
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS PERFORMING WELL, BUT PISA SCORES SLIDING

The latest Programme for International Student Assessment report shows that Australian Catholic schools continue to perform well in relation to high-performing countries, but declining results being seen locally and internationally are a cause for concern, the National Catholic Education Commission has said.

The 2015 PISA results were released today and show that Australian 15-year-olds continue to enjoy stronger results in maths, science and reading than their OECD peers, on average.

“In reading and in science, Australian students are performing well above the OECD average, and their scores in maths are also above the international average,” NCEC acting executive director Danielle Cronin said.

“Considering the performance data of Australian students across sectors, we can see that students in Australian Catholic schools are achieving results comparable with some of the world’s most highly regarded education systems.”

Ms Cronin said the report shows Australian Catholic school students perform better than students in South Korea, Norway, New Zealand, Japan and Great Britain in some or all of the test domains.

She acknowledged that a clear and troubling downward trend in the results of Australian students, including students in Catholic schools, must be analysed more deeply.

“While the decline in PISA scores in recent years has been observed internationally, including for some of the traditional educational powerhouses, it is important that there is an examination of the Australian context to seek insights into the possible causes of the decline,” Ms Cronin said.

“PISA was conducted across a sample of Australian schools and students, and as such provides a snapshot of the skills and competencies of the country’s 15-year olds. The information contained in the report should also be considered alongside a broader understanding of the education of students and groups of students.

“Students’ educational journeys are rightly assessed as far more than scores on a test, but the foundational skills of maths, reading and science are crucial to supporting young people in their progression through school and beyond.”