



Inspectie van het Onderwijs  
Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en  
Wetenschap

# **Inclusive education into practice**

**An international and national comparative  
analysis on inclusive education**

**Dutch Inspectorate of Education**

**and**

**Standing International Conference of  
Inspectorates**

# Table of contents

1. Summary
2. Introduction
3. Study design
4. The general organization of the educational and supervisory system
5. Results from the two fictitious cases
6. Conclusions
7. Final thought
8. Literature

## *Appendices*

- A: Interview guide
- B: Detailed description of the educational systems of the six jurisdictions
- C: Detailed description of the system of special schools in the six European jurisdictions
- D: Description of the organization of supervision in the six European jurisdictions
- E: Description of the organization of supervision in the seven Dutch regional educational authorities
- F: Description of the procedure to allocate a SEN child to a special school in the different jurisdictions

## Summary

The Dutch Inspectorate of Education and the Standing International Conference of Inspectorates (SICI) together conducted an international and national comparative analysis about inclusive education. Goal of this analysis is to learn from European jurisdictions and Dutch regional educational authorities about how the educational and supervisory system is organized with regard to inclusive education and what this means for the individual child with special educational needs (SEN) in these specific regions.

The analysis focusses on primary and secondary education and on the development towards inclusive education in six European jurisdictions that are member of the Standing International Conference of national and regional Inspectorates of education (SICI). The six participating jurisdictions were Ireland, Denmark, Flanders (Belgium), North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany), Serbia and The Netherlands. In addition, the same analysis was done in seven Dutch regional educational authorities.

This comparative analysis consists of desk research and interviews with key persons in the selected Dutch regional educational authorities and European jurisdictions. Hereby we gained insight into legislation and policy rules with regard to inclusive education and how the educational systems are organized with regard to inclusive education. In order to gain insight into the available provision of support for SEN pupils and decisions and available resources for SEN children in primary and secondary education, two fictitious cases were used, named Anna and Alex. The following topics were discussed through the eyes of seven year old Anna and fifteen year old Alex: law, policy and finance, allocation and admission to special provision, practices of special provision, outcomes of education and professionalization of the staff and supervision.

We conclude that there are a lot of similarities in ambitions, laws, policies and procedures with regard to inclusive education across jurisdictions and between Dutch regional educational networks. The educational systems of the participating jurisdictions can be described as an 'adaptive' way of inclusive education: regular if possible, specialized if necessary, with a system of special schools for those with specific impairments.

This leaves different types of special schools intact and thereby distinguishes itself from the strict concept of inclusive education.

However, we also saw a lot of variation in the practice of inclusive education and the way supervision is organized. This variety is both present between Dutch regional educational authorities as well as between the different jurisdictions.

To conclude, there is no mold for inclusive education. A certain level of variety is useful to fully align sources with the local needs. However, the challenge will be to organize the system in such a way that the conditions as well as the persons involved (e.g. teachers, school leader, parents) are enough capacitated to deliver the best possible education to children who are in special need.

# 1. Introduction

The movement towards inclusive education is a key component of special educational policy across Europe (Ainscow & César, 2006). This policy entails the ambition to educate all children with special educational needs (SEN) if possible in mainstream education and if needed in special education. This striving originates from the concern that the rights of children with disabilities are contravened by segregating them from the curriculum and practices of regular education, and from typically developing peers (Lindsay, 2007). Another aspect that gave rise to the movement towards inclusive education was the increasingly questioned idea that for children with disabilities education in segregated settings would be more effective than in regular education (Stoutjesdijk, 2014).

To enforce their intentions of developing educational policies towards inclusive education, many countries signed international conventions and statements<sup>1</sup>. As a result, within European political and policy contexts, a number of shifts can be discerned, which appear to have had an impact on countries' stance in relation to inclusion. The most important shifts in the included six European jurisdictions, will be described below.

In *Flanders* (Belgium) the M-decree was adopted in March 2014. With this decree a new legal framework was constructed with regard to the rights of SEN pupils to participate in mainstream education with the help of reasonable adjustments.

In *The Netherlands* the new education act for pupils with special educational needs (Passend Onderwijs) came into effect in August 2013. This act aims to decrease the number of students with disabilities in special schools and also to support their participation in mainstream schools.

---

1 International conventions and statements associated with inclusive education are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1949), the Convention on the Right of the Child (UN, 1989), Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the Salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs education (UNESCO, 1994), Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005), Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) and Resolution 1761 of the Raad van Europa (2010). Law on the Foundations of the Education System in August 2009

Due to this policy regular schools are obligated to support and educate children with special educational needs or to find an appropriate alternative at another school in the region, which can be a special school.

The educational system in *Serbia* has changed considerably towards more inclusive education since the adoption of the new Law on the Foundations of the Education System in August 2009.

In *North-Rhine Westphalia (Germany)* a new law was amended in 2014 named "Verordnung über die sonderpädagogische Förderung, den Hausunterricht und die Schule für Kranke (Ausbildungsordnung sonderpädagogische Förderung –AO-SF). This new law focusses on the declared intention/will of the parents and prioritizes integration in mainstream schools (common learning) rather than special schools. Furthermore, there is the law "das Erste Gesetz zur Umsetzung der VN Behindertenrechtskonvention in den Schulen"(9. Schulrechtsänderungsgesetz) und begleitende Maßnahmen of October 16th of 2013. Since August 2014 this law is prosecuted and gives every child/pupil with the need of special education the right (step by step) to visit and to be educated in a mainstream school.

In *Denmark*, there is no specific legislation that applies to children with special needs. General legislation, pertaining to the individual levels of education, more or less outlines directly that teaching is accessible to all and should be organized and performed in due consideration of pupils' different prerequisites and needs.

In *Ireland*, a substantial body of legislation provides statutory support for education policy and provision for children with special educational needs. The impetus for this legislation arises from a desire on the part of the community and the government to assert the rights of children with special educational needs to an education that is appropriate to their needs, and to ensure statutory protection for their rights to such an education. The legislation includes the Education Act (1998), the Equal Status Act (2000), the Equality Act (2004), the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), the Data Protection Acts (1988 and 2003), the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (2004) and the Disability Act (2005). These acts provide a statutory basis for education policy and

provision by the Department of Education and Skills, other government departments and state agencies in relation to the education of all children, including children with special educational needs.

## **2. Study design**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This international and national comparative analysis is a joint product of the Dutch Inspectorate of Education and the Standing International Conference of Inspectorates (SICI). The comparative analysis was designed by consensus of specialists on inclusive education within the Dutch Inspectorate of Education. Prior to the start of the project an interview guide was created by the Dutch team on inclusive education. Internal consultation was done by the management team of the Inspectorate as well as the management teams of the sectors 'Special education (Speciaal Onderwijs)' and 'Research and Development (Kennis)'. In addition, Marjan van Zandbergen, the Dutch representative of the European Agency for Special Educational Needs and Inclusive Education, was consulted.

### **2.2. Goal of the study**

The short and long term evaluation of 'Passend Onderwijs' is covered by studies that are the responsibility of The Dutch Nationaal Regieorgaan Onderwijsonderzoek (NRO; <https://www.nro.nl/onderzoeksprojecten/passend-onderwijs/>) which supports a strong system of sciences in the Netherlands by encouraging quality and innovation in science. This comparative analysis is not part of these evaluations. Goal of the present study is to describe several important developments with regard to the organization and supervision of inclusive education and to put these developments into an international perspective.

### **2.3. Research question**

The overall research question of this study is: *'How is the provision of support and are available resources for SEN pupils organized in different Dutch regional educational networks and European jurisdictions? And what is the role of supervision in this?'*

## **2.4. Method**

This analysis focuses on primary and secondary education and consist of two parts. The first part of the study focuses on the developments in several European jurisdictions: Ireland, Denmark, Flanders (Belgium), North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany) and Serbia. These jurisdictions are member of the SICI network and have a national policy of stimulating inclusive education. The second part of the study focusses on developments in seven Dutch regional educational authorities (three primary education; four secondary education). Selection of these regions is based on variation in financial budgeting, region in The Netherlands as well as on (future) population decrease.

### **2.4.a. International study**

The study started with desk research. Based on available English and (in the case of Flanders) Dutch documentation, a general description of the educational and supervisory system was made of each jurisdiction (see also appendix B and D). In addition, the website of SICI (<http://www.sici-inspectorates.eu>) and European Agency for Special Educational Needs and Inclusive education (<https://www.european-agency.org>) were consulted for country specific information. Finally, face-to-face interviews with key persons in the selected jurisdictions were done. These key persons are country experts within the field of inclusive education (inspectors, learning consultants or members of governmental inclusion teams) and are also a member of the SICI network.

### **2.4.b. National study**

In line with the international study, the national study also started with desk research. Based on available information on the website [www.passendonderwijs.nl](http://www.passendonderwijs.nl) as well as the recent supervision reports of the Dutch inspectorate of Education, a general description of the educational and supervisory system was made per regional network (see also appendix E). Then, face-to-face interviews with key persons in Dutch regional educational networks were held. These key persons were the director of the network, a director of the school within the network and a pedagogue or learning consultant of the network.

The interview took about two hours and started with general questions about the educational and supervisory system in each jurisdiction. The following themes were discussed: Law, policy and finance; allocation and admission to special provision; practices of special provision; outcomes of education; professionalization of the staff and supervision. For more detailed information about the interview guide, see also appendix A.

## **2.5. Description of fictitious cases**

The following two fictitious cases were discussed during the interview.

*Anna is seven years old. She is in a regular primary school since she was four years old. Since one year her progress in reading, writing and arithmetic stagnates. She receives extra support for reading, but she seems to have even more problems with arithmetic. In addition, her parents and school are worried about her social development and her behavioral problems. Her teacher does not know how to meet her needs. Anna has average intellectual capacity (IQ=100) and is concerned with autism spectrum disorder.*

*Alex is fifteen years old. He is in a regular secondary school since he was twelve years old. He visited a regular primary school, but he needed extra support in almost every grade. He doesn't have any extra support in secondary education, because he doesn't want it. Currently, his results are very bad, he skips classes and is obviously not happy. Parents and school are worried about his results and his social and emotional development. The school does not know how to meet his needs. Alex has average intellectual capacity (IQ=100) and is concerned with autism spectrum disorder.*

## **2.6. Additional source of information**

In addition to the individual interviews with the experts of the participating European jurisdictions, a SICI conference and workshop on Inclusive education was held in Copenhagen, Denmark, January 2016. During this symposium and workshop, all six jurisdictions presented the highlights of their educational and supervisory system with specific focus on the organization of inclusive education.

### **3. Insight into the general organization of the educational and supervisory system**

This section describes the general organization of the educational and supervisory system with regard to inclusive education of the six participating European jurisdictions. In addition, the following themes will be discussed in the context of participating jurisdictions and Dutch regional educational networks: the process of allocation, financing inclusive education, facilitations, persons involved in the (daily) process of inclusive education and the provision of special needs. Finally, this chapter will finish with a reflection on these specific themes. Appendix B provides a detailed description of the educational system of the six participating jurisdictions.

#### **3.1. Inclusive education within the different jurisdictions**

Inclusive education is the process of participation and decreasing exclusion from the culture, curriculum and community of mainstream schools (Booth, 2000). To maximize participation, every pupil needs to receive specific education based on their individual learning needs. All participating jurisdictions in this comparative analysis (The Netherlands, Flanders, Serbia, NRW, Ireland, Denmark) have a national policy of stimulating inclusive education. At the same time this means that both on policy and educational level the prevailing thought is that inclusive education can only be successful if regular schools are well prepared for children with special educational needs. However, this also implies that there will always be children that are in need of very specialized care that is difficult to give in regular school settings. The educational systems of the participating jurisdictions can therefore be described as an 'adaptive' way of inclusive education: regular if possible and specialized if necessary. This leaves different types of special schools for those with specific impairments intact and thereby distinguishes itself from the strict concept of inclusive education.

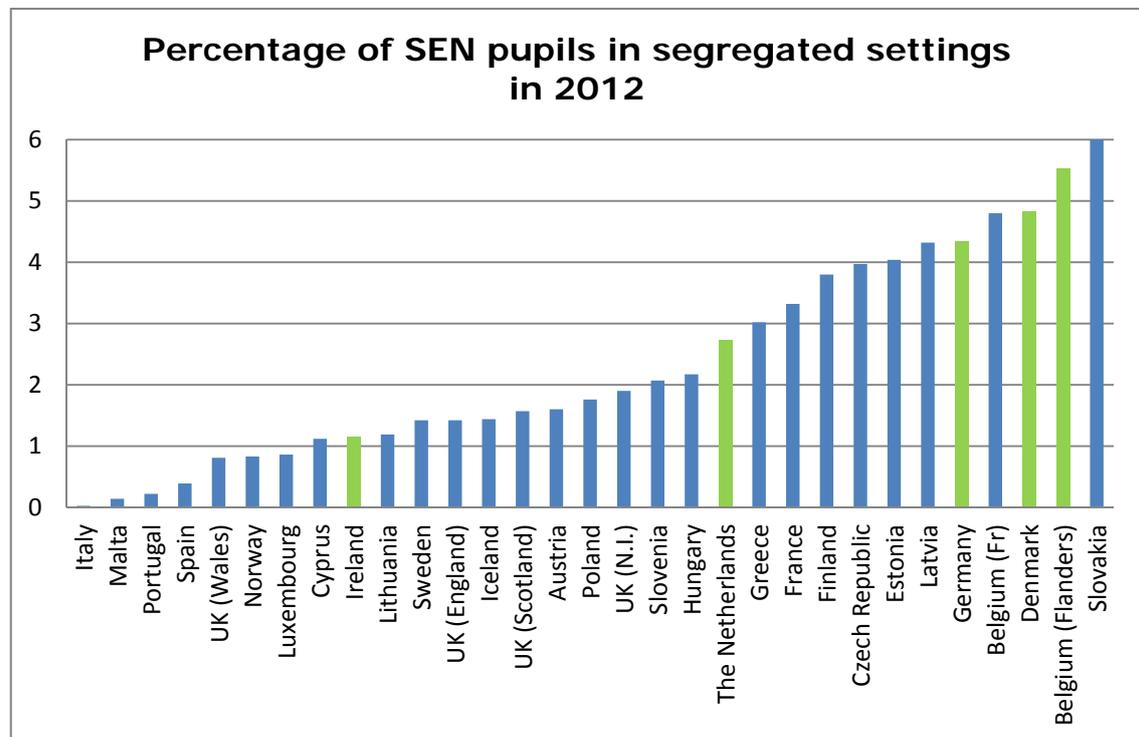
The implementation of inclusive education and the diversity of provisions available for children with special educational needs differs from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Often special

educational placements and services are part of a continuum increasing in restrictiveness, i.e. ranging from regular classrooms, resource rooms, separate classes in regular school buildings to special schools dedicated to particular disability groups (Stephens & Lakin, 1995). Also the number, types and position of special schools are different between jurisdictions.

While keeping in mind that there is difference in definition of SEN children between jurisdictions, according to the European Agency of Special Educational Needs and Inclusive Education, approximately 4.2 percent of European pupils in compulsory education are officially identified as children with special educational needs (European Agency of Special Educational Needs and inclusive Education, 2012). With a minimum below two percent to more than fourteen percent of children. With regard to the percentage of pupils in Europe that were educated in segregated settings (special schools or classes), this percentage was 2.2 percent in 2012 (Smeets, 2007; European Agency of Special Educational Needs and inclusive Education, 2012) and ranges from below 0.5 percent to over 5.5 percent. Although in some jurisdictions segregation rates have dropped slightly, this rate has raised in other jurisdictions. If available, individual rates per jurisdiction are described in the next paragraph. As is shown in Table 1, the percentage of pupils with SEN in segregated setting in year 2012 strongly varies between jurisdictions.

From a historical perspective, a jurisdiction such as Ireland is in a long tradition of inclusive education. It therefore has a relatively low percentage of SEN children in segregated settings. As a result, Ireland has additional financial resources, specific support of the mainstream schools and a restricted number of different types of special schools. In contrast, jurisdictions with higher percentages of SEN children in segregated settings such as Flanders, The Netherlands and Denmark have a tradition of a strongly differentiated system based on handicaps or disorders. The next section will describe factors that might have contributed to this tradition. In 2012, no specific information about Serbia and NRW was available at the European Agency of Special Educational Needs.

**Table 1.** Percentage of SEN pupils in segregated settings in 2012 (European Agency of Special Educational Needs and Inclusive Education, 2012)



\* In 2012 the percentage of SEN pupils in Serbia and NRW were not available.

Jurisdictions such as Flanders, The Netherlands, Denmark, Serbia and NRW originally shared the idea that SEN pupils were getting the best support by specialists in special provisions. To illustrate: even though in the case of the Netherlands Dutch parents had a choice to place their disabled children in a regular school setting since the Act for Centres of Expertise was adopted in 2003, the number of children with severe disabilities in special schools still exceeded the number in regular schools (Stoutjesdijk, Lemstra, & Jongbloed, 2007).

In these educational systems, special education was 'input-driven' financed; it was based on the number of pupils. As a result, referring a child to special education did not lead to a negative incentive for regular education (Smeets, 2007). In the end, this led to an considerable increase in (and eventually unsustainable) number of children with disabilities in special education and the costs of special needs programs became to high. For example in the case of Denmark, it amounted to 30 percent of the total costs of the public school.

Another important factor determining the structure of inclusive education, is a geographical factor. Population density is an important determining factor, with sparsely populated areas usually having less special schools (Smeets, 2007).

Eventually, because of the rising costs of special education and under the international influence of reforming educational policy towards inclusive education, the segregation of pupils with disabilities from regular education became less and less desirable. This finally led to the reform in policy and rules and a number of initiatives to support the reorganization process of special education within these jurisdictions as is described in the introduction.

### **3.5 Results**

This section will give a description of the most important findings of this study. For more detailed information see further appendix B to F.

#### **3.5.1. There is variation between jurisdictions in the practice of inclusive education**

The implementation of inclusive education and the diversity of provisions available for SEN children differs from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. While keeping in mind that there is difference between jurisdictions in the definition of a SEN child, the present comparative analysis shows that when compared to Ireland, most jurisdictions have a higher percentage of SEN children in segregated settings. This can possibly be due to the long tradition of inclusive education that is present in Ireland. As a result, Ireland has additional financial resources, specific support of the mainstream schools and a restricted number of different types of special schools. In contrast, jurisdictions such as *Flanders*, *NRW*, *The Netherlands* and *Denmark* that have a higher percentage of SEN children in segregated settings, are in a tradition of a strongly differentiated system based on handicaps or disorders.

Nevertheless, due to the rising costs of special education and under the international influence of reforming educational policy towards inclusive education, the segregation of pupils with disabilities from regular education became less and less desirable. This finally led to the reform in policy and rules and a number of initiatives to support the reorganization process of

special education within these jurisdictions, thereby stimulating a decrease in the high percentages of SEN pupils in segregated settings.

### **3.5.2. The position of special schools is changing**

The system of special schools in the six European jurisdictions differs. The number, types and position of special schools varies between jurisdictions. In all jurisdictions a system of special schools is present which is offered to those pupils whose special educational needs cannot be met within mainstream education. However, due to the movement towards more inclusive education, the position of special schools is changing. This holds that the emphasis on addressing special educational needs in standard schools and classes has major implications for the role and the number of special schools. For a more detailed description of the system of special schools, see Appendix C.

### **3.5.3. Organization of supervision of the six European jurisdictions**

With regard to the organization of supervision, the inspectorates differ in their method of inspection (i.e. risk based vs. full inspection), subject of supervision (i.e. directly supervising schools vs. through the supervision of municipalities) and the area of supervision of inspectors (i.e. with inspectors supervising both special as well as regular schools or inspectors holding different positions when it comes to the inspection of regular or special schools).

What is similar between jurisdictions, is that all inspectorates are part of the Ministry of Education, but hold an independent position. In addition, a general trend in all participating jurisdictions can be seen, where schools get more autonomy in relation to decisions about the organization of the curriculum and staff for example.

### **3.5.4. The procedure of allocating a SEN child to a special school**

In all six jurisdictions every SEN child has the right to enroll in a mainstream school provided that the required special educational assistance, practical support and the right physical environment are guaranteed. The mainstream school is obligated to provide special support in accordance with the educational needs of the child. However, in case a mainstream school can no longer provide the required special support for the SEN child, a procedure (which in general is quite similar between the jurisdictions, except for Ireland) can be started. This might eventually result in the allocation of a SEN child to special education.

The procedure of allocating a SEN child to a special school is relatively similar in the different jurisdictions. The next section will outline this procedure in general terms.

The screening for additional support starts at the individual teacher of the child. The teacher and parents are involved in determining the additional learning needs of the child. If the child needs more additional educational support, the team of additional support for inclusive education becomes involved. This team includes the teacher, parent(s) or caregivers and school expert staff (psychologist, pedagogue, special pedagogue). If the child is still in need of extra help, pupils, parent(s)/caregivers, teachers and the school management team can apply to a regional specific committee for information, help and guidance. Furthermore, this committee is responsible for the assessment of the educational needs for the specific SEN child. In some jurisdictions such as Serbia, Flanders and Denmark this committee is also responsible for health care and social support. This committee is involved in defining the Individual Education Plan (IEP) for educational support for the SEN child. It thereby prescribes a variety of measures to support the child. The preparation of the IEP and the monitoring of progress are tasks for the team for additional student support of the school. Each team member is responsible for the implementation of specific activities. The regional specific committee is also the body that gives a mandatory advice whether the child is allowed to go to a special or mainstream school. Jurisdictions differ in how detailed the allocation advice is. In some jurisdictions the network also advises about the allocation of the child to a

certain school. However, if the parents decide to keep their SEN child in a mainstream school, this school needs to provide the extra support based on the IEP in every jurisdiction. So the pupil might be enrolled into a special school, but only based on the common agreement of the regional committee and parents.

### **3.5.5. The body involved in financing the additional support**

The comparative analysis shows that the body that finances the additional support differs between jurisdictions. The following can be said for the different jurisdictions:

- In the case of Serbia the local authority has to fund additional sources based on the IEP.
- In the Netherlands this depends on the financial allocation model of the regional educational network.
- In Denmark the municipality is involved in financing the additional support of SEN children within mainstream and special schools.
- In NRW, mainstream and special schools are financed by the owner of the schools that might be the urban municipality, the county or in case of special schools for blind, and schools for children with hearing and physical impairments also associations of counties (Landschaftsverband).
- In Ireland, the educational system including special education is financed centrally through the Department of Education and Skills. Furthermore, a distinction is made between two categories of Special Educational Needs: low incidence and high incidence.
- In Flanders the way SEN pupils are financed is regulated by the central government. This means that the Flemish Parliament establishes the legal stipulations of the funding in decrees. The Flemish Government determines the further implementation hereof in decisions by the Flemish Government (e.g. specific norms for frame working) and the Ministry awards for teaching periods, hours and means of operation to the schools. As part of the M-decree, the funding mechanisms for SEN pupils are changing. Furthermore, the Agency for Education Services (Agentschap voor Onderwijsdiensten) in Flanders supports pupils and students in mainstream education by making special educational resources available.

## **4. Inclusive education into practice: results about seven year old Anna and fifteen year old Alex**

This section describes the findings resulting from the two fictitious cases, i.e. seven year old Anna and fifteen year old Alex. Both cases have average intellectual capacities (IQ=100) and are concerned with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). In addition, both cases have secondary behavioral problems. A more detailed description of Anna and Alex is given in the method section.

The final allocation and provision of support for Anna and Alex is based on a mixture of many different factors. Important factors are for example the context of the class and school, the tradition of inclusive education in the specific jurisdictions or regional educational authority that Anna or Alex is living in, the sense of urgency in an area to move towards inclusive education and financial incentives in the system to stimulate inclusive education.

The next paragraph will discuss similarities and variation between jurisdictions and Dutch regional educational networks.

### **4.1. Factors that might influence the decision to allocate a SEN child to a regular or a special school**

The decision to allocate Anna or Alex in mainstream or special education is based on many different factors. For example, what is the severity of the educational and/or pedagogical problem of Anna and Alex? In what way do these problems disturb the classroom atmosphere or the learning environment of the other children in the classroom? How many other children are in the classroom? What is the composition of the classroom; how many other SEN children are in the classroom? Is the teacher enough prepared to facilitate the additional support for Anna or Alex? What kind of additional support is possible from the school?

With regard to the composition of the classroom, Serbia for example has a stipulation in the law stating a maximum of two SEN children per classroom.

In addition, important factors of interest in the choice to allocate Anna or Alex to regular or special education, is the cultural preference towards inclusive education as well as the sense of urgency to stimulate inclusive education. These factors will be discussed below.

#### **4.2. The cultural preference might influence the preference to allocate a SEN child to regular or special education**

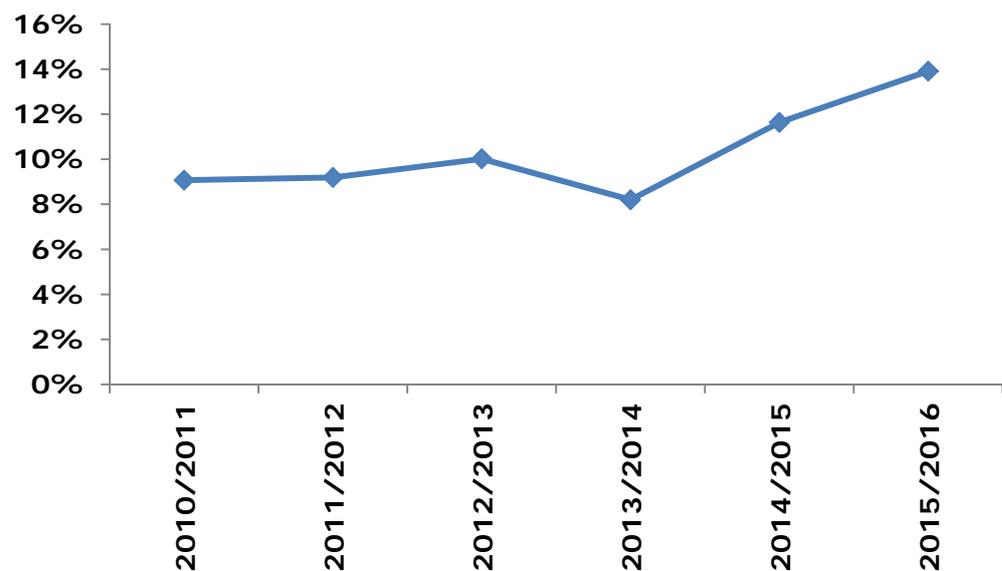
The practice of inclusive education is tightly bound to context; the culture and history of the jurisdictions strongly mediates the manner in which inclusion is defined, implemented and achieved within the different systems. As a result, the practice of inclusive education has many different faces in the participating jurisdictions and regional educational authorities. This ranges from Anna and Alex being educated in a regular classroom, a separate classroom in a regular school, or in a special school with specific focus on a particular disability group. However, the accent on specific resources between jurisdictions varies and is also strongly associated with a cultural preference towards the allocation of SEN children to regular or special education.

For example, Ireland and NRW are in a long tradition to teach a SEN child in a regular classroom. The preference of parents of both SEN as well as non-SEN children in these jurisdictions is strongly in favor of teaching SEN children in mainstream schools. As a result, this cultural preference results in a system in which regular schools receive enough finance to give the SEN child the extra educational support needed. The curriculum of the study to become a regular school teacher incorporates an introduction to the subject of inclusive education. Also due to the new laws that recently came into force, the cultural preference towards inclusive education in Serbia, the Netherlands, Flanders and Denmark is slowly changing towards (a certain way of) inclusive education. However, the speed in which this cultural change becomes practice differs between jurisdictions.

Since September 2015 the M-decree in Flanders came into full force. Hereby a substantial amount of parents of SEN children transferred their SEN child from special to regular schools.

Even though in the case of the Netherlands Dutch parents had a choice to place their SEN child in a regular school setting since the Act for Centers of Expertise was adopted in 2003, in the next years the number of children with severe disabilities in special schools still exceeded the number in regular schools. Since the new law 'Passend Onderwijs' came into force, this preference to allocate a SEN child, such as Anna or Alex, in special schools is slowly changing. Since 2013/2014 there are more SEN children moving from special primary school to regular secondary schools (see Graph 1 below).

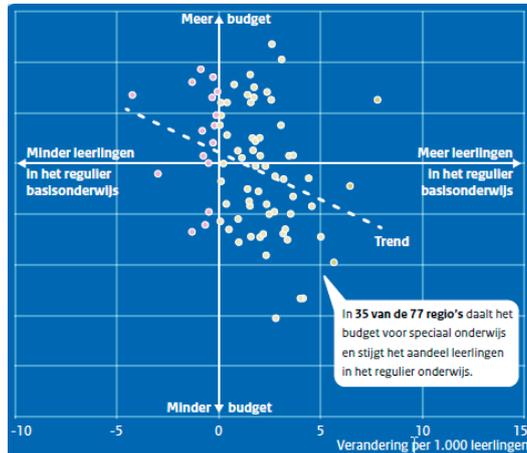
**Graph 1.** The percentage of SEN children that moved from primary special education to secondary mainstream education in The Netherlands in the period 2010 to 2015.



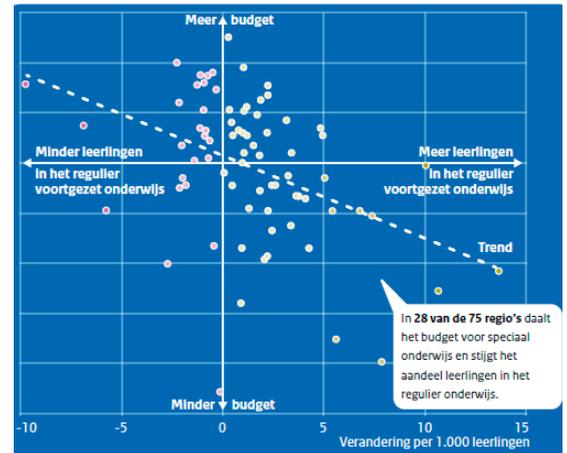
There is variation between Dutch regional educational networks in the preference to allocation a SEN child such as Anna or Alex to a regular or special school. Graph 2 shows that this allocation policy might also be related to the financial situation of a region.

**Graph 2.** Allocation policy might also be related to the financial situation of the region.

*Primary education*



*Secondary education*



(The state of Education in The Netherlands, 2016)

**Coordinator of a Dutch regional educational network**  
 Passend onderwijs/Inclusive education is action-oriented education. The big paradigm shift is to think in educational support instead of disabilities.

### 4.3. Variation between regular schools in the organization of additional educational support

There is lots of variation in the organization of the extra support between regular schools in Dutch regional educational networks and also between the different jurisdictions.

Dutch regional educational networks are free to determine the amount of money to provide basic provision of support for every pupil. In addition, regular schools can make their own choices with regard to the organization of this basic provision of support. Consequently, in the first regular school, Anna can be allocated to a class of 25 children with additional support of staff, such as a class-assistant. Contrary, in the neighboring school, Anna can be allocated to a small class of only fifteen children, but with no extra support for the teacher, such as a class-assistant.

The regional educational network is free to determine what criteria are used to give access to special education. Therefore, it occurs that in one regional educational authority, Anna or Alex will be allocated in special education, but in the other regional educational authority will be allocated to regular education.

Also population decrease might be associated with choices about the organization of extra support and the allocation of SEN children to regular or special schools. All jurisdictions, except for Ireland, have areas with substantial decrease of population. Consequently, less children go to school. In order to continue existence of the school, this might also influence the decision how to organize the basic provision of support for SEN children in mainstream schools, i.e. to spend the basic provision of support to smaller classes or to facilitate bigger classes with additional support of teacher assistants. Regular schools in areas with population decrease might be more prone to keep or allocate SEN children in their regular school, so that this school can continue existence. In addition, in regions with population decrease the special schools are on further distance to the pupils homes. The travel distance of Anna and Alex is a lot more and costs for the transport of the pupil are therefore higher. It depends on the local government whether and how these costs for pupil transport are covered.

The question remains whether these mainstream schools do make decisions with regard to the basic provision of support from the interest of the SEN child and if these schools are well enough prepared to give SEN children the best professional and educational support they need.

#### **4.4. Stick to the old or embrace the new**

There is variation between Dutch regional educational authorities in how they adapt to population decrease, i.e. less pupils. Currently, population decrease is mainly a matter of primary schools. While some schools try to keep the organization they originally had, other regular schools reinvent themselves by changing the organization of their curriculum, organization of the classes and resources. One example is schools that restructure themselves by the concept of 'slim fit' (See frame on the next page). Another example is of schools

that have organized that retired teachers can now assist in classroom teaching on a voluntary base.

Slim fit schools use another organizational principle. Traditional classrooms are replaced by units of 70 to 90 pupils (or less depending on the size of the school). The pupils receive appropriate education since more persons are involved in teaching the children. There are persons from the side of the school (teachers, teaching assistants, specialists), but also from outside the school (students, volunteers, freelancers). Teachers are concerned with 'core tasks' at their bachelor degree. The other persons give additional help and support. Every child is matched to a mentor with a bachelor degree, who is responsible for the learning process of this child. In these schools, ICT has a vital role.  
(<http://www.innovatieimpulsonderwijs.nl/over-iio/de-5-iio-experimenten/aan-de-slag-met-slimfit/> )

## **Variation in allocation to special education on temporal or structural base**

There is variation between jurisdictions and Dutch regional educational networks whether the allocation of a SEN child such as Anna or Alex to special education is on a temporal or structural base.

In the Netherlands the permit to allocate a SEN child to special education (Toelaatbaarheidsverklaring; TLV) is officially valid for at least one school year (plus the extra months in the remaining school year). An exception to this rule is when a child has a very low intelligence. In this case the TLV is valid for the rest of the school carrier (or until a child is eighteen years old). Consequently, after this period the TLV needs reevaluation, which is used to discuss the allocation to special education or the return to regular addition.

The new Law 'Passend Onderwijs' stimulates the Dutch regional educational networks to temporally allocate a SEN child to special education, since they are now legally obliged to describe the policy of relocation from special to regular education in the official document of the network ('het ondersteuningsplan'). Because the regional educational

network determines the duration of the TLV, they need to have procedures and policy for re-evaluating the TLV. A part of this re-evaluation is the possible continuation of the current special setting or the relocation to regular education (or a more regular form of education, such as Special Basis Onderwijs or Praktijk onderwijs).

However, although the process of relocation is described in almost every 'ondersteuningsplan' of the regional educational authorities, the relocation of SEN pupils to regular education is yet no common practice. Only a few networks recently started with the relocation of SEN children from special to mainstream schools.

Several good examples from Dutch regional educational networks of stimulating relocation of SEN children such as Anna and Alex from special to mainstream education are described in the frames below.

### **Good practices in primary education**

One of the Dutch regional educational networks stimulates the relocation of SEN children from special to mainstream schools by putting goals to the TLV. This helps to keep the focus on the temporality of placement in special education.

Another Dutch regional educational network stimulates the temporality of allocation to special education by keeping the referring regular school involved in the progress of the pupil when allocated in special education.

### **Good practice in secondary education**

One of the Dutch regional educational networks of secondary education have facilitated a 'FLEX-college'. This is an educational facility accessible for pupils with compulsory education on one of the secondary schools in that regional educational network. This 'Flex College' is accessible for pupils who need additional support, can't be adequately helped in a regular setting, but who do not meet the needs to go to special education. The education is focused on relocation to regular education, to accomplish a qualification or to go to employment.

With regard to the participating jurisdictions, there are jurisdictions in which temporality of allocating a SEN child such as Anna or Alex to special education is incorporated in the system. For example, in NRW the temporality to allocate a SEN child to special education is common practice and in a long tradition since 1970. Every SEN child is monitored every year with focus on relocation from special to regular education. Also in Serbia there is a focus on the replacement of SEN children from special to regular education. If Anna or Alex is allocated in special education, every three months she or he will be monitored on their school and behavioral outcomes. The results will be discussed in the expert team of the special school, in which there will be decided if the child can return to regular education. In the following years, the monitoring of Anna and Alex will be twice a year.

The physical nearness of special and regular settings seems to positively reinforce the relocation of SEN children from special to regular education. For example, in Denmark since 2015 there are newly founded special classes for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in regular secondary schools. As a result, ASD children such as Alex, can follow the same curriculum as regular pupils, but receive additional support in the special class. In case Alex is well enough prepared (both cognitive as well as social-emotional) to join the regular class, this can be facilitated by a step by step transfer to regular education starting with one course (for example in mathematics) and build up with more courses on different subjects.

Also in one of the Dutch regional education networks, there is a school for special (SBO) and regular education in the same building. SEN and non-SEN children are not organized by age,

but on didactic level. Children in the same 'learning square' receive similar instruction (if possible). Based on the additional support of the SEN child, the pupil can follow regular lessons in regular education or receive the lessons in special education. Hereby, the relocation from special to regular education can be stimulated.

#### ***Headmaster of a Dutch regular school***

With regard to the start of the extra support it is sometimes difficult to organize this extra support during the year. This because formation of the professionals, i.e. for example teachers, pedagogues and class-assistants, is already settled.

### **4.5. Inclusive education is also stimulated by financial incentives**

All participating jurisdictions have strong stipulations in the law according to which all children have the right to have access to education of good quality. However, inclusive education is also stimulated by financial incentives.

Examples of financial incentives are the following. The allocation of a SEN child, let's say Anna or Alex, in regular education is in general less expensive than the allocation of Anna or Alex in special education. In the Netherlands, because of the financial budgeting of the Dutch regional Educational networks (based on the number of pupils at October 1th, 2011) some educational networks will have less budget for additional educational support than before Passend Onderwijs started. As a result, this might influence the regional allocation policy and might increase the threshold of allocating Anna or Alex to a special school.

Some Dutch regional educational authorities have put their own financial barriers to allocate Anna or Alex in special education. For example, in one of the interviewed networks, the regular school has to pay €4000 to the regional network when a regular school applies for a transfer of Anna to special education. This money will be used by the network to organize the necessary educational support. One of the other interviewed networks stimulates the allocation of SEN children in regular education by presenting the number of children in special schools to all the administrations of the network once a

year in a meeting. The additional support for all SEN children who are allocated in special education is covered by all administrations in this network. By showing these numbers, the variation in allocation between administrations becomes clear, which stimulates awareness and discussion about the underlying considerations of the different administrations to allocate SEN children in special schools.

In Denmark, there is also a financial incentive to stimulate inclusive education. If a SEN child is transferred to a special school, the referring mainstream school has to finance the future school career in special education of the child.

Apart from a financial incentive to stimulate inclusive education, in NRW another type of incentive is being used. (See frame below)

The Jakob Muth Preis (<http://www.jakobmuthpreis.de>) is awarded since 2009 in states of Germany. Many schools participate in this competition which has already brought forward 21 winners. These winning schools are special and inspiring examples of inclusive education and receive a fair amount of money or training.

#### **4.6. Synchronization between the educational, social and welfare domain**

Synchronization of regulations between educational, social and welfare sectors and the local government is of crucial importance to fully support the additional needs or to enhance the process of relocating Anna or Alex to a special school. Although in most jurisdictions there is a multidisciplinary team that is involved in the provision of education and social support (for example, in Flanders there is the CBL; in the Netherlands, there is a so called ZAT team in every secondary school), the organization of the different types of support might be complex. This because regulations of these sectors are not always fully aligned. This may lead to complex, bureaucratic processes, and sometimes suboptimal solutions.

## **4.7. Position of the parents**

In all participating jurisdictions the position of the parents has positively changed. Parents are more involved in the process of the determination of the additional educational support and the process of allocating a SEN child to special education. For example, in the Netherlands parents now have the right of consent about the support plan (ondersteuningsplan) in every regional educational authority.

## **4.8. The formal role of supervision in different jurisdictions**

There is a difference with regard to the formal role of inspectors between the different jurisdictions. For example, in Denmark and Flanders, inspectors may only focus on the legal framework, but officially cannot advise how to improve the quality of education. On the other hand, inspectors in Ireland and NRW also have a formal role in stimulating schools with regard to inclusive education. This difference may partly be linked to the cooperation between inspectors and learning consultants in the different jurisdictions. These learning consultants offer individual advice to municipalities (in the case of Denmark) and schools (in Flanders and Denmark) how to improve the quality of the school. The learning consultants provide advice, specifically aimed at each school's needs. Both in Flanders and Denmark learning consultants are centrally organized by the government, but are not part of the inspectorate. In Denmark, schools and municipalities can apply for advice of a learning consultant free of charge. In Flanders, the Learning consults are part of the Centre of Pupil Guidance (CLB).

The Dutch inspectorate is currently in transition and is moving towards a new way of supervision. In addition to the evaluation of quality, checking compliance with rules and regulations is and will always be part of an inspection visit. In addition, in the new way of supervision (Toezicht 2020, starting in 2017), the Dutch Inspectorate will also have a more stimulating role during the inspection of schools, schoolboards and/or regional educational networks on how to improve their quality assurance. This is done through dialogue with stakeholders, such as schoolboards, schooldirectors, teachers, parents. In addition, there will be more 'custommade' supervision, with

more space to discuss the context and vision of the school. Further, the new supervisory framework holds a more clear distinction between legal requirements and non-mandatory aspects of the supervisory framework.

The interviewed Dutch regional educational networks are very positive about the new, stimulating way of supervision of the Dutch inspectorate. Especially the fact that supervision is not only focusing on 'quantitative outcomes' of the school, but that there is more room to discuss the individual context of the school, including the proposition of the population (i.e., many versus little SEN children), as well as the stimulating feedback and advice of the inspector are mentioned as being very stimulating en helpful.

## **5. Conclusions**

Goal of the current comparative analysis was to learn from European jurisdictions (i.e., Flanders, Serbia, NRW, Ireland, Denmark and The Netherlands) and Dutch regional educational authorities about how the educational and supervisory system is organized with regard to inclusive education and how this manifests itself for the individual SEN child in primary and secondary education. The overall research questions were: 'How is the provision of support and available resources for SEN pupils organized in different Dutch regional educational networks and European jurisdictions? And what is the role of supervision in this?'

The next paragraphs will describe the main conclusions.

### **5.1. Educational systems are in transition and in favor of inclusive education**

The movement towards inclusive education is not exclusively part of one or two jurisdictions: it rather is a key component of special educational policy across Europe (Ainscow & César, 2006). All participating jurisdictions have signed international conventions and statements. As a result, they have made a shift in political and policy context towards inclusive education and have a national policy of stimulating inclusive education. Both on policy as well as at the educational level the prevailing thought is thereby that inclusive education can only be successful if regular schools are well prepared for children with special educational needs. However, there will always be children that are in need of very specialized care, that is difficult to give in regular school settings. The educational systems of the participating jurisdictions can therefore be described as an 'adapted' way of inclusive education: regular if possible, specialized if necessary, with a system of special schools for those with specific impairments. This leaves different types of special schools intact and thereby distinguishes itself from the strict concept of inclusive education.

The practice of inclusive education in the different jurisdictions and Dutch regional educational authorities is tightly bound to context; the culture, history, and financial incentives to stimulate inclusive education. This strongly mediates the manner in which inclusion is defined, implemented and achieved within the different systems. As a result, the practice of inclusive education has many different faces. This also results in a diversity of provisions available for children with special educational needs in these different jurisdictions and Dutch regional educational authorities.

Jurisdictions such as Ireland and NRW are in a long tradition of inclusive education. Consequently, these jurisdictions have a relatively low percentage of SEN children in segregated settings and additional financial resources, specific support of the mainstream schools and a restricted number of different types of special schools. In contrast, jurisdictions such as Serbia, the Netherlands, Flanders and Denmark have relatively higher percentages of SEN children that are allocated in segregated settings. These jurisdictions were in a tradition of a strongly differentiated system based on handicaps or disorders. Due to the new laws and policy rules that recently came into force, the preference is slowly changing towards more inclusive education. However, the speed in which this change becomes practice differs between jurisdictions.

The variation between jurisdictions in the percentage of SEN children that is allocated in separate settings is also present in the different Dutch regional educational authorities.

## **5.2. Financial incentives might stimulate inclusive education**

The movement towards inclusive education might be positively reinforced by financial incentives. Since the allocation of a SEN child in regular education is (in general) less expensive than the allocation of a SEN child in special education, this might influence the allocation policy of regions and jurisdictions. For example, in the Netherlands financial budgeting seems to influence the regional allocation policy. Regions with less budget than before the new Law Passend Onderwijs came into power seem to increase the threshold of allocating a SEN child to a special school (The State of Education in the Netherlands, 2016). Also in Denmark there is a financial incentive to

stimulate inclusive education. If a SEN child is transferred to a special school, the referring mainstream school has to finance the future school career in special education of the child.

In states of Germany, The Jakob Muth Preis (<http://www.jakobmuthpreis.de>) is awarded since 2009. Many schools participate in this competition which has already brought forward 21 winners. These winning schools are special and inspiring examples of inclusive education and receive a fair amount of money or training.

### **5.3. Allocation of the SEN child to regular or special education**

The decision to allocate a SEN child to mainstream or special education is based on many different factors. For example, what is the severity of the educational and/or pedagogical problem of the SEN child? In what way do these problems disturb the classroom atmosphere or the learning environment of the other children in the classroom? How many other children are in the classroom? What is the composition of the classroom; how many other SEN children are in the classroom? Is the teacher enough prepared to facilitate the additional support for the SEN child? What kind of additional support is possible from the school?

With regard to the composition of the classroom, Serbia for example has a stipulation in the law stating a maximum of two SEN children per classroom.

### **5.4. Variation in temporality of allocation to special education**

There is variation between jurisdictions and Dutch regional educational networks in the allocation of a SEN child to special education; i.e. on a temporal or structural base. With the regional educational networks now determining the duration of the TLV, they need to have procedures and policy for re-evaluating the TLV. A part of this re-evaluation is the possible continuation of the current special setting or the relocation to regular education. However, although the process of relocation should be described in the 'ondersteuningsplan' of all 152 networks, the relocation of SEN pupils to regular education was (Ledoux et al., 2012) and is yet no common practice in most

regions. Only a few networks recently started with the relocation of SEN children from special to mainstream schools.

The temporality of the allocation of a SEN child to special education is common practice in jurisdictions such as Serbia and NRW. Every SEN child is regularly monitored with focus on endgoals. This might enhance relocation to regular education.

One aspect that might enhance the temporality of relocation, is the physical nearness of locations of special and regular schools. For example, in Denmark there are special classes for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in regular secondary schools since 2015. As a result, ASD children can follow the same curriculum as regular pupils, but receive additional support in the special class. In case the SEN child is well enough prepared (both cognitive as well as social-emotional) to join a regular class, the child can transfer to this class. This can be facilitated by a step by step transfer to regular education starting with one course for example in mathematics and build this up with more courses on different subjects.

Also in one of the Dutch regional education networks, there is a school for special (SBO) and regular education in the same building. SEN and non-SEN children are not organized by age, but on didactic level. Children in the same 'learning square' receive similar instruction (if possible). Based on the additional support of the SEN child, the pupil can follow regular lessons in regular education or receive the lessons in special education. Hereby, the relocation from special to regular education can be stimulated.

## **5.5. Variation in the organization of extra support**

There is lots of variation in the organization of the extra support between the different jurisdictions, but also between the regular schools in Dutch regional educational networks. For example in the case of Dutch regional educational networks, they are free to determine the amount of money to provide basic provision of support for every pupil. In addition, regular schools can make their own choices with regard to the organization of this basic provision of support. As a result, in the first regular school, the SEN child can be allocated in a class of 25 children with additional support of staff, such as a

class-assistant. However, in the neighboring school, the SEN child is in a small class of only fifteen children, but the teacher has no extra support of a class-assistant.

The question remains whether these mainstream schools do make decisions with regard to the basic provision of support from the interest of the SEN child and if these schools are well enough prepared to give SEN children the best professional and educational support they need.

## **5.6. Changing population in regular and special schools**

As a result of the laws to promote inclusive education the population of children in mainstream schools as well as special schools is slowly changing. More SEN children seem to move from special education to regular schools. What might seem the case, is that it is the group of SEN children with milder disabilities that move from special schools to regular education. As a result, the group of children with more severe disabilities remain in special schools. This is in line with the earlier finding in the Netherlands that before the new law on inclusive education (Passend Onderwijs) became into force, SEN children with less educational needs were the ones to transfer from special to regular education (Ledoux et al., 2012) with SEN children with higher educational needs remaining in special education.

This change of population in both regular as well as in special schools has many consequences, such a changing position of special schools as well as specific needs with regard to the professionalization of the staff.

## **5.7. Changing position of special schools**

Influenced by the new laws supporting more inclusive education, the position of existing special schools is changing. Although special schools may continue to provide the most suitable education for the children with disabilities who cannot be adequately served in regular classrooms or schools, special schools can also represent a valuable resource for the development of inclusive schools, with the staff of these special institutions possessing the expertise needed for early screening and identification of children with disabilities. In addition, the

staff of special schools can contribute to regular schools to the matching of curricular content and method to the individual needs of pupils.

### **5.8. Professionalization of the teachers**

In both regular as well as in special schools the teachers are confronted with a changing population with different needs. However, in all participating jurisdictions there are some concerns about the capacity of the educational system – and the teachers within it – to ‘deliver’ inclusion. The educational staff (such as teachers, school leaders, mentors) needs to develop knowledge and skills to deliver more inclusive education.

### **5.9. Synchronization between educational, social and welfare domain**

Synchronization of regulations between educational, social and welfare sectors and the local government is of crucial importance to fully support the additional needs or to enhance the process of relocating a SEN child to a special school. Although in most jurisdictions there is a multidisciplinary team that is involved in the provision of education and social support, the organization of the different types of support might be complex. This because regulations of these sectors are not always fully aligned. This may lead to complex, bureaucratic processes, and sometimes suboptimal solutions.

### **5.10. The formal role of supervision varies between jurisdictions**

There is a difference between the different inspectorates in their formal role. For example, inspectors in Denmark and Flanders are only allowed to focus on the legal framework and officially not allowed to advice on how to improve the quality of education. On the other hand, inspectors in Ireland and NRW may advice schools on how to improve inclusive education. This difference may partly be connected to the role of inspectors versus learning consultants in the different jurisdictions. Both in Flanders and Denmark learning consultants are centrally organized by the government, but are not a part of the inspectorate. In Denmark, schools and

municipalities can apply free of charge for advice of a learning consultant.

The Dutch inspectorate is currently in transition and moving towards a new way of supervision. In addition to the evaluation of quality, checking compliance with rules and regulations is and will always be part of an inspection visit. In addition, in the new way of supervision (Toezicht 2020), the Dutch Inspectorate will also have a more stimulating role during the inspection of schools, schoolboards and/or regional educational networks on how to improve their quality assurance. This is done through dialogue with stakeholders, such as schooldirectors, teachers, parents, and the inspector and gives room for 'custommade' supervision, the context of the school and to discuss the vision of the school on their own quality. Further, in the new supervisory framework there is a more clear distinction between legal requirements and non-mandatory aspects of the supervisory framework that help to stimulate the ambition of the school and schoolboard.

## 6. Final thought

There are a lot of similarities in ambitions, laws, policies and procedures with regard to inclusive education across jurisdictions and Dutch regional educational networks. However, there is a lot of variation in the practice of inclusive education and the supervisory framework being used. This variety is both present between as well as within jurisdictions.

To conclude, there is no mold for inclusive education. A certain level of variety is useful to fully align sources with the local needs. However, the challenge will be to capacitate (and supervise) the system in such a way that the conditions as well as the persons involved (e.g. teachers, schoolleaders, parents) are enough capacitated to deliver the best possible education to children who are in special need.

## 7. Literature

Allen, J. (1999). *Actively seeking inclusion*. London: Falmer.

Ainscow, M., & César, M. (2006). Inclusive education ten years after Salamanca: Setting the agenda. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, 21, 231-238.

Booth, T. (2000) Controlling the agenda: policies on inclusion and exclusion in England, in Armstrong, D., Armstrong, F., And Barton, L. (Eds). *Policy, Contexts and Comparative Perspectives*, London: Fulton

Department of Education & Skills Ireland (2016). <http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Statistics/Data-on-Individual-Schools/Data-on-Individual-Schools.html>

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2012). *Special needs education – Country information 2012*. <https://www.european-agency.org/publications/ereports/sne-country-data-2012/sne-country-data-2012>

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2016). <https://www.european-agency.org>

Innovatie Impuls Onderwijs (2015). *SlimFit is een innovatief onderwijsexperiment voor primair onderwijs. Hoe werkt het, en hoe kun je ermee aan de slag?*  
<http://www.innovatieimpulsonderwijs.nl/over-iio/de-5-iio-experimenten/aan-de-slag-met-slimfit/>

Jakob Muth Preis (2009). <http://www.jakobmuthpreis.de/>

Klasse (2015). *M-decreet: wat is een 'verslag van het CLB'?*  
<https://www.klasse.be/7269/gewoon-buitengewoon-wie-beslist/>

Ledoux et al (2012). COOL Speciaal. *Kohnstamm Instituut*.  
<http://www.kohnstammstituut.uva.nl/rapporten/pdf/ki884.pdf>

Lindsay, G. (2007). Educational psychology and the effectiveness of inclusive education/mainstreaming. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 77, 1-24.

LOP (2016). <http://www.lop.be>

Passend Onderwijs (2016). [www.passendonderwijs.nl](http://www.passendonderwijs.nl)

Passend Onderwijs (2016). *Verevening*.  
<https://www.passendonderwijs.nl/over-passend-onderwijs/in-het-kort/bekostiging/verevening/>

Raad van Europa (2010). Resolutie 1761.

Sardes (2015). Richting en inrichting van passend onderwijs in samenwerkingsverbanden.

SICI (2009). *Inspectorate profile: Denmark*. <http://www.sici-inspectorates.eu/Members/Inspection-Profiles/Denmark>

SICI (2009). *Inspectorate profile: Ireland*. <http://www.sici-inspectorates.eu/Members/Inspection-Profiles/Ireland>

SICI (2009). *Inspectorate profile: Flanders*. <http://www.sici-inspectorates.eu/Members/Inspection-Profiles/Flanders>

SICI (2015). *Inspectorate profile: North Rhine-Westphalia*.  
<http://www.sici-inspectorates.eu/Members/Inspection-Profiles/North-Rhine-Westphalia>

SICI (2016). <http://www.sici-inspectorates.eu>

Smeets, E. (2007). Speciaal of apart. Onderzoek naar de omvang van het speciaal onderwijs in Nederland en andere Europese landen. Nijmegen: ITS

Stephens, S. A., & Lakin, K. C. (1995). Where students with emotional and behavioral disorders go to school. In J. M. Kauffman, J. W. Lloyd, D. P. Hallahan, & T. A. Astuto (Eds.), *Issues in educational placement: Students with emotional behavioral disorders* (pp. 47-74). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Stoutjesdijk, R., Lemstra, R. & Jongbloed, M. (2007). Omkijken en vooruitzien. Afsluitend rapport Landelijke Commissie Toezicht Indicatiestelling. Katern 3: Indicatiestelling speciaal onderwijs 2006/2007. Den Haag: LCTI.

Stoutjesdijk, R. (2014). Children with emotional and behavioral disorders in special education: Placement, progress, and family functioning. Doctoral thesis, Leiden University.

The State of Education in the Netherlands (2016). *De staat van het Onderwijs: Onderwijsverslag 2014-2015*.  
<http://www.onderwijsinspectie.nl/binaries/content/assets/Onderwijsverslagen/2016/de-staat-van-het-onderwijs-2014-2015.pdf>

United Nations (2006). *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/> (geraadpleegd op 14-12-2012).

UNESCO (1994). The Salamanca Statement.

Van Bruggen, J.C. (2010). *Inspectorates of education in Europe; Some comparative remarks about their tasks and work*.

Vlaamse Ministerie voor Onderwijs en Vorming (2016). *Verslag voor toegang tot het buitengewoon onderwijs*.  
<http://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/verslag-voor-toegang-tot-het-buitengewoon-onderwijs>

Vlaamse Ministerie voor Onderwijs en Vorming (2016). *Nieuw M-decreet voor meer inclusie in het onderwijs*.  
<http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/specifieke-onderwijsbehoeften/beleid/M-decreet/>

Vlaamse Ministerie voor Onderwijs en Vorming (2016). *Ondersteuning voor leerkrachten en leerlingen bij specifieke onderwijsbehoeften*.  
<http://www.onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/ondersteuning-voor-leerkrachten-en-leerlingen-bij-specifieke-onderwijsbehoeften>

Vlaamse Ministerie voor Onderwijs en Vorming (2016). *Speciale onderwijsleermiddelen*.  
<http://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/onderwijspersoneel/van-basis-tot-volwassenenonderwijs/op-het-werk/lespraktijk/specifieke-onderwijsbehoeften/ondersteuning-en-leermiddelen/speciale-onderwijsleermiddelen>

Vlaamse Onderwijsinspectie (2016).  
<http://www.onderwijsinspectie.be/>

Vlaanderen (2015).

[www.vlaanderen.be/nl/publicaties/detail/vlaams-onderwijs-in-cijfers-2014-2015](http://www.vlaanderen.be/nl/publicaties/detail/vlaams-onderwijs-in-cijfers-2014-2015)

## Appendix A: Interview Guide

International comparative study on inclusive education

### Personal information

<b>Country</b>	
<b>Name expert1</b>	
<b>Profession/title</b>	
<b>Email address</b>	
<b>Name expert2</b>	
<b>Profession/title</b>	
<b>Email address</b>	
<b>Name expert3</b>	
<b>Profession/title</b>	
<b>Email address</b>	
<b>Name expert4</b>	
<b>Profession/title</b>	
<b>Email address</b>	
<b>Interviewer 1 Inclusion project</b>	
<b>Profession/title</b>	
<b>Email address</b>	
<b>Interviewer 2 Inclusion project</b>	
<b>Profession/title</b>	
<b>Email address</b>	
<b>Date of interview</b>	

## A. General information about the educational system and supervision

<b>A. General description of the educational system</b>	
<b>A.1</b>	We made a brief description on how the education to SEN pupils is organized in your country in <i>primary education</i> ..... Do you have any comments or supplements?
<b>A.2</b>	We made a brief description on how the education to SEN pupils is organized in your country in <i>secondary education</i> ..... Do you have any comments or supplements?
<b>A.3</b>	We made a brief description on how the identification of SEN pupils is organized in your country in <i>primary education</i> ..... Do you have any comments or supplements?
<b>A.4</b>	We made a brief description on how the identification of SEN pupils is organized in your country in <i>secondary education</i> ..... Do you have any comments or supplements?
<b>A.5</b>	Are there any recent developments, policies or (legal) changes concerning inclusive education in <i>primary or secondary education</i> ?
<b>A.5.a</b>	What is the target group of the inclusive education policy? Does it comprise gifted children? Does it comprise children with very low abilities? Do all children have a right on education, no matter their abilities or special needs?
<b>A.6</b>	Is there a (strong) presumption in the law in favor of inclusive education for all children?
<b>A.7</b>	Are there positive or negative incentives in law or policy for inclusive education?
<b>A.7a</b>	Is the aim of inclusive education that all children will be educated in the mainstream? Or is the aim: mainstream if possible, special when needed (like 'passend onderwijs')?
<b>A.8</b>	What kind of structural cooperation is there between mainstream schools and special schools in <i>primary education</i> ?
<b>A.9</b>	What kind of structural cooperation is there between mainstream schools and special schools in <i>secondary education</i> ?
<b>A.10</b>	Are there special classes or special units in or close to regular schools in <i>primary schools</i> ?
<b>A.11</b>	Are there special classes or special units in or close to regular schools in <i>secondary schools</i> ?

<b>B. General description of the supervision system</b>	
<b>B.1</b>	How is the supervision (Inspection) of the education of SEN pupils organized <i>in primary schools</i> ?
<b>B.2</b>	How is the supervision (Inspection) of the education of SEN pupils organized <i>in secondary schools</i> ?
<b>B.3</b>	Is there also supervision of the education in special classes, units etc. ? How does that look like?
<b>B.4</b>	How is the supervision stimulating inclusive education in primary and secondary schools?
<b>B.5</b>	Is supervision experiencing any challenges with regard to the topic of inclusion in your country?
<b>B.6</b>	If so, which challenges does supervision faces?
<b>B.7</b>	How does supervision faces these challenges?
<b>B.8</b>	How does the inspectorate judge the quality of education for SEN pupils in mainstream education?
<b>Comments</b>	

### **Fictitious cases**

The fictitious pupils in the current study have average intellectual capacities (IQ=100). However, the pupils are concerned with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and have secondary behavioral problems, i.e. externalizing (aggressive, oppositional deviant problems) or internalizing problems (anxious, depressive behavior).

**Fictitious case 1.** Anna is 7 years old and is in a regular primary school since she was 4 years old. Since one year her progress in reading, writing and arithmetic stagnates. She receives support for reading, but now she seems to have even more problems with arithmetic. Parents and school are worried about her social development and her behavioral problems. Her teacher does not know how to meet her needs.

**Fictitious case 2.** Alex is 14 years old and in a regular secondary school since he was 12 years old. He visited a regular primary school, but he needed extra support in almost every grade, till he was 10 years old. He doesn't have any extra support in secondary education, because he doesn't want it. Currently, his results are very bad, he skips classes and is obviously not happy. Parents and school are worried about his results and his social and emotional development. The school does not know how to meet his needs.

<b>Theme 1: Allocation</b>	
<b>1.1</b>	In what setting would this pupil be allocated? Regular/special school/in-between setting?
<b>1.2</b>	Does it make a difference, whether this pupil has internalizing (anxious, depressive) behavioral problems or externalizing (aggressive, oppositional deviant) behavioral problems?
<b>1.3</b>	Based on what criteria would this pupil remain in a mainstream school or what criteria would justify her allocation to a mainstream school?
<b>1.4</b>	Based on what criteria would this pupil be allocated to a special setting?
<b>1.5</b>	Based on what criteria would this pupil be allocated to a special class or an 'in-between' setting?
<b>1.5.a</b>	In secondary education: does it make a difference if the regular school has a system of early streaming and selection or a system of mixed ability grouping? What system is best for children with special needs?
<b>1.6</b>	Is it possible that the pupil is referred to another regular school? Under what circumstances or conditions is this possible?
<b>1.6.a</b>	Does it make a difference if the pupil lives in a city or in a small village, far from a special school?
<b>1.7</b>	If the pupil is referred to special education, for what period how long will this last?
<b>1.8</b>	Will the pupil return to regular education?
<b>Comments</b>	

<b>Theme 2: Organization of het proces of allocation</b>	
<b>2.1</b>	What persons are involved in the allocation/admission process of the pupil?
<b>2.2</b>	Who has the ultimate responsibility in decisions on admission and referral of this pupil?
<b>2.3</b>	How is the school career of this pupil monitored?
<b>2.4</b>	Who's involved in monitoring the school career of this pupil?
<b>Comments</b>	

**Theme 3: Organization of education on micro (class) level.**  
*Keep in mind that the pupil is allocated to a regular school.*

<b>3.1</b>	Who is/are involved in the (daily) teaching and learning process of this pupil?
<b>3.2</b>	What role or function does everyone has?
<b>3.3</b>	Who is involved in the planning of the education?
<b>3.4</b>	In what way are these persons involved in the planning?
<b>3.5</b>	How is the extra support organized in the school?
<b>3.6</b>	Is special support organized inside or outside the classroom?
<b>3.7</b>	If it is partly organized outside the classroom, how much time does the pupil spend outside the classroom?
<b>3.8</b>	Who is involved in the provision of extra support?
<b>3.9</b>	What is the average class size of the class this pupil will attend?
<b>3.10</b>	How many other SEN pupils will attend this class?
<b>3.11</b>	How is the organization and the provision of the extra support monitored? By whom?
<b>3.12</b>	Is the education of this pupil based on the mainstream curriculum? Or is there a special (smaller, customized) curriculum?
<b>3.13</b>	Is there class material available that is adaptive to this child?
<b>Comments</b>	

**Theme 4: Qualification and professionalization of the teachers**

**General questions**

<b>4.1</b>	Is there a difference in qualifications of teachers on regular schools/special schools/or in-between settings (for example a special class within a regular school)?
<b>4.2</b>	Are these qualifications legally required (necessary) or desirable?
<b>Specific questions on case level (keep in mind the child is allocated to a mainstream school)</b>	
<b>4.3</b>	How is the professionalization of the teacher(s) of this pupil organized in your country?
<b>4.4</b>	How is/are teacher(s) equipped during his/her carrier to teach this child?
<b>4.5</b>	Does the supervision system in your country monitors that teachers have the right degree when teaching special needs pupils?
<b>Comments</b>	

<b>Theme 5: Finance and needs</b>	
<b>5.1</b>	What provision is allocated to diagnose the needs of the pupil and school and what provision is allocated in regular education to respond to these needs? Is the support considered to be sufficient?
<b>5.2</b>	Are there rules or arrangements for the allocation of extra support in regular education? Are these formulated on a national level, a local level, or a schoollevel?
<b>5.3</b>	What is the influence of the wishes of the parents and the pupil on the description of the needs and on the provision of support?
<b>5.4</b>	Do parents have the right to choose the special or mainstream school they want? If not, do they have the right to appeal against a decision?
<b>5.5</b>	What are recent problems or dilemma's in the provision of support?
<b>Comment</b>	

<b>Theme 6: Learning outcomes of special educational pupils</b>	
<b>6.1</b>	Which ultimate goal is set for this pupil in your country? For example, does special needs education leads to obtaining a regular exam, diploma (or start qualification ) in your country?
<b>6.2</b>	Which ultimate qualifications are set for this pupil in your country?
<b>6.3</b>	Is there a difference in goals for this pupil when educated in regular schools versus educated in special education?
<b>6.4</b>	Are there positive or negative incentives regarding the learning outcomes of pupils with SEN in mainstream education? For instance in the Netherlands all regular primary school are judged on their average learning outcomes. Pupils with SEN can possibly lower these outcomes. There is discussion about the question how the outcomes of these pupils should be included in the judgment of the average learning outcomes of the school.

<b>Variation within the country</b>	
-------------------------------------	--

<b>7.1</b>	Could you please briefly describe the variation in organization of inclusive education within your country.
------------	---

<b>7.2</b>	Could you describe this variation within your country from the perspective of big city versus rural areas?
------------	--

<b>Transition to more inclusive education within the country: paper versus reality</b>	
--	--

<b>8.1</b>	In what way is transition towards more inclusive education already incorporated in the heart and mind of professionals (teachers/ head teachers)?
------------	---

<b>Additional comments</b>	
<b>Important websites</b>	
<b>Important documents</b>	

## Appendix B: The educational system of the six participating jurisdictions

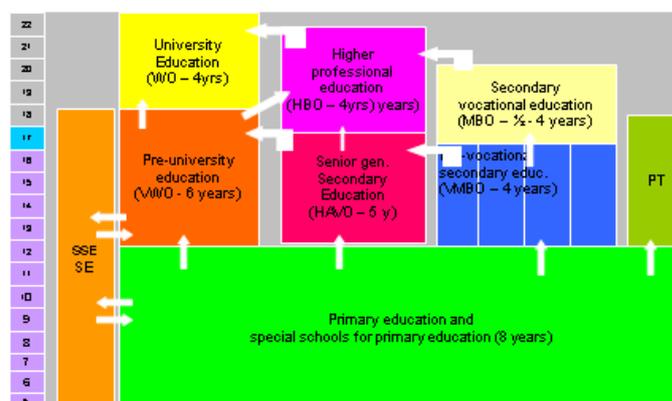
This appendix describes the educational system of the six participating jurisdictions.

### *The Netherlands*

Most children start primary school at the age of four. However, compulsory education starts at the age five. Based on the Compulsory Education Act, children must attend school fulltime for twelve full school years. Lower secondary educations start at age twelve, with a maximum age of fourteen years. Upper secondary education starts at age fourteen. Since 2007, students who have not obtained a qualification at MBO-2 (Vocational education, level two) or HAVO/VWO level (upper secondary education, highest levels), are legally obligated to stay in school until they are eighteen years old.

A SEN child can attend a special school for primary education until the pupil is fourteen years. With regard to a special school for secondary education there are different routes. The SEN child can finish his or her school carrier with a diploma, or if not possible with certificates and/or can continue in a day care setting, with a job or further vocational education. This is possible to a maximum age of 20 years, or with exemption granted by the inspectorate of education. Graph 1 gives a global view on the educational system of the Netherlands.

**Graph 1.** The educational system of the Netherlands.

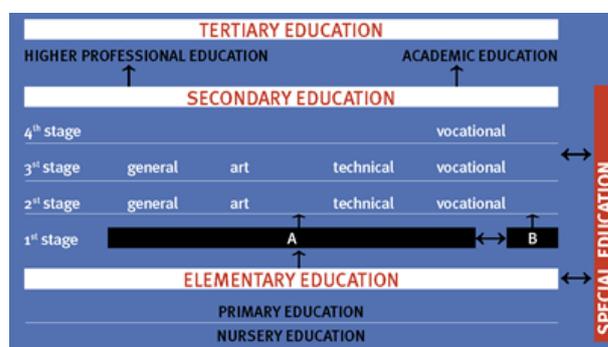


## Flanders

Under the Belgian Constitution every child has a right to education. Compulsory education starts on the 1<sup>st</sup> September of the year in which a child reaches the age of six and lasts twelve full school years. A pupil has to comply with compulsory education until the age of fifteen or sixteen. Afterwards only part-time compulsory education is applicable (a combination of part-time learning and working). However, most young people continue to attend fulltime secondary education. Compulsory education ends at the eighteenth birthday or on June 30<sup>th</sup> of the calendar year in which the youngster reaches the age of eighteen. If a pupil stops going to school on his 18<sup>th</sup> anniversary and does not finish the current school year, he does not have a right to a certificate or diploma which is awarded upon completing the course.

A SEN child can attend a special school for primary education until he or she is twelve and a special school for secondary education until he or she is eighteen years old. Compulsory education for SEN children is the same as for other children and starts at the age of six. If it is impossible due to a handicap to follow lessons on school, the inspectorate can positively advice for home education. This has a maximum of four hours a week, with the school of special education taking care of the education at home. If a child is not able to follow lessons on school or at home, the inspectorate can give a temporary permanent exemption from compulsory schooling (<http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/inspectie/>).

**Graph 2. Educational system of Flanders**



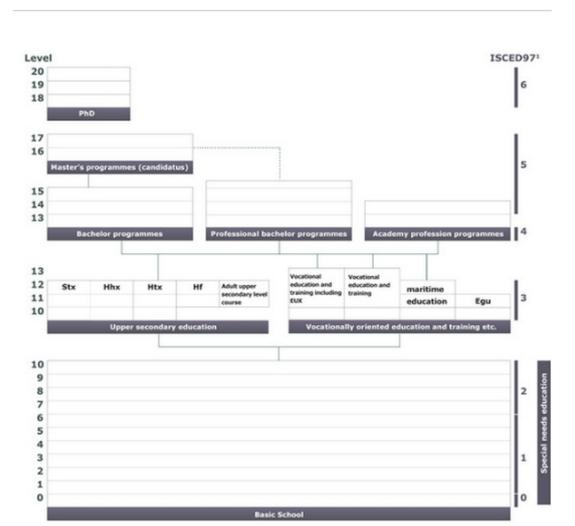
## Denmark

For the public system the concept of 'Folkeskole' is vital: one community school for almost all children regardless of their religion or pedagogical home-ideology and also almost regardless of their intellectual or educational background or problems. The 'Folkeskole' is for all children from six to sixteen. These schools are governed by the municipalities.

### Graph 3. Educational system of Denmark.

#### Overview of the Danish Education System

Get an overview of how the Danish Education System is structured.



## NRW

There is a compulsory school attendance for all children in NRW for the primary school (Primarstufe; year 1 to 4; 6 to 10 years old) and the lower secondary education (Sekundarstufe I; year 5-10: Hauptschule, Sekundarschule, Gymnasium, Gesamtschule, Realschule; 11 – 16 years old) that takes together 10 years (for the pupils with severe learning problems (mental development) it is 11 years).

After this, it continues with a compulsory school attendance for the upper secondary school (Sekundarstufe II; year 11-13: Gesamtschule, Gymnasium, Berufskolleg; 16-18 years). The compulsory school attendance ends for pupils who are not in a vocational training/college at the age of eighteen. For those in the vocational college the compulsory school attendance ends at the age of twenty-one.

For pupils with severe learning problems (mental development) it is possible that they remain in special schools (mental development) up to the age of twenty five years. In general the compulsory school attendance is from the age of six to the age of eighteen for every child (with or without special needs).

## **Serbia**

Primary and lower secondary education in the Republic of Serbia is compulsory, lasting eight years and being conducted in two educational cycles - 6 to 14 years. The first cycle covers the first, second, third and fourth grade. For the pupils of this cycle, classroom teaching is organized. The second cycle covers the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grade, in which the subject teaching is organized. A preparation preschool programme is also compulsory.

Pupils with disabilities acquire education, as a rule, in schools with other pupils, and when it is in the best interest of the SEN pupil, the SEN child will attend a school for pupils with disabilities, in accordance with the Law. Following this rule, schools for pupils with disabilities receive children at compulsory school age or after. The educational program is in compliance with the programme of regular schools and is adapted to children's disability level. Classes with pupils with disabilities in relevant regular schools are shown as school units, which is in line with the statistical definition of school as an observation unit.

## **Ireland**

### **Ireland**

The Irish education system is made up of Early Childhood, Primary, Post Primary, Further Education and Training and /Higher Education sectors.

Education in Ireland is compulsory from age six to sixteen or until students have completed three years of second level education. For primary education this entails children of six to twelve years of age, although almost all children also attend primary school from the age of four or five. For post primary education this entails children of twelve to sixteen years. Overall policy is towards inclusion of pupils with special

educational needs in mainstream schools and generally students with special educational needs are enrolled in a mainstream class with additional support, a special class / unit in a mainstream school or in a special school which caters for students with that category of disability. Currently there are 140 special schools catering for different types of disability. Pupils with more severe special needs attend these special schools. In Ireland individual schools in consultation with the parents of the child and other agencies and professionals decide about the appropriate placement of the child. Ultimately parents have the right to choose. For further information see <http://www.education.ie/en/The-Education-System/#sthash.54dJNIFE.dpuf>.

## Appendix C

### ***An overview of the system of special schools in the six European jurisdictions***

The number, types and position of special schools varies between jurisdictions. This appendix briefly describes the development of the structure and organization of special schools per jurisdiction.

#### *The Netherlands*

Special schools for regular primary (SBO) and secondary education (PRO) provide care and education for mildly impaired children. Before August 2013, when the new education act for SEN pupils ('Passend Onderwijs') came into force, special education in the Netherlands aimed at providing support and facilities for children with a wide range of disabilities in a variety of four different segregated settings with their own area of expertise regarding teaching and caring for children with severe disabilities. Cluster 1 offered special education for the visually impaired, Cluster 2 for the hearing impaired and/or children with serious speech and language problems, Cluster 3 for children with cognitive and/or physical disabilities and chronically ill children Cluster 4 for children with developmental, behavioral, and/or emotional disorders and chronically ill children. Access to all of these special settings were based on national procedures and criteria (by law). Since August 2013, the structure of the educational system completely changed.

New starting point is that schools are more capable to help SEN pupils without detailed regulation by the government. This means that the government will set goals about what schools have to achieve (the *what*), but does not prescribe *how* schools have to reach these goals. The most important change is the introduction of a judicial duty of care: the obligation for a school to either admit a child or ensure that another school is willing to accept the child. This is meant to be a guarantee that SEN children will have a place in a school and protection of their right of proper education. It implies that schools have to collaborate with each other and with bodies for youth health care to be able to fulfill this duty. Because organizations not always tend to start collaborating by themselves, collaboration

is legally required. That is why there are 152 mandatory networks (77 for primary education and 75 for secondary education) incorporating both regular and special schools.

All primary and secondary schools for regular or special education (with the exception of special schools for cluster one and two facilities that are nationally organized) are part of a regional educational network. The distinction between cluster 3 and cluster 4 special schools still exists, but SEN children with a TLV can now be allocated in cluster 3 or cluster 4 (Artikel 2, vierde lid WEC). The regional educational authorities have their own financial budget and have autonomy with regard to the provision and organization of the additional support within their network. In a document named 'ondersteuningsplan' the regional educational authorities are obligated to describe their regional policy, such as the way they arrange and finance the provision of additional educational needs in order to provide an extensive network.

On March 2<sup>nd</sup> of 2016 there were:

- 7423 establishments for regular primary education (BAO)
- 320 establishments for special primary education (SBO)
- 610 establishments for (secondary) special education (SO and VSO)
- 1641 establishments for regular secondary education (1503 establishments for regular secondary education including LWOO and 138 establishments for special secondary education (PRO)).

### *Denmark*

Until 2014, in Denmark a system of special schools only existed in primary education. In primary education all schools (both public as well as private) have an obligation to offer special needs education if needed, and some schools run special classes or are organized as special schools. These special schools have their own area of expertise regarding teaching and caring for children with severe disabilities.

Since 2015, Denmark started eight special separated classes for children with autism spectrum disorder and normal intelligence in upper secondary education. These eight special classes are incorporated within mainstream schools and spread along the country. In every class there is room for twelve children with autism spectrum disorder. These children follow

the same curriculum as non-SEN children in mainstream upper secondary education. However, the children with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) have more time to fulfill this curriculum and to obtain similar results as non-SEN children. Because these classes are within regular schools, it is possible for the ASD children to follow lessons in the mainstream school in the last two years and fully transfer to the regular school (if possible).

### *North Rhine Westphalia*

Children and young people in NRW whose special educational needs cannot be met within a mainstream school receive instruction in Förderschulen, with special emphasis on different types of special educational support, or in comparable institutions.

On October 16th of 2013 there came a new decree (Verordnung über die Mindestgrößen der Förderschulen und der Schulen für Kranke) which directs the minimum size of special schools according to the number of pupils. As a result quite a number of special schools (mostly those for Learning and those for Emotional and social development) were closed or associated with other special schools. Those schools are covering different areas of specialism. As a result there are still seven different types (focal areas) of special schools in NRW but in addition a great number of associated schools (in one building, one place, or different places) with different focal areas of specialism as Language, Learning and Emotional and social development. At first sight, it has nothing to do with inclusion but this decree had a lot of influence on the process of transferring teachers from special to mainstream schools and also on the decision of parents between mainstream or special school (because of the reputation of these schools; the mixture of pupils with different problems).

In 2015 the number of special and regular schools for both primary and secondary education were as follows:

- All together about 570 Special schools (Förderschulen) (mostly primary and secondary schools (Hauptschule) in one) and additional 2 special schools (Förderschulen) for upper secondary education (Gymnasium (Year 11-13)/Realschule (Year 5-10) with 80,000 pupils with a SEN Status;

- About 2840 schools for primary education with 19.400 children with a SEN status;
- About 2450 schools for lower (Year 5-10) and upper (Year 11-13) secondary education with about 30.600 students/pupils with a SEN status.

### *Serbia*

Since the adoption of the new Law on the Foundations of the Education System in August 2009, the educational system in Serbia has changed considerably towards more inclusive education. Each child has the right to enroll into mainstream school, and the school is obliged to provide special support in accordance with the educational needs of the child.

Article 77 of this Law defines the obligation of the school to define the individual mechanism for supporting SEN pupils. Schools are forming an expert team for inclusive education. Through another mechanism of the Inter Sectorial Committees (ISCs), all additional needs of support are provided at the level of the local community. The ISCs are responsible for the assessment of the needs for educational, health care, and social support, the centre for social work (CSW), and the health care institution is responsible for the child. ISC defines a complex Individual plan of support of which the Individual education plan (IEP) is part of. This is done with the purpose of support and thereby prescribes a variety of measures to support the child, including provision of transport, removal of physical hindrances at school premises, as well as provision of assistive technologies which are funded from the municipal budget (with certain exceptions). This prescription of special support is mandatory. The pupil might be enrolled into special schools, only based on the common agreement of the ISC and parents. If the parents decide to keep their SEN child in a regular school, this school needs to provide the extra support based on the IEP.

In Serbia there are several types of special schools, for example: schools for blind children, schools for deaf children and schools for children with different types of mental disabilities. The Law of 2009 stipulates that special schools may support the SEN pupils in mainstream schools. The intention is to include as many children as possible into mainstream schools. As a consequence the population of the special schools has changed, SEN children have moved from special schools to mainstream schools. Furthermore, nowadays special schools also enrol children with multiple disabilities, which were not covered by neither of the two (regular/special school) systems before 2009.

The emphasis on addressing special educational needs in standard schools and classes has major implications for the role of special schools, as well as the number of special schools. Moreover, the change in population of special schools, but also on mainstream schools, is difficult to adapt to for some teachers in regular and special schools. Not all teachers in regular as well as special schools feel prepared to teach the new population in their classes

In secondary education, SEN pupils may continue their education in mainstream schools, being enrolled with a special procedure based on the health and regional enrolment commission's recommendation. The role of the health enrolment commission is to make an estimation of adequate secondary school for the child, based on the health condition of the child. Based on their opinion, the pupil is enrolled into the respective secondary school. In mainstream schools, SEN pupils are educated according to IEP. According to their wish, they may continue education in special classes in mainstream schools, for which they would need the advice of the ISC and accordance of parents.

In 2015 there were 1273 regular schools for primary education and 530 schools for regular secondary education in Serbia, 250 classes with 1475 pupils, for SEN children in regular schools for primary education and 48 special schools of which 27 schools for both primary and secondary education.

## *Flanders*

Since 2015, the M-decree came into power. This has changed the types of special schools in Flanders. Special schools are still divided by disability of the child, but in primary education, from 2015 the following types exist:

- Type 'basic offer': children who are in need of substantial educational needs from early childhood;
- Type 2 offers education for children with mental disabilities;
- Type 3 offers education for children with emotional or behavioral disorder, without mental disability;
- Type 4 offers education for children with motoric disabilities;
- Type 5 offers education for children who are in hospital or residential setting;
- Type 6 offers education for visually impaired children;
- Type 7 offers education for children who are auditory impaired or children with speech or language disorders;
- Type 9 offers education for children with autism spectrum disorder without mental disability.

Secondary education consists of four different forms of special schools. Within every form, different types of special primary schools can be organized and every educational form has specific end goals. Educational form 1 focusses on social functioning and possible participation in an environment that provides support to become employed in an environment with additional support. Children with a report of type 2,3,4,6,7 and 9 in primary education can enroll in education form 1. Educational form 2 focusses on social functioning and participation in an environment that provides support to become employed in an environment with additional support. Children with a report of type 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 9 can enroll in training form 2. Training Form 3 focusses on social functioning and participation and to become employed in the ordinary work environment. Children with a report of type 3, 4, 6, 7 and 9 can enroll in training form 3. Educational form 4 focusses on social functioning and participation, whether or not in an environment where support is foreseen, and on the matter, within the context of the common curriculum for further education or employment in the ordinary work environment, with or without support. Children with a report of type 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9 can enroll in this form.

For the academic year of 2014/2015 there were 2587 schools for primary education of which 2392 schools for regular primary education and 195 special schools for primary education. 944 schools for regular secondary education and 114 special schools for secondary education ([www.vlaanderen.be/nl/publicaties/detail/vlaams-onderwijs-in-cijfers-2014-2015](http://www.vlaanderen.be/nl/publicaties/detail/vlaams-onderwijs-in-cijfers-2014-2015)). See table 2 for the allocation of pupils to regular and special schools from 2009 to 2014.

The Act on equal opportunities in education contains three major provisions:

- The Right to Enrolment: Each pupil has the right to enroll in the school of his/her (parents') choice. Only in a strictly limited number of cases, a school can refuse an enrolment or refer a newly enrolled pupil to another school:
- The establishment of local consultation platforms ([www.lop.be](http://www.lop.be)) with a threefold task: Local consultation platforms ensure the right of enrolment, act as an intermediary in case of conflicts and cooperate in implementing a local policy on equal opportunities in education;

Extra support for additional needs provision in schools: The support is aimed at schools that have a rather large number of pupils who meet certain socio-economic indicators. This extra support consists of teaching periods or additional teaching hours per teacher. This extra support is also assigned to the Pupil Guidance Centres (CLB). The cooperation between the school and the CLB is set out in a policy plan or contract. In order to ensure quality, the CLB must draw a quality handbook and a quality plan. The Inspectorate supervises their implementation.

**Table 2. Number of pupils in regular and special education in Flanders from 2009-2014.**

	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
<b>NURSERY EDUCATION</b>						
Regular	250 391	257 424	262 603	265 953	269 197	268 453
Special	1 962	1 975	1 986	2 023	2 042	2 000
Total	252 353	259 399	264 589	267 976	271 239	270 453
<b>PRIMARY EDUCATION</b>						
Regular	380 197	381 983	386 696	392 351	399 729	411 097
Special	27 705	28 225	28 566	28 481	28 307	27 483
Total	407 902	410 208	415 262	420 832	428 036	438 580
<b>Total elementary education</b>	<b>660 255</b>	<b>669 607</b>	<b>679 851</b>	<b>688 808</b>	<b>699 275</b>	<b>709 033</b>

### *Ireland*

In Ireland, children with more severe levels of disability may require placement in a special school or special class attached to a mainstream primary school. Each such facility is dedicated to a particular disability type and each operates at a specially reduced pupil-teacher ratio. Pupils attending these facilities attract special rates of capitation funding and are entitled to avail of the special school transport service and the school bus escort service. There are also special schools for children with profound and severe learning disability.

Currently in Ireland there is a distinction between two categories of Special Educational Needs, i.e., low incidence SEN and high incidence SEN. These different categories are further in Table 3, page 16.

The system for special education is similar in primary as well as secondary education.

For the academic year of 2014/2015 there were 3137 schools for regular primary education, 140 special schools for primary education and 732 post primary schools (including both regular as well as special school)

([www.education.ie/en/Publications/Statistics/Data-on-Individual-Schools/Data-on-Individual-Schools.html](http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Statistics/Data-on-Individual-Schools/Data-on-Individual-Schools.html)).

In Ireland special schools (for the most part) are categorised as primary schools and have pupils aged from entry 4/5 to leaving 17/18.

## Appendix D

### Description of the organization of supervision in the six European jurisdictions

This paragraph gives a short description of the tasks of the inspectorates of education in the six jurisdictions as these are currently executed. Participating inspectorates differ in method of inspection (risk based vs. full inspection), subject of supervision (directly supervising schools vs. the supervision of municipalities) and the area of supervision of inspectors (with inspectors supervising both special as well as regular schools or inspectors holding different positions when it comes to the inspection of regular or special schools). All inspectorates are part of the Ministry of Education, but hold an independent position.

A general trend in the participating jurisdictions is that schools get more autonomy in relation to decisions about the organization of the curriculum, staff, etc. The consequence is that there are more “best solutions”. And as a result, it is necessary for inspectorates to look carefully for the schools’ own solutions, to value these in a context-bound evaluation; but also with reference to everything the inspectorate knows about “what works” and is effective and efficient and about what is good for learners. In doing so, inspectorates give a “client – focused evaluation” that nevertheless is of general significance (Van Bruggen, 2010).

Below the organization of supervision in the six participating jurisdictions will be discussed.

#### *The Netherlands*

Since 2008, the Dutch Inspectorate of Education works with a risk-based model of inspection in order to identify those schools who pose an educational risk on the basis of their level of quality. On an annual basis, the inspectorate collects and analyses information on possible risks in all schools and visits each school at least once every four years. The results of the risk analysis indicate whether a school needs to be investigated more extensively, or whether the school can be trusted to perform adequately during the next year. If the analysis does not reveal any risks, the inspectorate has sufficient confidence in the quality of the education provided to qualify the school for

the so-called basic inspection program. On the other hand, in case a school performs inadequately, the inspectorate states which shortcomings should be improved and subsequently monitors these improvements. These supervision reports are public.

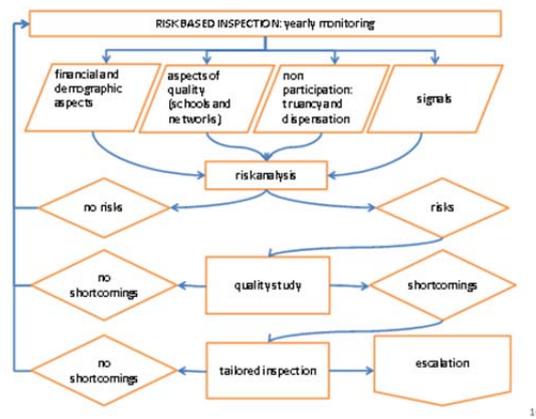
Since 2013, in addition to the direct supervision of schools, the Dutch inspectorate of education also holds supervision on the 152 regional educational networks including regular and special schools. From schoolyear 2013/2014 and 2014/2015, all regional authorities are visited and monitored by inspectors. Starting in schoolyear 2015/2016, the supervision on these networks will be risk-based. In line with supervision on individual schools, the inspectorate provides the so called 'basic- inspection- program' to the networks that do not reveal any risks. In case a network performs inadequately, the inspectorate states which shortcomings should be improved and subsequently monitors these improvements. These supervision reports are public. Graph 4 shows the process of risk based inspection.

In addition to the regular inspections, the inspectorate also conducts so-called thematic inspections. In a sample of schools or regional educational networks a certain topic or subject is inspected using a specific framework of indicators and criteria. These inspections also result in public reports.

A visit to a regular or special primary school takes one day and is done by one inspector. Inspection of a regular or special secondary school also takes one day, but is done by at least two inspectors. There are different inspectors involved in the supervision of regular and special schools. The supervision on the regional educational networks is done by a team of two inspectors: one with expertise of regular education, the other with expertise on special education. In the first two years, also a financial inspector was involved in supervision of the regional networks.

However, the Dutch inspectorate is currently in transition and is moving towards a new way of supervision. In addition to the evaluation of quality, checking compliance with rules and regulations is and will always be part of an inspection visit. In addition, in the new way of supervision (Toezicht 2020), the Dutch Inspectorate will also have a more stimulating role during the inspection of schools, schoolboards and/or regional educational networks on how to improve their quality assurance. This is done through dialogue with stakeholders, such as schooldirectors, teachers, parents, and the inspector and gives room for 'custommade' supervision, the context of the school and to discuss the vision of the school on their own quality. Further, in the new supervisory framework there is a more clear distinction between legal requirements and non-mandatory aspects of the supervisory framework that help to stimulate the ambition of the school and schoolboard. Finally, the ownership of schoolboards and schools will have a more central role. In case they positively protect and stimulate their quality, supervision will keep more distance. This new way of supervision will start in August 2017.

**Graph 4.** Risk based inspection: yearly monitoring



## *Flanders*

Since May 2009 the principle of proportionality and risk-based inspection has been introduced. The autonomy of the institutions has increased because the Inspectorate no longer inspects all results and operational aspects as during an integral inspection process. During the differentiated inspection process only a selection will be inspected more thoroughly (SICI, 2009; Inspectorate profile, Flanders).

Flemish schools have no formal obligation to do a formal self-evaluation, although this is stimulated by governmental projects and by the inspectorate. The inspectorate uses a self-evaluation as a source, but does not give a judgment about the quality of the self-evaluation. Thematic evaluations are not done on a regular base, but incidentally and for certain issues the results of the audits will be usable.

The pre-inspection phase has a duration of one day. Prior to the inspection visit inspectors analyze different documents (data, website's, old inspection reports etc.) about the concerning educational institution. After this, the actual inspection takes place. The duration of this inspection phase usually is longer than one day and for example depends on the size of educational institution, the number of locations and the number of inspectors that can be deployed. All these factors apply to regular primary and secondary schools, as well as special schools. Specific expertise of inspectors (with regard to educational fields/ subjects that are being inspected) definitely plays an important role for inspections in schools for secondary education.

For schools in special education there are specific inspectors. This is the case for both special schools in primary and secondary education. Nevertheless, some inspectors with specific special primary education expertise also inspect regular primary schools. Lastly, there is also separate specific expertise at the Inspectorate's corps regarding the inspection of the Pupil Guidance Centre's (CLB's), part-time art's education (DKO) and adult education.

All reports can be found on the website of the Flemish Inspectorate of Education (<http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/inspectie/>).

## *Denmark*

In Denmark there is a 'double system' with a distinction between the general public system of schools ('Folkeskole') and the system of 'private, independent schools'. The current study will only focus on the general public schools ('Folkeskole') (SICI, 2009; Inspectorate profile, Denmark).

The system of evaluation in Denmark is not centered around a type of 'full inspection' like it is seen in other European countries. The schools have to deliver contribution to an annual evaluation report of the municipality. This document is an important steering document for the municipality. The municipality also has to draw up an improvement plan for the Folkeskole in the municipality. There is a small unit at the Skolestyrelsen (part of the Ministry) that monitors these municipal evaluation reports and action plans. This monitoring is done since 2006 and is focused on some indicators for quality that may differ per year. In case of not meeting the general demands in the laws or in case of serious shortcomings, compared with national averages, this team can order a municipality to take specific actions with one or more schools. The team for this monitoring is small and this team does not carry out own inspections in the schools belonging under the governing of municipalities. They only do the type of 'meta-inspections' mentioned above.

Skolestyrelsen also takes care of a system of national testing since 2010. The Danish National Evaluation Institute EVA takes care of national evaluations of aspects of the system as a whole or of specific themes; but only at national level, not in specific schools.

All evaluation reports of Skolestyrelsen are placed on the web pages of the municipalities.

### *North Rhine-Westphalia*

Quality Analysis (QA) was introduced in August 2006 and is compulsory for all types of public schools in NRW. While overall responsibility for the QA program lies with the Ministry of School and Further Education of NRW, department 414- 'Quality Analysis', the specific organization of the inspections is delegated to the five district governments. Here, specific QA departments were established in 2006. The inspectors are based here. These departments are part of the school supervision system, which is responsible for controlling and supporting the schools. The QA departments work independently of, yet cooperate with the representatives of the School Supervisory Boards (SICI, 2015; Inspectorate profile: North Rhine-Westphalia).

Schools can either apply for QA or will be chosen by the responsible section 4Q. Priority is given to these schools which have not yet been inspected. Schools are involved in the process of QA from the very beginning. They actively contribute to organizing and designing their specific inspection.

The decisive components of teaching and school quality are divided into six quality areas (QA): School results, Learning and Teaching- lessons, School culture, Direction and management, Professionalism of teachers, Quality development- objectives and strategies. These six areas are currently subdivided into 26 main categories, which, in turn, comprise 151 quality criteria. 40 criteria are compulsory, including all 12 criteria concerning the quality of lessons. In addition, up to 96 optional criteria of the evaluation scheme can be agreed on by the school and the school inspection team. As a general rule, the quality analyses are carried out by two inspectors- in large schools or complex systems three or four inspectors may be involved.

QA mainly has a supporting function for the individual school and strengthens the responsibility of the school by including all stakeholders to create a specific external evaluation. QA in NRW has decided not to fulfill the following tasks:

- no ranking of schools depending on the results of the QA;
- no compulsory publishing of the quality reports. The 'school conference' (head of school, representatives of teachers, parents/legal guardians, pupils) decides whether the complete report or parts of it shall be published;

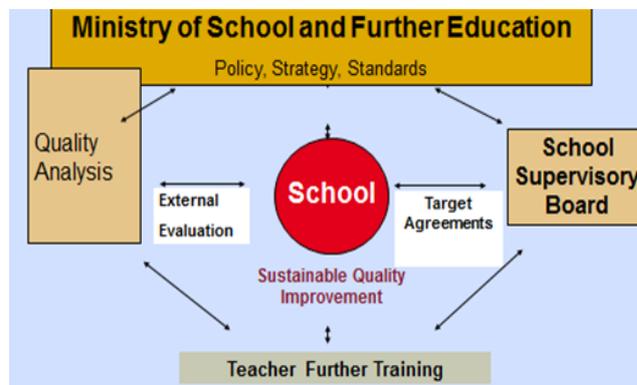
- there are no risk-based QA;
- there are no thematic QA.

QA has no direct advisory tasks, neither for the school as a system nor for teachers. The goal is to give detailed, data-based information about strengths and weaknesses and to give impulses for further development. To give advice is the task of the School Supervisory Board and the institutions of further education.

In NRW there is no different handling or procedure for mainstream schools or special schools or schools with or without inclusion or SEN pupils. The rule is: at least the inspection team leader must be qualified to teach at the type of school (teacher for primary school is a team leader in a primary school inspection, for Gymnasium, for the Hauptschule, Berufskolleg, special education...and so on) evaluated by the team.

The different numbers of inspectors and days of the visit have to do with the numbers of pupils in a school and the organisation of the specific school (half day/full day/ lessons in the evening) and the different professions, working in the schools (as social worker, nurses, therapists etc.) who get the opportunity of an interview (the number of interviews varies from five to nine). As the secondary schools are often much bigger than the primary schools or the special schools there will be more inspectors and four days of inspection (50% of the teachers has to be visited during the observation of lessons, the minimum is 20 lessons per school). The duration of the visits and number of inspectors per type of school is presented below.

Reports are not published by the Quality Analysis or the school supervisory system or the ministry. The school conference of each school can decide whether to publish the quality report or parts of it on the homepage of the school or not. Most of them don't publish the reports.



### ***Duration and number of inspectors at school visits in North Rhine Westphalia***

Primary schools: 2 inspectors, 3 days visit

Secondary schools

- Hauptschulen (year 5-10): 2 inspectors, 3 days visit
- Sekundarschulen (year 5-10): 2 inspectors, 3 days visit
- Realschule (year 5-10): 2 inspectors, 3 days visit
- Gesamtschule (year 5 – 13) 3-4 inspectors depending on the number of pupils; 4 days visit
- Gymnasium (year 5 – 13) 3-4 inspectors depending on the number of pupils; 4 days visit
- Berufskolleg (vocational training)( year 10 -13) 3-5 inspectors depending on the number of pupils; 4 days visit

Special schools ( Förderschulen):

- Learning (year 1-10) 2 inspectors, 3 days visit
- Emotional an social development (year 1-10) 2 inspectors, 3 days visit
- Mental development (Year 1 – 11( 12/13)) 2 inspectors, 4 days visit
- Language Primary (Year 1-4) (year 1-10) 2 inspectors, 3 days visit
- Language Secondary (year 5-10) 2 inspectors, 3-4 days visit
- Physical an motor skill development (Year 1 – 10 (11) 2 inspectors, 4 days visit
- Hearing an communication (Preschool and Year 1 – 10 (11) 2 inspectors, 4 days visit
- Seeing (Preschool and Year 1 – 10 (11) 2 inspectors, 4 days visit

The overall responsibility for the Quality Analysis lies with the Ministry of School and Further Education of North Rhine-Westphalia, department 414 – “Quality Analysis”.

Reports are not published by the Quality Analysis or the school supervisory system or the ministry. The school conference of each school can decide whether to publish the quality report or parts of it on the homepage of the school or not. Most of them do not publish the report.

### *Serbia*

The Serbian inspectorate of Education visits primary and secondary school every five years. Inspection of all schools (primary, secondary, special) is based on the same standards and indicators, and also on the same procedure. This means that usually during external evaluation, 3 or 4 inspectors stay in one school for three days observing lessons, taking interviews and checking documentations.

Reports are only available at the national level in Serbia.

### *Ireland*

Some 98% of pupils attend state-aided schools. In these schools education is provided for free. The rest are private schools which receive no state funding. All of the state-aided schools are inspected by the Inspectorate. The main functions of the Inspectorate can be categorized broadly as the evaluation of the education system (particularly at primary and second level). In addition, the inspectorate also provides advice to teachers, school management, policy makers and the Minister for Education and Skills. Different from other inspectorates is that the Irish inspectorate has a task in inspecting primary teachers in their probationary period. They also do an inspection of teachers in schools, if this is asked by the board of such a school, because that board has tried unsuccessfully to solve problems with a teacher and now asks the judgment of the inspectors about the teacher. This can also be done with heads of schools (SICI, 2009; Inspectorate profile: Ireland).

Inspectors also play their part in contacts and representations on other agencies and committees for example, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, the National Council for Special Education, the Teaching Council and many others. In addition the inspectorate has an advisory role and responsibility to the Minister for Education and Skills.

A key agency for special educational needs in the Irish system is the National Council for Special Education. This was established as an independent statutory body in December 2003. Its aim is to improve the delivery of education services to persons with special educational needs arising from disabilities with particular emphasis on children. It has

particular responsibility for the allocation of resources to schools to support pupils with special educational needs and also for the development of policy advice for the minister of Education and Skills. For example the NCSE recently published advice on the education of children with ASD.

All reports are public, with the exception of reports about teachers, reports about complaints, and reports about incidental, unannounced inspections.

The inspectorate in Ireland engages in a variety of different types of school inspections ranging from unannounced Incidental Inspections, Whole School Evaluation (WSE), Whole School Evaluation-Management of Leadership and Learning (WSE-MLL), Follow-Through Inspections, Inspections of particular subjects at primary and post-primary, Inspections of provision for special educational needs at primary and post-primary and inspections of newly qualified teachers. Currently all school evaluation reports with the exception of the one day incidental unannounced inspections and reports involving individual teachers are published on the Department of Education and Skills website.

Generally speaking, for WSE-MLL and WSE at primary and post-primary the evaluation team consists of two inspectors: a reporting inspector and a support inspector. In larger schools, generally in excess of 700 students, a third inspector may be added to the inspection team. The reporting inspector has overall responsibility for the organisation and co-ordination of the evaluation.

At primary level depending on whether a school is having a WSE or a WSE-MLL the amount of in school time varies from two days to five days. In a WSE at primary level generally four subject areas are evaluated (English, Irish, Maths and one other subject which changes on a monthly and regional basis). The board of management of a school may request the inspection team to evaluate a fifth subject selected by the school. However, where necessary a WSE may involve all curricular areas and subjects.

The WSE-MLL at primary level has a particular cross-curricular focus. This enables inspectors to evaluate aspects of teaching and learning such as teaching approaches, assessment

practices, pupil engagement and learning experiences in a cross-curricular rather than a subject-specific way.

At post-primary level for a WSE-MLL the team normally spends one advance day in the school during the pre-evaluation phase and three days in the school during the in-school phase. During the WSE and WSE-MLL, the quality of management, leadership, teaching and learning in the school is evaluated. The inspection team takes due account of school context factors including socio-economic circumstances. The evaluation team also takes account of the school's self-evaluation process, its current capacity and stage of development. This enables the evaluation team to identify and affirm the strengths within the school and to make clear recommendations on areas for development and improvement.

Inspections of particular subjects are referred to as Subject Inspections at post-primary and Curriculum Evaluations at primary. These are typically conducted by one or two inspectors depending on school size and focus exclusively on a school's provision for one specific subject of the curriculum – such as Mathematics, History or English. Inspections of a school's provision for pupils with special educational needs are generally conducted by one inspector and focus on the quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs. Both of these types of evaluations take between one and two days.

In the next paragraph, the organization of the Dutch regional educational networks will be described.

## Appendix E

### Description of the organization of supervision in the seven Dutch regional educational authorities

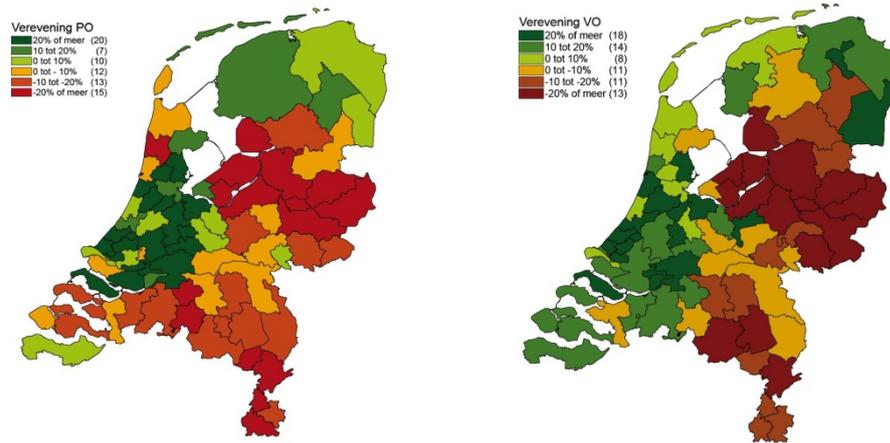
The financial allocation of the additional support can be divided in three different financial allocation models (*Sardes, 2015*):

- School model: the resources for additional support are allocated to schoolboards and schools on the basis of the numbers of pupils. As a consequence, these schoolboards and schools have a lot of freedom to use the administered agents to their own views.
- Expertise model: the resources for additional support are allocated to special (in between) settings facilities from the regional educational network. Based on common appointments, schoolboards and schools can use these extra resources.
- Pupil model: the additional support is allocated based on the individual needs with regard to the additional support child. These needs are based on action-based diagnosis ('handelingsgerichte diagnostiek').

Most regional educational authorities (both primary as well as secondary education) use a mixture of these three models.

Because of a strong variation in percentage of SEN pupils between regions before August 2014 the financial budget for educational support was unequally distributed along The Netherlands. In 2013, a governmental committee (Evaluatie Commissie Passend Onderwijs; ECPO) concluded that there were no substantive arguments that there existed differences in the need of additional support between regions (<https://www.passendonderwijs.nl/over-passend-onderwijs/in-het-kort/bekostiging/verevening/>). Consequently, the financial budget for additional support was redistributed based on the total amount of pupils per regional educational authority. This is called the process of 'verevening', which will take five years to be fully fulfilled (starting in schoolyear 2016-2017 and ending in schoolyear 2020-2021). As a result of the financial redistribution of educational support (*verevening*), there are regions in the Netherlands with less budget for additional support (negative *verevening*) and other regions that have more budget (positive *verevening*) than before August 2014 (See Graph 5).

**Graph 5.** The financial redistribution of educational support in regional educational networks of primary and secondary education in the Netherlands.



The seven regional educational authorities are spread along the Netherlands and vary in governmental model, recent and future population decrease, and financial redistribution (verevening). These background characteristics are shown in table 4.

**Table 4.** Background characteristics of the seven Dutch regional educational authorities on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014.

Dutch regional educational authorities									
	Primary education				Secondary Education				
	Nati ona l dat a (%)	1	2	3	4	Nati ona l dat a (%)	5	6	7
Allocati on model		Com bine d: scho ol- pupil mod el	Combi ned: scho ol- exp ert ise mod el	Scho ol mod el	Scho ol mod el		Combin ed experti se and school model	schoo lmod el	experti semod el
Numbe r of pupils		2613 0	6.870	12.55 3	21.008		8.487	18.60 7	8.628
Numbe r of		80	46	75	85		15	30	14

locations									
Number of administrations		18	6	11	20		7	11	7
% pupils attending special primary education (SBAO)	2,47	2,42	2,07	3,49	2,01				
% pupils attending special education in total	1,63	1,85	2,56	2,94	1,11				
% pupils in LWOO						10,48	4,72	6,47	8,60
% pupils in PRO						2,96	3,58	2,69	4,91
% pupils in VSO						3,62	2,61	3,36	3,82
Financial redistribution personal (€)		- 814.881	- 1.162.932,56	- 1.541.896,94	+1.505.097,37		+1.179.119,62	+ 193.407	- 711.911,26
Financial redistribution material		- 102.427	- 116.957,26	- 125.863,20	+ 155.162,32		+ 65.601,79	+ 43.672	- 36.495,94

## Appendix F

### **Description of the procedure to allocate a SEN child to a special school in the different jurisdictions**

In all six jurisdictions every SEN child has the right to enroll into a mainstream school provided that the required special educational assistance, practical support and the right physical environment are guaranteed. The mainstream school is obligated to provide special support in accordance with the educational needs of the child. However, in case a mainstream school can no longer provide the required special support for the SEN child, a procedure (which in general is quite similar between each country, except for Ireland) can be started. This might eventually result in the allocation of a SEN child to special education. The next paragraph will describe the procedure of allocating a SEN child to a special school in general terms.

In every jurisdiction the screening for additional support starts by the individual teacher of the child. The teacher and parents are involved in determining the additional learning needs of the child. If the child needs more additional educational support, the team of additional support for inclusive education becomes involved (including the teacher, parent(s) or caregivers and school expert staff (psychologist, pedagogue, special pedagogue). If the child is still in need of extra help, pupils, parent(s)/caregivers, teachers and the school management team can apply to a regional specific committee for information, help and guidance. This committee is responsible for the assessment of the educational needs for the specific SEN child (and in some countries such as Serbia, Flanders, Denmark also health care, and social support). This committee is involved in defining the Individual Education Plan (IEP) for educational support for the SEN child and thereby prescribes a variety of measures to support the child. The preparation of the IEP and the monitoring of progress are tasks of the team for additional student support of the school. Each team member is responsible for the implementation of specific activities. The regional specific committee is also the body which gives a mandatory advice on the allocation of the SEN child to special or to a mainstream school. Countries differ in how detailed the allocation advice is. With networks in some countries also advising the allocation of the child to a certain school, and networks of other countries which do not (as is described

below). However, if the parents decide to keep their SEN child in a mainstream school, in every jurisdiction this school needs to provide the extra support based on the IEP. So the pupil might be enrolled into a special school, but only based on the common agreement of the regional committee and parents.

Below the process of allocating a SEN child to a special school is described per jurisdiction.

### *The Netherlands*

If a school for special education (primary or secondary education) is the best place to receive education, the referring mainstream school applies for a permit to allocate a SEN child to special education (TLV ; Toelaatbaarheidsverklaring) at the regional educational network. If a pupil directly contacts a school for special education than that school applies for the permit (TLV) at the regional educational network.

What follows, is that the regional educational network examines the application to its own procedures and criteria. The advice of two experts is mandatory. Following legislation, the first expert must be a special educational generalist (orthopedagoog) or psychologist. The second expert must be, dependent on the type of pupil, a child psychologist, a pedagogue, a child psychiatrist, a social worker or a doctor. The regional educational network decides the duration of the permit. For primary and secondary special education (SO/VSO) this duration is minimal one schoolyear, For SBO there is no minimal duration. Secondly, the regional educational network decides about the height of the funding. A permit for special education for primary and secondary education (SO and VSO) is nationwide valid.

### *Flanders*

In cases where reasonable adjustments are not sufficient to let pupils attain the learning goals within regular/mainstream education, pupils are required to present a motivated report by the Pupil Guidance Centres (CLB), which is always given in consultation with parents and the school. This report is required for pupils to be referred to a school for special education. In this report the CLB gives an advise about the type of special education that is most suitable for the pupil, and in the case of special secondary education also the type

and educational form that is most suitable for the pupil is mentioned. Furthermore, the Pupil Guidance Centres in Flanders also give permission for programmes of 'GON-education', which is a type of integrated educational programme where SEN pupils can follow lessons within mainstream schools, using the guidance and expertise of a school for special education. This form of guidance/counselling can take several forms (for example: team support for teachers, additional support time for the pupil, creation of specific learning material, parental support etc.). (<http://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/verslag-voor-toegang-tot-het-buitengewoon-onderwijs>; <https://www.klasse.be/7269/m-decreet-verslag-van-het-clb>)

### *Ireland*

In Ireland individual schools in consultation with the parents of the child and other agencies and professionals decide about the appropriate placement of the child. Ultimately parents have the right to choose. Once a child is formally assessed by the appropriate professional (e.g. educational psychologist, speech and language therapist and/or occupational therapist) as having a special educational need, recommendations will be made in the report around the most appropriate placement for the child regular/mainstream school, special school or special class placement in a mainstream/ regular school.

### *NRW*

The report of the committee (1 teacher for special education 1 mainstream teacher) in NRW includes the parents wish regarding the specific school for their child, and may also include a recommendation regarding a specific school. However, the committee does not have the final say. The local authorities (school inspectors) decide about the specific schools based on their knowledge about the situation in the different schools in one region.

### *Serbia*

The intersectoral committee (i.e. the committee responsible for the assessment of the educational needs) provides a recommendation, which is advisory, not mandatory. The recommendation includes an opinion on additional support that

a specific child needs, in a form of development of Individual Education Plan (IEP) with modified educational outcomes. As a support measure, besides IEP, the inter-sectoral committee can recommend education of a child in the special school or in a special class in the mainstream school. However, the final decision is up to the parents.

To conclude, each mainstream school is obliged to enroll a child as the parents request, no matter of the recommendation of the inter-sectoral committee. On the other hand, special schools cannot enroll a child without a specific recommendation from the inter-sectoral committee.

The regional committee that is involved in defining the Individual Education Plan (IEP) for educational support for the SEN child and the allocation of the SEN child to mainstream or special schools in five participating jurisdictions:

- ✓ The Netherlands : Toewijzingscommissie of each regional educational authority
- ✓ NRW : Local supervisory authority
- ✓ Serbia : Inter Sectoral Committee (ISC)
- ✓ Denmark : Educational Psychological Service (PPR)
- ✓ Flanders : Pupil Guidance Center (Centrum voor Leerlingbegeleiding)

Under Ireland's education legislation the board of management of each school is responsible for the quality of education provided including the quality of education provided for pupils with SEN. This responsibility is typically delegated by the board of management to the principal. In practice once a child is placed in a school either special or regular the school's special education team under the guidance of the principal will take responsibility for developing the child's IEP again in consultation with parents and other relevant agencies and professionals.

The body involved in financing the additional support differs between jurisdictions. For example, in the case of Serbia the local authority has to fund additional sources based on the IEP. However, it depends on the budget of the local authority whether enough funding and resources are available to adapt the education environment to the special needs of the SEN child. There is no supervisory tool to ensure that the local authority is funding the additional learning needs.

In the Netherlands it depends on the financial allocation model of the regional educational network: they can divide all financial resources to the school(s) (boards; i.e. schoolmodel)

or provide budgets for individual children for educational support (i.e. expertisemodel). Special schools are financed by the regional educational authority based on the number of participating children (in the previous school year).

In Denmark the municipality is involved in financing the additional support of SEN children within mainstream and special schools.

In NRW, mainstream and special schools are financed by the owner of the schools that might be the urban municipality, the county or in case of special schools for blind, and schools for children with hearing an physical impairments also associations of counties (Landschaftsverband). Technically, they are the ones running the schools (building, furniture, equipment, media, cleaning, concierge, secretary) and therefore it is their decision to build or to close schools. The equipment of the schools varies a lot depending on the financial power of the different municipalities. Furthermore, the teachers of the schools (and of the special schools) are paid by the state of NRW, and they are civil servants.

In Ireland, the education system including special education is financed centrally through the Department of Education and Skills. Currently in Ireland there is a distinction between two categories of Special Educational Needs: low incidence and high incidence. An overview of these categories is shown in the following table.

**Table 3. Low and high incidence categories for SEN in Ireland**

Low Incidence SEN	High Incidence SEN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Physical Disability</li> <li>➤ Hearing Impairment</li> <li>➤ Visual Impairment</li> <li>➤ Emotional Disturbance</li> <li>➤ Severe Emotional Disturbance</li> <li>➤ Moderate General Learning Disability</li> <li>➤ Severe/Profound General Disability</li> <li>➤ Autism/Autistic Spectrum Disorder</li> <li>➤ Specific Speech and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Borderline Mild General Learning Disabilities</li> <li>➤ Mild General Learning Disabilities</li> <li>➤ Specific Learning Disability (Dyslexia)</li> </ul>

<p>Language Disorder</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Assessed syndrome in conjunction with one of the above</li> <li>➤ Multiple Disabilities</li> </ul>	
--	--

Every school receives an allocation designed to cater for children who need learning support in literacy and numeracy and high incidence special educational needs as listed above. This is referred to a General Allocation Model (GAM). A school's GAM allocation is based on the number of authorised posts in the school and concentration of pupils that require language support.

Resources for children with low incidence SEN are allocated to regular schools on the basis of an identified disability or condition. A professional assessment and formal diagnosis of a low incidence SEN is required before allocation of additional resource teaching hours is sanctioned. Extra resources consist of extra teaching/resource hours, provision of a special needs assistant for care support or financial aid. Each regular school has a Special Educational Needs Organiser (SENO) assigned to it and once a child is identified as having a low incidence special educational need the school makes application to the SENO for additional resources for that child.

The system for allocation of resources to schools is currently under review and is being piloted in a small number of schools.

In Flanders the financing of SEN pupils is regulated by the central government. This means that the Flemish Parliament establishes the legal stipulations of the funding in decrees, the Flemish Government determines the further implementation hereof in decisions by the Flemish Government (e.g. specific norms for frame working) and the Ministry awards for teaching periods, hours and means of operation to the schools.

With regard to SEN pupils, there are roughly the following funding mechanisms:

- Means for the coordination of care (primary education) that are granted to schools for regular primary education. This is a funding in proportion to the total amount of pupils in the school. Furthermore there are also resources for schools to implement an equal policy for educational chances also known as GOK-beleid in Flanders. This policy focuses on the

sheltering of newcomers with foreign languages and the support of pupils with an illness, which are each constant separate funding streams;

- Means for integrated education (GON-education): schools for special education receive a pupil funding for SEN pupils who attend classes in mainstream nursery, primary, secondary or higher education units (by which teachers and paramedics can be deployed as ambulatory GON-supervisors) and an integration allowance (for the funding of the mobility of GON-supervisors);
- Means for special education: funding of separate schools for special education, according to the type of education to which students were referred (the norms differ per type). This is also a pupil funding, open end, consisting of teaching periods, hours and means of operation. This is an open end funding which means that the more pupils there are, the more resources there will be spend and vice versa.

As part of the M-decree, the funding mechanisms for SEN pupils are changing. Currently there is a kind of guarantee-regulation which ensures that when the number of pupils in special education decreases (which is already taking place in special primary education), the open end mechanism does not come to play and the staff surplus in special education will be deployed to schools for regular education. For the allocation of these resources social partners like the educational umbrella organizations and the trade unions, are involved. Therefore, it is no longer the central government who is responsible for the allocation of resources to the schools but now this process takes place through an intermediate level of network committees with the social partners. Also for GON-education Flanders is aiming to stop pupil funding and evolve to more structure-reinforcing and teacher-focused support. This is something that is in full development at the moment.

Besides the previously mentioned characteristic of the guarantee-regulation of the M-decree, the following characteristics were also part of the regulation:

- the system must ensure that special schools' expertise will not be wasted by the introduction of the new decree;
- the free hours that have arisen in special schools due to the enforcement of the new decree will be proportionally divided in each educational network in Flanders;
- both tenured and temporary teachers can be deployed;

- the rights of the staff providing support in mainstream education will continually be connected to the schools for special education;
- the staff providing support in mainstream education will obtain a temporary appointment in the mainstream school, by a performance-regulation of 26 clock hours;
- there is a professionalization training for the participating staff of the schools for special education.

Furthermore, the Agency for Education Services (Agentschap voor Onderwijsdiensten) in Flanders supports pupils and students in mainstream education by making special educational resources available. Each school can apply for special educational resources which are special aids for pupils, students and learners which follow a programme in mainstream primary and secondary education, higher education and adult education.

To do this, the management of a school for mainstream education can apply for funding of special educational resources in both primary and secondary education. The application can be done by either the parent of the pupil or by adult pupils themselves. All applications are directed to the Agency for Education Services.

[\(<http://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/onderwijspersoneel/van-basis-tot-volwassenenonderwijs/op-het-werk/lespraktijk/specifieke-onderwijsbehoeften/ondersteuning-en-leermiddelen/speciale-onderwijsleermiddelen>;](http://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/onderwijspersoneel/van-basis-tot-volwassenenonderwijs/op-het-werk/lespraktijk/specifieke-onderwijsbehoeften/ondersteuning-en-leermiddelen/speciale-onderwijsleermiddelen)

[http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/specifieke-onderwijsbehoeften/beleid/M-decreet/;](http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/specifieke-onderwijsbehoeften/beleid/M-decreet/)

[http://www.onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/ondersteuning-voor-leerkrachten-en-leerlingen-bij-specifieke-onderwijsbehoeften\)](http://www.onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/ondersteuning-voor-leerkrachten-en-leerlingen-bij-specifieke-onderwijsbehoeften)