Growing Up in New Zealand

Now We Are Twelve

Life in early adolescence

Now We Are 12:

Teacher Survey Report

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Growing Up in New Zealand

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1. Summary

This report focuses on the educational experiences of the *Growing Up in New Zealand* (*GUiNZ*) cohort. A teacher survey was conducted as part of the Now We Are 12 data collection wave, where teachers of the *GUiNZ* cohort were invited to take part in an online questionnaire. In this report, findings from the teacher survey are presented. These findings relate young people (n = 1,271) who were predominantly in year 7 at school (around age 11 to 12). We outline the demographics of the teachers who took part in the survey (n = 775), students' experiences of distance learning during COVID-19, and describe the students' physical learning environments at school. We also share information on teaching practices, class climate, the student-teacher relationship, teacher perceptions of academic performance and digital competencies, and compare teacher and student perceptions of bullying and school engagement.

2. Key Findings

- Most teachers reported their students were in class environments which were generally positive and engaging places to learn.
- Student-teacher relationships were generally characterised by teachers as having high emotional connection with low levels of relationship challenges.
- Most teachers (87.5%) characterised their classrooms as having low peer conflict and high positive peer interactions.
- On average, teachers reported higher school engagement (mean = 4.05, SD = 0.69) than students themselves (mean = 3.82, SD = 0.70).
- Young person experiences of bullying were more frequent than teacher reports.
- When asked about the use of digital technology, teachers reported that 13.7% of students had difficulty staying on task, and 15.3% of students had difficulty discerning the accuracy of information found online.
- Over 20% of students in this study were identified as having an additional learning need.
- Approximately 1 in 5 teachers reported lacking confidence in using Te Reo Māori in the classroom.
- One in 10 teachers reported they were not using learning resources that explicitly included the following diverse identities: Māori, Pacific, Asian, persons with disabilities, or transgender identities.

3. What is this report about?

GUiNZ is a longitudinal cohort study that follows over 6,000 young people born in New Zealand as they grow up. At age 12, we collected data from over 4,500 of these young people and their families. In the 12-year data collection wave (DCW) we also approached the teachers of the young people to find out more about their school environments and learning, to understand how the school context influences developmental outcomes and to gain information about the young people from a familiar adult who (for the most part) is from outside the family unit. This report provides the first insights into these data.

The findings are presented throughout this report in two sections:

Research Findings Part 1 — Classroom Characteristics reports the teachers' demographic information and provides an overview of the teaching practices used in the classroom, such as the use of Te Reo Māori and intentional use of inclusive resources in the classroom. As such, this section predominantly reports findings in relation to each teacher who participated in the study (n = 775).

Research Findings Part 2 — Student Experiences of School reports the teachers' responses to questions about each young person's experience of school, and therefore, analyses were primarily conducted at the young person level (n = 1,271). This section includes findings related to the suitability of the physical learning environment, class climate, bullying, school engagement and the student-teacher relationship. Where applicable, we have also included responses from the young people themselves. In these instances, we have used a matched sample, meaning we have only included responses for the young people whose teacher participated in the *GUiNZ* Teacher Survey.

4. Study Design

4.1.Data and methods

Of the 4,500 young people who said that their usual country of residence was New Zealand, 3,807 families agreed for the young person's teacher to participate in a survey, indicated through both parent consent and young person assent. After obtaining consent/assent, we contacted school principals to gather contact details for the teachers of the cohort. From April to October 2022, we sent out invitations via email to teachers who had taught the *GUiNZ* young people during the 2021 school year, inviting them to participate in an online questionnaire, henceforth called the *GUiNZ* Teacher Survey. After contacting schools to obtain the teacher's contact information, we successfully received and were able to email survey links to the teachers of 2,345 participants, 62.0% of those families who agreed for the young person's teacher to participate. We received survey responses from teachers who taught 1,271 of these young people (33.4% of those who consented for *GUiNZ* to approach their

teacher).[1] Appendix A reports the response rate at the stage of consent/assent, and Appendix B demonstrates the response rate of the teacher survey sample utilised in this report (*n* = 1,271) compared to the *GUiNZ* sample utilised in the Now We are 12 Snapshot Series (*n* = 4,500). Included in these analyses were 775 teachers who participated in the *GUiNZ* Teacher Survey, with 538 teachers who answered a questionnaire in relation to only one young person, while the remaining teachers completed two or more questionnaires (i.e., about two or more *GUiNZ* young people).

This report uses standard summary statistics to provide an overview of the responses to the *GUiNZ* Teacher Survey. The aim of this report is to offer a concise and informative snapshot of the schooling experiences of young people involved in the *GUiNZ* longitudinal study, based on the observations and experiences shared by the teachers. The teachers were given the option to opt out of specific sets of questions within the questionnaire, resulting in varying denominators throughout this report. Accordingly, the focus is on complete cases, indicating the number of teachers who responded to each set of questions.

An outline of the methods and data collection for the full 12-year DCW can be found in the Introduction to the *Growing Up in New Zealand* 12-Year Data Collection Wave and Now We Are 12: Methods reports.

Most of the young people (91.7%, *n* = 1,140) were in year 7 when they were taught by these teachers (see Table 1 for the breakdown of the year levels attended). This sample includes 21.5% (*n* = 263) who attended a low decile school (decile 1-3), 39.1% (*n* = 478) who attended a middle decile school (decile 4-7) and 39.3% (*n* = 480) who attended a high decile school (decile 8-10).[2] Also included in the sample are 28 young people who were home-schooled, 14 young people who engaged in Te Kura, and 12 young people who engaged in schooling as part of a virtual learning network.

Table 1. School Year in 2021 (*n* = 1,243)

Year level	Students	
	n	%
Year 6	31	2.5
Year 7	1,140	91.7
Year 8	68	5.5
Year 9	< 10	<1
Other	< 10	<1

[1] Teacher responses were included even if they reported only teaching the young person for a short time, as these teachers were selected by the school principal/administrator to be the teacher who was most knowledgeable about the young person when the school was approached.

[2] In New Zealand the school decile system was replaced by the equity index in 2023. However, as school decile was the system in place at the time of the survey, this has been used as a reference point for this report. School decile can be used as an indicator of the socio-economic status of the school.

5. Research Findings Part 1 — Classroom Characteristics

This section considers the classroom characteristics and teaching practices of teachers in New Zealand who responded to the *GUiNZ* Teacher Survey regarding the 2021 school year. Therefore, this section considered the responses of each unique teacher who responded (n = 775), first describing the gender and ethnicity of the teachers and then describing the teachers' descriptions of their classroom practices, such as the use of Te Reo Māori in the classroom and intentional use of inclusive resources.

5.1. Teacher Demographics

To help with contextualising the teacher responses regarding young people's schooling experiences, the demographic characteristics of the teachers are described in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographics of Teachers who Participated in the Teacher Survey

	Teacher response	
	n	**(%)**
Gender Identity of Teacher (*n* = 765)		
Female	565	73.9
Male	195	25.5
Gender diverse	0	0
Prefer not to say	<10	<1
Ethnicity of Teacher (total response ethnicity; *n* = 760)		
Māori	127	16.7
Pacific	56	7.4
Asian	34	4.5
Middle Eastern/Latin American/African (MELAA) / Other	52	6.8
Sole European	504	66.3

Note. Participants who reported more than one ethnic group are counted once in each group reported, except for the "Sole European" group which includes those who only identified as European.

The majority of teachers in this study identified as female (73.9%; n = 565); whilst 25.5% (n = 195) identified as male; and <1% (n < 10) preferred not to report their gender (see Table 2). No teachers identified as gender diverse.

In the teacher survey, teachers indicated their ethnic identity/identities, and these ethnicity data were then aggregated into broad ethnic groupings aligned with the Statistics New Zealand Level 1 ethnic groupings (Statistics New Zealand, 2005). The ethnicity data are presented in Table 2 using total response ethnicity, where multi-ethnic participants were included in each relevant ethnic group. Those who reported more than one ethnic group are counted once in each group reported, except for the

Sole European group which includes those teachers who only identified as European. For more information on ethnicity derivation in the 12-year DCW, see *GUiNZ* paper on the Ethnic and Gender Identity at 12 Years Old.

5.2. Classroom Practices

The teachers in this study were specifically asked about the diversity in their teaching practices, including the languages spoken and the resources they used that represented different identities. Having an inclusive curriculum within schools has been found to support student-teacher relationships and improve academic achievement (Kosciw et al., 2020).

5.2.1. Language of Instruction

Teachers were asked to indicate the language(s) their student/s (n = 1,271) received instruction in, and what proportion of the school week was dedicated to each language. The findings show that 98.5% (n = 1,215) of students were receiving instruction in English. Of the students who received instruction in Te Reo Māori (28.5%, n = 352), 1.9% (n = 24) of students received instruction in this language more than 50% of the school week. Of the students who received instruction in New Zealand Sign Language (3.9%, n = 48), only a small number (n < 10) received this instruction for more than 30% of the school week.

5.2.2. Use of Te Reo Māori in the Classroom

Teachers were asked about their use of Te Reo Māori within the classroom (Figure 1). Notably, 79.4% (n = 587) of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they used day-to-day phrases, such as “ka pai” or “kia ora”. However, almost 1 in 5 teachers (18.8%, n = 139) reported that they did not feel confident using Te Reo Māori with their class (indicated by the disagree or strongly disagree response option).

When asked about whether teachers provided frequent opportunities for the students to learn *new* vocabulary or phrases in Te Reo Māori (as opposed to well-known words or phrases), 53.9% (n = 398) of teachers reported that they agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

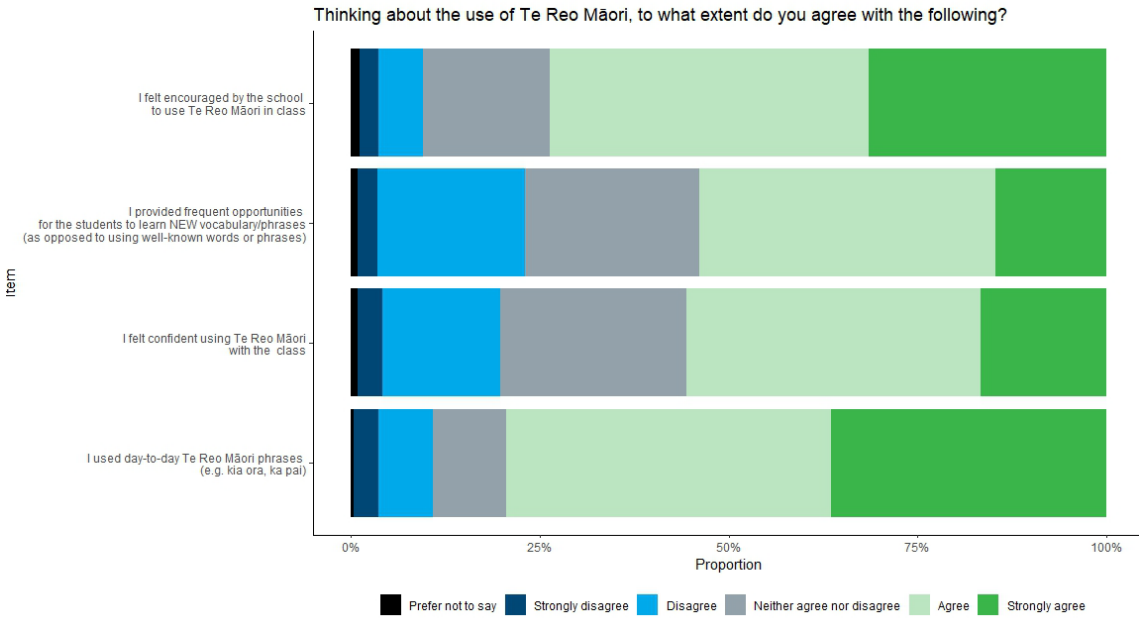

Figure 1. Teacher Reports of Use of Te Reo Māori in the Classroom (*n* = 739)

5.2.3. Intentional Use of Resources

Growing Up in New Zealand has demonstrated that young people in New Zealand have a diverse sense of identity, with 22.4% of the cohort at age 12 identifying as rangatahi Māori, 16.7% as Pacific, 14.8% as Asian, and 1.7% as MELAA see Ethnic and Gender Identity Snapshot. At age 12, the *GUiNZ* study also found that approximately 19.4% of young people were disabled, and 15% were identified as transgender, non-binary or unsure of their gender (see Ethnic and Gender Identity Snapshot and Disability Snapshot for more detail). These statistics suggest that most classrooms in New Zealand will have students that identify as gender diverse or are unsure of their gender, are disabled, and/or belong to an ethnic group that is not European.

Using resources in the classroom that incorporate diverse identities is important to ensure that students can relate to and see themselves in learning materials. The inclusion of resources representing diverse identities can have positive implications for wellbeing and educational outcomes (Gershenson et al., 2021). We asked teachers about their intentional use of learning materials that reflect diverse realities of learners in the classroom. Table 3 presents the breakdown for the proportion of teachers who were utilising resources that reflect each identity. Where most teachers were using resources that represented Māori identities (88.3%, *n* = 649), a much smaller proportion were including transgender identities (13.1%, *n* = 96). Notably, 1 in 10 teachers (10.2%, *n* = 75) reported not using resources that reflected any of these groups.

Table 3. Use of Diverse Learning Resources (*n* = 735)

Use of learning examples, exercises, and/or resources that explicitly included:	Yes	
	n	%
Māori identities	649	88.3
Pacific identities	445	60.5
Asian identities	277	37.7
Persons with disabilities	302	41.1
Transgender identities	96	13.1
None of the above	75	10.2

5.2.4. Future Research Possibilities

The questions that were included in the *GUiNZ* Teacher Survey relating to diversity within learning environments lend themselves to substantial research into the role of recognising young people's identities as part of learning and teaching practices. Future work could consider the relationship between the teacher use of resources and class climate, student engagement or student-teacher relationships. Research projects could also consider how teachers' choices of resources relates to wellbeing outcomes such as sense of belonging, acceptance, or bullying.

6. Research Findings Part 2 — Student Experiences of School

This section of the report examines students' experiences in the classroom, covering various aspects such as the physical learning environment, class climate, teacher perceptions of academic performance, digital competence, bullying, school engagement, student-teacher relationship, and the learning needs of the students. The analyses adopted a young person-centric approach, focusing on the teacher and student responses relating to the 1,271 young people, to better understand their educational journey.

6.1. Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants

In total, 1,271 young people living in New Zealand had a questionnaire completed by their 2021 teacher providing their perspective on the student experiences of school. Table 4 displays the sociodemographic characteristics of the students for whom a teacher had completed a questionnaire.

Table 4. Sociodemographic Characteristics of Students who had a Teacher Participate in the Teacher Survey (*n* = 1,271)

	Student's teacher participated in the survey	
	n	**(%)**
Total	1,271	100
Sex assigned at birth		
Male	625	49.2
Female	646	50.8
Gender Identity at Age 12		
Cisgender Boy	564	44.4
Cisgender Girl	499	39.3
Transgender/Non-binary/Unsure	207	16.3
Missing data	<10	<1.0
Ethnic Identity at Age 12 (total response)		
Māori	286	22.5
Pacific	183	14.4
Asian	160	12.6
Other/MELAA	39	3.1
Sole European	689	54.2
Missing data	28	2.2
Socioeconomic deprivation (NZDep2018)		
Low deprivation (scores 1–3)	454	35.7
Medium deprivation (scores 4–7)	518	40.8
High deprivation (scores 8–10)	282	22.2
Missing data	17	1.3

Note. For the categorisation of ethnic identity participants who reported more than one ethnic group are counted once in each group reported, except for the "Sole European" group which includes those who only identified as European. NZDep2018 is an area-based measure of deprivation based on 2018 census data.

6.2. Experiences of Distance Learning during Covid-19

The questionnaire asked teachers to report on students' learning experiences in the 2021 school year. During this time, many students spent a substantial proportion of the year in distance learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which likely affected their education and wellbeing. Many of the *GUiNZ* cohort were living in the Auckland, Counties-Manukau, and Waikato regions and therefore, a large portion of the cohort were living in areas that experiences some of the longest lockdowns in 2021. The teachers were asked to indicate the amount of time during the 2021 school year that students spent in online or distance instruction because of COVID-19 lockdown measures.

Of note, only 22.2% (*n* = 278) of students spent **less than 5 weeks** in online or distance instruction, whereas 32.5% (*n* = 407) of students spent **more than 12 weeks** learning from home. Table 5 reports this information in further detail.

Table 5. Time Spent in Distance Learning due to Covid-19 (*n* = 1,252)

Time in distance learning	*n*	%
None	14	1.1
Less than 5 weeks	264	21.1
About 5–12 weeks	547	43.7
More than 12 weeks	407	32.5
Not applicable	20	1.6

Note. Teachers who reported 'none' or 'not applicable' were often the teachers of home-schooled or Te Kura students (*n* = 22). 'Not applicable' was given as an answer option to be relevant to students where COVID-19 lockdown measures would not cause a change to their mode of instruction.

When asked a follow up question about how well the distance learning environment supported the students learning, only 34.2% (*n* = 411) of students' teachers said that this supported them to learn effectively. Figure 2 shows that the most common reasons teachers thought the distance learning environment did *not* support their student were factors related to the absence of the school environment.

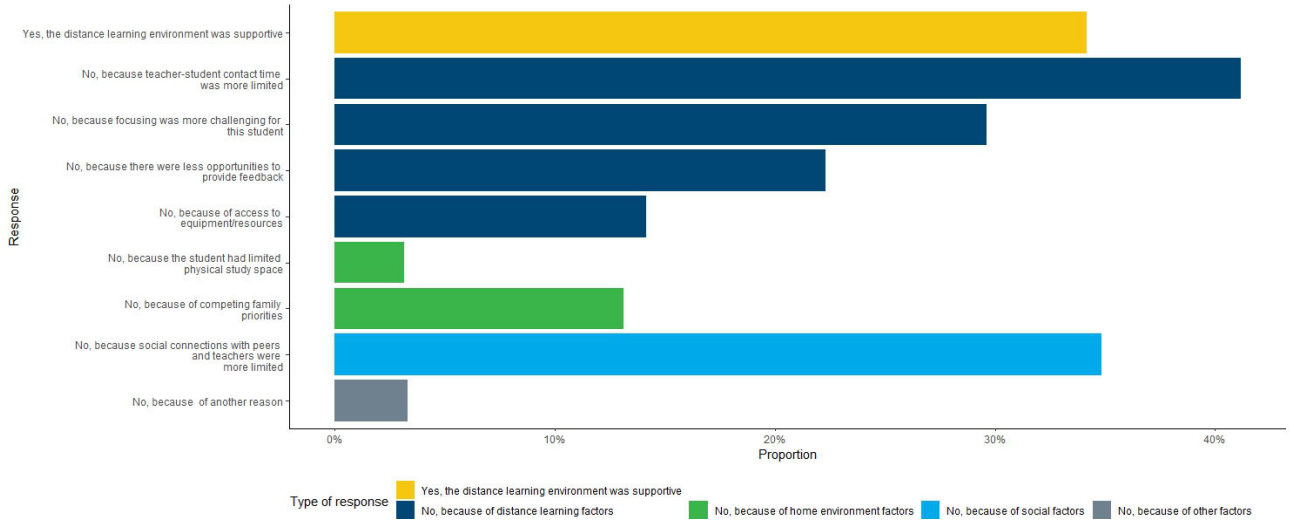

Figure 2. Bar Chart of Reasons Why the Distance Learning Environment Did/Did Not Support Students (*n* = 1,202)

Many teachers (65.8%, *n* = 791) indicated that the distance learning environment did not adequately support their student's learning. Reasons provided for this were *because the teacher-student contact time was more limited* (40.8%, *n* = 491), *because focusing during distance learning was more challenging* (29.3%, *n* = 352), and/or *because there were fewer opportunities to provide feedback on learning* (22.0%, *n* = 265). Additionally, despite the efforts to alleviate barriers to accessing learning resources, teachers reported that *access to equipment and resources* was an issue for 14.1% (*n* = 169) of young people. There were also 34.6% of teachers (*n* = 416) who reported that the distance learning environment did not support the student to learn *because social connections with peers and teachers were more limited*.

Teachers also described components of the home environment as posing additional and unavoidable barriers for some students, with teachers reporting that *competing family priorities* (13.0%, *n* = 156), and *limited physical study space* (3.2%, *n* = 38) were contributors to the environment being described as not supporting young people with their learning.

6.2.1. Future Research Possibilities

Future research using these data could investigate the socioeconomic factors that contributed to young people's experience of distance learning, and how their experiences of lockdown may have contributed to other educational and wellbeing outcomes.

6.3. Physical Learning Environment

Teachers were asked about the physical learning environment when students were receiving face-to-face instruction in the 2021 school year. The number of students that were in the same learning space as the *GUiNZ* young person ranged from 1–150, with a median class size of 30.0 students.

One key consideration of the physical learning space is the classroom setup, which can vary widely across schools and different learning environments. In total, 62.1% (*n* = 770) of students were reported to be in a single cell classroom environment. An additional 6.9% (*n* = 85) of students were learning in a space with multiple classes joined but with dividing doors separating the spaces, creating single cell style teaching.

There are two main ways to use an open plan learning space and teachers were asked to distinguish between these. In total, teachers reported that 10.7% (*n* = 132) of the students were in a learning space that functioned mostly as separate classes. Whereas 15.3% (*n* = 190) of students were in classrooms where the learning space was utilised in a collaborative manner and multiple classes were functioning mostly as one large class. Table 6 elaborates on the reports of the physical learning environment further.

Table 6. Teacher-reported Physical Learning Environment (*n* = 1,239)

Physical Learning Environment	*n*	%	Number of students in class				
			1 –30	31–40	41–60	61–100	101–150
Single-cell classroom	770	62.1%	633	131	<10	<10	0
Multiple classes with dividing doors separating them	85	6.9%	54	13	<10	10	<10
Two or more classes — functioning separately	132	10.7%	32	16	110	118	45
Two or more classes — functioning as one large class	190	15.3%					
Te Kura	14	1.1%	47	<10	<10	<10	<10
Home schooling	28	2.3%					
Virtual Learning Network	12	1.0%					
Other	<10	<1%					

6.3.1. Suitability of the In-Person Classroom Environment

Most young people's teachers' (91.4%, *n* = 1,130) reported that the in-person school environment supported them to learn effectively. As seen in Table 7, the teachers of all (100%, *n* = 13) students attending Te Kura (formerly The Correspondence School) indicated that this environment was suitable for the student's learning. For students in other learning environments, some teachers reported that the environment did not support their student to learn effectively:

- 4.8% (*n* = 59) said no, because of the distracting noise of other children
- <1% (*n* < 10) said no, because of another distracting noise source
- <1% (*n* < 10) said no, because of difficulty hearing the 'teacher's voice
- 1.5% (*n* = 18) said no, because of visual distractions
- 1.8% (*n* = 22) said no, because of lack of withdrawal spaces
- 1.7% (*n* = 21) said no, because the physical environment made it hard to monitor all learners
- 3.5% (*n* = 43) gave another reason

Table 7. Suitability of the In-Person Learning Environment by the Classroom Layout (*n* = 1,237)

	Suitability	
Classroom Layout	***n***	**%**
Te Kura (*n* = 13)	13	100
Home schooling (*n* = 28)	24	85.7
Visual Learning Network (*n* = 12)	11	91.7
Single-cell classroom (*n* = 769)	718	93.4
Multiple classes with dividing doors separating them (*n* = 85)	79	92.9
Two or more classes —functioning separately (*n* = 131)	116	88.5
Two or more classes — functioning as one large class (*n* = 190)	163	85.8
Other (*n* <10)	< 10	<1.0

6.3.2. Future Research Possibilities

Further analysis of these items could provide valuable information on the relationship between the physical learning space and educational outcomes such as student engagement, student-teacher relationship, peer relationships, and class climate.

6.4. Class Climate

Class climate refers to the social and emotional environment in a classroom where students interact and learn together (Rowe et al., 2010). This atmosphere plays a crucial role in fostering behaviours, engagement in learning, and academic achievement among students (Reyes et al., 2012). The teachers who participated in this study were asked about two key aspects of class climate for the classrooms that the young people were learning in—positive peer interactions and student conflict. Questions relating to positive peer interactions were focused on cooperation, working well together, and encouragement of other students. Regarding peer conflict, teachers were asked about the frequency of student arguments, teasing, and hurtful remarks exchanged within the classroom. As these questions refer to in-class peer interactions, home-schooled young-people were removed from the analysis.

Two scales were created to represent *positive peer interactions and peer conflict* by summing together the items relating to each construct, and deriving a mean score (i.e., dividing by the number of items in each scale). Both scales ranged from 0 – 3, where a high score on the *positive peer interactions* scale indicated frequent positive behaviours, and a high score on the *peer conflict* scale indicated higher frequency of conflict. For information on the preliminary scale testing, see Appendix C: Scale testing for Class Climate.

Figure 3 plots the two scales to show that most teachers (87.5%, n = 1,039) reported lower peer conflict (a score of 0-1) and higher levels of positive peer interactions (scores of 2-3). The colour gradient ranges from a lighter green shade for smaller cell counts through to a darker green for higher cell counts.

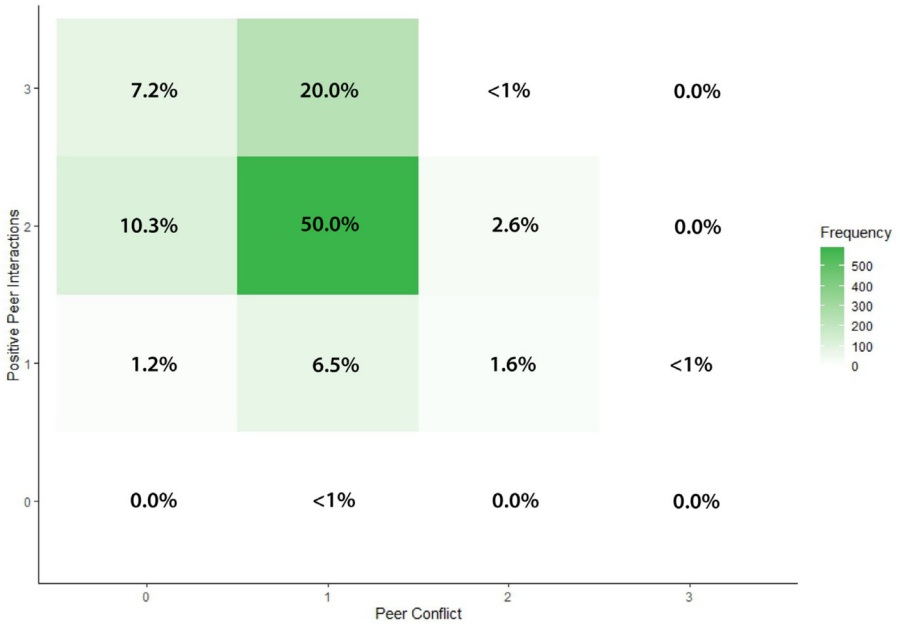

Figure 3. Heatmap of Positive Peer Interactions and Peer Conflict (n = 1,188)

6.5. Academic Performance

To evaluate student performance across the nine areas of the curriculum, teachers were asked to rate the student's performance in 2021 to curriculum expectations. It is important to clarify that we did not collect academic performance records from teachers; their responses were based on their perceptions of performance in the 2021 academic year prior to answering the questionnaire in 2022. The literacy and numeracy learning areas exhibited the highest percentage of students exceeding curriculum expectations, with 31.4% (*n* = 381) and 29.8% (*n* = 362) of young people exceeding curriculum expectations respectively. However, teachers indicated that around one in five students in these subjects had yet to meet the curriculum expectations (literacy, 20.5%, *n* = 249; numeracy, 21.0%, *n* = 255). For further information refer to Figure 4.

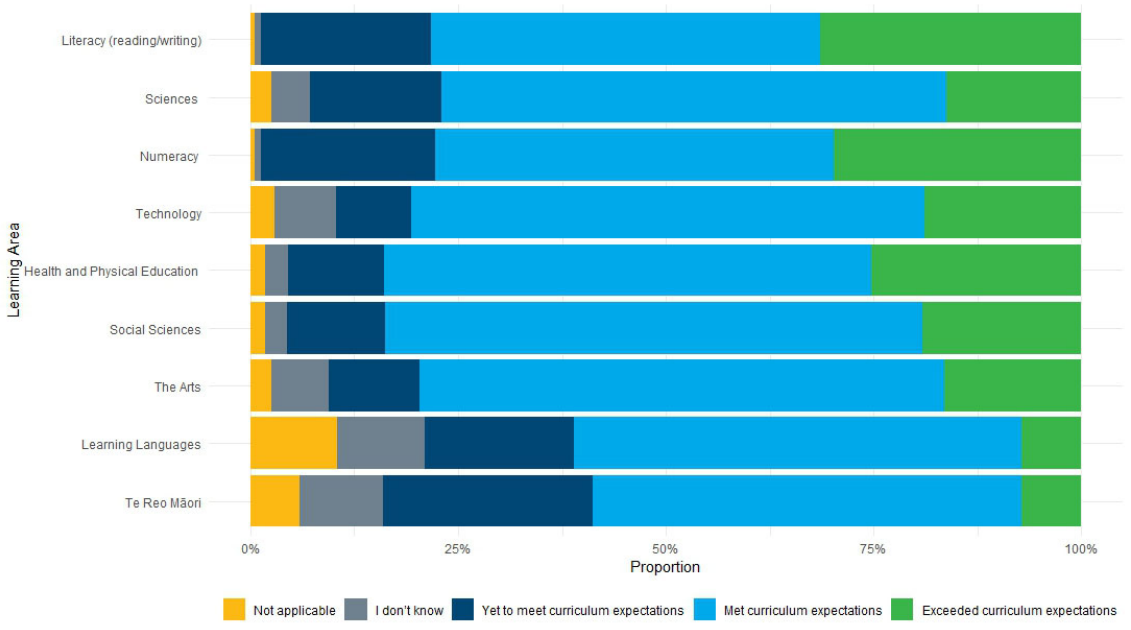

Figure 4. Stacked Bar Chart of Teacher Perceptions of Academic Performance (*n* = 1,213)

Notably, teachers indicated that approximately four out of five students in literacy and numeracy were at or above curriculum expectations (literacy, 78.2%, *n* = 949; numeracy, 77.7%, *n* = 943). We compared these results to the most recent National Monitoring Study of Student Achievement (NMSSA) results of Year 8 students; in mathematics and statistics these assessments were conducted in 2018 (Ministry of Education, 2018), and for writing and reading these assessments were conducted in 2019 (Ministry of Education, 2020). The NMSSA results suggested that much lower proportions of New Zealand students were achieving at or above Level 4 curriculum expectations (writing, 35%; reading, 56%; mathematics and statistics, 45%). There are several possible explanations for this discrepancy. For example, the retrospective nature of the data collection means that teachers were responding to

their recollection of the achievement level at the end of the year, by which time more students could be expected to be achieving at the expected curriculum levels—though this would likely only explain a small portion of the discrepancy. Another possibility is that teachers in the *GUiNZ* Teacher Survey may have over-estimated the achievement of students. This pattern aligns with previous research indicating that teacher judgments tend to be higher than standardised achievement results (e.g., Meissel et al., 2017). This tendency for teacher judgments to be higher than indicated by standardised achievements is sometimes argued to reflect differences in the underlying construct, in that teacher judgments incorporate a broader set of evidence than a standardised achievement result. However, previous research has indicated that this effect tends to be biased by gender, ethnicity, and learner need (Meissel et al., 2017; Rubie-Davies et al., 2020).

6.5.1. Future Research Possibilities

These items lend themselves to further research into the relationship between teacher perceptions of achievement and formal assessments of achievement. Linkage to standardised achievement data would enable a more detailed investigation of whether a similar pattern is observed within the *GUiNZ* cohort, as well as individual, family and school-level factors that mitigate such effects.

6.6. Digital Competencies

Teachers were asked to assess students' proficiencies in digital technologies. Importantly, the results revealed that 13.7% (*n* = 165) of students were yet to meet the curriculum expectations regarding staying focused while using digital technology. Additionally, teachers reported that 15.3% (*n* = 185) of students were yet to meet curriculum expectations in their ability to critically evaluate online information to discern between authentic and false content. In all other areas, more than 75% of students were meeting or above curriculum expectations, as depicted in Figure 5.

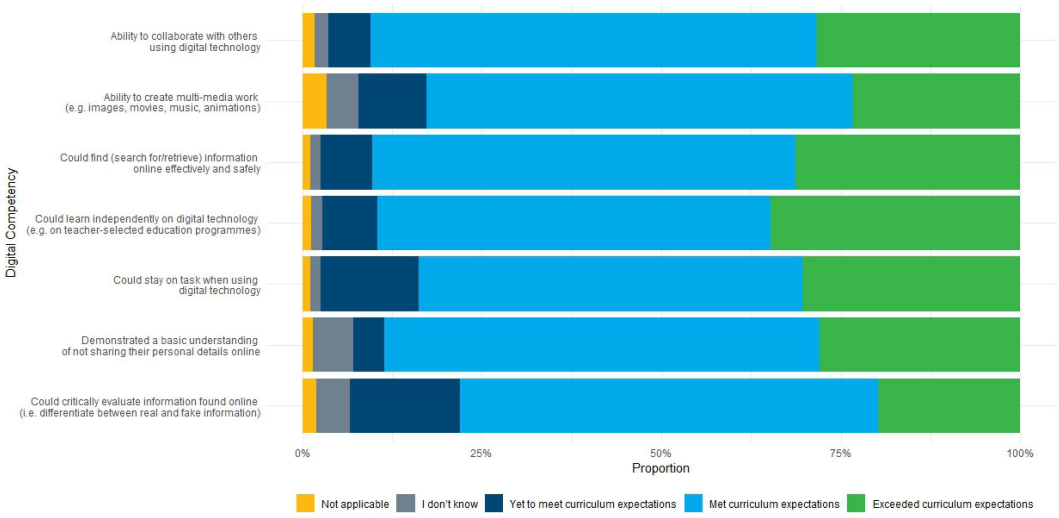

Figure 5. Stacked Bar Chart of Teacher Perceptions of Digital Competencies (*n* = 1,207)

These findings carry implications for teacher education and professional development by highlighting specific areas where students may require additional support. It appears that students would benefit from reflecting on aspects of digital technology usage that tend to be distracting and working collaboratively with them to identify strategies for minimising these distractions. Examples of such strategies may include disabling pop-up notifications, utilising separate logins for schoolwork and recreational use, and employing sticky notes to record thoughts to come back to later. Furthermore, these findings emphasise the necessity for explicit instruction on how to critically evaluate information obtained online.

6.6.1. Future Research Possibilities

This information was collected soon after the strengthening of Digital Technologies Curriculum was implemented universally across New Zealand schools in 2020. Therefore, it provides an early indication of areas for development. As with other items, these data could be considered in relation to socio-economic factors, equity index indicators, and/or school context factors to determine resource and funding gaps that may need addressed.

6.7. Experiences of Bullying

Bullying can be identified as deliberate, repeated, and targeted behaviour that can cause harm, where there is an imbalance of power (Bullying Free NZ, 2023). Bullying may be overt (often physical or verbal bullying) or covert (as is often the case with social or cyber bullying). At times these covert behaviours can be difficult for others to identify.

The *GUiNZ* Teacher Survey asked teachers to report on the young people's experiences of bullying, considering both victim and perpetrator actions.[3] In the 12-year DCW, we also asked the young people themselves to report on their experiences of being bullied (i.e., victim). The bullying items focused on victimisation experiences (including cyberbullying), such as teasing, name-calling, being physically harmed, and having personal property stolen or damaged. In analyses, we have matched the teacher and young people's responses of victimisation. These items are reported below.[4]

Figures 6-8 compare the frequency of reports by the teacher and young person for each of the ten bullying items, grouped by type of bullying—verbal, social or physical. The vast majority of children and teachers indicated that bullying had not occurred in the last school term. For students this is the last full term prior to completing the questionnaire, and for teachers this was the last full school term teachers were teaching the student in person, not online, during 2021. However, there were important differences in the frequency to which children and teachers reported that bullying behaviours had occurred towards the students. Across all items young people reported higher frequency of experiences of bullying behaviours than teachers had reported.

As seen in Figure 6, both *being called names and being teased* had a similar proportion (around 25%) of young people and teachers reporting exposure to this type of behaviour. However, young people reported this occurring at a higher frequency than teachers reported. For example, where teachers reported that the students had been teased once a week or more (1.5%; $n = 16$), 4.9% ($n = 53$) of students reported being teased this often.

[3] Note that teachers were all asked about the 2021 school year, whereas many students completed their questionnaires in 2022. Therefore, care must be taking in interpreting these data.

[4] The question asked of teachers and young people did not specify that the bullying needed to occur at school but did refer to the last school term. The question to teachers was "Thinking about the last full term when {NAME} was physically at school in 2021, to the best of your knowledge, how often was {NAME} bullied (including cyberbullying) by one or more peers?" Similarly, the question asked of students read "Last school term, how often were you bullied (including cyberbullying) by one or more young people in the following ways?"

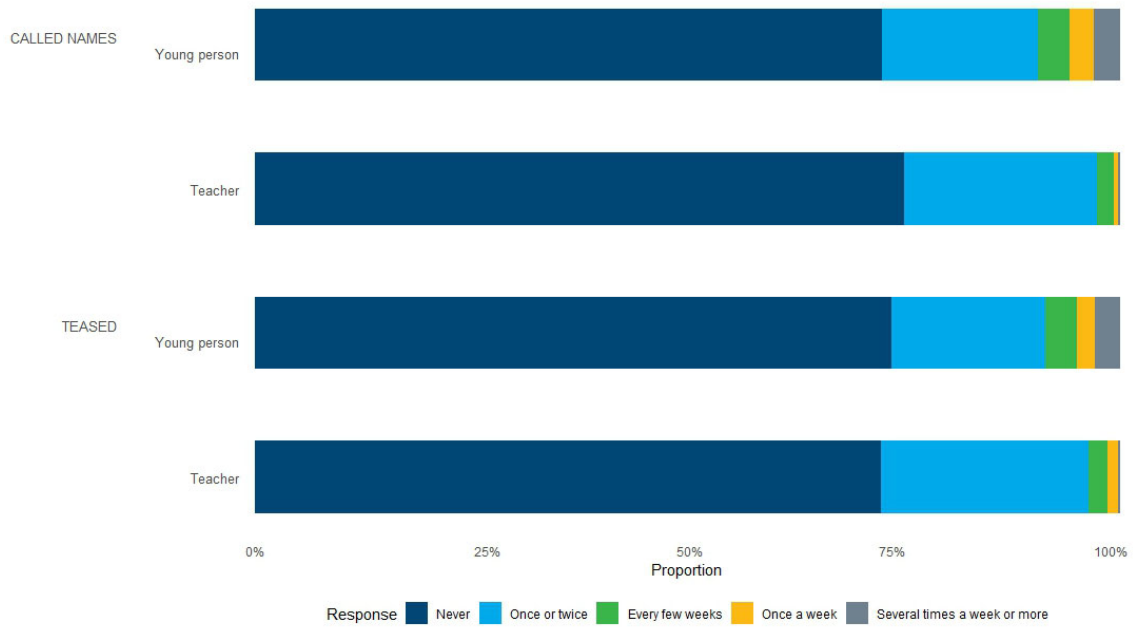

Figure 6. Comparison of the Young Person and the Teacher Reports of the Frequency of Verbal Bullying (*n* = 1,071)

Figure 7 displays the results of items relating to social/relational bullying. The teacher reports of these bullying behaviours are lower than the young people's report on each type of act. For example, while the proportion of students and teachers reporting any instance of the young person *being left out* was similar (young person report, 24.0%, *n* = 257; teacher report, 23.7%, *n* = 254), almost three times the number of students indicated this was occurring every few weeks or more (8.6%, *n* = 92), compared with teachers report of this (2.8%, *n* = 30).

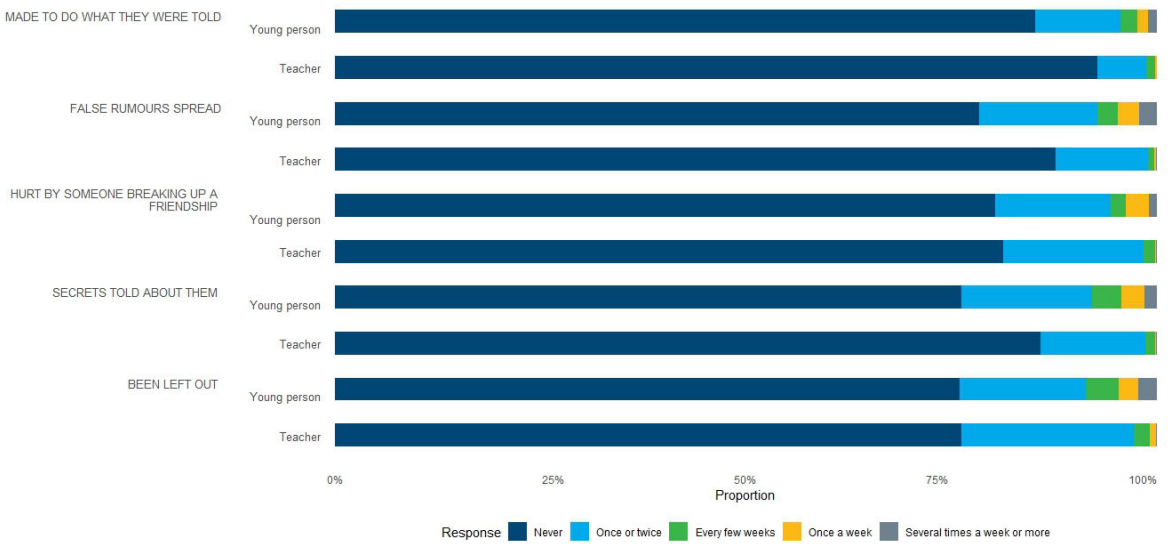

Figure 7. Comparison of the Young Person and the Teacher Reports of the Frequency of Social Bullying (*n* = 1,071)

Figure 8 displays the frequency of reports of physical aggression behaviours in schools. In each of these behaviours a higher proportion of young people report being a victim of physical aggression than the teachers, and more frequently. For example, where 7.1% (*n* = 76) of students were reported by their teachers to have had their property damaged or stolen, 16.8% (*n* = 180) of students reported this occurring.

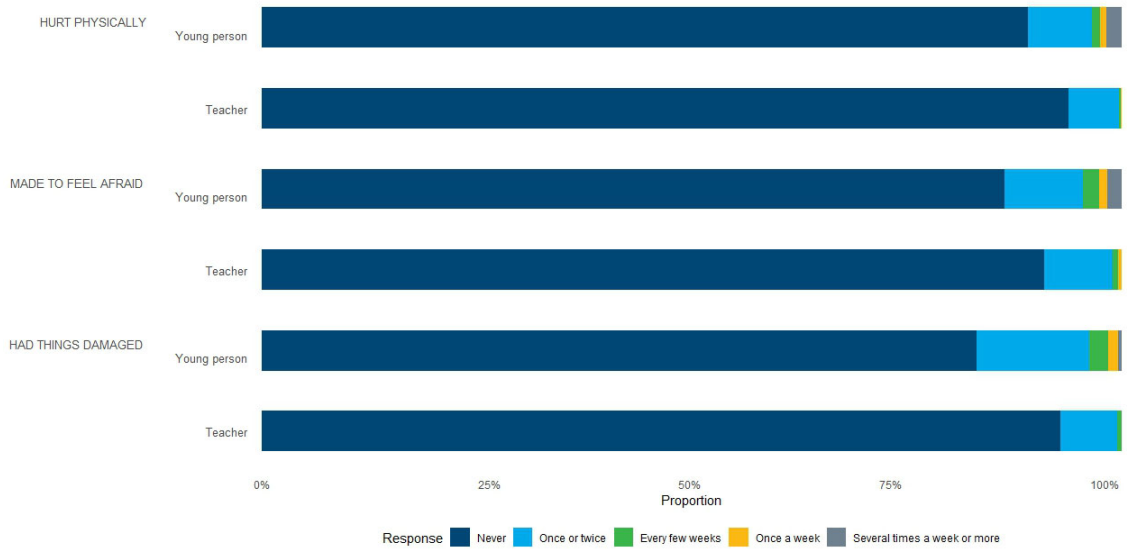

Figure 8. Comparison of the Young Person and the Teacher Reports of the Frequency of Physical Bullying (*n* = 1,071)

6.8. Hurt Physically

Being hurt physically was reported by both young people and their teachers as the least common type of bullying behaviour (young person report, 10.8%, *n* = 116; teacher report, 6.2%, *n* = 66; either teacher or young person reported this experience, 15.6%, *n* = 167). The frequency of these reports raises cause for concern. Of the young people who reported physical harm in the last term (*n* = 116), 13.8% (*n* = 16) reported they were being hurt physically several times per week or more when their teachers reported they were not aware of this happening (see Table 8 for more details).

Furthermore, 27.6% (*n* = 32) of young people who reported being physically hurt at some point in the last term, reported that this happened at least every few weeks and their teachers reported they were not aware of it happening at all. This highlights that almost 1 in 3 young people who reported experiencing physical harm, did so on a regular basis but their teachers remained unaware. Schools need to ensure that they are creating a culture where bullying-type behaviours are not accepted and reporting of these behaviours (particularly repeated experiences) is facilitated, acknowledged and dealt with. Further investigation into these data could identify protective factors that would improve outcomes for young people.

Table 8. Table Showing Incongruence in Reporting Between Teachers and Young People for Bullying Where Young People Reported Being Hurt Physically (*n* = 116).

		Teacher Report of Young Person Being Hurt Physically				
		Not aware of this happening	**Once or twice**	**Every few weeks**	**About once per week**	**Several times per week or more**
Young person report of being hurt physically	**Once or twice**	59.5%	8.6%	0%	0%	0%
	Every few weeks	8.6%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	About once per week	5.2%	<5.0%	0%	0%	0%
	Several times per week or more	13.8%	<5.0%	0%	0%	0%

Note. The denominator of *n* = 116 indicated the number of young people who reported physical harm.

Throughout this section we have demonstrated that teachers reported lower incidences of bullying behaviours, compared to the young person's self-reports. These findings suggest that more could be done to create inclusive environments where bullying is not accepted.

6.8.1. Future Research Possibilities

In addition to these bullying items, *GUiNZ* have data relating to the young person as a perpetrator of bullying behaviours which have not been presented here, as well as information on the student's and teacher's perspective of the student-teacher relationship which may add an additional lens to this construct. The possibilities for research using these bullying items are vast and will have important implications for policy and practice, when explored in more depth. We suggest that scale testing, and further exploratory analysis be undertaken prior to more substantial assessments of bullying in relation to educational and wellbeing outcomes.

6.9. School Engagement

School engagement refers to the extent to which students demonstrate interest, active participation, and commitment in their learning activities and overall school experience. For the 12-year DCW, school engagement was defined as three components of the student experience: behavioural engagement (the actions students take in their learning), emotional engagement (their feelings and attitudes toward school), and cognitive engagement (their profound thinking about learning (Fredricks et al., 2004). Accordingly, we used three scales to assess each component of school engagement (for more information, see School engagement supplementary materials). These scales were asked of both the young people and teachers—young people were asked to self-report their feelings and behaviours, and teachers were asked to report on their observations of the young people in the classroom and school environment.

Mean scores for each of the three scales were created by summing together the items within each scale and dividing by the number of items. Scores across the three scales were then aggregated to form an overall school engagement score (range = 1–5). Table 9 displays the descriptive statistics for each of the individual engagement scales, along with the overall engagement scores.

Table 9. School Engagement Descriptive Statistics (Teacher and Young Person Report)

Engagement	Teacher Report		Young Person Report	
	n	Mean (SD)	*n*	Mean (SD)
Emotional Engagement	1,006	4.1 (0.85)	1,006	3.59 (1.01)
Behavioural Engagement	1,183	4.28 (0.87)	1,183	4.01 (0.84)
Cognitive Engagement	1,182	3.71 (0.80)	1,182	3.82 (0.71)
Overall Engagement	998	4.05 (0.69)	998	3.82 (0.70)

Note. SD = standard deviation. Number of participants varies as comparison requires respondent to have answered all questions to derive a score.

Figure 9 presents an overlapping histogram illustrating the reported levels of school engagement from both teachers and young people. There was some alignment between school engagement reports however, overall, teachers reported higher levels of school engagement than the young people themselves (as indicated by the more prominent left skew). This finding is interesting as it suggests that the teachers perceived greater engagement from their students than the students themselves acknowledged.

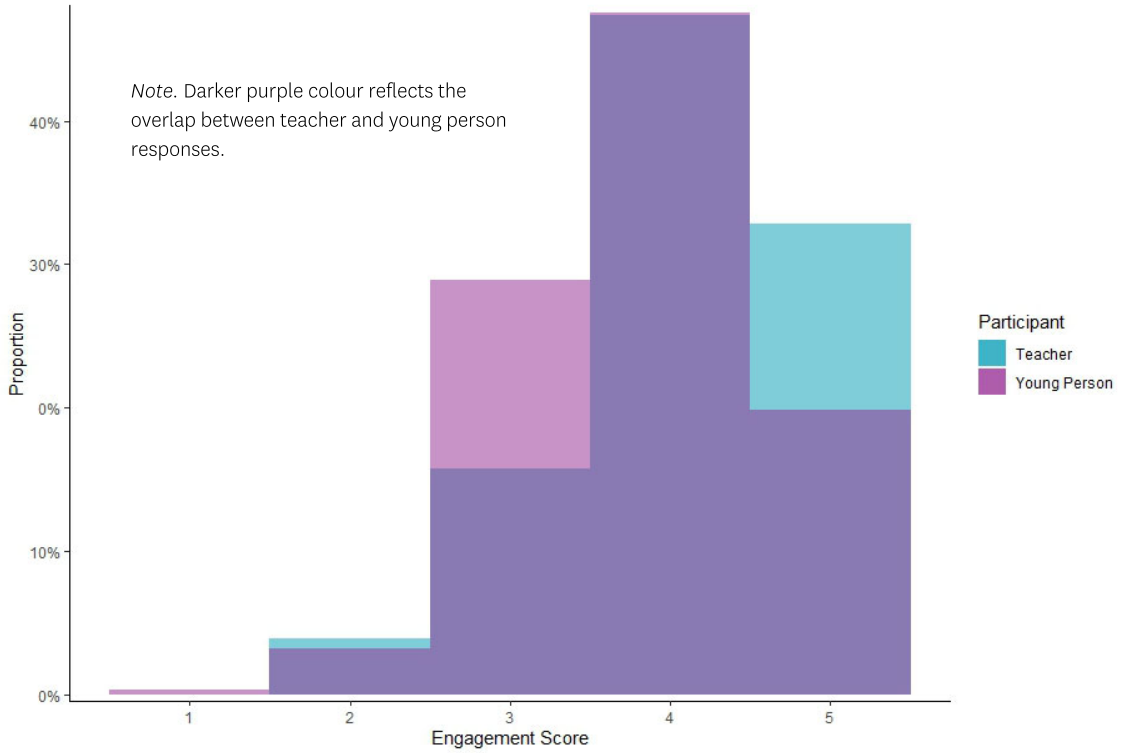

Figure 9. Overlapping Histogram of Teacher and Young Person Engagement Scores (matched sample, *n* = 998)

Further analyses of the individual items could provide some valuable insights into student engagement. For example, 17.9% (*n* = 214) of teachers reported that the student never or only sometimes found school interesting.

6.9.1. Future Research Possibilities

These data provide the opportunity to delve deeper into the teacher and young person reports of school engagement. For instance, identifying whether the higher teacher-reported levels of engagement correspond to improved academic performance, student well-being, or other educational outcomes would provide further insight. *GUiNZ* also holds data collected on the home and educational experiences during early and middle childhood which would allow researchers to explore early life influences on school engagement at age 12.

6.10. Student-Teacher Relationship

Positive student-teacher relationships have powerful implications for student success. When relationships are warm, caring, and teachers believe students can succeed, young people can experience increased motivation, engagement in learning, and enjoy more positive learning experiences (Davis, 2003). When asked about how many months the teacher had taught the young person in the 2021 school year, 89.8% (n = 1,065) of students had been taught by this teacher for nine months or longer. Additionally, for 90.5% (n = 1,073) of students, their teacher indicated that they knew them fairly well or very well.

We also asked the teachers about their perspectives of the student-teacher relationship using 14 items, adapted from the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale—Short Form (Koomen et al., 2012). This scale was designed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics and nuances present in the student-teacher relationship. The items focus on elements of emotional connection and aim to explore teachers' perceptions regarding the value the students placed on their relationship, the student's willingness to openly share personal information, and the level of respect demonstrated by the students towards their teacher. In addition to assessing the positive aspects of the relationship, we also considered the challenges that might arise within it. Other items focus on instances of the student becoming angry with their teacher, and whether the teacher and student often struggled with one another.

Both sets of questions—those focused on positive aspects of the student-teacher relationship and those on challenges—were scored on a scale of 1–5. A score of "1" corresponded to a response that the statement *definitely did NOT apply* and a "5" corresponded to *definitely applied*. Items were aggregated to form two scales. As displayed in Figure 10, for most students, their teacher reported low relationship challenges and high levels of emotional connection (as indicated by the darker blue colour representing more teachers with these scores).

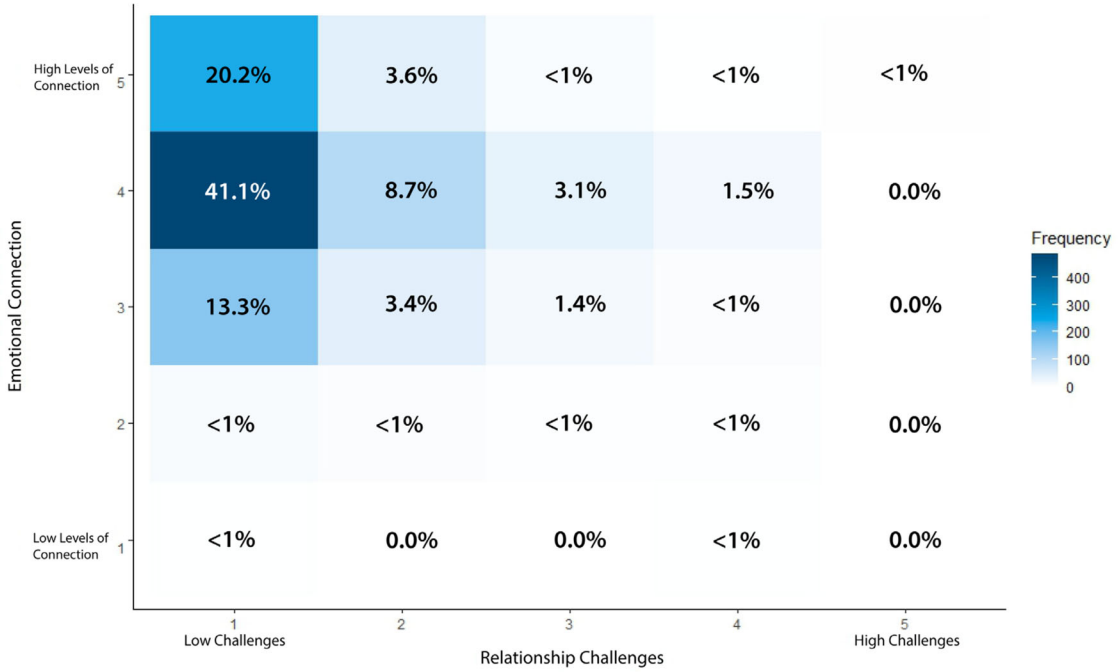

Figure 10. Teacher Reports of Relationship Challenges and Emotional Connection within the Student-Teacher Relationship (*n* = 1,180)

Interesting insights can also be gleaned from individual items within the student-teacher relationship scales. For example, 45.7% (*n* = 539) of teachers believed that the students *definitely* valued their relationship with them, and an additional 38.2% (*n* = 451) indicated that they *somewhat agreed* that the student valued their relationship. These results are important, as student-teacher relationship has been found to be of high importance to school engagement (see the Now We Are 12 Snapshot: School Engagement).

6.10.1. Future Research Possibilities

These insights, along with the findings from the Now We Are 12 Snapshot: School Engagement, indicate that further research is necessary to understand the student-teacher relationship. This could include investigating the relationship between student-teacher relationship, the influence of the class climate, young people's school engagement and how these constructs relate to each other.

6.11. Learning Needs

Teachers were asked to identify whether the student had an additional learning need that they were aware of. In total, teachers reported that 22.3% (*n* = 263) of the students had been identified as having an additional learning need. It was reported that 1 in 5 of these students (20.9%, *n* = 55) had an Individual Education Plan.

Figure 11 displays the proportions of each type of learning need identified, as reported by the teachers (top graph, darker blue colour) and the main caregiver of the young person at the 12-year DCW (lower graph, lighter blue colour). The proportions of young people identified as having a learning need were similar between parents and teachers, across all learning need types.

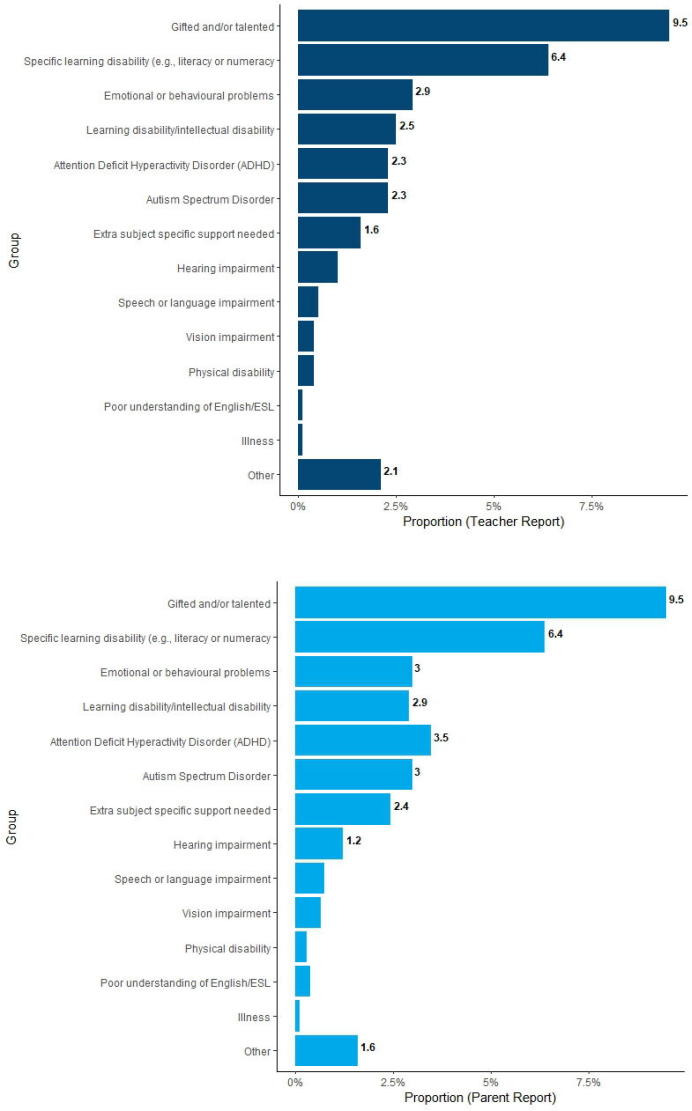

Figure 11. Type of Additional Learning Needs, as Reported by Teachers and Parents (matched sample, *n* = 1,065).

6.11.1. Future Research Possibilities

The *GUiNZ* Teacher Survey included follow-up questions related to the provisions that were made for the student, support services received, and assessments that may have taken place. *GUiNZ* has collected information from parents on learning needs at age 12, and areas of concerns at multiple time points since early in the life course. There are opportunities to delve deeply into the data for those students with an identified learning need and conduct further analyses related to outcomes for these students.

7. Other available data

In addition to the areas explored in this report, the *GUiNZ* Teacher Survey also collected information from teachers in relation to the following areas:

- Teacher expectations of school leaving and further education beyond high school
- Peer relationships
- Parent involvement in learning
- Resources utilised in supporting young people with additional learning needs
- Highlights and Challenges

These data can be accessed by researchers through the *GUiNZ* data access application process.

8. Discussion

This report demonstrates the breadth of data gathered through the *GUiNZ* Teacher Survey. It highlights a number of teacher and student strengths, areas where students need additional support, and areas where further professional learning and development may support teachers and schools to enhance student engagement, learning, and experiences of school.

Based on the reports of teachers, students from the *Growing Up in New Zealand* study were in class environments that were generally positive and engaging places to learn. Their classes could typically be characterised by more frequent positive peer interactions with less frequent peer conflict. Generally, the student-teacher relationships were characterised by high emotional connection and low levels of relationship challenges showing that, at this age, the student-teacher relationships are viewed as strong by the teachers. Encouragingly, student engagement was found to be generally positive. It was noted that teachers rated student school engagement higher than the young person themselves. Teachers being optimistic about their students engagement is likely to have positive implications for teachers self-efficacy in teaching and this may have positive flow on effects for their students learning and engagement (Lu & Mustafa, 2021). Despite physical environments varying across the cohort, most students were reported to be in a school environment that supported them to learn effectively (91.1%). This is important to highlight considering the disruption caused by COVID-19 in recent years; when teachers in this sample found only 34.0% of young people were supported to learn effectively during distance learning.

This report highlights areas for growth in the provision of teacher education and professional development to enhance teacher knowledge, awareness, and confidence in practice. Specifically, the use of Te Reo Māori in the classroom and the intentional use of diverse and inclusive resources varied

greatly, highlighting areas for development. The Ministry of Education in association with Te Kete Ipurangi have produced a website to support inclusive practices in schools—inclusive.tki.org.nz

This report found that the teachers' perceptions of academic performance differed from what was expected based on previous reports of student achievement data. Further, over 20% of students in this study were identified by teachers as having an additional learning need indicating that many teachers will have multiple students with additional needs in their classroom. Ensuring teachers are supported in meeting the diverse needs of students is essential.

There is a need for increased attention on students' digital competence particularly around their ability to stay on task when using digital technologies and some young people need better strategies to be able to evaluate the legitimacy of information they find online.

Students were largely in classrooms described as having low peer conflict and high positive peer interactions, and mostly reported strong student-teacher relationships however, there were some learnings that can be drawn from the findings of analyses of the bullying items. We investigated the items relating to verbal, social and physical bullying. For each of the victimisation items, young people reported a higher frequency of these behaviours taking place than teachers reported. The findings of this report suggest that more needs to be done to stop bullying in New Zealand schools. Schools need to continue to work to promote inclusive environments that have a zero tolerance for bullying.

9. Conclusion

Whilst this report does not present all the findings from the *GUiNZ* Teacher Survey, it highlights some key areas for future research. With descriptive analyses, we have demonstrated the breadth of knowledge about young people's schooling experiences gained from conducting this survey. We invite data users and future collaborations for research that will further interrogate these data.

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Appendix A: Consent/Assent Rate

Table 10 compares the sociodemographic characteristics of families who consented and assented to their teacher being involved in the Teacher Survey compared with the full sample who participated in the 12-year DCW (see 'Eligible cohort' in Table 10 which was established from the number of families who participated in the consent/assent process at age 12). For the teacher to be invited to participate in the Teacher Survey, both the young person and their main caregiver had to provide assent/consent. A series of logistic regressions were conducted to examine each variable of interest and whether consent and assent was given.

Table 10. Sociodemographic Characteristics of Families who Consented/Assented Compared to Eligible Cohort at the 12-year DCW

	Eligible cohort	Consent/assent for teacher to participate	No consent/ assent	Consent/ assent rate	Logistic model	
	N	*n*	*n*	(%)	Odds ratio	P-value
Total	4,398	3,807	591	86.6	–	–
Socioeconomic deprivation (NZDep2018)						
Low (1–3)	1,551	1,393	158	89.8	1	Ref.
Medium (4–7)	1,698	1,468	230	86.5	0.72	***
High (8–10)	1,072	882	190	82.3	0.53	***
Missing data	77	64	13	83.1	–	–
Gender (12-year)						
Cisgender Boy	2,008	1,720	288	85.7	1	Ref.
Cisgender Girl	1,648	1,451	197	88.0	1.23	*
Transgender/non-binary/unsure	729	625	104	85.7	1.01	ns
Missing data	13	11	<10	84.6	-	–
Ethnicity (12-year young person report, externally prioritised)						
European	2,249	2,025	224	90.0	1	Ref.
Asian	522	424	98	81.2	0.48	***
Māori	954	812	142	85.1	0.63	***
Pacific	465	368	97	79.1	0.42	***
Other	89	81	<10	91.0	1.12	ns
Missing data	119	97	22	81.5	–	–
Mother education at birth						
No sec school qualification	196	159	37	81.1	0.54	**
Sec school/NCEA 1-4	866	729	137	84.2	0.67	**
Diploma/Trade cert/NCEA 5-6	1,249	1,074	175	86.0	0.78	*
Bachelor's degree	1,185	1,052	133	88.8	1	Ref.
Higher degree	837	744	93	88.9	1.01	ns
Missing data	65	49	16	75.4	–	–
Mother age at birth						
≤ 20 years	111	90	21	81.1	0.59	*
21–25 years	614	517	97	84.2	0.74	*
26–30 years	1,122	965	157	86	0.85	ns
31–35 years	1,518	1,333	185	87.8	1	Ref.
36–40 years	855	751	104	87.8	1.0	ns
> 40 years	120	107	13	89.2	1.14	ns
Missing data	58	44	14	75.9	–	–

Appendix B: Coverage Rate

Table 11 compares the sociodemographic characteristics of families who had a teacher participate in the Teacher Survey compared with the full sample who participated in the 12-year DCW. Table 11 compares the proportion of the cohort who had a teacher participate in the survey to the full 12-year sample, rather than presenting the proportion of eligible teachers who were invited to participate in the survey, as this was what was available at the time of analysis.

Table 11. Sociodemographic Characteristics of Families who had a Teacher Participate Compared to the Eligible Cohort at the 12-year DCW

	Eligible cohort	Teacher participated	Teacher did not participate	Participation rate	Logistic model	
					Odds ratio	p-value
	N	*n*	*n*	(%)		
Total	4,398	1,271	3,127	28.9	–	–
Socioeconomic deprivation (NZDep2018)						
Low (1–3)	1,551	454	1,097	29.3	1	Ref.
Medium (4–7)	1,698	518	1,180	30.5	1.06	ns
High (8–10)	1,072	282	790	26.3	0.86	ns
Missing data	77	17	60	22.1	–	–
Gender (12-year)						
Cisgender Boy	2,008	564	1,444	28.1	1	Ref.
Cisgender Girl	1,648	499	1,149	30.3	1.11	ns
Transgender/non-binary/unsure	729	207	522	28.4	1.02	ns
Missing data	13	<10	12	7.7	–	–
Ethnicity (12-year young person report, externally prioritised)						
European	2,249	689	1,560	30.6	1	Ref.
Asian	522	130	392	24.9	0.75	**
Māori	954	286	668	30	0.97	ns
Pacific	465	116	349	24.9	0.75	*
Other	89	22	67	24.7	0.74	ns
Missing data	119	28	91	23.5	–	–
Mother education at birth						
No sec school qualification	196	57	139	29.1	1.02	ns
Sec school/NCEA 1-4	866	233	633	26.9	0.92	ns
Diploma/Trade cert/NCEA 5-6	1,249	365	884	29.2	1.03	ns
Bachelor's degree	1,185	340	845	28.7	1	Ref.
Higher degree	837	256	581	30.6	1.10	ns
Missing data	65	20	45	30.8	–	–
Mother age at birth						
≤ 20 years	111	36	75	32.4	1.11	ns
21–25 years	614	175	439	28.5	0.93	ns
26–30 years	1,122	324	798	28.9	0.94	ns
31–35 years	1,518	457	1,061	30.1	1	Ref.
36–40 years	855	222	633	26	0.81	*
> 40 years	120	38	82	31.7	1.08	ns
Missing data	58	19	39	32.8	–	–

Note. * = $p < .05$, ** = $p < .01$, ns = non-significant.

Appendix C: Scale testing for Class Climate

We used Exploratory Factor Analysis to understand the factor structure of the items relating to the class climate. First, the 11 items were tested using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure to verify the sampling adequacy. The results from this test indicated there was a high degree of common variance between the items (KMO = .86). Additionally, the Bartlett test for sphericity was used to verify that an EFA could compress the data in a meaningful way. The statistically significant result from the Bartlett test ($p < .001$) indicated that the data were suitable for EFA and a factor matrix could be extracted. EFA was performed using PAF and Direct Oblimin rotation. Two factors were extracted, as determined by the >1 eigenvalues and scree plot methods. All items loaded above .56. These factors were interpreted to represent *positive peer interactions and peer conflict*.

Suggested citation:

Grant, M., Tait, J., Meissel, K., Peterson, E.R., Bullen, P., Wheadon, M., Miller, S., Pillai, A., Paine, S-J. 2023. *Now We Are 12:* Teacher Survey Report. Auckland: *Growing Up in New Zealand*. Available from: www.growingup.co.nz

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