



**RÉPUBLIQUE  
FRANÇAISE**

*Liberté  
Égalité  
Fraternité*

**depp** Direction de l'évaluation,  
de la prospective  
et de la performance

**November 2020**

**French national evaluations contribution to the analysis of the impact of the health crisis**

Two months after the start of the school year, it is now possible to answer two essential questions asked after the period of closure of schools and establishments from March to May 2020:

- What are the consequences of confinement in terms of learning and mastery of fundamental knowledge at the critical moments of schooling that are the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and CP, CE1 and 6<sup>th</sup> grades classes?
- What impacts does confinement have on educational inequalities?

We can indeed rely on the French system - unique in Europe - of exhaustive national assessments which have the dual advantage of covering entire cohorts, in French language and mathematics (nearly 800,000 students per level), and of existing since 2018 for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades, and since 2017 for 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

This allows for temporal comparisons, which are essential for answering these questions.

We will thus be able to compare the skills of the generation that experienced confinement with those of the generations that preceded it and that had not experienced confinement.

**First grade entry**

- It is important to remember what happened in previous years: in 2019, results were stable compared to 2018, in terms of mastery levels but also in terms of differences in mastery levels between students entering first grade in priority education areas and those entering second grade in other areas.
- In September 2020: there is a slight decrease in the proportion of students with satisfactory results in any of the areas assessed.
- On the whole, the strongest declines observed in both French and Mathematics correspond to parts of the curriculum worked on at the end of the Kindergarten class "Grande Section".
- The gaps in mastery levels between students entering first grade in priority education areas and those entering in other areas are increasing slightly.

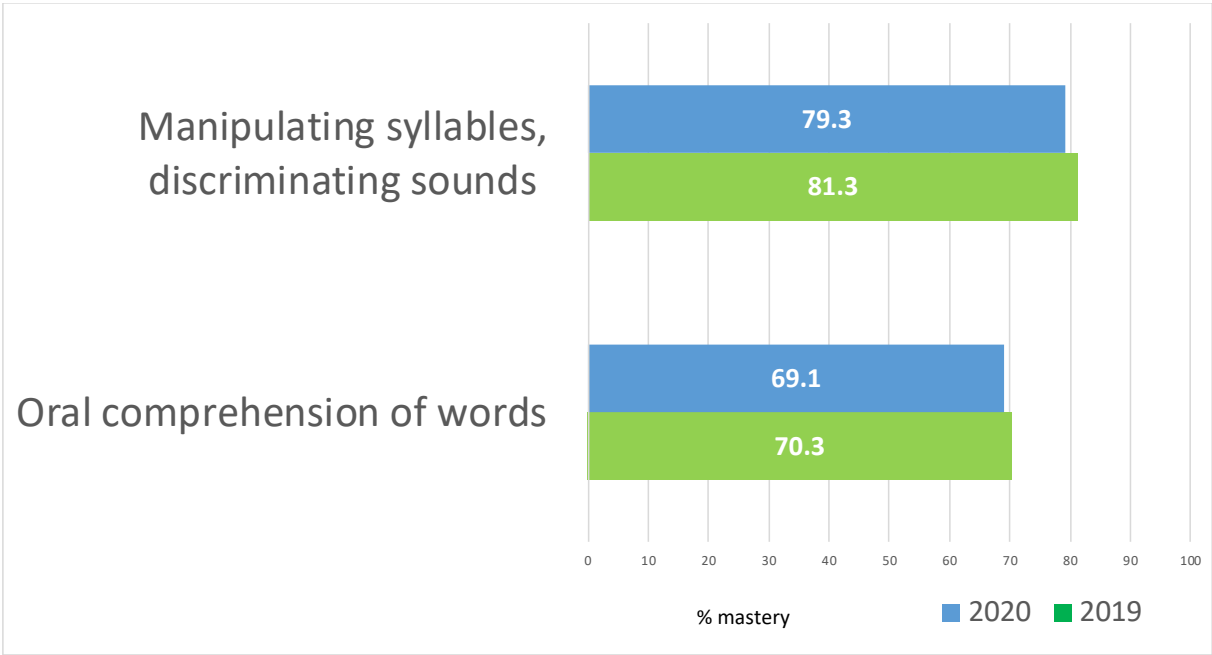
The generation that has experienced confinement enters 1<sup>st</sup> grade class with a less assertive background than those who preceded it and who, for their part, had not experienced confinement. Moreover, the educational gaps according to the sector of schooling are slightly greater for this generation.

In 2020, in French, there is a drop of 1 to 2 points in the percentage of mastery.

The largest declines occur in the areas of phonology and knowledge of letters. Here, for example, for "manipulating syllables, discriminating sounds" there is a drop of 2 points.

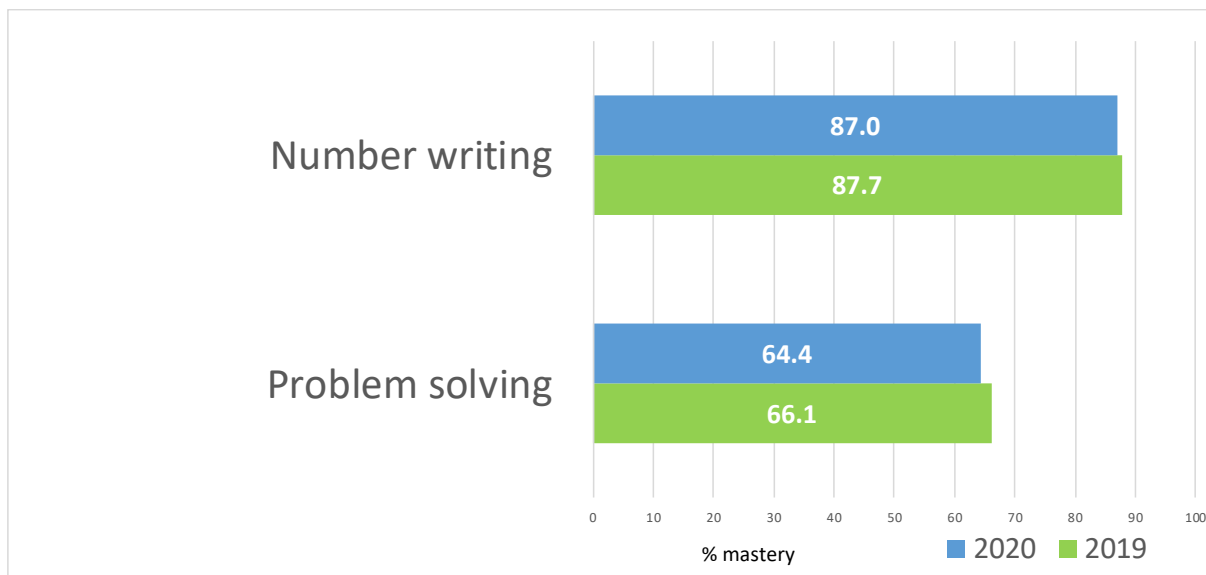
Decreases are smaller in areas related to oral comprehension of texts, sentences or words. Here, for example, for "word comprehension" with a drop of 1.2 points.

Here are two examples of changes, in French : these are the percentages of mastery in two areas of French (in green: 2020, in blue: 2019)



In 2020, in mathematics, there are declines in six of the seven areas assessed of 1 to 2 points.

Two other examples of evolutions, in mathematics this time: the percentages of mastery in two areas of mathematics (in green: 2020, in blue: 2019). Here, -0.7 points in number writing and -1.7 points for the problem solving exercise.



As in other years, students entering the priority education schools have a less assertive mastery of the different competences.

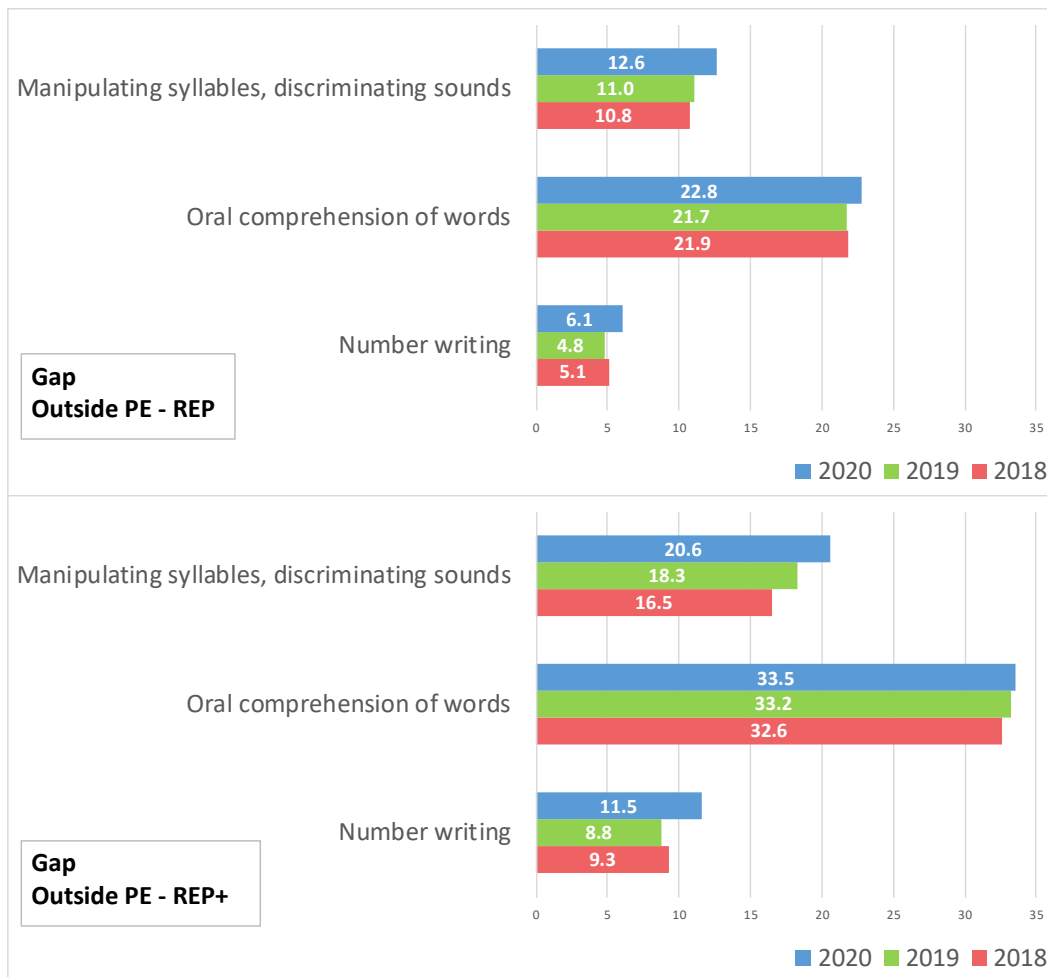
The most marked gaps in French for these students with those in other schools are found in oral comprehension. The differences are less significant but nevertheless high for letter recognition and phonological skills.

In mathematics, the greatest differences are found in the use of numbers, particularly in problem solving, and the smallest differences are found in reading whole numbers.

What we see in 2020 is that the decline in performance is visible in all educational sectors, including the private sector, whether in mathematics or in French.

Below are represented the gaps between the mastery rates of students entering priority education and students entering the public schools outside priority education (Outside PE), first level priority education (REP) in the top graph and second level priority education (REP+) in the bottom graph

In horizontal bars you see the differences in 2018 red, 2019 green, 2020 blue



The differences were stable between 2018 and 2019. In 2020, there was an increase in performance gaps between students in the public sector outside PE and those in PE, but the increase was moderate.

In priority education areas of first level (REP), in the areas of

"Manipulating syllables, i.e., discriminating sounds," shows an increase of 1.6 percent.

"Understanding Words Read by the Teacher" increased by 1.1

"Writing whole numbers" shows an increase of 1.3 per cent.

In priority education areas of second level (REP+), the increase in gaps is more pronounced

In the fields of

"Manipulating syllables, i.e., discriminating sounds," shows an increase of 2.3 percent.

"Understand words read by the teacher" there is stability

"Writing whole numbers" shows an increase of 2.7 per cent.

## Entrance to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class

At the entrance to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class, the findings are different

- It is important to remember what happened in previous years: as a reminder, in 2019, results were up from 2018, in terms of mastery levels, and they were associated with a reduction in the gaps between students entering second grade in priority education and others.
- In September 2020, there was a decline in French-language results in second grade, particularly in the areas of reading and writing.
- There is relative stability in mathematics
- The decrease in French is similar to the increase between 2018 and 2019, except for reading text aloud and writing words, for which the results are down more than in 2018. These competences are particularly worked on at the end of 1<sup>st</sup> grade class.
- Gaps are widening in French and mathematics between students entering second grade in priority education areas and other students.

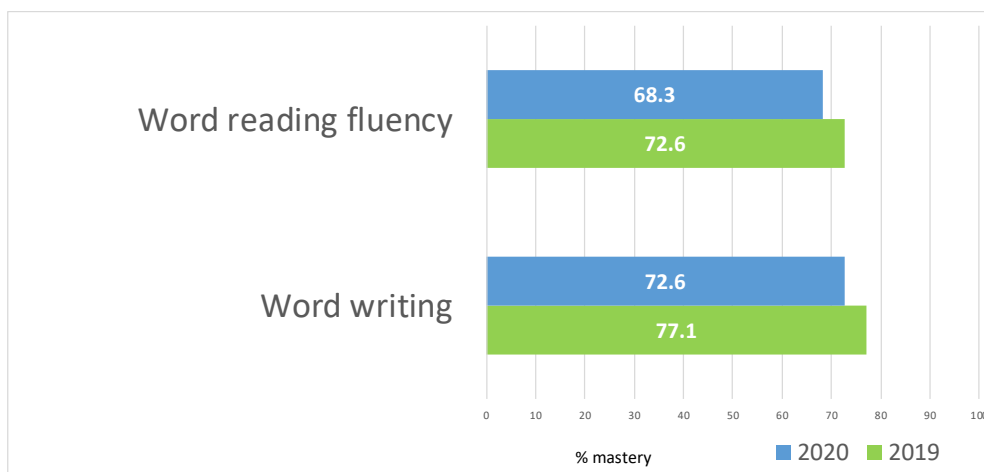
The generation that has experienced confinement enters the second grade with less asserted achievements than the generation that preceded it, which had not experienced confinement. With the exception of reading text aloud and writing words, we find the same level of achievement as the generation that entered first grade in September 2018. In addition, the schooling gaps according to the sector of schooling are greater, especially for students in REP+, for this generation than for the previous one.

In 2020, in French, we can observe negative developments in seven out of eight areas.

For example, the proportion of students with satisfactory mastery drops for word reading by 4.3 points and for word writing by 4.5 points. The decline is less pronounced in abilities related to oral comprehension.

In reading text and writing words, results are at a level of mastery below 2018 but in reading words, writing syllables and reading comprehension alone they return to the level of 2018. Reading comprehension of sentences read orally is stable.

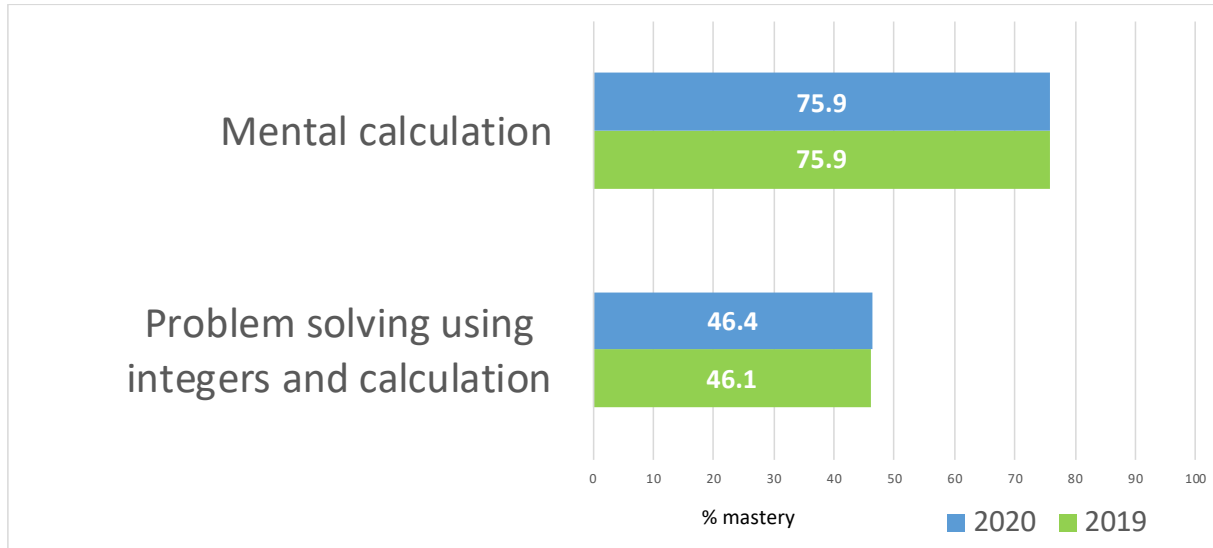
Here are two examples of changes, in French, in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade : these are the percentages of mastery in two areas of French (in green: 2020, in blue: 2019)



In mathematics, in 2020, the decline is less marked than in French. In fact, it is greater than 1 point only in "representing whole numbers" (-1.2 point).

For the rest, performance is comparable between 2019 and 2020.

Here are two examples of changes, in mathematics, in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade : these are the percentages of mastery in two areas of French (green: 2020, blue: 2019)



However, this apparent stability in mathematics hides different evolutions according to the sectors of students' education.

In French, as in other years, significant differences are noted according to the skills assessed and the sector of schooling of the students (REP+, REP, public non-EP or private schools).

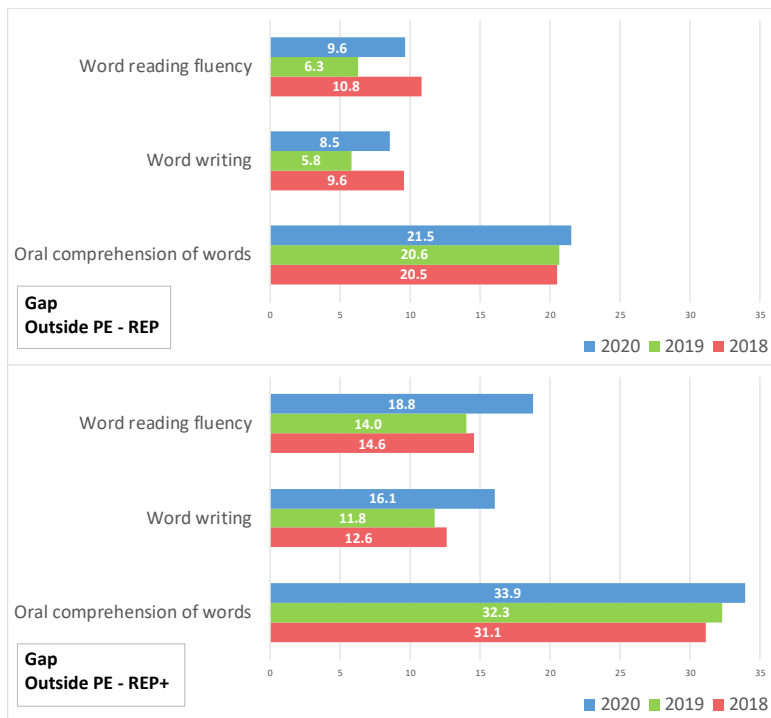
Students enrolled in the public sector in priority education schools have a less assertive mastery. This applies to all the areas assessed in French, where the greatest gaps are found in oral comprehension and the least gaps are found in syllable or word writing.

What we can see in 2020 in French is that the decline in performance in the fields evaluated concerns all educational sectors. Only the oral sentence comprehension exercise shows stable results regardless of the sector. However, this decline is more pronounced in certain sectors and particularly in priority education.

In addition, contrary to what was observed between 2018 and 2019 with a reduction in the EP/non-EP gaps, the gaps widen in 2020.

The graph below represents the gaps between the mastery rates of students entering priority education (REP in the upper graph and REP+ in the lower graph) and students entering the public outside priority education.

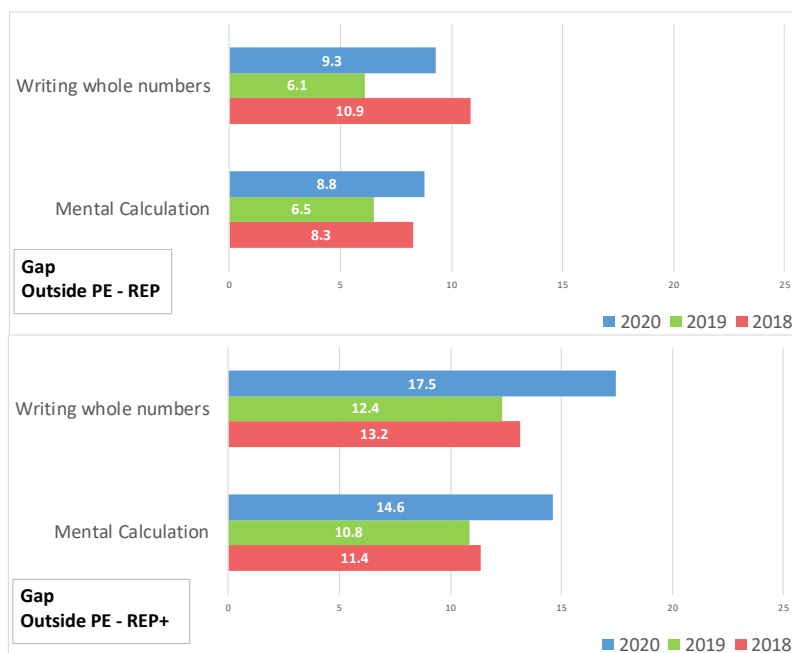
In horizontal bars you see the gaps in 2018 red, 2019 green, 2020 blue



One can observe that the gaps decreased between 2018 and 2019 overall in PE. In 2020, on the contrary, there was a sharp increase in the performance gaps between students in the public sector outside PE and those enrolled in French PE.

In mathematics, the average stability of results observed is accompanied by an overall increase in performance in 2020 in the private sector and, to a lesser extent, in the public sector excluding priority education. In priority education, we observe a decrease in performance except in geometry and for the exercise of the numerical line.

We therefore observe an increase in the gaps between PE and non-PE, but less marked than in French, except in two areas: "reading whole numbers" and "writing whole numbers".



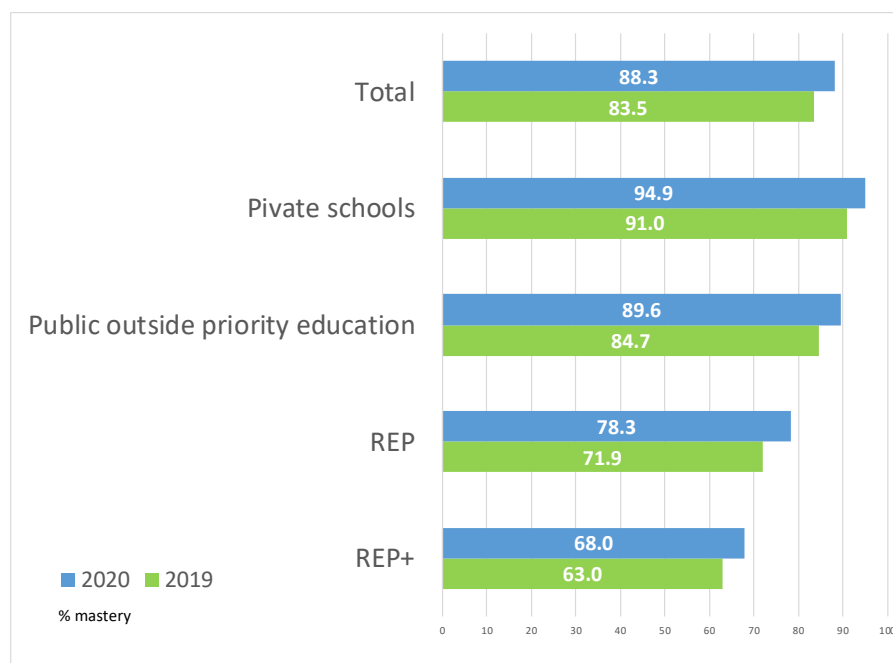
In 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, the increase in the gaps between students entering PE and those outside PE is of the same order of magnitude as the progress made between 2018 and 2019 in PE. While the gaps are larger in 2020 than in 2019, this is not the case with respect to 2018. Recall that the year 2018-2019 was the year of generalization of split classes in EPR. We therefore return to the situation in 2018.

In REP+, the gaps in relation to the public excluding priority education in 2020 are greater than in 2018. However, 2018 may not be the best reference point on the gaps: the generalization of split classes in REP+ took place on the previous year 2017-2018: One lacks the 2017 starting point to estimate the gaps between REP+ and the others.

### **Entrance to 6th grade**

- It is important to remember what happened in previous years: stable results in mathematics since 2017 and a slight improvement in French since 2017.
- An assessment at the beginning of 6th grade that focuses on the achievements of the entire elementary school and not only those of 5<sup>th</sup> grade.
- In September 2020, there is an improvement in results in both French and mathematics.
- Gaps are widening in mathematics, between students entering 6th grade in priority education and the others.
- Still a large percentage of students in difficulty, especially in mathematics

### **Results in French**



The proportion of students with a sufficient command of French increases by 4.8 points between 2019 and 2020.

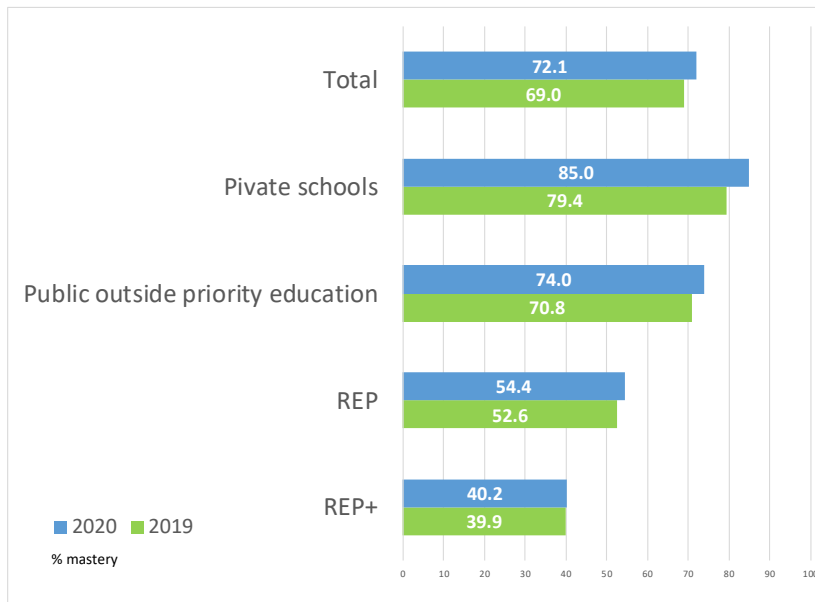
The increase is 5 points in REP+, 5.4 in REP, 5 in public education excluding priority education and 3.9 in private education.



Therefore, in French, over the medium term, the proportion of students with insufficient or fragile mastery is down compared to 2019, 2018 and 2017. In French, over the 2017 / 2020 period, there is an improvement in all sectors and especially in PE.

In French, REP+ / HEP and REP / HEP gaps are stable between 2020 and 2019 and have narrowed very slightly between 2017 and 2020.

### **Results in mathematics**



The proportion of students with sufficient mastery in mathematics increases between 2019 and 2020 by 3.1 points.

The increase is 0.3 points in REP+, 1.8 points in REP, 3.2 points in public education excluding priority education and 4.6 points in private education.

Therefore, in mathematics, the proportion of students with insufficient or fragile mastery is down compared to 2019, but not compared to 2018 and 2017: also in mathematics, there is a deterioration between 2017 and 2020 for all except private schools, which is stable.

In mathematics, the gaps REP+ / HEP and REP / HEP increased between 2020 and 2019 while they were stable between 2017 and 2019.

There is therefore no drop in scores in 2020 in French and mathematics in any sector: this is the first important news after the imposed confinement.

But the changes for students entering the sixth grade are more positive for the more socially advantaged sectors, and while the score gaps between sectors are stable in French, they increase in mathematics.

It is therefore important to remember that while the students as a whole do not seem to have been penalized by the distance learning period, this is less the case for the most socially fragile students.

### **For more information**

<https://www.education.gouv.fr/evaluations-2020-reperes-cp-ce1-premiers-resultats-307122>

<https://www.education.gouv.fr/evaluations-de-debut-de-sixieme-2020-premiers-resultats-307125>