First results of OECD Pisa 2006

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Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)

• An OECD programme that produces information about the state of education in an international frame of reference.

• Measures how 15-year-old students master:
  – key skills essential for full participation in future society, for the development of working life and for the quality of life, and
  – what kind of factors influence these skills and how the skills evolve over time.

• At three-year intervals measures learning outcomes in:
  – reading (PISA 2000)
  – mathematics (PISA 2003) and
  – science (PISA 2006)
PISA ...

• In science, PISA studied:

  – Students' ability to use scientific knowledge and skills in different theme areas and in different everyday situations
  – Students' approaches to learning science and their attitudes to scientific issues and to scientific thinking and reasoning
  – Students' responsibility for sustainable development and chances of influencing it
Pisa 2006 - first results

- Finnish students' knowledge is excellent and uniform in all the sectors studied:
  - Finnish students scored highest among the OECD countries in science and second highest in mathematics and reading.
  - The proportion of poor performers is small and the number of high performers good.
  - The differences in performance between regions and schools are very small in Finland.
Learning outcomes in science

• The results for Finland are significantly better than for any other country participating in PISA 2006, and the score was the highest ever achieved in the PISA surveys.

• Finnish students have a high level of knowledge in all the aspects of science assessed.

• Students appreciate science because:
  – Progress in science and technology improve people's living conditions and
  – help us understand the world around us.

• Finnish students have a more positive attitude towards science than students in the OECD countries on average.
Reading and mathematics

- Finnish students' reading skills are still of the highest order.
  - Girls have significantly better reading skills than boys. This gender difference is still large - the second largest among the OECD countries.

- Finnish students' mathematics skills are also among the best in the world.
  - The mean performance in mathematics has risen from 2003.
  - Boys are still better in mathematics than girls. The difference between boys' and girls' mathematics skills has grown from the previous PISA (?) .
Background to Finland's success

• Education system:
  – Guarantees equal opportunities for basic education to all children and young people irrespective of their socio-economical standing, gender and ethnic background
  – The main responsibility for providing education close to pupils and their families

• Free education and extensive benefits
  – pupil welfare services
  – school meals
  – school travel benefits

• Teachers have high-level qualifications, which
  – makes for quality teaching
  – inspires confidence in education
  – makes it possible for schools and teachers to have considerable latitude in implementing education
  – highlights cooperation (home-school cooperation and multi-professional cooperation between authorities)
QUALITY ENHANCEMENT IN BASIC EDUCATION

• According to the Government Programme, the resources freed as a result of decreasing age groups will be used to develop the quality of education.

• The aim is:
  – to reduce group sizes
  – to strengthen remedial teaching and special education
  – to develop guidance counselling and pupil welfare services
  – to invest in school clubs and
  – to promote cooperation between parents and the school

• During the term of the current Government, a total of 80 million euros will be allocated to quality enhancement in basic education ("POP programme")

• In 2008 and 2009 the priority is on the development of teaching, supportive action and guidance counselling for pupils with special educational needs (€ 18 million)