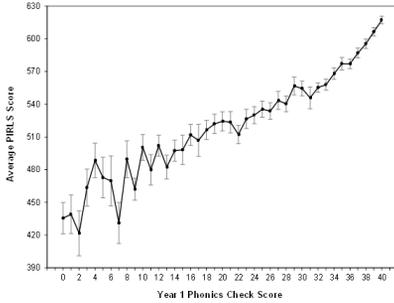


# PIRLS 2016 results in England



**PIRLS** is an international comparative study directed by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). **The aim of PIRLS is to assess and compare pupils' reading literacy in their fourth year of formal schooling (Year 5 in England), within and across participating countries. A total of 50 countries took part in PIRLS 2016.** England has participated in all four PIRLS cycles (2001, 2006, 2011 & 2016).

## Highlights for PIRLS 2016

- In 2016, pupils in **England have achieved their highest average score (559)** across all four PIRLS cycles.
- England's average performance in 2016 is a **statistically significant improvement** from the PIRLS 2006 (539) and 2011 (552) cycles.
- **20% of England's pupils score above the PIRLS Advanced Benchmark in 2016**, which is up from 18% in 2011, and well above the International Median of 10%. **Only 3% of pupils score below the Low Benchmark**, which is down from 5% in 2011.
- England's average performance is **among the best in Europe**.
- England's average is **significantly above the International Median** performance, but below top PIRLS performers like the Russian Federation and Singapore.

## Key improvements in PIRLS 2016

- The average improvement of England's pupils in 2016 is **largely attributable to two changes**: 1) In 2016, **boys have significantly improved** in their average performance compared to previous cycles, whereas the girls' performance is similar to their average score in 2011; and, 2) **England's lowest performing pupils have substantially improved** compared to previous PIRLS cycles, which has narrowed the gap between the higher and lower-performing pupils.
- In 2011, England's gender-gap was one of the largest across all participating countries, but in 2016, **England's gender-gap is now consistent with the International Median**.
- The **gap between the higher and lower performing pupils in England is still larger than in many other top PIRLS countries**.

## PIRLS 2016 performance and prior reading attainment

- PIRLS 2016 is the **first cycle where England's pupils have completed both the Year 1 phonics check, introduced in 2012, and the PIRLS assessment**. The Year 1 phonics check scores are significantly associated with Year 5 PIRLS performance, with a moderate correlation of 0.52. In fact, when examined with other background characteristics, **the phonics check score is the most significant predictor of PIRLS performance**. Pupils in England that attained full marks in the Year 1 phonics check have a higher average score (617) than any countries participating in PIRLS 2016.
- Performance in the Year 2 phonics checks, which is mostly completed by pupils who do not meet the expected standard in Year 1, is also positively associated with PIRLS performance. However, **even the highest-performing pupils in the Year 2 phonics check only have an average performance similar to England's overall average score (563 compared to 559)**.
- The former Key Stage 1 (KS1) reading assessment is also positively associated with PIRLS performance. **Pupils who attained a Level 3 for KS1 reading have an average PIRLS score of 615**.

## Pupil characteristics and PIRLS

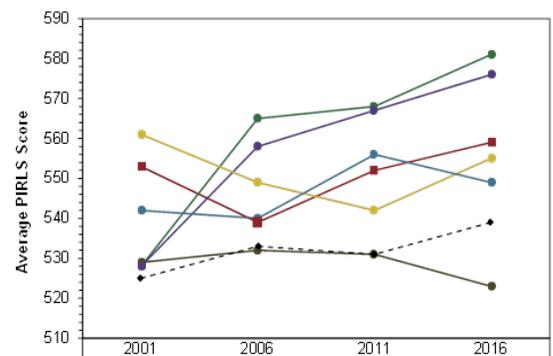
- In England, the **number of books** a pupil has access to at home is the **second most significant predictor of PIRLS performance**.
- Generally, **pupils with more educational resources at home have significantly higher average PIRLS scores** than pupils with fewer educational resources.
- Pupils **eligible for free school meals in the previous six years perform significantly lower** than their non-eligible peers.
- **Older pupils perform significantly better on PIRLS**, and there is a strong association between birth month and average PIRLS performance in England.
- Pupils' **ethnicity and their English as an Additional Language (EAL) status are not associated with PIRLS performance** when accounting for other pupil characteristics.

## School characteristics and PIRLS

- In England, **24% of headteachers believe that their school places a very high emphasis on academic success**, compared to an International Median of 5%.
- **Pupils at such schools generally perform significantly higher** than those in schools with lower emphasis on academic success.
- The **majority of pupils in England attend schools that teachers perceive as very safe and orderly** and where the headteacher believes that **school discipline is effective**.
- **15% of pupils in England report that they are bullied about weekly**, which is similar to the International Median.
- **Pupils reporting more frequent episodes of bullying have lower average performances** than their peers who report that they are almost never bullied at school.

## Teacher characteristics and PIRLS

- England's Year 5 teachers report an **average of 11-years of teaching experience**, which is lower than the **International Median of 17-years** experience.
- They also report **receiving fewer hours of reading-related professional development** than the International Median.
- Teaching experience and professional development do not appear to be related to pupils' PIRLS performance in England.
- Teachers in England report **lower career-satisfaction than the International Median**.



	2001	2006	2011	2016
England	553	539	552	559
New Zealand	529	532	531	523
Russian Federation	528	565	568	581
Singapore	528	558	567	576
Sweden	561	549	542	555
United States	542	540	556	549
International Median	525	533	531	539

## Attitudes and motivation to read

- **53% of England's pupils report very high confidence in reading**. This is above the International Median of 45%.
- **20% of pupils in England state they do not like reading** compared to an International Median of 17%. Positive attitudes toward reading are generally associated with higher average performance in PIRLS.
- In 2016, **England's boys' attitudes towards reading have slightly improved** but girls still report more positive attitudes.

Full PIRLS report for England : McGrane, J., Stiff, J., Baird, J.-A., Lenkeit, J., & Hopfenbeck, T. N. (2017). *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS): National Report for England*. London: Department for Education.

Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pirls-2016-reading-literacy-performance-in-england>

International Report: <https://timssandpirls.bc.edu/pirls2016/index.html>

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