

# 1. WHAT STUDENTS KNOW AND CAN DO – TRENDS

## Performance in reading since 2000

- Between PISA 2000 and PISA 2009, reading performance improved in 13 countries, declined in 4 and was unchanged in 21.
- Among countries that performed above the OECD average in 2000, Korea's reading scores improved, while those of Australia, Ireland and Sweden declined.
- The four countries that show the greatest improvement in reading scores, Chile and the partner countries Albania, Peru and Indonesia, all performed far below the OECD average in 2000.

### What it means

In the past decade, most countries have substantially increased their investment in education. PISA helps to monitor whether outcomes are improving as a result. In 2009, PISA focused on reading for the first time since the original PISA survey in 2000. This allows for a comparison of how student performance has evolved over the past decade.

### Findings

Mean reading performance remained unchanged, on average, across the 26 OECD countries with comparable results in both the 2000 and the 2009 PISA reading assessments. Reading performance improved in seven of these countries and in six partner countries, and declined in four OECD countries. In the rest of the 38 countries that participated in both surveys, there was no significant change.

Among the four countries showing the greatest improvement, average reading performance had been very low in 2000. Chile's mean score in 2000 was at the bottom of the baseline reading proficiency Level 2, that of the partner countries Albania and Indonesia was at Level 1, and that of the partner country Peru stood below Level 1. The reading scores of 15-year-olds rose by 31 to 43 points in these four countries, or around half a proficiency level. This is a substantial achievement in just nine years. For example, with the improvement, the gap between Chile's mean score and the OECD average was nearly halved.

Among the other nine countries showing improvement in reading scores, seven had performed somewhat below the OECD average in 2000, with mean scores in the upper half of proficiency Level 2 or the very bottom of Level 3. Of these below-average performers in 2000, Poland and the partner country Liechtenstein attained above-average scores in 2009, Germany, Hungary and

Portugal reached the OECD average, and Israel and the partner country Latvia were still below the OECD average but had closed over half the gap. The partner country Brazil also improved, even though it remains more than one proficiency level below the OECD average.

Korea, which was already an above-average performer in 2000, improved its mean score to equal that of the top-performing OECD country in reading, Finland.

Among countries whose reading performance declined, two had been among the top five performers in PISA 2000: Ireland, whose scores fell to the OECD average, and Australia, which remained above average. Sweden had performed above the OECD average in 2000, but showed average performance in 2009. In the Czech Republic, mean scores were just below the average in 2000, and fell further below average in 2009.

### Definitions

Changes in mean PISA reading scores are reported here only where they are statistically significant. Only those 38 countries with comparable results in both the 2000 and the 2009 PISA reading assessments are considered in this section.

The different number of OECD countries participating in successive PISA assessments is reflected through separate OECD averages that provide reference points for trend comparisons. For reading, the main reference point is the OECD average for the 26 OECD countries that participated in both PISA 2000 and PISA 2009. Among OECD countries, the Slovak Republic and Turkey joined PISA in 2003, and results from Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Austria are not comparable between 2000 and 2009. Estonia and Slovenia only participated in 2006 and 2009.

Information on data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

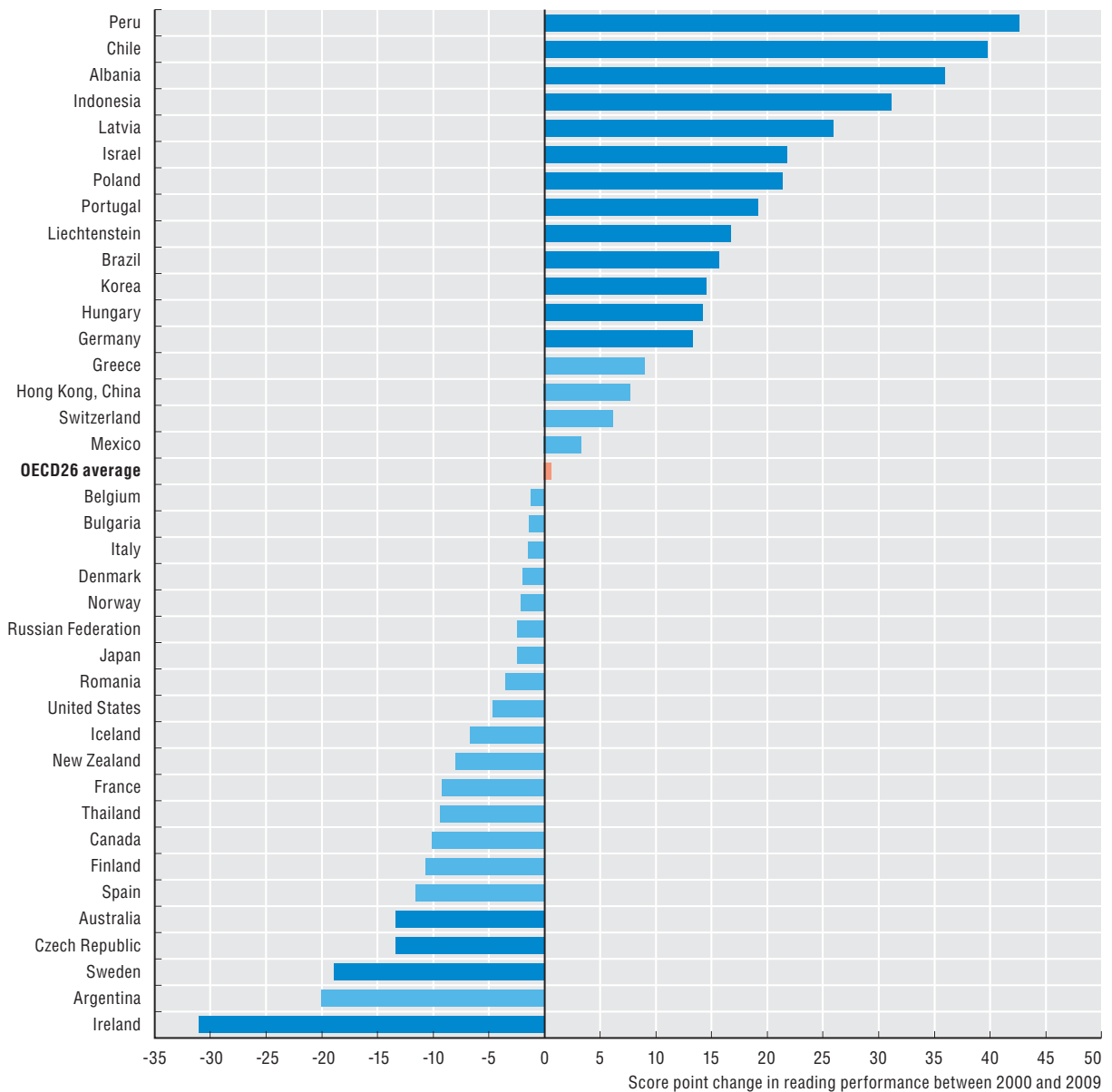
### Going further

Further analysis of changes in reading performance between 2000 and 2009 is presented in *PISA 2009 Results Volume V, Learning Trends: Changes in Student Performance Since 2000*. Full data are shown in Table V.2.1 at the back of that volume.

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Figure 1.12. Change in reading performance between 2000 and 2009



Note: Statistically significant score point changes are marked in a darker tone. Countries are ranked in descending order of the score point change in reading performance between 2000 and 2009.

Source: OECD (2010), PISA 2009 Results, Volume V, Learning Trends: Changes in Student Performance Since 2000, Figure V.2.1, available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932359967>.



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