

**EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS' ACTION PLAN ON
EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

Final Report



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarises the steps and main findings the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (the Agency) has undertaken during its formative evaluation of the European Schools' Action Plan on Educational Support and Inclusive Education, in line with the framework in the Inception Report.

The European Schools' Action Plan is still in its implementation phase. Therefore, the activities were prepared and implemented as a formative evaluation. The evaluation examined the performance and effectiveness of the actions and measures detailed in the Action Plan. The Agency has not assessed the Action Plan's quality or feasibility. However, the Agency has reserved the right to comment on the extent to which the Action Plan itself is in line with general concepts and principles for inclusive education, with international and European principles and with the Agency's wider work (see section *Comments on the Action Plan in relation to Agency's Position on Inclusive Education*).

The evaluation was undertaken in six stages. Following the approval of the Inception report by the European schools, quantitative data were collected through a documentary search and two online surveys, one addressed to the 13 schools and the other to the system level. Analysis of the quantitative data provided an accurate picture of current practice across a number of indicators, such as finance, resourcing, learner and staff numbers, assessment, qualifications and training, enrolments, requests for support, and interaction with families. This data enabled comparisons to be made between and across school departments, phases or across all 13 European Schools, to gain an overview of consistency and progress.

The analysis then informed the next stage of the evaluation, clarifying issues for exploration through qualitative data collection. This was done through six online focus groups and 7 interviews.

Analysis of the qualitative data indicated the extent of the impact of policies and practices on all stakeholders (management, teaching staff, support staff, learners and families), as groups and as individuals, within and across groups and the inter-relation between groups or individuals.

The final stage of the analysis brought together all findings from each Area, and every stage of the Evaluation, to gain an overall formative evaluation of the implementation of the Action Plan, and the extent to which it is in line with the core principles of inclusive education, to which the Agency adheres.

Taken as a whole, the Action Plan demonstrates the European Schools system's commitment to make significant changes to enable the schools to further develop and implement policies and practices which are more in line with the processes of inclusive education. Findings indicate that there is progress across most Recommendations and Actions; this may be at an entry and emerging level or at a more developed or secure level within each Area. In three Areas, Actions are planned, but not yet started (Adaptability-curricula, assessment, examination; Certification of capacities; Monitoring/quality assurance) and in one Area, Actions are nearly complete (Enrolment).



Across different Areas, while there are Actions in place at system level, there is variation across and between the 13 schools in their implementation. This potential gap between the development of policies and guidelines at system level and the way they are implemented into practice at school level may have arisen due to different factors, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. There is also variation in the ways the 13 schools work within the guidelines given in the policies. It is also noted that some recent decisions made at system level had not been implemented in schools at the time of this evaluation.

Schools, which receive guidance and information at system level, are working within their own contexts to make the required changes and adaptations. There is some variation across schools in their perceptions of their own progress in some aspects of the Action Plan and in the on-going challenges they experience. There are also some challenges across all Areas of the Action Plan and other challenges arising directly from the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

This Final Report indicates the progress in the implementation of the Action Plan. The Agency has evaluated the progress made in each of the 13 Areas against the Actions, Indicators of Success, Timeline and Budget, as indicated in the Action Plan. Where appropriate, progress has been evaluated in relation to one or more of the five criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact, in line with the core principles of inclusive education, to which the Agency adheres.

Overview of progress across the Areas:

- There is progress across the Area of **Human Resources**, with some Actions in place at system level, that are not implemented yet at School level, indicating that there are on-going challenges for schools. These are in relation to the qualifications of the Educational Support Co-ordinators, the recruitment of appropriately qualified or skilled support staff, the allocation of time to Educational Support, including secretarial support; and the recruitment of teachers, particularly those with language skills.
- In the Area of **Qualifications and Training**, there has been progress at system level. As the training policy was approved in November 2021, there has not yet been enough time for implementation at the school level. While the impact of the pandemic on training opportunities has been considerable, it seems that schools have met challenges in increasing the involvement of staff in training, in relation to educational support and inclusive education and this is something that needs further development.
- In the Area of **Budgetary Allocation**, there has been progress at system level. However, there are some issues in relation to schools' understanding of the budget. Budget is perceived as very complex and with missing information.
- With regards to **Accessibility of the Built Environment**, adaptations are the responsibility of the city, region, or state, so practices can diverge widely from school to school.
- Regarding **Accessibility – Information and Communication**, there is progress at system level. However, there appears to be a gap between policy and



implementation into practice by schools. While at system level, policies are mostly implemented, some stakeholders at school level consider that the policies could be better disseminated and more effectively put into practice.

- There is progress regarding the **Teaching Material**, specifically in relation to the access the Schools have to national resource centres, so that they can benefit from the expertise shared and support provided. However there are some limitations to the effective use of the resource centres in practice by schools. Progress is also indicated in relation to the identification of common market for purchasing accessible teaching and assistive material and setting up a framework contact.
- In **Personalised Support**, guidance given to schools indicates that there is progress across the Actions at system level, but there is variation in the ways that schools work within the guidelines given in the policies. However, there are significant challenges at every level, with variation in the interpretation and provision of personalised support.
- There is a gap between the policy at system level and the practice at school level regarding the **Transition between school cycles**. There is progress in relation to identifying existing difficulties and making proposals in the transition from primary to secondary cycle. The smooth transition policy identifies mechanisms to evaluate the process of developing teams and the teams' impact on transitions. However, there are variations that indicate different levels of practice across schools.
- The Actions in the Area on **Adaptability (Curricula, Assessment and Examination)** range from planned to being in progress. The analysis of concrete barriers in the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and the preparation of a proposal for introducing flexibility to the curriculum is planned. Improvement of the electronic system recording provision, progress and assessment of pupils with special educational needs is in progress.
- In the Area of **Enrolment**, the implementation of common guidelines about enrolment, removal or non-enrolment for the schools is nearly complete. Directors base their decision not to enrol a learner/no longer provide education to a learner on clear procedures and documentary evidence, including external expertise. The cases are properly documented, analysed and conclusions are drawn. However, there are some issues in the way that the guidelines have been implemented.
- The **Transition to other schools** is in progress. However, despite existing specific procedures at system level for transition to other schools and/or co-operation with the hosting member state/municipality or the local schools, there are different levels of practice across the 13 European schools. This indicates that these schools have just planned or are in progress in establishing a relationship with the local authority in the field of educational support and inclusive education.
- The Actions regarding the **Certification of Capacities** are planned. The mapping of the different certificates at the end of S5, developed by the member states' national education systems, is planned. The Pedagogical Reform Group has planned to analyse and discuss the request and provide its opinion.



- Regarding the **Monitoring and Quality Assurance**, the Actions are planned. The main aspects that the schools identify as a need of urgent improvement are related to retrieving data from school management system. Stakeholders indicate that this is currently very difficult. No evidence was given to indicate how this Action might be progressed.

Drawing on the Agency's experience of working with its member countries, it was felt during the evaluation of the Action Plan, that there are some aspects of the Action Plan which call for further in-depth reflection and action on the extent of their alignment with the vision and principles of inclusive education. In some cases these derive from the choice of terminology, which can give rise to ambiguity in meaning. In other cases, this is in relation to the decisions made by the European Schools about their own policies and practices in some of the Areas. These relate to aspects of personalised support, transitions, continuation, adaptability, curriculum and enrolment.

While the status of the European Schools is different to that of other systems, and may present certain difficulties, there is clear progress and a commitment towards the process of inclusive education.



INTRODUCTION

This document is the Final Report on the External Evaluation of the Implementation of the European Schools' Action Plan on Educational Support and Inclusive Education, by the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (the Agency).

This report gives an overview of the evaluation's progress from February 2021 to January 2022.

The results presented in this report are based on desk research. This included:

- An analysis of documents shared by the Office of the Secretary-General of the European Schools
- An online survey completed by the European Schools on relevant information on educational support and inclusive education
- An online survey completed by representatives of the different system-level bodies of the European Schools on relevant information on educational support and inclusive education
- Six online focus group meetings with selected representatives, i.e. primary and secondary classroom teachers, support teachers, support assistants, learners, parents, system-level bodies, and the European Commission
- Six interviews with directors and support co-ordinators from three selected schools
- An interview with representatives of Interparents, the umbrella association for the Parent Associations of the European Schools.

The research focused on evaluating the progress made in implementing the Action Plan on Educational Support and Inclusive Education.

This Final Report is the third output associated with the evaluation, following the Inception Report (February 2021) and the Preliminary Report (July 2021). The Final Report is expected to be presented to the European Schools Board of Governors in the first quarter of 2022.

Background information

In December 2018, the Board of Governors of the European Schools took note of the *Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the Educational Support Policy in the European Schools* and the report on *Inclusive Education in the European Schools*. Both reports recommended further strengthening the Educational Support Policy and supporting and guiding the schools to provide high-quality inclusive education. At that time, the Board of Governors mandated the Educational Support Policy Working Group to provide by April 2019 a Draft Action Plan addressing both reports' recommendations. At its meeting in April 2019, the Board of Governors of the European Schools approved the Action Plan on Educational Support and Inclusive Education.



The Board of Governors of the European Schools approved the performance of an external evaluation on the implementation of its Action Plan on Educational Support and Inclusive Education, planned for 2021. After exploring all possibilities to have an organisation/expert with a suitable profile and experience conduct the evaluation, the European Schools established a service-level agreement with the Agency. According to the agreement, the Agency would assist the European Schools with the external formative evaluation.

Aim and objective of the evaluation

The European Schools' Action Plan is still in its implementation phase. Therefore, the Agency prepared and implemented its activities as a formative evaluation. The evaluation examined the performance and effectiveness of the actions and measures detailed in the Action Plan. As such, the aims, methods and tools developed can potentially be used to inform a future summative evaluation.

The Agency has not assessed the Action Plan's quality or feasibility. However, the Agency has reserved the right to comment on the extent to which the Action Plan is in line with general concepts and principles of inclusive education, with international and European principles and with the Agency's wider work (see the section '[Comments on the Action Plan in relation to the Agency Position on Inclusive Education](#)').

The Action Plan identifies 13 Areas for development in respect of inclusive education. These are colour coded according to the priority and timeframe indicated by the European Schools. Some Areas have subsections and some subsections have different priority levels.

Colour	Meaning
Red	High importance and short term (by 2019/20 school year)
Gold	High importance and medium term (by 2020/21 school year)
Yellow	High importance and long term
Green	Important and short term (by 2019/20 school year)
Blue	Important and medium term (by 2020/21 school year)
Light blue	Important and long term

The external evaluation of the implementation of the Action Plan lasted one year. During this period, the Agency's work focused on the following key questions:

- **Is the implementation of the Action Plan in progress and to what extent?** This question highlights which actions/outcomes have been implemented, and the level of success. It identifies areas of strength for further development, as well as aspects that appear to present challenges and barriers.
- **Which actions/outcomes have not been implemented? Why not?** These questions examine the extent of the challenges and barriers in the implementation of the Action Plan. They also identify the need for future courses of action, in light of the planned output(s) and allocated timeframe.
- **What recommendations can be made to ensure further progress in implementing the Action Plan?** This question focuses on possible future courses to overcome the identified gaps and needs in respect of outputs. It considers which have been



partially implemented or not yet begun, as well as recommendations for on-going development to further embed the outputs already implemented.

There are four sections and an annex in this Evaluation:

Section 1, Methodology, outlines the process of the formative evaluation and the methods used for the collection and analysis on the quantitative and qualitative data.

Section 2, Areas of Implementation, presents in detail the main findings and suggestions for further development for each of the 13 Areas.

Section 3, Discussion and Evaluation Overview, outlines the main findings and challenges in the implementation of the Action Plan.

Section 4, Comments on the Action Plan in relation to Agency's position on Inclusive Education, presents the extent to which the Action Plan itself is in line with general concepts and principals for inclusive education, with international and European principles and with the Agency's wider work.

Annex: The survey at school level, the survey at system level, and the questions of the focus groups and interviews can be found at the conclusion of the report in Annexes 1, 2 and 3.



METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the process of the formative evaluation and the methods used for the collection and analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data.

The methodological approach to this formative evaluation is guided by evidence from a large body of academic literature in inclusive education, that is widely accepted worldwide, in many countries and school systems. It shows that policy-makers and educators seek to develop inclusive education systems and practices within schools and classrooms (Ainscow, 2020; Barrett et al., 2015; Booth, Ainscow and Vaughan, 2002; Florian and Spratt, 2013; Florian, Black-Hawkins and Rouse, 2017; Hollenweger and Haskell, 2002; Köpfer, Powell and Zahnd, 2021; Loreman, 2014; New Jersey Coalition for Inclusive Education, 2010; Ofsted, 2019; Opertti, Walker and Zhan, 2014).

Developing inclusive education systems and schools

Inclusive education has at its heart social justice and a participatory ethos, in which all members of the community play a role. As such, developing an inclusive education system or school does not mean applying a set of rules. Rather, it is a multi-faceted, community-based approach, founded on changed attitudes and vision. Schools exist within broader contexts, however, and must be answerable to these international, national, regional or local demands. Nevertheless, an evaluation of current practice within schools is the best starting point. This serves to identify current pockets of excellence in policy and practice, at every level, as well as areas where challenges may remain (Ainscow and Sandill, 2010).

Developing inclusive schools requires a collaborative approach, involving policy-makers, supportive leaders, teachers' pedagogical skills and professional knowledge, learner experience and family participation. It is underpinned by shared vision and goals, alongside additional resources, to achieve sustained change (Ainscow, Booth and Dyson, 2006a; 2006b; Brennan, King and Travers, 2019; Fullan, 2006; Harris and Jones, 2010; Spratt and Florian, 2014).

The methodology for the Agency's formative evaluation of the European Schools' Action Plan on Educational Support and Inclusive Education involved collecting both documentary evidence and qualitative data from those most closely associated with the European Schools: the decision-making bodies (Schools' Administrative Boards, Board(s) of Inspectors, Joint Teaching Committee, Budgetary Committee, Board of Governors, Interparents association), as well as directors, staff, learners and parents. This approach enabled the Agency to conduct a detailed, on-going formative evaluation of the Action Plan.

Systematic approach to evaluating the Action Plan

The methodology for this evaluation takes as its main frame of reference a combination of approaches which, together, aimed to indicate policy's effectiveness in relation to policy and everyday practice and to identify areas that appear to contribute to, or detract from, the achievement of inclusive education (Forlin and Loreman, 2014; Kyriazopoulou and Weber, 2009; Florian and Spratt, 2013).



Together, these approaches provide a set of key quantitative and qualitative indicators relating to policy conditions for inclusive education. These indicators may be used to evaluate different aspects of an educational system, such as policy or practice, by means of an ‘inputs, processes and outcomes’, providing a standardised framework, which can be monitored for progress. (Kyriazopoulou and Weber, 2009). This approach can then be applied to more detailed aspects of inclusive education, at the levels of macro meso, micro and person (Forlin and Loreman, 2014). These correspond to national and system level, school level, classroom level, and individual level, respectively (Watkins, Ebersold and Lénárt, 2016). The framework developed by Florian and Spratt (2013), is used as a means of evaluating the processes and practices of inclusive education, within classrooms and schools, to gain greater depth at the meso, micro and individual levels.

Inputs, Processes and Outcomes map closely with the Recommendations, Actions and Indicators of Success from the Action Plan, across the 13 Areas. These are evaluated at the system level (European Schools), the school level (the 13 schools, in junior and senior phases and language sections), the classroom level (individual schools) and in terms of the experience of the individual, at every level, across a number of themes. This approach aims to cover the whole ecosystem of the European Schools organisation.

This Final Report gives an evaluation of the progress made in the implementation of the complete Action Plan, alongside an evaluation of the progress made in each of the 13 Areas, against the Actions, Indicators of Success, Timeline and Budget, as indicated in the Recommendations in the Action Plan. Progress made within each Area is evaluated as being planned, being implemented, nearing completion, or fully implemented. Where appropriate, progress is evaluated in relation to one or more of the five criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact, in line with the core principles of inclusive education, to which the Agency adheres.

Given that the Action Plan is still in an implementation phase, it is not appropriate to give an evaluation across all criteria for all Areas. An overall formative evaluation of the Action Plan is given, in terms of the level of development against the indicators and criteria regarding progress towards inclusive education, as entry, emerging, developing or secure.

Formative evaluation process

The work progressed through the following six steps:

1. Inception Report submitted, detailing the planned process for the evaluation of the Action Plan, and accepted by the European Schools
2. Quantitative data collection: documentary information collection and desk research
3. Preliminary Report submitted, with indication of progress in the evaluation and some early findings
4. Qualitative data collection:
 - School and system surveys
 - Focus groups and interviews
5. Analysis of all data and emergence of findings
6. Final Report and suggestions for further development.



The evaluation of the Action Plan had 13 distinct stages:

1. Inception Report submitted, detailing the planned process for the evaluation of the Action Plan
2. Quantitative data collection: information collection and desk research
3. Documentary analysis
4. Preliminary Report and early findings
5. Qualitative data collection: school survey completed online by all 13 European Schools
6. School survey data analysis
7. System survey completed online by seven representatives of system organisations
8. System survey data analysis
9. Fieldwork: online focus groups and interviews
10. Focus group and interview data analysis
11. Merging of findings from all data analysis in each Area
12. Merging of findings from analysis of all data from all Areas
13. Final Report and suggestions for further development.

The collection of the quantitative data aimed to provide an assessment of current practice across a number of indicators, such as finance, resourcing, learner and staff numbers, assessment, qualifications and training, enrolments, requests for support, and interaction with families. This data enabled comparisons to be made between and across school departments, phases or across all 13 European Schools, to gain an overview of consistency and progress.

The qualitative data indicated the extent of the impact of policies and practices on all stakeholders (management, teaching staff, support staff, learners and families), as groups and as individuals, within and across groups and the inter-relation between groups or individuals. This human perspective revealed strengths. It also indicated some aspects where there are challenges, barriers or gaps, which were not apparent in the quantitative data. The qualitative data identified the impact of inclusive education policies and practices on an individual basis, and the interaction between people, policy and practice.

The triangulation of different types of data gathered through quantitative and qualitative methods is in line with best practice and validated by research and development (Black-Hawkins, 2010; Florian and Spratt, 2013).

Ethical issues

This evaluation has been carried out in an ethical manner, with full consideration of confidentiality, privacy, anonymity and vulnerability issues. Quantitative data provided to the Agency team by the European Schools, and the qualitative data from the surveys, focus groups and interviews, and all data and documents generated through the analysis and evaluation processes, have been kept securely, in line with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). No-one from the Agency, beyond the small team working with the European Schools had access to the data. Consent to the surveys was agreed prior to the completion of the surveys. Consent from the Directors of the schools involved in the focus groups and interviews was obtained, as well as from all the participants, prior to data collection. A statement in relation to the purpose of the project, together with information in relation to audio and video recording was read out to all



participants at the start of each focus group, and individual oral consent was given by each participant. Clear and age-appropriate language was used to explain the purpose of the project and each focus group, and in all sessions with younger participants. Participants were free to withdraw consent at any stage of the process. Individual schools and participants were anonymised in the final report, and the findings are not identifiable by school, or by individual.

Limitations

There were some limitations in the processes undertaken by the Agency.

During the period of the evaluation, countries worldwide were subject to different restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These had an impact on the fieldwork aspects of the evaluation, in that planned school visits could not take place. This meant that the additional element of fieldwork in seeing teachers and learners in the environment of the school buildings and facilities, and in classroom settings, where learning and teaching are taking place, was not available as part of the data.

Focus group meetings and interviews, which had been planned to take place in schools, had to be conducted online. While the online format worked well, face-to-face interaction with those taking part, in their own teaching and learning environments, might have allowed greater insights to emerge through the data.

The Agency team had limited choice as to which individuals responded to the two surveys and who participated in each focus group, other than suggesting what body or role in the school or system each might represent.

All focus groups and interviews were conducted in English. Therefore any individual who wished to participate, but whose level of spoken English was not sufficient, might have been unable to contribute. This means that there is a risk of self-selection in the process, which might introduce some bias into the results. However, there is no evident indication that the mastery of the English language was correlated with having a specific opinion on the subject matter of the evaluation.

These limitations have not had a significant impact on this evaluation, other than on the micro (classroom) and person (individual) levels, in which more data could have been gathered if school visits had been possible. However, other than these few minor limitations, the evaluation proceeded in a full and detailed way, with the full co-operation of all involved from the European Schools.

Exemplars of the [school survey](#), the [system survey](#) and the [focus groups and interviews questions](#) are located in the Annexes to this Report.

Methods

A number of methods were used in this evaluation, appropriate to the data. Quantitative data was collected through a number of documents, such as policies, guidelines, working group reports, annual reports, etc., from the European Schools. Qualitative data was collected using two online surveys, with closed and open questions, as well as online focus groups and interviews.



1. Quantitative data collection and first stage analysis

To evaluate the implementation of the Action Plan, the Agency requested documentary evidence from the Office of the Secretary-General (OSG) relating to all European Schools. These documents were analysed in relation to the 13 Areas of the Action Plan, to identify data in respect of the Recommendations, Actions and Indicators of Success. This process of initial analysis revealed gaps in the documentary data, across some Areas of the Action Plan. The Agency then requested specific documents and data directly relating to the relevant Actions and measures of the Action Plan in all 13 European Schools, to gain data in relation to the identified gaps. In all, there were in excess of fifty documents and web links submitted to the Agency team.

Analysis of these two sets of key documents gave an overview of policy and practices, which apply across all 13 schools, as well as indications of the extent to which the Actions and Outcomes of the Action Plan were in the processes of planning and implementation, across all 13 Areas and by all 13 European Schools. Analysis revealed early findings at the macro (system) level and some initial data at meso (school) level. To fill the gaps in the data, the evaluation then moved to the qualitative stage.

2. Qualitative data collection and analysis

a. School survey:

Where the documents from the European Schools Office of the Secretary General (OSG) related to policy development and implementation did not sufficiently detail recommendations or guidance, the Agency requested further information separately from each of the 13 schools, through an online survey. The survey questions were designed to give data about all the Areas of the Action Plan, the Recommendations, Actions and Indicators of Success, as well as the perceptions of the schools on their own progress towards implementation. All 13 European Schools received an online survey in mid-June 2021, with the thirteen completed surveys received by the Agency at the end of the month. Each of the 13 schools responded to one survey independently. The Agency had requested that, where possible, responses should be given by those most closely associated, in any capacity, with implementing the themes and actions, rather than by an administrator or director. This approach enabled detailed information to emerge in the data, about the change processes and their impact at the school and individual levels (meso, micro and person) to emerge, in relation to each of the Areas of the Action Plan.

The survey aimed to collect data, through a mixture of open and closed questions, on the progress made in implementing the Recommendations in each Area of the Action Plan, and the extent to which individual schools were working towards implementing the Action Plan. The survey design was mapped closely in line with the Areas of the Action Plan, and to the quantitative data gather in stage one of the process. This enabled a close correlation of the data with the progress in different Areas to emerge in analysis. The analysis revealed data in relation to three aspects at the meso/school level:

- the receipt of policy information and guidance;
- the process of implementing policy requirements;
- and the process of implementing Recommendations from the Action Plan.



This enabled greater insights into the individual schools' perceptions of the interpretation and implementation of system-level policy and guidance into practice, at the local level.

The final section of the survey enabled each school to reflect openly on the process of, and progress in, implementing the Recommendations across all the Areas of the Action Plan, and to identify any particular issues or strengths in their own context. This information revealed data in relation to localised and contextual issues. Themes emerged from these open questions, within Areas of the Action Plan. Similar themes which emerged in a number of Areas were drawn together in the analysis.

(See [Annex 1](#) for the template of the school survey).

b. System survey:

A survey was designed for online completion by representatives of the European Schools' decision-making bodies: the Board(s) of Inspectors, the Joint Teaching Committee, the Budgetary Committee, the Board of Governors and the Educational Support Policy Working Group. There were seven respondents to the survey, with some respondents representing more than one decision-making body. The survey contained 55 mixed closed and open questions, in relation to the 13 Areas of the Action Plan, the Recommendations, the Actions and Indicators of Success. The survey revealed data on the progress of the Actions and Indicators of Success most relevant at system level, as well as the perceptions of those in the decision-making bodies of the extent to which the Actions and Indicators of Success of the Areas of the Action Plan were being implemented in all the European Schools. The open and closed question format enabled a depth of data to emerge, with themes emerging both within and across different Areas.

(See [Annex 2](#) for the template of the system survey).

The comparative analysis of the data from the two surveys revealed gaps in information and in the different perceptions of progress in the implementation of the Actions at system (macro) and school (meso) levels, as well as some similarities and differences in perceptions of the implementation of the Action Plan from different stakeholders.

c. Focus groups and interviews:

To enable more detailed qualitative data to emerge at the macro, meso, micro and person levels (system, school, class and individual), six focus groups and seven interviews were held online. Specific Areas of the Action Plan were addressed in each of the six focus groups, as appropriate to the participants, ensuring that all Areas were covered.

The Agency indicated the roles of the people to be included in each focus group and invited the European Schools to share the relevant information with anyone interested in participating. Focus groups contained between three and nine participants and were semi-structured. Focus groups with learners were in a more relaxed, conversational style.

The six focus groups were constituted as follows:

- Teachers, support teachers and support assistants at primary level
- Teachers, support teachers and support assistants at secondary level
- Parents of learners of any age in the schools, with and without educational support needs



- Primary learners, with and without educational support needs
- Secondary learners, with and without educational support needs
- System-level representatives of the OSG, Inspectors, Educational Support Policy Working Group, Joint Teaching Committee, Budgetary Committee, Board of Governors and Support Inspectors.

Information about the evaluation was read out to all participants in each focus group. Age-appropriate language was used in the information and in the way each focus group was conducted, with an awareness of ethical issues relating to informed understanding and consent for all participants, particularly learners. Participants had the option to speak or to listen if they preferred in the meetings. Questions for each focus group were in relation to the relevant Areas, Recommendations and Actions. They were sent to the participants ahead of the meetings, although some indicated they had not seen them. There was an opportunity in each of the focus groups for the participants to raise additional points of importance to them.

Meetings were conducted in English, via the Teams platform, and were recorded and transcribed, with the permission of all participants in all focus groups, as well as of the school directors. There was full compliance with GDPR requirements.

Three schools were selected for school visits, according to criteria developed as part of the evaluation process, in relation to the schools' size and location and the overall level of implementation of the Action Plan, as perceived by each school itself. It had been hoped that these visits would be able to take place, but COVID-19 restrictions meant this was not possible, so the school visits were cancelled at a late stage of the evaluation.

Six conversational, semi-structured interviews with Directors and Educational Support Co-ordinators, which had been planned to take place as part of the school visits programme, were conducted online. An online interview was held with members of the Interparents association. Topics were sent to the participants ahead of the interviews, as a guide, but the semi-structured approach enabled participants to raise issues of concern or importance in addition to the suggested topics.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed, with the permission of all participants. There was full compliance with GDPR requirements. Each interview was conducted in English, by one or two members of the Agency, and lasted between 45 minutes and one hour.

Participants in the seven interviews:

- Director of School One
- Educational Support Co-ordinators of School One
- Director of School Two
- Educational Support Co-ordinators of School Two
- Director of School Three
- Educational Support Co-ordinators of School Three
- Members of the Interparents association.



d. Analysis of all data and identification of findings:

Data analysis from all stage of the evaluation has been in relation to the 13 Areas of the Action Plan, and the Recommendations, Actions, Indicators of Success, timeline and budget (where appropriate) associated with each Area. As the evaluation progressed, data from each stage informed the next, to build up an overall picture of the implementation of the Action Plan. The design of the surveys was in relation to the structure of the Action Plan, which enabled the data to map directly to each Area and aspect. The questions in the Focus Groups and interviews were developed to add richness to the data from the other aspects of the evaluation, and to enable the voices, experience and perceptions of the individual participants to emerge. Data from the open questions from the two surveys, and the focus group and interview data were analysed in relation to the Areas of the Action Plan, from which broad themes emerged. These themes were then explored across all the data sets, to identify findings. These may have been in relation to strengths, barriers, challenges, aspects of disagreement or differences in interpretation, divergence between practice within Schools, across Schools or between School and System level.

A detailed analysis of data from each stage of the evaluation enabled findings to emerge at the macro, meso, micro and person levels across all Areas in detail, and in relation to the Action Plan as a whole.

The final stage of the analysis brought together all findings from each Area and from every stage of the evaluation, to gain an overall formative evaluation of the implementation of the Action Plan, and the extent to which it is in line with the core principles of inclusive education, to which the Agency adheres. The multiple approaches used during the evaluation acted as a form of triangulation, adding validity, depth and richness to the findings. In light of the formative nature of this evaluation, in this Final Report, the Agency makes some practical suggestions for further development in inclusive education, included in the tables for each Area, in the Findings section of this Final Report.



AREAS OF IMPLEMENTATION

This section presents in detail the main findings and suggestions for further development for each of the 13 areas of the Action Plan. It sets out the following information:

- Findings from documentary analysis and school survey data: synthesis of the data per area arising from the desk-based documentary search and the school survey.
- Findings from system survey data: synthesis of the data per area provided by the system level survey.
- Findings from focus groups and interviews data: synthesis of the data per area arising from the focus groups and interviews.
- Key messages per area: merged findings from all the previous actions of the evaluation (documentary search, school survey, system survey, focus groups and interviews).
- Findings in relation to the Recommendations and Indicators of success of the Action plan: a table per area with the actions and the indicators of success outlined in the Action Plan, merged findings and suggestions for further development.
- Evaluation of progress for each Area: the overall progress made in the implementation of the actions planned for each Area.

Area 1: Human resources

For this Area 1 on Human resources, the Action Plan contains five Recommendations, nine Actions and their corresponding Indicators of Success, and four priority levels.

1.a. Findings from documentary and school survey data

This section presents the synthesis of the data for Area 1 arising from the desk-based documentary search and the school survey:

- Policy documents have been created at system level and passed to schools in the form of recommendations and policies with binding actions to be implemented at individual school level.
- In some cases, the policy recommendations are general and are open to local interpretation, with adjustments according to different circumstances.
- Schools are generally in the process of implementing the changes indicated in the recommendations. However, they have encountered some challenges in meeting the requirements for staff, in terms of qualifications, skills and experience, across all cycles and language sections, and in the allocation of secretarial support to Educational Support Co-ordinators.
- These variations may indicate different levels of practice across schools.



1.b. Findings from system survey data

The synthesis of the data for Area 1 provided by the system level survey shows the following:

- The data suggests that the policies are generally in progress, but there is significant variation in the extent of their development and implementation of policies and some challenges have been encountered.
- The recruitment of Educational Support Co-ordinators and teachers is generally in progress, with 1 respondent indicating the policies were fully implemented. There was a more mixed picture in relation to the allocation of support hours for the Educational Support Co-ordinator, with 1 respondent indicating this was not yet begun, 1 that it was fully completed, but making progress for 4 out of 7 respondents.
- Secretarial support for the Educational Support Co-ordinators was less advanced, with 4 out of 7 respondents indicating a planning stage, with 2 in progress and 1 nearly completed.
- The responses around the recruitment of support assistants showed the greatest variation, suggesting that this is an area which presents some challenges. 3 out of 7 respondents indicated that there was no action/no information, with 3 indicating progress, and 1 nearly completed. Contracts for support assistants also presented a divided picture, with 4 out of 7 responses indicating no action or planned action, and 3 indicating the policy was complete or nearly complete. Most responses (4 out of 7) suggest that this is an area yet to be developed in detail.
- Responses in relation to the policies (Q 4, recruitment of support teachers, support co-ordinators, allocation of time, secretarial support, support assistants) indicated full implementation had only been achieved by 1 out of 7 respondents across 5 of the 6 policies and several respondents indicated that no action had been taken in response to 3 of the 6 policies. This suggests that there were a number of challenges encountered. There are challenges in meeting the policy requirements in the recruitment of support teachers (5/7 responses). The combined difficulties were caused by a limited timeframe and the problems in smaller schools with finding applicants with the necessary qualifications, particularly in small language sections. However, it was indicated that training would be given to staff in this situation.
- One respondent indicated that there seemed to be an idea that support teachers do not need to be as well qualified as other teachers in the schools.
- One respondent indicated that COVID-19 was a factor in the numbers of appropriately qualified Educational Support Co-ordinators, but otherwise most schools maintained the status quo, as the requirement had only been approved in December 2020.



1.c. Findings from focus group and interview data

The synthesis of the data for Area 1 arising from the focus groups and interviews shows:

- Directors indicate problems with staff recruitment and major challenges with support across all the language sections.
- Support in the primary schools seems to be more straightforward to organise and to put into place. Primary learners were generally happy with the support received. Support in the secondary schools presents major challenges for all stakeholders. There is a lack of consistency in support between primary and secondary schools, which has an impact on teachers, learners, parents and support staff.
- Communication between stakeholders needs to improve. This concerns the transfer of information and the means of communication. All stakeholders indicate that there are insufficient staff with appropriate knowledge of educational needs and of different languages to be able to support all learners who need it. This impacts on all staff, parents and learners.
- Administration of support is difficult and time-consuming and there is insufficient time and staff to do the work. This impacts on all staff, parents and learners.
- Support staff have multiple roles in the schools, which causes complications, conflicts of time allocation and timing of commitments, a lack of consistency, poor communication and delay. These issues have an impact on all stakeholders.
- While some parents indicated that the support their children received was appropriate, others felt that, sometimes, support may be delivered by teachers and assistants who may be underqualified or, occasionally, overqualified for the task or who lack specific knowledge. In their opinion, there are some issues about the type, quality, quantity, consistency and appropriateness of support. Some stakeholders indicated that there is a need for more support staff, particularly in some language sections.
- Some stakeholders indicated that there are different views on what support is, who needs support, what it is for, how it is to be delivered and by whom. This causes difficulties for all stakeholders.
- According to some stakeholders, many of the issues with human resources are linked to a lack of centralisation of knowledge and understanding about inclusive education and a sharing of expertise across schools. Schools are responding to the needs for support as presented in the school and making their own decisions in line with their own interpretations of inclusive education and educational support and in line with the available resources in the school in terms of staffing. This is evidenced by the multiple roles held by teachers and other staff, and the insufficient time and resource allocation for educational support to be developed and implemented consistently across the schools.



1.d. Key messages relating to Area 1

This section presents the merged findings for Area 1 from all the previous actions of the evaluation (documentary search, school survey, system survey, focus groups and interviews):

- There are issues and challenges around human resources at every level. However, some aspects of this Area are still under development/implementation in terms of the Action Plan timing. There are also constraints arising from the impact of COVID-19 to be considered.
- There are difficulties in human resources with implications for policy and practice. Schools interpret the requirements of policies in relation to their own local contexts, requirements and constraints. This creates some difficulties, as indicated by some stakeholders.
- There is a shortage of support staff, particularly in some language sections and at secondary level. Support reduces from the primary to secondary sections, which creates difficulties for parents and for learners.
- A suggestion emerging from the evidence is that there is a variety of interpretations of inclusive education and a corresponding variety of commitments to its implementation in the schools. This gives rise to difficulties at every level, from an inconsistency in the appointment of staff with appropriately high levels of qualifications and training in educational support, to the way that support staff are perceived in the school.
- Aspects of the previous support system are still in place, whereby any teacher may support a learner, for a shorter or longer time, alongside their other roles in the school. This undermines the work of the support staff and allows for the emergence of a perception that it is not specialised or important work. It also affects the allocation of time to work around support, including administration and secretarial work, interacting with parents, teachers and learners themselves, and other aspects of the roles, which may be unseen or unrecognised by directors or other staff, such as support for colleagues, training and development of a database of expertise, in terms of human and learning resources, for example.



1.e. Findings in relation to the Recommendations and Indicators of Success of the Action Plan

This section contains a table for Area 1 with the actions and the indicators of success outlined in the Action Plan, merged findings and suggestions for further development:

No.	Action	Indicators of Success	Findings	Suggestions for further development
1.1	a) Clearly define the required qualifications for educational support (EduSup) teachers.	Specialised EduSup teachers (with appropriate qualifications) are seconded/recruited as of the 2020/21 school year.	While schools have Educational Support Co-ordinators in place, these have a variety of qualifications for the role. Some teachers already in the role were appointed in a part-time capacity, with no further qualifications. It is clear that the recruitment of staff with appropriate educational support qualifications is a difficulty across schools, with the added issue of language requirements, creating further problems for schools. However, this should not mean that the need for qualified support teachers is any less important than for teachers in other areas of the schools.	It may be possible to map the qualifications and skills of the present Educational Support Co-ordinators across the schools, in relation to the recommended levels of qualifications. This information could be centralised and used as a means of generating appropriate training and sharing best practice across schools.
1.1	b) Recruitment criteria for teaching staff include EduSup qualifications and experience.	Every language section has adequate expertise and well qualified human resources in EduSup.	Evidence from the data sources indicate that this has not been achieved. There are issues for all stakeholders in the lack of support in all language sections.	The lack of teachers in all language sections, and particularly support teachers is a concern. Schools could work more closely with the local community to appoint teachers with the appropriate languages. The European Schools could have a centralised approach to this issue, to increase training and development across all language sectors, and to source shared expertise.



No.	Action	Indicators of Success	Findings	Suggestions for further development
1.2	a) Ensure secretarial support in the EduSup area by creating synergies with the future Advisory Teams.	Concrete proposal of the EduSup Working Group (WG)/Educational Adviser WGs.	The data indicates that secretarial support is not yet adequately provided in Educational Support in the schools. This has an impact in many ways, as the role of the Educational Support Co-ordinators involves much administration work, which takes up a great deal of the time allocated to support, and results in a heavy workload for the Educational Support Co-ordinators, and delays in support for learners, and in communication with parents.	The allocation of hours of secretarial support to Educational Support could be increased, with the burden of administrative tasks removed from the Educational Support Co-ordinators, to enable them to allocate their time to the support work in which they are specialists.
1.2	b) Recommend a minimum ratio of time allocation for support co-ordination based on the number of learners receiving EduSup as a guidance for schools (Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the Educational Support Policy in the European Schools (IR), p. 47).	Time allocation for support co-ordinators allows them to perform their jobs effectively and professionally.	Support co-ordination work in the schools is extensive and there is insufficient time allocation for this. This creates difficulties across many aspects of the schools and has an impact on teachers, support staff, learners and parents. The policy of allocating a minimum amount of time for co-ordination may have an impact on how support is co-ordinated as the academic year progresses. The interpretation of the policy in practice may not consider the wide variation in the duties of the Educational Support Co-ordinators, many of which take up a significant amount of time, which cannot be 'calculated' in this way, in relation to numbers at any one point. Restricting time to a minimum allocation creates difficulties for support staff, learners, teachers and parents. It works against the principles of inclusive education.	This approach may prevent the Educational Support Co-ordinators from fulfilling all aspects of this important and varied role as effectively as they might wish. A change in the way educational support is perceived in the school, as a dynamic and evolving process, could be considered.



No.	Action	Indicators of Success	Findings	Suggestions for further development
1.2	c) Recommend the requirements for support co-ordinators' qualifications and expertise (IR, p. 47).	Increase in the number of support co-ordinators with qualifications and expertise in special educational needs.	While at least one Educational Support Co-ordinator is in place in all primary and secondary sections of schools, it is unclear the extent to which they have qualifications and expertise in special educational needs. The findings from the qualitative evidence indicate that some Educational Support Co-ordinators do not have any qualifications in educational support, but have been appointed alongside their other roles in the school (such as classroom teacher). While these staff may have some experience of supporting learners, this may not be formalised through specialised training, which results in a varied provision of support, both in terms of quality, quantity and appropriateness across the schools. The wording of this Indicator of Success ('special educational needs') indicates that there is a narrow concept of support in inclusive educational environments. Inclusive education supports all learners to make the most of their educational opportunities.	There is a need for a change in the way educational support is perceived in the schools and enacted in practice. This is linked to other aspects of the Action Plan, and requires a change in the understanding of how educational support is a specialised field, where staff's qualifications, knowledge and personal qualities are central to the ethos of an inclusive education system.



No.	Action	Indicators of Success	Findings	Suggestions for further development
1.3	a) Mandate the EduSup Policy WG to examine in more detail the way the schools 'use' the Support Assistants and to review the job description.	Concrete proposal of the EduSup Policy WG.	Findings from the qualitative data indicate that support assistants undertake varied duties in the school. For some of these, they may be underqualified or, occasionally, overqualified. This suggests that the role is not adequately defined or that the support assistants are being used on an ad-hoc basis, on some occasions.	Support assistants' roles and duties could be clearly defined in relation to their skills, strengths and experience. As schools develop and implement their training policies, support assistants may be given greater opportunities to develop and build on their skill base, for their own career development, and to create a breadth of knowledge and skills in specific areas, which can be used across all sections of the school where they are employed. Schools may work to ensure that all stakeholders recognise the value and importance of support assistants as a resource in inclusive schools.
1.3	b) Mandate the Administrative and Ancillary Staff (AAS) WG to review the Support Assistants' legal status in light of the analysis carried out by the EduSup Policy WG.	Concrete proposals of the AAS WG.	—	—



No.	Action	Indicators of Success	Findings	Suggestions for further development
1.4	Prepare next call for expression of interest.	List of professions meets concrete needs of learners with special educational needs; contracts are compatible with European Union law.	While the next call for expressions of interest has been prepared, there is an indication from some stakeholders that the list of professions may not always meet the needs of all learners, in some circumstances.	
1.5	Request the seconded post for the 2020 budget.	The post is created and filled by 1 January 2020.	Complete.	Not applicable.

1.f. Overall evaluation of progress in this Area

There are nine Actions in this Area, and most (8/9) are considered of high importance according to the priority and timeframe indicated in the Action Plan. There is progress across this Area, with some Actions in place at system level. However, there are some aspects of Human Resources that are not implemented at school level, indicating that there are on-going challenges for schools. These are in relation to the qualifications of the Educational Support Co-ordinators, the recruitment of appropriately qualified or skilled support staff, the allocation of time to educational support, including secretarial support, and the recruitment of teachers, particularly those with language skills. The evidence indicates that the challenges emerge from the difficulties that schools have encountered in meeting the requirements of the policies, which has an impact on their effectiveness.



Area 2: Training and qualifications

The Action Plan in Area 2, Training and qualifications, contains three Recommendations, three Indicators of Success and three priority levels.

2.a. Findings from documentary and school survey data

This section presents the synthesis of the data for Area 2 arising from the desk-based documentary search and the school survey:

- Policies at the system level emphasise the importance of initial and on-going training for all staff across the schools, with a dedicated budget. This training should take place at different levels and across a range of topics, to develop knowledge, understanding and skills in inclusive education. The importance of raising awareness and understanding around inclusive education is also a core feature of this Area at system level, for staff, parents and learners. The Training Policy was approved at the system level in November 2021.
- As the Training Policy was recently approved, development in this Area appears mixed across schools. Some schools put in place training activities even though the Training Policy on Educational Support and Inclusive Education was not yet in place. Four schools are not currently developing a training policy for all staff, but several schools have an induction plan for new staff nearing completion. Despite the pandemic restrictions, some schools held a number of training and other events to raise awareness of inclusive education across the staff and among parents.
- While some of the focus for training this year has been on distance learning, there has been other training for some individual staff around specific issues.
- Schools did not indicate how they had budgeted for training and associated events, as the possibility of a dedicated budget was only approved in November 2021.

2.b. Findings from system survey data

The synthesis of the data for Area 2 provided by the system level survey shows the following:

- There is raised awareness about the need for training in inclusive education. The topic is now part of discussions in schools.
- A majority of respondents indicated some progress in this Area, but there were also a high number of no information/no action/planned responses and 0/7 responses for near or full implementation.
- Information about the extent and types of staff training was mixed, but most responses indicated an increase in discussion and awareness of the need for training in inclusive education.
- Some schools had held events or were planning to incorporate information on inclusive education on Pedagogic Days.



- One respondent indicated that schools were ‘overloaded’ due to COVID-19, which left little space for development and innovation elsewhere.

2.c. Findings from focus group and interview data

The synthesis of the data for Area 2 arising from the focus groups and interviews shows:

- Training is seen as an essential element for the on-going development of the schools as inclusive, but some stakeholders indicated that there is a lack of focus and clarity about its purpose, type and effectiveness.
- Different schools and sectors have different approaches. Stakeholders indicated that the recently approved Training Policy will support the sharing of expertise.
- Teachers, parents and learners consider training to increase knowledge, understanding and expertise to be very important.
- Parents do not have access to specific information about training or evidence of how training is developed in the schools and undertaken by staff. They feel there is insufficient time given to staff training, and that external training seems very limited. There are concerns that staff training is not matched to learner needs in a planned way, and that specific training needs are not met by the schools, which has an impact on educational support for learners.
- In practice, there is more focus on training for support staff than for all staff. So far, events organised by schools to raise awareness about inclusive education do not take place very often and are not directed to a range of teachers or parents from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- Parents indicate that schools do not organise enough events and that the information given is not always detailed enough or fully accurate.
- Events in this context for some or all learners are rare. Learners indicated that increased awareness and understanding about different types of learning and support needs are important for all staff and for all learners in the school.

2.d. Key messages relating to Area 2

This section presents the merged findings for Area 2 from all the previous actions of the evaluation (documentary search, school survey, system survey, focus groups and interviews):

- There is raised awareness of the importance of staff training for inclusive education at policy level, but so far, there is wide variation in the planning and implementation of training across schools, and in the interpretation of the need for training for all or some staff, to raise awareness and knowledge of, and expertise in, inclusive education.
- The importance of training to increase knowledge and understanding of inclusive education and support is particularly recognised as a significant gap by parents, support staff and learners.



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- There is a lack of events for different stakeholders to raise awareness, knowledge and understanding of the changes taking place in the schools in relation to inclusive education generally and to educational support more specifically.



2.e. Findings in relation to the Recommendations and Indicators of Success of the Action Plan

This section contains a table for Area 2 with the actions and the indicators of success outlined in the Action Plan, merged findings and suggestions for further development:

No.	Action	Indicators of Success	Findings	Suggestions for further development
2.1	Map concrete needs for training in inclusive education, develop a training policy and set up a dedicated budget. Ensure competences to provide reasonable accommodation for individual needs.	Increase in the number of teaching and non-teaching staff participating in internal or external training on inclusive education.	Findings suggest that there has not been an increase in staff participating in training on inclusive education and that schools have not yet developed a mapping process around staff competences and individual needs for educational support. Schools did not indicate how a budget for training was in operation. The pandemic is identified as a factor which has had a negative impact on training in inclusive education. Another factor is that the Training Policy was approved in November 2021.	A centralised format for the mapping of educational support needs to staff competences and areas of specialisation could enable schools to formalise training in terms of current and anticipated future needs. Training for all staff (teaching and non-teaching) could increase awareness of a range of support needs, as well as building a skillset across all the staff, as is included in the recently approved Training Policy.
2.2	Mandate the newly created Teacher Induction WG to address the need.	The training plan for new teaching staff devotes a part to EduSup.	Some schools are in the process of developing training policies and plans in this area, but this requires further development.	Training plans could be finalised and put into place as soon as possible as a priority, with new staff and current staff simultaneously.



No.	Action	Indicators of Success	Findings	Suggestions for further development
2.3	Support schools by providing material on raising awareness of inclusive education.	Schools regularly organise awareness-raising events.	Schools do not organise many events to raise awareness of inclusive education, although it is included in the Training Policy. Some schools have an event at the start of the school year, but this does not necessarily meet the need for information. Events of this sort for all staff and all learners are rare. Some training days include an element of inclusive education or educational support, but attendance by non-support staff is not mandatory. There is variation in the extent to which schools indicate that they have received specific guidance about material for this type of event.	A centralised outline for a range of events for different stakeholders could be given to schools, which can then adapt them to their local contexts and needs. There could be 'in-house' experts in the schools system who deliver a range of training to all the European Schools. The number and type of events could be increased, to include formal and informal events, some with a social aspect, and some with dedicated experts (from within the school or external to it and drawn from the local community, or led by parents or learners themselves), to enable different stakeholders to attend events most suited to their needs (all staff, parents, families and learners).

2.f. Overall evaluation of progress in this Area

There are three Actions in this Area, two of which are of high importance (2.1, 2.2), according to the priority and timeframe indicated in the Action Plan. Overall, there has been progress at system level, but little progress made towards these by schools, as the Training Policy was only recently approved. While the impact of the pandemic on training opportunities has been considerable, it seems that schools have met challenges in increasing the involvement of staff in training and in relation to educational support and inclusive education and this is something that needs further development. The issue of material and events for raising awareness of inclusive education is generally still at an early stage in schools. Evidence from the qualitative data indicates that some stakeholders think that effective training could have an impact on inclusive practices in the schools.



Area 3: Budgetary allocations

The Action Plan in Area 3, Budgetary allocations, contains one Recommendation, one Action and Indicator of Success and one priority level.

3.a. Findings from documentary and school survey data

This section presents the synthesis of the data for Area 3 arising from the desk-based documentary search and the school survey:

- Most schools have received guidelines about the annual support budget and the requirements for annual reporting.
- In most cases, the guidelines about the support budget meet the schools' requirements.

However:

- In some cases, schools cannot predict the increase in needs in the school population.
- COVID-19 affected and increased the amount of support required by learners.

3.b. Findings from system survey data

The synthesis of the data for Area 3 provided by the system level survey shows the following:

- Responses are aligned for some procedural aspects, but some aspects about budget planning are unclear/still pending.
- There is almost total agreement regarding the possibility of schools to give feedback and engage in discussion in relation to their individual current and anticipated budgetary requirements. However, a contradiction emerges in replies regarding schools' ability to make decisions independently on details of how the budget is allocated.
- 'The budget lines devoted to Educational Support is based on the number of pupils in need of support and the severity of the pupils' particular conditions and both budget lines (related to the staff and material) are possible to be revised, accordingly'.
- Criticism by some parents' representatives emerges regarding missing information on the annual support budget.
- There is substantial variation in replies regarding schools' ability to make decisions independently on details of how the budget is allocated: 4 respondents (among them Office of the Secretariat General) out of 7 gave affirmative replies, while the other 3 respondents are European Schools Inspectors in charge of Educational Support, 'Inspectors in charge of Educational Support' and 'Other members of the Educational Support Policy WG'.



- For question 13, regarding the ‘possibility of schools to give feedback and engage in discussion in relation to their individual budgetary current and anticipated requirements’, responses are aligned apart from the negative replies given by ‘Other members of the Educational Support Policy WG’, who might be not completely aware of school procedures.

3.c. Findings from focus group and interview data

The synthesis of the data for Area 3 arising from the focus groups and interviews shows:

- Budget procedures are the same in all 13 schools, but some stakeholders indicated that they are complex.
- Full budget is not always used. Some stakeholders indicated that the question is more one of organisation and qualifications, rather than insufficient budget. According to them, money is not always used effectively for needs-based hiring, and this should be properly identified and then budgeted for. Schools should use needs-based information to access the appropriate finance. The budget for educational support is increasing every year. In the directors’ experiences, requests for educational support budgets have never been refused so far.
- Schools could ask for more time for Educational Support Co-ordinators and greater allocation, but the Educational Support Co-ordinators have much to do and this leads to long delays. It is unclear why the schools do not add another half Educational Support Co-ordinator.
- Some stakeholders indicated that if the Educational Support Co-ordinators are not able to steer the process, then the budget is not being used efficiently. Support agreements (the legal basis for support) are very late in reaching parents (months late) and do not contain the full information (missing information includes minutes from meetings/decisions, for example).
- There is variation in approaches and delivery of support across schools and teachers.

3.d. Key messages relating to Area 3

This section presents the merged findings for Area 3 from all the previous actions of the evaluation (documentary search, school survey, system survey, focus groups and interviews):

- All schools agree that **procedural aspects** of the budget are clear, but complex. The budget is published in the Statistical Report, available on the website, discussed in the Educational Support Policy Working Group. However, some stakeholders indicated that information about the annual support budget is not shared among all stakeholders. Moreover, a contradiction emerges in replies regarding schools’ ability to make decisions independently on details of how the budget is allocated.
- Budget allocation for educational support is decided at the beginning of the year, based on the previous school year’s allocations for learners. It is adjusted during the school year according to the learners’ needs.



- The budget line regarding allocation for educational support increases every year and was greatly affected by COVID. None of the stakeholders involved has ever experienced a refusal to increase the budget devoted to educational support. However, some stakeholders' impression is that it takes a long time to get it and that the budget could be used more efficiently.
- According to some stakeholders, the question is more one of organisation and qualifications, rather than insufficient budget. Schools should use needs-based information to access the appropriate finance.



3.e. Findings in relation to the Recommendations and Indicators of Success of the Action Plan

This section contains a table for Area 3 with the actions and the indicators of success outlined in the Action Plan, merged findings and suggestions for further development:

No.	Action	Indicators of Success	Findings	Suggestions for further development
3	Review the annual budget instructions and ensure annual reporting.	The annual budget instructions provide clear guidelines. Schools can provide evidence on how the support budget has been used.	All schools agree that procedural aspects of the budget are clear, but very complex. However, it emerged also that information about the annual support budget is not shared among all stakeholders. Moreover, a contradiction emerges in replies regarding schools' ability to make decisions independently on details of how the budget is allocated . Budget allocation for educational support is decided at the beginning of the year, based on the previous school year's allocations for learners. It is adjusted during the school year according to the learners' needs. The budget line regarding allocation for educational support increases every year and was greatly affected by COVID. None of the stakeholders involved has ever experienced a refusal to increase the budget devoted to educational support. However, the impression expressed by some stakeholders is that it takes a long time to get it, the budget could be used more efficiently, support agreements (the legal basis for support) are very late in reaching parents (months late) and do not always contain the full information (missing information includes minutes from meetings/decisions, for example). According to stakeholders, the question is more one of organisation and qualifications, rather than insufficient budget. Money is not being used effectively for needs-	The deadline for its implementation was December 2021, so when the data collection took place, information was still missing and some was delivered with a degree of uncertainty about its realisation and its time. According to the data collected during the activity, the indicators of success for budgetary allocation are mostly satisfied. Schools are able, at the end of the school year, to provide evidence on how the support budget has been used. Stakeholders agree that procedural aspects of the budget are the same for the 13 schools and they are quite clear but also with a high degree of complexity. The needs-based budget leads to a growth in yearly budgetary allocations. Inclusive education tends to allocate resources – human, budgetary – to the system to be able to deal with ALL learners' needs. However, in the European Schools, the budget for educational support is allocated directly to the learners according to their needs. This makes it very difficult to plan the budget and to stick to the initial plan. Moreover, it focuses on learners' needs, fostering a possible labelling process and



No.	Action	Indicators of Success	Findings	Suggestions for further development
			based hiring, and this should be properly identified and then budgeted for.	consequent learner unease/stigmatisation. A possible recommendation could be the possibility, in the future, to start devoting all resources to improving the schools' capacity to deal with different needs: using approaches to build the capacity of schools, staff and resources to anticipate the needs of current and future stakeholders, and to be ready to support the needs of all learners.

3.f. Overall evaluation of progress in this Area

There is one Action in this Area; it is important and medium term according to the priority and timeframe indicated in the Action Plan. Overall, there has been progress at system level.

However, at school level, some issues in understanding the budget arise. The budget is perceived as very complex, unclear due to missing information and it seems that information is not shared among all stakeholders, although it is available in the statistical report.

Moreover, other topics beyond the scope of the action about 'budgetary allocation' emerged from the qualitative data. According to some stakeholders, the budget is considered to be sufficient but it could be used more effectively, mainly in relation to organisation and qualifications. The needs-based budget leads to a growth in yearly budgetary allocations. Another issue relates to communication on support agreements which, according to some parents, are very late in reaching the stakeholders concerned.



Area 4: Accessibility of the built environment

The Action Plan in Area 4, Accessibility of the built environment contains, contains one recommendation, two Actions, one Indicator of Success and one priority level.

4.a. Findings from documentary and school survey data

This section presents the synthesis of the data for Area 4 arising from the desk-based documentary search and the school survey:

- The Accessibility Policy at system level is still in progress, but is already being actioned at school level.
- For most schools, adaptations to the built environment are completed, in progress or planned. These adaptations largely depend on the school buildings' existing condition and the fact that, for some schools, adaptations to the built environment are not within their responsibility or power.
- Most schools have agreed different adaptations to information and communication technology (ICT). These range from permitting the use of laptops or tablets, increased use of assistive technology, and increased availability of digital teaching and learning materials, to the installation of sensory rooms and training learners and teachers to use online technology for teaching and learning.
- Most schools are not responsible for school transport. Therefore, adaptations are the responsibility of the city, region or state. In some cases, authorities have offered adaptations. In others, the Parent Association APEEE has offered support where needed.
- At this time in the evaluation, it is not clear how in line the school actions are with the final Accessibility Policy, although school actions do indicate partial progress in implementation of the recommendation and actions.
- Activities in relation to monitoring the implementation of the recommendation and Accessibility Policy are taking place and planned. At this time in the evaluation, it is not clear how co-ordinated and aligned these activities will be across the European Schools.

4.b. Findings from system survey data

The synthesis of the data for Area 4 provided by the system level survey shows the following:

- The European Schools Accessibility Policy had not been approved yet; it was expected to be approved in December 2021.¹
- Some schools have already started the analysis of the built environment's accessibility, based on national standards.

¹ 2021-02-D-12-en-6 – Accessibility Policy in the European Schools



- However, up to now, as built environment seems to be largely the competence of Member States, with a role for local authorities also, practices can diverge widely.
- 5 out of 7 respondents said: 'implementation in progress'. The remaining 2 stated: 'no activity yet'.
- The Secretary-General's reply mentions the fact that the European Schools' Accessibility Policy had not been approved yet and was expected to be approved in December 2021. However, one of the priorities for the schools in the current school year is the development of school-specific standards, which must include the national/local standards/regulations. For the time being, it is not possible to get accurate information regarding the situation in each school.
- However, some respondents point out missing information on mechanisms in place to monitor the effectiveness of the workflow and ensure communication and co-operation is effective or they list individual school inspections as mechanisms in place. Again, criticism is raised by parents' representatives. They point out that as built environment seems to be largely the competence of Member States, with a role for local authorities also, practices can diverge widely. Parents are not aware of a centralised approach to map barriers to access. Moreover, they argue that 'progress with the Accessibility Policy in no way can be used as an argument to slow down or reduce efforts to meet the individual needs of pupils with an impairment. That remains an urgent individual need and right which needs to be addressed with full urgency and commitment'.

4.c. Findings from focus group and interview data

The synthesis of the data for Area 4 arising from the focus groups and interviews shows:

- Teachers perceive themselves as the first port of call to establish that there is a need.
- However, the possibility to respond to learners' needs is also related to teachers' abilities to deal with them.
- Some parents can also deny help for their children, and this turns into a problem for teachers who identify needs.
- Some schools might be ready to manage physical disabilities, but there is a lack of space and equipment to support accessibility for emotional or behavioural issues and teachers must have ideas and passion.
- Curriculum adaptation is not a standard procedure.
- Some of the barriers to the implementation of the Action Plan include dissemination of information, space limitation and lack of teacher training.
- Parents agreed that, especially for children with support needs, the online format was a varying and often difficult experience.
- During COVID, educational support was delivered to learners but, in some cases, parents experienced mismanagement of its delivery.



- It seems that the general approach is to respond to a case when schools are presented with it, such as a learner with a particular need or a staff member with difficulties. It is at this point that the school responds appropriately.
- There is an awareness of issues around ICT (i.e. not allowed to use iPads or applications, where these are not available to all learners, i.e. in all languages). There are hopes that this is improving. Schools often decide on a case-by-case basis (example of a daughter to remain in one room and the teacher to move: it took the school a year to make these changes and there were no clear processes in place to do it). There are no special arrangements for classroom practice (only for exams) and they are not regulated. Parents pushed on this. Parents have a right to ask for assistive technology: it is still unclear who pays for this, there are no clear criteria, and it is done on a case-by-case basis, at the director's discretion.

4.d. Key messages relating to Area 4

This section presents the merged findings for Area 4 from all the previous actions of the evaluation (documentary search, school survey, system survey, focus groups and interviews):

- Adaptations are the responsibility of the city, region or state, so practices can diverge widely. Some schools have already started the analysis of the built environment's accessibility, based on national standards. However, this cannot be an argument to slow down or reduce efforts to meet the individual needs of learners with an impairment.
- Most schools have agreed different adaptations to ICT. These range from permitting the use of laptops or tablets, increased use of assistive technology, and increased availability of digital teaching and learning materials, etc. However, it was highlighted that learners are not allowed to use iPads or applications, where these are not available to all learners, i.e. in all languages. Moreover, parents have a right to ask for assistive technology but it is still unclear who pays for this, and there are no clear criteria.
- During COVID, educational support was delivered to learners. In some cases, parents experienced mismanagement in delivering and receiving support.
- Schools often decide on a case-by-case basis and the general impression among stakeholders is that they are more prepared to deal with physical impairments rather than emotional or behavioural issues.
- Teachers perceive themselves as the first port of call to establish that there is a need. However, the possibility to respond to learners' needs is also related to teachers' abilities to deal with them.
- Initiatives are sometimes left in parents' hands. However, some parents can also deny help for their children, and this turns into a problem.



4.e. Findings in relation to the Recommendations and Indicators of Success of the Action Plan

This section contains a table for Area 4 with the actions and the indicators of success outlined in the Action Plan, merged findings and suggestions for further development:

No.	Action	Indicators of Success	Findings	Suggestions for further development
4	a) Develop a comprehensive Accessibility Policy with clear standards, recognising the differences between existing national standards. A school-specific workflow is established to promote effective communication and co-operation within the school to ensure adequate accessibility from the first day of schooling.	No learners face difficulties in accessing their classrooms as of the beginning of the school year.	Adaptations are the responsibility of the city, region or state, so practices can diverge widely. Some schools have already started the analysis of the built environment's accessibility, based on national standards. However, this cannot be an argument to slow down or reduce efforts to meet the individual needs of learners with an impairment.	The implementation of this area is of high importance but also long term. Regarding compliance with the indicators of success, the Agency did not have the chance to visit the schools.



No.	Action	Indicators of Success	Findings	Suggestions for further development
4	b) Prevent barriers by adopting measures that ensure the right to accessible education and full and equal participation for all learners.	–	<p>Most schools have agreed different adaptations to ICT. These range from permitting the use of laptops or tablets, increased use of assistive technology, and increased availability of digital teaching and learning materials, etc. However, it was highlighted that learners are not allowed to use iPads or applications, where these are not available to all learners, i.e. in all languages. Moreover, parents have a right to ask for assistive technology but is it still unclear who pays for this, and there are no clear criteria.</p> <p>During COVID, educational support was delivered to learners. In some cases, parents have experienced mismanagement.</p> <p>Continuity in education is undermined by high teacher turnover that is not always timely and adequately substituted. Moreover, while replacing teachers, sometimes learners' files are not taken into account or followed up/taken over. In some cases, it is up to learners to inform new teachers about their needs.</p> <p>Schools often decide on a case-by-case basis and the general impression among stakeholders is that they are more prepared to deal with physical impairments rather than emotional or behavioural issues.</p> <p>Teachers perceive themselves as the first port of call to establish that there is a need. However, the possibility to respond to learners' needs is also related to teachers' abilities to deal with them.</p> <p>Initiatives are sometimes left in parents' hands. Some parents can also deny help for their children, and this turns into a problem.</p>	<p>As the Action states, schools should be able to anticipate learners' needs instead of only responding to them when they arise, which causes delays in the response, greater expenditure, discomfort in learners and parents and, in certain cases, missing follow-ups.</p> <p>Overlaps with other areas:</p> <p>Some of the barriers to the implementation of the Action Plan include dissemination of information, space limitation and lack of teacher training.</p>



4.f. Overall evaluation of progress in this Area

There are two Actions in this Area of high importance and long-term implementation and both are in progress according to the priority and timeframe indicated in the Action Plan.

Adaptations are the responsibility of the city, region or state, so practices can diverge widely from school to school. However, it has been underlined that the complexity and the variety of those policies cannot be an argument to slow down or reduce efforts to meet the individual needs of learners with an impairment. Some schools have already started the analysis of the built environment's accessibility, based on national standards, and have agreed different adaptations to ICT. However, some issues were highlighted at school level regarding assistive technology, some mismanagement in the delivery of educational support during the pandemic period, follow-up on learners' files during teacher turnover, etc. Importantly, schools react to learners' needs rather than acting to prevent barriers to learning, as stated in Action 4b.



Area 5: Accessibility – information and communication

The Action Plan in Area 5, Accessibility – information and communication, contains one recommendation, two Actions and Indicators of Success and one priority level.

5.a. Findings from documentary and school survey data

This section presents the synthesis of the data for Area 5 arising from the desk-based documentary search and the school survey:

- Even though the final Accessibility Policy is not yet available for most schools (11 of 13), implementation is in progress, nearly completed or completed.
- A little over half of the schools (7 of 13) indicate that the guidance provided at a European Schools system level is useful. However, it is also acknowledged that sometimes adaptations are not fully under the schools' control.
- Within all schools, there are different possibilities for learners and their families to voice their views on issues around accessibility.

5.b. Findings from system survey data

The synthesis of the data for Area 5 provided by the system level survey shows the following:

- There is a substantial positive agreement on the completion of the following topics: 'Schools' comprehensive and easily accessible school-specific guidelines that are fully compliant with the European Schools Accessibility Policy' (in progress/almost completed for 5 out of 7 respondents); 'comprehensive and easily accessible school-specific guidelines that are fully compliant with the Policy on 'Educational Support and Inclusive Education' and the Checklist on Core Elements' (in progress/nearly completed for 6 out of 7 respondents).
- The following topics are perceived as being in an early stage of implementation: 'implementation of the full new Accessibility Policy' (no implementation in place/lack of information about it for 5 out of 7 respondents); 'the sharing with schools of the Accessibility Policy and all guidance needed for implementation' (6 out of 7 respondents said that they 'don't know'/not approved yet/part of the Action Plan).
- Regarding 'implementation of the Action Plan on schools' comprehensive and easily accessible school-specific guidelines that are fully compliant with the European Schools Accessibility Policy', 1 respondent said 'no activity yet (no information)', 1 said 'implementation planned', 3 said 'implementation in progress' and 2 said 'implementation nearly complete'.
- Regarding 'schools having comprehensive and easily accessible school-specific guidelines that are fully compliant with the Policy on "Educational Support and Inclusive Education" and the "Checklist on Core Elements"', 1 respondent said 'implementation planned', 2 said 'implementation in progress' and 4 said 'implementation nearly completed'.



- With respect to the implementation of the full new Accessibility Policy, 4 said it was not yet in place, 1 does not have the information, 1 reports the following: 'During WSIs [Whole School Inspections], it strikes me that schools have well-developed systems for implementing support', 1 reports the following: 'There seems to be a misinterpretation in the question'.
- As per the sharing with schools of the Accessibility Policy and all guidance needed for implementation, 2 respondents said 'don't know', 4 said that it is not approved yet/part of the Action Plan, 1 respondent replied that the detailed guidance on elements of school guidelines developed by the Policy Group (2019-06-DE-9) was shared well in time with all schools before the action started. However, there has been no compliance check on the substance of the school-specific documents except for two legal aspects.
- With regards to the suggestions made to schools about how the Accessibility Policy can be made accessible to all involved in the life of the school, 3 respondents replied 'don't know', 2 that it is not approved yet, 1 said yes and another 1 replied that this is about school-specific guidelines for the implementation of the policy, as mentioned, and not accessibility. What is important is that a full compliance check is made for all documents, and that deviations from the policy are corrected and communicated and that the roles and responsibilities of those that shall exercise such oversight are clarified, and that they play their role in actual fact. In other words: the policy must be present and functional. For checking the compliance of the school-specific guidelines, the active involvement of parent associations, which in some cases already have undertaken work, in redrafting in collaboration with the schools and the system level, could greatly facilitate the work.
- Regarding the area of ICT, the Secretary-General said that the schools use information from parents and school staff to identify barriers and work together with the OSG ICT unit to find appropriate, possible solutions.
- Regarding the built environment and transport, the schools have not reported barriers preventing learners from participating in school life.
- In addition, it is underlined that 'this area has never been monitored at the system level'.
- School inspectors mentioned enrolment forms, entry profiles, support advisory groups' meetings, and the availability of Educational Support Co-ordinators to legal representatives when they need consultation.
- The Educational Support Policy Working Group presumes from the enrolment form and from the communication with the parents prior to the start of the school year – part of the role of the Educational Support Co-ordinator.

5.c. Findings from focus group and interview data

The synthesis of the data for Area 5 arising from the focus groups and interviews shows:

- Beyond accessibility to different media and languages, reported challenges include cultural difference and awareness among learners and families in the perceptions and communication of needs.



- Some parents deny that their children need educational support and it is difficult to convince them.
- According to some, there are communication channels in place but these need more work to use them effectively.
- In primary, learners refer to the class teacher, while in secondary they have a pedagogical advisor.
- Communication of accessibility information can also take place through working groups/questionnaires/surveys with different stakeholders for collection of information.
- Information is then written in documents and circulated.

5.d. Key messages relating to Area 5

This section presents the merged findings for Area 1 from all the previous actions of the evaluation (documentary search, school survey, system survey, focus groups and interviews):

- There are communication channels in place, but the perception of some stakeholders is that they are not effectively used and advertised or need more work to use them effectively.
- Although at theoretical level some procedures are in place, they are not always fully advertised, clear to all stakeholders and/or effectively used.
- Apart from cultural diversity, a lack of awareness in many aspects (not knowing about the existence of person of reference or where to get the information to reach them; a lack of awareness about needs and how to meet them) is the main barrier to accessing information.



5.e. Findings in relation to the Recommendations and Indicators of Success of the Action Plan

This section contains a table for Area 5 with the actions and the indicators of success outlined in the Action Plan, merged findings and suggestions for further development:

No.	Action	Indicators of Success	Findings	Suggestions for further development
5.1	a) Establish a list of core elements of the guidelines.	All schools have comprehensive and easily accessible school-specific guidelines that comply fully with the policy	<p>There are communication channels in place, but they are not effectively used/advertised or need more work to effectively use them.</p> <p>Although at theoretical level some procedures are in place, they are not fully advertised, clear to all stakeholders and/or effectively used.</p> <p>Apart from cultural diversity, a lack of awareness in many aspects (not knowing about the existence of person of reference or where to get the information to reach them; a lack of awareness about needs and how to meet them) is the main barrier to accessing information.</p>	<p>The implementation of this area is of high importance and short term (by 2019/20 school year).</p> <p>This area represents the gap between policy and practice. While at system level it seems that policy is there and, in most cases, almost implemented, at school level there is a need to systematically put it into practice (handover of information among teachers on learners' files, etc.).</p> <p>The indicator of success is partially accomplished because some stakeholders' impression is that guidelines are in place, but they are not fully accessible by all stakeholders.</p> <p>The impression is that parents are involved in some activities like delivering information, but they claim there is a lack of information/involvement in other areas.</p> <p>Moreover, learners lack information.</p> <p>A recommendation could include effective and systematic policy application; parents' involvement not only in the sense of giving information about their children but also to receive information about them when decisions are taken, and possibly also having a say about them. This should also more widely involve</p>



No.	Action	Indicators of Success	Findings	Suggestions for further development
				learners' involvement in decisions made about them and a clear communication on processes.

5.f. Overall evaluation of progress in this Area

There is one Action in this Area, and it is considered of high importance and short term according to the priority and timeframe indicated in the Action Plan. There is progress across this area at system level. However, there appears to be a gap between policy and implementation into practice by schools. While at system level policies are mostly implemented, qualitative data indicates that some stakeholders at school level suggest that the policies could be put into practice more systematically and more effectively.



Area 6: Teaching material

The Action Plan in Area 6, Teaching material, contains two Recommendations, two Actions and Indicators of Success and one priority level.

6.a. Findings from documentary and school survey data

This section presents the synthesis of the data for Area 6 arising from the desk-based documentary search and the school survey:

- Most schools have access to national resource centres. The ways in which these are used include: as a training resource, to raise awareness of inclusive education, to source teaching materials, for language support, etc.
- The main challenges schools encounter in accessing and/or using the national resource centres more efficiently include limitation of use due to many different language sections, incompatibility with the European Schools system needs, accessible only to local schools, etc.
- For most schools, national inspectors do not yet act as a first point of contact and support the schools to find information. For a few schools, implementation is planned, in progress or completed.
- Almost all schools (12 out of 13) have access to the necessary teaching material.
- At this time in the formative evaluation, national inspectors have not established links with/facilitated access to national resource centres at the schools' request.
- At this time in the formative evaluation, is not clear if a framework contract for the common market to purchase accessible teaching and assistive material is agreed, in place and functional in all countries.

6.b. Findings from system survey data

The synthesis of the data for Area 6 provided by the system level survey shows the following:

- A majority of respondents (5 out of 7) indicated progress in relation to the access schools have to national resource centres and to the necessary teaching material. They also highlighted that it depends on the country; it is easier in some countries than in others. Some progress is also reported with regard to the expertise and support the national resource centres provide to the schools so they can fulfil their responsibilities. Three respondents indicated implementation in progress, one implementation planned and three that they have no information.
- Some progress is indicated in relation to the identification of a common market for purchasing accessible teaching and assistive material. Three respondents reported implementation in progress, one implementation planned and three that they have no information.
- For schools that work with the national/local resource centres, it was reported that they use their services in all different areas: as a training resource, to raise



awareness of inclusive education, to source teaching materials, for language support, etc.

- Five respondents indicated that they have no information on whether the framework contract has been set up for purchasing accessible teaching and assistive material. Only two respondents reported that implementation is in progress.

6.c. Findings from focus group and interview data

The synthesis of the data for Area arising from the focus groups and interviews shows:

- Schools are in contact with national inspectors, but teaching and support staff do not have much regular contact with them. Whenever they need to, they can contact them.
- When learners are transitioning from one system to another, schools and parents contact national inspectors to get information about the quality of schools in the country.
- Locally recruited staff have no access to national inspectors, but it would be useful for them to be able to contact and work with them.
- There are few contacts with the national resource centres, mainly for making appointments about assessment and identification of learners' educational needs.
- The issue of resources is very much related to training. A focus on training to support staff in knowing what resources are needed is considered very important.
- Setting up a platform sharing resources across the European Schools.
- Schools have access to a number of teaching and assistive materials to be shared among teachers and learners.
- Teachers' access to training opportunities is also very important.
- Access to information about new material, assistive technology devices and training opportunities needs to be improved.

6.d. Key messages relating to Area 6

This section presents the merged findings for Area 6 from all the previous actions of the evaluation (documentary search, school survey, system survey, focus groups and interviews):

- While schools are in contact with national inspectors, teaching and support staff do not have regular contact with them. They can contact them, if needed.
- When learners are transitioning from one system to another, schools and parents usually contact national inspectors to get information about the quality of national/local schools.
- There is some progress in relation to the access schools have to national resource centres, as well as to the expertise and support the national resource centres



provide to the schools so they can fulfil their responsibilities. It depends on the country; it is easier in some countries than in others.

- The schools that work with the national/local resource centres use their services in all different areas: as a training resource, to raise awareness of inclusive education, to source teaching materials, for language support, for making appointments about assessment and identification of learners' educational needs, etc.
- The main challenges schools encounter in accessing and/or using the national/local resource centres more efficiently include limitation of use due to many different language sections, incompatibility with the European Schools system needs, accessible only to local schools, etc.
- In general, schools have access to a number of teaching and assistive materials to be shared among teachers and learners.
- The issue of resources is very much related to training. A focus on training to support staff in knowing what resources are needed is considered very important.
- Access to information about new material, assistive technology devices and training opportunities needs to be improved.
- Setting up a platform sharing resources across the European Schools.
- There is little progress in relation to the identification of a common market for purchasing accessible teaching and assistive material.



6.e. Findings in relation to the Recommendations and Indicators of Success of the Action Plan

This section contains a table for Area 6 with the actions and the indicators of success outlined in the Action Plan, merged findings and suggestions for further development:

No.	Action	Indicators of Success	Findings	Suggestions for further development
6.1	National inspectors agree to act as first point of contact and support the schools to find information. National resource centres can share expertise and provide support to schools that remain with the responsibility.	Schools have access to national resource centres	<p>While schools are in contact with national inspectors, teaching and support staff do not have regular contact with them. They can contact them, if needed.</p> <p>When learners are transitioning from one system to another, schools and parents usually contact national inspectors to get information about the quality of national/local schools.</p> <p>There is some progress in relation to the access schools have to national resource centres, as well as to the expertise and support the national resource centres provide to the schools so they can fulfil their responsibilities. It depends on the country; it is easier in some countries than in others.</p> <p>The main challenges schools encounter in accessing and/or using the national/local resource centres more efficiently include limitation of use due to many different language sections, incompatibility with the European Schools system needs, accessible only to local schools, etc.</p> <p>The schools that work with the national/local resource centres use their services in all different areas: as a training resource, to raise awareness of inclusive education, to source teaching materials, for language support, for making appointments</p>	<p>The European Schools' co-operation with national resource centres could be strengthened so that schools have access to the resource centres' expertise and support, in order to fulfil their responsibilities.</p> <p>National inspectors could be in regular contact with the schools, including the teaching and support staff and act as the first point of contact to support the schools in finding the appropriate information.</p> <p>The European Schools could use the services of the resource centres in all different areas: as a training resource, to raise awareness of inclusive education, to source teaching materials, for language support, for making appointments about assessment and identification of learners' educational needs, etc.</p>



No.	Action	Indicators of Success	Findings	Suggestions for further development
			about assessment and identification of learners' educational needs, etc.	
6.2	Areas for common market are identified	Set up a framework contract	There is some progress in relation to the identification of a common market for purchasing accessible teaching and assistive material.	Schools need to have access to all the necessary teaching and assistive material to be shared among teachers and learners. The issue of resources could be related to training and setting up a platform sharing resources across the European Schools. A procurement policy (needs to) could be promoted to purchase accessible teaching and assistive material, identify areas for a common market and set up a framework contract.

6.f. Overall evaluation of progress in this Area

There are two Actions in this Area, both of them are considered important and medium term, according to the priority and timeframe indicated in the Action Plan, and are in progress.

There is progress in relation to the access the European Schools have to national resource centres so that schools can benefit from the resource centres' expertise and support in order to fulfil their responsibilities. However, there are some limitations to the effective use of the resource centres in practice by schools.

Progress is also indicated in relation to the identification of a common market for purchasing accessible teaching and assistive material and setting up a framework contract. There is not sufficient information to assess its effectiveness.



Area 7: Personalised support

The Action Plan in Area 7, Personalised support, contains three Recommendations five Indicators of Success and three priority levels.

7.a. Findings from documentary and school survey data

This section presents the synthesis of the data for Area 7 arising from the desk-based documentary search and the school survey:

- There is a significant commitment to developing personalised support at the system level, with detailed guidance for schools.
- Some recommendations at system level are under development and will be sent to schools in due course.
- The European Schools are committed to ensuring that inclusive education and individual support are standardised across all the schools. However, it is recognised at system level that there are limitations and challenges for individual schools arising from local differences.
- Schools are at different stages of development and progress in the move to a more personalised support system.
- Schools have encountered challenges in recruiting staff with the appropriate qualifications, experience and skills to meet all learners' needs.
- Almost all schools have met challenges in relation to adjusting class sizes to ensure that personalised and appropriate support is available for all learners, with the numbers of learners with additional needs and the constraints arising from staff limitations.

7.b. Findings from system survey data

The synthesis of the data for Area 7 provided by the system level survey shows the following:

- There is some progress in this Area, but little evidence of near or full implementation.
- A large number of challenges have been identified across all sections of the policy.
- Schools do not seem to interpret and implement the requirements of the policy consistently and there is significant variation in the stakeholders involved, how they are used and their role in the processes.
- A range of processes and documents are used during enrolment, but there is significant variation in the detail in the responses around this and in the extent and range of stakeholders who participate, at different levels and stages.
- Some respondents identify significant challenges in all parts of the Area, some arising from the complexity of the processes themselves. Some respondents indicate that schools were able to make some adaptations in relation to the



numbers of learners with support needs (such as re-arranging parallel classes), but one respondent indicates that it is not possible at present for schools to adjust class sizes.

- One respondent indicates that there seems to be a lack of early identification of needs and delayed implementation once needs have been identified and that there is a lack of clarity around the documentation of the processes and decisions made. One major concern was around the complexity of the process, and how and what sort of information was shared with parents, which has led to significant parental anxiety and a lack of clarity about their role in the process.
- There are concerns about the location and hiring of particular staff with the level of qualifications and expertise needed to address identified needs and that, as a result, some staff are delivering support for which they are not qualified, and that this can result in ineffective personalised support.
- While the policy calls for training for support staff, where learner needs are identified, this does not occur, and the adaptation of class sizes is infrequent.
- In some cases, 'experts' are not always fully qualified in the area in which they are consulted, and may only be brought in at the parents' request.
- One respondent indicates divergence in practices around personalised support, which can result in similar cases having different processes and outcomes. The means of justification and accountability by the schools is not made clear to parents, who are limited in their ability to question decisions made by the schools, on account of the existing complaints procedure.
- There are inconsistencies in the role of experts and how their 'expert' knowledge is used or not used by schools. Different countries involve a range of officials external to the school in different roles in the processes leading to personalised support.
- One respondent indicates that language and translation difficulties in the documents also create problems for stakeholders.

7.c. Findings from focus group and interview data

The synthesis of the data for Area 7 arising from the focus groups and interviews shows:

- There seems to be some variation in the interpretation of the phrase 'personalised support', which is indicative of a possible lack of understanding of how inclusive education incorporates support for all learners. This suggests that the schools are still working to a previous system, where support is available for learners with an official 'diagnosis', from a special educational needs standpoint. Support staff have to work within the constraints of this variation and there is a lack of a clear understanding and direction in the system.
- Personalised support is an area where many stakeholders indicate the need for improvement and where practices do not always follow policy.
- Generally, teachers, support assistants and primary school learners feel they are understood and supported in school.



- Parents and secondary learners indicate that this is not always the case and that appropriate support is not always in place, is not given consistently, and that parents and learners themselves are not always involved in the process. Both groups indicate that their views are either not always sought or not listened to, and that communication between them and the school is difficult.
- Procedures for support in primary school settings seem to work more closely with all stakeholders, and there is a more 'informal' approach to communication and information sharing. This enables some evaluation of support to take place.
- A system operates whereby support is gradually reduced as learners progress through primary school, in anticipation of less support in secondary school. This situation seems to have become the norm, and does not seem to be on educational grounds alone, but is more in response to a known reduction in the availability of support in secondary school. Parents, support staff and secondary learners all expressed dissatisfaction with this process.
- According to some stakeholders, some decisions about support seem to be made on a financial basis, with the allocation of money at the beginning of the school year. This may impact on the availability of support for learners who need it later in the year.
- There is variation and some lack of clarity in the ways 'experts' are used by the school in the processes around personalised support.
- A lack of available resources in schools limits the way that support can be personalised, meaning that support is more likely to be in place for a group of learners with similar learning needs, rather than for individual learners with a range of specific needs.
- Some stakeholders indicated that there is a lack of continuity in teaching, which has an impact on support. While this may be in part due to high staff turnover, learners' needs are not always taken into account when assigning teachers to classes. According to some stakeholders, there is some delay (up to many months) between the identification of a need for educational support, and personalised support being put in place. In addition, the agreed support may not always be put in place, and changes may be made by the school at any time. Some stakeholders indicated that close monitoring and evaluation of support does not seem to be in place in a systematic way across the schools. This suggests that different criteria may be in place to evaluate support. These may not include quality, appropriateness, consistency, and learner feedback, but may include statistical elements, funding, staff availability, timing and resources. Evaluation at system level is largely statistical and may not involve any qualitative data from some stakeholders. It is unclear if this process of data gathering and monitoring is appropriate as the only means of evaluating support in an inclusive system.



7.d. Key messages relating to Area 7

This section presents the merged findings for Area 7 from all the previous actions of the evaluation (documentary search, school survey, system survey, focus groups and interviews):

While there is commitment at system level in this Area, there seem to be significant challenges at every level.

Where policy information has been given to schools, this has resulted in a range of systems of personalised support, of policies and of practices within schools, and in a variation in the interpretation of the main policy.

There seems to be no single agreement on the meaning of the phrase 'personalised support', partly because this is linked to the Intensive Support B system, and partly in relation to a lack of understanding of inclusive education in practice.

A number of constraints to schools fulfilling the commitment to personalised support have emerged, relating to other Areas of the Action Plan, such as qualifications and training, staffing, experts, allocation of support resources, enrolment, budget, accessibility and transition.

Some stakeholders highlighted that personalised support is sometimes delayed, not appropriate or inconsistent; parents do not have sufficient general and specific information about support and do not always feel included in the process; learners have little knowledge about support, or who can access support, or how this may be done.

In some cases, learners, parents and some staff feel that they do not receive personalised support to fulfil their roles and that their presence and participation are not always valued or respected.



7.e. Findings in relation to the Recommendations and Indicators of Success of the Action Plan

This section contains a table for Area 7 with the actions and the indicators of success outlined in the Action Plan, merged findings and suggestions for further development:

No.	Action	Indicators of Success	Findings	Suggestions for further development
7.1	a) Review the decision of the Board of Governors (BoG) and give autonomy to the schools' Administrative Boards.	The number of learners in the class is linked to the number of learners with Intensive Support A (ISA).	There is little evidence to indicate that this is applied consistently within schools and across schools, because the Action is planned but has not started yet.	The support system could be clarified and standardised across schools, for all stakeholders.
7.1	b) Ensure that the schools adapt their policies in accordance with the needs of the learners, within their given autonomy.	The way to organise EduSup is linked to the number and needs of learners with ISA within the given legal framework.	There is variation in how educational support policies are interpreted in practice. The linking of educational support to the numbers of learners with ISA at a given point in the year leads to some difficulties for learners with needs identified at a later point in the school year, with an impact on stakeholders.	Learning support could be established in a more flexible way, as the need for educational support will fluctuate throughout the school year, and within different sections of the schools. There may be learners in the school who could benefit from support, but who do not fulfil the remit of 'ISA'. Building a body of expertise within the staff, over a period of time, and using local and centralised training opportunities could enable these changes to take place.
7.2	a) Create a harmonised chapter dealing with EduSup needs in all enrolment forms of the different schools.	Potential needs are addressed in the enrolment process while respecting General Data Protection Regulation requirements.	In some cases, schools use different processes in the identification of potential needs. There are some issues around the interpretation of the GDPR requirements, which exclude parents from aspects of decisions made about their children's education.	Centralised guidance at system level in the identification of potential needs, taking account of the legal and education systems in place in all the host countries, together with GDPR regulations.



No.	Action	Indicators of Success	Findings	Suggestions for further development
7.2	b) Collect/develop/make available comprehensive tools for early identification/pedagogical diagnostics harmonised across the system.	The schools have harmonised and comprehensive diagnostic tools at their disposal.	Schools use a range of diagnostic tools and processes, including the 'Framework for Early Identification' and experts, according to their circumstances. The nature, qualifications and roles of 'experts' vary between schools, with a lack of clarity about their recommendations and the extent to which their reports are used.	This process could be standardised at system level, as above, with clear and readily available documents to indicate all stages of the processes involved, the nature and role of the pedagogical experts (the ones producing the multi-disciplinary report, as well as the ones working in and with the schools), and how decisions are made. Processes around decisions in individual cases should be transparent and available for the stakeholders most closely associated (such as parents) to see and have the opportunity to respond to, in a fair manner.
7.3	Develop an up-to-date diagnosis classification and start to study a future possible change of diagnosis into an assessment of needs and identification of support.	Up-to-date diagnosis classification is used as a basis for identification, proper provision of EduSup and for statistics and evaluation.	While this is considered 'important and short term' in the Action Plan, it is unclear if the 'future possible change' is underway or still planned, and this is an area which needs clarification for all stakeholders.	–

7.f. Overall evaluation of progress in this Area

There are five Actions in this Area, of which three are of high importance (7.1b, 7.2a, 7.2b) and two are important according to the priority and time frame indicated in the Action Plan. Guidance given to schools indicates that there is progress across the Actions at system level, but there is variation in the ways that schools work within the guidelines given in the policies. Development towards the harmonisation of processes would enable progress to be more effective at school level. Action 7.3 is well underway.



Area 8: Smooth transition

The Action Plan in Area 8, Smooth transition, contains one Recommendation, two Actions, two Indicators of Success and one priority level.

8.a. Findings from documentary and school survey data

This section presents the synthesis of the data for Area 8 arising from the desk-based documentary search and the school survey:

- At system level, the smooth transition policy is nearly complete (mainly with the Framework for school-specific guidelines for transition nursery/primary/secondary). It is already in progress at school level.
- The Framework for school-specific guidelines for transition identifies mechanisms to evaluate the process of developing teams and the teams' impact on transitions.
- The Framework for school-specific guidelines for transition gives guidance to schools about which parties to involve and how. Most schools have a list of parties involved in the transition cycle. However, the professionals and the number of people involved are quite varied. Most schools did not mention the involvement of parents and/or learners in the transition process.
- Most of the schools are identifying existing difficulties and concrete proposals to ensure a successful transition from the primary to the secondary cycle.
- Despite most schools implementing different multi-professional 'trans cycle' care teams, no schools have a dedicated number of hours/periods of *décharge*.
- Almost all the schools affirm that there is a process of communication on transition among the stakeholders involved.

8.b. Findings from system survey data

The synthesis of the data for Area 8 provided by the system level survey shows the following:

- Policy implementation: schools identify existing difficulties and make concrete proposals to ensure a successful transition from primary to secondary cycle. All the respondents indicated that the implementation is in progress or nearly complete.
- A framework establishing measures of effective transition has been established at the system level. This area was analysed in the context of in-service training for Educational Support Co-ordinators and the schools shared best practices.
- School management, Educational Support Co-ordination members and class teachers are the contact points for remarks or concrete feedback from parents and learners regarding all aspects of school life, including transition.
- Despite the transition policy set at system level, most schools identified existing difficulties to ensure a successful smooth transition from the primary to the secondary cycle. Moreover, 3 out of 7 respondents indicated that there is no activity yet regarding a multi-professional 'trans cycle' care team in every school



(with a certain number of hours/periods of *décharge* in the document on 'Internal Structures'). The rest of the answers on the level of implementation range from just 'planned', to 'fully implemented'. This discrepancy in perceptions means that not all the different system-level bodies are aware of or informed about the transition policy.

- Some of the respondents (4 out of 7) do not know if there is an open channel of communication with schools to give feedback in reducing barriers encountered by all stakeholders at the time of transition.
- Although a framework establishing measures of effective transition has been established at the system level, no formal evaluation of its application has been carried out.
- Awareness of teachers after transition often relies on their individual approach (information does not always seem to reach them in time).
- One respondent's particular area of concern is that (early) identification/diagnosis should not be used for far-reaching prognoses on the likelihood of learners progressing in the European Schools system to the end, thus risking creating a dynamic towards alternative educational paths or predicting/imposing a path of support in the years ahead. Especially, but not only, in early childhood, development is difficult to predict, and early action can markedly improve outcomes. It is appropriate to see and evaluate year-by-year and then develop strategies that might or might not lead to alternative educational pathways. There are examples of successful cases of learners with impairments who progressed for many years and even passed the Baccalaureate despite difficult prognoses in early childhood.
- There is a lack of a strategic and needs-based approach. When learners move to secondary, parents are often told that the learners cannot continue with the same level of support hours. There appears to be a tendency in secondary to presume or try to achieve a path of reduced support provision towards the Baccalaureate (and this is reflected in the actual figures), as learners supposedly should learn to make do with less and ultimately without support.
- In secondary, teachers often change every year. This is difficult for learners without support needs but even more challenging for learners with special educational needs.
- According to one respondent, decisions on special arrangements, classroom adaptations and accommodations are often opaque, may not follow policy, and regularly involve bodies that are not competent for such issues, such as Class Councils.
- From the statistics, interpretation on the use of support and on the delineation between support types (notably moderate support) can differ widely between primary and secondary, even in the same school. As a result, statistics show a drop in support coverage in transition that would be difficult to explain by objectively reduced needs.



- Teams seem to be formed to improve information at transition (but it has not been possible to check if the hours of *décharge* apply).

8.c. Findings from focus group and interview data

The synthesis of the data for Area 8 arising from the focus groups and interviews shows:

- There is a transition process in place in general, and particularly for learners with special educational needs. Teachers prepare learners for the next year by informing them about what is going to happen when they move to secondary. The learners visit the secondary school and meet their future teachers. The primary teacher meets with the future teacher in the secondary school and they discuss learners with special educational needs. The Educational Support Co-ordinators (primary and secondary) also hold discussions. Parents are informed and participate in the support advisory group meetings.
- Transition is not easy for learners or teachers, because it is different in primary and secondary. Sometimes there is not enough communication on what the learner needs and it is unclear what secondary means: a much higher level of autonomy is requested.
- One of the main issues in transition from primary to secondary is that support hours are often reduced. The statistics on support provision show a break in secondary. The intention for learners is that their support will progressively be reduced. A certain level of autonomy is requested in secondary school, so for the school it is important to make learners more autonomous when they get closer to P5. This is also discussed with parents so that they feel the school is not simply taking the hours away, but rather trying to do the best for the learner by making them more independent.
- In the first year of secondary, parents would need to have at least two meetings with the school, as is the case in primary school (at the beginning and at the end of the year). Communication with parents is important at the beginning of the year to ask if there is any help they would need and explain what help can be provided by the school, so they know what to expect.
- The problem several parents reported is that, when learners are moving to secondary, sometimes the educational advisors are not properly informed about the learners' needs in a timely manner. In several cases, there was a lack of information, late information or no information given to the class teachers on the learners' needs.
- There are cases where the workflow of transition documents and procedures have not worked because they are centred on individuals, so when those individuals leave the system the communication and the paperwork do not work as they should. Some work could be done to ensure that it does not depend on one individual.
- Support teachers are normally recruited locally. There is a previous general idea of how many hours each section will need in terms of support. If there is an extra need for support, more hours will be added over the year. General support starts



in October after the initial assessments in September and then more hours are added or taken away according to need. Some schools stop general support at the end of May in secondary and at the end of June in primary. At the beginning and the end of the year, they start with sometimes significantly fewer hours. It could be organised much more efficiently, especially at the beginning of the year, when the lessons start and the learners do not have that support.

- It takes a long time for support to be put into place at the beginning of the school year. It takes a month or more, so learners do not get support straightaway. In terms of special needs, information files are shared. The issue depends on the number of hours the learner comes up with and how that is co-ordinated.
- Some teachers in secondary are not always aware of special needs. There is an overall policy on inclusive education in the schools², but that is not always really passed to class teachers. Teachers should know about learners with special educational needs before the school year starts so that they know the correct approach, and they should get the training to know how to.

8.d. Key messages relating to Area 8

This section presents the merged findings for Area 8 from all the previous actions of the evaluation (documentary search, school survey, system survey, focus groups and interviews):

- At system level, the smooth transition policy is set out through the Framework for school-specific guidelines for transition nursery/primary/secondary. This Framework identifies mechanisms to evaluate the process of developing teams and the teams' impact on transitions.
- Most schools have a list of parties involved in the transition cycle. In general, school management, Educational Support Co-ordination members and class teachers are the contact points for remarks or concrete feedback from parents and learners regarding all aspects of school life, including transition.
- There is a transition process in place in general, and particularly for learners with special educational needs. Teachers prepare the learners for the next year. The learners visit the secondary school and meet their future teachers. The primary teacher meets with the future teacher in the secondary school and they discuss learners with special educational needs. The Educational Support Co-ordinators (primary and secondary) also hold discussions. Parents are informed and participate in the support advisory group meetings.
- There are variations that indicate different levels of practice across schools.
- Support in primary seems to be more straightforward to organise and to put into place. However, support in secondary presents major challenges for all stakeholders. There is a lack of consistency in support between primary and

² The Training Policy approved in November 2021 establishes decentralised trainings in all the Schools as from September 2022 to support the Schools in implementing the revised Policy and Procedural Document. The Policy, establishing inclusive education as the guiding principle, was approved in April 2021. The Procedural Document was approved in February 2022.



secondary, which has an impact on teachers, support teachers, learners and parents.

- The main issue for most stakeholders is the level of autonomy asked of the learners and the reduction of support in secondary. When learners move to secondary, the schools seem to have a general tendency of trying to reduce the support provision (fewer support hours) progressively. This tendency is reflected in the statistics, and the justification is that the school is trying to do the best for the learner by making them more independent.
- In secondary, sometimes the educational advisors are not properly informed about the learners' needs in a timely manner. In several cases, there was a lack of information, late information or no information given to the class teachers on the learners' needs.
- It takes a long time for support to be put into place at the beginning of the first school year in secondary. It takes a month or more, so learners do not get support straightaway. General support starts around October after the initial assessments in September and then hours are added or taken away according to needs.



8.e. Findings in relation to the Recommendations and Indicators of Success of the Action Plan

This section contains a table for Area 8 with the actions and the indicators of success outlined in the Action Plan, merged findings and suggestions for further development:

No.	Action	Indicators of Success	Findings	Suggestions for further development
8.1	a) Identify existing difficulties in the transition from primary to secondary cycle and make concrete proposals on how to ensure a successful transition (e.g. define a workflow to be established in schools' transition guidelines).	Guidance is given to schools and workflow is established and included in the school's transition documents and individual learning plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At system level, the smooth transition policy is set out through the Framework for school-specific guidelines for transition nursery/primary/secondary. This Framework identifies mechanisms to evaluate the process of developing teams and the teams' impact on transitions. There are variations that indicate different levels of practice across schools. Support in primary seems to be more straightforward to organise and to put into place. However, support in secondary presents major challenges for all stakeholders. There is a lack of consistency in support between primary and secondary, which has an impact on teachers, support teachers, learners and parents. The main issue for most stakeholders is the level of autonomy asked of the learners and the reduction of support in secondary. When learners move to secondary, the schools seem to have a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a lack of a needs-based approach in transition from primary to secondary. From the statistics, interpretation on the use of support can differ widely between primary and secondary in the same school. As a result, statistics show a drop in support coverage in transition that would be difficult to explain by objectively reduced needs. The provision of educational support in the transition to secondary could be organised much more efficiently, especially at the beginning of the year, when the lessons start and the learners do not have that support. To improve communication, parents of learners in secondary should have at least two meetings with the school (at the beginning and at the end of the year) to address possible issues. It does not seem to be the case in all the schools. It would be appropriate to see and evaluate year-by-year and then develop strategies that might or might not lead to alternative educational pathways.



No.	Action	Indicators of Success	Findings	Suggestions for further development
			<p>general tendency of trying to reduce the support provision (fewer support hours) progressively. This tendency is reflected in the statistics, and the justification is that the school is trying to do the best for the learner by making them more independent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In secondary, sometimes the educational advisors are not properly informed about the learners' needs in a timely manner. In several cases, there was a lack of information, late information or no information given to the class teachers on the learners' needs.• It takes a long time for support to be put into place at the beginning of the first school year in secondary. It takes a month or more, so learners do not get support straightaway. General support starts around October after the initial assessments in September and then hours are added or taken away according to needs.	



No.	Action	Indicators of Success	Findings	Suggestions for further development
8.1	b) Promote the concept of multi-professional, 'trans cycle' care teams and establish a certain number of hours/periods of <i>décharge</i> in the 'Internal Structures' document.	'Trans cycle' care teams are established in all schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This action has not been started yet. Most schools have a list of parties involved in the transition cycle. In general, school management, Educational Support Co-ordination members and class teachers are the contact points for remarks or concrete feedback from parents and learners regarding all aspects of school life, including transition. There is a transition process in place in general, and particularly for learners with special educational needs. Teachers prepare the learners for the next year. The learners visit the secondary school and meet their future teachers. The primary teacher meets with the future teacher in the secondary school and they discuss learners with special educational needs. The Educational Support Co-ordinators (primary and secondary) also hold discussions. Parents are informed and participate in the support advisory group meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although most schools have different multi-professional 'trans cycle' care teams, the action of having a dedicated number of hours/periods of <i>décharge</i> has not been started yet. Not all the different system-level bodies are aware of or informed about the transition policy. Some of them do not know if there is an open channel of communication with schools to give feedback on reducing barriers that all stakeholders encounter at the time of transition.

8.f. Overall evaluation of progress in this Area

There are two Actions in this Area, both considered important and medium term according to the priority and timeframe indicated in the Action Plan. The two Actions of this Area are in progress. However, qualitative data indicates a gap between the policy at system level and the practice at school level regarding transition between school cycles.



There is **progress in relation to identifying existing difficulties and making proposals in the transition from primary to secondary cycle**. The smooth transition policy set out through the Framework for school-specific guidelines for transition nursery/primary/secondary identifies mechanisms to evaluate the process of developing teams and the teams' impact on transitions. However, there are variations that indicate different levels of practice across schools. The relevance is limited because the implementation of the procedures is not consistent enough with the intended action. The guidelines have been delivered in a timely and efficient manner, but there is variation among the schools in the way they use the guidelines to optimise the implementation of a smooth transition between cycles. This reduces the effectiveness of the policy, and this may be caused by challenges in communication. The impact and effectiveness of this action cannot be estimated because it has not been fully implemented at the time of this evaluation.

The **promotion of the concept of multi-professional transition teams is still in progress**, as the schools have a list of parties involved in the transition cycle. However, there is no evidence that schools have established a certain number of hours/periods of *décharge*. The relevance of this action shows that the implementation of transition teams in the schools is not consistent enough with the number of hours/periods of *décharge* across schools. The efficiency is also limited because these multi-professional transition teams do not optimise the implementation of smooth transition from primary to secondary cycle. The impact and effectiveness of this action cannot be estimated because it has not been fully implemented at the time of this evaluation.



Area 9: Adaptability – curricula, assessment, examination

The Action Plan, in Area 9, Adaptability – curricula/ assessment/examination, contains three recommendations, three Actions and Indicators of Success and two priority levels.

9.a. Findings from documentary and school survey data

This section presents the synthesis of the data for Area 9 arising from the desk-based documentary search and the school survey:

- In the context of introducing **flexibility in the curriculum**, the Pedagogical Reform Group analyses the specific barriers in the curriculum for learners with special educational needs. The Educational Support Working Group and the Pedagogical Reform Working Group discuss a concrete proposal and submit the recommendations to the Board of Governors.
- The **main benefits** of educational support so far include the vast majority of learners receiving 'Intensive Support A' (89.7%) being moved on to the next year, and the fall in the repeat rate of learners with ISA in primary (from 3.3% last year to 1.2% this year) and secondary (from 2.3% last year to 2.0% this year).
- Only a few schools (five) have an improved **electronic system** to record the provision for, progress and assessment of learners with special needs.
- Improvement of the system is related to standardised use of OneDrive, the switch from paper to electronic files and the use of the School Management System (SMS) for all learners. In addition, learning plans are shared in OneDrive with the teachers involved in each course, the support courses are constantly updated in the SMS and Teams is used for support courses when necessary.
- Not all learners receiving support **are classified as having special educational needs** – they are 'classified' according to the support they get, which is sometimes more or different support lessons.

9.b. Findings from system survey data

The synthesis of the data for Area 9 provided by the system level survey shows the following:

- Little progress has been made in relation to the identification and analysis of concrete barriers in the curriculum for learners with special educational needs allowing more learners to be promoted. Three respondents indicated that the activity is planned and two respondents indicated that they have no information. Although the end of 2022 is the timeline for the action of introducing flexibility in the curriculum, allowing more learners with educational needs to be promoted, some progress has already been made, as one respondent indicated that implementation is in progress and two that implementation is planned.
- With regards to an improved electronic system for recording the provision, progress and assessment of learners with special needs, little progress has been made, as a majority of respondents (6 out of 7) indicated that schools do not have



an improved electronic system. The Secretary-General highlighted that the system has been improved; however, it has severe limitations that have already been identified and will be dealt with in the next call for tender for a new school management system.

- The classification that is introduced in the management system is made according to the types of support that the learners receive. A learner with special educational needs may have different types of support, depending on the areas/subjects. Similarly, a learner without an identified disability or special needs may also need specific/diversified types of support.
- With regards to the use of data, among others, data is used to produce statistical reports and to give input to the directors' reports and the analysis. It is important to mention that due to the severe limitations of the SMS, sometimes the data collected from the system is not accurate. In these cases, the schools need to process data manually, which is burdensome. In addition, support co-ordinators, support teachers and class teachers consider data.
- Depending on the school, teachers, co-ordinators, management, secretaries and the EduSup Co-ordinators are responsible for adding data to the system. With regards to the type of data collected, for learners it includes: particulars & demography, names, gender, date of birth, enrolment date, reason for leaving (for learners who left), nationality(ies), place of birth, primary, secondary and tertiary languages.
- For parents, collected data includes: names and surnames, gender, nationality, category of enrolment (I-working for European Union institutions, II-working for companies with an agreement with the European Schools system, III-private). In addition, data includes all information about courses and classes (level, language section, options, language of tuition, teachers, students without a language section, Educational Support, etc.), information about absences and information about promotion and marks/grades. Furthermore, collected data refers to comprehensive data (see the statistical reports). However, this data is not recorded via the SMS, but manually in an Excel table by the Educational Support Co-ordinators.
- For introducing flexibility in the curriculum, allowing more learners with educational needs to be promoted, most respondents indicated that concrete barriers in the curriculum have not been analysed yet and proposals for improving the flexibility have not been made (timeline for the activity: 2022).
- A great majority of respondents (6 out of 7) indicated that schools do not have an improved electronic system for recording the provision, progress and assessment of learners with special needs. Only one respondent highlighted that the system has been improved; however, it has severe limitations that have already been identified and will be dealt with in the next call for tender for a new school management system.



9.c. Findings from focus group and interview data

The synthesis of the data for Area 9 arising from the focus groups and interviews shows:

- This action is still being prepared.
- It is included in the multi-annual pedagogical plan and will be discussed in the Pedagogical Reform Working Group.
- Some challenges relate to the fact that the European Schools work with delegations from 27 Member States whose education systems are at different stages in the journey towards inclusive education.
- Therefore, the political commitment to approve and recognise flexible curricula might lead to a long and difficult discussion because there are different perspectives within the system.
- No real changes. No exceptions (e.g. learners have to pass Maths even if they have dyscalculia) in order to be promoted; there is no flexibility.
- There is the option of progression, which may be in the learner's interest, but no alternative learning path as yet; there is a need for more curricular options. There is a risk that it becomes a means of exclusion, where learners are effectively forced out of the school, as there is no way back to the Baccalaureate. There are suggestions that there should be more possible options and accommodations, and progression should not be an easy option for the school to use, as a means of linking accommodations with progression.
- The system has got flexibility to a certain extent and there are learners who follow their own adapted curriculum. These learners get only progression. They can continue with their classmates, but they are not promoted.
- The system has its limitations.

9.d. Key messages relating to Area 9

This section presents the merged findings for Area 9 from all the previous actions of the evaluation (documentary search, school survey, system survey, focus groups and interviews):

- Little progress has been made in relation to the identification and analysis of concrete barriers in the curriculum for learners with special educational needs allowing more learners to be promoted.
- This action is still being prepared. It is included in the multi-annual pedagogical plan and will be discussed in the Pedagogical Reform Working Group.
- The procedure includes the Pedagogical Reform Group analysing the specific barriers in the curriculum for learners with special educational needs. The Educational Support Working Group and the Pedagogical Reform Working Group discuss a concrete proposal and submit the recommendations to the Board of Governors.
- Some challenges relate to the fact that the European Schools work with delegations from 27 Member States whose education systems are at different



stages in the journey towards inclusive education. Therefore, the political commitment to approve and recognise flexible curricula might lead to a long and difficult discussion because there are different perspectives within the system.

- The system has got flexibility to a certain extent and there are learners who follow their own adapted curriculum.
- These learners get only progression. They can continue with their classmates, but they are not promoted. The system has its limitations.
- There are no exceptions for learners to be promoted (e.g. learners have to pass Maths even if they have dyscalculia); there is no flexibility.
- There is the option of progression, which may be in the learner's interest, but no alternative learning path as yet; there is a need for more curricular options. There is a risk that it becomes a means of exclusion, where learners are effectively forced out of the school, as there is no way back to the Baccalaureate. There are suggestions that there should be more possible options and accommodations, and progression should not be an easy option for the school to use, as a means of linking accommodations with progression.
- There is little progress with regard to an improved electronic system for recording the provision, progress and assessment of learners with special needs.
- The system's limitations have been identified and will be dealt with in the next call for tender for a new school management system.
- The classification made is introduced in the management system.



9.e. Findings in relation to the Recommendations and Indicators of Success of the Action Plan

This section contains a table for Area 9 with the actions and the indicators of success outlined in the Action Plan, merged findings and suggestions for further development:

No.	Action	Indicators of Success	Findings	Suggestions for further development
9.1	Analyse concrete barriers in the curriculum for learners with special educational needs and prepare a proposal	Some flexibility is introduced to the curriculum allowing more learners with educational needs to be promoted	<p>Little progress has been made in relation to the identification and analysis of concrete barriers in the curriculum for learners with special educational needs allowing more learners to be promoted.</p> <p>This action is still being prepared. It is included in the multi-annual pedagogical plan and will be discussed in the Pedagogical Reform Working Group.</p> <p>Some challenges relate to the fact that the European Schools work with delegations from 27 Member States whose education systems are at different stages in the journey towards inclusive education. Therefore, the political commitment to approve and recognise flexible curricula might lead to a long and difficult discussion because there are different perspectives within the system.</p>	<p>Mandate the Pedagogical Reform Group to identify and analyse the specific barriers in the curriculum and introduce flexibility allowing all learners to be promoted.</p> <p>On the basis of the relevant analysis and introduction of curriculum flexibility, the Educational Support Working Group and the Pedagogical Reform Working Group should discuss a concrete proposal for the promotion of all learners alongside their classmates and submit the recommendations to the Board of Governors.</p> <p>There should be more possible options and accommodations, and 'progression' should not be an easy option for the school to use, as a means of linking accommodations with progression.</p> <p>Political commitment is important to approve and recognise flexible curricula and overcome some challenges relating to the fact that the European Schools work with delegations from 27 Member States whose education systems are at different stages in the journey towards inclusive education.</p>



No.	Action	Indicators of Success	Findings	Suggestions for further development
9.2	Dto	Dto	There is the option of progression, which may be in the learner's interest, but no alternative learning path as yet; there is a need for more curricular options. There is a risk that it becomes a means of exclusion, where learners are effectively forced out of the school, as there is no way back to the Baccalaureate. There are suggestions that there should be more possible options and accommodations, and progression should not be an easy option for the school to use, as a means of linking accommodations with progression.	There should be more possible options and accommodations, and it should not be too easy for the school to use, as a means of linking accommodations with progression.
9.3	Improvement of the electronic system recording provision, progress and assessment of learners with special educational needs	The stakeholders (schools, inspectors, OSG) have at their disposal relevant data within SMS	There is little progress with regard to an improved electronic system for recording the provision, progress and assessment of learners with special needs. The system's limitations have been identified and will be dealt with in the next call for tender for a new school management system. The classification made is introduced in the management system.	Further development of the electronic system could be ensured, recording all learners' progress, assessment and promotion. Stakeholders (schools, teaching and support staff, EduSup Co-ordinators, inspectors, OSG, etc.) could have at their disposal relevant accurate data within the SMS. The classification introduced in the management system could be made according to the types of support that the learners receive.

9.f. Overall evaluation of progress in this Area

There are three Actions in this Area: two of them are considered of high importance and long term and one is considered important and long term according to the priority and the timeframe indicated in the Action Plan. Two Actions are planned and one is in progress.

The Action of analysing concrete barriers in the curriculum for learners with special educational needs and preparing a proposal for introducing flexibility to the curriculum allowing more learners with educational needs to be promoted, is planned but has not started yet. The efficiency, effectiveness and impact of this Action cannot be estimated at this stage.



Improvement of the electronic system recording provision, progress and assessment of learners with special educational needs is in progress. The Action for stakeholders (schools, teaching and support staff, Educational Support Co-ordinators, inspectors, OSG, etc.) to have relevant accurate data within the SMS at their disposal, is also in progress. However, its effectiveness cannot be established at this stage.



Area 10: Enrolment

The Action Plan in Area 10, Enrolment, contains three Recommendations, one Action, one Indicator of Success, and one priority level.

10.a. Findings from documentary and school survey data

This section presents the synthesis of the data for Area 10 arising from the desk-based documentary search and the school survey:

- At system level, there are procedures and documentary evidence on which decisions about removal or non-enrolment of a learner should be based. The procedure is personalised for each individual learner. The 'checklist' for directors and common guidelines, including the personnel to be involved, for all schools are in place.
- Decisions around consulting experts are made in cases where the support co-ordinator envisages difficulties regarding the integration or inclusion of a learner based on the documentation received.
- The procedures show that parental and learner views are heard and the learner's best interests are taken into account. Support is in place to enable parents and learners to access alternative education with the least disruption possible. Some schools provide information and/or follow-up of the process. Some schools also have contact and/or meetings with alternative schools and/or the local education system.
- Most schools affirm that the mechanisms in place to ensure that all stages of the process of enrolment/non-enrolment and non-continuation are open and followed according to the guidelines and the Educational Support Policy and its procedural rules.
- Most schools affirm the full implementation of each case is documented, analysed and conclusions drawn. This information is used in different ways to enable the school to become progressively more inclusive. There is statistical information about changes in non-enrolment/non-continuation of numbers of learners across the schools to indicate change in recent years.

10.b. Findings from system survey data

The synthesis of the data for Area 10 provided by the system level survey shows the following:

- According to most of the respondents (6/7), the cases of non-enrolment and non-continuation are properly documented and analysed (including drawing conclusions to make the school progressively more inclusive). The level of implementation is perceived as ranging from 'in progress', to 'fully implemented'.
- The procedures of enrolment/non-enrolment and non-continuation are perceived as known by all the relevant actors involved. In June 2019, the Educational Support Policy WG – where the different stakeholders are represented – produced



guidelines for the schools on how to analyse and decide on the situations for which the schools consider that they cannot provide reasonable accommodation in case of learners with specific educational needs. These situations are discussed and analysed – before decision – by the school pedagogical staff, parents and inspectors, who provide information and advice. Additionally, all situations of non-enrolment or discontinuation of studies are communicated and analysed in the Administrative Boards. These situations are reported in the statistical report and analysed in the Educational Support Policy WG.

- The information (all case documentation, analysis and conclusions) is shared and analysed in the Administrative Board meetings, i.e. the number of cases and the general context, not personal data. The different stakeholders may (and do) challenge the (rare) decisions of non-enrolment or discontinuation of studies at the school level. The same exercise is done at the system level in the context of the statistical report. The situation of enrolment and continuation of studies is analysed in the Educational Support Policy Working Group. Finally, when inspectors are called to provide advice on the different situations, the proposed decisions of the schools are also challenged by the inspectors, who may also provide guidance to the schools on how to better respond to the learners' needs or on how to ensure a smooth transition to other educational paths.
- A clear majority of respondents (6/7) affirm that there are mechanisms in place to ensure that all stages of the process of enrolment/non-enrolment and non-continuation are open and followed according to the agreed procedures and protocols in this area.
- One respondent observed that one concern is now to avoid exploring avenues that marginalise learners, prompting them to leave or not enrol in a so-called voluntary manner.
- One issue of particular concern for one respondent is the track of progression, which can be very useful and is particularly good to have, but where appropriate gatekeeping shall apply, so that it cannot be used in ways that reduce or restrict inclusion (such as inappropriately linking it to the use of various instruments of reasonable accommodation for both formative and summative assessment that are foreseen in the policy as means to promote inclusion within the curriculum). The situation appears not to have been fully resolved, though.
- Some of the respondents (3/7), including parents' representatives, do not know how the information (all case documentation, analysis and conclusions) is used to enable the European Schools to become progressively more inclusive. Cases of refusal and discontinuation of enrolment are reported to the Administrative Board. The Educational Support Policy Working Group ensures follow-up of such cases. Parents indicated they were unaware that such a mechanism existed.
- According to the statistical report, there is still a number of cases where the decision for a learner to discontinue their studies was made in agreement with parents. It is difficult to find out what happened here and why a child could not continue. Were parents advised to take their child out? Were all efforts really made and resources used? There should be proper documentation indicating the



reasons for those cases. Otherwise, the European Schools system cannot identify existing barriers and improve the situation.

10.c. Findings from focus group and interview data

The synthesis of the data for Area 10 arising from the focus groups and interviews shows:

- The official documents in place with defined procedures are guidelines for decisions on enrolment and discontinuation of learners with special educational needs.
- There is a procedure for the schools to follow with the objective of identifying any situations where the schools consider that they could not accommodate the needs of the learners, or enrolment, or continuation of studies. Since the approval of the guidelines in 2019, the schools are requested to formally inform the Administrative Board about these situations.
- In the case of discontinuation of studies the aim is, together with inspectors in charge of educational support and with the national inspectors, to ensure, if possible, a smooth and effective transition from the European Schools in co-ordination with other education systems.
- The European Schools should work with other institutions in the host country where the school is located or in the national education system of the country the learner is from. The idea for the learner to progress. What changed in 2019 was that the schools must consult the national inspectors of the host country. Then the education system where the learners are from and the inspectors are in charge of educational support.
- When learners are rejected, there is a procedure where the parents are involved from the beginning. If the school considers that it might not have the conditions to provide reasonable accommodation, there is a meeting of the Support Advisory Group where parents are present, and the situation is analysed. The Educational Support Co-ordinator prepares the reports for the inspectors and asks about options for the learner. Inspectors provide their answers, and then the decision is taken by the director.
- There are situations where the schools and parents decided that the best option for the learner was outside the European Schools system. However, there are also situations where the parents considered another path, but the schools considered they had the conditions to provide educational support. There are almost no situations where the school said that the learner could not continue because the school did not have the conditions to provide reasonable accommodation.
- When parents consider that their children will do better in another system, the schools will provide all the information to ensure a smooth transition. They are available to talk with the new school, but it is the parents' decision.
- In the past, there have been cases of non-enrolment that were appealed to the Secretary-General because the decisions taken by the directors were not properly motivated. The process until a final decision is made can be lengthy.



- Refusing enrolment or encouraging learners out of the system is rare. However, there is the risk that the main option for the school is to put the learners in 'progression' tracks, without clear criteria on the decision, and/or without clear information for the learner and their parents about the consequences.

10.d. Key messages relating to Area 10

This section presents the merged findings for Area 10 from all the previous actions of the evaluation (documentary search, school survey, system survey, focus groups and interviews):

- The level of implementation is perceived as being between 'in progress' and 'fully implemented'.
- There are procedures and documentary evidence on which decisions about enrolment, removal or non-enrolment of a learner should be based. The procedure is personalised for each individual learner. The 'checklist' for directors and common guidelines, including the personnel to be involved, for all schools are in place.
- The schools follow processes of enrolment/non-enrolment and non-continuation according to the guidelines, the Educational Support Policy and its procedural rules.
- The procedures of enrolment/non-enrolment and non-continuation are known by all the relevant actors involved.
- The cases of non-enrolment and non-continuation are properly documented and analysed (including drawing conclusions to make the school progressively more inclusive) by the schools.
- There is statistical information about changes in non-enrolment/non-continuation of numbers of learners across the schools to indicate change in recent years.
- Parental views are heard and the learner's best interests are taken into account. Support is in place to enable parents and learners to access alternative education with the least disruption possible. Some schools provide information and/or follow-up of the process. Some schools also have contact and/or meetings with alternative schools and/or the local education system.
- There are situations where the schools and parents decided that the best option for the learner was outside the European Schools system. However, there are also situations where the parents considered another path, but the schools considered they had the conditions to provide educational support. There are almost no situations where the school said that the learner could not continue because the school did not have the conditions to provide reasonable accommodation.



10.e. Findings in relation to the Recommendations and Indicators of Success of the Action Plan

This section contains a table for Area 10 with the actions and the indicators of success outlined in the Action Plan, merged findings and suggestions for further development:

No.	Action	Indicators of Success	Findings	Suggestions for further development
10.1 10.2 10.3	Establish a checklist for Directors and common guidelines for the schools.	All Directors base their decision to not enrol a learner/no longer provide education to a learner on clear procedures and documentary evidence, including external expertise and taking into account the best interests of the child in question. All these cases are properly documented, analysed and conclusions are drawn to make the European Schools progressively more inclusive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The level of implementation is perceived as ranging from 'in progress', to 'fully implemented'. There are procedures and documentary evidence on which decisions about enrolment, removal or non-enrolment of a learner should be based. The procedure is personalised for each individual learner. The 'checklist' for directors and common guidelines, including the personnel to be involved, for all schools are in place. The schools follow processes of enrolment/non-enrolment and non-continuation according to the guidelines, the Educational Support Policy and its procedural rules. The procedures of enrolment/non-enrolment and non-continuation are known by all the relevant actors involved. The cases of non-enrolment and non-continuation are properly documented and analysed (including drawing conclusions to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some system-level bodies, including parents' representatives, do not know how the information (all case documentation, analysis and conclusions) is used to enable the European Schools to become progressively more inclusive. According to the statistical report, there is still a number of cases where the decision for a learner to discontinue their studies was made in agreement with parents. It could be important to analyse those cases where parents decide in agreement with schools to take their child out of the European Schools. When cases of non-enrolment are appealed, the whole process until a final decision can take a long time. Refusing enrolment or encouraging learners out of the system is not happening. However, there is the risk that the main option for the school is to put the learners in 'progression' tracks, without clear criteria on the decision, and/or without clear information for the learner and their parents about the consequences.



No.	Action	Indicators of Success	Findings	Suggestions for further development
			<p>make the school progressively more inclusive) by the schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is statistical information about changes in non-enrolment/non-continuation of numbers of learners across the schools to indicate change in recent years. • Parental views are heard and the learner's best interests are taken into account. Support is in place to enable parents and learners to access alternative education with the least disruption possible. Some schools provide information and/or follow-up of the process. Some schools also have contact and/or meetings with alternative schools and/or the local education system. • There are situations where the schools and parents decided that the best option for the learner was outside the European Schools system. However, there are also situations where the parents considered another path, but the schools considered they had the conditions to provide educational support. There are almost no situations where the school said 	



No.	Action	Indicators of Success	Findings	Suggestions for further development
			that the learner could not continue because the school did not have the conditions to provide reasonable accommodation.	

10.f. Overall evaluation of progress in this Area

This Area is considered of high importance in the short term according to the priority and timeframe indicated in the Action Plan. The implementation of **common guidelines about enrolment, removal or non-enrolment for the schools is nearly complete**. Directors base their decision to not enrol a learner/no longer provide education to a learner on clear procedures and documentary evidence, including external expertise. The cases are properly documented and analysed and conclusions are drawn. The relevance of this Action shows that the planning and the implementation of the common guidelines are consistent with the intended outcomes and impact. It has been effective in the sense that these procedures have achieved the planned objectives, as indicated in the Action Plan, and produced demonstrable results and evidence of change. It has been also effective because the guidelines were delivered in a timely manner and are optimising the implementation of the action. However, based on the qualitative data, there are issues in the way the guidelines have been implemented by the schools in relation to information/communication, length of the processes, discontinuation in agreement with parents, and learners in 'progression' track.



Area 11: Transition to other schools

The Action Plan in Area 11, Transition to other schools, contains one Recommendation, two Actions, one Indicator of Success, and one priority level.

11.a. Findings from documentary and school survey data

This section presents the synthesis of the data for Area 11 arising from the desk-based documentary search and the school survey:

- Some schools have developed concrete actions for transition to other schools. This information was collected at European Schools system level and discussed in a Support Co-ordinators' training session. Half of the schools do not share best practices in terms of transition to other schools.
- Half of the schools have not yet established a relationship with the local authority in the field of educational support and inclusive education. However, eight schools have a good working relationship with the national inspectors.
- Some schools receive feedback about transitions to new schools and use this information to improve future transition processes. The information is not received in a structured manner and is usually informal feedback, mainly from families.

11.b. Findings from system survey data

The synthesis of the data for Area 11 provided by the system level survey shows the following:

- According to most of the respondents (5 out of 7), the schools are in the process of establishing a relationship with the local authority in the field of educational support and inclusive education.
- Most respondents (4 out of 7) affirm that the schools share best practices, mainly through the transfer of information by the educational support inspectors.
- Evidence collection is based on the schools' (co-ordinators) presentation. Co-ordinators share their practice, with information regarding the concrete situations, the process of decision regarding the provision of reasonable accommodation, and the communication with the schools/organisations that will welcome and work with the learner. The presentations are made from the perspective of the learner's best interest. However, no additional evidence is provided.
- The European Schools plan to continue and strengthen the identification and sharing of good practices but also 'less successful' examples in the context of training co-ordinators and directors.
- So far, best practices are just shared in the context of in-service training for Educational Support Co-ordinators and informal contact between schools.
- Most respondents (5 out of 7) do not know if there is documentary evidence of what constitutes 'best practice' in terms of transition to other schools.



- The responses showed that most respondents (5 out of 7) do not know if best practices are shared across all schools.
- The responses showed that most respondents (4 out of 7) do not know what mechanisms are in place to continue to develop and share best practice across all schools, and to ensure that all schools follow best practice guidelines for transition to other schools.

11.c. Findings from focus group and interview data

The synthesis of the data for Area 11 arising from the focus groups and interviews shows:

- There are specific procedures for transition to other schools and/or co-operation with the hosting Member State/municipality or the local schools. These procedures are defined in the document Provision of Educational Support in the European Schools – Procedural Document (Ref.: 2012-05-D-15-en). Revision of this document is currently in progress.
- There are different levels of practice across schools. There are some schools that are more involved in the local organisations, but for others communication is more difficult.
- Respondents are aware that there is a need to work on and invest in strengthening communication between schools and the national systems network.
- Co-operation in transition to other schools is limited. The examples provided show that, once there is an agreement between the school and the parents that the learner would not be able to follow (in most cases) the secondary cycle, it is mainly the parents who look for another school. In some cases, the assistance at this stage is limited due to the lack of information and contact with other schools.
- In order to develop and share best practice across schools, there are annual in-service training sessions and common meetings of the Educational Support inspectors with the co-ordinators. There is also a common Teams SharePoint.
- Respondents are aware that there is room for improvement in communication between the schools. There are guidelines on how to do it, but the discussions have just started and there is still no framework.
- Practices shared so far are completely different among schools.

11.d. Key messages relating to Area 11

This section presents the merged findings for Area 11 from all the previous actions of the evaluation (documentary search, school survey, system survey, focus groups and interviews):

- There are specific procedures for transition to other schools and/or co-operation with the hosting Member State/municipality or the local schools. These procedures are defined in the document Provision of Educational Support in the European Schools – Procedural Document (Ref.: 2012-05-D-15-en). Revision of this document is currently in progress.



- Half of the schools have not yet established a relationship with the local authority in the field of educational support and inclusive education. However, eight schools have a good working relationship with the national inspectors.
- There are different levels of practice across schools. There are some schools that are more involved in the local organisations, but for others communication is more difficult.
- Co-operation in transition to other schools is limited. The examples provided show that, once there is an agreement between the school and the parents that the learner would not be able to follow (in most cases) the secondary cycle, it is mainly the parents who look for another school. In some cases, the assistance at this stage is limited due to the lack of information and contact with other schools.
- At system level, in order to develop and share best practice across schools, there are annual in-service training sessions and common meetings of the educational support inspectors with the co-ordinators. However, half of the schools affirm they do not share best practices in terms of transition to other schools.
- Some schools receive feedback about transitions to new schools and use this information to improve future transition processes. The information is not received in a structured manner and is usually informal feedback, mainly from families.
- At system level, evidence collection is based on the schools' (co-ordinators) presentation. Co-ordinators share their practice, with information regarding the concrete situations, the process of decision regarding the provision of reasonable accommodation, and the communication with the schools/organisations that will welcome and work with the learner. The presentations are made from the perspective of the learner's best interest. However, no additional evidence is provided.



11.e. Findings in relation to the Recommendations and Indicators of Success of the Action Plan

This section contains a table for Area 11 with the actions and the indicators of success outlined in the Action Plan, merged findings and suggestions for further development:

No.	Action	Indicators of Success	Findings	Suggestions for further development
11.1	a) National inspectors agree to act as first point of contact.	All schools have established a relationship with local authorities in the field of EduSup and inclusive education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are specific procedures for transition to other schools and/or co-operation with the hosting Member State/municipality or the local schools. These procedures are defined in the document Provision of Educational Support in the European Schools – Procedural Document (Ref.: 2012-05-D-15-en). Revision of this document is currently in progress.• Half of the schools have not yet established a relationship with the local authority in the field of educational support and inclusive education. However, eight schools have a good working relationship with the national inspectors.• There are different levels of practice across schools. There are some schools that are more involved in the local organisations, but for others communication is more difficult.• Co-operation in transition to other schools is limited. The examples provided show that, once there is an agreement between the school and	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The different levels of practice across the schools indicate that the schools are in the process of establishing a relationship with the local authority in the field of educational support and inclusive education. However, more work and investment would be needed to strengthen communication between schools and the national systems.



No.	Action	Indicators of Success	Findings	Suggestions for further development
			the parents that the learner would not be able to follow (in most cases) the secondary cycle, it is mainly the parents who look for another school. In some cases, the assistance at this stage is limited due to the lack of information and contact with other schools.	
11.1	b) Schools share best practice.	(as above) All schools have established a relationship with local authorities in the field of EduSup and inclusive education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At system level, in order to develop and share best practice across schools, there are annual in-service training sessions and common meetings of the educational support inspectors with the co-ordinators. However, half of the schools affirm they do not share best practices in terms of transition to other schools. Some schools receive feedback about transitions to new schools and use this information to improve future transition processes. The information is not received in a structured manner and is usually informal feedback, mainly from families. At system level, evidence collection is based on the schools' (co-ordinators) presentation. Co-ordinators share their practice, with information regarding the concrete situations, the process of decision regarding the provision of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The European Schools could plan to continue and strengthen the identification and sharing of good practices but also 'less successful' examples in the context of training co-ordinators and directors. Best practices could be shared in a wider and more structured context than in-service training sessions for Educational Support Co-ordinators and informal contact between schools. There is room for improvement in communication among schools on sharing best practices. The different bodies of the European Schools system could be aware of sharing mechanisms and documentary evidence on 'best practices' in terms of transition to other schools.



No.	Action	Indicators of Success	Findings	Suggestions for further development
			reasonable accommodation, and the communication with the schools/organisations that will welcome and work with the learner. The presentations are made from the perspective of the learner's best interest. However, no additional evidence is provided.	

11.f. Overall evaluation of progress in this Area

There are two Actions in this Area, both considered of high importance and medium term according to the priority and timeframe indicated in the Action Plan. The two Actions in this Area are in progress. However, in this Area there is a gap between the policy at system level and the practice at school level.

Despite existing specific procedures at system level for **transition to other schools** and/or co-operation with the hosting Member State/municipality or the local schools, there are different levels of practice across the 13 European Schools that indicate that these schools have just **planned or are in the process of establishing a relationship with the local authority in the field of educational support and inclusive education**. The relevance is limited because the implementation of the procedures is not consistent with the intended action. The efficiency of the Action shows that procedures have been delivered in a timely manner, but they have not been used or have only been partially used to optimise the implementation of a relationship with the local authority. The impact and effectiveness of this Action cannot be estimated because it has not been fully implemented at the time of this evaluation.

The Action of **sharing best practice across schools is also in progress**. The stakeholders think there is room for improvement in communication among schools on sharing best practices in terms of transition to other schools. Half of the schools affirm they do not share best practices. Moreover, some schools receive the information in a non-structured manner, and some system-level bodies are not aware of sharing mechanisms and documentary evidence. The relevance of this Action shows that implementation of annual in-service training sessions and common meetings are not consistent enough with 'best practice' sharing across schools. The efficiency is also limited because these in-service training sessions and common meetings do not optimise the implementation of sharing best practice. The impact and effectiveness of this Action cannot be estimated because it has not been fully implemented at the time of this evaluation.



Area 12: Certification of capacities

The Action Plan in Area 12, Certification of capacities, contains one Recommendation, two Actions and Indicators of Success, and one priority level.

12.a. Findings from documentary and school survey data

Mapping the situation with regard to the different certificates developed by the Member States' national education systems is an on-going process. The timeline for this action is the end of 2022 so, at this time in the formative evaluation, the necessary information for initial findings is not available.

12.b. Findings from system survey data

There is very little progress in this area as all seven respondents indicated that the Pedagogical Reform Group has not analysed, discussed or provided its opinion on the request to develop two new certificates. This activity is planned and the timeline is the end of 2022.

12.c. Findings from focus group and interview data

The synthesis of the data for Area 12 arising from the focus groups and interviews shows:

- This Action has not started yet.
- It is included in the multi-annual pedagogical plan.
- It will be discussed in the Pedagogical Reform Working Group that will lead this process, with the involvement of national inspectors and experts from the European Commission, the Agency, etc.
- The main objective is that all learners at the end of each set, which in the European Schools system corresponds to S5, will get a certificate attesting to their competences.
- The certificates will be recognised in the Member States, according to the corresponding national certificates.

12.d. Key messages relating to Area 12

This section presents the merged findings for Area 12 from all the previous actions of the evaluation (documentary search, school survey, system survey, focus groups and interviews):

- The action of mapping the situation with regard to the different certificates developed by the Member States' national education systems has not started yet. It is included in the multi-annual pedagogical plan and the timeline for this action is the end of 2022.
- The main objective is that all learners at the end of each set, which in the European Schools system corresponds to S5, will get a certificate to their attesting competences.

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- The certificates will be recognised in the Member States, according to the corresponding national certificates.
 - It will be discussed in the Pedagogical Reform Working Group that will lead this process, with the involvement of the national inspectors and experts from the European Commission, the Agency, etc.



12.e. Findings in relation to the Recommendations and Indicators of Success of the Action Plan

This section contains a table for Area 12 with the actions and the indicators of success outlined in the Action Plan, merged findings and suggestions for further development:

No.	Action	Indicators of Success	Findings	Suggestions for further development
12.1 1	Map the situation in Member States	Pedagogical Reform Group has analysed and discussed the request and will provide its opinion	The action of mapping the situation with regard to the different certificates developed by the Member States' national education systems, has not started yet. It is included in the multi-annual pedagogical plan and the timeline for this action is the end of 2022. It will be discussed in the Pedagogical Reform Working Group that will lead this process, with the involvement of the national inspectors and experts from the European Commission, the Agency, etc.	Strengthening the mapping of the situation with regard to the different certificates developed by the Member States' national education systems.
12.1 2	Ditto	—	The main objective is that all learners at the end of each set, which in the European Schools system corresponds to S5, will get a certificate attesting to their competences. The certificates will be recognised in the Member States, according to the corresponding national certificates.	All learners at the end of each set, which in the European Schools system corresponds to S5, will get a certificate attesting to their competences. The certificates will be recognised in the Member States, according to the corresponding national certificates.

12.f. Overall evaluation of progress in this Area

There are two Actions in this Area, both of them are considered of high importance and long term according to the priority and timeframe indicated in the Action Plan. Both actions are planned.

The mapping of the situation with regard to the different certificates at the end of S5 developed by the Member States' national education systems, is planned. The Pedagogical Reform Group has planned to analyse and discuss the request and provide its opinion. The effectiveness and efficiency of the Action cannot be assessed at this stage.



Area 13: Monitoring/quality assurance

The Action Plan in Area 13, Monitoring/quality assurance, contains three Recommendations, three Actions and Indicators of Success, and three priority levels.

13.a. Findings from documentary and school survey data

This section presents the synthesis of the data for Area 13 arising from the desk-based documentary search and the school survey:

- Only a minority of schools received criteria for monitoring, recording, analysing and evaluating the educational support provision.
- Of this minority, some schools did not find the guidelines useful.
- COVID-19 contributed to some schools not being able to implement this policy area.
- Monitoring and quality assurance are an on-going process and one of the main priorities for some schools.

13.b. Findings from system survey data

The synthesis of the data for Area 13 provided by the system level survey shows the following:

- It emerges from 5 out of 7 respondents that the issue of schools being provided with guidelines on data collection is 'in progress/fully implemented'.
- However, 6 out of 7 respondents said, with respect to a consultation process in place to develop criteria to evaluate the educational support provision across all schools, 'no activity yet (no information)/implementation planned/implementation in progress'.
- The challenge seems to be in how the differences between schools have been accounted for, to produce 'harmonised' criteria, in cases where the plan is in progress, nearly completed or fully implemented. According to what has been reported, resource distribution is uneven for learners, and is considered in different ways among schools (discrepancies among schools regarding the type of support provided in different schools for the same type of need).
- Regarding the issue of schools being provided with guidelines on data collection, 1 respondent replied 'no activity yet', 1 said 'implementation planned', 3 said 'implementation in progress' and 2 said 'fully implemented'.
- With respect to a consultation process in place to develop criteria to evaluate the educational support provision across all schools, 2 respondents said 'no activity yet' (no information), 2 said 'implementation planned', 2 said 'implementation in progress' and 1 said 'implementation nearly complete'.
- Regarding how the differences between schools have been accounted for, to produce 'harmonised' criteria, in cases where the plan is in progress, nearly completed or fully implemented, 2 replied that they have no information, 1 said it



is in progress, 1 replied that the progresses and discrepancies among schools have been discussed in several boards, and 1 other respondent identified that 'the current external evaluation is one very important aspect of this on-going workstream. The opportunity for a follow-up exchange on this survey would be greatly welcome. This action should help to reflect on where to adjust actions to fulfil the Action Plan. There is a need to add in statistical reports (action agreed at Policy Group), as well as learners who have the intensive support/moderate support label and benefit from special arrangements and/or classroom adaptations without support hours, to show the full reach of reasonable accommodation'. Moreover, as far as the respondent understands, guidelines and processes have been defined to report statistical data; any suggestions to improve their coverage and quality and streamline the collection process is of course very welcome. The respondent has no detailed information on what further operational guidelines apply to the schools and how far they are in progressing with implementation. Nor does the respondent has concrete information on the state and possible differences in actual progress.

- 1 replied the following: 'Yearly survey on Educational Support provides a lot of data but doesn't show how each type of support has been decided by the school: for example, one child diagnosed with ADHD in one school will have a full-time assistant in class whereas only a few hours with the learning support teacher in another school. Parents who change ... school don't understand such a difference'. Lastly, there was the following comment: 'In the context of the Statistical Report on Educational Support and Inclusive Education, the different stakeholders and responsible bodies have identified areas that would need to be further analysed to understand the differences in the implementation of Educational Support in the European Schools. These reflections lead to the establishment of some actions that are currently in execution. The main areas of consideration involve: the use of different types of support in the different cycles/schools, transition between cycles, Educational Support budget'.
- Resource distribution is uneven for learners, and is considered in different ways among schools (discrepancies among schools regarding the type of support provided in different schools for the same type of need. See comments on Area 3).

13.c. Findings from focus group and interview data

The synthesis of the data for Area 13 arising from the focus groups and interviews shows:

- The main aspect that the schools identify as in need of urgent improvement relates to retrieving data from the school management system, which was said to be currently impossible. It would also allow them to collect more harmonised and accurate information, so this is one problem that, for many years, the schools have identified as needing improvement.
- The process of monitoring educational support is both at school and system level.
- At school level, educational support co-ordinators write a report for the Administrative Board at the start and end of each year. They give information on the number of learners, kind of learning disabilities they have, number of support



hours, general information and kind of progress, areas of growth and areas to develop/improve. Then they summarise it in terms of feedback to management and feedback to staff.

- They write a report that is published on the school website.
- However, the volume of work to do this is huge and cannot be left to the support co-ordinators alone.
- Two years ago, they introduced an assistant deputy to help the deputy director.
- Monitoring and quality assurance in the area of educational support would be an improvement. It is included in the European Schools' Action Plan as well, and hopefully in 2024 there will be a new management system.

13.d. Key messages relating to Area 13

Distribution of resources is uneven for learners, and it is considered in different ways among schools but also among cycles in the same school (discrepancies among schools regarding the type of support provided in different schools for the same type of need, the use of different types of support in the different cycles/schools, transition between cycles, Educational Support budget).



13.e. Findings in relation to the Recommendations and Indicators of Success of the Action Plan

This section contains a table for Area 13 with the actions and the indicators of success outlined in the Action Plan, merged findings and suggestions for further development:

No.	Action	Indicators of Success	Findings	Suggestions for further development
13.1	The Commission's Diversity and Gender Equality 2018 Report and Action Plan.	The BoG mandates the Secretary-General to contract an external evaluation in 2021 with the purpose of implementing the European Schools' Action Plan adopted by the BoG in April 2019, including any outstanding issues, and issuing recommendations to the BoG.	The Final formative evaluation report is conducted by the European Agency.	Take into account the information in the formative evaluation report and implement suggestions to improve IE in European Schools.
13.2	Provide the schools with guidelines on data collection.	Future statistical reports provide the requested data.	The main aspect that the schools identify as in need of urgent improvement relates to retrieving data from the school management system, which was said to be currently very difficult.	Schools should overcome current barriers and improve retrieving data from school management system.



No.	Action	Indicators of Success	Findings	Suggestions for further development
13.3	Develop harmonised criteria for evaluating the EduSup provision	All schools have at their disposal criteria for monitoring, recording, analysing and evaluating the Educational Support provision and its effectiveness.	Monitoring and quality assurance in the area of educational support would be an improvement. It is included in the European Schools' Action Plan as well, and hopefully in 2024 there will be a new management system. Distribution of resources is uneven for learners, and it is considered in different ways among schools but also among cycles in the same school (discrepancies among schools regarding the type of support provided in different schools for the same type of need, the use of different types of support in the different cycles/schools, transition between cycles, Educational Support budget).	Monitoring and the quality assurance in educational support should be harmonised.

13.f. Overall evaluation of progress in this Area

There are three Actions in this Area, one of high importance and long term (13.1), one important and short term (by 2019/20 school year, 13.2), and one important and long term according to the priority and timeframe in the Action Plan. The Actions are planned. The main aspect that the schools identify as in need of urgent improvement relates to retrieving data from the school management system. Stakeholders indicate that this is currently very difficult. No evidence was given to indicate how this action might be progressed. Moreover, monitoring and quality assurance in educational support would be an improvement. It is included in the European Schools' Action Plan and implementation of a new management system is planned for 2024.



DISCUSSION AND EVALUATIVE OVERVIEW

This section outlines the main findings and challenges in the implementation of the Action Plan.

Key messages in each of the 13 Areas, highlighted in the previous section, indicate that there is some progress across most Recommendations and Actions, but this may be at an entry and emerging level, or at a more developed or secure level, within each Area. In three Areas, Actions are planned, but not yet started (Adaptability-curricula, assessment, examination; Certification of capacities; Monitoring/quality assurance) and in one Area, Actions are nearly complete (Enrolment).

Overall evaluation of progress in each Area:

- There is progress across the Area of **Human Resources**, with some Actions in place at system level, that are not implemented at School level, indicating that there are on-going challenges for schools. These are in relation to the qualifications of the Educational Support Co-ordinators, the recruitment of appropriately qualified or skilled support staff, the allocation of time to Educational Support, including secretarial support; and the recruitment of teachers, particularly those with language skills.
- In the Area of **Qualifications and Training**, there has been progress at system level. As the training policy was only approved in November 2021, there has not yet been enough time for implementation at school level. While the impact of the pandemic on training opportunities has been considerable, it seems that schools have met challenges in increasing the involvement of staff in training, in relation to educational support and inclusive education and this is something that needs further development.
- In the Area of **Budgetary Allocation**, there has been progress at system level. However, there are some issues in relation to schools understanding of the budget. Budget is perceived as very complex and with missing information. Moreover, other topics beyond the scope of the action about 'budgetary allocation' emerged from the qualitative data. Budget is considered to be sufficient but, according to some stakeholders, it could be used more effectively, mainly in relation to organisation and qualifications. The needs-based budget links to a growth of yearly budgetary allocations.
- With regards to **Accessibility of the Built Environment**, adaptations are the responsibility of the city, region, or state, so practices can diverge widely from school to school. However, it has been underlined that the complexity and the variety of those policies cannot be an argument to slow down or reduce efforts to meet the individual needs of pupils with an impairment. Some schools have already started the analysis of the accessibility to the built environment based on the national standards and have agreed different adaptations to information and communication technology. However, some issues were highlighted at school level regarding assistive technology, some cases of mismanagement in the delivery of educational support during the pandemic period, follow-up on students' files during teachers' turnover, readiness of



schools to host students with all types of needs, etc. Importantly, schools react to students' needs rather than acting to prevent barriers to learning.

- Regarding **Accessibility – Information and Communication**, there is progress at system level. However, there appears to be a gap between policy and implementation into practice by schools. While at system level policies are mostly implemented, some stakeholders consider that the policies could be put into practice more systematically and more effectively.
- There is progress regarding the **Teaching Material**, specifically in relation to the access the schools have to national resource centres, so that they can benefit from the expertise shared and support provided. However, there are some limitations to the effective use of the resource centres in practice by schools. Progress is also indicated in relation to the identification of common market for purchasing accessible teaching and assistive material and setting up a framework contact.
- In **Personalised Support**, guidance given to schools indicates that there is progress across the Actions at system level, but there is variation in the ways that schools work within the guidelines given in the policies. However, there are significant challenges at every level, with variation in the interpretation and provision of personalised support. A number of constraints to schools in fulfilling the commitment to personalised support have emerged, relating to other Areas of the Action Plan, such as qualifications and training, staffing, experts, allocation of support resources, enrolment, budget, accessibility and transition. Development towards the harmonisation of processes would enable progress to be more effective at school level.
- There is a gap between the policy at system level and the practice at school level regarding the **Transition between school cycles**. There is progress in relation in identifying existing difficulties and making proposals in the transition from primary to secondary cycle. The smooth transition policy identifies mechanisms to evaluate the process of developing teams and the teams' impact on transitions. However, there are variations that indicate different levels of practice across schools. The promotion of the concept of multi-professional transition teams is still in progress, as the schools have a list of parties involved in the transition cycle. However, there is no evidence that schools have established a certain number of hours/periods of *décharge*.
- The Actions in the Area on **Adaptability (Curricula, Assessment and Examination)** range from planned to being in progress. The analysis of concrete barriers in the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and the preparation of a proposal for introducing flexibility to the curriculum allowing more pupils with educational needs to be promoted, is planned but not started yet. Improvement of the electronic system recording provision, progress and assessment of pupils with special educational needs is in progress. The Action for stakeholders to have at their disposal relevant accurate data, is also in progress.
- In the Area of **Enrolment**, the implementation of common guidelines about enrolment, removal or non-enrolment for the schools is nearly complete. Directors base their decision not to enrol a learner/no longer provide education to a learner on clear procedures and documentary evidence, including external expertise. The cases



are properly documented, analysed and conclusions are drawn. However, there are some issues in the way that the guidelines have been implemented.

- The **Transition to other schools** is in progress. However, despite existing specific procedures at system level for transition to other schools and/or co-operation with the hosting member state/municipality or the local schools, there are different levels of practice across the 13 European schools. This indicates that these schools have just planned or are in progress in establishing a relationship with the local authority in the field of educational support and inclusive education. The stakeholders think that there is room for improvement about the communication among the schools on sharing best practices in terms of transition to other schools.
- The Actions regarding the **Certification of Capacities** are planned. The mapping of the different certificates at the end of S5, developed by the member states' national education systems, is planned. The Pedagogical Reform Group has planned to analyse and discuss the request and provide its opinion.
- Regarding the **Monitoring and Quality Assurance**, the Actions are planned. The main aspects that the schools identify as a need of urgent improvement are related to retrieving data from school management system. Stakeholders indicate that this is currently very difficult. Moreover, monitorization and the quality assurance provided in education support would be an area of improvement.

However, across different Areas, there are Actions in place at system level where the implementation across the 13 schools varies and in some cases they are not harmonised. This potential gap between the development of policies and guidelines at system level and the way they are implemented in practice at school level has been affected by the pandemic, among other things. There is also variation in the ways the 13 schools work within the guidelines given in the policies. Moreover, some decisions have recently been taken at the system level and there has not been time for their implementation at the school level during the lifetime of this formative evaluation.

Schools receive guidance and information at system level but are working within their own contexts to make the required changes and adaptations, in different ways. There is some variation across schools in their perceptions of their own progress in some aspects of the Action Plan and in the on-going challenges they experience. There is also some variation in perception between the system level and the stakeholders on the progress in implementing different aspects of the Action Plan into practice at school level.

There are some challenges across all Areas of the Action Plan. Some of these have arisen directly from the effects of the global COVID-19 pandemic. The effects of the pandemic delayed the implementation of some Actions. As a result, resources and staff training were more focused on online teaching and learning than on inclusive education and personalised support.

Other challenges have been encountered in relation to: Budgetary Allocation, Accessibility of Built Environment, Enrolment, Qualifications and Training, Personalised Support and Human Resources.

Issues in **Budgetary Allocation** are linked to missing harmonisation criteria among schools, improved budget allocations for qualification and training, and receipt of budget



information by the stakeholders. Some of the barriers to the implementation of the Action Plan in the Area of **Accessibility of Built Environment** include dissemination of information, space limitation, teacher qualifications and training, some limitation in the use of teaching material, and financial responsibility for ICT material for learners. **Training** in inclusive education emerged as a particular challenge across several different Areas and as an area of concern among stakeholders in the focus groups and interviews. They identified this as a key and fundamental issue in relation to important and necessary changes to practice within schools for the development of inclusive education. In the Area of **Enrolment**, some stakeholders highlighted some issues regarding the way that the guidelines have been implemented by the schools, and in relation to information and communication, the length of the processes, discontinuation in agreement with parents, and learners in 'progression' track. A number of constraints on schools in fulfilling the commitment to **Personalised Support** have emerged, relating to other Areas of the Action Plan, such as qualifications and training, staffing, experts, allocation of support resources, enrolment, budget, accessibility and transition. In **Human Resources**, schools have encountered difficulties in the recruitment of staff with the appropriate skills and qualifications, across all sections, as indicated in the policy at system level.

There is considerable variation between the system level and stakeholders in schools in their perceptions of the level of progress made in implementing different aspects of the Action Plan in practice. Schools have encountered some challenges in implementing the policies and guidelines they have been given, and there are gaps between policy and practice across many of the Areas.

Similar challenges are evident across many Areas, and difficulties in one Area can have an impact on the effectiveness of other Areas. In practice, all the different Areas are interdependent and should work interactively to address the challenges. This highlights the importance of a holistic approach towards inclusive education.

The European Schools have started the long process of inclusive education and are developing a legal framework for capacity building of schools. However, in practice, schools still tend to respond to events and challenges as they occur, rather than by using approaches to build the capacity of schools, staff and resources to anticipate the needs of current and future stakeholders, and to be ready to support the needs of all learners.

While inclusive education has now been established as the guiding principle in the European Schools, there is still variation within schools and across the European Schools in the ways in which inclusive education is interpreted and incorporated into practice. It is apparent that there are a number of approaches to inclusive education, across stakeholders, even within individual schools, and a corresponding lack of homogeneity in practice, within schools, across stakeholders, and between schools.

This Final Report indicates the progress in implementing the Action Plan. The Agency has evaluated the progress made in each of the 13 Areas against the Actions, Indicators of Success, Timeline and Budget, as indicated in the Action Plan. Where appropriate, progress has been evaluated in relation to one or more of the five criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact, in line with the core principles of inclusive education, to which the Agency adheres.



COMMENTS ON THE ACTION PLAN IN RELATION TO THE AGENCY POSITION ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

This Final Report recognises and acknowledges that significant work has been done in preparing the Action Plan on Educational Support and Inclusive Education and in the processes undertaken by the Board of Governors, the Office of the Secretary General, the Working Groups, Directors, Educational Support Co-ordinators and all staff, at every level, in all 13 schools, to make the Action Plan's vision a reality, as the European Schools move towards a more inclusive ethos.

As the Inception Report indicated, the Agency has not assessed the Action Plan's quality or feasibility. However, in this section, it has exercised the right it was given to comment on the extent to which the Action Plan itself is in line with general concepts and principles for inclusive education, with international and European principles and with the Agency's wider work. It is clear that the move from the previous system to a new one is a complex and evolving process. This report recognises that the changes in policy, practice and culture which are called for, as schools and systems begin to develop inclusive education, are always a work in progress, subject to on-going development and adjustment, as they work continuously to create more meaningful, high-quality educational opportunities for all learners.

The Agency and all its member countries have an agreed position on the aspiration to develop more inclusive systems, outlined in the [Agency Position on Inclusive Education Systems](#) (European Agency, 2015). This presents the essential features of inclusive education systems and is fully in line with European Union and international stated priorities for education.

Drawing on the Agency's experience of working with its member countries, during the evaluation of the Action Plan it was felt that some aspects call for further in-depth reflection and action on the extent of their alignment with the vision and principles of inclusive education. In some cases these derive from the choice of terminology, which can give rise to ambiguity in meaning. In other cases, this is in relation to the European Schools' decisions about their own policies and practices in some of the Areas. These relate to aspects of personalised support, transitions, continuation, adaptability, curriculum and enrolment. This section seeks to clarify these points.

The Agency's member country representatives agreed on the following position on inclusive education, as a guiding principle for the Agency's activities:

The ultimate vision for inclusive education systems is to ensure that all learners of any age are provided with meaningful, high-quality educational opportunities in their local community, alongside their friends and peers (ibid., p. 1).

While the European Schools are unique, and work within a different context to national schools, the 'local community' in this sense is the European School currently attended by the learner, or to which they are applying for entry. The vision of quality education for all young people, alongside their friends and peers, remains central to inclusive education



systems. This principle underpins all policy and practice within inclusive schools and is inherent in every aspect of school life. It is the responsibility of schools to provide educational opportunities for all learners, alongside their peers, with the provision of appropriate learning support, within the school system, to achieve this vision.

Within inclusive education systems and schools, there are aims for all learners and these include a commitment to:

Raise the achievements of learners by recognising and building upon their talents and effectively meeting their individual learning needs and interests (ibid., p. 2).

The classification of certain learners (Area 7) with labels of 'special education needs', 'physical disability' or 'important learning difficulty' positions these learners as having a deficit. This creates barriers in the manner they are identified and are subject to different regulations, curricula and opportunities than other learners (Area 9). Inclusive education systems must move away from this medical model of classification, to a social (psycho-pedagogical) model, which identifies the on-going educational needs of each individual learner in relation to the learning environment. The most appropriate support is then put in place for teaching and learning to overcome any barriers. The language of the social model differs greatly from that of the medical model. It recognises that each person is unique in their response to circumstances and that it is barriers in the learning environment, rather than in the learner, which must be recognised and overcome.

The limiting of opportunities for some learners is against the principles of inclusive education, as this statement from the Agency's position paper makes clear:

The *policy* governing inclusive education systems must provide a clear vision for and conceptualisation of inclusive education as an approach for improving the educational opportunities of all learners (ibid., p. 1).

The European Schools' policy may limit the educational opportunities of some learners, particularly those who are 'progressed' but not 'promoted' with their peers at the end of the school year. Where these learners are subject to a restricted curriculum, it may cause distress to themselves and their families and create divisions in the inclusive ethos of the school.

A key principle of inclusive schools is the valuing of diversity by all stakeholders, across all policy and practice, and in working towards raising the achievements of all learners:

Ensure that all stakeholders value diversity. This principle should be enacted through actively engaging stakeholders in dialogue and providing support to enable them to make individual and collective contributions to widening access to education and improving equity to enable all learners to realise their full potential (ibid., p. 2).

It is the responsibility of the school to enable all learners to participate fully in school life, with a flexible curricular approach, rather than restricting the curriculum of some learners, on the basis of perceived disability (Area 9.2). These practices marginalise some learners from their peers and are against the principles of inclusive education, which indicate that



all learners' potential is open-ended. It is important to implement flexible curricula, leading to recognised certification, so that all learners receive the educational support needed to continue to be educated alongside their peers and friends, throughout their school years.

Ensure the availability of flexible continua of provision and resources that support the learning of all stakeholders at both individual and organisational levels (ibid.).

The policies of enrolment and of non-continuation (Area 10.1) need to be developed to be in line with the principles of inclusive education. This is exemplified in the wording of 'before rejecting³ a child' (Area 10.2). The notion of rejection is exclusionary and is contrary to the principles of inclusive education. Policies such as these may cause significant and long-lasting effects on the academic, social and emotional development and opportunities of a learner and their family. In the context of the European Schools, the disruption created by a move into a local school, with the prospect of a different system, language and culture, is likely to be significant. Furthermore, these policies undermine the European Schools' commitment towards the enactment of the vision of inclusive education. This vision, as clearly outlined by the Agency and all its member countries, is evident through legislation and policy:

For this vision to be enacted, the *legislation* directing inclusive education systems must be underpinned by the fundamental commitment to ensuring every learner's right to inclusive and equitable educational opportunities.

The *policy* governing inclusive education systems must provide a clear vision for and conceptualisation of inclusive education as an approach for improving the educational opportunities of all learners. Policy must also clearly outline that the effective implementation of inclusive education systems is the shared responsibility of all educators, leaders and decision-makers (ibid., p. 1).

While the status of the European Schools is different to that of other systems, and may present certain difficulties, the way in which on-going commitment to the development of inclusive education in the schools is being undertaken is clear. These points for in-depth reflection and action may assist the schools as they move forward with their vision. In this way, the European Schools will be more in line with international targets and developments in relation to achieving more inclusive educational environments.

³ The word 'rejection' is not used in the revised Policy.



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ANNEX 1: SCHOOL SURVEY

Introduction and instructions

This survey is part of the evaluation of the implementation of the European Schools' Action Plan on Educational Support and Inclusive Education. The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education is conducting this evaluation.

The survey aims to understand the status of each European School's implementation of the Recommendations and Actions in the Areas of the Action Plan. As you complete the survey, please consider all sections and departments of the school. Additionally, please ensure those responsible for each Area of the Plan complete the appropriate Area questions.

The survey includes three sections:

- **Section A – General Questions**
 - This section aims to obtain relevant background information about the individual completing the survey. It also aims to understand the roles of any other professionals consulted during the completion of the survey.
- **Section B – Areas from the Action Plan**
 - This section includes questions relating to the implementation of the Actions in each of the Action Plan's Areas. For each Area, there are questions about various aspects of the Plan. Answers fall on a scale ranging from 'No activity yet' to 'Fully implemented'. Please select only one answer for each question. Each Area also includes open-ended questions. Please answer these questions as fully as possible in the text fields.
- **Section C – Concluding Questions**
 - This section includes four open-ended questions aiming to understand your assessment of the school's strengths, progress and/or barriers when it comes to implementing the Recommendations in all Areas of the Action Plan. Please answer these questions as fully as possible in the text fields.

We request that you submit the survey and any supplementary materials by 30/6/2021.

Thank you very much for your participation in this survey.

Section A: General Questions

1. Please, share the country in which your school is located. Required
 - Belgium
 - Germany
 - Italy
 - Luxembourg



-
- Netherlands
 - Spain
2. Please share the name of your school:
 3. What is your role within the school? Please select your answer from the drop-down list.
 - School leader/Director
 - School leadership team
 - Teacher
 - Support co-ordinator
 - Support teacher
 - Support assistant
 - Therapist
 - Educational advisors
 - Psychologists
 - Support inspectors
 - Office of the Secretary-General
 - Parents
 - Other
 4. On a scale of 1–5 (1 = fully informed, 5 = not informed at all), how informed do you feel about the Action Plan on Educational Support and Inclusive Education?
 - Answers on a five-point scale, e.g. ‘fully informed’, ‘very informed’, ‘informed’, ‘somewhat informed’, ‘not informed at all’.

Section B: Areas from the Action Plan on Educational Support and Inclusive Education

1. Human Resources

The Recommendations for this Area are to:

- 1.1 Review the recruitment policy (for secondments and locally recruited staff) in order to ensure that newly recruited staff disposes of the necessary qualifications.
- 1.2 Strengthen the recognition of the support co-ordinators and provide them with secretarial support where necessary.
- 1.3 Improve the working conditions of support assistants (salary, job security, review of job description) and strengthen their status.
- 1.4 Review the list of professions, which are included in the list of therapists.



Please indicate your school's current status on the implementation of the following Actions. Please select only one reply per question.

Actions	No activity yet	Implementation planned	Implementation in progress	Implementation nearly complete	Fully implemented
Is there a recruitment policy in place for seconded and locally employed support teachers, with a clear definition of the requirements for qualifications and experience?					
Is there a recruitment policy in place for the Educational Support Co-ordinators, indicating the necessary minimum recommended requirements for qualifications, expertise, experience and language competence?					
Is there a policy recommendation for allocating time to Educational Support Co-ordination, based on the number of learners in the school receiving Educational Support?					
Is there a policy for dedicated secretarial support for Educational Support, indicating the hours of work per week and the respective sections of the school?					
Is there a policy in place for the role, qualifications and experience recommended for Support Assistants, following an internal review of their legal status and contracts?					
Is a detailed contract issued to all Educational Support Assistants to indicate their legal status and job description, including specific roles and tasks?					

In addition, please address the following open-ended questions:

- Have you met the policy requirements for the recruitment of support teachers? This includes the required level of qualifications and experience in learning support and in language competence in every language section.
- Have you met the requirements for increasing the number of Educational Support Co-ordinators employed this year with the appropriate level of qualifications, experience and expertise in special educational needs (SEN)?
- What is the rationale for the time allocation of the work of Educational Support Co-ordinators in relation to their flexible hours?



2. Qualifications and Training

The Recommendations for this Area are to:

2.1 Develop a training policy for teaching and non-teaching staff on inclusive education and set up a dedicated budget.

2.2 Provide all new teaching staff, as part of their induction training, with information on policy and procedures of educational support provisions.

2.3 Ensure awareness of all members of the school community (staff, parents and pupils).

Please indicate your school's current status on the implementation of the following Actions. Please select only one reply per question.

Actions	No activity yet	Implementation planned	Implementation in progress	Implementation nearly complete	Fully implemented
Is a training policy in place, including a dedicated budget for initial and on-going professional development in inclusive education for all teaching and non-teaching staff?					
Does the school have a training or induction plan for all new teaching staff this year, including a section on inclusive education?					
Has the school received any material or guidance on raising awareness of inclusive education?					

In addition, please address the following open-ended questions:

- Has there been an increase in teaching and non-teaching staff participation in internal or external training on inclusive education this year? If so, to what extent?
- How does the school ensure that Educational Support training enables staff to develop the necessary competence (knowledge, understanding and skills) to provide reasonable accommodation for individual learner needs?
- What types of events has the school organised to raise awareness and understanding of inclusive education among various internal and external stakeholders?

3. Budgetary Allocations

The Recommendation for this Area is to:

3.1 Provide the schools with more guidance on how to allocate the budget.



Please address the following open-ended questions:

- Have you received guidelines about the annual budget for support and the requirements for annual reporting?
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, did the guidelines about the support budget meet your requirements?
 - If no, how were the needs of the school different from what was anticipated?

4. Accessibility of the built environment (including information and communication technology and school transport)

The Recommendation for this Area is to:

4.1 Set up a comprehensive accessibility policy with clear standards, monitor its implementation and maintenance and check accessibility needs of pupils (and parents and teachers) on a regular basis in order to ensure reasonable accommodation.

Please indicate your school's current status on the implementation of the following Action. Please select only one reply.

Action	No activity yet	Implementation planned	Implementation in progress	Implementation nearly complete	Fully implemented
Has the school prevented barriers by adopting measures to ensure the right to accessible education and full and equal participation of all pupils?					

In addition, please address the following open-ended questions:

- What adaptations have been made to the built environment?
- What adaptations have been made to information and communication technology?
- What adaptations have been made to school transport?

5. Communication of accessibility information

The Recommendation for this Area is to:

5.1 Ensure that all schools have comprehensive and easily accessible school-specific guidelines.

Please indicate your school's current status on the implementation of the following Actions. Please select only one reply per question.



Actions	No activity yet	Implementation planned	Implementation in progress	Implementation nearly complete	Fully implemented
Does the school have comprehensive and easily accessible school-specific guidelines that are fully compliant with the European Schools Accessibility Policy?					
Does the school have comprehensive and easily accessible school-specific guidelines that are fully compliant with the Policy on 'Educational Support and Inclusive Education' and the Checklist on Core Elements?					

In addition, please address the following open-ended questions:

- At the system level, does the European Schools provide the guidance required for your school to establish an accessibility policy?
- How do learners and their families have the opportunity to voice their opinions and issues around accessibility, and for their views to be considered?

6. Teaching Material

The Recommendations for this Area are to:

6.1 Explore ways for strengthening the co-operation with National Resource Centres.

6.2 Establish a procurement policy to purchase accessible teaching material and assistive material.

Please indicate your school's current status on the implementation of the following Actions. Please select only one reply per question.

Actions	No activity yet	Implementation planned	Implementation in progress	Implementation nearly complete	Fully implemented
Do National Inspectors act as the first point of contact to support the school in finding information?					
Do National Resource Centres share expertise and provide support to the school so it can fulfil its responsibilities?					

In addition, please address the following open-ended questions:

- Do you have access to National Resource Centres?



- Yes
- No
- If yes, what are the main ways in which you use them (e.g. as a training resource, to raise awareness of inclusive education, to source teaching materials, for language support)?
- If no, what are the main challenges you have encountered in accessing or using the National Resource Centres?
- Does the school have access to the necessary teaching material?
 - Yes
 - No
 - If no, please elaborate on the potential barriers.

7. Personalised Support

The Recommendations for this Area are to:

7.1 Provide the schools with more autonomy to adapt the thresholds for the maximum number of pupils in cases where a class has several pupils receiving ISA. Alternatively, ensure that classes with 25–30 pupils and having several pupils receiving ISA get a support teacher on a permanent basis.

7.2 Develop and introduce a comprehensive and harmonised framework and procedure for early identification of pupils' abilities and needs.

7.3 The current classification of diagnosis used in the ES needs to be updated in order to fully correspond to the current understanding of difficulties and disabilities affecting learning, based on the existing research and to be in line with the human rights approach of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

Please indicate your school's current status on the implementation of the following Actions. Please select only one reply per question.

Actions	No activity yet	Implementation planned	Implementation in progress	Implementation nearly complete	Fully implemented
Is there a policy/section of policy about the enrolment process that addresses learners' potential needs, while respecting General Data Protection Regulation requirements?					
Is an internationally recognised process/framework for the diagnosis and classification of a learner's need for support in place for all sections of the school?					
Does the school have a standardised process for the early and on-going identification of learners' abilities and needs?					



Actions	No activity yet	Implementation planned	Implementation in progress	Implementation nearly complete	Fully implemented
Does the diagnostic and classification process match the appropriate provision of initial and on-going support in terms of resources, support staffing and assessment of need?					
Is there a policy in place to enable class sizes to be adapted in relation to the number of pupils with different types and levels of need, in a timely and flexible way?					

In addition, please address the following open-ended questions:

- What processes (consultation, reporting, assessment, etc.) are used to identify and classify potential needs during the enrolment of learners of different ages and in different sections of the school?
- How does the school ensure individual learner needs are matched to appropriate and on-going personalised support after diagnosis, in terms of support staff, resources and class size?
- Which staff and external individuals/organisational representatives are involved in decisions around the diagnosis, classification and adaptation and delivery of support in relation to individual learner needs?

8. Smooth Transition

The Recommendation for this Area is to:

- 8.1 Explore ways to facilitate the successful transition of pupils with educational needs in particular from the Primary to the Secondary Cycle.

Please indicate your school's current status on the implementation of the following Actions. Please select only one reply per question.

Actions	No activity yet	Implementation planned	Implementation in progress	Implementation nearly complete	Fully implemented
Has the school identified existing difficulties and made concrete proposals to ensure a successful transition from Primary to Secondary Cycle?					



Actions	No activity yet	Implementation planned	Implementation in progress	Implementation nearly complete	Fully implemented
Is there a multi-professional 'trans cycle' care team, with a certain number of hours/periods of <i>décharge</i> in the document on 'Internal Structures'?					

In addition, please address the following open-ended questions:

- What team members, specific roles and allocated hours are established for the multi-professional 'transition cycle' care team?
- Is there a process of communication, feedback and discussion around transition among all stakeholders involved (teachers, support staff, learners, families, administrative staff, management and inspectors)?
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, please explain the process and who is involved.

9. Adaptability – Curricula, Assessment, Examination

The Recommendations for this Area are to:

9.1 Mandate the Pedagogical Reform Group to analyse how to introduce some flexibility to the curriculum with the aim of allowing more pupils with educational needs to be promoted. This includes replacing an element of the curriculum with an alternative element in case of physical disability or learning difficulty, clarifying rules for promotion in case of skipped subject, etc.

9.2 Review the criteria for promotion and progression with the aim of allowing pupils with minor modifications of the curriculum or those who cannot attend some subject/s because of their disability to be promoted.

9.3 Further develop the electronic system to record pupil progress, assessment and promotion in order to better record the progress and promotion of pupils with special educational needs.

Please address the following questions:

- Does the school have an improved electronic system for recording the provision, progress and assessment of learners with special needs?
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, in what ways is this system an improvement on earlier systems? Are all learners receiving support classified as having SEN?
- How is the data from the system used in the school? Who is responsible for adding data to the system and what types of data are included?



10. Enrolment

The Recommendation for this Area is to:

10.1 Establish clear procedures, criteria and responsibilities for assessing the requests for enrolment of children with special educational needs and for advising parents in case of continuation of enrolment might not be in the best interest of the child.

Please indicate your school's current status on the implementation of the following Action. Please select only one reply.

Action	No activity yet	Implementation planned	Implementation in progress	Implementation nearly complete	Fully implemented
Are all cases of non-enrolment and non-continuation properly documented and analysed? This includes drawing conclusions to make the school progressively more inclusive.					

In addition, please address the following open-ended questions:

- Are there mechanisms in place to ensure that all stages of the process of enrolment/non-enrolment and non-continuation are open and followed according to the guidelines?
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, what are those mechanisms?
- How is the information (every case documentation, analysis and conclusions) used to enable the school to become progressively more inclusive?
- Is support provided for parents and learners to access alternative education with the least disruption?
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, what kinds of support?

11. Transition to other schools

The Recommendation for this Area is to:

11.1 Strengthen further the co-operation between the school and the hosting Member State/Municipality and the local schools.

Please indicate your school's current status on the implementation of the following Actions. Please select only one reply per question.



Actions	No activity yet	Implementation planned	Implementation in progress	Implementation nearly complete	Fully implemented
Has the school established a relationship with the local authority in the field of educational support and inclusive education?					
Do schools share best practices?					

In addition, please address the following open-ended questions:

- Has the school established a good working relationship with National Inspectors, local education authorities and external experts in inclusive education?
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, what are the typical processes and who is involved?
- Has the school sought feedback from the organisations involved in transitions and/or from learners and their families about their transitions to new schools?
How has the school used this information to improve the transition process?

12. Monitoring/Quality Assurance

The Recommendations for this Area are to:

12.1 Conduct an independent, external monitoring/evaluation concerning the inclusiveness of the policy of the European Schools in the context of the UNCRPD recommendations.

12.2 Cover in future statistical reports additional aspects such as qualification and training of teaching staff, information on therapists and reasons why pupils are not enrolled or leave the European School system.

12.3 Conduct a systematic evaluation of educational support provision in the schools based on clear criteria and statistical data.

Please indicate your school's current status on the implementation of the following Actions. Please select only one reply per question.

Actions	No activity yet	Implementation planned	Implementation in progress	Implementation nearly complete	Fully implemented
Is the school provided with guidelines concerning the collection of data?					



In addition, please address the following open-ended questions:

- Have you received criteria for monitoring, recording, analysing and evaluating the Educational Support provision and its effectiveness?
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, have these criteria been useful in evaluating and monitoring Educational Support across all departments and sections of the school?

Section C: Concluding Questions

- For which thematic area of the Action Plan do you feel your school has made the greatest progress?
- For which thematic area of the Action Plan do you feel progress is the most challenging?
- What do you feel are the overall strengths of implementing the Recommendations of the Action Plan?
- What do you feel are the main barriers for implementing Recommendations of the Action Plan?



ANNEX 2: SYSTEM SURVEY

Introduction and instructions

This survey is part of the evaluation of the implementation of the European Schools' Action Plan on Educational Support and Inclusive Education. The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education is conducting this evaluation.

The survey aims to understand the progress of the implementation of the Recommendations and Actions in the Areas of the Action Plan.

This survey is aimed at the organising bodies of the European Schools. Each organising body plays a certain role in implementing the Recommendations of the Action Plan.

The survey includes three sections:

- **Section A – General Questions**
 - This section aims to obtain relevant background information about the organising body completing the survey. It also aims to understand the roles of any other professionals consulted during the completion of the survey.
- **Section B – Areas from the Action Plan**
 - This section includes questions relating to the implementation of the Actions in each of the Action Plan's thirteen Areas. **Please ensure that each Area is answered by the individual person who has the most relevant information.** For each Area, **please give your perceptions of the progress made in schools.** Answers fall on a scale ranging from 'No activity yet (no information)' to 'Fully implemented'. Please select only one answer for each question in the table. Each Area also includes open-ended questions. If you do not have any information for the open-ended questions, please add 'No information' and proceed to the next section.
 - Please answer these questions as fully as possible in the text fields.
- **Section C – Concluding Questions**
 - This section includes one or more open-ended questions aiming to understand your assessment of the strengths, progress and/or barriers to implementing the Recommendations in all Areas of the Action Plan. Please answer these questions as fully as possible in the text fields.

We request that you submit the survey and any supplementary materials by **4/10/2021**.

Data protection

The Agency has reasonable and appropriate technical, physical and administrative controls in place to protect your personal data. For any queries about the personal data processed, please contact the Agency Data Privacy Group via email: privacy@european-agency.org.



Survey instructions

The survey is estimated to take 60 minutes to complete.

The intention is for one person within each organising body to collate information and complete the survey. To support this, a PDF version of this survey has also been shared to provide you with an overview of the questions.

On each page in the survey you can choose to save and continue by using the 'Next' option. If you continue, the information on the page will be saved. When you complete the survey and select 'Finish', your information will be submitted.

If you prefer to finish later or you need some time to complete the survey, you can choose 'Finish later'. This allows you to return to the same page of the survey at a later time from the same computer.

Please be aware if you do not select either 'Finish later' or 'Finish' your data will not be saved.

After submitting the survey, you will have the option to print or download a copy of your replies. This option is only available for 15 minutes after the survey is submitted. Please download and save a copy for your own reference.

Section A: General Questions

5. Please, share the governing body you work in:
 - Office of Secretary General,
 - ES Inspectors,
 - Educational Support Policy Working Group
 - Joint Teaching Committee,
 - Budgetary Committee
 - Board of Governors.
6. What is your role within European Schools? Please select your answer from the drop-down list.
 - a. Secretary-General
 - b. President of the Joint Teaching Committee
 - c. President of the Budgetary Committee
 - d. President of the Board of Governors
 - e. Inspectors in charge of Educational Support
 - f. Other members of the Educational Support Policy WG
7. On a scale of 1–5 (1 = fully informed, 5 = not informed at all), how informed do you feel about the Action Plan on Educational Support and Inclusive Education?



- Answers on a five-point scale, e.g. 'fully informed', 'very informed', 'informed', 'somewhat informed', 'not informed at all'.

Section B: Areas from the Action Plan on Educational Support and Inclusive Education

13. Human Resources

The Recommendations for this Area are to:

1.1 Review the recruitment policy (for secondments and locally recruited staff) in order to ensure that newly recruited staff disposes of the necessary qualifications.

1.2 Strengthen the recognition of the support co-ordinators and provide them with secretarial support where necessary.

1.3 Improve the working conditions of support assistants (salary, job security, review of job description) and strengthen their status.

1.4 Review the list of professions, which are included in the list of therapists.

Please indicate what you believe is the current status on the implementation of the following Actions in the majority of European Schools. Please select only one reply per question.

Actions	No activity yet (no information)	Implementation planned	Implementation in progress	Implementation nearly complete	Fully implemented
Do school have a recruitment policy in place for seconded and locally employed support teachers, with a clear definition of the requirements for qualifications and experience?					
Do schools have a recruitment policy in place for the Educational Support Co-ordinators, indicating the necessary minimum recommended requirements for qualifications, expertise, experience and language competence?					
Have schools made a policy recommendation for allocating time to Educational Support Co-ordination, based on the number of learners in the school receiving Educational Support?					
Do school have a policy for dedicated secretarial support for Educational Support, indicating the hours of work per week and the respective sections of the school?					



Actions	No activity yet (no information)	Implementation planned	Implementation in progress	Implementation nearly complete	Fully implemented
Do schools have a policy in place for the role, qualifications and experience recommended for Support Assistants, following an internal review of their legal status and contracts?					
Have schools created and issued a detailed contract to all Educational Support Assistants to indicate their legal status and job description, including specific roles and tasks?					

In addition, please address the following open-ended questions:

- Have schools met the policy requirements for the recruitment of support teachers? This includes the required level of qualifications and experience in learning support and in language competence in every language section.
- Have schools met the requirements for increasing the number of Educational Support Co-ordinators employed this year with the appropriate level of qualifications, experience and expertise in special educational needs (SEN)?
- Have schools established an appropriate rationale for the time allocation of the work of Educational Support Co-ordinators in relation to their flexible hours?

14. Qualifications and Training

The Recommendations for this Area are to:

2.1 Develop a training policy for teaching and non-teaching staff on inclusive education and set up a dedicated budget.

2.2 Provide all new teaching staff, as part of their induction training, with information on policy and procedures of educational support provisions.

2.3 Ensure awareness of all members of the school community (staff, parents and pupils).

Please indicate what you believe is the current status on the implementation of the following Actions in the majority of European Schools. Please select only one reply per question.



Actions	No activity yet (no information)	Implementation planned	Implementation in progress	Implementation nearly complete	Fully implemented
Do the schools have a training policy in place, including a dedicated budget for initial and on-going professional development in inclusive education for all teaching and non-teaching staff?					
Do the school have a training or induction plan for all new teaching staff this year, including a section on inclusive education?					
Have you sent the schools any material or guidance on raising awareness of inclusive education?					

In addition, please address the following open-ended questions:

- Have the schools increased the participation of teaching and non-teaching staff in internal or external training on inclusive education this year? If so, to what extent and which staff have been involved?
- How do schools ensure that Educational Support training enables staff to develop the necessary competence (knowledge, understanding and skills) to provide reasonable accommodation for individual learner needs?
- What types of events have the schools organised to raise awareness and understanding of inclusive education among various internal and external stakeholders?

15. Budgetary Allocations

The Recommendation for this Area is to:

3.1 Provide the schools with more guidance on how to allocate the budget.

Please address the following open-ended questions:

- Have you sent guidelines to schools about the annual budget for support and the requirements for annual reporting?
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, did the guidelines about the support budget meet their requirements?
 - If no, how were the needs of the schools different from what was anticipated?



- Are Schools able to make decisions independently on details of how the budget has been allocated, in line with their judgment of local need, within the guidelines?
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, in which budgetary lines schools have the possibility to make independent decisions?
- Can Schools give feedback, and engage in discussion in relation to their individual budgetary current and anticipated requirements?
 - Yes
 - No

16. Accessibility of the built environment (including information and communication technology and school transport)

The Recommendation for this Area is to:

4.1 Set up a comprehensive accessibility policy with clear standards, monitor its implementation and maintenance and check accessibility needs of pupils (and parents and teachers) on a regular basis in order to ensure reasonable accommodation.

Please indicate what you believe is the current status on the implementation of the following Actions in the majority of European Schools. Please select only one reply per question.

Action	No activity yet (no information)	Implementation planned	Implementation in progress	Implementation nearly complete	Fully implemented
Have the schools prevented barriers by adopting measures to ensure the right to accessible education and full and equal participation of all pupils?					

In addition, please address the following open-ended questions:

- What mechanisms are in place to monitor the effectiveness of the workflow in all School contexts, to ensure that communication and co-operation is effective for all those involved?
- How are national differences incorporated into the policy in regard to the built environment, information and communication technology and school transport, to ensure the same standards of accessibility are reached by all schools?
- What procedures are in place for pupils new to the school, to ascertain their accessibility needs prior to their first day of term?



- What process has been used to identify potential barriers to education and participation for all learners? And who has been involved in the consultation process?
- Have barriers which may be encountered others involved in the life of the school also been considered (staff, visitors, parents, external agencies)?

17. Communication of accessibility information

The Recommendation for this Area is to:

5.1 Ensure that all schools have comprehensive and easily accessible school-specific guidelines.

Please indicate what you believe is the current status on the implementation of the following Actions in the majority of European Schools. Please select only one reply per question.

Actions	No activity yet (no information)	Implementation planned	Implementation in progress	Implementation nearly complete	Fully implemented
Do the schools have comprehensive and easily accessible school-specific guidelines that are fully compliant with the European Schools Accessibility Policy?					
Do the schools have comprehensive and easily accessible school-specific guidelines that are fully compliant with the Policy on 'Educational Support and Inclusive Education' and the Checklist on Core Elements?					

In addition, please address the following open-ended questions:

- Is the new Accessibility policy now fully in place?
- Has the accessibility policy and all guidance needed for implementation been shared with schools?
- Are suggestions made to schools about how the Accessibility policy can be made accessible to all involved in the life of the School?

18. Teaching Material

The Recommendations for this Area are to:

6.1 Explore ways for strengthening the co-operation with National Resource Centres.

6.2 Establish a procurement policy to purchase accessible teaching material and assistive material.



Please indicate what you believe is the current status on the implementation of the following Actions in the majority of European Schools. Please select only one reply per question.

Actions	No activity yet (no information)	Implementation planned	Implementation in progress	Implementation nearly complete	Fully implemented
Do National Resource Centres share expertise and provide support to the schools so they can fulfil their responsibilities?					
Are areas for common market identified for purchasing accessible teaching and assistive material?					
Has the framework contract been set up?					

In addition, please address the following open-ended questions:

- Do the schools have access to National Resource Centres?
 - Yes
 - No
 - No information
 - If yes, what are the main ways in which the schools use them (e.g. as a training resource, to raise awareness of inclusive education, to source teaching materials, for language support)?
 - If no, what are the main challenges they have encountered in accessing or using the National Resource Centres?
- Do the schools have access to the necessary teaching material?
 - Yes
 - No
 - No information
 - If no, please elaborate on the potential barriers.

19. Personalised Support

The Recommendations for this Area are to:

7.1 Provide the schools with more autonomy to adapt the thresholds for the maximum number of pupils in cases where a class has several pupils receiving ISA. Alternatively, ensure that classes with 25–30 pupils and having several pupils receiving ISA get a support teacher on a permanent basis.

7.2 Develop and introduce a comprehensive and harmonised framework and procedure for early identification of pupils' abilities and needs.

7.3 The current classification of diagnosis used in the ES needs to be updated in order to fully correspond to the current understanding of difficulties and disabilities affecting



learning, based on the existing research and to be in line with the human rights approach of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

Please indicate what you believe is the current status on the implementation of the following Actions in the majority of European Schools. Please select only one reply per question.

Actions	No activity yet	Implementation planned	Implementation in progress	Implementation nearly complete	Fully implemented
Do schools have a policy/section of policy about the enrolment process that addresses learners' potential needs, while respecting General Data Protection Regulation requirements?					
Is an internationally recognised process/framework for the diagnosis and classification of a learner's need for support in place for all sections of the schools?					
Do schools have a standardised process for the early and on-going identification of learners' abilities and needs?					
Does the diagnostic and classification process used by schools match the appropriate provision of initial and on-going support in terms of resources, support staffing and assessment of need?					
Do the schools have a policy in place to enable class sizes to be adapted in relation to the number of pupils with different types and levels of need, in a timely and flexible way?					

In addition, please address the following open-ended questions:

- What processes (consultation, reporting, assessment, etc.) do schools use to identify and classify potential needs during the enrolment of learners of different ages and in different sections of the school?
- How do the schools ensure individual learner needs are matched to appropriate and on-going personalised support after diagnosis, in terms of support staff, resources and class size?
- In the schools, which staff and external individuals/organisational representatives are involved in decisions around the diagnosis, classification and adaptation and delivery of support in relation to individual learner needs?



20. Smooth Transition

The Recommendation for this Area is to:

- 20.1 Explore ways to facilitate the successful transition of pupils with educational needs in particular from the Primary to the Secondary Cycle.

Please indicate what you believe is the current status on the implementation of the following Actions in the majority of European Schools. Please select only one reply per question.

Actions	No activity yet (no information)	Implementation planned	Implementation in progress	Implementation nearly complete	Fully implemented
Have Schools identified existing difficulties and made concrete proposals to ensure a successful transition from Primary to Secondary Cycle?					
Has every school a multi-professional 'trans cycle' care team, with a certain number of hours/periods of <i>décharge</i> in the document on 'Internal Structures'?					

In addition, please address the following open-ended questions:

- What mechanisms are in place to ensure that Schools have implemented the workflow into all transition documents and procedures, and to evaluate its application?
- Is there an open channel of communication with Schools to give feedback in the suitability of the workflow in reducing difficulties and barriers encountered by all stakeholders at the time of transition?

21. Adaptability – Curricula, Assessment, Examination

The Recommendations for this Area are to:

9.1 Mandate the Pedagogical Reform Group to analyse how to introduce some flexibility to the curriculum with the aim of allowing more pupils with educational needs to be promoted. This includes replacing an element of the curriculum with an alternative element in case of physical disability or learning difficulty, clarifying rules for promotion in case of skipped subject, etc.

9.2 Review the criteria for promotion and progression with the aim of allowing pupils with minor modifications of the curriculum or those who cannot attend some subject/s because of their disability to be promoted.

9.3 Further develop the electronic system to record pupil progress, assessment and promotion in order to better record the progress and promotion of pupils with special educational needs.



Please indicate what you believe is the current status on the implementation of the following Actions in the majority of European Schools. Please select only one reply per question.

Actions	No activity yet (no information)	Implementation planned	Implementation in progress	Implementation nearly complete	Fully implemented
Has the Pedagogical Reform Group analysed concrete barriers in the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and prepared a proposal?					
Is some flexibility introduced to the curriculum of the schools allowing more pupils with educational needs to be promoted?					

In addition, please address the following open-ended questions:

- Do the schools have an improved electronic system for recording the provision, progress and assessment of learners with special needs?
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, in what ways is this system an improvement on earlier systems? Are all learners with support classed as SEN?
- How is the data from the system used in the schools?
- Who is responsible for adding data to the system?
- What types of data are included?
- Do the stakeholders (schools, inspectors, OSG) have at their disposal relevant data within the SMS?
 - Yes
 - No

22. Enrolment

The Recommendation for this Area is to:

10.1 Establish clear procedures, criteria and responsibilities for assessing the requests for enrolment of children with special educational needs and for advising parents in case of continuation of enrolment might not be in the best interest of the child.

Please indicate what you believe is the current status on the implementation of the following Actions in the majority of European Schools. Please select only one reply per question.



Action	No activity yet (no information)	Implementation planned	Implementation in progress	Implementation nearly complete	Fully implemented
Are all cases of non-enrolment and non-continuation properly documented and analysed? This includes drawing conclusions to make the school progressively more inclusive.					

In addition, please address the following open-ended questions:

- Are there mechanisms in place to ensure that all stages of the process of enrolment/non-enrolment and non-continuation are open and followed according to the agreed procedures and protocols in this area?
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, what are those mechanisms?
- How is the information (every case documentation, analysis and conclusions) used to enable the European Schools to become progressively more inclusive?

23. Transition to other schools

The Recommendation for this Area is to:

11.1 Strengthen further the co-operation between the school and the hosting Member State/Municipality and the local schools.

Please indicate what you believe is the current status on the implementation of the following Actions in the majority of European Schools. Please select only one reply per question.

Actions	No activity yet (no information)	Implementation planned	Implementation in progress	Implementation nearly complete	Fully implemented
Have Schools established a relationship with the local authority in the field of educational support and inclusive education?					
Do Schools share best practices?					

In addition, please address the following open-ended questions:

- What documentary evidence is there of what constitutes 'best practice' in terms of transition to other school?



- How is 'best practice' shared across all Schools?
- What mechanisms are in place to continue to develop and share best practice across all Schools, and to ensure that all Schools follow best practice guidelines for transition to other school?

24. Certification of Capacities

The recommendation for this area is to:

12.1 Develop two new certificates at the end of S 5 which are recognised by the national education systems of the Member States:

- 1) an alternative leaving certificate for students with modified curriculum who are not promoted but progressed,
- 2) certificate for all pupils at the end of S 5.

Please indicate what you believe is the current status on the implementation of the following Actions in the majority of European Schools. Please select only one reply per question.

Actions	No activity yet (no information)	Implementation planned	Implementation in progress	Implementation nearly complete	Fully implemented
Has the Pedagogical Reform Group analysed and discussed the request for developing two new certificates and provided its opinion?					

In addition, please address the following open-ended question:

- Is the mapping of the situation in Member States in progress?
 - Yes
 - No
 - If yes, what is the process?

25. Monitoring/Quality Assurance

The Recommendations for this Area are to:

12.1 Conduct an independent, external monitoring/evaluation concerning the inclusiveness of the policy of the European Schools in the context of the UNCRPD recommendations.

12.2 Cover in future statistical reports additional aspects such as qualification and training of teaching staff, information on therapists and reasons why pupils are not enrolled or leave the European School system.

12.3 Conduct a systematic evaluation of educational support provision in the schools based on clear criteria and statistical data.



Please indicate what you believe is the current status on the implementation of the following Actions in the majority of European Schools. Please select only one reply per question.

Actions	No activity yet (no information)	Implementation planned	Implementation in progress	Implementation nearly complete	Fully implemented
Are the schools provided with guidelines concerning the collection of data?					
Is a consultation process in place to develop criteria to evaluate the Educational Support provision across all Schools?					

In addition, please address the following open-ended question:

- If the process is in progress/nearly completed/fully implemented, in which ways have differences between schools been accounted for, to produce 'harmonised' criteria?

Section C: Concluding Questions

- For which thematic area of the Action Plan do you feel schools have made the greatest progress?
- For which thematic area of the Action Plan do you feel progress is the most challenging?
- What do you feel are the overall strengths of implementing the Recommendations of the Action Plan?
- What do you feel are the main barriers for implementing Recommendations of the Action Plan?



ANNEX 3: FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS QUESTIONS

European Schools questions for Focus Group 1 – primary level (teachers, support teachers, support assistants)

Area 1: Human Resources

- Is your support role/job description realistic in terms of your daily tasks and workload? Do you have any other roles in the school?
- Do you receive clear, supportive and helpful feedback about your work?
- Are you able to discuss the evaluation, and request further training or support in your work?

Area 2: Qualifications and Training

Section One: Training

- Since you arrived at the school, how much training in inclusive education have you received?

Section Two: Awareness of Inclusive Education

- What different activities are held (*for staff, parents and learners*) to raise awareness of inclusive education, and to learn more about the inclusive education policies and procedures?

Area 4: Accessibility – Built Environment (including ICT and school transport)

- How are the needs of learners, parents and school staff considered and monitored and what processes are in place to quickly address needs?
- What adaptations to the curriculum are being considered?
- Which are the strengths and barriers that you encountered in implementing the recommendations of the action plan?

Area 7: Personalised Support

- To what extent do you feel supported and respected in the school community?

Area 8: Smooth transition

- What channels of communication allow the school to give feedback on the suitability of the workflow in reducing difficulties and barriers encountered by all stakeholders at the time of transition?
- How does the school adapt the hours/periods of *décharge* in relation to its local arrangements and needs?



European Schools questions for Focus Group 2 – secondary level (teachers, support teachers, support assistants)

Area 1: Human Resources

- Is your support role/job description realistic in terms of your daily tasks and workload? Do you have any other roles in the school?
- Do you receive clear, supportive and helpful feedback about your work?
- Are you able to discuss the evaluation, and request further training or support in your work?

Area 2: Qualifications and Training

Section One: Training

- Since you arrived at the school, how much training in inclusive education have you received?

Section Two: Awareness of Inclusive Education

- What different activities are held (*for staff, parents and learners*) in the different language sections of the school, to raise awareness of inclusive education?

Area 5. Communication of accessibility information

- Can you give examples of how the needs of families are met, where access to information technology is limited due to different reasons (e.g. speaking minorities languages, social or cultural disadvantage, for example)?
- What processes are in place to ensure that all families are provided with a full range of accessible information, in different formats and languages, as needed? Has the school encountered any challenges in this?

Area 6: Teaching material

- In what ways do you work with the National Inspectors? To what extent is their support useful? Can you give us some examples? Main challenges encountered?
- What are the main ways in which you use the resource centres? To what extent is use of resource centres useful? Can you give us some examples? Main challenges encountered?

Area 7: Personalised Support

- To what extent do you feel supported and respected in the school community?



Area 8: Smooth transition

- What channels of communication allow the school to give feedback on the suitability of the workflow in reducing difficulties and barriers encountered by all stakeholders at the time of transition?
- How does the school adapt the hours/periods of *décharge* in relation to its local arrangements and needs?

European Schools questions for Focus Group 3 – parents (Primary & Secondary level)

Area 1: Human Resources

- Do you feel confident that support staff have the qualifications, knowledge, experience, specialist and language skills to give you and your child the support you and he or she need(s)?
- Have you encountered any particular difficulties in accessing the right support (for your child), in any sector of the school?

Area 2: Qualifications and Training

Section One. Training

- Do you think that staff receive sufficient and appropriate training in inclusive education and educational support to support your child in the best and most appropriate way?

Section Two. Awareness

- In what ways has the school given opportunities for you to learn more about the inclusive education policies and procedures, through a range of events?

Area 4. Accessibility of the built environment (including information and communication technology and school transport)

- Thinking about access to the school buildings, school transport and the system of information and communication technology (ICT) in school, do you feel that the needs of you as parents and of your children are taken into consideration, and responded to appropriately? Are you aware of any processes which can respond quickly to your needs, and also those of staff?
- In your view, does the school have effective and on-going processes for identifying and dealing with potential barriers which might prevent learners currently in the school, and future learners from full participation in their education at the school?

Area 7: Personalised Support

- In what ways do you feel supported and respected by the school community?



Area 8: Smooth Transition

- Are you aware of processes in the school to involve parents and learners with educational needs in discussion about the transition from one cycle to another (Pre-Primary to Primary, or Primary to Secondary) to enable the transition to be as smooth as possible?
- If your child has transitioned from one cycle to another, was it a smooth and easy process, and were your child's needs at the centre of any discussions?

Area 10: Enrolment

- As parents, are you aware of the process of de-enrolment from the school, at any stage?
- Do parents receive sufficient documentation about the process (including school and system reports), including information about decisions made?
- If you have experience of this process, or know personally someone who has, are you able to give an example of any documentation received?
- In your view was the situation handled in a professional way, with respect and sensitivity towards you and your child?

European Schools questions for Focus Group 4 – (mixed group of Primary learners)

Area 1: Human Resources

- Are you supported in all your classes by staff who understand what you need, and who can speak your first language?
- Is it ever difficult for you to find the support you need in any part of school life?
- Do you think there is a difference between some classes in how well staff understand about supporting you?

Area 2: Qualifications and Training

- Have you and your family been able to attend some activities and events organised by the school, to help you understand more about how inclusive education works in the school?

Area 7: Personalised Support

- Do you feel happy and supported in school?

Area 8: Smooth transition

- Before you moved up to the Primary cycle from Pre-primary, did your teachers talk to you about the support you would have in your class?



European Schools questions for Focus Group 5 – (mixed group of Secondary learners)

Area 1: Human Resources

- Do you feel confident that support staff have the qualifications knowledge, experience, specialist and language skills to give you the support you need?
- Have you experienced any particular difficulties in accessing the right support in any part of school life? Where/when was that?

Area 2: Qualifications and Training

- Do you think that the school gives enough training to staff, so that they understand about supporting you and any additional needs that you have to be able to do your work, and join in everything at school?
- Have you and your family been able to attend some activities and events organised by the school, to help you understand more about how inclusive education works in the school?

Area 7: Personalised Support

- Do you feel supported and that your learning needs are met and understood by everyone in the school community?

Area 8: Smooth transition

- When you moved from the Primary to the Secondary cycle, were you and your parents consulted about your support needs before you moved?
- Do you think that the transition was as easy for you, as it could have been? Were there any difficulties around support when you first arrived in the secondary cycle?

European Schools questions for Focus Group 6 – Representatives of (OSG, inspectors, ESPWG, JTC, BC, BoG, support inspectors)

Area 1: Human Resources

- What processes are in place in the school for evaluating the work of Educational Support Co-ordinators, the Educational Support Teachers and the Support Assistants and how are criteria for evaluation established?
- How much flexibility is given to the Educational Support Co-ordinators, to fulfil all duties? How and by whom is an evaluation of this process undertaken?
- To what extent do local conditions and constraints on the appointment of staff with appropriate qualifications and experience impact on support staff, teachers and learners? What is being done to take account of these issues?



Area 2: Qualification and Training

- Has a training policy with a dedicated budget for all teaching and non-teaching staff been developed which maps all training needed to ensure competences to provide for individual needs? (ED Sup & WG)
- Are all new staff given training on the policy and procedures of Educational Support as part of their Induction Training and what processes are in place to evaluate the increasing numbers of staff taking the training and its effectiveness? (OSG & Induction WG)
- What evaluation processes are in place to ensure that material provided to schools to raise awareness of inclusive education amongst the wider school community, including parents is appropriately used and that meaningful events and activities are held regularly? (OSG & Directors)

Area 3: Budgetary Allocations

- Did the initial budget allocation planning correspond to final expenditure? If not, which budget item discrepancies are most evident?
- Which are the main strengths and barriers of the overall budget allocation/planning and implementation related to educational support?

Area 7: Personalised Support

- How does the school monitor and evaluate the educational support given to learners by all staff across the school, to ensure that it is in line with their assessed needs, and consistent across all systems in the school?

Area 9: Adaptability – Curricula, Assessment, Examination

- To what extent are specific barriers in the curriculum identified and who has been involved in this process? Can you give us information on the progress made? Main challenges encountered in this process?
- What changes have been made to the flexible curriculum to enable more learners with 'special educational needs' to be promoted? Can you give us information on the progress made? Main challenges encountered in this process?

Area 10: Enrolment

- Could you provide examples of the documentation at each stage of rejection (including school and system reports) given to parents and learners?

Area 11: Transition to other schools

- Are there documents on specific procedures for transition to other schools and/or co-operation with the hosting member state/municipality or the local schools?
- What are the mechanisms in place to continue to develop and share best practice across schools, and to ensure that all schools follow best practice guidelines for transition?



Area 12: Certification of Capacities

- Could you inform us about the on going process of mapping the ‘certification of capacities’ across all member states, indicating similarities and differences? Who is involved in this process?
- Could you inform us about the on-going process of consultation, discussion and development and any decisions made to date? What are the plans for the 2 certificates?

Area 13. Monitoring/Quality Assurance

- What did the schools find that could be improved in the guidelines they received regarding monitoring and quality assurance?
- How have differences between schools been accounted for, to produce ‘harmonised’ criteria?

Questions for interviews with Directors

Area 1: Human Resources

Section Two: Support Staff

- How many support staff have the appropriate qualifications, skills, experience for the work they are doing?
- Does the school have a lack of the right numbers of appropriately trained support staff at each level and in each section, (Early Years, Primary, Secondary, language sections)? Where do the main gaps occur?

Area 2. Qualifications and Training

Section One: Qualifications and Training

- Is training in inclusive education and support mandatory for all staff? If not, why is this?

Section Two: Awareness of Inclusive Education

- How does the school raise awareness of inclusive education policies and practices for staff, for learners and for parents from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds?

Area 3: Budgetary allocations

- What do you consider is the main progress made in budget planning regarding educational support? Which practical consequences it has/they have?

Area 4: Accessibility of the built environment (including information and communication technology and school transport)

- In terms of full accessibility, in what ways are the needs of all who are involved in school life, other than learners, such as all staff, parents, families and visitors, taken into consideration?



Area 5: Communication of accessibility information

- By which process others (staff, learners, families) can give feedback and comments on the policy and the targets?

Area 8: Smooth transition

- What mechanisms are in place to ensure that the school has implemented the workflow into all transition documents and procedures, and to evaluate its application?

Area 10: Enrolment

- How this information (enrolment of pupils/discontinuation of pupils) is used to enable the school to become progressively more inclusive?

Questions for interviews with Support Co-ordinators

Area 1: Human Resources

Section One: Your role

- Do you have a role description for your work as Educational Support Co-ordinator? Does this fit with what you have to do day to day and with your workload?

Area 2: Qualifications and Training

Section One: Qualifications and Training

- Is training in inclusive education and educational support recognised by all staff as a priority and of relevance to the fulfilment of their roles in the school?

Area 6: Teaching material

- How often in the last year have you worked with the National Inspectors? In what ways do you work with the National Inspectors? Can you give us some examples?
- Are you able to access and use the National Resource Centres independently and free of charge? What are the main ways the school uses them? which staff in the school use them? Can you give us some examples?
- Does the school have access to the teaching and assistive material that is needed? Does the school have a contract in place for a common market to purchase accessible teaching and assistive material? Main challenges encountered in setting up or managing this process?

Area 7: Personalised Support

- What are the procedures for ensuring that the appropriate level of educational support is in place, as learners' needs change over time, from enrolment, and particularly in times of transition between cycles?

Area 11: Transition to other schools

- What are the examples of 'best practice' in terms of transition and co-operation?