



**INCLUSIVE
EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION**

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**Case Study Visit Report:
Reykjavík, Iceland, 9–11 May 2016**

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Full version
ECE:	Early childhood education
EU:	European Union
IECE:	Inclusive Early Childhood Education
IEP:	Individual Education Plan
OECD:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAG:	Project Advisory Group
SEN:	Special educational needs



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Finally, the Agency would like to acknowledge the key role of the PAG members and national experts who took part in the visit and provided additional support.



PREAMBLE: THE IECE PROJECT


This report on the case study visit to Reykjavík and Sólborg and Múlaborg pre-schools, Iceland, is part of the Inclusive Early Childhood Education (IECE) project, conducted by the Agency from 2015 to 2017. The project includes a total of eight such visits in different European countries.

The project's overall goal is to identify, analyse and subsequently promote the main characteristics of quality inclusive ECE for all children from three years old to the start of primary education.

Thus the project focuses on the structures and processes that can ensure a systemic approach to providing high-quality inclusive ECE that effectively meets the academic and social learning needs of all the children from the school group's local community.

The project started off with a focus on the five thematic areas for improving ECE that were raised by EU and OECD working groups for this field (EU, 2014; OECD, 2014):

- Access to quality ECE for all children. From the perspective of the project, this principle refers to facilitating access for all children in the community, with particular concern for the most vulnerable, such as children with disabilities and SEN, immigrants and newcomers, and other at-risk children and families.
- Workforce quality. This principle calls for the employment of appropriately trained staff with access to continuous training and adequate working conditions, appropriate leadership, support staff inside and outside the school, and adequate resources and positive parent, interdisciplinary and interagency collaboration.
- Quality curriculum/content. This principle underlines the need for a holistic and flexible curriculum and pedagogy that promote child wellbeing and learning in all aspects of development – cognitive, social, language, emotional and physical – and enable children to be meaningfully and actively engaged in a safe but open and stimulating environment.
- Evaluation and monitoring. This not only refers to how children's development and learning is monitored, but also to the ECE provision's level of effectiveness to meet established quality standards that ensure a quality learning environment for all children.
- Governance and funding. This principle considers how public funding and leadership models are used accountably to ensure that a quality ECE service is



available to all children and is managed with a constant focus on enabling each child's holistic growth and learning.

Project activity and project outputs will include:

- A literature and policy review providing the conceptual framework for the project and including a review of international and European research literature and policy papers on ECE.
- Country reports providing information on policy and practice in inclusive ECE for all children at national level.
- European practitioners' perceptions of and practices for inclusive ECE: a qualitative analysis of descriptions of 31 examples of inclusive ECE provisions.
- Detailed reports of the eight selected case study sites, including analysis of the key project themes investigated.
- Recommendations designed to meet policy-makers' needs: the project synthesis report will draw on evidence from all project activities; the key issues/factors facilitating quality inclusion in ECE will be analysed and translated into recommendations.
- A self-assessment/self-reflection tool for the ECE setting.



1. INTRODUCTION: SELECTED CASE STUDY VISIT 3 OF THE IECE PROJECT

This report provides information about the case study visit that the Agency team conducted in Iceland in May 2016.

Reykjavík and Sólborg and Múlaborg pre-schools were selected, along with seven other sites, from examples of inclusive practice in ECE submitted by national experts and Agency Representative Board members. The eight selected examples were willing to be visited and studied by a project team in order to understand the quality features of inclusive ECE provision.

In order to support the countries in identifying examples of inclusive practice in ECE, the Agency team, in collaboration with the PAG members, established criteria that the example provisions were expected to meet. These criteria, which were also used to select the eight examples, were:

- Relevance of the site
- Clarity of the information provided
- Evidence of the following:
 - respect for diversity;
 - promotion of participation and engagement;
 - holistic curriculum;
 - skilled workforce;
 - collaboration and partnership;
 - smooth transitions;
 - quality assurance;
 - self-evaluation to inform improvement.

The selected examples also needed to reflect diverse geographical locations across Europe.

A team of Agency staff, PAG members and country experts visited Reykjavík and Sólborg and Múlaborg pre-schools from 9 to 11 May 2016. The visit provided opportunities to hear first-hand about developments in the city and the pre-schools' ECE provisions, to observe classes and to interview different stakeholder groups: principals, teachers, support teachers, parents and children. Interviews were conducted according to a schedule to provide consistency across the eight project case study visits. In addition, relevant documents on national and regional policy and practice were collected prior to and during the visit. All visiting project participants provided first impressions at a forum on the last day of the visit and



then submitted written feedback about the inclusive features of the ECE provision at the Sólborg and Múlaborg pre-schools. All these sources of evidence have been used to draft this report.

An analysis of all the above data led to the identification of three themes that enhance the inclusiveness of the two pre-schools' ECE provision:

- 1 Inclusive support system
- 2 Shared vision of inclusion
- 3 Holistic curriculum.

These are described in detail in Sections 3 to 5 of this report. Section 2 gives an account of the background of inclusive provision within inclusive education in Reykjavík and in Sólborg and Múlaborg pre-schools, Iceland. Section 3 follows, describing the settings' main highlight.



2. THE CONTEXT

2.1 Inclusive education in Reykjavík, Iceland

Iceland's educational policy is based on six fundamental pillars on which the national curriculum guidelines are based. Please refer to:

www.menntamalaraduneyti.is/utgefid-efni/namskrar/nr/3952

These fundamental pillars are:

- literacy;
- sustainability;
- health and welfare;
- democracy and human rights;
- equality;
- creativity.


Each of the fundamental pillars derives from laws on pre-primary education, compulsory education and upper-secondary education. The fundamental pillars refer to social, cultural, environmental and ecological literacy. These enable children and young people to develop mentally and physically, thrive in society and co-operate with others. The fundamental pillars also refer to a vision of the future, and the ability and will to influence and be active in maintaining, changing and developing society.

In Reykjavík, there are 63 pre-school centres and 17 private ones. In Iceland, there are 217 pre-school centres and 34 private ones.

Children may start attending pre-school at 18 months or, upon special request, at 12 months. There are three pre-schools which offer specialist services, but no special pre-schools or pre-schools with special departments. All pre-schools have a similar structure and all children are included, except for very ill children. For these children, there is a special division for children with health problems.

Children may be referred by the pre-school. Decisions about eligibility for support are made by special education experts (which cover educational councils) after meeting with professionals from multidisciplinary teams within Service Centres (teams at community level, supported by social welfare). Eligibility decisions are based on evidence (assessment by the school personnel and the abovementioned expert and team) and according to the criteria for one of three types of support:

1. additional financial support (autism, deafness, immobility, etc.);

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2. regular assistance (up to six hours per day) (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism, mental disorder, etc.);
 3. children with special needs that do not fall under categories 1 or 2.

Based on conversations with the pre-school staff, it was apparent that the eligibility system is highly flexible. It is based on on-going communication between the abovementioned decision-making levels (pre-school, municipality, national).

The [State Diagnostic and Counselling Centre](#) carries out multidisciplinary assessment and provides a diagnosis report (where applicable) for the school. In order to request extra staff, the school must send documentation to the Centre. The Centre provides periodic external advice to schools and assessment tools (e.g. checklists) to assess children's characteristics.

The local community centre (the abovementioned support centre) is run by the welfare system. Experts from the centre come to schools to review and collaborate in the assessment-intervention process. If necessary, it can refer children to the State Diagnostic and Counselling Centre.

Therapies, including speech, occupational and physiotherapy, are provided by the health system or by private institutions (with subsidies to parents). There is high flexibility in service provision. Counselling is a relevant dimension in this type of support.

At a municipal level, Reykjavík pre-primary inclusive education policy states that the special assistance and stimulation of children with SEN in the form of special education must always take into account the objectives and guidelines defined for all children in the Icelandic pre-primary national curriculum. Furthermore, the Reykjavík pre-primary education policy aims to meet children's SEN within the group's daily activities. Play is respected as the child's main learning path. Pre-schools in Reykjavík have also formulated a policy on issues of multiculturalism. This includes a focus on children's language and cultural aspects and the provision of voluntary interpreters for parents.

Since 2001, there has been a specific policy for multicultural education and leisure in general, as well as a multicultural education policy for pre-schools in Reykjavík (http://reykjavik.is/sites/default/files/fjolmenningarstefna_uppsett_enska_n.pdf).

Policy regarding reading, language and literacy takes a holistic approach and embraces principles of active bilingualism. No diagnosis is needed for children to get support, which comes from the whole school system, rather than a special education teacher. Schools must apply for funding. Around 18.7% of children in Icelandic pre-schools have one or both parents from an immigrant background (Polish-speaking families are the largest group). In the case of refugees and children



receiving asylum, schools can apply to the government for extra financial support and to the municipality for interpreters.

(More information about the Icelandic inclusive education system is available in the country report, in the description of the example and in Iceland's national overview: www.european-agency.org/national-policy-and-provision/Iceland).

2.2 Múlaborg pre-school

[Múlaborg pre-school](#) in Reykjavík, Iceland, was established in 1975. It is close to the centre of Reykjavík and the children come from all areas of Reykjavík. Múlaborg co-operates closely with organisations in the neighbourhood. These include primary and upper-secondary schools, as well as non-profit organisations and companies which provide services to people with disabilities.

Múlaborg was originally developed as a special needs institution with four divisions for children aged one to six. Eight out of 94 places have been allocated annually to children with disabilities. In recent years, the pre-school has specialised in inclusive education for all children. As the pre-school now receives an increasingly ethnically diverse group of children, it has begun responding to this linguistic diversity with inclusion.

The pre-school is open from 7:30 to 17:15 daily (Monday to Friday) and the children attend for 6–9 hours per day. The motto of Múlaborg is respect, trust and security. The pre-school emphasises this by receiving every child with warmth and respect so that they feel safe at pre-school. The learning environment is adapted to all children. The pre-school is a pioneer in including children both with and without disabilities. It also provides consultation for other pre-schools on inclusive practices, and has received awards for its inclusive work.

Parents also confirm their satisfaction. The parents' association is active, with parents developing individualised curricula in collaboration with the staff. The pre-school has an exceptionally diverse staff composition compared to other pre-schools in Iceland.

2.3 Sólborg pre-school

[Sólborg pre-school](#) in Reykjavík, Iceland, opened in the spring of 1994. It has room for 88 children aged one and a half to six, when they start primary school in Iceland. The children attend pre-school for 4–9 hours per day. The children are divided into five areas or departments in the pre-school.

Sólborg includes children with severe disabilities along with their non-disabled peers. The school follows international conventions, such as the Salamanca Statement, adopted in Spain in 1994, and the Reykjavík school inclusion policy. The



pre-school is registered as a specialist pre-school. Its goal is to educate deaf and hearing impaired children and children with other disabilities. The teachers use iPads for children with special needs. Sólborg is seen as a role model in inclusive pre-primary education in Reykjavík. It provides other pre-schools with consultation on how to meet children's different needs.

The pre-school's main objective is to develop a school that meets the needs of all children in an inclusive environment. The methods and techniques used to achieve this goal allow all the children to learn academic and social skills with their peers. Usually 12–15 children with special needs attend the school. Last year, Sólborg had 17 children with special needs. The children had defined disabilities within the fields of hearing impairment, visual impairment, autism, Down's syndrome, language and behavioural problems. The children were assigned 12 support teachers. The main focuses for teaching these children were:

- teaching deaf children sign language;
- behavioural training for children with autism;
- training and education for children with integrated visual and hearing impairments (deaf-blindness)
- systematic, organised training for children with other developmental needs regarding motor development and self-help.

Most of the children with special needs who attend Sólborg are deaf, so all children learn sign language.



3. THE SETTINGS' HIGHLIGHT (THEME 1): INCLUSIVE SUPPORT SYSTEM

Both pre-schools work hard to find ways to help the children participate equally in all activities. They have a rotation plan for special support teachers, while ensuring information is shared about children's characteristics and intervention plans.

Although every child who needs support is assigned a specific person, in practice there is a team who takes care of the child. There is a teamwork approach to child support, with staff rotation every week. This enables the children to be interactive and participate in the class. The children learn to be with different staff members, rather than becoming attached to one person.

Staff role rotation provides a framework for good communication and teamwork. The special support staff also have a counselling role, advising other adults. This helps to ensure improvement in children's participation levels with their peers during activities. Meetings are highly valued by all staff as opportunities for planning and information sharing. Parents are free to participate as much as they wish. The benefit of this teamwork approach to support is that all staff support the entire class.

For example, the Múlaborg teamwork approach includes:

- principal;
- vice-principal;
- special needs co-ordinator;
- class leaders (one per class);
- special education teacher;
- other support staff (depending on the number of extra support hours approved by Reykjavík municipal government), who work under and with the class leader.

The class leader and special education teacher work together. The special education teacher is responsible for the participation of children with special needs. The special education teacher informs the other teachers in the team on how the children can be best supported.

Children are provided with support on request. The number of hours is decided at municipal level. Extra support teachers can be hired according to this number. However, support teachers do not work solely with the child with special needs that they were hired for. Instead, they function as other staff in the rotation system to take care of special needs.



These pre-schools are considered to be schools with special resources, rather than special schools. The support staff are part of the school. They are resources for the classroom and implement embedded instruction in routines and environmental design. This ensures the full participation of children with special needs in classroom activities. It supports them in becoming part of the group and promotes relationships and friendships among peers.

In-service training for all staff is common to both schools. It is probably a relevant factor in the constant search for improvement and openness to change. This is apparent in the dramatic change both schools underwent in the last two decades, based on constant evaluation of their work.



4. THEME 2: SHARED VISION OF INCLUSION

During the visit to the two pre-schools (Múlaborg and Sólborg) and the discussions with the stakeholders, there was a remarkable sense of community. The staff identified with common goals within an agreeable and calm atmosphere, based on excellent communication.

In Múlaborg, the principal explained the staff's shared vision of inclusion, saying that, in the pre-school, 'We don't ask who, we ask how'.

In Sólborg, the inclusive perspective was extended to the criteria for recruiting staff. Enthusiasm for the common mission is obvious, both among staff members (from the principal to the newest collaborators in the pre-school) and among parents.

4.1 Teamwork approach by qualified staff

Teamwork, including both professionals and parents, is founded on solid and well-organised structures, such as:

- a strong theoretical background shared by the staff;
- the use of frameworks: for example, in Múlaborg, the use of Diane Bricker's Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming System (AEPS) curriculum. This includes adequate measures for both children's abilities and the quality of the educational environment. The Project Spectrum, based on the multiple intelligences approach (Gardner, Feldman and Krechevsky, 1998), and the Young Investigators Project (Helm and Katz, 2001) are being implemented;
- well thought-out logistical organisation in terms of a carefully planned staff schedule. This includes frequent planned time for classroom staff meetings (weekly in Sólborg) and meetings between staff and parents of children in need of additional support (every five weeks for evaluation in Sólborg; every six months for IEP revision in Múlaborg);
- accountability based on very clear roles assigned and assumed by the staff;
- a strong leadership allied with horizontal decision-making processes.

Most impressive is the diverse staff, including different age groups, languages and genders.

The pre-schools have several ways of reflecting on their practice. These include plans, co-ordinators, outside experts and teamwork. Although many people are involved, it is still structured.

The identification of children's needs is based on observation tools. Teachers use checklists to monitor the children's progress and pay attention to parents' opinions for preparing the IEP.



4.2 Collaboration with parents

According to the policies of both pre-schools, collaboration with parents should be based on respect and trust. To achieve this, various methods are employed to reach all parents. For ethnic minority parents, interpreters are employed in all meetings, and methods such as 'communication books' are used on a daily basis.

During the discussion, parents declared that they are generally very pleased with the pre-schools. They confirmed that there is good collaboration between the parents, staff and principals. Parents seem to be particularly satisfied with the individual curricula for each child. These are developed by the pre-schools in co-operation with the parents.

Parents feel their children are happy playing with their peers and love coming to pre-school. They are also happy and feel confident that their children have all the support they need within the inclusive pre-school setting.

Parents of children with special needs gave the following examples of inclusive approaches as reasons for having chosen these pre-schools:

- the generalised use of sign language;
- the presence of PCS (picture communication symbols) in all classrooms and their use for step-by-step instructions in the classroom areas;
- the availability of specialist staff;
- the accessibility of the premises (e.g. no stairs) and the presence of necessary accommodations (e.g. special chairs).

Parents of children without special needs mentioned that one argument for enrolling their children in these pre-schools is the enriching experience of diversity. According to parents, this helps their children become better citizens and better human beings.

Parents from other parts of town specifically choose these two pre-schools because of their inclusive practices and ideology. They claim they teach their children valuable lessons about diversity and inclusion, which they feel are important for active participation in a modern democratic society. They want their children to have the best preparation possible and therefore they choose these pre-schools.

Teachers are aware that the transition process is important and they plan different meetings and visits to the new school with the parents.

4.3 Strong and shared leadership

The principals in both pre-schools are strong and have a very clear vision. They are both passionate and believe in inclusion. They regard the diverse group of children,



teachers and other staff as being a strength of the pre-schools, as well as posing a challenge. They hold very high expectations of their staff ('Don't believe in our project 100%? Don't work here'). The extension of the inclusive idea to staff as a logical step on from inclusive education deserves praise.

The principals described their vision as being an equality- and human rights-based approach. They consider the pre-schools as being a learning community where staff and children learn from each other. Although there is a solid structure and a strong sense of leadership, as mentioned above, the atmosphere is of supervision and monitoring, not control. They get the best from their structures because of their commitment and great management of resources.

4.4 Network of relationships

There seems to be very good communication between different levels (at pre-school level but also between pre-schools, municipality services, State Diagnostic and Counselling Centre and policy level).

One professional stated: 'Trust goes both ways: from municipal level to school staff and vice versa. We will give back support hours that were allocated. The decentralisation trend in Scandinavia and Iceland helps this.'

The two pre-schools have very good co-operation with the State Diagnostic and Counselling Centre. The Centre carries out multidisciplinary assessment and provides diagnosis reports which are sent to the school. To request extra staff (support teachers), the school must send documentation to this Centre. The Centre provides periodic external advice to schools and also assessment tools (such as checklists) for assessing children's characteristics.

The pre-schools also maintain a network of relationships. Besides joint work with the municipality structures and therapy centre, both pre-schools have connections with the university. Working with institutions at different levels of the system ensures continuous communication between practice, research and policy at different levels (national, community and school).



5. THEME 3: HOLISTIC CURRICULUM

The main objectives of Múlaborg and Sólborg pre-schools are based on international conventions and the Icelandic pre-primary education laws, national curriculum and policy on inclusion.

All children are supported in a variety of ways, covering all aspects of day-to-day activities. Teachers and other staff have extensive experience and knowledge, combined with a positive attitude toward inclusion. In observing and assessing the children's learning, the staff focus on finding and identifying the children's different needs. There is good co-operation with the special education department for pre-schools in Reykjavík and other pre-school professionals who provide services to children with special needs. Meetings are held regularly on how the child is developing, involving all professionals who work with the child. These meetings aim to get a good overview of the development progress from all relevant experts and to co-ordinate the inputs and methods used. An IEP and goals are prepared with the participation of parents and in co-operation with other professionals working with the child. Reassessment of goals takes place once a month. Emphasis is placed on ensuring that children get the assistance that is needed in the pre-school. This allows them to actively take part in the activities and enjoy their pre-primary education.

5.1 Múlaborg pre-school

Múlaborg's curriculum has five main aims:

1. to work towards the equality of all children;
2. to meet every child's needs;
3. to work towards co-operation among all professions;
4. to strengthen children's social development and work for tolerance and consideration for others;
5. to strengthen children's general development and thus prepare them for life and the future in a responsible way.

The school curriculum further states that it aims to 'enact/carry out the ideology of inclusive education by meeting every child's and parent's needs.' Meeting every child's needs is understood as meeting every child where they are and working from this basis, with each child's needs, as a principle. It is also understood as organising the pre-school surroundings to meet every child's needs.

The pre-school's policy and work plan also state that, in the pre-school, equality is understood in a broad sense. Human rights are emphasised and multiculturalism and equality of viewpoints are implemented in every respect. The role of the staff is



to meet the needs of every child and ensure that all children enjoy and use their pre-school years for growth and development. Co-operation of staff with diverse professions and teams is considered necessary for achievement.

The means of achieving the aims are listed as follows:

- Choice of activities
- Organised workshops
- Co-operative learning
- Close educational partnerships with parents
- Good organisation and firmness
- Positive atmosphere and imaginative staff
- Good flow of information
- Diverse and open resources.

The children make choices during group work based on interest and ability. However, they are also encouraged and supported to choose subjects they are hesitant or reluctant to try. The children have an active role in everyday activities at the school. This includes helping out during lunch or snack time and assisting and supporting less-able friends. They are encouraged by the staff to be independent decision-makers and to be supportive and broadminded members of the school community.


5.2 Sólborg pre-school

Sólborg's curriculum has three main objectives:

1. To promote equality, value and respect for the individual child
2. To meet the needs of a diverse group of children
3. To develop activities based on professional co-operation and shared responsibility of staff and children.

Inclusive practices and methods are used to achieve these goals. The work is based on three main factors:

- The goals and priorities of the Bank Street programme. The main objective is to 'stimulate the overall development of the child'. Special emphasis is placed on enhancing the skills, uniqueness and identity of the child and promoting the child's socialisation and maturity through play.

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- The teachings of Dr Howard Gardner on Multiple Intelligences. The teachers should spend less time sorting children and more time helping them to realise their inherent talents and interests.
 - The right of children to grow up together, learn from each other and with each other. The rights of children are supported in the international conventions of which Iceland is a member and in Icelandic laws and regulations.

The three basic foundations of pre-school activities are:

- Play is an important way to promote the whole development of the child.
- Life skills are integrated into all activities so that the child learns self-respect, respect for others and tolerance.
- Daily activities give the children opportunity to build trust, independence and to fend for themselves.

In order to achieve the objectives of the national curriculum, Sólborg has put together a work schedule stating how and when to work with individual subject areas.

In all organised activities, play is a fundamental mode of learning. The daily schedule allows for the child to participate in play. During so-called 'choice time', taking place twice a day, the children have the opportunity to choose a play area and/or play content. In the outdoor area, the children enjoy spontaneous play. The staff are committed to participating in play on the children's terms. The teachers are always available and closely monitor the game and assist.

The key factors in Sólborg's practice are:

- Children have the moral right to grow up together, learn from each other and with each other regardless of mental or physical condition. Emphasis is placed on the need to respect the diversity of the children in the school and meet their different needs. With the support of parents, staff develop an environment where all children are active participants.
- Well-organised and targeted ECE is desirable and necessary for children with disabilities. Staff systematically pursue these objectives in all activities. It is important that activities are well-organised and take into account the needs of the group as well as its individuals. This is especially important for children with disabilities.
- Each child has talents and interests to be nurtured and cultivated. The pre-school staff honour each child, seek to identify their skills and use methods and approaches that can best lead to increased development.



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- In Sólborg, the teachers try to meet the individual needs of children in an inclusive environment. In Sólborg, no single theory or method of educating is used, but rather a combination of elements from different academic theories and methods. The focus is on practices with defined aims (objectives), how the work is done (methods) and the time of day the intervention takes place.
 - Diverse education and knowledge of staff is necessary. Staff expertise is crucial to the implementation of the methods and philosophy of inclusion. Well-educated staff are key to effective work in Sólborg and high demands are made on the staff. Education and experience are important in meeting these requirements.
 - Co-operation and collaboration with parents are important for the wellbeing and success of every child. Attention to the needs of each child and their family is essential.



6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The inclusive education policy in Iceland is strongly based on the Declaration of Human Rights. It assures accessibility and accommodation to all children in the community, including those with additional support needs. Article 22 of the [Pre-school Act](#) states that children have the right to special assistance and support according to their needs. Moreover, the right to equality is stated in the National Curriculum Guide for Pre-schools, chapter 5: all children may benefit from educational measures in accordance with their needs, and have the right to respect for their own point of view. The curriculum has the characteristics of an open system, by encompassing guidelines and enabling creativity and inclusion.

Moreover, during the visits to the pre-schools it was apparent that there are guidelines at municipality level that translate the national policies to a local level. There are also support structures that ensure good communication between decision-making levels (national, municipal and the local community).

Visit participants stated that the strengths of both pre-schools are:

- clear inclusive policies;
- strong leadership;
- awareness and active participation of well-educated staff regarding the school policy and participation in varied development work and projects;
- co-operation with external systems and institutions;
- co-operation with the university;
- good collaboration with parents.

6.1 Areas for further discussion

As Múlaborg and Sólborg pre-schools strive to continue improving their services, the visit participants made some proposals for further reflection on key areas related to inclusion:

- Transition: Children's transition to primary school level was considered by both staff and parents as needing improvement. Some ideas to improve this aspect were put forward, namely:
 - bring the primary teacher to the pre-school for a few days each year;
 - contribute to a change of attitudes in mainstream primary schools;
 - contribute to building a school system with a variety of educational resources to accommodate diversity;



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- consider the children’s and young people’s points of view, hear their voices.
 - **Diagnosis:** The system is more and more resource-oriented, but is it still possible to look at difficulties? It should not swing back to being deficit-orientated, but it should not ignore problems either. Because funding is linked to diagnosis, the diagnosis system is growing and becoming a problem for municipalities. This problem appears to be pervasive throughout Europe, and can be even more dangerous in bigger and more bureaucratic systems. It is very difficult to unwind the system, as it is politically sensitive. Funding problems are complicated, so the solutions will be complicated, too. A child cannot be ‘put on hold’ while waiting for diagnosis and teachers do not feel ready to take on the challenge. Support teacher culture might not help this development.