

# Manav Rachna International Schools Set a Global Benchmark in Learning with PISA-Based Assessment

Category: Business

written by News Mall | June 27, 2025



When students are given the space to question, explore and make sense of what they learn, something big happens. Learning starts to reflect life. It moves beyond memory and repetition, and begins to take shape through reasoning, application, and ideas. These are not skills developed overnight. They grow over time through the right environment, experiences, and exposure.



### **Students engaged in collaborative reading**

At Manav Rachna International Schools (MRIS), this way of learning has taken shape steadily across years of thoughtful academic design. From how subjects are approached to the kind of experiences offered beyond the classroom, the emphasis has remained clear. The focus is on helping students build the ability to think, respond, and act with purpose.

This belief led to the school's decision to participate in the PISA-based Test for Schools, an international assessment developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and introduced in India by ExcelOne, joining over 100 schools across India in this first-of-its-kind effort. The results provided a broader view of how students are learning. More than scores, it offered insights into how knowledge is being applied, how learners are thinking through unfamiliar situations, and how classroom practices translate when viewed through a global lens.

The participation was to understand how learning at MRIS holds up when examined closely. When students are placed in situations where the questions are new, the patterns are unfamiliar, and success depends on their ability to connect, interpret, and reason. That intent shaped every aspect of the

experience. A group of Grade 10 students who matched the age criteria participated in the assessment, which focuses on 15-year-olds.

The assessment covered three domains: reading, mathematics, and science. It did not test memory or syllabus content. It looked at how students extract meaning from texts, interpret data, solve real-world problems, and use logic in unfamiliar contexts. The results showed that students of MRIS performed significantly above the national and OECD averages, with scientific reasoning emerging as the strongest domain.

This strength was especially encouraging, as it reflected the kind of thinking the school has always aimed to nurture. The ability to interpret scientific information, evaluate evidence, and apply it in a range of new situations is not only a subject-specific skill. It is a way of thinking that grows when students are given opportunities to explore, reflect, and try different approaches.

That process begins early. In the foundational years, MRIS introduces students to hands-on learning through Tinkershala, a space designed for guided exploration. Here, students observe, design, and solve problems in ways that build curiosity, collaboration, and communication. As they move through school, they step into Makershala, where they choose between STEM-based or media-based pathways.

Students who choose the STEM path engage with electronics, robotics, engineering design, and innovation projects. Those who opt for the media stream explore podcasting, digital storytelling, journalism, and visual content creation through Mediashala. Regardless of their chosen path, students develop skills in problem-solving, real-world application, and approaching tasks from multiple perspectives.

These learning experiences are strengthened by the school's Future Skills and Sustainability curriculum, which connects

classroom learning to real-world issues. Whether students are working on environmental solutions, designing products, or studying behaviour patterns, the emphasis remains on relevance, inquiry, and impact.

The insights gained from the PISA-based Test for Schools extended beyond subject competencies. The assessment also included detailed student questionnaires that captured learner perceptions on motivation, classroom climate, stress, confidence, and connection to learning. A majority of MRIS students reported feeling engaged and supported in their academic journey. They expressed belief in their ability to succeed, a sense of belonging, and a recognition that learning has a real-world purpose.

Importantly, the report also pointed to a healthy level of equity across student performance. There were no visible gaps between learners from different socio-economic backgrounds or genders. This reflects the school's ongoing efforts to ensure equity in opportunity, support, and outcomes for every learner.

Students approached the exam based on what they had learned over time through regular instruction, projects, and classroom experiences. That is what made the insights more meaningful. The outcomes showed how students think when they are on their own, when the task is new, and when they must rely on their understanding and reasoning.

These insights continue to shape academic planning and reflection across the school. The findings are being used to strengthen what works well, identify areas for growth, and further integrate real-life application into everyday learning. The focus remains on offering timely support to learners who need it and creating classroom experiences that build confidence, ownership, and deeper understanding.

The school's participation in this initiative served as a

meaningful checkpoint. It offered both validation and direction. Validation that the learning environment is enabling students to apply their skills with clarity and confidence. Direction to keep refining the approach, because the world beyond school demands more from students than scores.

At MRIS, learning is a foundation students build and carry with them, shaping how they think, act, and lead. The PISA for Schools experience offered an opportunity to step back and see this from a wider frame, reminding the school of what it has always aimed to do and prepare learners not just for success, but for significance.

