

# Ireland: Educational policies and trends in achievement

*Dr Aidan Clerkin*  
*Educational Research Centre, Ireland*

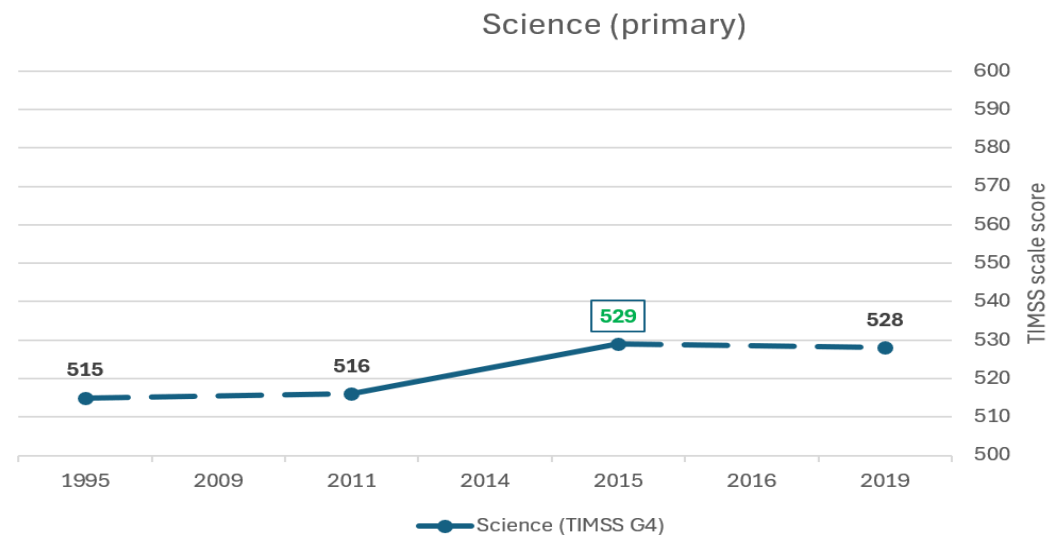
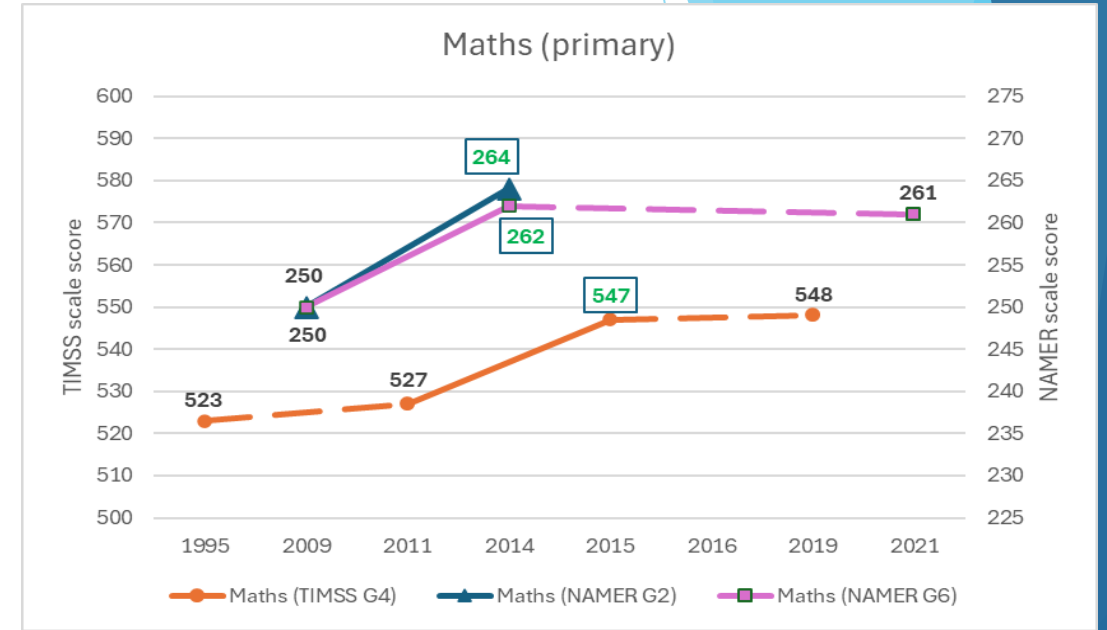
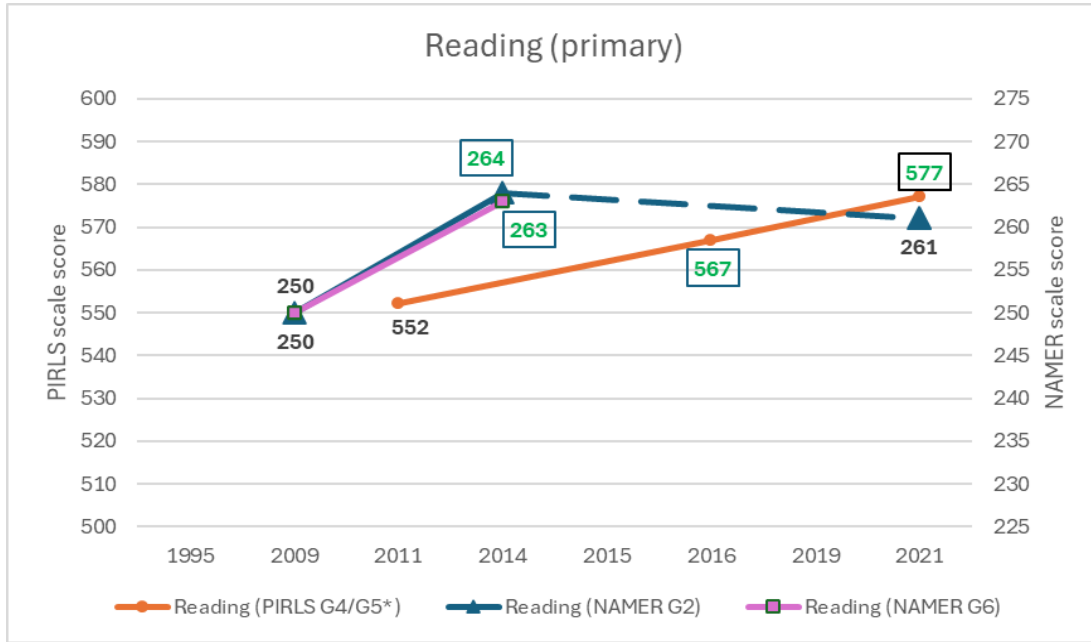
EDULOG, Porto - May 2024

[aidan.clerkin@erc.ie](mailto:aidan.clerkin@erc.ie) / Twitter: @clerkinclerkin

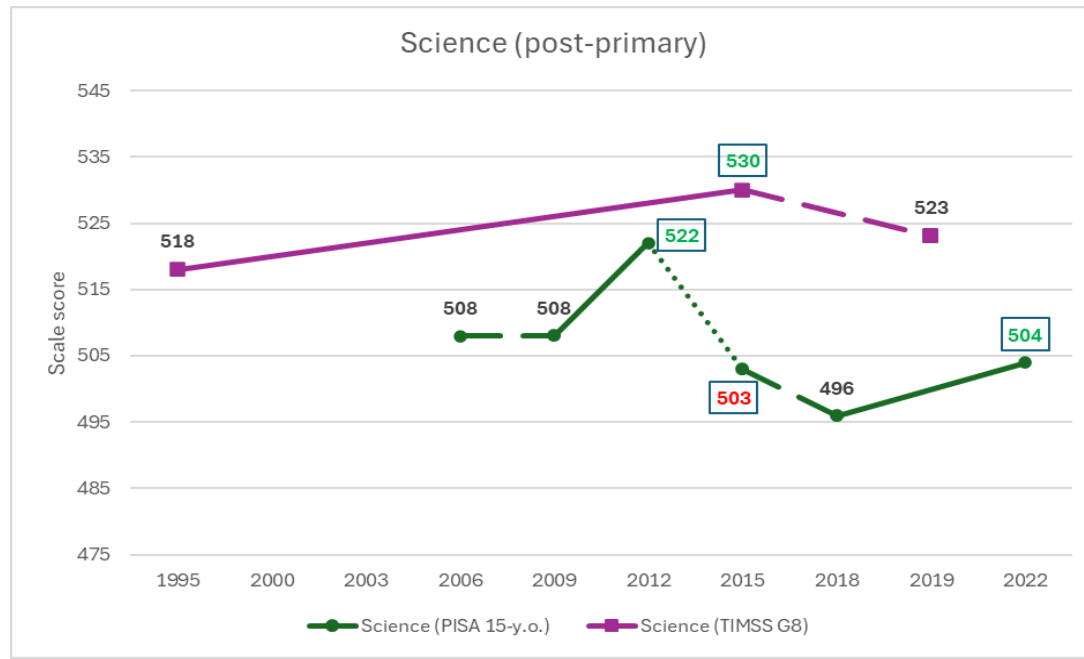
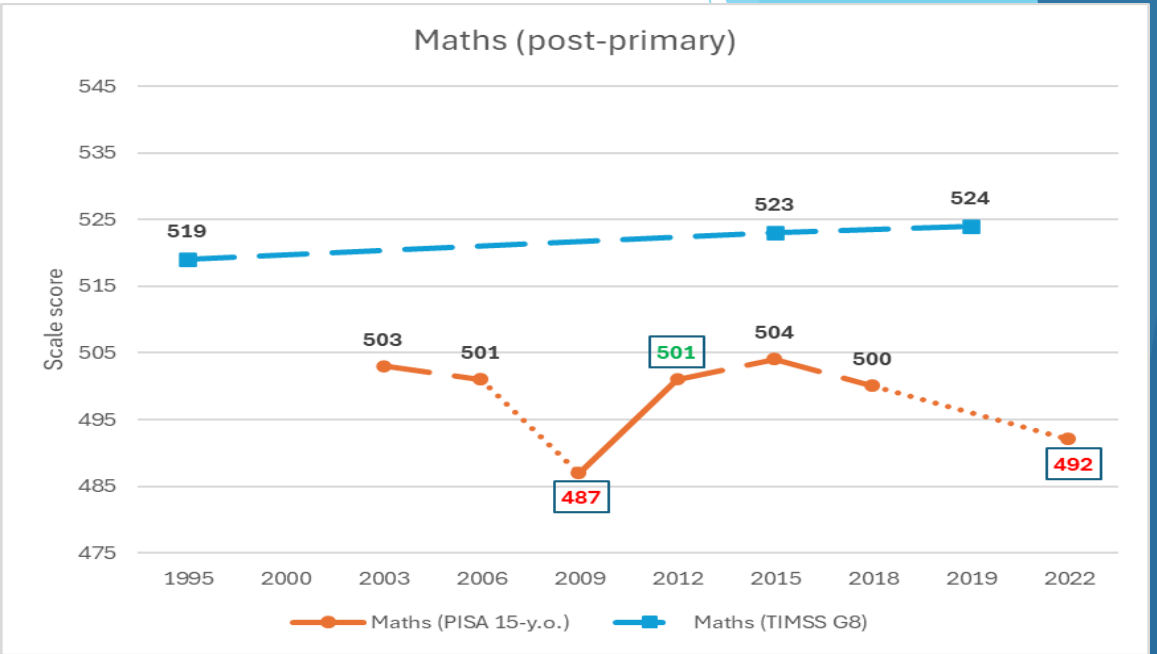
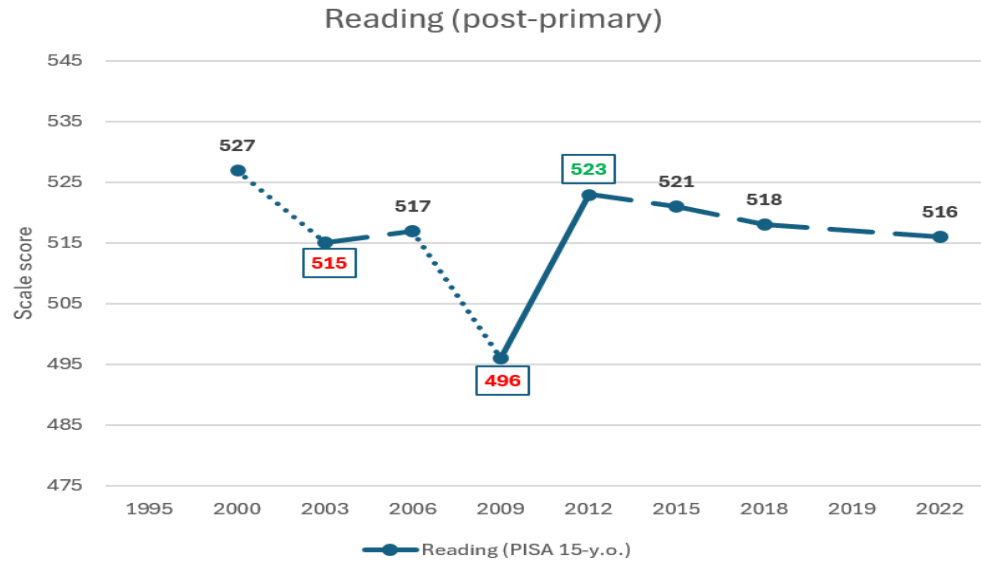
# Data sources (large-scale assessments)

	READ	MATH	SCI		G2	G4	G6	G8	15-y.o.
PIRLS	X					X			
NAMER	X	X			X		X		
TIMSS		X	X			X		X	
PISA	X	X	X						X

# Trends in achievement in Ireland at primary level (1995-2021)



# Trends in achievement in Ireland at post-primary level (1995-2022)



# Summary of recent trends in achievement

## ▶ At primary level:

- ▶ **Reading:** Significant increases to mid-2010s, then stability (or possibly some increase - *but PIRLS 2021 comparisons must be made cautiously*).
- ▶ **Maths:** Significant increases to mid-2010s, then stability.
- ▶ **Science:** Significant increase to mid-2010s, then stability.

## ▶ At post-primary level:

- ▶ **Reading:** Ups and downs from 2000-2009, then stability since 2012.
- ▶ **Maths:** TIMSS shows stability; PISA mixed but recent decline in 2022.
- ▶ **Science:** Significant increases to mid-2010s, then mixed (but broadly stable).

# Policy developments (2011-2023... and 2024-2033)

- ▶ **PISA 2009** appeared to show a major drop in standards & caused substantial alarm.
  - ▶ *Subsequently determined that some genuine decline had likely occurred, but exaggerated by confounding factors (e.g., altered patterns of student engagement, demographic changes, and statistical reservations over the stability of the link used to establish trends).*
  - ▶ *As shown already, scores “rebounded” in 2012.*
- ▶ **Policy response (*National Strategy: Literacy and Numeracy for Learning and Life, 2011-2021*)** included: targets, instructional time, ITE, mandatory testing, SSE.
- ▶ New Primary Language Curriculum (rolled out 2015-2019); new Primary Mathematics Curriculum (2023); new lower secondary mathematics (2018).
- ▶ Achievement in designated disadvantaged schools a long-standing area of concern.
  - ▶ No targets in 2011 but specific targets set during interim review in 2017.
  - ▶ **But - how to evaluate effects of dedicated programme (DEIS)? \***
- ▶ ***New Literacy, Numeracy, and Digital Literacy Strategy (2024-2033) (May 15<sup>th</sup>):***
  - ▶ Possible focus: Digital literacy, higher achievers, Shape & Space, attitudes, Irish and other languages, family support for learning, early childhood settings?

# Evaluating the effects of policies/interventions

- ▶ A recent effort to start a conversation about the evaluation of educational policies in Ireland (and elsewhere)...
  - ▶ Data limitations, conceptual clarity, variation in supports, variation in time, interactions with other policies and programmes, etc.
  - ▶ Open access from *Irish Educational Studies* (April 2024) (<https://doi.org/10.1080/03323315.2024.2334704>)

IRISH EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

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 OPEN ACCESS



## Towards more robust evaluation of policies and programmes in education: identifying challenges in evaluating DEIS and Reading Recovery

Lorraine Gilleece  and Aidan Clerkin 

Educational Research Centre, DCU St Patrick's College Campus, Dublin 9, Ireland

Obrigado!