Wānangatia te Putanga Tauira
National Monitoring Study of Student Achievement

Social Studies
2014 – Contextual Report
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- the teachers who administered the assessments to the students
- the teachers, senior initial teacher education students and others who undertook the marking
- the Ministry of Education Research Team and Steering Committee.

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<td>Rangatahi Ltd</td>
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Executive Summary

In 2014, the National Monitoring Study of Student Achievement (NMSSA) assessed student achievement at Year 4 and Year 8 in two areas of the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) – English: reading and social studies. This report examines a range of contextual data collected from students, teachers and principals as part of the 2014 NMSSA study of social studies. The report supplements Social Studies 2014 – Overview and the priority learner group reports in social studies for Māori, Pasifika and students with special education needs.

For this report, we draw on evidence collected through questionnaires from students, teachers and principals. The report provides background information relevant to understanding the schools’ social studies programmes, the level of teachers’ interest in and self-efficacy teaching social studies, and students’ experiences at school and any associations with student achievement.

The report is written descriptively to outline the types of responses typical of the students, teachers and principals who made up the sample. It is important to note that two of these groups – the teachers and principals – are not necessarily representative of the corresponding groups in the general population. In addition, the students, teachers and principals are reporting their perceptions based on the meaning they make of the questions and their ability to recall information in order to make a response. Taken together, this means care should be applied when interpreting and generalising from the findings. Overall, however, the findings do provide indications and patterns that are useful when seeking to understand social studies as part of the social sciences learning area.

Nature of Social Studies (NSS) assessment
Achievement in social studies was assessed using a series of performance and interview tasks administered individually by teacher assessors to approximately 800 students at Year 4 and Year 8. The tasks focused on the construct of the Nature of Social Studies (NSS) from the social sciences learning area of the NZC.

The NSS is made up of three inter-related aspects of social studies – conceptual understanding, active participation in society, and values and perspectives. The aspects covered the four conceptual strands of the social sciences learning area in the NZC (i.e., identity, culture and organisation; place and environment; continuity and change; and the economic world).

Item response theory was used to construct a NSS measurement scale. Student achievement on the NSS tasks at Year 4 and Year 8 was able to be located on the same scale.

Student questionnaire: About You
All students in the NMSSA study, about 2,200 at each year level, completed the NMSSA student questionnaire. The About You section asked students general questions about the amount of English spoken at home, the number of schools attended, absences from school, and whether they thought their teacher liked them. All Year 4 and Year 8 students in the study were asked to respond to the same questions.

Most Year 4 and Year 8 students ‘always’ spoke English at home and, on average, these students performed significantly better on the NSS measure than students who spoke English ‘often’ and ‘hardly ever’.

Sixty-four percent of Year 4 students had attended 1 school and 66 percent of Year 8 students had attended 1 or 2 schools (many Year 8 students will have attended a contributing primary school followed by an intermediate or secondary school). At Year 4, the number of schools that students attended varied by school decile and ethnicity but at Year 8, this varied by ethnicity only. Year 4 students who attended fewer schools scored higher on average. However, Year 8 students’ achievement was similar across the number of schools attended.

1 Six reports have been written to present the findings for social studies, and a parallel set of six reports have been written to present the findings for English: reading. A table of the reports for each learning area is provided in Appendix 1.
Greater proportions of students from low decile schools (deciles 1 to 3) reported frequent instances of whole-day absence and being late to school than students from mid (deciles 4 to 7) or high decile schools (deciles 8 to 10). The same was true for Māori and Pasifika students compared with non-Māori and non-Pasifika students. Year 4 and Year 8 students who reported a greater number of absences and being late for school tended to score lower on the NSS assessment.

The majority of students agreed with the statement ‘my teacher likes me’. Students’ levels of agreement with this question were positively related to their scores on the NMSSA Attitude to Social Studies scale but not to their achievement on the NSS scale.

Teacher questionnaire

Up to three teachers in each of the schools involved in the NMSSA social studies study completed a teacher questionnaire. About 80 percent of eligible teachers completed the questionnaire at each year level.

Overall, teachers had very positive attitudes towards social studies and felt confident about teaching social studies. Most of the teachers reported being familiar with the term ‘social inquiry’. Of these teachers, those teaching at Year 8 were more likely than those teaching at Year 4 to indicate that they ‘included a social inquiry approach to learning’ and ‘wrote learning intentions’ in their social studies programme ‘often’ or ‘always’. Teachers at both year levels placed most emphasis in their social studies programme on the development of students’ ‘conceptual learning’, followed by ‘active participation in society’ and then ‘values and perspectives’.

Teachers received classroom assistance in social studies from a range of sources. Roughly similar proportions of Year 4 and Year 8 teachers received assistance from ‘another teacher’, a ‘teacher aide’ or their ‘peers’. A greater proportion of Year 4 teachers than Year 8 teachers reported having help from ‘parents/whānau’ and a ‘community member’.

For both Year 4 and Year 8 teachers, the most commonly reported strategy for meeting differentiated learning needs was ‘incorporating different media and learning approaches within a topic’, while the least commonly reported strategy was ‘specialist advice to adapt the NZC for students with special education needs’.

Most teachers provided the range of learning experiences and opportunities in social studies listed in the questionnaire. The general pattern of responses was similar across year levels and school decile band.

At both year levels, the largest proportion of teachers rated their professional support for teaching social studies as ‘fair’. A greater proportion of teachers at Year 4 rated their professional support as ‘very poor’ or ‘poor’ than did those at Year 8. However, a lesser proportion of Year 4 teachers than Year 8 teachers rated their professional support as ‘good’ or ‘excellent’.

Broadly speaking, Year 8 teachers were more satisfied than Year 4 teachers in terms of the quality of the professional support they received at school for the teaching of social studies. Only 25 percent of Year 4 teachers compared with 40 percent of Year 8 teachers rated their professional support as ‘good’ or ‘excellent’. The largest proportion of teachers at both year levels rated their professional support as ‘fair’. Teachers indicated that they had a range of interactions with other teachers in their school about teaching social studies but opportunities to ‘observe a colleague teaching social studies’ was experienced the least. Approximately 20 percent of the teachers had received social studies-focused professional learning and development in the last 12 months.

Principal questionnaire

The principal in each of the schools selected for the 2014 NMSSA study was asked to complete a questionnaire. Principals were asked about the social studies programme across the school, including how the teaching of social studies was structured, how students were supported to take social action that leads to change at the school or community level, and the ways that the school engages with whānau and the wider community in the teaching of social studies. About 80 percent of principals completed the questionnaire at each year level.
Most principals indicated that the teaching of social studies was integrated with other learning areas as opposed to being taught independently. This was more so at Year 4 than Year 8 and was also progressively more common for higher decile schools.

The majority of principals rated their school’s provision for learning in social studies as ‘good’ or ‘very good’, and this was similar for low, mid and high decile schools. At least 90 percent of principals at each year level reported that ‘involvement in school issues/events’ was a way that their students were supported to take social action that leads to change at school or in the community. Students were also involved in the student council and in local community issues and events.

Principals most frequently engaged with whānau and wider community by ‘inviting speakers from the local community’, ‘visiting community organisations/resources’ and ‘drawing on local community knowledge/resources’, but less so by ‘visiting local marae’. The pattern of engagement was similar across school decile bands. The vast majority of principals rated their school’s inclusion of students with special education needs in the social studies programme as ‘good’, very good’ or ‘excellent’.
1 Overview of the Contextual Report

1. Introduction

This report examines a range of contextual data collected as part of the 2014 NMSSA study of social studies. The report supplements Social Studies 2014 – Overview and the priority learner group reports in social studies for Māori, Pasifika and students with special education needs. The purpose of this report is to provide background information relevant to understanding the social studies programme, including the achievement patterns that were observed.

This chapter introduces the 2014 NMSSA study, including describing the range of achievement and contextual data collected in social studies. A short summary of achievement results from the study is provided. The chapter finishes by describing the structure of the report.

2. 2014 National Monitoring Study of Student Achievement

NMSSA is a sample-based monitoring project designed to assess and understand student achievement at Year 4 and Year 8 in New Zealand English-medium state schools. NMSSA aims to cover all learning areas of the New Zealand Curriculum (NZC) during a 5-year cycle. In 2014, the study assessed English: reading and social studies. The study was carried out during Term 3 and involved a nationally representative sample of about 2,200 students from 100 schools at each year level.

3. How social studies was assessed

NMSSA assessed achievement in social studies using a programme of individual performance and interview tasks administered by specially trained teachers to 800 students in 100 schools at each year level (eight students from each school). Students’ responses were video-recorded and marked by experienced teacher and senior teacher education student markers.

The assessments focused on the construct of the Nature of Social Studies (NSS) from the social sciences learning area of the NZC. The NSS is made up of three inter-related aspects of social studies – conceptual understanding, active participation in society, and values and perspectives. The aspects covered the four strands of the social sciences learning area in the NZC (i.e., identity, culture and organisation; place and environment; continuity and change; and economic world).

The approach taken to construct the NSS scale is based on Item Response Theory; specifically the Rasch model. The techniques used to do the scaling are similar to those used in studies such as PISA and TIMSS. The scale allows scores for Year 4 and Year 8 students to be reported on the same metric. The scale has been constructed so that 100 scale score units represents the combined average score for Year 4 and Year 8, and 20 scale score units is equal to the average standard deviation for a year level.

Performance on the NSS assessment was linked to the social sciences learning area of the NZC through a curriculum alignment exercise. The exercise considered the performance demands of the assessment against curriculum expectations at curriculum levels 1 to 4 and resulted in cut-off scores being defined on the NSS scale to differentiate performance across these levels.

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2 Contextual information about students’ attitudes, and learning opportunities and experiences in social studies are included in NMSSA Report 6.1 Social Studies 2014 – Overview and the priority learner group reports. See Appendix 1.

3 PISA – Programme for International Student Assessment; TIMSS – Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study.
4. Summary of achievement

Figures 1.1 and 1.2 display the score distributions for gender and ethnicity at Year 4 and Year 8 on the NSS assessment. On average, Year 8 students scored 33 units higher on the NSS scale than Year 4 students (an annualised difference of about 8 scale score units per year).

There was no statistically significant difference between the average scale scores of girls and boys at either year level. The difference in average scale scores between girls and boys was 1 at Year 4 and 2 at Year 8. At Year 4, NZ European students scored higher than non-NZ European students by an average of 16 scale score units. Non-Māori students scored higher than Māori students by an average of 10 scale score units, and non-Pasifika students scored higher than Pasifika students by an average of 19 scale score units. Ethnic group differences at Year 8 followed a similar pattern to Year 4, except the difference for each comparison was 10 scale score units. These differences were all statistically significant.

The differences between ethnic groups reflect those reported by the National Education Monitoring Project (NEMP) over four cycles of social studies assessment results in 1997, 2001, 2005 and 2009.

4 Refer to Chapter 1 of NMSSA Report 6.1 Social Studies 2014 – Overview for information about scale scores and NSS assessment more generally.

5 Non-prioritised ethnicity was used where students could identify with up to three ethnicities. This meant they could be present in multiple ethnic groups. Student ethnicity data were obtained from student National Student Number information held on the Ministry of Education ENROL database. The ‘NZ European’ category included NZ Pākehā only. The ‘Pasifika’ category included Tokelauan, Fijian, Niuean, Tongan, Cook Islands Māori, Samoan and other Pacific peoples. The ‘Asian’ category included Filipino, Cambodian, Vietnamese, Other Southeast Asian, Indian, Chinese, Sri Lankan, Japanese, Korean, and other Asians. The ‘Other’ category included Australians, British/Irish, German, Dutch, Greek, Polish, South Slav, Italian and other Europeans, Middle Eastern, Latin American, African, and Not Stated. About 7 percent of students at Year 4 and about 6 percent at Year 8 indicated they belonged to ethnic groups categorised as ‘Other’.

5. What contextual data were collected?

Questionnaires for students, teachers and principals were used to collect a range of contextual data.

All students in the NMSSA study (about 2,200 students at each year level) completed a student questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered as a paper-and-pencil instrument, and was read out to students in Year 4 by the teacher assessor. The questionnaire asked students about their attitude and engagement, and their learning opportunities and experiences in social studies. An Attitude to Social Studies scale was constructed on the basis of the attitude and engagement section. The questionnaire also contained a range of general questions about the students themselves.

The teacher questionnaire was completed by up to three teachers in each school who were working at the year level assessed in their school (Year 4 or Year 8). Teachers were asked for information about themselves, their personal interest and attitude towards social studies, their approaches to teaching social studies, the opportunities and experiences students were exposed to in their class relating to social studies and the professional support they received in social studies.

The principal questionnaire was completed by the principal of each school involved in the NMSSA study. In some cases, the principal may have delegated filling in the questionnaire to someone in the school leadership team. Principals were asked about the social studies programme across the school, including how the teaching of social studies was structured, how students were supported to take social action that leads to change at the school or community level, and the ways that the school engages with whānau and the wider community in the teaching of social studies. The principal questionnaire also contained questions about the schools’ responsiveness to priority learner groups.

6. Structure of the report

This report examines each of the contextual data sources starting with the student questionnaire. The data are examined with a focus on reporting notable differences by year level and school decile band. Student responses are also examined by gender and ethnic group. Where appropriate, the link between students’ responses to questions and their performance on the NSS assessment is examined. Graphs and tables are used to present the information. Percentages reported in tables and in the text have been rounded to whole numbers and may not always add to 100 percent. Linear regression has been applied in some instances, to look at the relationship between achievement and responses to questions across school decile bands.

The report is written descriptively to outline the types of responses typical of the students, teachers, and principals who made up the sample. At times, these groups – for instance the teachers who responded to the teacher questionnaire – may not necessarily be representative of the corresponding group in the general population. In addition, the students, teachers and principals are reporting their perceptions based on the meaning they make of the questions and their ability to recall information in order to make a response. Taken together, this means care should be applied when interpreting and generalising from the findings. Overall, however, the findings do provide indications and patterns that are useful when seeking to understand student achievement in social studies.

An analysis of questions related to the schools’ responsiveness to priority learner groups (Māori, Pasifika and students with special education needs) will be contained in a separate report.
2 Student Questionnaire: About You

1. Introduction

All students in the NMSSA study (about 2,200 at each year level) completed a student questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into three parts. Part 1 asked the students for information about social studies. Part 2 asked the students for information about English: reading. Part 3 asked the students for some general information about themselves and was titled About You. Students’ responses to parts 1 and 2 of the questionnaire have been reported previously. This chapter describes how students responded to the questions in the About You section of the student questionnaire and relates these to patterns in achievement on the NSS assessment. The findings are examined by year level, ethnicity and school decile band. Where notable gender differences exist, these are also described. However, response patterns across genders were similar for most of the About You questions.

2. About You section

The About You section asked students general questions about themselves and their experience of school. All Year 4 and Year 8 students in the study were asked to respond to the same questions about the amount of English spoken at home, the number of schools attended, absences from school and whether they thought their teacher liked them.

This report shows how all students in the study responded to the About You questions. However, when students’ questionnaire responses are associated with their achievement on the NSS assessment, only data related to the subset of students who responded to both the questionnaire and NSS assessment are used (about 800 students at each of Year 4 and Year 8).

3. Speaking English at home

Students were asked whether they spoke English at home ‘hardly ever’, ‘often’ or ‘always’. Seventy-three percent of Year 4 students reported that they always spoke English at home, as did 82 percent of Year 8 students.

Figures 2.1 and 2.2 show how students responded to this question, by ethnicity, at Year 4 and Year 8. At both year levels, greater proportions of NZ European and Māori students than Pasifika or Asian students indicated that they ‘always’ spoke English at home. A lesser proportion of Asian students, at both year levels, reported always speaking English at home compared with students in other ethnic groups.
As Table 2.1 shows, a smaller proportion of students from low decile schools than those from mid or high decile schools reported that they ‘always’ spoke English at home. These decile differences are not surprising given the different ethnic compositions of student groups across decile bands (see Social Studies 2014 – Overview report).

Table 2.1 Percentage frequency of how often students spoke English at home, by school decile band

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decile band</th>
<th>Hardly ever</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>75</td>
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</table>
Speaking English at home and social studies achievement

Figures 2.3 and 2.4 use boxplots to show the relationship between students’ reports on the amount of English spoken at home and their scores on the NSS assessment at Year 4 and Year 8. On average, and at both year levels, students who reported that they ‘always’ spoke English at home scored higher on the NSS assessment than students who reported that they did so ‘often’ or ‘hardly ever’. The average score difference between students who selected the ‘hardly ever’ and ‘always’ response categories was similar at Year 4 and Year 8 (about 9 scale score units).

A regression analysis by year level indicated that after taking decile into account, students who selected ‘always’ to the question about ‘How often you speak English at home’ had higher NSS scores on average than students who selected ‘hardly ever’.⁹

4. Number of schools attended

Students were asked how many schools they had attended since they turned 5. They responded by selecting one of the following: ‘1 school’, ‘2 schools’, ‘3 schools’ or ‘4 or more schools’. At Year 4, the minimum number possible is 1 school. At Year 8, the minimum possible is 1 or 2 schools (64 percent of Year 8 students in the sample attended an intermediate or secondary school).

Figure 2.5 shows that 65 percent of students in Year 4 reported having attended only one school. At Year 8, 66 percent of students attended 1 or 2 schools.

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⁹ Decile is generally a strong predictor of average achievement. That is, decile explains a sizeable amount of the variance in social studies scores. When the amount of English spoken at home is added into a regression model that already uses decile as a predictor, the amount of variance described increases enough for the change to be considered statistically significant (p value = 0.03, 0.02 at Year 4 and Year 8 respectively.) ANOVA tests were used to compare the regression models.
The number of schools that students had attended also varied by school decile. As shown in Table 2.2, the proportion of Year 4 students who reported attending only 1 school was lowest for students from low decile schools and highest for students from high decile schools. A greater proportion of Year 4 students from low decile schools than from mid or high decile schools reported attending 3 or more schools. Table 2.3 shows that the pattern by decile for Year 8 students was different. The proportion of Year 8 students who reported attending 1 or 2 schools (many Year 8 students will have attended a contributing primary followed by an intermediate or secondary school) was relatively similar for students across low, mid and high decile schools (67, 61 and 70 percent, respectively). By decile, there was also little difference in the proportions of Year 8 students who reported attending 3 or more schools. This contrast in the decile patterns for Year 4 and Year 8 might be explained by the different school types available at Year 8 and present in the sample at different decile bands.

### Table 2.2  Percentage frequency of the number of schools attended for Year 4 students by decile band

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decile band</th>
<th>1 school</th>
<th>2 schools</th>
<th>3 schools</th>
<th>4 or more schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tbody>
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### Table 2.3  Percentage frequency of the number of schools attended for Year 8 students by decile band

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decile band</th>
<th>1 school</th>
<th>2 schools</th>
<th>3 schools</th>
<th>4 or more schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tables 2.4 and 2.5 show that, at Year 4, greater proportions of Māori and Pasifika students than NZ European or Asian students reported having attended 3 or more schools. At Year 8, there were greater proportions of Māori and Asian students than Pasifika or NZ European students who reported having attended 3 or more schools.

### Table 2.4  Percentage frequency of the number of schools Year 4 students attended by ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
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<th>2 schools</th>
<th>3 schools</th>
<th>4 or more schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NZ European</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māori</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasifika</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2.5  Percentage frequency of the number of schools Year 8 students attended by ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
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<th>2 schools</th>
<th>3 schools</th>
<th>4 or more schools</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NZ European</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māori</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasifika</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Number of schools attended and achievement

Figures 2.6 and 2.7 show the relationship between the reported number of schools attended and achievement on the NSS assessment for Year 4 and Year 8, respectively. At Year 4, there was a general trend towards lower average scores as the number of schools attended increased. There was a difference of 15 scale score units between the average score on the NSS assessment for Year 4 students who had attended 1 school and those who had attended 4 or more schools. A difference of 8 scale score units is equivalent to the 'progress' made in about 1 year of schooling. At Year 8, the average level of achievement was fairly consistent across the number of schools attended.

A regression analysis by year level indicated that, after taking decile into account, Year 4 students who attended fewer schools had higher NSS scores, on average, than those who attended more schools. There was no association found between achievement and the number of schools attended for Year 8 students.

5. School attendance

Students responded to two questions related to their attendance at school over the previous 2 weeks\(^{10}\). The first question asked how many times students were absent from school for the whole day and the second asked how many times they had arrived late for school.

Absences

Figure 2.8 shows the number of absences from school over the previous 2 weeks, as reported by students in Year 4 and Year 8. A greater proportion of Year 8 students than Year 4 students reported ‘never’ being absent from school in the previous 2 weeks, while a greater proportion of Year 4 students than Year 8 students reported three or more absences.

\(^{10}\) NMSSA assessments were undertaken in Term 3 of 2014.
Figures 2.9 and 2.10 show that the pattern of absences by year level held across school decile bands. At both year levels, a greater proportion of students from low decile schools than from mid or high decile schools reported that they were absent from school 3 or more times during the previous 2 weeks. Greater proportions of Māori and Pasifika students than non-Māori and non-Pasifika students reported that they were absent from school three or more times. However, the results for ethnicity groups and decile groups are likely to be somewhat confounded because there were more Māori and Pasifika students at low decile schools than at mid or high decile schools.

**Comparison with national data**

Data available from the Education Counts website, and related to a report on attendance in New Zealand schools in 2013 (Loader, 2014\(^{11}\)), indicates an absence rate for New Zealand students in Year 4 and Year 8 of 7.3 and 8.1 percent respectively. This is not consistent with the self-reported absences of the students in the NMSSA sample where Year 4 students reported more absences than those in Year 8. Moreover, the number of absences reported over the 2-week period indicates a daily absence rate in excess of 10 percent at both year levels. These inconsistencies could suggest that the students in the NMSSA sample, particularly those in Year 4, over-reported their absences. However, patterns in the NMSSA data, in terms of the relative proportions of reported absences by gender, ethnicity and school decile, were generally in agreement with the attendance data provided by Loader\(^{12}\).

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\(^{12}\) Loader’s data about absences are based on roll returns from schools.
Absences and achievement

At both year levels, students who reported a greater number of absences tended to score lower on the NSS assessment. Figures 2.11 and 2.12 show the relationship between reported absence categories and achievement on the NSS assessment. At Year 4, while a pattern of decreasing achievement is clear for the first three categories, the last category does not follow this pattern. This inconsistency in the pattern may be due to some Year 4 students finding it difficult to give a precise answer to a question which asks them to think back over the 2 previous weeks.

A regression analysis by year level indicated that after taking decile into account, students who were absent from school less often had higher NSS scores, on average, than those who were absent from school more often. Figure 2.13 shows the relationship between achievement on the NSS assessment and absence across decile bands by year level.
Lateness
Figure 2.14 shows students’ reports of how many times they were late for school over the previous two weeks. A greater proportion of Year 4 students than Year 8 students, reported being late for school one or more times. At both year levels, a greater proportion of students from low decile schools reported being late for school one or more times than those from mid or high decile schools. Māori and Pasifika students also reported more instances of lateness than non-Māori and non-Pasifika students, respectively. As with absences, the results for ethnicity groups and decile groups are likely to be somewhat confounded because there are more Māori and Pasifika students at low decile schools than at mid or high decile schools.

Lateness and achievement
At both year levels, students who reported a greater number of times being late for school tended to score lower on the NSS assessment. Figures 2.15 and 2.16 show the relationship between reported lateness categories and average achievement scores on the NSS assessment. There was a similar relationship between lateness and achievement as there was between absence and achievement. A regression analysis by year level indicated that after taking decile into account, students who were late for school less often had higher NSS scores, on average, than those who were late for school more often.
6. ‘My teacher likes me’

Students were asked to show how much they agreed with the statement ‘my teacher likes me’. They responded by selecting one of the following response categories: ‘do not agree at all’, ‘agree a little’, ‘agree quite a lot’ and ‘totally agree’.

The majority of students agreed ‘quite a lot’ or ‘totally’ with the statement. Figures 2.17 and 2.18 show the percentage of students selecting each response category by gender for Year 4 and Year 8. There is some variation in the proportion of students who selected ‘totally agree’ by year level and gender. This option was more often selected by Year 4 students than Year 8 students, and more often selected by girls than boys. There were no notable differences in responses to ‘my teacher likes me’ by school decile or ethnicity.

![Figure 2.17 Percentage frequency of Year 4 students’ agreement with the statement ‘my teacher likes me’, by gender](image1)

![Figure 2.18 Percentage frequency of Year 8 students’ agreement with the statement ‘my teacher likes me’, by gender](image2)

‘My teacher likes me’ and achievement

Students in Year 4 who responded with higher agreement to the statement ‘my teacher likes me’ were slightly more likely to achieve higher on the NSS scale than those who responded with less agreement. At Year 8 there was no consistent relationship between these variables.

A much more definite relationship was shown between responses to ‘my teacher likes me’ and the Attitude to Social Studies scale. At both year levels, students who responded with higher agreement to the statement ‘my teacher likes me’ tended to respond positively to statements regarding their attitude to social studies. Figures 2.19 and 2.20 show the relationship between responses to the statement ‘my teacher likes me’ and scores on the Attitude to Social Studies scale for Year 4 and Year 8, respectively.

![Figure 2.19 Distribution of Year 4 students’ scores on Attitude to Social Studies scale, by level of agreement with statement ‘my teacher likes me’](image3)

![Figure 2.20 Distribution of Year 8 students’ scores on Attitude to Social Studies scale, by level of agreement with statement ‘my teacher likes me’](image4)
7. Summary

In the About You section of the student questionnaire, students were asked information about themselves and their experience of school. All students in the NMSSA study (about 2,200 at each year level, completed the NMSSA student questionnaire. All Year 4 and Year 8 students in the study were asked to respond to the same questions.

Most of the Year 4 and Year 8 students reported that they ‘always’ spoke English at home, although the proportions of Asian and Pasifika students and students from low decile schools reporting this were smaller. Students who ‘always’ spoke English at home performed better on average on the NSS measure than students who spoke English ‘often’ and ‘hardly ever’.

Year 4 students generally reported having attended 1 school, whereas Year 8 students reported having attended 1 or 2 schools (many Year 8 students will have attended a contributing primary school followed by an intermediate or secondary school). At Year 4 the number of schools that students attended varied by school decile and ethnicity but at Year 8, this varied by ethnicity only. Year 4 students who attended fewer schools had higher NSS scores on average; however, Year 8 students’ achievement was similar across the number of schools attended.

Greater proportions of students from low decile schools (deciles 1 to 3) reported frequent instances of whole day absence and being late to school than students from mid (deciles 4 to 7) or high decile schools (deciles 8 to 10). The same was true for Māori and Pasifika students compared with non-Māori and non-Pasifika students. Year 4 and Year 8 students who reported a greater number of absences and being late for school tended to score lower on the NSS assessment.

The majority of students agreed with the statement ‘my teacher likes me’. Students’ levels of agreement with this question were positively related to their scores on the NMSSA Attitude to Social Studies scale but not to their achievement on the NSS scale.
3 Teacher Questionnaire

1. Introduction

This chapter explores data collected using the teacher questionnaire. Up to three teachers in each school completed the questionnaire which was divided into three parts. Part 1 asked the teachers for some information about themselves. Part 2 asked them about their teaching of English: reading. Part 3 asked them about their teaching of social studies. This chapter describes how teachers responded to the sections about themselves and their teaching of social studies.

2. Who responded

In total, 210 Year 4 teachers from 94 schools and 212 Year 8 teachers from 92 schools responded to the questionnaire. These figures represent a response rate of 83 percent at Year 4 and 80 percent at Year 8.

Table 3.1 shows how many teachers responded by year level taught and school decile band. There were more questionnaires completed by teachers from mid and high decile schools than by teachers from low decile schools. In particular, fewer questionnaires were completed by Year 8 teachers in low decile schools than by Year 8 teachers in mid or high decile schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School decile band</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N = 210 (94)</td>
<td>N = 212 (92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>60 (28)</td>
<td>33 (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>63 (29)</td>
<td>90 (39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>87 (37)</td>
<td>89 (37)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nearly all teachers who responded categorised themselves as classroom teachers (99 percent at Year 4 and 96 percent at Year 8) rather than as social studies specialists. Of the teachers who responded to the question about gender, about 80 percent indicated they were female.

It is important to note that the teachers who completed the questionnaire were not selected as a nationally representative sample of teachers. Each school was invited to involve up to three teachers who taught social studies at the year level being assessed. The teachers could either be general classroom teachers or specialist teachers of social studies. The findings presented in this chapter describe the views of teachers in the NMSSA study and provide an indication of New Zealand teachers’ views about social studies.
3. Teacher characteristics

Experience

Figure 3.1 shows the number of years of teaching experience reported by Year 4 and Year 8 teachers. Overall, 54 percent of teachers indicated they had taught for 10 or more years. A smaller proportion of Year 4 teachers than Year 8 teachers indicated that they had taught for 10 or more years.

A smaller proportion of teachers from low decile schools (47 percent) than from mid or high decile schools (58 and 54 percent, respectively) reported they had taught for more than 10 years. Thirty-one percent of teachers from low decile schools reported they had taught for more than 20 years, compared with 19 and 22 percent of teachers from mid and high decile schools respectively.

Leadership responsibilities and qualifications

Just under 20 percent of teachers at each year level had syndicate or school leadership responsibilities for social studies. A larger proportion of teachers from low decile schools (26 percent) than from mid or high decile schools (16 and 17 percent, respectively) had syndicate or school leadership responsibilities for social studies.

Just under 20 percent of teachers at each year level and from each school decile band had specialist qualifications in social studies. Specialist qualifications included teacher education degrees with social studies as a major and/or the completion of social studies-related university papers.

4. Class profile and support in the classroom

Class profile

The average class size reported by Year 4 teachers was 27 students, compared with 29 students for Year 8 teachers. On average, teachers in low decile schools reported slightly smaller class sizes than teachers in mid or high decile schools at both year levels.

The average number of students per class who spoke English as a second language was 4. The average was the same for each year level. However, the average was higher for teachers from low decile schools (7 students) than for teachers from mid or high decile schools (3 students in both cases).

Support in the classroom

Teachers were asked to indicate who supported them in the classroom by selecting all that applied from a given list of people. Figure 3.2 shows the proportion of teachers who selected each option according to year level. About 25 percent of teachers at both year levels reported that support in the classroom was from ‘another teacher’, and at Year 4 from ‘parents/whānau’. Least support (reported by about 5 percent of teachers) was from a ‘cultural advisor’, a ‘social studies specialist’ or ‘senior students’.
5. Teachers’ attitudes and practices in teaching social studies

Teachers were asked to indicate how true each of a series of statements was for them regarding their attitudes and practices in teaching social studies. Figure 3.3 shows how teachers responded to each statement by year level.

Overall, teachers were very positive in their responses. For each of the statements, the vast majority of teachers responded ‘moderately true’ or ‘very true’. A greater proportion of Year 8 teachers used the ‘very true’ category than Year 4 teachers.

The pattern of teacher responses across school decile bands was very similar for each statement.

![Figure 3.3 Percentage frequency of Year 4 and Year 8 teachers’ responses to statements about attitudes to and teaching practices in social studies](image_url)
6. Social studies in the classroom

Teachers were asked several questions about how they taught social studies in their class. The questions asked about their familiarity with and use of ‘social inquiry’, the conceptual/contextual focus of their teaching, the learning experiences they provided students in their class, and professional support for their teaching of social studies.

‘Social inquiry’

The Ministry of Education states that effective teaching of social studies uses a social inquiry approach. Through social inquiry students ask questions, gather information, and examine the background to important societal ideas and events. They are able to explore and analyse values and perspectives relating to these ideas and events; and develop understandings about issues and the ways that people make decisions and participate in social action.\(^\text{13}\)

A slightly smaller proportion of Year 4 teachers (85 percent) than Year 8 teachers (93 percent) reported they were familiar with the term ‘social inquiry’. At each year level, the proportion of teachers who reported they were familiar with the term was similar across school decile bands.

Using a social inquiry approach

Teachers who indicated that they were familiar with the term ‘social inquiry’ were asked how often they included a social inquiry approach to learning in their social studies programme and how often they wrote learning intentions for the social inquiry process.

Figure 3.4 shows that a greater proportion of teachers at Year 8 than Year 4 reported that they ‘included a social inquiry approach to learning in their social studies programme’ ‘often’ or ‘always’. The proportion of teachers who ‘included a social inquiry approach to learning in their social studies programme’ ‘often’ or ‘always’ was greatest in mid decile schools, and least in low decile schools.

Figure 3.5 shows that a greater proportion of Year 8 teachers reported that they ‘write learning intentions for the social inquiry process’ ‘often’ or ‘always’. The proportion of teachers who ‘write learning intentions for the social inquiry process’ ‘often’ or ‘always’ was similar across school decile bands.

\(^{13}\)http://ssol.tki.org.nz/Social-studies-Years-1-10/Teaching-and-learning/effective_teaching_in_social_studies/social_inquiry
Approach to developing a learning programme in social studies

Teachers were asked to indicate the statement/s that best described their approach to developing a learning programme in social studies. The approaches are summarised in Table 3.2. A greater proportion of Year 4 teachers than Year 8 teachers selected the ‘concept-based’ approach. The same was true for the ‘context-based with a knowledge focus’ approach. A greater proportion of Year 8 teachers than Year 4 teachers selected the ‘context-based with a concept focus’ approach.

A greater proportion of teachers from low decile schools selected the ‘concept-based’ approach than teachers from mid or high decile schools. A smaller proportion of teachers from high decile schools than teachers from low or mid decile schools selected the ‘context-based with a knowledge focus’ approach. The proportion of teachers selecting the ‘context-based with a concept focus’ approach was highest in mid decile schools and lowest in low decile schools.

Table 3.2  Percentage of teachers who used different approaches to teaching social studies by year level and decile band

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach to developing a learning programme</th>
<th>Year level</th>
<th>School decile band</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>Year 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept-based (e.g., community, identity, place, change)</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context-based with a knowledge focus (e.g., a country, ANZAC Day, early settlers, disasters)</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context-based with a concept focus</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Emphasis in teaching social studies

Teachers were asked in an open-ended question, to specify the aspects of social studies they emphasised the most. The initial scheme developed to code the responses was based on important themes and ideas (constructs) that underpin the social studies learning area. The three coding categories related to the aspects of the construct for social studies: ‘conceptual learning’, ‘active participation in society’, and ‘values and perspectives’. Two categories emerged from the coding process itself – ‘context’ and ‘skills’. Any remaining aspects reported by teachers were grouped as ‘other’ and included (sparking an interest and relating to their personal life, building on students' prior knowledge, aspects relevant to our students - especially the local area and environmental issues, fostering a thirst for knowledge within the children and encourage them to lead their own path of discovery). Responses could be coded in up to three categories. Table 3.3 shows the proportion of responses that were coded in each category by year level and school decile band. As teachers’ responses could belong to more than one category, percentages total more than 100 percent at each year level.

Both Year 4 and Year 8 teachers reported emphasising the development of students’ ‘conceptual learning’ more often than their ‘active participation in society’. ‘Values and perspectives’ were reported as being emphasised the least of the three social studies constructs.

Table 3.3  Percentage frequency of the aspects of social studies that teachers placed most emphasis on, by year level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emphasised aspect of social studies</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conceptual learning</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active participation in society</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values and perspectives</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills (research, inquiry)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Meeting the differentiated social studies needs of students

Teachers were presented with a list of five strategies for meeting the differentiated needs of students in social studies and were asked to select which ones they used in their classrooms. Figure 3.6 shows how teachers responded by year level.

![Percentage frequency of strategies for meeting the differentiated needs of students reported by Year 4 and Year 8 teachers](image)

The most commonly reported strategy for meeting differentiated learning needs, for both Year 4 and Year 8 teachers, was ‘incorporating different media and learning approaches within a topic’, while the least commonly reported strategy was ‘specialist advice to adapt the NZC for students with special education needs’.

A smaller proportion of teachers from low decile schools (84 percent) than teachers from mid or high decile schools (96 and 98 percent) reported that they were ‘incorporating different media and learning approaches within a topic’. A greater proportion of teachers from the low decile schools (23 percent) than teachers from mid decile schools (13 percent) indicated that they made use of ‘specialist advice to adapt the NZC for learners with special education needs’.

Learning activities and experiences

Teachers were asked how often students in their class had a range of learning experiences and opportunities in social studies. Figure 3.7 shows teachers’ responses to the range of statements. For four of the learning experiences and opportunities, the proportion of teachers reporting ‘often’ or ‘always’ was over 80 percent. These statements were: ‘I link other learning areas with my social studies programme’; ‘I establish students’ prior knowledge before I begin a topic or unit’; ‘whatever topics I am teaching, I relate and connect them to the students’ lives and show they have meaning for them’; and, ‘as part of learning in social studies students participate and contribute in groups’.

The learning opportunities that were reported as occurring ‘rarely’ were: ‘students access social studies information from experts/visitors to the classroom’ and ‘students have opportunities for participating in social action on issues of interest and relevance to them at our school’.

The general pattern of responses was similar across year levels and school decile bands.
Comparison of teacher and student responses

Five statements about classroom activities in the teacher questionnaire were similar to statements contained in a parallel section of the student questionnaire. The wording of the five statements was slightly different in the two questionnaires. Table 3.4 shows the percentage of students and teachers at each year level who reported experiences and opportunities to learn in social studies happened with ‘high frequency’. ‘High frequency’ was defined as responses of ‘often’ or ‘very often’ by students, and ‘often’ and ‘always’ by teachers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment feedback</td>
<td>Students receive feedback on how well they achieved on each topic/unit</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>My teacher tells me how well I’m doing in social studies</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior knowledge</td>
<td>I establish students’ prior knowledge before I begin a topic/unit</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>My teacher asks us about what we already know about the topic we study in social studies</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making connections</td>
<td>Whatever topics I am teaching, I relate and connect them to the students’ lives and show they have meaning for them</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>In social studies I learn things that connect with my own life</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborating with peers</td>
<td>As part of their learning in social studies students participate and contribute in groups</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>I get to talk about and discuss my ideas with other people in social studies</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision making</td>
<td>Students have opportunities for participating in social action on issues of interest and relevance to them at our school</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Students get to make decisions in our school about things that matter to us</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the main, far greater proportions of teachers reported high frequency occurrences of the comparable activities than students. This difference was more pronounced at Year 8 than Year 4, and particularly notable for the statements about ‘assessment feedback’. Overall, there appears to be a gap between the intention of teachers providing opportunities, and students’ perceptions of receiving them. This may be partially explained by the tendency for social studies to be studied in an integrated way, rather than as an independent study (as reported by principals – see the next chapter).

7. Professional support for teaching social studies

Professional support at school

Teachers were asked to rate the level of professional support they received overall at school for their teaching of social studies. Table 3.5 shows that the quality of teachers’ experiences of professional support was quite variable by year level and school decile band. The largest proportion of teachers at both year levels rated their professional support for teaching social studies as ‘fair’. A greater proportion of teachers at Year 4 rated their professional support as ‘very poor’ or ‘poor’ than did those at Year 8. However, a lesser proportion of Year 4 teachers than Year 8 teachers rated their professional support as ‘good’ or ‘excellent’.

The pattern of responses to this question was similar across the school decile bands with the exception of the two highest rating categories (‘good’ and ‘excellent’). Thirty-seven percent of teachers from low decile schools and 35 percent of teachers from high decile schools rated their professional support as ‘good’ or ‘excellent’, whereas only 26 percent of teachers from mid decile schools did.

Table 3.5  Percentage frequency of teachers’ rating of the level of professional support within their school for social studies, by year level and school decile band

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating of professional development</th>
<th>Year level</th>
<th>School decile band</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 4</td>
<td>Year 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very poor</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interactions with other teachers

Teachers were asked to rate how often they had a range of interactions with other teachers about social studies. Their responses are displayed in Figure 3.8. For all but one of the statements, at least 50 percent of teachers at each year level interacted either ‘at least once a term’ or ‘at least once a month’. The majority of teachers, at both year levels, reported that the opportunity to ‘observe a colleague teaching social studies’ occurred either ‘at least once a year’ or ‘never’. Response patterns were similar across decile bands.
The final question asked teachers whether they had had any opportunities in the last 12 months for professional learning and development (PLD) focused on social studies. Only 20 percent of Year 4 teachers and 26 percent of Year 8 teachers had received any PLD focused on social studies in the last 12 months. A lesser proportion of teachers from mid decile schools (13 percent) than teachers in low or high decile schools (23 and 31 percent, respectively) had received PLD in the last 12 months.

If teachers had not received any PLD in the last 12 months, they were asked to report the last time they received any. Figure 3.9 shows how these teachers responded by year level. The proportion of these teachers who indicated that they had never had PLD focused on social studies was greater for teachers from low decile schools (74 percent) compared with mid or high decile schools (81 percent for both).
8. Summary

The teacher questionnaire included sections that asked teachers for information about themselves and their teaching of social studies. Findings presented in this chapter should be interpreted cautiously since the sample of teachers may not be nationally representative.

Almost half of the teachers at both year levels indicated they had 10 years or more teaching experience. The average class size at Year 4 and Year 8 was 27 and 29, respectively. Types of classroom support reported by teachers were generally similar for both year levels. Overall, teachers were found to have very positive attitudes to social studies regardless of their school decile.

Most of the teachers indicated they were familiar with the term ‘social inquiry’. Of these teachers, a greater proportion of teachers at Year 8 than Year 4 reported that they ‘included a social inquiry approach to learning’ and ‘wrote learning intentions’ in their social studies programme ‘often’ or ‘always’. Both Year 4 and Year 8 teachers placed most emphasis on the development of students’ ‘conceptual learning’, followed by ‘active participation in society’ and then ‘values and perspectives’.

Meeting the differentiated social studies needs of students was commonly achieved by ‘incorporating different media and learning approaches within a topic’. Most teachers provided the range of learning experiences and opportunities in social studies listed. The general pattern of responses was similar across year levels and school decile band. However, teachers’ reports of learning experiences provided to students were not mirrored in students’ perceptions of receiving them. The discrepancy was more prevalent at Year 8 than Year 4.

Broadly speaking, Year 8 teachers were more satisfied than Year 4 teachers in terms of the quality of the professional support the received at school for their teaching of social studies. Teachers indicated that they had a range of interactions with other teachers about social studies but almost half of the teachers at both year levels reported the lack of observing a colleague teaching social studies. Approximately one-fifth of the teachers from both year levels reported receiving social studies focused PLD in the last 12 months.
Principal Questionnaire

1. Introduction

In each of the schools selected for the 2014 NMSSA study, the principal was asked to complete a 4-part questionnaire. Part 1 asked principals about how their school provided for students’ learning in reading. Part 2 asked principals about how their school provided for learning in social studies. For the questions in parts 1 and 2, principals were directed to respond in relation to the learning of the year level that had been assessed in their school (Year 4 or Year 8). Part 3 asked about overall school characteristics. Part 4 had questions about provisions for priority learner groups (Māori, Pasifika and students with special education needs).

This chapter describes how principals responded to the questions about general school characteristics, and the social studies programme in their school. If principals felt they did not have time to complete the questionnaire they were asked to delegate it to a member of the school leadership team. In this report, all respondents are referred to as principals.

2. Who responded

In total, 161 principals returned the questionnaire. The response rate at Year 4 was 80 percent and at Year 8 was 81 percent.

Table 4.1 shows how many principals responded to the questionnaire by year level and school decile band. The number of questionnaires completed by principals from low decile schools was fewer than for those from mid or high decile schools. It is important to note that the principals who completed the questionnaire do not necessarily constitute a nationally representative sample. The findings discussed in this chapter should be interpreted as a broad indication of principals’ views about social studies.

Table 4.1 Respondents to the 2014 NMSSA principal questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School decile band</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N = 80</td>
<td>N = 81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Students who do not speak English as a first language

Principals were asked what proportion of students in their school overall did not have English as their first language. Figure 4.1 shows that the majority of Year 4 and Year 8 principals (74 and 88 percent, respectively) reported that ‘25% or less’ students in their schools did not speak English as their first language. These figures were even higher for mid and high decile schools (93 and 90 percent, respectively) and substantially lower for principals from low decile schools (49 percent). At the other extreme, 10 percent of Year 4 principals and 5 percent of Year 8 principals reported more than 50 percent of their students did not have English as their first language. The majority of these principals were from low decile schools (24 percent) compared with mid and high decile schools (3 and 2 percent, respectively).

![Figure 4.1 Percentage frequency of students who do not speak English as their first language, by year level](image)

4. The school social studies programme

How teaching of social studies is structured

Principals were asked if the teaching of social studies was taught independently of other learning areas or whether it was integrated into the teaching of other learning areas. Table 4.2 shows that the majority of principals selected the statement, ‘teaching of social studies is integrated into other learning areas’. This percentage was higher at Year 4 (86 percent) than Year 8 (77 percent). The percentages were also progressively larger at higher decile schools. Seventy-three percent of principals selected ‘teaching of social studies is integrated into other learning areas’ at low decile schools, 82 percent did at mid decile schools, and 86 percent did at high decile schools. Overall, less than 20 percent of principals reported social studies was taught independently of other learning areas, except for Year 8 principals (23 percent) and principals from low decile schools (27 percent).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure of social studies teaching</th>
<th>Percentage of principals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social studies is taught independently of other learning areas</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching of social studies is integrated into other learning areas</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Provision for student learning in social studies

Principals were asked to rate their school’s provision for learning in social studies as ‘poor’, ‘fair’, ‘good’, ‘very good’ or ‘excellent’. Figure 4.2 shows that overall, the majority of principals rated their school’s provision for learning in social studies as ‘good’ or ‘very good’. A greater proportion of Year 8 principals than Year 4 principals rated their school’s provision for learning in social studies as ‘excellent’. No principals rated their provision for social studies as ‘poor’.

Similar proportions of principals from low, mid, and high decile band schools (83, 79 and 87 percent, respectively) rated their school’s provision for learning in social studies as ‘good’ or ‘very good’. About 10 percent of principals from mid and high decile schools rated their provision as ‘excellent’ compared with 5 percent from low decile schools.

Social action

Principals were asked about the ways that their students were supported to take social action that leads to change at school or in the community. Principals were invited to select all statements that applied to their students. Figure 4.3 shows that at least 90 percent of principals at each year level selected the statement: ‘involvement in school issues/events’. A similar level of response was reported across school deciles.

The second most frequently selected statement by principals was ‘involvement in local community issues/events’. Seventy percent of Year 4 principals and 81 percent of Year 8 principals selected this statement. The proportion of principals from low, mid and high decile schools selecting this statement became progressively larger (68, 74 and 81 percent, respectively).

The third most frequently selected statement by principals was ‘student council’. Less than half of Year 4 principals (43 percent) compared with the majority of Year 8 principals (87 percent) selected this statement. Only about half of principals from low decile schools (49 percent) selected the ‘student council’ statement which was lower than mid and high decile schools (67 and 73 percent, respectively).
‘Other’ types of social action specified by principals included mediation, mentoring and leadership opportunities involving peers; enviro-school participation; and inquiry-based initiatives. These ‘other’ types of support were generally more often provided at Year 8 and in low decile schools.

Engaging with whānau and the wider community

Figure 4.4 shows the percentage of principals who reported how the school engages with whānau and the wider community in the teaching of social studies. Principals were invited to select all statements that applied to their school.

At least 80 percent of principals at both year levels selected the statements ‘drawing on local community knowledge/resources’, ‘inviting speakers from the local community’ and ‘visiting community organisations/resources’. Approximately 60 percent of principals selected the statement ‘visiting local marae’. These patterns were generally similar for principals from low, mid, and high decile schools. The most notable difference was that a smaller proportion of principals from low decile schools (78 percent) than principals from mid and high decile schools (90 and 89 percent respectively) reported ‘inviting speakers from the local community’.

Just under 20 percent of principals specified other types of engagement such as school camps, community focus topics and regular home/school partnership meetings. This finding was similar across school decile bands.
5. Inclusion of students with special education needs in the social studies programme

Principals were asked to rate their school’s inclusion of students with special education needs in the social studies programme. Figure 4.5 shows that no principals rated their school’s inclusion practices as ‘poor’ and only a small proportion rated them as ‘fair’. The vast majority of principals rated their school’s inclusion as ‘good’, ‘very good’ or ‘excellent’. Approximately 50 percent of principals across year levels and decile bands rated their inclusion of students with special education needs in the social studies programme as ‘very good’.

![Percentage frequency of principals’ ratings of their school’s inclusion of students with special education needs in the social studies programme by year level](image)

6. Summary

Principals in schools involved in NMSSA were asked to complete a questionnaire. The questionnaire included sections that asked for information about general school characteristics, and the social studies programme in their school. The findings should be interpreted as a broad indication of principals’ views about social studies that may not be nationally representative.

The majority of principals reported that the proportion of students in their school for whom English was not their first language was ‘25% or less’. Most principals indicated that the teaching of social studies was integrated with other learning areas as opposed to being taught independently. This was more so at Year 4 than Year 8 and was also progressively more common for higher decile schools.

The majority of principals rated their school’s provision for learning in social studies as ‘good’ or ‘very good’, and was similar for low, mid, and high decile schools. At least 90 percent of principals at each year level selected ‘involvement in school issues/events’ as a way that their students were supported to take social action that leads to change at school or in the community. Students were also involved in the student council and involved in local community issues and events.

Principals most frequently engaged with whānau and wider community by ‘inviting speakers from the local community’, ‘visiting community organisations/resources’ and ‘drawing on local community knowledge/resources’, but less so by ‘visiting local marae’. The pattern of engagement was similar across school decile bands. The vast majority of principals reported their school’s inclusion of students with special education needs in the social studies programme as ‘good’, ‘very good’, or ‘excellent’.
Appendix 1: List of reports for 2014

Reports of findings for English: reading

5.1 NMSSA English: Reading 2014 – Overview
5.2 NMSSA Māori Student Achievement in English: Reading – Key findings 2014
5.3 NMSSA Pasifika Student Achievement in English: Reading – Key findings 2014
5.4 NMSSA Achievement of Students with Special Education Needs in English: Reading – Key findings 2014
5.5 NMSSA English: Reading 2014 – Contextual Report
7 NMSSA Technical Information 2014 – Social Studies, English: Reading

Reports of findings for social studies

6.1 NMSSA Social Studies 2014 – Overview
6.2 NMSSA Māori Student Achievement in Social Studies – Key findings 2014
6.3 NMSSA Pasifika Student Achievement in Social Studies – Key findings 2014
6.4 NMSSA Achievement of Students with Special Education Needs in Social Studies – Key findings 2014
6.5 NMSSA Social Studies 2014 – Contextual Report
7 NMSSA Technical Information 2014 – Social Studies, English: Reading

All reports are available on line at http://nmssa.otago.ac.nz/reports/index.htm.