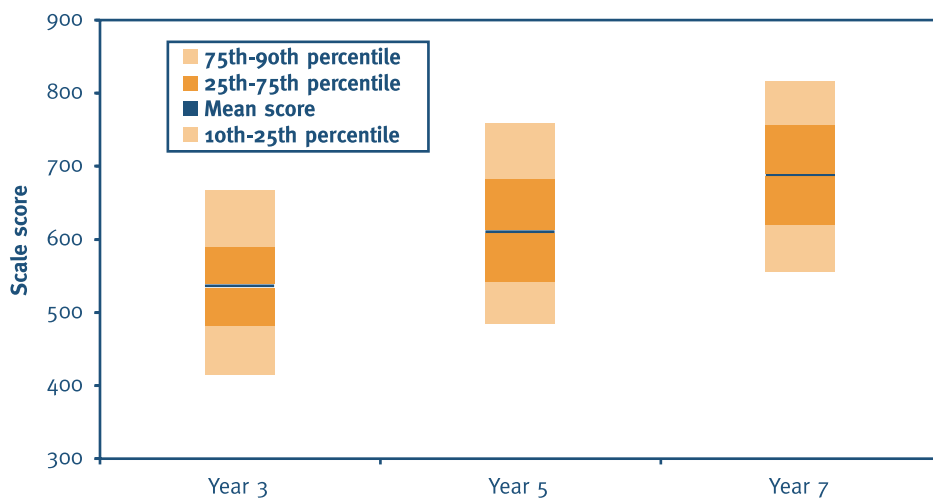


Figure 9.6 Distribution of number scores by year level, Queensland, 2003



Note: The shaded boxes denote the range of performances for the middle 80% of students (10th to 90th percentiles), and the inner shaded boxes denote the range of performance for the middle 50% of students (25th to 75th percentiles).

Source: Queensland Studies Authority, 2003 *Overview of Statewide Student Performance in Aspects of Literacy and Numeracy: Report to the Minister for Education and Minister for the Arts*

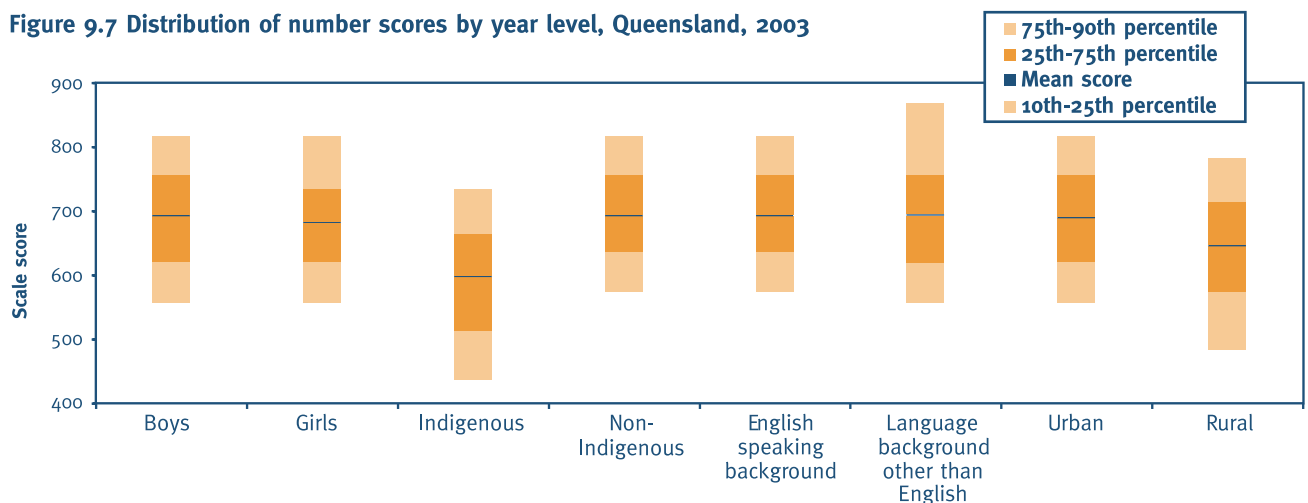
Differences in the mean number scores of various population groups were evident in each year level. A comparison of Year 7 number scores shows several similarities with reading skills (Figure 9.7).

- Indigenous students had lower mean scores of 598 compared to 693 for non-Indigenous students.
- Students in rural areas had lower mean scores of 646 compared to 690 in urban areas.

However, there were some contrasts to patterns in reading skills.

- Boys had a higher mean number score than girls in Year 3 (544 compared to 527), although the difference was less in Years 5 and 7 (Year 7 mean scores were 693 for boys and 682 for girls).
- There was little difference in mean number scores between students from non-English speaking backgrounds and those from English speaking backgrounds. The mean score for Year 7 students from non-English speaking backgrounds was 694 compared to 693 for students whose language background was English.

Figure 9.7 Distribution of number scores by year level, Queensland, 2003



Note: The shaded boxes denote the range of performances for the middle 80% of students (10th to 90th percentiles), and the inner shaded boxes denote the range of performance for the middle 50% of students (25th to 75th percentiles).

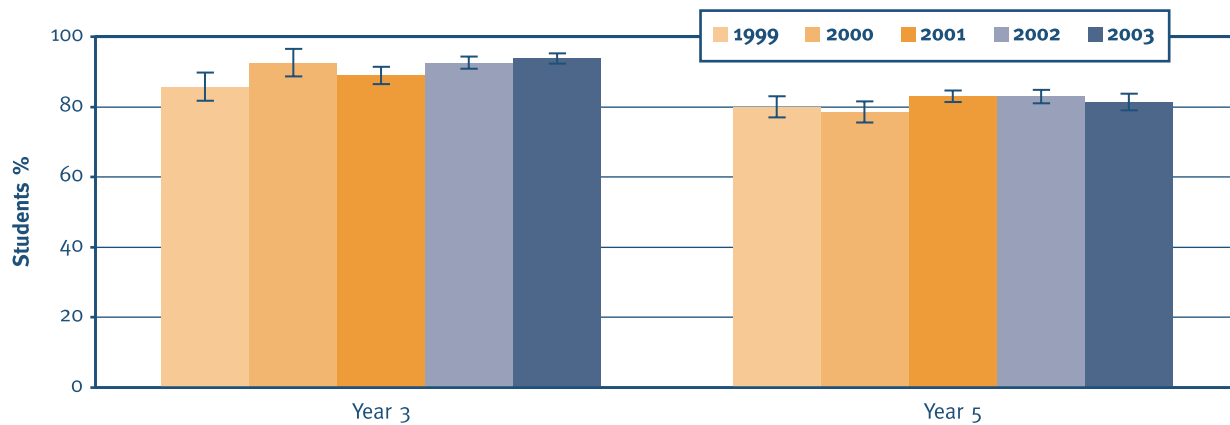
Source: Queensland Studies Authority, 2003 *Overview of Statewide Student Performance in Aspects of Literacy and Numeracy: Report to the Minister for Education and Minister for the Arts*

Students achieving national benchmarks

The national benchmarks indicate agreed minimum acceptable standards for students in Years 3 and 5. Students performing below these standards are likely to find it difficult to progress in school. Estimates of students achieving national benchmarks in 2003 are provisional and subject to revision, but show that:

- 93.8% (± 1.5) of Year 3 students met the national reading benchmark (Figure 9.8)
- 81.4% (± 2.4) of Year 5 students met the reading benchmark
- 92.1% (± 1.6) of Year 3 students met the numeracy benchmark (Figure 9.9)
- 86.3% (± 1.6) of Year 5 students met the numeracy benchmark.

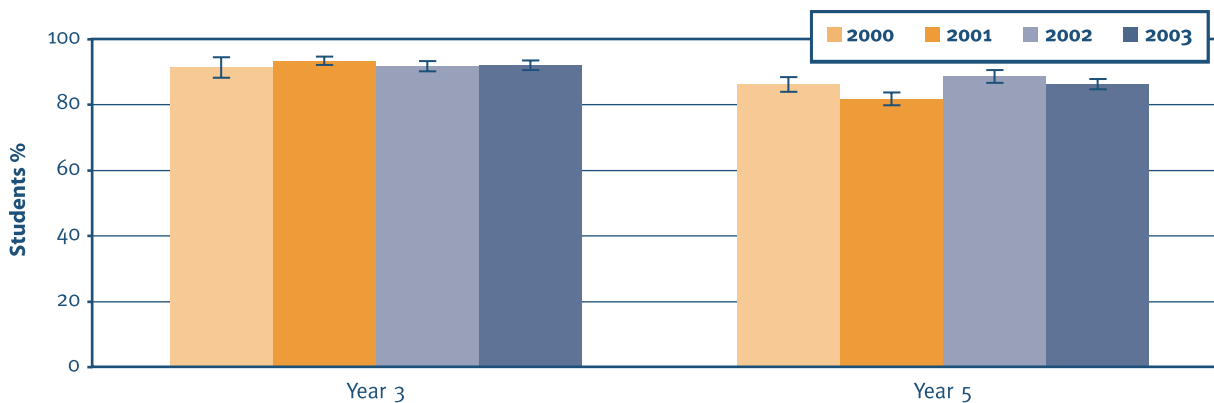
Figure 9.8 Students achieving national reading benchmarks, Queensland, 1999 to 2003



Note: Bars on estimates indicate the possible range of the actual value at a 95% confidence level. Year 3 data for 1999 and 2000 are based on a sample of approximately 10% of students.

Source: Queensland Studies Authority, 2003 *Overview of Statewide Student Performance in Aspects of Literacy and Numeracy: Report to the Minister for Education and Minister for the Arts*

Figure 9.9 Students achieving national numeracy benchmarks, Queensland, 2000 to 2003



Note: Bars on estimates indicate the possible range of the actual value at a 95% confidence level. Year 3 data for 2000 are based on a sample of approximately 10% of students.

Source: Queensland Studies Authority, 2003 *Overview of Statewide Student Performance in Aspects of Literacy and Numeracy: Report to the Minister for Education and Minister for the Arts*

Looking at different groups of students in 2003 (Queensland Studies Authority, 2004):

- a higher proportion of girls achieved the reading benchmark compared to boys (84.8% \pm 2.4 and 78.4% \pm 2.8 respectively in Year 5) - there were only small differences in the proportions who achieved the numeracy benchmarks
- the proportions of students from backgrounds where languages other than English were spoken who met national benchmarks for literacy and numeracy were similar to those for all students
- Indigenous students achieved the benchmarks at lower rates than all students:
 - 84.9% (\pm 3.9) of Year 3 Indigenous students met the national reading benchmark
 - 55.5% (\pm 4.2) of Year 5 Indigenous students met the reading benchmark
 - 78.3% (\pm 3.7) of Year 3 Indigenous students met the numeracy benchmark
 - 62.6% (\pm 3.4) of Year 5 Indigenous students met the numeracy benchmark.

Children in the care of the state

A child or young person may be placed in the care of the state if they have suffered or are suffering harm, or are at unacceptable risk of suffering harm and do not have a parent able and willing to protect them. Such children may already have experienced disadvantage in various aspects of their lives, and they are at risk of having poorer educational and social outcomes.

Over the past few years the Department of Education and the Arts has introduced a number of initiatives to try to improve educational outcomes. As part of these initiatives, literacy and numeracy results have been analysed from the Years 3, 5 and 7 Testing Program for children who had been in the care of the State for at least two years.

Results published in the '*Baseline*' *Performance Report* (Department of Child Safety, 2004) show a larger proportion of children in the care of the State in 2003 were not achieving national literacy and numeracy benchmarks compared to the general school population:

- 51.1% (\pm 8.3) of Year 5 students in care met the national reading benchmark compared to 81.4% (\pm 2.4) of all students
- 29.6% (\pm 7.5) of Year 5 students in care met the national numeracy benchmark compared to 86.3% (\pm 1.6) of all students.

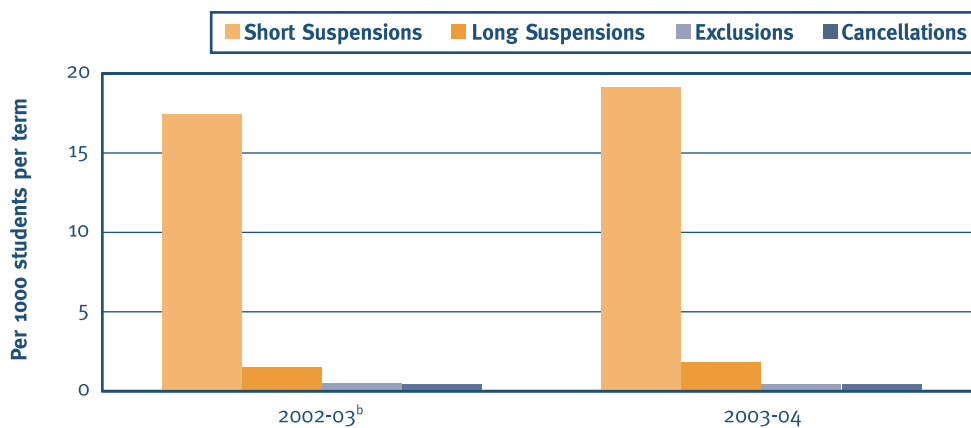
Disciplinary absences

A number of strategies are used by schools to manage student behaviour. State schools in Queensland use student disciplinary absences – short suspension (1 to 5 days), long suspension (6 to 20 days), exclusion and cancellation of enrolment – as options of last resort to address serious behaviour difficulties (Department of Education and the Arts, 2002).

Figure 9.10 illustrates the incidence of disciplinary absences at state schools. In the four terms from Term 3, 2003 to Term 2, 2004, there were:

- 34,284 short suspensions or 19.1 incidents per 1000 students per term
- 3188 long suspensions or 1.8 incidents per 1000 students per term
- 773 exclusions or 0.4 incidents per 1000 students per term
- 803 cancellations or 0.4 incidents per 1000 students per term.

Figure 9.10 State school disciplinary absences^a, Queensland, 2002–03 to 2003–04



a. Incidents per 1000 students per term.

b. Based on Term 4 2002 to Term 2 2003.

Source: Department of Education and the Arts, Annual Report, 2003-04

Reasons for the 34,284 short suspensions in the four terms in 2003-04 included:

- 29.7% for physical misconduct
- 21.7% for verbal or non-verbal misconduct
- 15.2% for persistently disruptive behaviour adversely affecting others
- 9.5% for refusal to participate in the program of instruction
- 8.5% for other conduct prejudicial to the good order and management of the school
- 6.5% for property misconduct
- 6.0% for substance misconduct involving tobacco and other legal substances
- 1.9% for absences
- 0.9% for substance misconduct involving an illicit substance.

Comments

There will be fundamental changes to schooling in Queensland in the next few years with the introduction of the Education and Training Reforms for the Future (ETRF). These reforms will affect both the early years of schooling and senior schooling.

In 2007, a full-time Preparatory Year will be universally available, and in the following year the school entry age will be lifted so children will have to turn six on or before 30 June to enrol in Year One.

Although the Preparatory Year will be voluntary, it is expected that almost all children will enrol in the extra year of schooling.

The benefits of the change in the early years of schooling may not be seen clearly until 2010 when most children sitting in the Year 3 literacy and numeracy tests will have been through the Preparatory Year.

There should also be an impact on performance against national benchmarks, as when Queensland children sit the literacy and numeracy tests, most will have attended an extra year of school and will be up to six months older, making them the same age as students in other states when they sit the tests.

There will also be impacts on senior schooling. In October 2003, Queensland Parliament passed legislation allowing young people aged 15 to 17 years to follow learning paths that meet their needs in more innovative and flexible ways. The new laws are contained in complementary Acts: the *Youth Participation in Education and Training Act 2003* and the *Training Reform Act 2003*.

The legal school leaving age in Queensland is currently 15. From 2006, it will be compulsory for young people to stay at school until they complete Year 10 or turn 16, whichever comes first. Then, once a young person completes Year 10 or has turned 16, there will be a requirement to participate:

- for two years beyond Year 10, or
- until they have gained a Senior Certificate, or
- until they have gained a Certificate III, or
- until they turn 17.

The only exception to the compulsory participation phase will be for young people who enter full-time work (minimum 25 hours) after they have either completed Year 10 or turned 16.

The impact of the ETRF senior phase of learning on participation and retention of young people in education and training will be assessed through a performance reporting framework that will measure outcomes across all sectors linked to the reforms:

- there will be more options, support and flexibility for young people, including those at risk of disengaging
- community partnerships will enable better coordination of programs and services for young people
- education and training staff will have the appropriate training and support to deliver the objectives of the ETRF
- collaborative resource planning, allocation and management of assets, finances and human resources will occur.

In addition there are outcomes expected in relation to:

- increased numbers of young people successfully transitioning into the senior phase of learning
- increased numbers of young people successfully taking part in a range of relevant options during the senior phase of learning to assist with their successful transition to further education and training and/or employment.

These data are not expected to be reported until 2008 due to the timeframes of implementation of some initiatives linked to the ETRF senior phase of learning.