

NSW top of the class

Students lead nation in reading and numeracy

Bruce McDougall
Education Reporter

NSW STUDENTS are Australia's undisputed spelling champions and either lead or are close to the top in most literacy and numeracy skills.

The state's Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 students have emerged as No. 1 for their spelling ability while the youngest children had big improvements in reading, grammar and punctuation.

National literacy and numeracy test results released yesterday showed NSW Year 5 students made significant advances in reading and numeracy since last year.

Premier Nathan Rees claimed the scores proved students were benefiting from how maths and English have been taught in NSW.

"This is proof we have a strong curriculum focused on literacy and numeracy and students benefit from a world-class education," Mr Rees said.

"NSW students were the undisputed champion spellers in the country ... getting the highest marks in the nation at every year level tested.

"NSW also has a greater proportion of students achieving

above the national average in the key area of writing with NSW ranked first in almost every year group. In numeracy NSW has the greatest proportion of students in the highest achievement band at every year level."

Toongabbie West Public School in Sydney's west improved its Year 3 literacy scores by a staggering 80.8 points more than double the improvement usually considered an outstanding result, and boosted numeracy by 59 points.

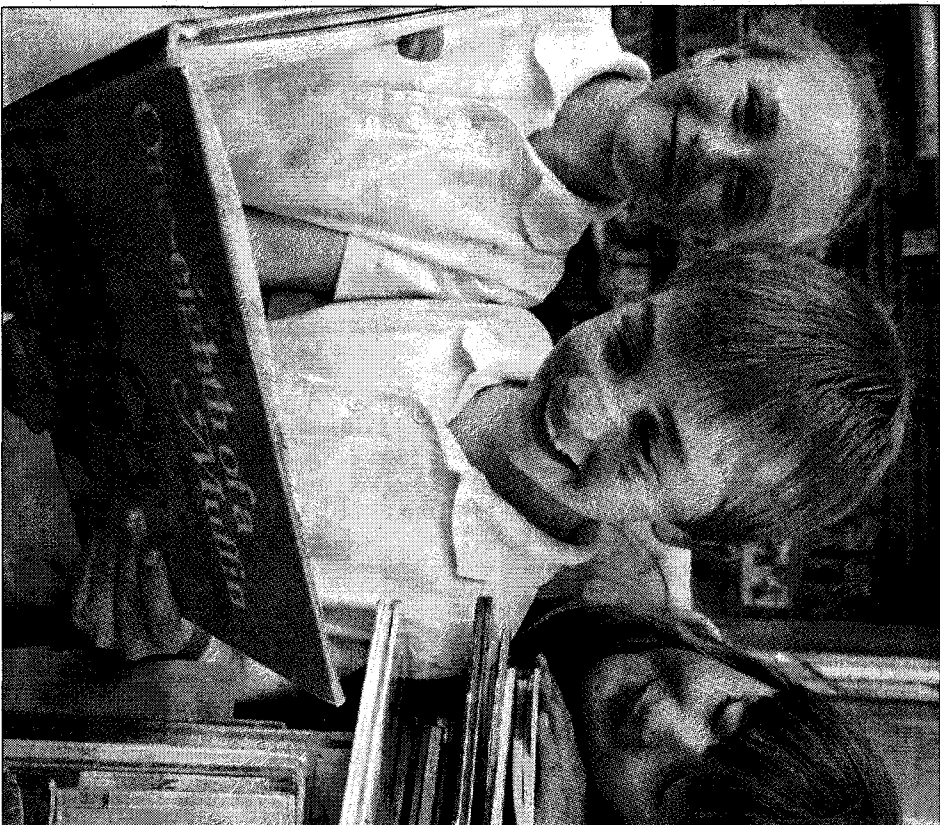
Relieving principal Kerry Maxwell said the performance in literacy, achieved after intensive work with the students, was one of the best in the state.

"It is a remarkable growth that is the culmination of a couple of years of hard work," she said.

One key to the success is literacy and numeracy experts who have gone into schools to identify areas that need to be targeted.

From next week parents will receive a detailed report showing how their child is performing against other students in their year and against the national average.

Education Minister Verity Firth said results would be used to help children reach their full potential.



Among the best: Toongabbie West Public School students Amiya Mitchell, William Kelly and Willow Katz yesterday
Picture: Jeff Herbert