

Foreword

The highest performing education systems across OECD countries combine excellence with equity. The excellence of the Netherlands is evidenced by its strong average performance and few low performers in the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Survey of Adult Skills, a product of the OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC). The commitment to further improve education quality is visible at all levels of the education system and beyond. Decentralisation encourages innovative educational practice and facilitates a central government approach that is backed by a widespread commitment to evidence-based policy making. Decentralisation is effectively balanced by strong accountability mechanisms.

However, some challenges remain, and the strengths of the Dutch education system need to be sustained and further developed in the context of changing social and labour market requirements. The Netherlands has long succeeded in managing a system with extensive early tracking and multiple tracks, but growing inequity and an increasing rigidity in track placement has led to increased pressure. Student motivation is inadequate and there are too few top performers, given the overall high standards.

The review aims to further advance the quality and equity of the Dutch system, as well as maintain and build on its current strengths. The report draws on key lessons from high performing and rapidly improving education systems, as well as on research and analysis undertaken by the OECD as part of this project.

The Netherlands is known globally for its commitment to excellence, equity and innovation. I hope this report will support the Netherlands in its ambitions to further enhance the quality and outcomes of its education system, and strengthen the contribution of education and skills to the economic and social growth of the country. The OECD is here to help the Netherlands rise to this challenge.



Andreas Schleicher

Director for Education and Skills and Special Advisor
on Education Policy to the Secretary-General
OECD

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