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Alkumittaus – Matematiikan ja äidinkielen ja kirjallisuuden osaaminen ensimmäisen luokan alussa

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In autumn 2018, the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) arranged an assessment of learning outcomes among first-grade pupils in basic education for the first time. The assessment was called the starting level measurement. The purpose was to produce national data on the pupils' starting level at the beginning of the first grade of basic education. The starting level measurement marked the beginning of a longitudinal assessment of learning outcomes in basic education. The goal of the longitudinal assessment is to assess the development of pupils' skills during comprehensive school in two key subjects, *mathematics* and *mother tongue and literature*, according to the goals set in the national core curriculum for basic education. The learning outcomes will be assessed in grades three, six and nine.

This report describes the first results of the starting level measurement on the basis of pupil data. The national assessment sample consisted of 7,770 pupils. Of them, 6,902 were from Finnish-speaking schools and 868 from Swedish-speaking schools. The schools reported that 531 pupils learn Finnish or Swedish as a second language, 521 pupils receive intensified support and 278 pupils receive special support. The pupils did the assessment assignments in the school's language of instruction. Among the assessment participants, there was also a separate 107-pupil sample of special support pupils who studied in a special school or who had had an individual educational plan (*IEP*) created for them before beginning school, with a personal syllabus either in mathematics or mother tongue and literature defined for them in the plan.

The skill differences between individual pupils were great but differences between genders were small. The girls' overall result was slightly better than the boys' result and they did better than the boys in assignments related to mother tongue and literature. On the other hand, the boys were better than the girls in assignments related to mathematics and there were more boys among the top pupils. The boys were also in the majority among those with weakest skills in mathematics and mother tongue.

The pupils' skills were equally good in Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking schools. On the other hand, the skills level of pupils who learn Finnish or Swedish as a second language was clearly lower than that of other pupils. Regional differences were small. However, there were differences in intra-region variation. Skills were better in urban municipalities than in semi-urban or rural municipalities.

Although the students have very varied skills when they start grade 1, they start their schooling with just as equal starting points around Finland. In the longitudinal assessment, it is important to examine which background factors can explain the students' skills at the beginning of basic school and the development of pupils' learning.

Key words: basic education, early primary education, evaluation, learning outcomes, literacy, mathematics, mother tongue and literature