

## WHAT IS PISA?

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is an assessment of the skills and knowledge of 15-year-olds. PISA is a project of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Participating countries work together to produce a student assessment that is valid, relevant and authentic. The project is collaborative in its design and development.

The PISA assessment is carried out in three-yearly cycles and assesses skills in three areas: reading, mathematics and science.

The first cycle, in which the main focus was on reading, took place in 2000. In 2003 the main focus was on mathematics, while in 2006 it was on science. In 2009, the main focus will once again be on reading.

An assessment framework developed by international subject area experts guides the content and processes assessed in reading, mathematics and science. In each country, a minimum of 4,000 students are assessed.

## WHICH COUNTRIES ARE PARTICIPATING IN PISA?

The following 67 countries will participate in PISA 2009 (all 30 OECD member countries and 37 'partner' countries):

Albania*	Hong Kong-China*	Panama*
Argentina*	Hungary	Peru*
Australia	Iceland	Poland
Austria	Indonesia*	Portugal
Azerbaijan*	Ireland	Qatar*
Belgium	Israel*	Romania*
Brazil*	Italy	Russian Federation*
Bulgaria*	Japan	Republic of Serbia*
Canada	Jordan*	Singapore*
Chile*	Kazakhstan*	Slovak Republic
China (Shanghai)*	Korea	Slovenia*
Chinese Taipei*	Kyrgyzstan*	Spain
Colombia*	Latvia*	Sweden
Croatia*	Liechtenstein*	Switzerland
Czech Republic	Lithuania*	Thailand*
Denmark	Luxembourg	Trinidad and Tobago*
Dominican Republic*	Macao-China*	Tunisia*
Dubai*	Mexico	Turkey
Estonia*	Republic of Moldova*	United Kingdom
Finland	Republic of Montenegro*	United States
France	Netherlands	Uruguay*
Germany	New Zealand	
Greece	Norway	

\*Partner countries

## WHO IS IMPLEMENTING PISA?

PISA is implemented through two international groups of institutions. The lead institutions for the consortia are the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) and the National Institute for Educational Measurement, Netherlands (CITO).

Key decisions are made by the PISA Governing Board. Each OECD country has a voting representative on this Board.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF PISA IN IRELAND

In Ireland, the Educational Research Centre (ERC) and the Department of Education and Science are implementing the project. Implementation and interpretation of outcomes are guided by the National Advisory Committee, consisting of:

<b>Eamonn Murtagh</b>	Department of Education and Science, Chair
<b>George Porter</b>	Department of Education and Science
<b>Brian Murphy</b>	Education Department, University College Cork
<b>Elizabeth Oldham</b>	School of Education, Trinity College Dublin
<b>Hal O'Neill</b>	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
<b>Aideen Cassidy</b>	Junior Certificate School Programme
<b>Alison Graham</b>	Sandford Park School, Dublin
<b>Rachel Perkins</b>	Educational Research Centre
<b>Gerry Shiel</b>	Educational Research Centre
<b>Jude Cosgrove</b>	Educational Research Centre

Other partners are kept informed of PISA activities through regular correspondence.

In March 2009, it is planned to assess 5,500 15-year-olds in a representative sample of about 160 schools in Ireland. Both schools and students will be randomly selected.

A field trial involving 27 schools and 700 students was carried out in February 2008. The purpose of the field trial was to prepare the survey instruments and refine procedures.

## WHY IS PISA IMPORTANT?

PISA's primary focus is on key public policy issues such as:

- *The performance of students in Ireland in three core subject areas, relative to students in other countries.*
- *Changes in achievement over time.*
- *The extent to which the Irish education system is preparing young adults for full participation in society.*
- *The nature and extent of associations between school and student factors and achievement outcomes.*

## PISA 2009 ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

Previous international assessments have concentrated on "curricular" knowledge. PISA aims to assess students' performance on "real-life" tasks.

Students will be assessed in their schools on a specified day. The assessment will be administered by a teacher in the school who has participated in a training session on PISA. Students will be asked to complete the following tasks:

*The PISA 2009 test:* This is a written assessment which examines student achievement in reading, mathematics and science. *Duration: approximately 2 hours.*

*The PISA student questionnaire:* This asks students about their backgrounds, attitudes to reading, reading strategies, educational and occupational aspirations, and familiarity with Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). *Duration: approximately 45 minutes.*

*The PISA 2009 electronic reading assessment:* About one-quarter of participating students will be invited to respond to electronic texts on a computer. The computer-based test will add further valuable information on student achievements in a more dynamic, interactive reading environment than is possible on a written test. The duration of this assessment is approximately 1 hour. A final decision as to whether Irish students participate in the electronic assessment will be made in October 2008.

Principals of participating schools will be asked to complete a short *school questionnaire* about school resources and school organisation, particularly as they relate to reading instruction.

Teachers of English in participating schools will be invited to complete a *teacher questionnaire* concerning instructional practices, and implementation of the Junior Certificate English syllabus, in particular with students of differing levels of ability.

All information collected in the survey is treated as confidential. Results are reported as summary statistics for large groups of schools and students.

## WHAT'S NEW ABOUT PISA 2009?

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PISA 2009 will offer a further opportunity to examine changes in achievement in reading, mathematics and science since 2000, allowing for more confident interpretations to be drawn.

Reading will again be the major focus of the assessment, allowing an in-depth examination of students' achievements across a wide range of content areas and processes.

A computer-based assessment of reading will be implemented in some participating countries for the first time in 2009. It is envisaged that the computer-based assessment will add value to the paper assessment by probing students' understanding of electronic texts.

PISA 2009 will also assess students' usage of metacognitive strategies in detail as well as their attitudes to and interest in reading.

## PUBLICATION OF RESULTS

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The OECD plans to release an international report on PISA 2009 in December 2010. A national report for Ireland will also be published.

Reports for the first three PISA cycles are available at <http://www.erc.ie/pisa> (national reports) and at <http://www.pisa.oecd.org/> (OECD reports).

## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS FROM PREVIOUS CYCLES

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*PISA Mathematics: A Teacher's Guide* is intended for teachers of Junior Certificate students in post-primary schools in Ireland. The focus of the guide is on the implications of PISA for teaching and learning mathematics in post-primary schools in Ireland.

*Ready for Tomorrow's World? The competencies of Ireland's 15-year olds in PISA 2006* presents analyses, conclusions and implications of PISA 2006 in an Irish context. A copy of this can be ordered from the ERC. Alternatively, a summary can be downloaded from [www.erc.ie/pisa](http://www.erc.ie/pisa)

*PISA 2006: Science competencies for tomorrow's world* is the OECD international report on the third cycle of PISA, in which science was the major assessment domain. This report looks in detail at performance outcomes, attitudes and motivations for learning science, and trends in reading literacy and mathematics. This can be downloaded in full and in summary form from [www.pisa.oecd.org](http://www.pisa.oecd.org).

All OECD publications can also be ordered online at <http://new.sourceoecd.org>.

## FURTHER INFORMATION ON PISA

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Rachel Perkins, PISA National Project Manager, Ireland

Jude Cosgrove, Irish Representative on the PISA Governing Board

Educational Research Centre, Drumcondra, Dublin 9, Ireland  
Tel: +353 (01) 837 3789. Fax: +353 (01) 837 8997.

Email: [pisa@erc.ie](mailto:pisa@erc.ie)  
<http://www.erc.ie/pisa>  
<http://www.pisa.oecd.org>

## Information Brochure

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### Main Study 2009

### OECD Programme for International Student Assessment

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