



# international work at the NFER





## A leader in international research

The NFER prides itself on its involvement in some of the most important and ground-breaking international comparative studies into educational standards and trends. Our findings have helped to inform policy-makers and professionals, and shaped ongoing developments and reforms in national education policies.

- NFER is the national centre for the United Kingdom for the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), an internationally standardised assessment, taken by 15-year-olds in participating countries.
- The Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) is run by NFER in England and Scotland. The results of trends analysis of students' achievements in years 5 and 9 enables international comparisons of the quality, quantity and content of teaching.
- The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), run by NFER in England and

Scotland, measures trends in children's reading and gathers information about reading and literacy policies and teaching methods every five years in year 5. It enables international comparisons in pupil attainment and the literacy strategies used by teachers.

- NFER is a member of the international co-ordinating centre for the new IEA International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS), which is investigating how well 14 year olds are prepared for their roles as citizens in over 40 countries. The ICCS study is also run in England by NFER.

Smaller-scale projects include our work with lesser-used languages. Working for the European Commission, our research team developed stories for publication in minority languages in Wales, Scotland, Ireland and Italy as part of a project to investigate support for the teaching of literacy skills in the minority languages of bilingual children.

## International credentials

*The Foundation is a corporate member of the Consortium of Institutions for Development and Research in Education in Europe (CIDREE), a network of agencies that play a national role in curriculum development and educational research.*

*It is also a corporate member, and currently holds the Presidency, of the Association for Educational Assessment (AEA) Europe, which acts as a platform for discussion of development in educational assessment around the continent, fostering cooperation and facilitating liaison between people who work in the field of assessment.*

## Our subject specialisms

NFER researchers are expert in key subject areas, including:

- assessment systems and test development
- factors that can lead to school improvement
- use of information and communications technology
- effective multi-agency working
- efficient integrated services
- problems associated with exclusion and disaffection
- the effects of social disadvantage.

## A start to finish service

Working together, NFER's teams are skilled in a wide range of tried and tested research methodologies, both qualitative and quantitative.

We have the resources and capabilities to conduct and evaluate large-scale studies, as well as to work with smaller groups for specialised training and consultancy.

Our researchers are supported by in-house specialists in sophisticated statistical analysis and survey administration, and by quality control systems that ensure excellent service and results. Many researchers play key roles in devising, conducting and analysing major international studies, in partnership with colleagues overseas.

We communicate our findings in a variety of ways, ranging from bespoke web resources to reports and short summaries in print and electronic formats. What is really important to us is that the information from our research reaches the right people in a way they can use it to best advantage.

International Information Unit

NFER is home to the national Eurydice Unit for England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Eurydice is the European information network for education, set up in 1980 by the European Commission to boost cooperation. It serves policy makers at European, national and local government level. The Unit offers an enquiry service for policy makers, an international current awareness bulletin and access to publications and databases.

The International Information Unit at NFER also manages the International Review of Curriculum and Assessment Frameworks (INCA) Internet Archive, which provides descriptions of government policy on education in 20 countries worldwide, focussing on the curriculum, assessment and initial teacher training.

The Unit conducts thematic probes and studies into specific subjects across the Archive's 21 countries, for example a probe into active citizenship. Member

countries use the probe results to guide further detailed study, in order to provide information on which clear policy decisions can be based.

## Contact details

For further information about our international work visit [www.nfer.ac.uk/international](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/international) or contact Sharon O'Donnell at [international@nfer.ac.uk](mailto:international@nfer.ac.uk).

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