

# Achievement in social studies

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## Summary for teachers and principals of results from the 2018 National Monitoring Study of Student Achievement



### NMSSA in 2018

The National Monitoring Study of Student Achievement (NMSSA) is designed to assess student achievement across the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) at Year 4 and Year 8 in English-medium state and state-integrated schools.

In 2018 the study focused on mathematics and statistics, and social studies. Mathematics and statistics was last assessed in 2013, and social studies in 2014.

### The NMSSA social studies study

In 2018 NMSSA assessed achievement in social studies of a nationally representative sample of about 1,200 students from 100 schools at each of Year 4 and Year 8. The assessment included one-to-one interviews, a collaborative team activity, and short computer-interactive and written response tasks. The assessment covered aspects of conceptual understanding from all strands and social inquiry (values and perspectives, active participation in society and using information) in a wide range of contexts.

Scores on the assessment were located on a Nature of Social Studies (NSS) measurement scale (see graph at top right). Scores range from about 30 to 180 NSS units, with an average of 100 and a standard deviation of 20. Tasks that were used in both 2014 and 2018 allowed score comparisons to be made.

Questionnaires were used to gather information about teaching and learning in social studies from students, teachers, and principals.

### Key findings regarding achievement

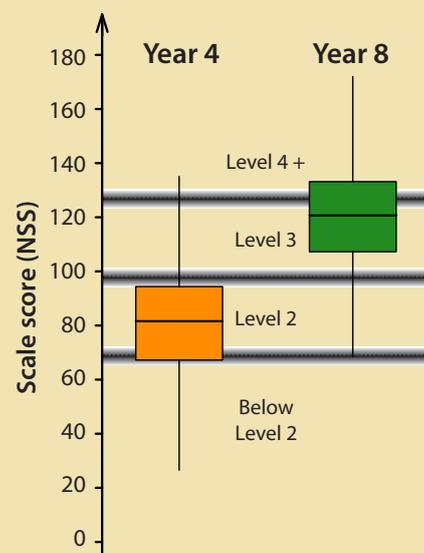
#### Results from 2018

- In Year 4, 73 percent of students achieved at or above curriculum expectations (Level 2). In Year 8, 37 percent of students achieved at or above curriculum expectations (Level 4).
- Between Year 4 and Year 8, students made, on average, about 10 NSS units of 'progress' per year.
- Girls scored higher, on average, than boys by 4 units at Year 4 and 8 NSS units at Year 8.
- At both year levels, non-Māori students scored higher, on average, than Māori students by about 10 NSS units.
- Non-Pacific students scored higher, on average, than Pacific students by about 12 NSS units at each year level.
- At both year levels, students from high decile schools scored higher, on average, than those from mid-decile schools, who, in turn, scored higher than those from low decile schools. The difference between the average scores for students in the high and low decile bands was 18 NSS units.

#### Changes in achievement between 2014 and 2018

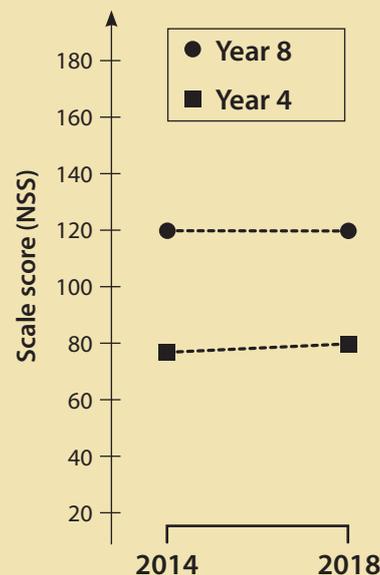
- Year 4 students' in 2018 scored, on average, 4 NSS units higher than in 2014. In Year 8, there was no change between 2014 and 2018.
- Statistically significant increases in average achievement were recorded for Year 4 girls, Year 4 Māori students, Year 4 Pacific students, Year 4 Asian students and Year 8 students in low decile schools.

Distribution of Year 4 and Year 8 students' scores on the *Nature of Social Studies* (NSS) scale in 2018



The blurred lines (*above*) show the boundaries between curriculum levels. The lines are blurred to indicate the uncertainty involved in defining precise boundaries.

Change in average scores of Year 4 and Year 8 students on the *Nature of Social Studies* (NSS) scale between 2014 and 2018



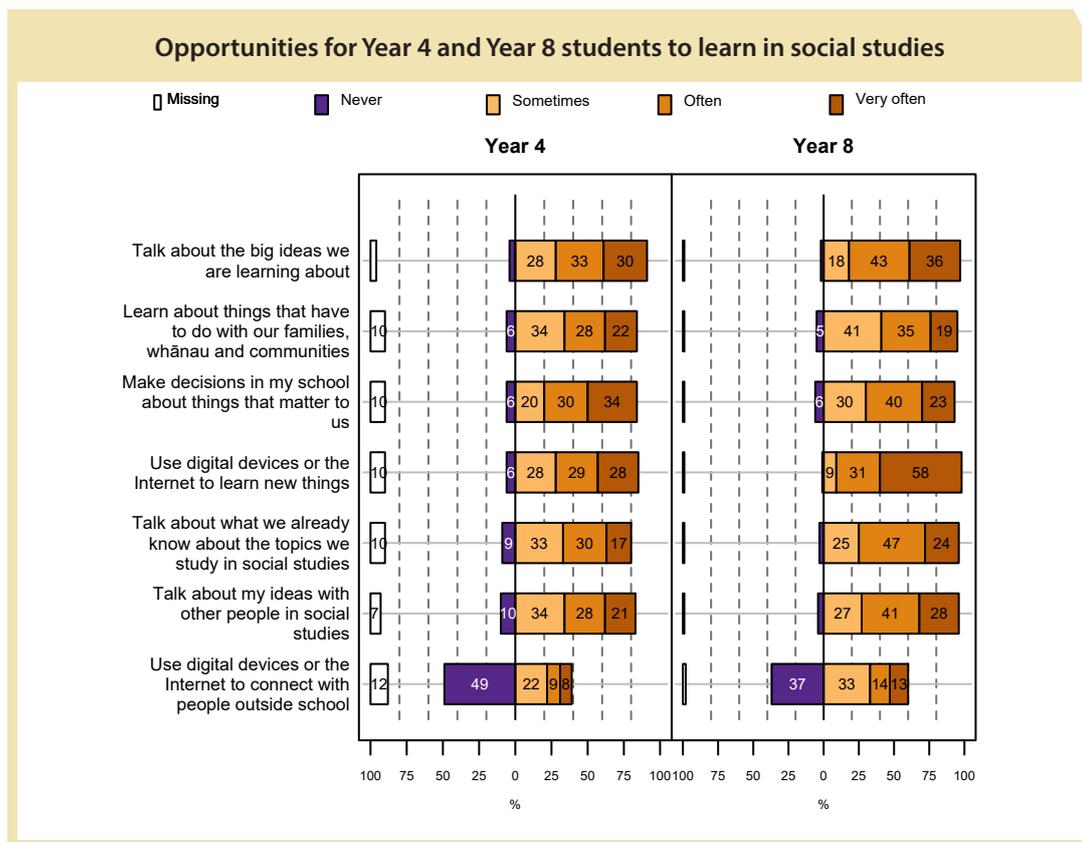
## Students' attitude to social studies and confidence in social studies

- Most students were positive and confident about learning social studies.
- Year 4 students were more positive and more confident than Year 8 students.

## Opportunities to learn social studies at school

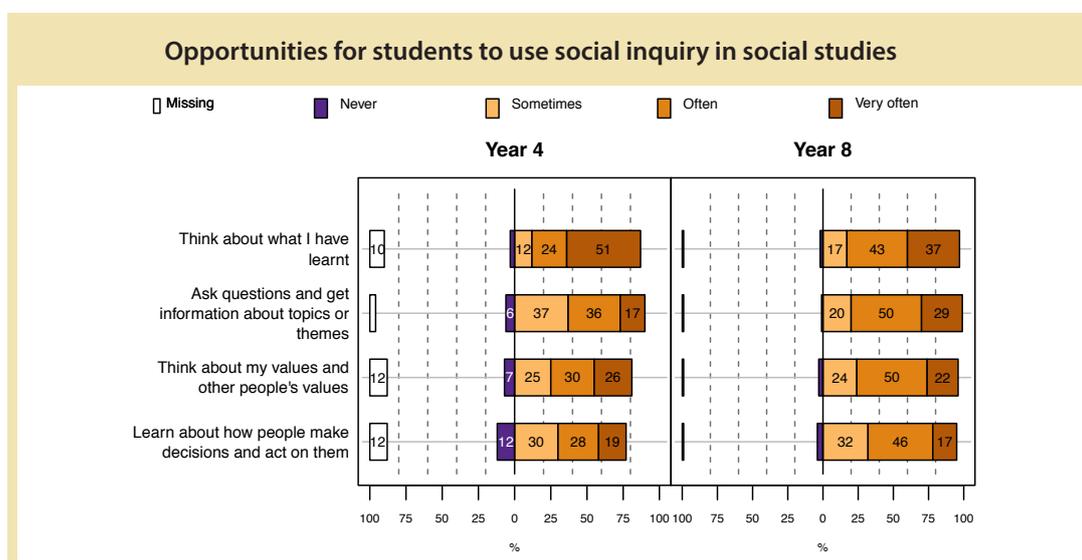
Students indicated how often they were involved in a range of opportunities to learn social studies at school (see figure right).

- For the majority of students in Year 8, most activities happened 'often' or 'very often'.
- Opportunities to 'use digital devices or the Internet to connect with people outside school' were notably fewer than other opportunities.



## Opportunities to use social inquiry in social studies

- The majority of students used social inquiry in social studies at least sometimes (see figure right).
- Students most often reported 'Think[ing] about what [they] have learnt'.



## Teachers' and principals' perspectives on social studies

- Most teachers enjoyed teaching social studies, were confident about teaching it, and confident about teaching students to use a social inquiry approach.
- Three quarters of teachers used *Social Studies Online* on TKI to support their teaching of social studies.
- Most teachers had professional interactions with colleagues about teaching social studies at least twice a year, but only a few of them had observed a colleague teaching social studies.
- More principals at Year 8 than Year 4 indicated that teachers had access to PLD in social studies.