

Reading among England's primary children not affected by pandemic: New report

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Credit: AI-generated image ([disclaimer](#))

Reading among 9–10-year-olds in England has remained consistent despite the COVID-19 pandemic, according to research released today from Oxford University's Department of Education.

Findings from the 2021 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

has shown that, while most countries showed downward trends in pupils' reading achievement since 2016, England's results showed no statistically significant change and remained above the international average. This is despite the disruption the pandemic caused to teaching and learning.

Dr. Ariel Lindorff, associate professor at Oxford's Department of Education and primary author of the report, says, "[The report] was not designed to measure the impact of COVID-19 as such, so we can't be sure of all the ways it affected teaching and learning, but the fact we do not see a decline in reading achievement in England since 2016 is encouraging.

"While we can't link the results to any specific initiative, they do suggest that, at least to some extent, the combination of COVID-19 recovery efforts made in England have been successful in supporting pupils' reading skills."

The PIRLS 2021 [research](#) was conducted by the Oxford University Center for Educational Assessment (OUCEA) in collaboration with the research team at Pearson, under the leadership of National Research Coordinator, Associate Professor Grace Grima. The Oxford research team included Dr. Ariel Lindorff, Jamie Stiff and Heather Kayton.

In welcoming the study's completion, Dr. Grima, said, "It is encouraging to see pupils in England continuing to perform well in reading after COVID. I would like to thank all the schools, teachers and pupils who helped make the study a success."

Results also showed that the [gender gap](#), which had already narrowed between 2011 and 2016, was further reduced in PIRLS 2021. The PIRLS study, which takes place every five years, provides an international comparative picture of reading and shows trends over time. In the PIRLS 2021 cycle, 57 countries participated, including England.

More information: PIRLS 2021: reading literacy performance in England: [www.gov.uk/government/publicat ... rformance-in-england](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reading-literacy-performance-in-england)

Provided by University of Oxford

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