Four Catholic primary schools in the Diocese of Rockhampton have been identified as demonstrating above average NAPLAN gain compared to schools across Australia with similar students, following the release on Thursday (March 5) of 2014 NAPLAN data by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

Updated NAPLAN data on the My School website revealed St Mary’s Catholic Primary School, Mackay, St Peter’s Catholic Primary School, Rockhampton, St Patrick’s Catholic Primary School, Emerald and St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School in Biloela were identified as ‘high gain’ schools in numeracy following last year’s round of standardised testing across Years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

According to ACARA schools were chosen based on methodology focussing on three standards including large overall gain compared to previous years, gain compared to schools with similar groups of students based on the Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) level, and gain compared to students at similar NAPLAN start points.

The ICSEA level is a scale which allows for fair and reasonable comparisons among schools with similar students providing an indication of the socio-educational background of students according to factors related to students, parents and school.

Catholic Education Diocesan Director, Leesa Jeffcoat, said whilst the results were certainly pleasing and a positive reflection on academic development within each of the schools identified, the indicators needed to be viewed in the context of the holistic approach to education fundamental to Catholic schooling in the Diocese of Rockhampton.

"Around 300 schools across Australia were listed as 'high gain' - in statistical terms this is a significant result. I am delighted for our schools identified as they have worked hard to ensure the best outcomes for students," Miss Jeffcoat said.

"Undoubtedly the results shine a very positive light on how curriculum content is being delivered at these Catholic schools. However, it is important to view the information in the measured way it is intended, and not as the singular or main indicator of a school's overall performance," Miss Jeffcoat said.

“Our Catholic schools are characterised by a holistic approach to education and are concerned with not only the academic development of students but also their emotional, psychological, physical and spiritual development,” she said.

Miss Jeffcoat said NAPLAN data and other information on the My Schools website provided useful information to parents and educators about how individual schools were performing in the standardised areas tested and when viewed with a good understanding of how results were reported.