

# **Gender and school differences in pupils' reading performance in the first and second grades of Icelandic primary schools using Beginning Literacy**

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## **Abstract**

The recent years have seen a growing discussion on gender differences in literacy and literacy comprehension of pupils in Icelandic elementary schools. The aim of the paper is to examine literacy tests conducted in the first two years of primary schools in relation to the implementation of a literacy teaching method to see what the test results reveal about the average reading performance of pupils, gender differences, differences between schools and the consistency of results between years. The test have been used to identify children with reading difficulties and are conducted six times during the first two years of primary school. The analysis will use the results of around 34 thousand tests which have been conducted in schools which have used the Beginning literacy method. The results indicate that gender differences observed among pupils at the end of primary school are not visible to the same extent at the start of primary school with gender accounting for only around 1-3 per cent of the variability in reading performance. Some differences can be found between schools but at the same time there is limited consistency in the performance of individual schools between years.

**Keywords:** literacy, gender differences, school differences, Iceland