and the Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management Programme (IYTCM).<sup>35</sup> It also looks at schools' uptake of various literacy and numeracy initiatives and examines the association between school uptake of initiatives and pupil achievement. Findings are presented regarding school access to external literacy or numeracy support from charitable or voluntary organisations. The final part of this section outlines the percentages of pupils in schools where principals reported providing various supports to parents for the purposes of helping their children at home.

The Friends programmes ('Fun Friends', 'Friends for Life' and 'My Friends Youth') are school-based anxiety prevention and resilience-building programmes. IYTCM is a classroom-based prevention and early-intervention programme designed to reduce challenging behaviours and promote children's pro-social behaviour. Priority access to these programmes is given to DEIS schools (Department of Education and Skills, 2017). It is recognised that uptake of initiatives or voluntary

34 <https://assets.gov.ie/41216/fc1f9f7ae6df4749924eea240b9f3b98.pdf> & <https://friendsresilience.org/>

35 <https://assets.gov.ie/41215/90a7cb8701ab475cada4a20860dbcd73.pdf> & <https://incredibleyears.com/programs/teacher-classroom-mgt-curriculum/>

support may be a response to more challenging behaviours and/or lower levels of achievement in the school.

## Wellbeing initiatives

Principals reported on the availability and perceived value of two wellbeing initiatives. Findings show that Friends and IYTCM were more likely to be available in DEIS schools compared to Urban Non-DEIS schools. This is in line with the target of the *DEIS Plan 2017* to further extend the roll-out of these programmes in DEIS schools.

While over one-fifth of Sixth class pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools had principals who indicated that Friends programmes were not available, about one-eighth of pupils in Urban Band 1 schools and no pupils in Urban Band 2 schools had principals who reported that the programmes were not available. Turning to IYTCM, half of pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools had principals who reported that the programme was not available. The corresponding percentages in Urban Band 1 and Urban Band 2 schools were 18.8% and 17.9% respectively (Table 4.8).

For schools where Friends or Incredible Years were available, principals were asked to rate the perceived value of each as low, medium or high. About one-quarter of Sixth class pupils had principals who indicated that Friends had a 'low value'. Although this percentage was higher than the corresponding percentage in Urban Non-DEIS schools (8.7%) or Urban Band 2 schools (7.4%), differences were not statistically significant (Table A4.8).

Where training in the IYTCM programme was available, the majority of principals deemed the programme to be of high or medium value. IYTCM was considered to have a 'low value' by the principals of nearly one-in-five Sixth class pupils (18%) in Urban Band 1 schools although this was not significantly higher than the corresponding percentages in Urban Non-DEIS (8.4%) or Urban Band 2 schools (4.0%). Both programmes (Friends and IYTCM) were highly regarded by principals in Urban Band 2 schools where approximately two-thirds of Sixth class pupils had principals who considered the programmes to be of 'high value' (Table A4.8).

**Table 4.8: Percentage of pupils in schools with access to well-being initiatives and their perceived value, by DEIS status**

DEIS status	Not available			Perceived value when available		
		Low value	Medium value	High value		
<b>Friends programmes</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS*	22.6	8.7	38.0	53.3		
Urban Band 1	13.0	27.8	42.2	30.0		
Urban Band 2	0.0	7.4	30.5	62.0		
<b>Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management Programme</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS*	50.1	8.4	50.5	41.1		
Urban Band 1	<b>18.8</b>	18.0	50.1	31.9		
Urban Band 2	<b>17.9</b>	4.0	27.0	69.0		

Sixth class database. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

## Wider initiatives and support for literacy or numeracy

Principals were asked if their school participated in any initiatives or programmes designed to promote enjoyment of reading (e.g., Write a Book Project, World Book Day) or enjoyment of Mathematics (e.g., Maths Week, Maths Eyes) (Table 4.9). At least three-quarters of Second class pupils in Urban Band 1 and Urban Band 2 schools and over 80% in Urban Non-DEIS schools had principals who reported that the school had participated in initiatives or events designed to promote the enjoyment of reading.

Similarly, high percentages of Sixth class pupils had principals who reported that the school participated in initiatives or programmes designed to promote enjoyment of Maths; percentages exceeded 75% across Urban Non-DEIS and DEIS schools. There were no statistically significant differences in the average English reading or Mathematics achievement of pupils in schools that did not participate in any initiatives compared to those that did (Table A4.9).

**Table 4.9: Mean English reading and Mathematics achievement scores (Second and Sixth class, respectively), by school DEIS status and principal report of school participation in initiatives/programmes designed to promote enjoyment of reading or Mathematics**

Achievement	DEIS status	Yes*		No	
		%	Mean	%	Mean
English reading	Urban Non-DEIS	81.3	265.7	18.6	262.6
	Urban Band 1	76.7	235.3	23.3	242.2
	Urban Band 2	76.1	252.3	23.9	253.7
Mathematics	Urban Non-DEIS	76.8	263.7	23.2	256.6
	Urban Band 1	77.6	233.1	22.4	233.8
	Urban Band 2	84.4	254.9	15.6	239.0

Second & Sixth class databases. No significant differences from reference group\*.

About two percent of pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools had principals who reported that the school had literacy support for senior classes provided by a voluntary group, charity or company. The corresponding percentage for Mathematics was also very low (2.4%). In contrast, higher percentages of pupils in DEIS schools had principals who reported that the school had literacy or numeracy support from a voluntary group, charity or company for senior classes (Second class and upwards). Over two-fifths of Second class pupils in Urban Band 1 schools and one-quarter in Urban Band 2 schools had principals who reported that the school had support for literacy for senior classes from a voluntary group, charity or company. For Mathematics, principals of about one-quarter of Sixth class pupils in Urban Band 1 schools reported support from a voluntary group, charity or company; the percentage was very similar in Urban Band 2 schools.

In addition, there were no significant differences in the average English reading achievement of pupils whose principals reported access to voluntary or charitable support for literacy and those whose principals indicated that the school did not have such access (Table 4.10; Table A4.10).<sup>36</sup> In Mathematics, the mean score of Sixth class pupils in schools without voluntary support for Mathematics was significantly higher than the mean score in schools with such access. As previously noted, uptake of voluntary or charitable support may reflect a school response to lower levels of achievement.

**Table 4.10: Mean English reading and Mathematics scores of pupils in schools with voluntary sector literacy and numeracy support for senior classes, by DEIS status**

Achievement	DEIS status	Yes*		No	
		%	Mean	%	Mean
English reading	Urban Band 1	43.3	236.2	56.7	238.5
	Urban Band 2	25.5	258.9	74.5	251.6
Mathematics	Urban Band 1	25.7	222.5	74.3	<b>236.3</b>
	Urban Band 2	26.8	259.1	73.2	250.0

Second & Sixth class databases. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

<sup>36</sup> Mean scores are not provided for pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools given the small number of pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools whose principals reported receipt of voluntary or charitable support for literacy or numeracy.

## School supports for parents

For each of four strategies related to English and Mathematics, principals were asked to indicate whether or not the school had used each to support parents to help their children at home. It was noted that the strategy/approach could be delivered online or in-person. The strategies were: implementing a programme (e.g., two or more meetings with same parents); facilitating a once-off workshop/information session with a group of parents; sharing resources with parents (e.g., reading lists, websites); or 'other' (Table 4.11).

There was some variation across the various approaches in the extent to which principals reported they had been used to support parents to help their children. For example, large majorities of pupils were in schools where principals reported that resources (e.g., reading lists or websites) were shared with parents. At least 85% of Second class pupils in DEIS and Non-DEIS schools had principals who reported that this approach had been used to support parents with helping with English at home (Table A4.11). Similarly, high percentages of Sixth class pupils had principals who reported that sharing of resources was used to help parents support their children's learning in Mathematics; percentages exceeded 75% across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools.

About one-third to two-fifths of Second class pupils across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools had principals who reported implementing a programme (e.g., two or more meetings with the same parents) to help parents to support their child's English reading. For Mathematics, percentages ranged from 16% in Urban Band 2 schools to 39% in Urban Non-DEIS schools.

**Table 4.11: Mean achievement scores of pupils in schools where supports had/had not been offered to parents, by DEIS status**

Achievement	Urban Non-DEIS		Urban Band 1		Urban Band 2	
	Yes*	No	Yes*	No	Yes*	No
<b>Implementing a programme</b>						
Reading	262.5	266.4	236.6	237.2	249.4	253.9
Mathematics	262.2	262.0	237.0	231.8	247.7	253.4
<b>Facilitating a once-off workshop/information session with a group of parents</b>						
Reading	251.3	<b>265.7</b>	237.6	236.8	247.1	253.3
Mathematics	258.6	262.3	229.6	234.6	270.4	251.5
<b>Sharing resources with parents</b>						
Reading	264.7	267.0	236.6	242.2	254.5	<b>241.2</b>
Mathematics	261.5	264.0	232.9	235.0	253.4	235.0

Second & Sixth class databases. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

Lower percentages of pupils were in schools where principals reported facilitating a once-off workshop or information session with a group of parents although this seemed somewhat more common in Urban Band 1 schools compared to Urban Non-DEIS schools. While 4% of Second class pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools had principals who reported that the school facilitated a once-off workshop, 16% of pupils in Urban Band 1 schools had principals who indicated that this approach had been used to help parents support their children's English reading. Similarly, for Mathematics, 5% of pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools and 27% in Urban Band 1 schools had principals who reported that a once-off workshop or information session related to Mathematics was held for parents.

In general, there were no significant associations between average achievement in English or Mathematics and school use of a particular strategy. An exception to this relates to whether or not the school shared resources with parents to help children with English. In Urban Band 2 schools only, average reading performance of Second class pupils was significantly lower in schools where resources were not shared with parents compared to those in which resources were shared (Table A4.11).

# CHAPTER 5

# DISCUSSION

NAMER '21 provides valuable data from a large sample of pupils on pupil achievement in reading and mathematics and also provides important insights into the homes, classrooms and schools of participating pupils. In this chapter, key findings are considered with reference to earlier national assessments, other relevant studies conducted in Ireland and policy directed at educational disadvantage.

## Pupil characteristics and achievement

### Pupil background and language

NAMER '21 gathered information from pupils on their country of birth. The percentages of Second class pupils participating in NAMER '21 who reported that they were born outside Ireland varied across Urban Non-DEIS, Urban Band 1 and Urban Band 2 schools where 12.4%, 14.6% and 21.9% of pupils respectively indicated that they were *not* born in Ireland. The corresponding percentages were somewhat lower at Sixth class (ranging from 8% to approximately 17%).

Notwithstanding the limitations associated with the smaller numbers of pupils from DEIS schools participating in NAMER '14, it is useful to provide comparable percentages of pupils born outside Ireland in that cycle of the study. In NAMER '14 almost 10% of Second class pupils and nearly 12% of Sixth class pupils overall reported that they were *not* born in Ireland (Kavanagh et al., 2015). Specifically, at Second class, 12.2% of pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools, 19.0% in Urban Band 1 schools and 11.2% in Urban Band 2 schools indicated that they were not born in Ireland in the 2014 cycle. At Sixth class, 13.6% of Urban Non-DEIS pupils, 22.0 of Urban Band 1 pupils and 10.0% of Urban Band 2 pupils reported in NAMER '14 that they were born outside Ireland (authors' analyses of the 2014 database).

There was no significant association in NAMER '21 between place of birth and reading achievement at Second class in Urban DEIS schools with both groups of pupils (those born in Ireland and those born elsewhere) achieving a very similar mean score. In contrast, Second class pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools who were born in Ireland achieved a significantly higher mean reading score than their counterparts who reported that they were born elsewhere. Place of birth outside Ireland was positively associated with achievement in Mathematics in Urban DEIS schools, although this association was statistically significant in Urban Band 1 schools only. This advantage for pupils born outside Ireland was not evident in Urban Non-DEIS schools.

Turning to NAMER '14, findings showed that Second class pupils not born in Ireland had lower scores in both English reading and Mathematics than those of their Irish-born peers. Thus, the relative disadvantage in mean reading achievement in NAMER '14 evident for Second class pupils born outside Ireland is no longer observed in DEIS schools in 2021 although the gap remains significant in Urban Non-DEIS schools. In Mathematics, findings from 2014 show that at Sixth class, pupils not born in Ireland had lower reading scores than those born in Ireland but at that time, there was no statistically significant difference in average Mathematics achievement between the two groups (Kavanagh et al., 2015).

Looking at language use in the home in 2021, the majority of pupils in the three school contexts (Urban Non-DEIS, Urban Band 1 and Urban Band 2) reported 'always or almost always' speaking English at home, although percentages in this group ranged from 57% of Second class pupils in Urban Band 2 schools to 82% of Sixth class pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools.

Questions on home language were worded somewhat differently in the NAMER '14 questionnaire where pupils were asked which of three options (English, Irish or a different language) they spoke most often at home. Overall, 8.5% of Second class pupils and 7.3% of Sixth class pupils indicated that they spoke a different language most often at home (Kavanagh et al., 2015). Percentages were considerably higher in urban schools compared to rural schools and higher in Urban Band 1 than Urban Band 2 or Urban Non-DEIS schools.

In general, findings from 2021 show that across school contexts, higher mean scores in Second class English reading were associated with speaking English more frequently at home. A contrasting picture emerged for Sixth class Mathematics where pupils in DEIS schools who spoke English less frequently were found to have an advantage in Mathematics over their peers who spoke English more frequently. The mean Mathematics scores of pupils in Urban DEIS schools who reported 'never' speaking English at home were about as high as the mean scores of pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools who reported 'always or almost always' speaking English at home.

Findings from NAMER '14 also identified a positive association between reading achievement and speaking English at home; no association was found in that cycle between average Mathematics achievement at Sixth class and home language (Kavanagh et al., 2015). Some other Irish studies conducted in DEIS schools have pointed to an advantage in Mathematics for pupils with home languages other than English or Irish (Kavanagh & Weir, 2018). Future research could usefully examine the relative strengths in Mathematics of pupils born outside Ireland and/or speaking home languages other than English or Irish in order to support the highest levels of achievement amongst these pupils. Also, the relative disadvantage in Mathematics of pupils born in Ireland and/or regularly speaking English at home may merit further attention.

## *Homework*

All pupils at both Second class and Sixth class reported that they were actively engaged in English and Mathematics homework with at least four-fifths of Second class pupils and over three-quarters of Sixth class pupils across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools indicating that they did homework on 'most school days'. Pupils were not asked how frequently the teacher assigned homework. In general, pupils' reported frequency of doing homework was positively associated with achievement with lower average scores found in most school contexts for pupils who reported 'hardly ever' doing homework relative to their peers who reported doing homework on 'most school days'.

Findings from NAMER '14 also showed very high percentages of pupils engaged in daily homework but noted that there were no significant associations between homework frequency and average achievement in Second class reading or Sixth class Mathematics (Kavanagh et al., 2015). The value of homework has been debated in the literature where it is noted that the nature of the homework is a likely determinant of its value, although a lack of research on this issue in the Irish context has been identified (O'Toole et al., 2019). Furthermore, O'Toole et al. (2019) note that parents are not a homogenous group, given for example findings from NAMER '09 which showed variation across parents in their confidence in helping with homework (Eivers et al., 2010). Findings from NAMER '14 also showed that fewer parents reported feeling confident in helping with homework in Mathematics compared to homework in English (Kavanagh et al., 2015). Further attention could usefully be given to the role of homework, particularly in DEIS schools, and how the value of homework may vary across grade levels. There may be value in considering how the HSCL Coordinator can support parents to gain confidence in helping with homework, in particular parents for whom the language of instruction is not their native language.

## *Home resources*

Findings from NAMER '21 showed that high percentages of pupils had access to a computer, tablet or a games console at home. There was almost universal access to the internet ( $\geq 96\%$  at Second class;  $\geq 98\%$  at Sixth class across all school contexts), mirroring findings of very widespread internet access amongst pupils in NAMER '14 (Kavanagh et al., 2015). Current findings show that both Second and Sixth class pupils in DEIS schools were more likely to have a TV in their bedroom, and more likely to have access to their own mobile phone, than pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools. A similar pattern was found in PT 2011 (Clerkin & Creaven, 2013) and in NAMER '09 where it was reported that boys and pupils from families with lower socio-economic status were more likely to have TVs in their bedroom (Eivers et al., 2010).

In general, findings from NAMER '21 show that pupils had higher average English reading or Mathematics scores when they reported access to certain resources at home such as a computer, access to the internet, books to read for fun, or a calculator. In contrast, lower average achievement in English reading or Mathematics was associated with pupils having a TV in their bedroom or their own mobile phone. Patterns of association were broadly similar across Urban Non-DEIS and DEIS schools and are similar to previously reported patterns in earlier national assessments (Eivers et al., 2010; Kavanagh et al., 2015). The following recommendation based on NAMER '14 remains valid:

*“Schools should seek to raise awareness among parents about behaviours and practices that are supportive of children’s academic development (such as reading books at home for pleasure) and those that are not (unmonitored television access, large amounts of technology use)” (Kavanagh et al., 2015, p. 178).*

## Pupil attitudes

### Sense of school belonging

Second class pupils were asked to what extent they liked school. Across all school types, about half of pupils reported that they ‘liked’ school while about one-sixth of pupils reported ‘not liking’ school; the remainder were ‘not sure’. Findings were similar in NAMER '14 when over 57% of Second class pupils indicated that they liked school (Kavanagh et al., 2015). In general, more favourable attitudes to school were associated with a higher mean reading score although this was statistically significant in Urban Non-DEIS schools only, where there was a 20-point gap in average reading achievement between those who liked school and those who did not.

At Sixth class, pupils were asked to indicate their level of agreement with several statements related to school belonging (like being at school, feeling safe at school, belonging at school, the perceived fairness of teachers, their pride in attending the school and whether they had friends in the school).<sup>37</sup> It is not possible to determine if/how pupils’ sense of belonging, in particular their perceptions of safety at school, may have been influenced by concerns about COVID-19. Similarly, it is not possible to determine any possible impact on pupils’ liking of school of the extended periods of school closures/remote learning which had occurred prior to NAMER '21 administration. Findings from NAMER '21 show that large majorities of Sixth class pupils in Urban DEIS and Non-DEIS schools agreed (either ‘a lot’ or ‘a little’) with each of the statements about school belonging (liking school, feeling safe, feeling a sense of belonging, perceived fairness of teachers, pride in attending the school and having friends in school). In each of the three school contexts (Urban Band 1, Urban Band 2 and Urban Non-DEIS), more than 95% of Sixth class pupils agreed that they have friends in the school. Over 80% agreed with each of the statements regarding feeling safe in the classroom or in the playground, that teachers are fair to them, or that they are proud to go to the school. Somewhat lower percentages reported that they liked being at school, with 70% of pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools indicating that they liked school compared to 66.1% and 70.4% in Urban Band 1 and Urban Band 2 schools respectively. In general, across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools, pupils who ‘disagreed’ with statements regarding school belonging had lower levels of average achievement in Mathematics than their counterparts who ‘agreed’ with the statements. The relationship between school belonging and achievement is likely bidirectional. For example, school liking may lead to improved achievement, but higher academic achievement may also contribute to increased school liking.

The percentages of Sixth class pupils in NAMER '21 who agreed that they feel like they belong at their school (approximately 80% in Urban Non-DEIS, Urban Band 1 and Urban Band 2) were

37 Sixth class pupils were not offered the ‘not sure’ response option.

very similar to the percentages of Fourth class pupils who agreed (a lot or a little) with the same statement in PIRLS and TIMSS 2011 (82% overall; 79% in Urban Band 1; 75% in Urban Band 2; Non-DEIS 83%)<sup>38</sup> (Clerkin & Creaven, 2013). In the same study, 74% of Fourth class pupils overall in Ireland agreed (a lot or a little) that they liked being in school, with 64% of pupils in Urban Band 2, 79% of pupils in Urban Band 1 schools and 74% in Non-DEIS schools indicating that they liked being in school (Clerkin & Creaven, 2013). Turning to perceptions of safety in school, findings from PIRLS and TIMSS 2011 show that 93% of pupils in Urban Band 1 schools, 83% in Urban Band 2 schools and 92% in Non-DEIS schools agreed (a lot or a little) that they feel safe when at school (Clerkin & Creaven, 2013). More recent findings from TIMSS 2015 show that overall in Ireland, 88% of Fourth class pupils indicated that they feel like they belong at school, 79% of Fourth class pupils indicated that they like school and 94% of Fourth class pupils reported feeling safe at school; a breakdown is not available by school DEIS status (Perkins et al., 2020).

Recent Irish policy in education has placed a strong emphasis on student wellbeing, recognising four key areas in wellbeing promotion – School Culture & Environment; Curriculum (Teaching & Learning); Relationships & Partnerships; and Policy & Planning (Government of Ireland, 2019). The current cycle of SSE advises schools to initiate a wellbeing promotion review and development cycle and consideration of pupils' sense of safety at school could usefully feature as part of this review (Department of Education, 2022d). The Department of Education provides a suite of online guidance materials to support the wellbeing of school communities (Department of Education, 2022a) and issued guidance on fostering resilience and promoting safety and belonging in schools following COVID-19 lockdowns (NEPS, 2022). The particular importance of fostering pupil wellbeing in DEIS schools is emphasised in the *DEIS Plan 2017* (Department of Education and Skills, 2017) and more recently, the *Cineáltais: Action Plan on Bullying* – published since the administration of NAMER '21 – provides a roadmap for preventing and addressing bullying in schools. The implementation of *Cineáltais* is intended to ensure that all children and young people are kept safe from harm in school (Department of Education, 2022b). Current findings show that despite COVID-19 disruptions to teaching and learning, high percentages of pupils demonstrate high levels of connections with their school community. Nonetheless, there is a continued need to focus on the minorities of pupils who report that they do not like school or feel safe in the classroom or playground.

Increasing policy (e.g., Department of Education, 2021) and research (e.g., Granville, 2021; Skerritt et al., 2023) attention in Ireland focuses on the importance of student/pupil voice where the work is underpinned by the *National Framework for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-making* (Government of Ireland, 2021, and based on the child-rights model of participation by Laura Lundy).<sup>39</sup> In the interests of supporting all pupils to like school and to fully engage with their learning, it is important that teachers are supported to effectively access pupil voice to understand the types of learning experiences preferred by pupils.

### *Second class pupils' enjoyment of reading, self-assessment of their skills in English and engagement in reading activities*

Across Urban DEIS and Non-DEIS schools, large percentages of Second class pupils agreed that they liked reading. Nonetheless, a substantial minority (ranging from 13.2% in Urban Non-DEIS schools to 19.4% in Urban Band 1 schools) disagreed that they liked reading. Second class pupils who 'disagreed' that they liked reading had lower average reading scores than their counterparts who 'strongly agreed' in all school contexts. Second class pupils' perceptions of their own abilities in English were also significantly associated with reading achievement. Both in DEIS and Non-DEIS schools, pupils who reported that they 'need to improve' in either English reading, speaking English or writing a story in English had lower average reading scores than pupils with higher self-rated skills.

38 The Non-DEIS category in the PIRLS and TIMSS analysis comprised Urban Non-DEIS and Rural Non-DEIS schools

39 [https://hubnanog.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/5611-Hub\\_na\\_nOg-LundyModel.pdf](https://hubnanog.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/5611-Hub_na_nOg-LundyModel.pdf)

Second class pupils were asked about the frequency with which they engaged in various reading activities, such as reading on their own for fun or with an adult. A substantial minority of Second class pupils reported 'never' reading with their mum or dad at home (28.3% in Urban Non-DEIS; 30.7% in Urban Band 1; 32.3% in Urban Band 2 schools). Similar percentages (21.5% in Urban Non-DEIS; 33.5% in Urban Band 1; 31.4% in Urban Band 2 schools) reported 'never' reading books on their own for fun. Across Second class pupils participating in NAMER '14, 23.9% reported never reading with a parent at home and 14.3% reported never reading on their own for fun at home (Kavanagh et al., 2015).

Findings show that more frequent individual reading of books for fun (but not magazines or comics) was associated with higher average reading scores; i.e., those who reported reading books on their own for fun on 'most days' had a significantly higher average score than those who 'never' read books on their own for fun. In contrast, more frequent reading with an adult (either a parent or another adult) was associated with lower average reading achievement. These results are consistent with the pattern in NAMER' 14 and suggest that higher achieving pupils are more likely to be reading alone by Second class than lower achieving pupils who may still require adult support (Kavanagh et al., 2015).

Drawing on data from PIRLS 2011 and 2016, Delaney et al. (2022) report that overall, time spent reading outside school by Fourth class pupils in Ireland and the frequency of reading for fun remained mostly stable between 2011 and 2016. However, they note that in 2016, pupils in Urban DEIS schools spent somewhat less time on average reading outside school than pupils in other schools, and read for fun less often. In contrast, reading to find things out was slightly more common for pupils in Urban DEIS than other schools. No significant difference in frequency of library use was observed between Urban DEIS and other pupils in their analysis. Delaney et al. (2022) also report some gender differences in reading behaviours with boys engaged in reading behaviours less often, on average, than girls.

Turning to findings from PIRLS 2021, Delaney et al. (2023) report that about one-in-six pupils (16%) participating in PIRLS 2021 'never or almost never' read for fun outside school while a further 16% only did so 'once or twice a month'. Analysis of the 2021 data shows that the frequency of pupils reading for fun outside school had declined since PIRLS 2016, with a 5% drop in the percentage of pupils who reported reading for fun 'every day or almost every day'. At post-primary level, an increase over time has been observed in the percentage of 15-year old students who do not read for enjoyment rising from 41.9% in 2009 to 47.7% in 2018 (Shiel et al., 2022). Future research may usefully give further consideration to the leisure reading activities of boys and girls in DEIS schools and monitor trends over time in time spent reading for enjoyment. This is of particular relevance given recent findings from the UK of reduced reading enjoyment reported by children aged 8-18 in 2023 compared to 2005, fewer boys than girls reporting enjoyment of reading, and children in receipt of free-school meals less likely than their counterparts to report enjoyment of leisure reading (Clark et al., 2023).

### *Sixth class pupils' parental support*

Sixth class pupils were asked about the frequency with which various activities took place in their homes. These were the frequency with which their parents discussed how well they were doing at school; discussed books, films or TV programmes; ate dinner with them; or spent time chatting with them. In general, patterns were very similar between DEIS and Non-DEIS schools. The reported frequency of these activities was not significantly associated with achievement in Mathematics.

## Teachers, classrooms and achievement

### *Teacher background and experience*

Looking at teacher background and experience, the majority of pupils at both grade levels in DEIS and Non-DEIS schools were taught by teachers who identified as female. At least 80% of Second class pupils and about 60% of Sixth class pupils were taught by female teachers. The proportions taught by female teachers are similar to those reported in NAMER '14. The higher percentage of Sixth class taught by male teachers was also observed in NAMER '14 (Kavanagh et al., 2015). For comparison, national data show that in 2021, 84.2% of primary teachers in Ireland were female (Government of Ireland, 2023).

There were no significant differences in average years of teaching experience between DEIS and Non-DEIS schools at either grade level (Second class 9.8 to 11.2 years; Sixth class 11.3 to 12.2 years). These are comparable with the average years' teaching experience reported in NAMER '14 where findings showed that teachers of Second class pupils had an average of 12.2 years of experience. The corresponding value for Sixth class was 13.1 years (Kavanagh et al., 2015). In NAMER '21, three-fifths to three-quarters of Second class pupils and over four-fifths of Sixth class pupils were taught by teachers with permanent posts. There were no significant differences in average English reading or Mathematics achievement associated with teacher employment status.

In terms of teacher qualifications, the percentages of pupils taught by teachers with additional qualifications at postgraduate level did not differ significantly across school contexts and ranged from about 30% to 45%. Additional qualifications on the part of the teacher was not significantly associated with average achievement in reading at Second class. In contrast, some statistically significant associations were observed at Sixth class but as the direction of the association was not consistent across school types, these may merit further examination.

Teachers were asked to report on the frequency of their engagement with continuing CPD/TPL in the two years prior to NAMER '21. However, the timing of the study should be borne in mind when interpreting results as it is likely that teacher participation in CPD/TPL, particularly in-person CPD/TPL, was significantly impacted by the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Teacher participation in CPD/TPL in the two years prior to NAMER '21 did not differ significantly by school DEIS status. Over 80% of Second and Sixth class pupils were taught by teachers who reported that they had participated in planning activities. About 70% of Second class pupils were taught by teachers who had participated in online CPD/TPL; percentages were somewhat lower at Sixth class. At least half of pupils were in classes where teachers reported that they had engaged in professional self-directed reading or study related to English or Mathematics. The perceived value of the CPD/TPL is not assessed in NAMER.

### *Classroom context*

In line with policy provisions for more favourable class sizes in Urban Band 1 schools, smaller average class sizes were observed at Second class in DEIS schools. The average class size of Second class pupils was highest in Urban Non-DEIS schools where there was a total of 26.3 pupils on average per classroom (including pupils from other classes in a multi-grade classroom) and an average of 25.1 Second class pupils. Average numbers were significantly lower in Urban Band 1 and Urban Band 2 schools, with an average 19.7 and 22.9 Second class pupils respectively. These values are similar to values in NAMER '14 where there was a total of 26.3 pupils on average in Urban Non-DEIS schools, 20.5 in Urban Band 1 schools, and 25.7 in Urban Band 2 schools (Shiel et al., 2015). Taking into account the total number of pupils in the classrooms of Second class pupils (i.e., in a multigrade setting) in DEIS schools, the average number of pupils in the classrooms of Second class pupils were 20.3 in Urban Band 1 schools and 23.1 in Urban Band 2 schools.

In NAMER '21, the average class size of Sixth class pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools was 26.4 (or 26.1 focusing on the average number of Sixth class pupils only). Corresponding values were

significantly lower in Urban Band 1 schools (22.2 pupils in total, 20.9 Sixth class pupils) but not significantly different in Urban Band 2 schools (27.0 pupils in total, 26.9 Sixth class pupils). The total number of pupils on average per classroom in NAMER '14 in Urban Band 1 and Urban Band 2 schools were 21.0 and 26.2, respectively (Shiel et al., 2015). Findings of more favourable class sizes in Urban DEIS schools, particularly Urban Band 1 schools, is in line with commitments outlined in the *DEIS Plan 2017* (Department of Education, 2022e; Department of Education and Skills, 2017) and further subsequent improvements.<sup>40</sup>

Teachers in NAMER '21 reported similar levels of access to classroom resources across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools. The majority of pupils were in classrooms where teachers reported sufficient access to interactive whiteboards and to high-speed internet that usually worked. However, over one-quarter of pupils were in classrooms where teachers reported insufficient access to computers or computing devices. A particular area of perceived deficiency was access to electronic books for pupils to read. Over three-fifths of Second class pupils and two-thirds to three-quarters of Sixth class pupils were in classrooms where teachers reported insufficient access to electronic books. It was less common for teachers to indicate that they perceived insufficient access to an adequate number of print-based novels or insufficient access to print-based information books for pupils to read.

Findings from NAMER '14 also identified issues with access to resources noting that while access to computing devices and whiteboards was high, there was lower availability of e-books (Kavanagh et al., 2015). The digital strategies for schools (Department of Education, 2022f; Department of Education and Skills, 2015) aim to enhance the embedding of digital technology across the curriculum and in all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment. An important pillar of these strategies is to ensure that schools have reliable and robust internet connectivity and adequate hardware (such as computers, tablets, and interactive whiteboards) to support digital learning initiatives. Delaney et al. (2022) note a considerable rise between 2011 and 2016 in the percentages of Fourth class pupils with access to a computer during reading lessons in Irish primary schools and reported that over half of pupils in Urban DEIS schools compared to over one-third in other schools had digital devices available during reading lessons. Despite these improvements, findings from NAMER '21 show an ongoing need for improved access to computers and e-books in Irish primary schools.

In terms of learning supports offered for English in the classroom, there were no statistically significant differences by DEIS status. The most frequently used approach was withdrawal of pupils in groups, with over 80% of Second and Sixth class pupils in classes where this approach was used according to their teachers. Findings from NAMER '14 were very similar in this regard where it was reported that 87% of Second class pupils and 78% of Sixth class pupils were in classes where this approach was used to provide learning support (Kavanagh et al., 2015). Individual withdrawal was also reported to be widely used by teachers in NAMER '21; at least three-fifths of Second and Sixth class pupils were in classrooms where teachers indicated that this occurred. About half of Second class pupils and two-fifths to half of Sixth class pupils were in classes where in-class support by the learning support/special education team was used to provide additional support for English.

In Ireland, the provision of learning support is guided by the Continuum of Support framework according to which support is provided through classroom support, school support and school support plus.<sup>41</sup> The framework is intended to ensure that interventions are incremental, moving from class-based interventions to more intensive and individualised support. Classroom support is carried out by the class teacher within the regular classroom. School support is usually co-ordinated by the Special Education teacher working alongside the classroom teacher and interventions are additional to those provided through classroom support. School support plus typically involves external services in more detailed assessment of pupils and the development of intervention programmes. It is not possible to determine the extent to which COVID-19 restrictions may have impacted on the provision of learning support around the time of NAMER '21 administration

40 <https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/4018ea-deis-delivering-equality-of-opportunity-in-schools/#supports-to-deis-schools>

41 <https://www.sess.ie/special-education-teacher-allocation/primary/continuum-support-primary>

although it is possible that that schools may have adapted their practices during this period, for example minimising the use of team teaching to limit movement between classrooms.

## *Literacy and Numeracy*

In NAMER '21, as in previous cycles of the study, teachers were asked to indicate the frequency with which they implemented a variety of reading/language and numeracy programmes or approaches in their classrooms. Findings show that teachers implemented a range of programmes designed to improve the performance of pupils in English reading and Mathematics. Guided Reading and Drop Everything and Read were widely implemented across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools with 80-95% of Second class pupils in classrooms where these were reported to be used.

As might be expected given the emphasis on evidence-based programmes for literacy and numeracy in DEIS (Department of Education and Skills, 2017), findings show that for some programmes, pupils in DEIS schools were more likely to experience several of the initiatives, programmes or approaches than their counterparts in Urban Non-DEIS schools. For example, higher percentages of pupils in DEIS schools, compared to Non-DEIS schools, were in classrooms where teachers reported use of First Steps Reading, First Steps Writing, First Steps Oral Language or Reading/Literacy Stations. The frequency with which various programmes were implemented were also found to vary by school DEIS status in NAMER '14 (Kavanagh et al., 2015).

For numeracy, Paired Maths with another pupil was reported to be very widely used across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools, with over 80% of Sixth class pupils in Urban DEIS and Non-DEIS schools in classrooms where teachers reported this approach to be used. High percentages of pupils were in classrooms where teachers reported use of Maths for Fun or Maths stations; three-fifths to two-thirds of pupils were in classrooms where these were reported to be used.

## **School resources: Access and use**

### *Resources*

Unsurprisingly, some variation was found across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools in school access to financial resources and the types of provisions made by schools. Principals of 66% of Urban Non-DEIS pupils, 22% of Urban Band 1 pupils and 30% of Urban Band 2 pupils reported that voluntary contributions were sought from parents. Earlier findings from Growing Up in Ireland showed that two-thirds of parents of participating 9-year olds were asked by their child's school for a voluntary contribution (Growing Up in Ireland Study Team, 2018).

Across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools, all or almost all Sixth class pupils were in schools where a textbook rental scheme was provided. Since the administration of NAMER '21, the Free Primary Schoolbooks Scheme has been introduced in Ireland removing the cost from families of funding schoolbooks for children enrolled in primary schools and special schools. The scheme commenced in the 2023/24 school year (Department of Education, 2023).

Findings from NAMER '21 show that pupils in Urban Band 1 schools were less likely than pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools to have principals who reported that buildings and facilities were available to the local community at weekends or out of term-time. The *DEIS Plan 2017* (Department of Education and Skills, 2017) includes reference to improving community links, including through developing and building relationships with local community organisations and businesses to support the work of schools. There may be merit in considering how the opening up of school buildings and facilities outside of school time could contribute to building these links.

The provision of breakfast clubs and school meals varied by school DEIS status although the likely impact of COVID-19 restrictions on provision at the time should be borne in mind. About half

of Sixth class pupils in Urban Band 1 schools and a similar percentage in Urban Band 2 schools had principals who reported that the school provided a breakfast club. The percentage was considerably lower in Urban Non-DEIS schools (6%). Principals of about one-quarter of Sixth class pupils in Urban Band 1 schools and one-sixth in Urban Band 2 schools indicated that the breakfast club was not running at that time because of COVID-19 restrictions (Spring 2021).

All Sixth class pupils in DEIS schools had principals who reported that some or all pupils had access to free school meals at lunchtime compared to fewer than one-in-ten in Urban Non-DEIS schools. This reflects DEIS school access to the School Meals Programme prioritised under the *DEIS Plan 2017* (Department of Education and Skills, 2017) and subsequently expanded (Department of Social Protection, 2023) since the administration of NAMER '21.

In terms of human resources, difficulties in teacher recruitment and the sourcing of qualified substitutes were identified as challenges by principals albeit with little variation by school DEIS status. Teacher recruitment difficulties were reported by principals of just under 50% of pupils in all school contexts. Teacher retention difficulties were experienced by principals of 17%-23% of pupils across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools. Principals of all or almost all Sixth class pupils indicated that they had had difficulties in the twelve months prior to NAMER '21 in sourcing qualified substitute teachers when required. Ireland has experienced teaching shortage difficulties over the past decade, highlighted in reports such as the *Striking the Balance* (Technical Working Group on Teacher Supply, 2015) and widely covered in the media (e.g., Fox, 2023; Gallagher, 2023). Ongoing work by the Department of Education<sup>42</sup> and the Teaching Council<sup>43</sup> is designed to address this issue (Department of Education, 2022g).

Principals' job satisfaction was reported to be high with all pupils in Urban Band 1 and Urban Band 2 schools having principals who found the role at least 'fairly' satisfying; the corresponding value in Urban Non-DEIS schools was a little lower at 97.1%. Whilst this is a positive finding, there were also high percentages of Sixth class pupils across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools (89.2% to 97.1%) where principals indicated that they found the role at least 'fairly' stressful. Two-thirds to four-fifths of Sixth class pupils were in schools where principals indicated they felt at least 'fairly' supported in their role.

The GUI study also found that principals of 9-year-old pupils reported both high levels of job satisfaction (93%) and stress (70%) and they note the complex interplay between these dimensions of the workplace (Darmody & Smyth, 2011). Similarly, Rawdon et al. (2021) reported that about half of primary principals responding to their survey indicated that they were 'very' satisfied with their job but also that about 60% of primary principals felt 'very' stressed in their role. Some differences by school DEIS status were observed in their findings. The Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN, 2022) has recently published research findings detailing the competing demands faced by Irish primary school leaders and outlining recommendations intended to improve the conditions for leadership. Their ongoing work in the area is conducted in response to concerns about the workload demands on school leaders and its impact on their health and wellbeing.<sup>44</sup> Various resources have been developed in the Irish context to support teacher wellbeing and in-school support in this area was provided by the PDST.<sup>45</sup> The wellbeing of teachers (including school leaders), as well as that of learners, is also prioritised by the Teaching Council.<sup>46</sup> In addition, mental health and wellbeing support is provided by workplace wellbeing providers.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>42</sup> For example, <https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation-information/b0d06c-teacher-supply-data-working-group/> and <https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation-information/f15096-teacher-supply-communications-working-group/>

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/about-us1/teacher-supply/>

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.ippn.ie/index.php/advocacy/sustainableleadership/9140-sustainable-leadership-project-update-june-2023>

<sup>45</sup> <https://pdst.ie/teacher-wellbeing>

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/about-us1/wellbeing/>

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.spectrum.life/>

## *Teacher, parent and pupil engagement*

Principals were asked to characterise the engagement of teachers, parents, and pupils in various aspects of school life. According to principals, teachers experienced high levels of job satisfaction and good levels of morale. Over 90% of Sixth class pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools had principals who rated teachers' job satisfaction as 'very high' or 'high'. Corresponding values in Urban Band 1 and Urban Band 2 schools were somewhat lower at 78.3% and 71.0%, respectively.

However, teachers in Urban DEIS schools were less likely than those in Urban Non-DEIS schools to receive high ratings from principals for their understanding of school goals, success in achieving these goals or for their expectations for pupil achievement. Principals of about three-quarters of Sixth class pupils rated teachers as 'very high' or 'high' on each of these statements compared to over 90% in Urban Non-DEIS schools. Effective DEIS Action Planning has been emphasised since the outset of the programme (Department of Education and Skills, 2017) although some variation has been noted across DEIS schools in the extent to which DEIS Action Planning impacts on learning and teaching (Department of Education, 2022h). While the Inspectorate report emphasises that in a majority of schools DEIS Action Planning had a positive impact on teaching and learning, they identify shortcomings in a minority of schools. Throughout their work, they highlight the importance of high teacher expectations for all pupils.

Parental engagement was rated less favourably by principals in DEIS schools. Only one-tenth of Sixth class pupils in Urban Band 1 schools and just over one-quarter in Urban Band 2 schools had principals who rated parental support for pupil achievement as 'very high' or 'high'. In Urban Non-DEIS schools, over four-fifths of Sixth class pupils had principals who rated parent support for pupil achievement as 'very high' or 'high'. A very low percentage of Sixth class pupils in Urban Band 1 schools (<2%) had principals who assigned a rating of 'very high' or 'high' to parental involvement in school activities. This compares to 12.3% and 48.8% in Urban Band 2 and Urban Non-DEIS schools, respectively. Principals were asked about parental involvement in a general sense but did not specify the nature of that involvement (e.g., formal involvement in the Board of Management or Parents' Association or informal involvement such as attendance at school events). Earlier findings from PT 2011 also showed variation in patterns of parental engagement in school activities across DEIS and Non-DEIS primary schools (Clerkin & Creaven, 2013). In spite of the strong focus on partnership with parents in the *DEIS Plan 2017*, NAMER '21 shows that this remains a challenging area for at least some DEIS schools.

Pupil engagement was less likely to be rated as 'very high' or 'high' by principals in DEIS schools compared to in Non-DEIS schools. The principals of 90% of Sixth class pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools indicated that pupils' regard for school property was 'very high' or 'high'. The corresponding values in Urban Band 1 and Urban Band 2 schools were 67.6% and 77.6%, respectively. Principals' ratings of pupils' desire to do well in school also showed some variation between DEIS and Non-DEIS schools. Principals of a large majority of Sixth class pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools (90%) rated as 'very high' or 'high' pupils' desire to do well in school compared to principals of 55.3% of pupils in Urban Band 1 schools and 47.1% in Urban Band 2 schools.

## *Initiatives and supports for pupil wellbeing, literacy or numeracy*

Priority access to the Friends programme and the Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management (IYTCM) Programme is given to schools under DEIS. This was reflected in the higher percentages of Sixth class pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools where principals reported that Friends or IYTCM was not available. For example, about half of Urban Non-DEIS Sixth class pupils had principals who indicated that IYTCM was not available in their school compared to less than one-fifth of pupils in Urban Band 1 or Urban Band 2 schools. There was some variation in the perceived value of the programmes across DEIS and non-DEIS schools although differences were not statistically significant. Relative to their counterparts in Urban Band 2 or Urban Non-DEIS schools, somewhat lower percentages of Sixth class pupils in Urban Band 1 schools had principals who reported that the programmes were of 'high' value. Previous research has shown larger impacts on

teacher self-efficacy and wellbeing associated with participation in training for IYTCM in Non-DEIS schools relative to DEIS schools and the authors of that study speculate that such differences might be associated with the historically lower levels of professional development available to teachers in Non-DEIS schools (Kennedy et al., 2021).

Findings from NAMER '21 show that school participation in initiatives or programmes designed to promote enjoyment of reading or Mathematics was reported to be high. Over three-quarters of Second class pupils in DEIS schools and over 80% in Urban Non-DEIS schools had principals who reported school participation in initiatives or events designed to promote the enjoyment of reading. Similarly, high percentages of Sixth class pupils (>75% across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools) had principals who reported that the school participated in initiatives or programmes designed to promote the enjoyment of Mathematics. Higher percentages of pupils in DEIS schools than in Urban Non-DEIS schools had principals who indicated that the school received some literacy or numeracy support from a voluntary group, charity or company. There were no significant differences between the average English reading or Mathematics achievement of pupils in schools that did not participate in any initiatives or received support from the voluntary/charity sector compared to those that did. It is recognised that there was likely wide variation in the types of initiatives in which schools participated, ranging from one-off events to ongoing programmes of support. The duration, intensity and quality of any supports would likely influence the degree to which the programme would impact on achievement although it is recognised that even short or low-intensity programmes may have motivational benefits that support pupil engagement without directly impacting on achievement in the short-term.

For English and Mathematics, principals were asked to indicate whether or not the school had used a number of strategies to support parents to help their children at home. Based on principal reports, the most frequently used approach was the sharing of resources with parents. Almost one-third to two-fifths of Sixth class pupils had principals who reported implementing a programme for English (e.g., two or more meetings with the same parents); corresponding values for Maths were one-sixth to two-fifths of pupils. Lower percentages of pupils had principals who reported facilitating a once-off workshop or information session with a group of parents. There was no association between use of these strategies and average achievement in reading or Mathematics. Earlier findings from NAMER '14 have shown that workshops and information sessions for parents were more likely to be organised in Urban Band 1 schools than in other school types (Kavanagh et al., 2015). This is not surprising given the emphasis placed on parental engagement in the *DEIS Plan 2017* (Department of Education and Skills, 2017) and the specific activities typically undertaken by Home School Liaison Coordinators.<sup>48</sup>

## Limitations to NAMER '21

NAMER '21 is a cross-sectional study of pupil achievement in reading and Mathematics. It gathers some information on pupil attitudes and experiences related to learning. Given its cross-sectional nature, causal inferences cannot be made. The relationships between pupil, teacher or school characteristics, attitudes and performance are likely to be inter-related and bivariate analyses in this report do not take account of potential inter-relationships.

It should be noted that the context information may be subject to self-report bias that may influence the accuracy of data collected from pupils, teachers, or principals. For example, pupils might overstate or underestimate engagement in school activities. Similarly, teachers may provide biased assessments of their instructional practices, classroom management practices, or pupil interactions due to a desire to present themselves in a favourable light. Response bias and in particular, the tendency to provide socially desirable responses, are widely recognised limitations

48 <https://www.tusla.ie/tess/information-for-parents-and-guardians-tess/home-school-liaison-community-liaison/what-is-a-course-for-parents/>

of survey research and these issues have been examined in the context of international large-scale assessments in education (Schulz & Carstens, 2020).

The non-administration of parent questionnaires in NAMER '21 leaves gaps in the understanding of pupil and parent background and home learning environment factors that may also be linked with achievement. The focus of this report has been on the achievements and experiences of pupils in Urban DEIS schools compared to Urban Non-DEIS schools. Oversampling of Rural DEIS schools would be required for future National Assessments cycles to get more accurate estimates of pupil achievement and to consider contextual factors in Rural DEIS schools.

## Conclusions and implications

Pupil achievement in English reading and Mathematics are associated with a range of pupil, teacher, classroom and school factors that may vary across school contexts. This report aims to shed some light on the characteristics of pupils' homes, classrooms and schools known to support pupil engagement and achievement. Future research can usefully consider these factors in a multivariate context and a multilevel model of achievement will be presented in the forthcoming NAMER '21 contextual report (Kiniry et al., In preparation). In addition, the forthcoming report will provide more in-depth information on teaching and assessment practices related to reading and Mathematics.

A number of issues are identified in this report as meriting further attention from schools, policy makers or researchers. These are:

- Findings from NAMER '21 show that pupils had higher average English reading or Mathematics scores when they reported access to certain resources at home such as a computer, access to the internet, books to read for fun, or a calculator. In contrast, lower average achievement in English reading or Mathematics was associated with pupils having a TV in their bedroom or their own mobile phone. Patterns of association were broadly similar across Urban Non-DEIS and DEIS schools and are similar to previously reported patterns in earlier national assessments (Eivers et al., 2010; Kavanagh et al., 2015). **The NAMER '14 recommendation remains valid regarding awareness raising on the part of schools among parents about behaviours and practices that are supportive of children's academic development (such as reading books at home for pleasure) and those that are not (unmonitored television access, large amounts of technology).**
- NAMER '21 findings show the despite COVID-19 disruptions to teaching and learning, high percentages of pupils demonstrate high levels of connections with their school community. Nonetheless, there is a continued need to focus on the minorities of pupils who report that they do not like school or feel safe in the classroom or playground. **These findings underscore the need to further enhance a sense of school belonging for all pupils and the importance of relevant policy developments.<sup>49</sup> They also point towards an ongoing need for schools and teachers to be supported to effectively access pupil voice to understand the types of learning experiences preferred by pupils.**
- High percentages of Sixth class pupils reported that parents/guardians ate dinner with them around the table several times a week. Also, almost three-quarters of pupils across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools indicated that parents spent time chatting with them several times a week. According to pupils, supportive engagement on the part of parents was equally prevalent in DEIS and Non-DEIS schools. However, according to principals,

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<sup>49</sup> For example, the *Cineáltais: Action Plan on Bullying* – published since the administration of NAMER '21 (Department of Education, 2022b).

parental support for pupil achievement, particularly in Urban Band 1 schools, was very low. **These findings show that while there may be scope to further encourage parental/guardian engagement in their children's learning, there may also be scope to more fully recognise the 'funds of knowledge'<sup>50</sup> or wider experiences brought by all pupils to the classroom.**

- Principals in DEIS schools were less likely to rate teacher engagement as 'high' or 'very high' on several areas than their Non-DEIS counterparts. According to principals, teachers in Urban Band 1 schools were less likely to have 'high' or 'very high' understanding of the school's targets and goals, success in achieving the school's targets and goals, or expectations for pupil achievement. **The importance of high teacher expectations for all pupils is emphasised by the work of the Inspectorate through their support for DEIS Action Planning and School Self-Evaluation and current findings point towards an ongoing need for this work. These findings also point towards a need for all schools to emphasise and implement whole-school approaches across the key areas of DEIS action planning and to be proactive in ensuring that all teachers are aware of DEIS-related targets and interventions.**
- While principals reported high levels of job satisfaction, the role was also reported to be associated with high levels of stress, with no statistically significant differences in this regard between DEIS and Non-DEIS schools. **These findings underscore the need for greater support for principal wellbeing and further consideration for how this may be improved through professional development opportunities and greater balance in the role across all aspects of leadership and management.**
- Widespread difficulties with the sourcing of qualified substitute teachers were apparent across DEIS and Non-DEIS schools. Teacher recruitment difficulties were also evident. Teacher retention problems were deemed to be less widespread relative to the other areas. There was no evidence of differences between DEIS and Non-DEIS schools in the extent of these difficulties. **These findings provide further evidence of widespread problems with teacher supply across school contexts and emphasise the importance of ongoing work designed to address this issue by the Department of Education and the Teaching Council.**
- Findings from NAMER '21 show that pupils in Urban Band 1 schools were less likely than pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools to have principals who reported that buildings and facilities were available to the local community at weekends or out of term-time. The *DEIS Plan 2017* (Department of Education and Skills, 2017) includes reference to improving community links, including through developing and building relationships with local community organisations and businesses to support the work of schools. **There may be merit in considering how the opening up of school buildings and facilities outside of school time could contribute to building school-community links.**
- In Mathematics, Sixth class pupils in Urban Band 1 schools who were born outside Ireland had a significantly higher mean score than their counterparts born in Ireland. Similarly, Sixth class pupils in DEIS schools who spoke English less frequently were found to have an advantage in Mathematics over their peers who spoke English more frequently. The mean Mathematics scores of pupils in Urban DEIS schools who reported 'never' speaking English at home were about as high as the mean scores of pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools who reported 'always or almost always' speaking English at home. **Future research could usefully examine the relative strengths in Mathematics of pupils born outside Ireland and/or speaking home languages other than English**

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50 The Funds of Knowledge approach (González et al., 2005) is based on the assumption that all pupils bring valuable knowledge and skills to the classroom, based on their life experiences outside of school. It has been employed to avoid deficit theorising in educational research and practice (e.g., 't Gilde & Volman, 2021).

or Irish in order to support the highest levels of achievement amongst these pupils. Also, the relative disadvantage in Mathematics of pupils born in Ireland and/or regularly speaking English at home may merit further attention.

- One-fifth to one-third of Second class pupils reported 'never' reading books on their own for fun. Such pupils had a significantly lower average reading score than those pupils who reported reading books on their own for fun on 'most days'. **Given trends pointing towards reduced leisure reading in Ireland and internationally, schools are encouraged to promote leisure reading amongst pupils and continue to raise awareness amongst parents of its value. Future research may usefully give further detailed consideration to the leisure reading activities of boys and girls in DEIS primary schools and monitor trends over time in this area.**

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Supports provided under the DEIS School Support Programme: Primary Schools

### Resources for DEIS Band 1 Primary schools

- There are designated staffing schedules for DEIS Band 1 schools giving a class size of 17:1 in junior schools, 19:1 in vertical schools (schools with junior and senior classes) and 21:1 in senior schools [Circular 0006/2023 Appendix A](#)
- Administrative Principal are appointed on an enrolment of 113 pupils [Circular 0006/2023 Appendix B](#)
- [Circular 0034/2023](#) (Delivering Equality of Opportunity In Schools) action planning and grant allocation for all DEIS schools
- Access to [Home School Community Liaison Services \(HSCL\)](#)
- Access to [School Meals Programme](#)
- Access to range of supports under [School Completion Programme](#)
- Access to literacy/numeracy support such as Reading Recovery, Maths Recovery, First Steps, Ready Set Go Maths
- Access to planning supports
- Access to a range of professional development supports through Oide, the new integrated support service for teachers and school leaders (formerly PDST, CSL, JCT and NIPT). [www.oide.ie](http://www.oide.ie)

In addition, the DEIS Plan (DES, 2017, pp. 56-57) identified:

- Expansion of NEPS provision in DEIS schools.
- Roll out of Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management Programme and Friends Programme to all DEIS schools.

### **Resources for DEIS Band 2 Primary schools:**

- Administrative Principal are appointed on an enrolment of 136 pupils [Circular 0006/2023 Appendix B](#)
- [Circular 0034/2023](#) (Delivering Equality of Opportunity In Schools) action planning and grant allocation for all DEIS schools
- Access to [Home School Community Liaison Services \(HSCL\)](#)
- Access to [School Meals Programme](#)
- Access to range of supports under [School Completion Programme](#)
- Access to literacy/numeracy support such as Reading Recovery, Maths Recovery, First Steps, Ready Set Go Maths
- Access to planning supports
- Access to a range of professional development supports through Oide, the new integrated support service for teachers and school leaders (formerly PDST, CSL, JCT and NIPT). [www.oide.ie](http://www.oide.ie)

### **Resources for DEIS Rural schools**

- [Circular 0034/2023](#) (Delivering Equality of Opportunity In Schools) action planning and grant allocation for all DEIS schools
- Access to [School Meals Programme](#)
- Access to planning supports
- Access to a range of professional development supports through Oide, the new integrated support service for teachers and school leaders (formerly PDST, CSL, JCT and NIPT). [www.oide.ie](http://www.oide.ie)

In addition, the DEIS Plan (DES, 2017, pp. 56-57) identified:

- Access to range of supports under School Completion Programme.
- Expansion of NEPS provision in DEIS schools.
- Roll out of Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management Programme and Friends Programme to all DEIS schools.

\*Accessed 23.10.2023 list provided: <https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/4018ea-deis-delivering-equality-of-opportunity-in-schools/#resources-for-deis-schools>

## Appendix 2: NAMER '21 scales and statistics

The following notes on NAMER '21 scales and statistics can be used to interpret the results reported in the remainder of the report:

### NAMER '21 scale scores & proficiency levels

**Scale Scores:** Scale scores take into account not only the number of items answered correctly by each pupil but also the unique characteristics of each test item, as well as other information (e.g., contextual data). In NAMER '09 mean scores on all scales and subscales in English reading and Mathematics were set to 250 points, and standard deviations to 50. Scores achieved by pupils participating in NAMER '14 and NAMER '21 were projected onto the same scales and subscales as those used in NAMER '09 using Item Response Theory (IRT) scaling.

**Proficiency Levels:** Proficiency levels describe the skills that pupils falling within certain score ranges can demonstrate. There are four proficiency levels, with Level 4 representing the most complex skills and Level 1 the most basic. There is also a 'Below Level 1' category for pupils who did not show the competencies required for the simplest assessment tasks. Proficiency levels are based on mastery of skills, meaning that pupils are consistently able to demonstrate the skills at their proficiency level and the levels below, but are not consistently able to demonstrate the skills exemplifying the levels above them.

In NAMER '09, pupils were assigned to proficiency levels on the overall reading and Mathematics scales in Second and Sixth classes, such that, for each domain, at both class levels, 10% of pupils were assigned to Level 4 (the highest level), 25% to Level 3, 30% to Level 2, 25% to Level 1, and 10% to 'Below Level 1' (Eivers et al., 2010). The score benchmarks used in 2009 were also used in NAMER '14 and NAMER '21.

### Statistical Terms

**Standard Error (SE):** Estimates (e.g., mean scores and percentages) presented in this report are based on the sample of pupils selected to take part in NAMER '21. However, it is unlikely that the 'true' value (e.g., the overall English reading mean score of all pupils in Ireland) would be exactly the same as the estimate calculated from our sample. Some variation or 'error' around estimates is to be expected. Thus, each estimate has a standard error, which provides information on how accurately the estimate found in our sample is likely to reflect the 'true' value in the population. The 'true' population value is likely to be found in an interval that is about two standard errors on either side of the obtained estimate, 95% of the time with a similar sample and assessment design.

**Confidence Intervals (CI):** Confidence intervals provide a range of values within which a statistic of interest is expected to fall. It is expected that the population statistic would fall within this range in 95% of samples of this size.

To compute the confidence intervals around an estimate, the following formula is used:

$$CI = x \pm SE * t$$

Where  $x$  is the observed value (e.g., mean score or percentage),  $SE$  is the standard error around this estimate and  $t$  is the critical value which is based on the survey design and the significance level.

**Statistical Significance:** A statistically significant difference between groups is one that a statistical test has established is unlikely to be due to chance. The criterion, or *alpha level* ( $\alpha$ ), of .05 (5%) implies that only observed statistics with less than a 1 in 20 chance of occurring are interpreted as statistically significant.

When simultaneously comparing the differences between multiple groups, it is likely that some of them may emerge as significant at the .05 level just because of chance and not because they are truly significant in the population. If the total number of comparisons approaches 20, it follows that at least one of the relationships identified as significant using the .05 alpha level is likely to be incorrectly identified. Therefore, where multiple comparisons are carried out, the criterion for testing each comparison is adjusted to maintain the overall alpha level and protect from Type I error (false positive); i.e., incorrect rejection of the null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant relationship between two variables.

Alpha levels have been adjusted by applying the Bonferroni correction:

$$\alpha_{adjusted} = \frac{\alpha}{n}$$

where  $\alpha$  is the original alpha level (i.e., .05) and  $n$  the total number of comparisons.

It should be noted that the Bonferroni correction is considered to be a conservative approach to protecting from Type I error. This approach was also used in analyses of the previous National Assessment data.

**Effect Sizes:** An effect size is a standardised measure of the strength of a relationship between two variables. If both variables have interval or ordinal scales, then the effect size is the correlation coefficient. If one variable describes membership in a group and the other has an interval or ordinal scale, then the effect size is the difference between two means that is expressed in standard deviation units.

Effect sizes associated with mean differences in this report were computed using Cohen's  $d$  (Cohen, 1988). Based on benchmarks suggested by Cohen (1988), for mean differences, an effect size of 0.2 can be interpreted as small, an effect size of .5 is medium, and an effect size of .8 is large. However, these benchmarks should not always be interpreted rigidly, because even small effect sizes can have large consequences in some contexts. This report uses the What Works Clearinghouse (2014) criteria for interpreting effect sizes. Mean differences with effect sizes of 0.25 or higher can be considered substantively important, whether or not the underlying difference is statistically significant. Effect sizes greater than 0.50 are considered large.

## Appendix to Chapter 2

**Table A2.1: Percentage of pupils who were not born in Ireland by DEIS status and grade level**

DEIS status	Second Class		Sixth Class	
	%	SE	%	SE
Urban Non-DEIS	12.4	1.49	8.0	0.71
Urban Band 1	14.6	2.12	13.0	1.66
Urban Band 2	21.9	3.05	17.3	2.70
Comparisons	Difference	SED	95% CI (BC)	
Second Class				
Urban Band 1* - Urban Non-DEIS	2.2	2.59	-4.1	8.4
Urban Band 2* - Urban Non-DEIS	<b>9.5</b>	3.39	1.3	17.7
Urban Band 2* - Urban Band 1	7.3	3.71	-1.6	16.3
Sixth Class				
Urban Band 1* - Urban Non-DEIS	<b>5.1</b>	1.81	0.7	9.4
Urban Band 2* - Urban Non-DEIS	<b>9.3</b>	2.79	2.6	16.0
Urban Band 2* - Urban Band 1	4.2	3.17	-3.4	11.9

Second & Sixth class databases. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

**Table A2.2: Pupil place of birth and mean achievement scores by DEIS status and grade level**

Second Class English Reading								
DEIS status	Born in Ireland	SE	Not born in Ireland*	SE	Difference	SED	95% CI	
Urban Non-DEIS	267.4	1.76	252.3	3.99	<b>15.1</b>	3.92	5.6	24.6
Urban Band 1	237.1	2.21	237.1	3.57	0.0	3.61	-8.7	8.8
Urban Band 2	251.9	2.92	252.8	5.34	0.9	4.35	-9.6	11.4
Sixth Class Mathematics								
	Born in Ireland	SE	Not born in Ireland*	SE	Difference	SED	95% CI	
Urban Non-DEIS	262.8	2.43	258.6	6.32	4.2	5.69	-9.6	17.9
Urban Band 1	232.2	2.82	242.0	3.37	<b>9.8</b>	3.95	0.2	19.3
Urban Band 2	249.8	4.71	262.0	8.57	12.2	5.47	-1.0	25.4

Second & Sixth class databases. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

**Table A2.3: Mean reading achievement of Second class pupils and Mathematics achievement of Sixth class pupils by English spoken at home and DEIS status**

DEIS status	I always or almost always speak English at home*		I sometimes speak English and sometimes speak another language at home		I never speak English at home	
English reading	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE
Urban Non-DEIS	269.4	2.03	262.0	2.97	241.7	4.92
Urban Band 1	235.7	2.62	244.2	2.79	229.9	4.57
Urban Band 2	254.9	4.55	253.4	2.47	235.9	4.90
Mathematics						
Urban Non-DEIS	263.3	2.62	259.3	4.51	264.2	4.94
Urban Band 1	228.2	2.77	246.3	3.42	259.4	7.00
Urban Band 2	247.4	4.52	260.4	6.43	273.3	15.25
<b>English reading</b>						
<b>Comparisons – Urban Non-DEIS</b>			<b>Difference</b>	<b>SED</b>	<b>95% CI (BC)</b>	
Always* - Sometimes			<b>7.4</b>	3.26	0.0	14.8
Always* - Never			<b>27.8</b>	5.33	15.7	39.8
<b>Comparisons - Urban Band 1</b>						
Always* - Sometimes		<b>8.5</b>	3.68	0.1	16.8	
Always* - Never		5.8	5.57	-6.8	18.4	
<b>Comparisons – Urban Band 2</b>						
Always* - Sometimes		1.5	4.03	-7.6	10.6	
Always* - Never		<b>19.0</b>	7.13	2.9	35.1	
<b>Mathematics</b>						
<b>Comparisons – Urban Non-DEIS</b>			<b>Difference</b>	<b>SED</b>	<b>95% CI (BC)</b>	
Always* - Sometimes			4.0	4.13	-5.3	13.3
Always* - Never			0.9	5.74	-12.0	13.9
<b>Comparisons - Urban Band 1</b>						
Always* - Sometimes		<b>18.2</b>	3.35	10.6	25.7	
Always* - Never		<b>31.2</b>	8.11	12.9	49.6	
<b>Comparisons – Urban Band 2</b>						
Always* - Sometimes		<b>13.0</b>	4.56	2.7	23.3	
Always* - Never		25.9	12.56	-2.5	54.3	

Second & Sixth class databases.

Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

**Table A2.4: Frequency of English (Second) and Mathematics (Sixth) homework and mean achievement scores by DEIS status**

DEIS status	Most school days*		2-3 times a week		Once a week		Hardly ever	
English reading	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE
Urban Non-DEIS	267.6	2.03	268.9	5.43	248.2	6.43	242.5	11.95
Urban Band 1	240.0	2.15	236.3	4.54	219.5	11.02	228.7	4.77
Urban Band 2	254.2	3.73	256.5	9.57	267.6	10.42	234.2	7.77
<b>Mathematics</b>								
Urban Non-DEIS	264.4	2.86	252.9	5.49	249.0	9.84	257.8	6.32
Urban Band 1	237.9	2.95	222.8	6.10	231.8	12.11	218.8	6.60
Urban Band 2	252.9	5.96	252.3	8.07	247.2	10.27	208.2	9.55
<b>English reading</b>								
<b>Comparisons – Urban Non-DEIS</b>			<b>Abs Difference</b>	<b>SED</b>	<b>95% CI (BC)</b>			
Most school days* - 2-3 times a week			1.2	5.99	-13.2	15.7		
Most school days* - Once a week			<b>19.4</b>	6.68	3.3	35.6		
Most school days* - Hardly ever			25.1	12.57	-5.3	55.5		
<b>Comparisons – Urban Band 1</b>								
Most school days* - 2-3 times a week			3.7	4.26	-6.6	14.0		
Most school days* - Once a week			20.5	11.05	-6.2	47.2		
Most school days* - Hardly ever			<b>11.3</b>	4.48	0.4	22.1		
<b>Comparisons – Urban Band 2</b>								
Most school days* - 2-3 times a week			2.3	10.81	-23.8	28.4		
Most school days* - Once a week			11.5	10.94	-14.9	38.0		
Most school days* - Hardly ever			<b>20.0</b>	7.47	2.0	38.1		
<b>Mathematics</b>								
<b>Comparisons – Urban Non-DEIS</b>			<b>Abs Difference</b>	<b>SED</b>	<b>95% CI (BC)</b>			
Most school days* - 2-3 times a week			11.5	6.08	-3.2	26.2		
Most school days* - Once a week			<b>15.4</b>	10.63	-10.3	41.1		
Most school days* - Hardly ever			6.7	6.99	-10.2	23.6		
<b>Comparisons – Urban Band 1</b>								
Most school days* - 2-3 times a week			15.1	7.15	-2.2	32.4		
Most school days* - Once a week			6.07	12.88	-25.1	37.2		
Most school days* - Hardly ever			<b>19.1</b>	6.89	2.4	35.8		
<b>Comparisons – Urban Band 2</b>								
Most school days* - 2-3 times a week			0.6	9.64	-22.7	23.9		
Most school days* - Once a week			5.7	11.03	-21.0	32.3		
Most school days* - Hardly ever			<b>44.6</b>	10.98	18.1	71.2		

Second & Sixth class databases. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

**Table A2.5a: Percentages of pupils with access to resources at home and mean English reading achievement scores in Second class, by DEIS status**

Technologies	Yes*			No			Comparisons				
		Mean	SE	%	Mean	SE	Abs Diff	SED	95% CI		
Computer or laptop	Urban Non-DEIS	87.0	268.2	1.80	13.0	251.6	4.16	16.5	4.09	8.5	24.6
	Urban Band 1	73.7	239.8	2.12	26.3	232.1	2.87	7.7	3.03	1.7	13.7
Tablet	Urban Band 2	81.8	255.4	2.94	18.2	243.5	5.08	11.9	3.8	4.4	19.5
	Urban Non-DEIS	90.5	266.5	1.91	9.5	259.7	5.07	6.9	5.33	-3.6	17.4
Games console	Urban Band 1	82.6	238.9	2.19	17.4	231.6	4.18	7.3	4.39	-1.4	16.0
	Urban Band 2	83.7	252.5	2.78	16.3	256.1	6.58	3.6	4.84	-5.9	13.2
Internet	Urban Non-DEIS	73.4	264.0	2.09	26.6	270.9	2.29	6.8	2.59	1.7	11.9
	Urban Band 1	75.7	237.5	2.02	24.3	237.6	3.24	0.0	2.94	-5.8	5.8
TV in the bedroom	Urban Band 2	72.5	254.1	3.37	27.5	251.3	4.42	2.8	3.32	-3.8	9.3
	Urban Non-DEIS	96.5	266.8	1.92	3.5	241.9	5.08	25.0	5.60	13.9	36.0
Own mobile phone	Urban Band 1	96.5	237.9	2.07	3.5	224.5	11.3	13.4	11.73	-9.7	36.6
	Urban Band 2	96.0	254.0	3.46	4.0	228.5	7.36	25.6	8.04	9.7	41.4
Books to read for fun	Urban Non-DEIS	36.3	250.4	2.10	63.7	274.5	1.98	24.1	2.82	18.6	29.7
	Urban Band 1	62.3	231.2	2.05	37.7	247.7	3.07	16.6	3.33	10.0	23.1
E-books	Urban Band 2	48.5	244.2	2.47	51.5	260.8	4.28	16.6	4.67	7.3	25.8
	Urban Non-DEIS	37.9	252.7	2.42	62.1	274.1	2.11	21.4	2.92	15.6	27.1
	Urban Band 1	60.9	233.0	2.09	39.1	244.1	2.56	11.1	2.40	6.4	15.9
	Urban Band 2	49.6	246.9	3.66	50.4	258.5	3.33	11.7	2.84	6.1	17.3
	Urban Non-DEIS	83.5	271.0	1.63	16.5	239.6	3.44	31.4	3.55	24.4	38.4
	Urban Band 1	71.7	244.9	1.84	28.3	220.5	3.05	24.3	3.20	18.0	30.7
	Urban Band 2	73.9	257.9	3.44	26.1	240.0	3.11	17.9	3.36	11.2	24.5
	Urban Non-DEIS	34.7	270.0	2.78	65.3	264.2	2.01	5.9	3.02	-0.1	11.8
	Urban Band 1	27.0	239.4	2.57	73.0	238.2	2.35	1.2	3.05	-4.8	7.3
	Urban Band 2	34.5	254.2	2.95	65.5	252.4	4.30	1.8	4.47	-7.0	10.6

Second class database. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

**Table A2.5b: Percentages of pupils with access to resources at home and mean Mathematics achievement scores in Sixth class, by DEIS status**

Technologies	Yes*			No			Comparisons			
	%	Mean	SE	%	Mean	SE	Abs Diff	SED	95% CI	
Computer or laptop	Urban Non-DEIS	92.1	264.6	2.50	7.9	239.6	4.51	<b>24.9</b>	4.09	16.9
	Urban Band 1	82.3	237.2	2.78	17.7	219.8	3.06	<b>17.4</b>	3.62	10.3
Urban Band 2	Urban Non-DEIS	88.7	254.0	5.17	11.3	234.5	8.30	<b>19.5</b>	5.76	8.2
	Urban Band 1	81.4	263.7	2.62	18.6	258.5	3.44	5.2	3.22	-1.1
Tablet	Urban Non-DEIS	78.2	233.7	2.64	21.8	233.9	3.69	0.3	3.48	-6.6
	Urban Band 2	80.2	251.0	5.61	19.8	255.4	5.30	4.4	4.10	-3.7
Games console	Urban Non-DEIS	87.6	262.2	2.42	12.4	265.6	4.15	3.4	3.55	-3.6
	Urban Band 1	86.4	232.9	2.73	13.7	239.3	4.26	6.4	4.47	-2.5
Urban Band 2	Urban Non-DEIS	81.6	251.2	4.56	18.4	252.0	10.59	0.9	7.47	-13.9
	Urban Band 1	99.1	262.6	2.48	0.9	242.1	11.40	20.6	11.18	-1.5
Internet access/Wi-Fi	Urban Band 2	98.6	252.0	5.42	1.5	221.1	26.80	30.9	23.30	-15.1
	Urban Non-DEIS	47.9	249.5	2.48	52.1	274.7	2.56	<b>25.2</b>	2.51	20.2
TV in your bedroom	Urban Band 1	69.2	229.0	2.58	30.8	244.6	3.65	<b>15.6</b>	3.65	8.4
	Urban Band 2	54.1	240.6	4.00	45.9	263.2	5.96	22.6	4.41	13.9
Calculator	Urban Non-DEIS	92.2	264.4	2.41	7.8	240.5	4.39	<b>24.0</b>	3.29	17.5
	Urban Band 1	80.8	237.0	2.71	19.2	222.3	3.26	<b>14.7</b>	3.25	8.3
Urban Band 2	Urban Non-DEIS	83.8	254.0	5.87	16.2	240.9	4.43	13.1	6.21	0.8
	Urban Band 1	87.4	260.5	2.54	12.6	276.3	3.77	<b>15.8</b>	3.97	7.9
Your own mobile phone	Urban Band 2	91.2	233.4	2.44	8.8	239.6	5.86	6.2	5.02	-3.7
	Urban Non-DEIS	94.8	262.9	2.49	5.2	257.2	5.37	5.7	5.10	-4.4
Streaming service	Urban Band 1	92.1	232.5	2.51	7.9	247.5	6.86	<b>15.0</b>	6.01	3.2
	Urban Band 2	92.7	251.3	5.07	7.3	259.1	7.08	7.8	5.12	-2.4

Sixth class database. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

**Table A2.6: Second class pupils' liking of school and English reading performance, by DEIS status**

DEIS status	Yes, I like School*		I'm not sure		No, I don't like school	
English reading	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE
Urban Non-DEIS	269.4	2.43	267.5	2.33	249.8	3.32
Urban Band 1	236.8	2.26	243.9	2.88	229.0	3.82
Urban Band 2	250.0	2.51	258.7	4.86	248.2	4.52
<b>Comparisons – Urban Non-DEIS</b>			Difference	SED	<b>95% CI (BC)</b>	
Yes, I like School* - I'm not sure			1.9	3.13	-5.2	9.0
Yes, I like School* - No, I don't like school			<b>19.6</b>	4.07	10.4	28.8
<b>Comparisons - Urban Band 1</b>						
Yes, I like School* - I'm not sure			7.2	3.38	-0.5	14.8
Yes, I like School* - No, I don't like school			7.8	3.65	-0.5	16.0
<b>Comparisons – Urban Band 2</b>						
Yes, I like School* - I'm not sure			<b>8.7</b>	3.55	0.7	16.8
Yes, I like School* - No, I don't like school			1.8	3.72	-6.6	10.2

Second class database. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

**Table A2.7: Second class pupils' enjoyment of reading and mean English reading scores by DEIS status**

DEIS status	Strongly agree*		Agree		Disagree	
	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE
English reading						
Urban Non-DEIS	279.3	2.3	261.1	2.0	241.9	3.2
Urban Band 1	239.0	3.0	242.1	2.3	225.6	4.2
Urban Band 2	260.2	3.7	252.3	3.9	239.5	4.4
<b>Comparisons – Urban Non-DEIS</b>			Difference	SED	<b>95% CI (BC)</b>	
Strongly agree* - Agree			<b>18.2</b>	2.71	12.1	24.4
Strongly agree* - Disagree			<b>37.4</b>	3.28	30.0	44.8
<b>Comparisons - Urban Band 1</b>						
Strongly agree* - Agree			3.0	3.75	-5.4	11.5
Strongly agree* - Disagree			<b>13.5</b>	4.10	4.2	22.7
<b>Comparisons – Urban Band 2</b>						
Strongly agree* - Agree			7.8	4.50	-2.4	18.0
Strongly agree* - Disagree			<b>20.7</b>	4.12	11.3	30.0

Second class database. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

**Table A2.8: Second Class pupils' assessment of their own English abilities and mean reading scores by DEIS status**

DEIS status	Very good*		Good		Need to improve	
English reading	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE
Urban Non-DEIS	278.0	1.82	254.5	2.70	229.5	4.22
Urban Band 1	249.8	2.51	230.2	2.73	200.7	4.67
Urban Band 2	260.3	4.51	249.7	2.98	215.9	4.01
<b>Speaking English</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS	269.7	1.93	253.0	3.43	231.8	9.95
Urban Band 1	241.2	2.25	226.2	2.85	204.6	7.98
Urban Band 2	257.3	2.71	240.6	6.30	219.6	8.36
<b>Writing a story in English</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS	270.8	2.2	267.9	2.7	252.0	3.8
Urban Band 1	243.3	2.7	238.1	2.8	227.5	3.8
Urban Band 2	258.4	3.5	253.7	3.2	237.8	4.4
<b>English reading</b>						
<b>Comparisons – Urban Non-DEIS</b>		Difference	SED	<b>95% CI (BC)</b>		
Very good* - Good		<b>23.5</b>	2.43	18.0	29.0	
Very good* - Need to improve		<b>48.5</b>	4.77	37.7	59.2	
<b>Comparisons - Urban Band 1</b>						
Very good* - Good		<b>19.5</b>	2.57	13.7	25.3	
Very good* - Need to improve		<b>49.1</b>	4.67	38.5	59.7	
<b>Comparisons – Urban Band 2</b>						
Very good* - Good		10.6	4.78	-0.2	21.4	
Very good* - Need to improve		<b>44.4</b>	5.55	31.9	57.0	
<b>Speaking English</b>						
<b>Comparisons – Urban Non-DEIS</b>		Difference	SED	<b>95% CI (BC)</b>		
Very good* - Good		<b>16.8</b>	3.69	8.4	25.1	
Very good* - Need to improve		<b>38.0</b>	10.69	13.8	62.2	
<b>Comparisons - Urban Band 1</b>						
Very good* - Good		<b>15.0</b>	2.95	8.4	21.7	
Very good* - Need to improve		<b>36.6</b>	8.52	17.3	55.9	
<b>Comparisons – Urban Band 2</b>						
Very good* - Good		<b>16.7</b>	5.49	4.3	29.1	
Very good* - Need to improve		<b>37.6</b>	6.80	22.2	53.0	
<b>Writing a story in English</b>						
<b>Comparisons – Urban Non-DEIS</b>		Difference	SED	<b>95% CI (BC)</b>		
Very good* - Good		2.90	3.39	-4.8	10.6	
Very good* - Need to improve		<b>18.8</b>	4.39	8.9	28.7	
<b>Comparisons - Urban Band 1</b>						
Very good* - Good		5.25	3.49	-2.6	13.1	
Very good* - Need to improve		<b>15.9</b>	3.93	7.0	24.7	
<b>Comparisons – Urban Band 2</b>						
Very good* - Good		4.7	2.96	-2.0	11.4	
Very good* - Need to improve		<b>20.6</b>	4.11	11.3	29.9	

Second class database. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

**Table A2.9a: Frequency of reading activities in the home and mean reading scores Second class by DEIS status – Means and SE**

DEIS status	Most days*		Some days		Never	
	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE
<b>Read with your mam or dad</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS	260.9	3.05	266.3	2.29	269.9	2.34
Urban Band 1	229.4	3.38	241.2	2.49	242.6	3.19
Urban Band 2	243.5	4.61	255.9	3.94	255.3	4.67
<b>Read with another adult</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS	246.1	5.40	270.1	2.83	266.2	2.29
Urban Band 1	221.3	4.17	238.6	4.26	240.7	2.16
Urban Band 2	229.7	6.85	257.1	6.53	254.3	2.65
<b>Read books on your own for fun</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS	278.0	2.13	266.1	2.11	241.3	2.71
Urban Band 1	241.3	3.47	245.6	2.44	226.7	3.23
Urban Band 2	263.7	5.03	255.2	2.38	237.5	3.00
<b>Read magazines or comics on your own for fun</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS	267.9	3.04	275.2	3.17	261.6	2.09
Urban Band 1	237.6	5.63	242.3	4.00	237.4	2.20
Urban Band 2	254.9	5.69	258.4	4.27	251.3	3.32
<b>Read something online at home with another adult</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS	245.9	3.80	263.3	3.34	269.8	2.01
Urban Band 1	225.6	4.94	242.2	3.97	238.8	2.19
Urban Band 2	241.9	5.43	253.5	3.60	254.2	3.85
<b>Read something online at home on your own</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS	257.9	3.32	265.8	3.14	268.7	2.02
Urban Band 1	239.5	3.38	243.9	2.68	234.8	2.35
Urban Band 2	247.7	3.09	261.9	4.27	249.9	3.75

Second class database.

**Table A2.9b: Frequency of reading activities at home and mean reading scores Second class by DEIS status – Comparisons**

<b>Read with your mam or dad</b>				
Comparisons – Urban Non-DEIS	Abs Difference	SED	95% CI (BC)	
Most days* - Some days	5.4	2.82	-1.0	11.8
Most days* - Never	9.1	3.48	1.2	16.9
<b>Comparisons - Urban Band 1</b>				
Most days* - Some days	11.8	3.81	3.2	20.5
Most days* - Never	13.3	4.52	3.1	23.5
<b>Comparisons – Urban Band 2</b>				
Most days* - Some days	12.3	4.47	2.2	22.5
Most days* - Never	11.8	4.87	0.8	22.8
<b>Read with another adult</b>				
Comparisons – Urban Non-DEIS	Abs Difference	SED	95% CI (BC)	
Most days* - Some days	24.0	5.14	12.4	35.7
Most days* - Never	20.1	5.75	7.1	33.1
<b>Comparisons - Urban Band 1</b>				
Most days* - Some days	17.3	6.11	3.5	31.2
Most days* - Never	19.4	5.01	8.0	30.7
<b>Comparisons – Urban Band 2</b>				
Most days* - Some days	27.4	6.32	13.1	41.7
Most days* - Never	24.6	6.11	10.8	38.4

Read books on your own for fun				
Comparisons – Urban Non-DEIS	Abs Difference	SED	95% CI (BC)	
Most days* - Some days	<b>12.0</b>	2.75	5.8	18.2
Most days* - Never	<b>36.7</b>	3.26	29.3	44.1
Comparisons - Urban Band 1				
Most days* - Some days	4.3	4.58	-6.1	14.6
Most days* - Never	<b>14.6</b>	3.64	6.4	22.8
Comparisons – Urban Band 2				
Most days* - Some days	8.4	4.09	-0.8	17.7
Most days* - Never	<b>26.2</b>	4.15	16.8	35.6
Read magazines or comics on your own for fun				
Comparisons – Urban Non-DEIS	Abs Difference	SED	95% CI (BC)	
Most days* - Some days	7.4	3.67	-0.9	15.7
Most days* - Never	6.2	3.34	-1.3	13.8
Comparisons - Urban Band 1				
Most days* - Some days	4.8	7.94	-13.2	22.7
Most days* - Never	0.2	5.20	-11.6	11.9
Comparisons – Urban Band 2				
Most days* - Some days	3.5	5.76	-9.5	16.6
Most days* - Never	3.5	4.35	-6.3	13.4
Read something online at home with another adult				
Comparisons – Urban Non-DEIS	Abs Difference	SED	95% CI (BC)	
Most days* - Some days	<b>17.4</b>	4.69	6.8	28.0
Most days* - Never	<b>23.8</b>	3.81	15.2	32.4
Comparisons - Urban Band 1				
Most days* - Some days	<b>16.6</b>	6.27	2.5	30.8
Most days* - Never	<b>13.2</b>	5.51	0.8	25.7
Comparisons – Urban Band 2				
Most days* - Some days	<b>11.6</b>	4.30	1.9	21.4
Most days* - Never	<b>12.4</b>	4.84	1.4	23.3
Read something online at home on your own				
Comparisons – Urban Non-DEIS	Abs Difference	SED	95% CI (BC)	
Most days* - Some days	<b>7.9</b>	3.43	0.2	15.6
Most days* - Never	<b>10.8</b>	3.89	2.0	19.6
Comparisons - Urban Band 1				
Most days* - Some days	4.4	3.55	-3.6	12.4
Most days* - Never	4.7	3.59	-3.4	12.8
Comparisons – Urban Band 2				
Most days* - Some days	<b>14.2</b>	4.32	4.5	24.0
Most days* - Never	2.2	3.62	-6.0	10.4

Second class database. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

**Table A2.10: Sixth class pupils' sense of belonging at school and mean Mathematics achievement**

DEIS status	Agree*	SE	Disagree	SE	Difference	SED	95% CI	
<b>I like being at school</b>								
Urban Non-DEIS	266.4	2.93	253.0	2.44	<b>13.4</b>	2.92	7.6	19.2
Urban Band 1	238.2	2.23	225.1	4.09	<b>13.1</b>	3.55	6.1	20.1
Urban Band 2	254.2	5.95	247.1	4.46	7.1	4.27	-1.3	15.6
<b>I feel safe when I am in my classroom at school</b>								
Urban Non-DEIS	264.6	2.48	246.2	3.81	<b>18.3</b>	3.24	11.9	24.7
Urban Band 1	235.4	2.54	222.7	5.38	<b>12.7</b>	4.99	2.9	22.5
Urban Band 2	253.5	5.63	240.0	4.46	13.5	7.58	-1.5	28.5
<b>I feel safe when I am in the playground at school</b>								
Urban Non-DEIS	265.0	2.62	244.9	3.60	<b>20.1</b>	3.56	13.1	27.1
Urban Band 1	235.0	2.44	226.6	5.33	8.4	4.76	-1.0	17.8
Urban Band 2	254.0	5.98	238.9	3.22	<b>15.1</b>	7.42	0.5	29.8
<b>I feel like I belong at this school</b>								
Urban Non-DEIS	266.1	2.49	244.5	3.64	<b>21.5</b>	3.19	15.2	27.8
Urban Band 1	236.8	2.51	222.3	4.19	<b>14.6</b>	3.24	8.2	20.9
Urban Band 2	255.0	5.92	240.3	3.81	<b>14.7</b>	5.61	3.6	25.8
<b>Teachers at this school are fair to me</b>								
Urban Non-DEIS	263.7	2.54	254.9	4.86	8.8	4.58	-0.2	17.9
Urban Band 1	235.4	2.65	222.5	4.10	<b>12.9</b>	3.83	5.3	20.4
Urban Band 2	253.5	5.22	243.2	5.46	<b>10.2</b>	3.87	2.6	17.9
<b>I am proud to go to this school</b>								
Urban Non-DEIS	264.1	2.63	251.5	4.63	<b>12.6</b>	4.74	3.2	21.9
Urban Band 1	235.4	2.51	222.1	5.16	<b>13.2</b>	4.45	4.5	22.0
Urban Band 2	253.3	4.80	242.5	11.00	10.9	7.20	-3.3	25.1
<b>I have friends in school</b>								
Urban Non-DEIS	263.4	2.57	238.4	5.73	<b>25.0</b>	6.12	12.9	37.1
Urban Band 1	234.4	2.50	220.2	9.03	14.2	8.56	-2.7	31.1
Urban Band 2	253.1	5.48	225.8	6.36	<b>27.4</b>	9.62	8.4	46.4

Sixth class database. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

**Table A2.11: Sixth class pupils' frequency of parental support for learning at home and mean Mathematics achievement**

Parental Support	Several times a week*		Several times a month		Less often	
	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE
Discuss how well you are doing at school	261.7	2.85	265.0	3.56	262.0	3.33
Urban Non-DEIS	231.8	3.50	239.0	4.02	233.0	3.21
Urban Band 1	248.1	5.17	258.5	7.57	250.0	4.78
Urban Band 2	263.0	3.38	268.5	3.07	257.4	2.60
Discuss books, films, or TV with you	230.3	3.65	236.1	3.70	235.9	3.10
Urban Band 1	248.7	7.94	257.0	6.76	249.5	4.23
Urban Band 2	266.2	2.70	252.6	4.52	240.9	4.11
Eat dinner with you around the table	235.8	2.90	230.2	4.60	227.8	3.37
Urban Band 1	252.9	5.71	250.3	8.89	242.8	4.32
Spend time just chatting with you	263.5	2.84	261.7	3.35	256.7	3.85
Urban Non-DEIS	234.4	2.69	237.7	5.03	224.2	4.55
Urban Band 1	251.0	6.20	253.5	6.65	251.2	7.56

Discuss how well you are doing at school				
Comparisons – Urban Non-DEIS	Difference	SED	95% CI (BC)	
Several times a week* - Several times a month	3.3	3.27	-4.1	10.7
Several times a week* - Less often	0.3	3.54	-7.7	8.3
Comparisons - Urban Band 1				
Several times a week* - Several times a month	7.2	5.13	-4.4	18.8
Several times a week* - Less often	1.3	3.64	-7.0	9.5
Comparisons – Urban Band 2				
Several times a week* - Several times a month	<b>10.4</b>	4.12	1.1	19.7
Several times a week* - Less often	1.9	3.52	-6.0	9.9
Discuss books, films, or TV with you				
Comparisons – Urban Non-DEIS	Difference	SED	95% CI (BC)	
Several times a week* - Several times a month	5.5	3.12	-1.6	12.6
Several times a week* - Less often	5.6	3.05	-1.3	12.5
Comparisons - Urban Band 1				
Several times a week* - Several times a month	5.8	4.78	-5.0	16.6
Several times a week* - Less often	5.6	3.87	-3.2	14.3
Comparisons – Urban Band 2				
Several times a week* - Several times a month	8.3	5.71	-4.6	21.2
Several times a week* - Less often	0.7	5.73	-12.2	13.7
Eat dinner with you around the table				
Comparisons – Urban Non-DEIS	Difference	SED	95% CI (BC)	
Several times a week* - Several times a month	<b>13.6</b>	3.83	5.0	22.3
Several times a week* - Less often	<b>25.3</b>	5.42	13.0	37.5
Comparisons - Urban Band 1				
Several times a week* - Several times a month	5.6	4.53	-4.7	15.8
Several times a week* - Less often	8.0	3.59	-0.2	16.2
Comparisons – Urban Band 2				
Several times a week* - Several times a month	2.5	5.44	-9.8	14.8
Several times a week* - Less often	10.0	6.19	-4.0	24.0
Spend time just chatting with you				
Comparisons – Urban Non-DEIS	Difference	SED	95% CI (BC)	
Several times a week* - Several times a month	1.8	3.31	-5.7	9.3
Several times a week* - Less often	6.8	4.33	-3.0	16.6
Comparisons - Urban Band 1				
Several times a week* - Several times a month	3.3	5.06	-8.1	14.7
Several times a week* - Less often	<b>10.3</b>	4.16	0.9	19.7
Comparisons – Urban Band 2				
Several times a week* - Several times a month	2.5	8.33	-16.4	21.3
Several times a week* - Less often	0.2	5.81	-12.9	13.4

Sixth class database. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

## Appendix to Chapter 3

**Table A3.1: Teacher gender, Second and Sixth class, by school DEIS status**

Grade	Gender	Urban Non-DEIS*		Urban Band 1		Urban Band 2	
		%	SE	%	SE	%	SE
Second class	Female	81.0	5.29	89.8	2.88	86.9	4.37
	Male	19.0	5.29	10.2	2.88	13.1	4.37
Sixth class	Female	59.1	5.9	61.2	6.94	64.5	10.88
	Male	40.9	5.88	38.8	6.94	35.5	10.88
<b>Comparisons</b>		<b>Difference</b>		<b>SED</b>		<b>95% CI (BC)</b>	
<b>Second class</b>							
Female	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	8.9		6.02		-4.8	
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	5.9		6.86		-9.6	
Male	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	8.8		6.02		-4.8	
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	5.9		6.86		-9.6	
<b>Sixth class</b>							
Female	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	2.1		9.10		-18.5	
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	5.4		12.37		-22.6	
Male	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	2.1		9.10		-18.5	
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	5.4		12.37		-22.6	

Second & Sixth class databases. No statistically significant differences from the reference group\*.

**Table A3.2: Completion date completion of initial teacher education training, by grade and DEIS status**

Date of completion initial teacher education	Grade	Urban Non-DEIS*		Urban Band 1		Urban Band 2	
		%	SE	%	SE	%	SE
Before 1990	Second	2.9	2.02	4.0	2.39	9.3	3.47
	Sixth	3.0	2.01	3.1	1.9	2.8	2.03
1990-1999	Second	10.3	3.59	5.2	2.4	7.4	3.88
	Sixth	10.8	3.90	5.9	3.14	13.5	6.40
2000-2009	Second	20.7	4.78	24.4	4.74	22.5	5.50
	Sixth	32.2	5.72	44.4	6.60	30.3	8.62
2010-2019	Second	60.7	6.10	61.0	5.79	55.3	6.95
	Sixth	49.3	5.77	41.9	6.12	52.1	11.49
2020	Second	5.5	2.77	5.4	2.92	5.4	3.23
	Sixth	4.8	2.43	4.6	1.42	1.4	1.42
<b>Comparisons</b>		<b>Difference</b>		<b>SED</b>		<b>95% CI (BC)</b>	
<b>Before 1990</b>							
Second	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	1.1		3.13		-5.9	
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	6.4		4.02		-2.7	
Sixth	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	0.2		2.77		-6.1	
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	0.2		2.86		-6.3	
<b>1990-1999</b>							
Second	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	5.1		4.33		-4.7	
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	2.8		5.28		-9.1	
Sixth	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	4.9		5.01		-6.4	
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	2.7		7.50		-14.3	

2000-2009					
Second	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	3.7	6.73	-11.5	18.9
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	1.8	7.28	-14.7	18.3
Sixth	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	12.3	8.73	-7.5	32.0
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	1.9	10.34	-21.5	25.3
2010-2019					
Second	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	0.3	8.41	-18.7	19.3
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	5.4	9.25	-15.5	26.3
Sixth	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	7.4	8.41	-11.7	26.4
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	2.8	12.86	-26.2	31.9
2020					
Second	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	0.1	4.02	-9.0	9.2
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	0.0	4.25	-9.6	9.6
Sixth	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	0.2	2.81	-6.2	6.5
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	3.4	2.82	-3.0	9.7

Second & Sixth class databases. No statistically significant differences from the reference group\*.

**Table A3.3: Average years teaching experience, by DEIS status and grade**

DEIS status	Second class		Sixth class	
	Mean	SE	Mean	SE
Urban Non-DEIS*	10.0	0.85	11.3	0.82
Urban Band 1	9.8	0.79	11.0	0.87
Urban Band 2	11.2	1.30	12.2	1.36
Comparisons	Difference		SED	95% CI (BC)
Second Class				
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	0.2	1.16	-2.5	2.6
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	1.3	1.55	-2.3	4.8
Sixth Class				
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	0.3	1.19	-2.4	3.0
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	0.9	1.59	-2.7	4.5

Second & Sixth class databases. No statistically significant differences from the reference group\*.

**Table A3.4: Percentages of pupils with teachers who previously taught in DEIS school, by DEIS status and grade level**

DEIS status	Second class		Sixth class	
	%	SE	%	SE
Urban Non-DEIS*	24.6	7.30	30.2	6.11
Urban Band 1	96.1	2.53	100.0	0.00
Urban Band 2	98.1	1.87	98.4	1.57
Comparisons	Difference		SED	95% CI (BC)
Second Class				
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	<b>71.5</b>	7.72	54.1	89.0
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	<b>73.5</b>	7.53	56.5	90.6
Sixth Class				
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	<b>69.8</b>	6.11	56.0	83.7
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	<b>68.3</b>	6.31	54.0	82.5

Second & Sixth class databases. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

**Table A3.5: Mean achievement scores of pupils with permanent, temporary, and substitute teachers, by DEIS status**

DEIS status	Permanent*		Temporary		Substitute	
<b>English reading</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SE</b>
Urban Non-DEIS	267.6	2.01	260.8	3.80	257.5	5.24
Urban Band 1	238.5	2.19	234.1	4.84	233.6	10.72
Urban Band 2	254.2	3.97	253.0	4.59	244.5	5.52
<b>Mathematics</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS	262.2	2.92	264.8	7.74	258.1	5.92
Urban Band 1	233.4	2.83	232.4	11.18	229.1	6.08
Urban Band 2	252.0	6.20	253.1	4.07	236.9	5.27
<b>English reading</b>						
<b>Comparisons – Urban Non-DEIS</b>		<b>Difference</b>	<b>SED</b>	<b>95% CI (BC)</b>		
Permanent* - Temporary		6.8	3.95	-2.1	15.8	
Permanent* - Substitute		10.1	5.82	-3.1	23.3	
<b>Comparisons - Urban Band 1</b>						
Permanent* - Temporary		4.4	4.71	-6.2	15.1	
Permanent* - Substitute		4.9	10.93	-19.8	29.6	
<b>Comparisons – Urban Band 2</b>						
Permanent* - Temporary		1.2	6.15	-12.7	15.1	
Permanent* - Substitute		9.7	5.76	-3.4	22.7	
<b>Mathematics</b>						
<b>Comparisons – Urban Non-DEIS</b>		<b>Difference</b>	<b>SED</b>	<b>95% CI (BC)</b>		
Permanent* - Temporary		2.6	6.29	-11.7	16.8	
Permanent* - Substitute		4.1	8.96	-16.2	24.3	
<b>Comparisons - Urban Band 1</b>						
Permanent* - Temporary		1.0	6.50	-13.7	15.7	
Permanent* - Substitute		4.3	11.24	-21.1	29.7	
<b>Comparisons – Urban Band 2</b>						
Permanent* - Temporary		1.07	8.50	-18.1	20.3	
Permanent* - Substitute						

Second & Sixth class databases. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

**Table A3.6: Percentages of pupils whose Second class and Sixth class teachers had an additional qualification, by DEIS status**

DEIS status	Second class		Sixth class	
	%	SE	%	SE
Urban Non-DEIS	44.3	5.61	44.8	5.11
Urban Band 1	37.6	6.37	41.6	5.21
Urban Band 2	29.9	7.24	34.3	9.54
<b>Comparisons</b>		<b>Difference</b>	<b>SED</b>	<b>95% CI (BC)</b>
<b>Second Class</b>				
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	6.8	8.49	-12.4	26.0
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	14.4	9.16	-6.3	35.2
<b>Sixth Class</b>				
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	3.2	7.30	-13.3	19.7
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	10.5	10.82	-14.0	34.9

Second & Sixth class databases. No statistically significant differences from the reference group\*.

**Table A3.7: Mean achievement scores of pupils whose teachers had an additional qualification, by grade level and DEIS status**

DEIS status	Yes*	SE	No	SE	Diff	SED	95% CI
<b>English reading – Second class</b>							
Urban Non-DEIS	263.5	2.58	267.4	2.85	3.9	4.25	-4.4
Urban Band 1	233.4	3.34	239.9	2.42	6.5	4.09	-1.6
Urban Band 2	255.2	3.19	251.5	4.65	3.7	5.99	-8.2
<b>Mathematics – Sixth class</b>							
Urban Non-DEIS	261.9	3.35	262.7	3.28	0.8	4.32	-7.7
Urban Band 1	243.8	3.38	225.6	3.10	<b>18.2</b>	4.44	9.5
Urban Band 2	243.1	4.84	256.5	5.51	<b>13.4</b>	5.45	2.6

Second & Sixth class databases. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

**Table 3.8: Percentages of pupils whose teachers reported that they had ‘attended’ some CPD/TPL in English (Second) and Mathematics (Sixth), by DEIS status**

CPD/TPL	Grade	Urban Non-DEIS*		Urban Band 1		Urban Band 2	
		%	SE	%	SE	%	SE
Attendance at external CPD/TPL courses on teaching and learning	Second	47.3	6.00	50.8	6.48	50.0	11.05
	Sixth	29.5	5.42	31.1	5.91	30.0	8.71
Participation in in-school CPD/TPL (outside ‘Croke Park hours’)	Second	45.4	6.96	63.1	7.34	56.2	9.70
	Sixth	35.1	5.52	42.4	5.83	36.3	8.80
Participation in in-school CPD/TPL (inside ‘Croke Park hours’)	Second	64.6	7.43	54.6	6.44	75.6	6.50
	Sixth	51.4	6.97	54.9	6.10	54.3	11.17
Participation in planning activities (inside/outside ‘Croke Park hours’)	Second	89.8	4.33	87.5	3.81	85.7	6.25
	Sixth	82.1	5.15	81.1	3.80	83.1	4.45
Online CPD/TPL	Second	71.2	5.61	71.9	4.66	68.4	7.32
	Sixth	53.4	5.83	46.8	6.56	39.1	10.37
Professional self-directed reading/study	Second	62.0	6.15	55.7	5.63	71.4	7.34
	Sixth	54.6	6.57	54.7	5.64	48.6	9.00
Training in distance learning in relation to English or Mathematics	Second	47.2	5.60	32.2	6.13	46.3	7.57
	Sixth	34.9	5.39	36.1	5.82	32.1	9.55
Comparisons		Difference		SED		95% CI (BC)	
<b>Attendance at external CPD/TPL courses on teaching and learning</b>							
Second	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	3.5	8.84	-16.5	23.4		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	2.7	12.58	-25.7	31.2		
Sixth	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	1.6	8.02	-16.6	19.7		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	0.5	10.26	-22.7	23.7		
<b>Participation in in-school CPD/TPL (outside of ‘Croke Park Agreement hours’)</b>							
Second	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	17.7	10.12	-5.2	40.6		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	10.8	11.94	-16.2	37.8		
Sixth	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	7.3	8.03	-10.9	25.4		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	1.2	10.39	-22.3	24.7		
<b>Participation in in-school CPD/TPL (inside of ‘Croke Park Agreement hours’)</b>							
Second	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	9.9	9.84	-12.3	32.2		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	11.1	9.88	-11.3	33.4		
Sixth	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	3.5	9.26	-17.4	24.4		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	2.9	13.16	-26.8	32.7		
<b>Participation in planning activities (inside or outside of ‘Croke Park Agreement hours’)</b>							
Second	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	2.3	5.77	-10.8	15.3		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	4.1	7.61	-13.1	21.3		
Sixth	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	1.0	6.40	-13.5	15.5		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	1.1	6.81	-14.3	16.4		
<b>Online CPD/TPL</b>							
Second	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	0.6	7.29	-15.8	17.1		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	2.8	9.22	-18.0	23.7		
Sixth	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	6.5	8.78	-13.3	26.4		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	14.3	11.90	-12.6	41.2		
<b>Professional self-directed reading/study related to English or Mathematics</b>							
Second	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	6.4	8.34	-12.5	25.2		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	9.4	9.58	-12.3	31.0		
Sixth	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	0.07	8.66	-19.5	19.6		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	5.9	11.14	-19.2	31.2		
<b>Specific training in distance learning in relation to English or Mathematics</b>							
Second	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	15.0	8.30	-3.8	33.7		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	0.8	9.41	-20.4	22.1		
Sixth	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	1.2	7.93	-16.7	19.2		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	2.7	10.97	-22.1	27.5		

Second & Sixth class databases. No statistically significant differences from the reference group\*.

**Table A3.9: Mean class size, by DEIS status and grade level**

DEIS status	Second class				Sixth class			
	All class levels		Second class only		All class levels		Sixth class only	
	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE
Urban Non-DEIS*	26.3	0.41	25.1	0.81	26.4	0.49	26.1	0.53
Urban Band 1	20.3	0.54	19.7	0.64	22.2	0.46	20.9	0.60
Urban Band 2	23.1	0.69	22.9	0.52	27.0	1.49	26.9	1.51
<b>Comparisons</b>			<b>Difference</b>		<b>SED</b>		<b>95% CI (BC)</b>	
<b>Second – All class levels</b>								
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1			<b>6.1</b>		0.68		4.5	7.6
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2			<b>3.3</b>		0.80		1.5	5.1
<b>Second – Second class only</b>								
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1			<b>5.5</b>		1.03		3.1	7.8
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2			<b>2.3</b>		0.96		0.1	4.4
<b>Sixth – All class levels</b>								
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1			<b>4.1</b>		0.67		2.6	5.7
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2			<b>0.7</b>		1.57		-2.9	4.2
<b>Sixth – Sixth class only</b>								
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1			<b>5.2</b>		0.80		3.4	7.0
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2			<b>0.8</b>		1.60		-2.8	4.4

Second & Sixth class databases. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

**Table A3.10: Percentages of pupils who did 'not' have access to classroom resources, by grade and DEIS status**

Resources	Grade	Urban Non-DEIS		Urban Band 1		Urban Band 2	
		%	SE	%	SE	%	SE
An interactive whiteboard	Second	4.4	2.60	7.1	3.51	6.6	3.30
	Sixth	8.9	3.28	11.2	2.75	4.1	3.07
Computers/computing devices	Second	24.3	6.14	34.5	6.51	26.5	11.40
	Sixth	26.6	6.84	24.9	5.57	30.2	9.08
High-speed Internet that usually works	Second	5.7	2.70	14.2	4.86	7.9	4.27
	Sixth	9.0	3.69	14.8	4.60	16.2	5.73
Electronic books for pupils to read	Second	68.1	6.53	66.8	7.31	62.3	7.35
	Sixth	76.4	5.49	76.4	5.05	66.1	11.91
An adequate number of print-based novels for pupils to read	Second	14.7	4.90	21.4	3.95	16.1	7.20
	Sixth	6.8	3.41	11.3	3.90	5.2	2.20
An adequate number of print-based information books for pupils to read	Second	22.9	3.75	38.3	5.82	31.4	5.97
	Sixth	27.9	6.74	32.2	5.28	23.3	5.16
<b>Comparisons</b>		<b>Difference</b>		<b>SED</b>		<b>95% CI (BC)</b>	
<b>An interactive whiteboard</b>							
Second	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	2.7	4.37	-7.2	12.6		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	2.2	4.20	-7.3	11.7		
Sixth	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	2.3	4.28	-7.4	12.0		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	4.8	4.49	-5.3	15.0		
<b>Computers/computing devices</b>							
Second	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	10.1	8.95	-10.1	30.4		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	2.1	12.95	-27.1	31.4		
Sixth	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	1.7	8.82	-18.2	21.6		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	3.5	11.37	-22.	29.2		
<b>High-speed Internet that usually works</b>							
Second	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	8.5	5.56	-4.1	21.1		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	2.2	5.05	-9.2	13.6		
Sixth	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	5.8	5.90	-7.6	19.1		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	7.2	6.82	-8.2	22.6		
<b>Electronic books for pupils to read</b>							
Second	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	1.3	9.80	-20.9	23.5		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	5.8	9.83	-16.5	28.0		
Sixth	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	0.0	7.47	-16.9	16.9		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	10.3	13.12	-19.3	40.0		
<b>An adequate number of print-based novels for pupils to read</b>							
Second	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	6.7	6.29	-7.6	20.9		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	1.4	8.71	-18.3	21.1		
Sixth	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	4.5	5.19	-7.2	16.3		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	1.6	4.06	-7.6	10.8		
<b>An adequate number of print-based information books for pupils to read</b>							
Second	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	15.4	6.92	-0.2	31.1		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	8.5	7.05	-7.4	24.4		
Sixth	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	4.3	8.56	-15.1	23.6		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	4.6	8.49	-14.6	23.8		

Second & Sixth class databases. No statistically significant differences from the reference group\*.

**Table A3.11: Percentages of pupils in receipt of various forms of learning support for English, by grade and DEIS status**

Learning Support	Grade	Urban Non-DEIS		Urban Band 1		Urban Band 2	
		%	SE	%	SE	%	SE
In-class support	Second	52.4	7.51	55.9	6.70	54.7	6.62
	Sixth	43.5	6.53	43.0	6.19	51.9	11.89
Withdrawal from class – in a group	Second	90.0	3.42	85.6	4.79	81.0	12.61
	Sixth	80.9	4.04	84.5	4.26	85.9	6.61
Withdrawal from class – individually	Second	76.9	5.19	63.9	5.85	64.7	9.81
	Sixth	63.0	6.49	59.8	5.61	69.7	4.86
No additional support provided	Second	0.0	0.00	2.1	0.52	1.5	1.53
	Sixth	5.0	2.44	1.4	1.1	5.53	3.30
<b>Comparisons</b>		<b>Difference</b>		<b>SED</b>		<b>95% CI (BC)</b>	
<b>In-class support</b>							
Second	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	3.4	10.07	-19.3	26.2		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	2.3	10.01	-20.3	24.9		
Sixth	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	0.5	9.00	-19.8	20.9		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	8.3	13.57	-22.4	39.0		
<b>Withdrawal from class – in a group</b>							
Second	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	4.4	5.88	-8.9	17.7		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	9.0	13.07	-20.5	38.6		
Sixth	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	3.6	5.87	-9.7	16.9		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	5.0	7.75	-12.5	22.5		
<b>Withdrawal from class – individually</b>							
Second	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	13.0	7.82	-4.6	30.7		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	12.2	11.10	-12.9	37.3		
Sixth	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	3.2	8.58	-16.2	22.6		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	6.7	8.11	-11.6	25.0		
<b>No additional support provided</b>							
Second	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	<b>2.1</b>	0.52	0.9	3.3		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	1.5	1.53	-2.0	4.9		
Sixth	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	3.6	2.68	-2.4	9.7		
	Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	0.9	4.10	-8.8	9.8		

Second & Sixth class databases. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

**Table A3.12: Percentages of Second class pupils taught by teachers using each of several reading initiatives, programmes, or approaches, by DEIS status**

Reading/language initiatives or approaches	Urban Non-DEIS *		Urban Band 1		Urban Band 2	
	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE
Paired/shared reading with a parent or adult volunteer	30.4	5.98	32.9	6.14	33.1	8.55
Peer tutoring/Paired reading with another pupil	37.5	7.01	45.7	6.77	48.0	12.60
Paired reading with another member of teaching staff	51.2	7.34	75.9	5.59	63.1	6.84
Paired Writing	63.7	6.50	70.3	4.65	71.6	10.54
First Steps Reading	18.2	5.34	71.6	6.25	79.7	11.25
First Steps Writing	29.7	6.68	74.4	6.00	83.4	10.48
First Steps Oral Language	20.9	5.77	70.3	6.38	72.3	11.83
Reading/Literacy Stations	52.1	6.22	75.9	4.78	73.6	6.13
Power Hour	27.5	5.24	31.7	6.22	21.1	5.82
Guided Reading	80.8	5.26	91.7	3.41	81.5	6.47
Drop Everything and Read	94.5	2.97	93.8	3.04	95.8	4.49
Literacy Lift-Off	20.6	5.26	17.9	3.96	27.7	8.96
Jolly Phonics	74.5	6.76	70.4	6.16	61.9	11.33
Write to Read	13.4	4.86	25.0	5.82	13.9	6.04
Comparisons	Difference		SED		95% CI (BC)	
<b>Paired/shared reading with a parent or adult volunteer</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	2.5	8.57	-16.9	21.9		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	2.7	10.43	-20.9	26.3		
<b>Peer tutoring/Paired reading with another pupil</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	8.3	9.75	-13.8	30.3		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	10.9	14.42	-22.0	43.2		
<b>Paired reading with another member of teaching staff</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	24.6	9.23	3.8	45.5		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	11.9	10.04	-10.8	34.6		
<b>Paired Writing</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	6.6	7.99	-11.5	24.7		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	8.0	12.38	-20.0	36.0		
<b>First Steps Reading</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	53.4	8.22	34.8	72.0		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	61.5	12.45	33.4	89.7		
<b>First Steps Writing</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	44.7	8.98	24.4	65.0		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	53.7	12.43	25.7	81.8		
<b>First Steps Oral Language</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	49.4	8.60	29.9	68.8		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	51.4	13.16	21.7	81.2		
<b>Reading/Literacy Stations</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	23.9	7.84	6.2	41.6		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	21.6	8.73	1.9	41.4		
<b>Power Hour</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	4.2	8.13	-14.2	22.6		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	6.4	7.83	-11.3	24.1		
<b>Guided Reading</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	10.9	6.26	-3.3	25.1		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	0.7	8.34	-18.1	19.6		

Drop Everything and Read				
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	0.7	4.26	-8.9	10.4
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	1.3	5.39	-10.9	13.5
Literacy Lift-Off				
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	2.7	6.58	-12.2	17.6
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	7.1	10.39	-16.4	30.6
Jolly Phonics				
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	4.1	9.14	-16.6	24.7
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	12.9	13.19	-16.9	42.7
Write to Read				
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	11.6	7.59	-5.6	28.7
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	0.4	7.75	-17.1	18.0

Second class database. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

**Table A3.13: Percentages of Sixth class pupils taught by teachers using each of several numeracy initiatives, programmes, or approaches, by DEIS status**

Initiatives	Urban Non-DEIS*		Urban Band 1		Urban Band 2	
	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE
Paired Maths with a parent or adult volunteer	21.4	5.41	18.5	5.11	1.9	1.71
Paired Maths with another pupil	87.6	3.82	86.1	4.09	83.9	4.97
Maths for Fun	66.8	6.22	67.7	5.95	66.7	7.01
Maths stations	62.4	7.20	65.3	5.26	60.3	7.36
Coding	42.3	5.80	38.8	5.95	30.0	11.17
Lesson Study	37.5	5.42	41.9	6.41	31.7	11.43
Comparisons	Difference		SED	95% CI (BC)		
Paired Maths with a parent or adult volunteer						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	2.9	7.44	-14.0	19.7		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	<b>19.7</b>	5.67	6.9	32.5		
Paired Maths with another pupil						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	1.5	5.60	-11.2	14.1		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	3.7	6.27	-10.5	17.9		
Maths for Fun						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	0.9	8.61	-18.5	20.4		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	0.1	9.37	-21.1	21.3		
Maths stations						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	2.9	8.92	-17.3	23.0		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	2.1	10.29	-21.2	25.4		
Coding						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	3.5	8.31	-15.3	22.3		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	12.3	12.58	-16.2	40.7		
Lesson Study						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	4.4	8.39	-14.6	23.4		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	5.9	12.65	-22.7	34.5		

Sixth class database. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

## Appendix to Chapter 4

**Table A4.1: Percentage of pupils offered textbook rental scheme and annual costs by DEIS status**

	Urban Non-DEIS*		Urban Band 1		Urban Band 2	
	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE
Offer Textbook rental scheme	97.7	2.34	100.0	0.00	96.5	3.53
<b>Comparisons</b>	<b>Difference</b>		<b>SED</b>		<b>95% CI (BC)</b>	
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	2.3	2.34	-3.0	7.6		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	1.2	4.24	-8.4	10.7		

Sixth class database. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

**Table A4.2: Percentages of pupils in schools where parental contribution was requested and received, by DEIS status**

	Urban Non-DEIS*		Urban Band 1		Urban Band 2	
	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE
Contribution requested	66.0	7.92	21.5	5.26	30.0	5.86
<b>Percentage of pupils where contribution received</b>						
0-25%	18.7	7.36	33.9	7.82	59.8	14.10
26-50%	12.7	6.25	19.0	9.28	16.0	11.13
51-75%	34.4	8.44	23.9	9.85	13.4	9.66
76-100%	34.3	8.59	23.2	7.10	10.9	7.98
<b>Comparisons</b>	<b>Difference</b>		<b>SED</b>		<b>95% CI (BC)</b>	
<b>Contribution requested</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	<b>44.5</b>	9.51	22.0	66.0		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	<b>36.0</b>	9.85	13.7	58.3		
<b>Percentage of pupils where contribution received 0-25%</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	15.2	10.74	-9.1	39.5		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	<b>41.1</b>	15.91	5.1	77.0		
<b>Percentage of pupils where contribution received 26-50%</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	6.3	11.19	-19.0	31.6		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	3.3	12.76	-25.6	32.1		
<b>Percentage of pupils where contribution received 51-75%</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	10.5	12.97	-18.8	39.8		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	21.0	12.83	-8.0	50.0		
<b>Percentage of pupils where contribution received 76-100%</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	11.0	11.15	-14.2	36.2		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	<b>23.3</b>	11.72	-3.2	49.8		

Sixth class database. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

**Table A4.3: Percentages of pupils in schools with school meals, by DEIS status**

School meals	Urban Non-DEIS*		Urban Band 1		Urban Band 2	
	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE
Breakfast club	6.2	3.50	54.7	8.35	52.4	11.95
Free school meals at lunchtime	9.3	3.27	100.0	0.00	100.0	0.00
<b>Comparisons</b>	<b>Difference</b>		<b>SED</b>		<b>95% CI (BC)</b>	
<b>Breakfast club</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	<b>48.6</b>	9.06	28.1		69.0	
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	<b>46.2</b>	12.45	18.1		74.4	
<b>Free school meals at lunchtime</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	<b>90.7</b>	3.27	83.3		98.1	
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	<b>90.7</b>	3.27	83.3		98.1	

Sixth class database. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

**Table A4.4: Percentages of pupils in schools where facilities were open to the community, by DEIS status**

School building(s) and other facilities open to the local community	Urban Non-DEIS*		Urban Band 1		Urban Band 2	
	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE
In the evenings during the week	64.5	7.50	42.1	7.06	59.0	11.66
At weekends	57.7	8.07	27.9	6.43	46.7	11.39
Out of term time	62.1	7.93	24.4	6.25	56.1	6.87
<b>Comparisons</b>	<b>Difference</b>		<b>SED</b>		<b>95% CI (BC)</b>	
<b>In the evenings during the week</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	<b>22.4</b>	10.30	-0.8		45.7	
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	5.5	13.87	-25.8		36.9	
<b>At weekends</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	<b>29.9</b>	10.32	6.6		53.2	
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	11.1	13.96	-20.5		42.6	
<b>Out of term time</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	<b>37.6</b>	10.10	14.8		60.5	
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	5.9	10.49	-17.8		29.6	

Sixth class database. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

**Table A4.5: Percentage of pupils in schools experiencing teacher recruitment and retention difficulties, by DEIS status**

Difficulties over the last twelve months	Urban Non-DEIS*		Urban Band 1		Urban Band 2	
	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE
Teacher recruitment difficulties	49.1	8.79	47.4	6.68	48.0	5.87
Teacher retention difficulties	22.9	7.35	16.6	4.75	22.8	12.13
Sourcing qualified substitute teachers when required	97.6	2.42	100.0	0.00	85.0	11.38
<b>Comparisons</b>	<b>Difference</b>		<b>SED</b>		<b>95% CI (BC)</b>	
<b>Teacher recruitment difficulties</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	1.7	11.04	-23.3	26.6		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	1.1	10.57	-22.8	25.0		
<b>Teacher retention difficulties</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	6.3	8.75	-13.5	26.1		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	0.2	14.18	-31.9	32.2		
<b>Sourcing qualified substitute teachers</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	2.4	2.42	-3.1	7.9		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	12.6	11.64	-13.7	39.0		

Sixth class database. No statistically significant differences from the reference group\*.

**Table A4.6: Percentage of pupils in schools where the principals found their role 'very/fairly' satisfying, stressful, and supported, by DEIS status**

Question	Urban Non-DEIS*		Urban Band 1		Urban Band 2	
	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE
How satisfying is your job	97.1	2.90	100.0	0.00	100.0	0.00
How stressful is your job	89.2	5.35	97.1	2.12	96.9	3.11
How supported do you feel in your job	66.9	7.42	76.3	6.66	81.3	9.35
<b>Comparisons</b>	<b>Difference</b>		<b>SED</b>		<b>95% CI (BC)</b>	
<b>How satisfying is your job</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	2.9	2.90	-3.7	9.5		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	2.9	2.90	-3.7	9.5		
<b>How stressful is your job</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	8.0	5.75	-5.1	21.0		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	7.7	6.19	-6.3	21.7		
<b>How supported do you feel in your job</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	9.4	9.97	-13.2	31.9		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	14.3	11.94	-12.7	41.3		

Sixth class database. No statistically significant differences from the reference group\*.

Table A4.7: Percentages of pupils whose principal teachers characterised aspects of teacher, parent, and pupil engagement, as 'very high/high', by DEIS status

Engagement	Urban Non-DEIS *		Urban Band 1		Urban Band 2	
	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE
Teachers' job satisfaction	93.6	3.84	78.3	7.01	71.0	8.73
Teacher morale	81.7	6.41	72.5	8.10	68.9	7.70
Teachers' understanding of the school's targets and goals	96.0	2.88	78.5	5.66	77.6	12.21
Teachers' success in achieving the school's targets and goals	93.8	3.74	74.8	6.34	70.4	11.77
Teachers' expectations for pupil achievement	97.7	2.35	76.3	5.85	93.6	4.62
Parental support for pupil achievement	84.2	5.91	9.0	4.51	28.1	8.98
Parental involvement in school activities	48.8	6.88	1.8	1.79	12.3	6.28
Pupils' regard for school property	89.8	4.76	67.6	5.81	77.6	7.99
Pupils' desire to do well in school	88.1	5.38	53.3	6.37	47.1	10.73
Comparisons	Difference		SED	95% CI (BC)		
<b>Teachers' job satisfaction</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	15.3	7.99	-2.7	33.4		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	22.6	9.54	1.1	44.2		
<b>Teacher morale</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	9.1	10.33	-14.2	32.5		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	12.7	10.02	-9.9	35.4		
<b>Teachers' understanding of the school's targets and goals</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	17.5	6.35	3.1	31.9		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	18.4	12.54	-10.0	46.7		
<b>Teachers' success in achieving the school's targets and goals</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	19.0	7.36	2.3	35.6		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	23.4	12.35	-4.6	51.3		
<b>Teachers' expectations for pupil achievement</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	21.4	6.31	7.2	35.7		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	4.1	5.19	-7.6	15.8		
<b>Parental support for pupil achievement</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	75.1	7.44	58.3	92.0		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	56.1	10.75	31.8	80.4		
<b>Parental involvement in school activities</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	47.0	7.11	30.9	63.0		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	36.5	9.32	15.4	57.5		
<b>Pupils' regard for school property</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	22.2	7.51	5.2	39.2		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	12.2	9.30	-8.9	33.2		
<b>Pupils' desire to do well in school</b>						
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	34.8	8.34	16.0	53.7		
Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	41.0	12.01	13.9	68.2		

Sixth class database. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

**Table A4.8: Percentage of pupils in schools with access to well-being initiatives and their perceived value, by DEIS status**

	Urban Non-DEIS *		Urban Band 1		Urban Band 2	
	%	SE	%	SE	%	SE
<b>Friends programmes (FP)</b>						
Not available	22.6	7.25	13.0	4.59	0.0	0.00
<b>Perceived value when available</b>						
Low value	8.7	5.16	27.8	7.09	7.4	5.33
Medium value	38.0	8.30	42.2	9.27	30.5	9.72
High value	53.3	9.18	30.0	6.56	62.0	11.35
<b>Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management Programme (IYTCM)</b>						
Not available	50.1	8.64	18.8	6.75	17.9	8.39
<b>Perceived value when available</b>						
Low value	8.4	6.06	18.0	5.66	4.0	4.10
Medium value	50.5	12.14	50.1	8.2	27.0	6.28
High value	41.1	11.17	31.9	7.81	69.0	7.54
<b>Comparisons</b>	<b>Difference</b>		<b>SED</b>		<b>95% CI (BC)</b>	
<b>Not available</b>						
FP Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	9.6	8.58	-9.8	29.0		
FP Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	22.6	7.25	6.3	39.0		
IYTCM Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	31.3	10.96	6.5	56.1		
IYTCM Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	32.2	12.04	5.0	59.4		
<b>Low value</b>						
FP Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	19.1	8.76	-0.7	38.9		
FP Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	1.3	7.41	-15.5	18.0		
IYTCM Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	9.6	8.29	-9.1	28.4		
IYTCM Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	4.4	7.32	-12.2	20.9		
<b>Medium value</b>						
FP Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	4.1	12.44	-23.9	32.3		
FP Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	7.5	12.78	-21.4	36.4		
IYTCM Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	0.4	14.65	-32.7	33.5		
IYTCM Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	23.5	13.67	-7.4	54.4		
<b>High value</b>						
FP Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	23.2	11.28	-2.2	48.7		
FP Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	8.8	14.59	-24.2	41.7		
IYTCM Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 1	9.2	13.63	-21.6	40.0		
IYTCM Urban Non-DEIS* - Urban Band 2	27.9	13.48	-2.6	58.4		

Sixth class database. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

**Table A4.9: Mean English reading and Mathematics achievement scores of pupils where schools participated in initiatives /programmes designed to promote the enjoyment of reading and Mathematics, by DEIS status**

DEIS status	%	Yes*	SE	%	No	SE	Difference	SED	95% CI
<b>Reading</b>									
Urban Non-DEIS	81.3	265.7	2.00	18.6	262.6	5.07	3.2	5.70	-8.1 14.4
Urban Band 1	76.7	235.3	2.07	23.3	242.2	4.43	6.9	4.80	-2.6 16.4
Urban Band 2	76.1	252.3	3.99	23.9	253.7	3.74	1.4	5.41	-9.3 12.1
<b>Mathematics</b>									
Urban Non-DEIS	76.8	263.7	3.01	23.2	256.6	5.01	7.1	6.12	-5.0 19.1
Urban Band 1	77.6	233.1	2.88	22.4	233.8	6.40	0.7	7.14	-13.3 14.8
Urban Band 2	84.4	254.9	6.07	15.6	239.0	7.30	15.9	9.56	-3.0 34.8

Second & Sixth class databases. No statistically significant differences from the reference group\*.

**Table A4.10: Mean Second class English reading and Sixth class Mathematics scores of pupils in schools with voluntary sector literacy or numeracy support for senior classes, by DEIS status**

DEIS status	%	Yes*	SE	%	No*	SE	Difference	SED	95% CI
<b>Reading</b>									
Urban Non-DEIS	2.4			97.6					
Urban Band 1	43.3	236.2	3.71	56.7	238.5	2.29	2.3	4.11	-5.9 10.4
Urban Band 2	25.5	258.9	6.51	74.5	251.6	3.51	7.3	5.50	-3.6 18.2
<b>Mathematics</b>									
Urban Non-DEIS	2.4			97.6					
Urban Band 1	25.7	222.5	5.73	74.3	236.3	3.23	<b>13.8</b>	6.96	0.1 27.6
Urban Band 2	26.8	259.1	18.37	73.2	250.0	3.57	9.2	18.94	-28.2 46.5

Second & Sixth class databases. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.

Mean scores are not provided for pupils in Urban Non-DEIS schools because of the very low percentages of pupils in these schools whose principals reported receipt of voluntary or charitable support for literacy or numeracy.

**Table A4.11: Mean achievement scores of pupils in schools where supports had/had not been offered to parents, by DEIS status**

		DEIS status	%	Yes*	SE	%	No*	SE	Difference	SED	95% CI
<b>Implementing a programme (e.g., two or more meetings with same parents)</b>											
<b>Reading</b>	Urban Non-DEIS	31.7	262.5	4.07	68.3	266.4	2.11	3.9	4.71	-5.4	13.2
	Urban Band 1	44.5	236.6	3.35	55.5	237.2	2.45	0.6	3.99	-7.3	8.5
<b>Urban Band 2</b>	30.7	249.4	2.30	69.3	253.9	4.31	4.6	4.80	-4.9	14.0	
	Urban Non-DEIS	38.8	262.2	4.52	61.2	262.0	2.50	0.3	4.78	-9.2	9.7
<b>Maths</b>	Urban Band 1	28.0	237.0	4.77	72.0	231.8	3.98	5.2	7.22	-9.1	19.4
	Urban Band 2	16.4	247.7	10.44	83.6	253.4	6.18	5.7	11.93	-17.9	29.2
<b>Facilitating a once-off workshop/information session with a group of parents</b>											
<b>Reading</b>	Urban Non-DEIS	4.0	251.3	6.94	96.0	265.7	1.87	14.5	7.05	0.6	28.4
	Urban Band 1	15.8	237.6	3.77	84.2	236.8	2.36	0.8	4.41	-7.9	9.5
<b>Urban Band 2</b>	11.7	247.1	5.74	88.3	253.3	3.46	6.3	6.63	-6.8	19.4	
	Urban Non-DEIS	5.3	258.6	2.99	94.7	262.3	2.64	3.7	3.97	-4.1	11.5
<b>Maths</b>	Urban Band 1	27.3	229.6	4.37	72.7	234.6	3.75	5.0	6.46	-7.8	17.7
	Urban Band 2	5.1	270.4	2.31	94.9	251.5	5.77				
<b>Sharing resources with parents (e.g., reading lists, websites)</b>											
<b>Reading</b>	Urban Non-DEIS	86.4	264.7	2.09	13.6	267.0	3.80	2.1	4.48	-6.7	11.0
	Urban Band 1	94.2	236.6	2.20	5.9	242.2	6.68	5.7	7.29	-8.7	20.1
<b>Urban Band 2</b>	85.7	254.5	3.38	14.4	241.2	3.69	13.4	5.03	3.5	23.3	
	Urban Non-DEIS	77.6	261.5	2.85	22.4	264.0	5.56	2.5	6.30	-9.9	15.0
<b>Maths</b>	Urban Band 1	83.2	232.9	2.92	16.8	235.0	6.48	2.1	7.30	-12.3	16.5
	Urban Band 2	80.4	253.4	6.68	19.6	248.6	2.54	4.8	7.10	-9.2	18.8

Second & Sixth class databases. Values in **bold** are statistically significantly different from those of the reference group\*.



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