

# **COUNTRY POLICY REVIEW AND ANALYSIS**

**Italy**



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## Section 1: Country priorities for education

The text below presents the main country priorities in the field of education, with special attention to the development of inclusive education.

### Country priorities

In Italy, the integration of learners with disabilities started in 1971.

In 1977, special classes were abolished.

There are still some sections in rehabilitation centres that only receive learners with disabilities. However, these should be considered as sections of hospital schools, with temporary rates linked to the period of hospitalisation.

The principle of inclusion is enshrined in the Constitution. This means removing all barriers preventing the full development of the human being and affirming the right to education for all.

With direct reference to the founding principles of Italian law, two special laws were enacted that constitute the framework for the rights of people with special educational needs (SEN). They are: Law 104 of 1992 ('Framework Law for the assistance, social integration and the rights of the disabled') and Law 170 of 2010, which guarantees the right to education of pupils and students with specific learning disabilities (SLD).

In Italy, there is also a law for accessibility of information and communication technology (ICT).

Schools welcome children with SEN by implementing specific activities and educational interventions. Various actors are involved, from the head teacher, the special project teacher, the curricular teachers and the support teachers, to the entire school staff and educators or assistants provided, if needed, by local authorities or other entities.

In Italy, every child with disabilities is guaranteed a specialised tutorial and educational teacher, in addition to the class teacher. An individual education plan is drawn up for each learner with disabilities. It is prepared jointly by specialist clinicians and teachers, with the family's collaboration. This plan contains the 'life project' of the person with disabilities, with actions ranging from school, to work and social rights.



## Section 2: Analysis grid

### Measure 1: To improve inclusive education and to ensure that good quality education is accessible for all

Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>1.1 There is a clearly stated policy for the promotion of quality in inclusive education.</p> <p><i>(Policy aims to widen access to education and to promote full participation and opportunities for all learners vulnerable to exclusion to realise their potential. Policy outlines how education policy-makers need to take responsibility for all learners.)</i></p>	<p>1.1.1 The Constitution states that the Italian Republic guarantees school for all (Article 34) and requires that the mandatory duty of solidarity be fulfilled (Article 2). Moreover, it states that it is the 'duty of the Republic to remove any obstacles constraining the freedom and equality of citizens in order to ensure the full development of the human person' (Article 3) (OoP, p. 1).</p> <p>1.1.2 Two special laws were enacted that constitute the framework for the rights of people with SEN: Law 104 of 1992 ('Framework Law for the assistance, social integration and the rights of the disabled') and Law 170 of 2010, which guarantees the right to education of pupils and students with SLD.</p>
<p>1.2 Legislation and policy are consistent with the principles of the UNCRC and the UNCRPD.</p> <p><i>(Legislation and policy and upholds the right of all learners to full participation in school with their own local peer group.)</i></p>	<p>1.2.1 Law 104/1992 provides for the removal of barriers (architectural or sensorial) and the introduction of appropriate aids and tools to support pupils with disabilities in education and training (OoP, p. 2).</p> <p>1.2.2 Law 3 March 2009 no. 18 ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The same law established the National Observatory on the Status of Persons with Disabilities, which provides advice and technical and scientific support for the development of national policies on disability. In particular, the Observatory works to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• promote the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;</li><li>• draft the biennial action programme for the promotion of the rights and the integration of people with disabilities;</li></ul>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promote the collection of statistical data and conduct studies and research on the subject;</li> <li>• submit to the Parliament the triennial report on the implementation of disability policies.</li> </ul> <p>1.2.3 Almost all segregated educational institutions have been abolished and all nurseries, schools and universities are required to accept any child or learner regardless of their disability, including the most severe impairments. This goal has been reached thanks to the support provided by educators, trainers, teachers, etc., to enhance the learning process of learners with disabilities.<sup>1</sup></p> <p>1.2.4 Moreover, the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research (MIUR) has experimented with the World Health Organization’s International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health for Children and Youth (ICF-CY) model for didactical purposes. Based on the results of this experiment, the MIUR will introduce the ICF model in all schools and for every special educational need.<sup>2</sup></p>
<p>1.3 The concept of inclusion is clarified in education policy as an agenda that increases quality and equity for all learners.</p> <p><i>(Policy aims to address underachievement of all vulnerable groups including children with disabilities.)</i></p>	<p>1.3.1 The MIUR guarantees the uniformity of national educational provision by laying down, for example, general educational goals, specific learning goals according to pupils’ skills, the minimum national curriculum, standards related to the quality of educational services, and general criteria for pupil assessment and the organisation of adult education (OoP, p. 1).</p> <p>1.3.2 In 2009, the MIUR published the ‘Guidelines for the integration of pupils with disability at school’, aimed at increasing the quality of educational interventions for pupils with physical, intellectual and sensory impairment (OoP, p. 3).</p> <p>1.3.3 Law 170/2010 and related guidelines state that pupils with learning disorders do not need special teachers, but a new way of teaching, according to their way of learning. The aim is to shift the focus from a clinical to a pedagogic view, by empowering all subjects involved in the educational</p>

<sup>1</sup> *Zero Project Report 2013*, international study on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, available at [zeroproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Zero-Report\\_e\\_-2013.pdf](http://zeroproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Zero-Report_e_-2013.pdf) (Accessed 14 January 2015).

<sup>2</sup> [hubmiur.pubblica.istruzione.it/web/istruzione/dettaglio-news/-/dettaglioNews/viewDettaglio/14284/11210](http://hubmiur.pubblica.istruzione.it/web/istruzione/dettaglio-news/-/dettaglioNews/viewDettaglio/14284/11210) (Accessed 14 January 2015).



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>process.</p> <p>As pupils with SLD are under the responsibility of the curricular teachers, the MIUR has issued guidelines to help schools support pupils with SLD. In particular, schools should activate specific pedagogic and didactic measures to guarantee their achievements. They may also use personalised education plans (PDP) and have the possibility of using compensatory tools and dispensatory measures.</p> <p>1.3.4 Law 107/2015 goes further, introducing important novelties through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• redefining support teachers' initial training;</li><li>• identifying essential service levels in education, health and social provision, taking into account the different institutional competences;</li><li>• providing indicators for self-evaluation and evaluation of school inclusion;</li><li>• revising criteria and procedures relating to certification, which should be aimed at identifying the requests for competences;</li><li>• re-organising the regional workgroups for inclusion;</li><li>• providing compulsory initial and in-service training for school leaders and teachers on pedagogic, didactic and organisational aspects for inclusive education;</li><li>• identifying the in-service training requirements on school inclusiveness for the administrative, technical and auxiliary staff, according to their specific expertise.</li></ul> <p>1.3.5 Relevant is the fact that Italy's legislation has changed the culture and social perception in the country. 1977 was the first time when pupils with disabilities entered mainstream schools. At that time, pupils were not accustomed to diversity. Families themselves were ashamed. Now, each Italian pupil experiences diversity in their everyday life. They accept it and feel personally responsible for the well-being of their classmates with disabilities. The whole school community (teachers, other staff,</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	parents) feels fully committed to inclusion. There is a wide understanding that what works for a pupil with disabilities, works and fits for everyone.
<p>1.4 Legislation and policy for inclusive education is cross-sectoral.</p> <p><i>(Policy outlines procedures to ensure the efficient co-ordination of services, as well as clearly defining roles and responsibilities.)</i></p>	<p>1.4.1 Italy's education system is organised according to the principles of subsidiarity and school autonomy. The state and the regions share legislative competence (OoP, p. 1).</p> <p>1.4.2 Law 328/2000 defines the 'integrated system of interventions and social services', while Law 53/2003 defines the essential service levels in education and training (OoP, p. 1).</p> <p>Law 328/2000 states that families, with municipalities and social services, agree upon an individualised life project for their children, aiming for full integration 'within the family and social life'.</p> <p>1.4.3 The law provides for the creation of mainstream classes as separate sections in rehabilitation centres and hospitals, in order to provide education for children who are temporarily unable to attend school (for no less than 30 days). Teachers with specific psycho-pedagogical training can be employed to teach in rehabilitation centres and hospitals. 'School in hospital' is highly flexible, taking into account each pupil's type of illness, time for medical examinations and therapies, as well as the pace of life in hospitals.</p>
<p>1.5 There is a long-term multi-level policy framework for implementing quality inclusive education at national, regional and / or organisational levels.</p>	<p>1.5.1 The state and the regions share legislative competence. Moreover, regions should comply with the provisions of national legislation. Schools are autonomous with regard to didactic, organisational and research activities (OoP, p. 1).</p> <p>1.5.2 Under Law 118/1971, municipalities are responsible for making school buildings accessible for everyone, according to national standards (OoP, p. 1).</p> <p>1.5.3 The Ministerial Directive of 27 December 2012, on 'Measures for pupils with special needs and local organisations for school inclusion', cites all the initiatives taken for different types of pupils with special needs: pupils with assessed disabilities, with specific developmental disorders or with socio-economic, linguistic and cultural disadvantages (OoP, p. 4).</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>The multi-level framework for inclusive education is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The MIUR is responsible for inclusion policies and their funding.</li> <li>• Local authorities provide ancillary services and assistance.</li> <li>• Regions regulate school assistance (direct and indirect interventions).</li> <li>• Municipalities offer support services and assistance to personal autonomy.</li> </ul> <p>This ‘co-participation’ in school funding among central government, regions and local authorities depends on their different competences, as stated by law, in order to monitor and guarantee efficacy in provision and involve all levels of government in the inclusion process.</p> <p>It rests on two principles: equality of the system through the whole country is guaranteed at central level; subsidiarity is the basis of all intervention at local level.</p>
<p>1.6 Policy outlines how education policy-makers need to take responsibility for all learners.</p>	<p>1.6.1 Law 104/1992 is the main framework for all disability issues: it guarantees specific rights for people with disabilities and their families, provides assistance, stipulates full integration and the adoption of prevention measures and functional recovery. It also ensures social, economic and legal protection.</p> <p>1.6.2 Since the 2013/14 school year, each school has to draft an Annual Plan for Inclusion (PAI) as a basis for the Triennial Plan of the Educational Offer (PTOF). The Annual Plan of the Educational Offer (POF) is the basic document describing the curricular, extra-curricular, educational and organisational resources that each school adopts according to its autonomy. At the end of each school year, schools must monitor and evaluate the efficacy of their inclusiveness.</p> <p>1.6.3 In 2014, the MIUR launched the National Guidelines on Educational Guidance. Their main objective is to support each learner’s maturation and educational achievement. This will help to lower school dropout rates, which are still very high, especially in the first two years of high school.</p>





Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>1.7 Policy has the goal of supporting all teachers to have positive attitudes towards all learners.</p>	<p>1.7.1 Support teachers are part of the team of regular teachers and participate in all the activities, planning and assessment. Support teachers are also facilitators of inclusion (OoP, p. 2).</p> <p>1.7.2 The verdict of <i>Consulta</i> no. 80/2010 abrogated paragraphs 413 and 414 of Article 2 of Law 244/2007. The Constitutional Court asked the Parliament to overcome the 70% permanent workforce restriction as stated in Law 128/2013.</p> <p>1.7.3 Furthermore, under Law 107/2015 ('La Buona Scuola'), support teachers will be hired to ensure inclusion in the Italian school system.</p> <p>1.7.4 All the school staff are responsible for pupils with SEN, not just the support teachers. Therefore, teachers and school managers at all school levels receive specific in-service training for pupils with SEN. Training activities focus on topics such as early risk identification, didactic measures to be adopted both with the pupil and with the class group, assessment procedures and guidance. The specific training plans are drafted by the Ministry and by schools, according to their autonomy. Training activities may also involve universities, research institutes, scientific entities, associations and local health authorities.</p>
<p>1.8 Policy requires learning material to be accessible.</p>	<p>1.8.1 Law 104/1992 provides for the removal of barriers (architectural or sensorial) and the introduction of appropriate aids and tools to support pupils with disabilities in education and training. For example, technical and didactic equipment should be adapted to pupils' needs, according to their functional or sensorial impairments (OoP, p. 2).</p> <p>1.8.2 The Stanca Law 9 January 2004 no. 4, containing the 'Provisions to support the access of disabled people to computing', has become operational by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Implementing Decree of the President of the Republic (DPR), 1 March 2005, no. 75;</li> <li>• the Ministerial Decree of 8 July 2005 'Technical requirements and different levels of accessibility to information technologies', laying down guidelines on the technical</li> </ul>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>requirements and methods to verify the accessibility of internet sites, and evaluation programmes used for this purpose;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Ministerial Decree of 30 April 2008 ‘Technical rules governing the access to educational tools and training for pupils with disabilities’.</li> </ul>
<p>1.9 Policy describes an effective framework of support for schools to implement inclusive education.</p> <p><i>(Support structures focus on different forms of educational resource centres that are locally organised to offer support to individual or clusters of schools.)</i></p>	<p>1.9.1 Schools can establish agreements with centres specialised in pedagogical consultation and production or adaptation of specific didactic materials (OoP, p. 2).</p> <p>1.9.2 Territorial Support Centres (CTSs) are a network of 106 public mainstream schools across Italy. The CTS teachers compile and disseminate the best practices on ICT for inclusion (hardware and software) and support teachers who ask for help both in purchasing and efficiently using those technologies (‘Guidelines for the integration of pupils with disability at school’, 2009, Part II, par. 1).</p>
<p>1.10 Policies outline a continuum of support for children and young people in schools, to meet the full diversity of learners’ needs.</p>	<p>1.10.1 According to DPR 89/2008, classes with pupils with disabilities usually contain a maximum of 20 pupils. This is provided that the inclusion process is supported by a project which defines strategies and methods adopted by class teachers together with support teachers and school staff (OoP, p. 1).</p> <p>1.10.2 Pupils with disabilities have the right to attend mainstream classes with appropriate teaching support. They have the right to full participation in school life, such as summer camps, study visits (accompanied by special staff), etc. According to their disability, children may have assistants provided by local authorities. Pupils have the right to an individual education plan (drafted by family and schools), to a social project (drafted by social assistants and experts from the local health board), to a rehabilitation programme tailored to their individual needs and to vocational guidance (OoP, p. 3).</p> <p>1.10.3 The principle of inclusion and the right of pupils with disabilities to receive specific support are also included in subsequent legislation that regulates general aspects of the education system. These include enrolment, class size and pupil assessment, as well as initial teacher training and support</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>teacher training (OoP, p. 3).</p> <p>1.10.4 Home tuition is intended for ill children who cannot attend school for at least 30 days, who are taught at home by one or more teachers according to a specific project aimed at their subsequent re-integration in class (OoP, p. 11).</p>
<p>1.11 Policy outlines strategies for awareness-raising with all stakeholders in inclusive education.</p>	<p>1.11.1 In line with the collective school staff employment agreement, school staff have the right and the duty to undergo in-service training. Law 128/2013 introduced the principle of compulsory in-service training.</p> <p>1.11.2 According to Law 107/2015, PTOFs are linked to a national triennial teachers' and school staff's training plan, considering all the training needs in each school, inclusive practices, information and awareness.</p> <p>1.11.3 According to the principle of partnership, the MIUR involved different stakeholders in the decision-making process about the 2014–2020 <i>PON for School</i> priorities.<sup>3</sup> The stakeholders included local authorities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), associations, representatives of learners and parents, etc. The decision-making process consisted of a public comment period (meetings and electronic submission of comments).</p>
<p>1.12 Policy outlines the development of the role of special schools as a resource to increase the capability of mainstream schools and improve support for all learners.</p> <p><i>(The specialist knowledge and skills of special school / resource centre are</i></p>	<p>–</p>

<sup>3</sup> [hubmiur.pubblica.istruzione.it/web/istruzione/pon/programmazione\\_2014\\_2020](http://hubmiur.pubblica.istruzione.it/web/istruzione/pon/programmazione_2014_2020) (Accessed 14 January 2015).



Agency recommendation	Findings
<i>maintained and further developed so as to enhance support for learners, such as those with low-incidence disabilities.)</i>	

#### Measure 1 evaluative comments

Inclusive education is the sector where national legislation and policies have been mostly focusing their efforts. Italy is, so far, the only European country which has reached 99.6% inclusion of learners with disabilities in mainstream education. In fact, by law there are no special schools or classes in the Italian school system. The 0.4% of pupils with disabilities attend rehabilitation centres financed by the local health services. Teachers are provided by the MIUR.

In-service training for curricular and support teachers provides instruction on different types of disabilities and how to cope with them (specific curricula).

Regarding the educational system in general, the Council of the European Union has recommended that Italy implement, for instance, the National System for Evaluation of Schools. This would improve school outcomes and reduce rates of early school leaving.<sup>4</sup>

On 27 November 2014, the MIUR launched a format to help schools in their self-evaluation. This would lead, in summer 2015, to the first schools' self-evaluation report.

Some of the indicators are on inclusion. The format is meant to help schools improve their outcomes and reduce rates of early school leaving.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Council Recommendation of 8 July 2014 on the National Reform Programme 2014 of Italy and delivering a Council opinion on the Stability Programme of Italy, 2014, available at [ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2014/csr2014\\_council\\_italy\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2014/csr2014_council_italy_en.pdf) (Accessed 14 January 2015).

<sup>5</sup> [www.istruzione.it/sistema\\_valutazione](http://www.istruzione.it/sistema_valutazione) (Accessed 14 January 2015).



**Measure 2: To support improved co-operation, including greater involvement of parents and local community**

Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>2.1 The full involvement of families in all educational processes is outlined in legislation and policy.</p>	<p>2.1.1 According to Article 14 of Law 328/2000, parents, local health services and social services agree upon an individualised life project for their children, aimed at full integration ‘within the family and social life’ (OoP, p. 2).</p> <p>2.1.2 During enrolment, parents must submit the specific certification issued by the relevant office after the mandatory disability identification procedures have been completed. Such documentation certifies the type of disability and the right to receive specific support (OoP, p. 10).</p> <p>2.1.3 Law 107/2015 (School Reform Act) provides for the enhancement of the school community and its professional development through interaction, collaboration and planning with families and the local community as a whole (local entities, authorities, associations, NGOs, etc.).</p> <p>All subjects involved in the education of pupils with disabilities (teachers, social services, educators, health services and parents) concur in drafting the individual education plan (PEI) and the life project.</p> <p>2.1.4 Law 104/1992 is the main framework for all disability issues: it guarantees specific rights for people with disabilities and their families, provides assistance, stipulates full integration and the adoption of measures for prevention and functional recovery. It also ensures social, economic and legal protection.</p> <p>The principle of integration and the right of pupils with disabilities to receive specific support are also included in all the subsequent legislation that regulates general aspects of the educational system, such as enrolment, class size and pupils’ assessment, as well as curricular teacher training and support teacher training.</p>
<p>2.2 Policy for inclusive education places learners and their families at the centre of all actions.</p>	<p>2.2.1 Law 104/1992 is the main framework for all disability issues: it guarantees specific rights for people with disabilities and their families, provides assistance, stipulates full integration and the adoption of measures for prevention and functional recovery. It also ensures social, economic and</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>legal protection (OoP, p. 1).</p> <p>According to Law 104/1992, parents and pupils have the following rights:</p> <p><b>Parents' rights:</b></p> <p><b>Permission for assistance:</b> mothers and fathers of children with identified disabilities, including adopted children, have the option to take three years of work leave or two hours a day of special permission until the child is three years old. After the child has turned three, they have three days off each month for assistance. Parents also have the right to choose a workplace closer to home and they cannot be moved to another workplace without their agreement.</p> <p><b>Information, education and participation:</b> families should receive information about their children's needs from teachers and head teachers. Parents and schools work together on creating and implementing the individual education plan, according to the child's needs. Parents participate in the school Workgroup for Inclusion (GLI) and they are also represented in the Local Inter-Institutional Workgroups (GLIP-GLIR).</p> <p><b>Children's rights:</b></p> <p>Attendance and education: children have the right to attend schools that are well-equipped for any special need and to use technologies, subsidies and specific materials. Pupils and students with disabilities have the right to free transport.</p> <p><b>Programmes and school life:</b> pupils with disabilities have the right to attend regular classes with appropriate teaching support. They have the right to full participation in school life, such as summer camps, study visits (accompanied by special staff), etc. According to their disability, children can have assistants provided by local authorities. Pupils and students have the right to an individual education plan (drafted by family and schools), to a social project (drafted by social assistants and experts of the local health board), to a rehabilitation programme tailored to their individual needs and to vocational guidance.</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>The principle of inclusion and the right of pupils with disabilities to receive specific support are also included in the subsequent legislation that regulates general aspects of the education system, such as enrolment, class size and pupils' assessment, as well as initial teacher training and support teachers' training.</p> <p>2.2.2 The Ministry of Education has a specific Directorate for Students whose mission is to guarantee all learners' rights.</p> <p>The Directorate for Students guarantees the active participation of learners, families, NGOs, etc., in the policy-making process.</p>
<p>2.3 Sharing information among professionals and families is a policy priority.</p>	<p>2.3.1 Law 104/92 states that families should receive information about their children's needs from teachers and principals (OoP, p. 2).</p> <p>2.3.2 In addition to meetings between teachers and parents, each school has a Workgroup for Inclusion, in which the school leader, teachers and parents take part. This workgroup aims to plan all measures useful to inclusion.</p>
<p>2.4 Policy has the goal of supporting parental interaction and communication with professionals.</p>	<p>2.4.1 According to Italy's legislation, parents participate in the school workgroups. Moreover, parents of pupils with disabilities participate in the school's Workgroup for Inclusion and are also represented in the Local and Regional Inter-Institutional Workgroups (OoP, p. 2).</p> <p>2.4.2 Parental interaction and participation is guaranteed by law in the social and health fields also (Laws no. 104/1992 and no. 328/2000).</p>
<p>2.5 Schools are expected and supported to involve a wider range of partners and foster formal and informal networks that support their practice.</p>	<p>2.5.1 According to their autonomy, schools can be flexible in adapting teaching time, curricula and didactics to pupils' specific learning needs. They can also provide extra-curricular education and activities according to their cultural, social and economic context, as well as through networks and agreements with other schools, universities, agencies and so on (OoP, p. 1).</p> <p>2.5.2 Schools also make agreements with associations and NGOs, not only for extra-curricular</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>activities, but also to provide services (DPR 275/1999).</p> <p>2.5.3 According to the Constitution, there is a balance between the fact that the state is entitled to set principles and general regulations and the fact that schools are autonomous.</p> <p>The national legislation states that schools make networks and agreements to improve the quality of the education and the provision they offer.</p> <p>2.5.4 Law 328/2000 defines the ‘integrated system of interventions and social services’. It states that families, along with municipalities and social services, agree on an individualised life project for their children, aiming for full integration ‘within the family and social life’. Moreover, Law 328 and Law 104 state that local authorities, local health services, social services, schools and families make framework agreements for the integration of all services necessary for the full inclusion of pupils with disability, according to their potential and aimed at their educational, social and future work life.</p>

### *Measure 2 evaluative comments*

The Monitoring Council on the Inclusion of Pupils with Disability is active within the MIUR. The Council includes people with disabilities and the organisations representing them. It aims to involve people with disabilities in the decision-making process at national level.

Moreover, parents participate in the school Workgroup for Inclusion (at school level, comprising the school manager, teachers, parents and other professional figures). They are also represented in the Local Inter-Institutional Workgroups (at regional and provincial level, comprising representatives of the local authorities, local health authorities and associations of people with disabilities).

Starting from the pilot experience of the Vicenza Territorial School Office (UST), and after a test period in six regions, the autism helpdesk project has been extended throughout Italy, both at regional and territorial level.

It is a ‘low-cost’ project and its added value comes from the fact that teachers support other teachers in dealing concretely with pupils with autism. The national project will involve not only experienced teachers, but also experts and all the most representative associations.

Since 2007, the MIUR has created a permanent school network for inclusion: the CTS network. It consists of 106 public mainstream schools, one for





each province, where two-thirds of teachers received specific in-service training on inclusive education and ICT. Currently, the network is being enriched by the creation of CTIs (local support centres). Using a peer-to-peer approach, teachers working in CTs compile and disseminate best practices, support colleagues in managing special needs and supply technological devices to schools.

The same model and the same structures will be used for realising autism helpdesks. Whenever required, experienced teachers will give support and advice, at distance, but also by visiting schools and undertaking observation periods.

From the 2015/16 school year on, 106 autism helpdesks will be operative all over Italy.

In a second stage, the helpdesks will also be open to families and become a reference point between schools, local authorities, social services, associations, research centres and universities.

**Measure 3: To develop monitoring strategies, establishing a comprehensive accountability and evaluation framework for inclusive education**

Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>3.1 Policy describes clear mechanisms to evaluate effectiveness and quality in inclusive education.</p>	<p>3.1.1 In March 2013, a new Presidential Decree (80/2013) regulating the national evaluation system was issued (OoP, p. 13). According to the Decree, starting from the 2014/15 school year, schools would begin self-evaluation, compared to national standards, through an internal process (RAV – Self-Evaluation Report). Starting from 2015/16, schools would face an external evaluating process, aiming to assess weaknesses and strengths and plan improvement actions.</p> <p>3.1.2 According to the Decree, the following three actors are involved in the national evaluation system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the National Institute for the Evaluation of the Education and Training System (INVALSI), whose task is to prepare tests for the external evaluation of pupils’ learning outcomes;</li> <li>• the National Institute for Documentation, Innovation and Research in Education (INDIRE), whose aim is to support schools in innovation processes, in teachers’ professional development and in research activities;</li> <li>• the schools themselves (OoP, p. 13).</li> </ul>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>3.1.3 According to Law 107/2015 (School Reform Act), there is a triennial educational offer plan, according to the three-year budgetary term. It also includes a triennial plan on in-service teacher and school staff training.</p> <p>3.1.4 INVALSI is in charge of collecting data and monitoring ICT use (ICT4I, p. 2).</p>
<p>3.2 Monitoring procedures ensure that inequalities in access to educational resources at regional or organisational levels are addressed.</p>	<p>3.2.1 In Italy, parents are free to enrol children at every level of age and school in the school they prefer, without any selection. Schools are made aware of difficulties through information from the previous school and from the family or through direct observation.</p> <p>The Workgroup for Inclusion has the duty of checking learning difficulties and impairments each year (in order to complete the PAI).</p>
<p>3.3 Accountability measures that impact upon educational professionals' work reflect the importance of wider learner achievements.</p>	<p>3.3.1 Starting from the 2013/14 school year, each school has to draft a PAI as a basis for the PTOF. The POF is the basic document describing the curricular, extra-curricular, educational and organisational resources that each school adopts according to its autonomy. At the end of each school year, schools must monitor and evaluate the efficacy of their inclusiveness.</p> <p>3.3.2 The support teacher is a highly-qualified figure in inclusive education, who has specific professional expertise regarding the childhood sector. The support teacher collaborates with the curricular teacher and the other staff. The support teacher is appointed by the MIUR.</p> <p>There is also the so-called educational and cultural assistant (AEC), who has a specific role in the educational project aimed at facilitating autonomy and communication. AECs are appointed by the local authority (or by the municipality in pre-primary schools). Assistants for sensory impairments or typhlogologists are appointed by the former provinces.</p> <p>All of these staff members co-operate actively with the curricular and support teachers.</p> <p>Teachers should be graduates of primary teaching, although there are some teachers without a degree. These teachers have a diploma for teaching in nursery schools and pre-primary schools earned</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>prior to 1998, when regulations requiring specific degrees changed.</p> <p>Support teachers are graduates of primary teaching, with specialisations or a master’s degree in special education, developmental psychopathology, neuropsychiatry, psychology for disability and rehabilitation, or special learning methods and teaching.</p> <p>Other staff do not need a degree, except for the head teacher and the financial director.</p> <p>A significant aspect of inclusive education concerns assistance for autonomy and communication. The assistant is an operator – educator, mediator, etc. – who facilitates communication between pupils with disabilities and the people who interact with them. The assistants stimulate the development of skills (in the different dimensions of autonomy and basic social communication among the learner with disabilities and the class group) to strengthen peer relationships and support participation in school activities. The assistants participate in teaching-educational planning.</p> <p>Usually, assistants have a master’s degree, but there are differences throughout Italy (local authorities have own competences in the field). A national framework is needed.</p> <p>3.3.3 The head teacher, through staff meetings with the special project teachers, the support teachers and the curricular teachers, co-ordinates teamwork, thus promoting the inclusive process.</p>
<p>3.4 Policy outlines common standards for service and provision evaluation for use across health, education and social services.</p>	<p>3.4.1 As regards identification, the local health authorities carry out specific assessments at the parents’ request, in compliance with Law 104/1992 (OoP, p. 6).</p> <p>3.4.2 Law 328/2000 states a permanent link between school, health and social services at a local level. It works through comparison of each service’s action plans, in order to maximise the use of resources.</p>
<p>3.5 Policy outlines how to involve families in the process of evaluating quality of services.</p>	<p>3.5.1 Since 1975, parents’ representatives are entitled to participate in School Committees (organi collegiali) at class and school level.</p> <p>Families are to be actively involved in the RAV (Self-Evaluation Report) process from 2015/16.</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
3.6 Policy describes mechanisms to evaluate demand for services.	3.6.1 Law 328/2000 asks services to monitor the percentage of people involved in actions, in order to foresee changes in demand.
3.7 Policy supports opportunities for school teams to evaluate their practice through involvement in research and development activities.	<p>3.7.1 Schools carry out self-evaluation based on data released by the MIUR and on the results of INVALSI's surveys on pupils' learning outcomes, in terms of added value (i.e. net of the influence of the socio-economic-cultural background). Subsequently, schools set out their improvement plans (OoP, p. 13).</p> <p>3.7.2 Schools carry out improvement actions with the support of INDIRE and in collaboration with universities, research centres and associations (OoP, p. 13).</p>

*Measure 3 evaluative comments*

According to the new Presidential Decree (80/2013), starting from the 2014/15 school year, schools began to self-evaluate themselves, compared to national standards, through an internal process (RAV – Self-Evaluation Report). Starting from 2015/16, schools face an external evaluating process, aiming to assess weaknesses and strengths and plan improvement actions. It is the first time that schools will be evaluated at a national level, referring to national standards. This does not aim to divide schools into 'best' or 'worst', but financing and support will be provided to schools relating to their needs.

The new School Reform Act (Law 107/2015) allows the Ministry of Education to define in the next year the essential service levels provided by schools, with particular attention to inclusive matters; it will then be easier to compare and evaluate school services.

**Measure 4: To improve the cost-effectiveness of the education system, combining efficiency, effectiveness, equity and inclusion**

Agency recommendation	Findings
4.1 National level inclusive education strategies are linked to long-term financial	4.1.1 The MIUR provides 80% of school funding, covering core services. Funds for school operations are directly allocated to schools, according to the number of pupils enrolled in each school.



Agency recommendation	Findings
support.	<p>The state also provides for pupils with SEN by offering ‘special funds’ to foster teacher training, promote inclusion and improve learners’ outcomes, as well as the use of ICT.</p> <p>The regions and local authorities provide the other 20% of school funding, aimed at ancillary services, through both direct and indirect interventions:(OoP, p. 5).</p> <p>4.1.2 Municipalities provide support services and assistance to all pupils with disabilities attending schools in their jurisdiction.</p> <p>Municipalities and provincial authorities provide funds for school buildings and for removing architectural barriers (as required for public facilities under Law 118/1971).</p> <p>This ‘co-participation’ in school funding among central government, regions and local authorities depends on their different competences, as stated by law, in order to monitor and guarantee efficacy in provision and involve all levels of government in the inclusion process (OoP, p. 5).</p> <p>4.1.3 Under Law 107/2015 (School Reform Act), 9,000 curricular and support teachers have been hired. In 2016 (C-phase), 6,446 more units were due to be added.</p> <p>Law 107/2015 also provides EUR 40 million for compulsory in-service teacher training in the field of inclusion.</p>
4.2 Funding policies and structures provide flexible resourcing systems that promote inclusion.	<p>4.2.1 Italian school funding is provided by the state, regions and municipalities.</p> <p>The MIUR provides 80% of school funding, aimed at core services (salaries and school functioning).</p> <p>School staff’s salaries are provided by the MIUR. School staff include administrative staff and curricular and support teachers (which represent 13.2% of the total teachers).</p> <p>Funds for school functioning are assigned directly to schools, according to the number of pupils enrolled in each school.</p> <p>In 1999 (DPR 275/1999), Italian schools were provided with didactical, administrative and financial</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>autonomy. They can also receive funds from other sources (private or public).</p> <p>The state also takes care of pupils with SEN by providing ‘special funds’ aiming to empower teacher training, promote inclusion and improve learners’ outcomes, also by the use of ICT.</p> <p>The other 20% of school funding, aimed at ancillary services, is provided by regional and local authorities through direct and indirect interventions.</p> <p>Direct interventions are scholarships, cheques and contributions aimed at enabling school attendance. Meanwhile, indirect interventions include some free-of-charge services, such as transport, meals and textbooks.</p> <p>Municipalities may provide support services and assistance to all pupils with disabilities attending schools in their jurisdiction.</p> <p>Municipalities and provincial authorities provide funds for school buildings, as well as for removing architectural barriers (as required for public facilities – Law 118/1971).</p> <p>This ‘co-participation’ in school funding among central government, regions and local authorities depends on their different competences, as stated by law, in order to monitor and guarantee efficacy in provision and involve all levels of government in the inclusion processes.</p> <p>4.2.2 Local authorities must provide free transport for people with disabilities, such as, for example, daily transport to schools and to education and health centres (OoP, p. 2).</p>
<p>4.3 There are long-term funding commitments to support collaborative initiatives between various school-based, resource centre and research teams.</p>	<p>4.3.1 The multi-level framework for inclusive education is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The MIUR is responsible for inclusion policies and their funding.</li> <li>• Local authorities provide ancillary services and assistance.</li> <li>• Regions regulate school assistance (direct and indirect interventions).</li> </ul>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipalities offer support services and assistance to personal autonomy.</li> </ul> <p>This ‘co-participation’ in school funding among central government, regions and local authorities depends on their different competences, as stated by law, in order to monitor and guarantee efficacy in provision and involve all levels of government in the inclusion process.</p> <p>It rests on two principles: equality of the system through the whole country is guaranteed at central level; subsidiarity is the basis of all intervention at local level.</p>
<p>4.4 Policy outlines mechanisms for systematic data collection on expenditure and implementation that informs cost-effectiveness issues.</p>	<p>4.4.1 Italian school funding is provided by state, regions and municipalities.</p> <p>Each entity should monitor the effectiveness of its funding.</p> <p>Each general directorate at the MIUR has an internal monitoring process for this purpose.</p>

*Measure 4 evaluative comments*

The School Reform Act (Law 107/2015) provides schools with more teachers to cover curricular activities and to let schools plan new activities, cope with new learners’ needs and improve services, including inclusiveness.

**Measure 5: To increase participation in good quality inclusive early childhood education and care and enrolment rates in pre-school education**

Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>5.1 Policy clearly respects the rights and the needs of children and their families.</p>	<p>5.1.1 The information under Measure 1 is also valid for early childhood education (ECE).</p> <p>Children have the right to attend schools that are equipped for any special need and to use technologies, subsidies and specific materials. Pupils and students with disabilities have the right to free transport (OoP, p. 3).</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>5.1.2 Mothers and fathers of children with identified disabilities, including adopted children, have the option to take three years of work leave or two hours a day of special permission until the child is three years old. After the child has turned three, they have three days off each month for assistance. Parents also have the right to choose a workplace closer to home and they cannot be moved to another workplace without their agreement (OoP, p. 2).</p>
<p>5.2 Support is available for families to recognise and understand the needs of their child.</p> <p><i>(Support focuses upon and what is in the child's best interests.)</i></p>	<p>5.2.1 School have a crucial role in early SEN detection; systematic observations help to detect suspected cases. The link to the family and collaboration between school and parents are very important.</p> <p>Law provides for a process starting from a diagnostic approach. Family and physicians request observation of the pupil at a local Tsmree centre (centres for mental health protection and rehabilitation in developmental age). Early diagnosis is crucial because schools can 'translate' the medical approach into an educational approach, shaping an educational path that will turn into a vertical curriculum from ECE to primary school and later to lower- and upper-secondary school.</p> <p>Transition from home to ECE and from ECE to primary education is well planned by the two schools. When a three-year-old enters school for the first time, they attend gradually (e.g. one hour a day, two hours a day) until they are ready to attend regularly.</p> <p>Childhood services do not fall within Legislative Decree 28 February 1983 no. 55 (converted with amendments by Law 26 April 1983, no. 131) concerning public services destined to individual demand, so they are exempt from the Stability Pact.</p> <p>Nevertheless, as soon as health services provide diagnosis to the school institutions, the municipality (three months to three years) or state (three years to six years) provides for support teachers (Law 104/92).</p>
<p>5.3 Policy outlines how ECI services should be provided for children and families as</p>	<p>5.3.1 The early childhood school is a fundamental inclusive setting for children of different ages with different needs. Therefore, it also welcomes children with SEN, through the implementation of specific</p>





Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>early as possible and as quickly as possible, following identification of need.</p>	<p>activities and educational interventions.</p> <p>5.3.2 Formerly, attendance at nursery school (three months to three years) and kindergarten (three years to six years) was not compulsory, though the state encouraged families to send their children to pre-school (attendance is 97%). The School Reform Act recognises ECE (0–6) as the first segment of the educational system. The upcoming delegated decree organises an integrated system between schools (MIUR responsibility) and educational services (municipalities’ responsibilities), defining common essential service levels for the whole country (same teacher training, same provisions, same funding, etc.).</p>
<p>5.4 Policy states that in risk situations, the child’s rights should come first.</p>	<p>5.4.1 The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was ratified by Law no. 176 of 27 May 1991.</p>
<p>5.5 Policy measures and guidelines clearly define quality standards for early childhood services and provision.</p>	<p>5.5.1 The School Reform Act recognises ECE (0–6) as the first segment of the educational system. The upcoming delegated decree organises an integrated system between schools (MIUR responsibility) and educational services (municipalities’ responsibilities), defining common essential service levels for the whole country (same teacher training, same provisions, same funding, etc.).</p> <p>5.5.2 Formerly, the Italian system provided for: nurseries (children aged 0–3), ECE (children aged 3–6) and so-called ‘spring sections’ (children aged 2–3). There are national standards, set by law, for the ECE curriculum; while planning their activities, schools must take these standards into account, according to their autonomy. By law, ECE does not provide for special or separated classes for children with disabilities.</p> <p>5.5.3 The reform ‘Provisions on pre-school (0–6 years) integrated education and equal male and female pupils’ right to education equal opportunities’ enabling law asks for a unification of the pre-school path.</p> <p>Nursery school will not be a service by individual application, but a mainstreaming service directly</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>linked to the kindergarten and to the compulsory school under the Ministry of Education.</p> <p>According to this law, the state should cover 50% of the management cost, leaving the rest to regions and municipalities.</p> <p>Furthermore, all teachers will have a university degree and continuous in-service training.</p>
<p>5.6 Early childhood guidance is developed jointly by departments of health, education and social services.</p>	<p>5.6.1 Early detection is crucial because schools can ‘translate’ the medical approach into an educational approach, shaping an educational path that will turn into a vertical curriculum from ECE to the primary school and later to lower- and upper-secondary school.</p> <p>5.6.2 Transition from home to ECE and from ECE to primary education is well planned by the two schools. When a three-year-old enters school for the first time, they attend gradually (e.g. one hour a day, two hours a day) until they are ready to attend regularly.</p> <p>5.6.3 Different initiatives to facilitate the transition from ECE to primary school are planned by the different schools (e.g. older pupils guide the younger ones to become used to the new setting; teachers from both schools exchange information about the pupils and plan activities together). The aim is to make the transition as smooth as possible and to allow for educational continuity between the two schools.</p> <p>5.6.4 Law 328/2000 defines the ‘integrated system of interventions and social services’. It states that families, with municipalities and social services, agree upon an individualised life project for their children, aiming for full integration ‘within the family and social life’. Moreover, Law 328 and Law 104 state that local authorities, local health services, social services, schools and families make framework agreements for the integration of all services necessary for the full inclusion of pupils with disability, according to their potential and aimed at their educational, social and future work life.</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>5.7 Policy for early childhood services supports cross sectoral, multi-disciplinary working at regional and local levels.</p>	<p>5.7.1. Law 107/2015 makes the government responsible for establishing the integrated education system from birth to six years, comprising local educational services for children, nursery schools and pre-primary schools. It is aimed at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• defining the essential service levels through:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. the spread of the service;</li> <li>2. common regulations on initial and in-service training (initial training should be at university level);</li> <li>3. common structural, organisational and qualitative standards, with reference also to the National Guidelines for the Curriculum;</li> </ol> </li> <li>• defining the functions and tasks of the regions and local authorities;</li> <li>• approving and funding a national action plan for promoting the integrated education system.</li> </ul>
<p>5.8 Policy ensures there are pre-school places offered to children coming from ECI services/provision.</p>	<p>5.8.1 In Italy, schools are widespread all over the country. School service is widely available all over the national territory, so class size varies depending on the geographical factor and on the number of inhabitants in the communities where schools are located. This explains the lower teacher/learner ratio in OECD reports. Smaller classes are often seen as beneficial because they allow teachers to focus more on the needs of individual learners. Moreover, Law 104/1992, which introduces the principle of inclusion as a right for people with disabilities, states that the average class size should not exceed 20 pupils, if including pupils with disabilities.</p> <p>Each pupil has the right to attend the school nearest to their home.</p> <p>According to the early childhood education reform (see above), the new integrated service comprising schools and pre-primary educational services is part of the school system.</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
5.9 Policy outlines how cost-free services/provision are made available for families.	5.9.1 Pupils and students with disabilities have the right to free transport (OoP, p. 3). 5.9.2 For all levels of education, pupils with disabilities have the right to free transport, meals, aids and economic benefits.
5.10 Policy ensures the same quality of service irrespective of differences in geographical location. <i>(Such as isolated or rural areas)</i> .	5.10.1 Draft Law 1260 – Senato della Repubblica (Puglisi Draft Law) states that male and female pupils should attend a school at a ‘reasonable’ distance from their home by foot, bus or pre-arranged (municipality) transport. Please also refer to point 5.8.

*Measure 5 evaluative comments*

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**Measure 6: To improve student-focused measures such as mentoring, personalised learning approaches and improved guidance**

Agency recommendation	Findings
6.1 High expectations for all learners’ achievements underpin policy for inclusive education.	6.1.1 Law 107/2015 (School Reform Act) has the main aim of affirming the central role of the school in the knowledge society and raising the levels of education and skills of all learners according to their individual learning times and styles. It aims to counteract inequalities and prevent school dropout, to create open schools as permanent labs for research, experimentation, educational innovation, participation and education for active citizenship, to guarantee the right to study, equal opportunities and learners’ achievements, from a lifelong perspective.



Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>6.2 Policy outlines that learners' voices should be listened to in decision-making that affects them.</p>	<p>6.2.1 In 2002, the Minister for Education created the National Students' Council and the National University Council. These bodies, comprising learner representatives, advise and formulate proposals to the Ministry.</p> <p>There are also regional students' councils in which all learners (including those with disabilities) are represented.</p> <p>The national Monitoring Council on the Inclusion of Pupils with Disability in schools provides for the participation of students' associations, as well as families' associations.</p>
<p>6.3 Teaching, support and guidance has the goal of empowering all learners.</p>	<p>6.3.1 Inclusion is a key point of Italy's educational system. By law, school is a welcoming community in which all pupils, regardless of their functional diversity, can pursue their educational and social growth.</p> <p>All teachers (not only support teachers) are responsible for empowering all learners.</p>
<p>6.4 Appropriate educational support is available as necessary and is fit for purpose in meeting personal learning needs.</p>	<p>6.4.1 According to the Inter-Ministerial Ministry of Education, Universities and Research-Ministry of Health Decree (17/4/2013), concerning early detection in school, specific learning disabilities (SLDs) should be detected early in schools, generally starting from the second year of primary education. In case of a suspected SLD, schools should intervene promptly, notifying the pupil's family in order to proceed with further detection (OoP, p. 6).</p> <p>6.4.2 In Italy's school system – by law – pupils with SEN attend common classes in which curricular teachers are supported by special teachers (support teachers).</p> <p>Each year, the MIUR regional offices (USR) allocate support teachers to each school, according to the number of pupils and the typology of disabilities. Support teachers are part of the teachers' team: they work with curricular teachers and participate in all the activities concerning the class as a whole, such as planning and assessment.</p> <p>A significant aspect of inclusive education concerns assistance to autonomy and communication. This</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>involves a personal assistant, who provides specialised assistance and collaborates with the support teacher to achieve the educational goals, according to the individual education plan.</p> <p>The assistant is an operator – educator, mediator, etc. – who facilitates communication between pupils with disabilities and the people who interact with them. The assistants stimulate the development of skills (in the different dimensions of autonomy and basic social communication among the learner with disabilities and the class group) to strengthen peer relationships and support participation in school activities. The assistants participate in teaching-educational planning.</p>
<p>6.5 The learning process is based on flexible curricula based on learner centred approaches and the development and implementation of individual learning plans as necessary.</p>	<p>6.5.1 Parents and schools work together to create and implement an individual education plan according to the child’s needs (OoP, p. 2).</p> <p>6.5.2 The individual education plan is drawn up jointly by the local health authority, curricular and support teachers, educationists or education assistants (if required), in collaboration with parents. It includes a description of the interventions planned for the pupil in a given period (OoP, p. 11).</p> <p>6.5.3 Assessment for pupils with disabilities is carried out according to the goals set out in the individual education plan. Although the same assessment procedures are applied to all pupils, they take pupils’ progress into account, rather than their achievements. Pupils who follow a differentiated study plan, which does not lead to a final qualification, receive a ‘portfolio’ accrediting the subjects studied, the competences acquired and the relevant credits obtained in the final exam (OoP, p. 11).</p> <p>6.5.4 Law 53/2003 already introduced the concept of personalisation in learning. The same concept has been stressed by Ministerial Directive 27 December 2012 on special educational needs (covering not only disability, but also specific learning disorders and difficulties).</p> <p>In line with the overall objectives of the national education system and respecting the freedom of education, of parents’ educational and training choices and of the learners’ right to learn, autonomy is the instrument through which schools adopt working methods, teaching time and functional solutions to the realisation of the POF in accordance with each learner’s needs.</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	In Italy, more than 10 years ago, the National Curriculum was replaced by the National Guidelines for the Curriculum, a tool for the autonomous schools. They provide schools with learning objectives and competencies that each learner must acquire, stressing the learner's centrality in all aspects of the educational activity.

*Measure 6 evaluative comments*

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**Measure 7: To improve the school ethos (such as the creation of supportive learning environments, adapting learning environments to specific learning needs)**

Agency recommendation	Findings
7.1 Policy supports school leaders to value diversity among staff as well as learners, encourage collegiality and support innovation.	7.1.1 According to Presidential Decree 275/99, schools are autonomous with regard to their internal organisation and to local adaptations of the curricula. School leaders are requested to encourage co-operative attitudes among teachers and to support innovation.  The new School Reform Act (Law 107/2015) allows school leaders to appoint 10% of staff to co-operate with them in goal-based improvement actions.
7.2 Policy outlines the responsibility of school leaders to effectively communicate their vision for inclusive education to the school teaching team and wider school community.	7.2.1 The new School Reform Act (Law 107/2015) gives school leaders responsibility for planning the school's main goals for a three-year period, sharing them with teachers and parents, managing them and monitoring that they are carried out.



Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>7.3 Policy aims to ensure the recruitment of teaching staff from diverse backgrounds, including those with disabilities.</p>	<p>7.3.1 The new School Reform Act (Law 107/2015) establishes a new way to appoint teachers, through interviews and curricula evaluation. Experiences and individual characteristics, including disability, are taken into account.</p>
<p>7.4 Policy supports schools to ensure teaching staff are able to meet diverse learning needs.</p> <p><i>(Teaching staff have competence and expertise to develop individual plans, implement learner-centred approaches and support learners in personalised learning.)</i></p>	<p>7.4.1 According to the collective school staff employment agreement, school staff have the right and the duty to undergo in-service training. Law 128/2013 introduced the principle of compulsory in-service training.</p> <p>7.4.2 Currently in Italy there are 8,406 schools, with 7,816,408 pupils enrolled, of which 224,509 are pupils with disabilities The Italian Ministry of Education is making a great effort to quickly train all teachers – whether already employed in schools or newly qualified – to face new challenges (learner-centred education, ICT, inclusive educational practice, diverse learning needs, strategies, etc.) (please also refer to TALIS, 2013). It includes master’s degrees and distance learning programmes.</p> <p>The new School Reform Act (Law 107/2015) provides additional funding for this purpose.</p>
<p>7.5 The school ethos and culture is guided by school strategic plans that have high expectations for the academic and social achievements of all learners.</p>	<p>7.5.1 According to DPR 275/99, schools are autonomous in their organisation, but within the framework of duties and rights stated by national legislation. The fundamental documents each school has the duty to draw up, with the participation of the whole school community (head teacher, teachers, staff, parents, etc.), are: the School Regulation, the POF, the PAI, the school budget and the Educational Co-Responsibility Pact.</p> <p>7.5.2 The Educational Co-Responsibility Pact clearly states the rights and duties of schools, pupils and families, aimed at the pupil’s growth (not only in terms of achievements, but in terms of acquiring active citizenship).</p> <p>The new School Reform Act (Law 107/2015) gives schools responsibility for planning the school’s main goals for a three-year period (PTOF).</p>





Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>PTOFs should be drafted through the participation of the whole school community. The PTOF is the fundamental document for schools, describing their cultural, curricular, extra-curricular, educational and organisational identity.</p> <p>7.5.2 Schools are also required to adopt a PAI, in order to improve their inclusiveness.</p> <p>As said, the PAI should be the basis for the POF.</p> <p>The National Guidelines for the Curriculum, published in 2012, require high levels of learning achievements, establishing the final standards for all learners; schools are free to pursue them in different ways.</p>
<p>7.6 School strategic plans describe how universal design for learning approaches are used to provide individualised learning tools and opportunities.</p>	<p>7.6.1 Schools must remove all barriers and offer all facilities (as well as the use of ICT) in the most functional manner suited to each pupil's needs (OoP, p. 11).</p> <p>7.6.2 Classes with one or two pupils with disabilities usually contain a maximum of 20 pupils. The inclusion process is supported by a project which defines strategies and methods adopted jointly by curricular and support teachers, together with the school staff (OoP, p. 11).</p> <p>7.6.3 Yes, it is stated in all school documents. Universal design is a guiding principle stated by law.</p>
<p>7.7 School strategic plans stipulate that all learners are entitled to be active participants in the life of the school and community.</p>	<p>7.7.1 Yes, in the Educational Co-Responsibility Pact, according to the national legislation (see above).</p>
<p>7.8 School strategic plans have clear statements on the value of diversity.</p>	<p>7.8.1 Yes, according to the national legislation and to the learners' rights and duties decree (DPR 249/1998).</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
7.9 School strategic plans describe mechanisms for shared leadership, teamwork and collaborative problem solving.	7.9.1 Yes, in the School Regulation, according to the national legislation on school participation ('organi collegiali', mentioned above).

#### *Measure 7 evaluative comments*

What does it mean to improve the school ethos?

Schools are not meant to be an economic entity; they are meant to be an educational community.

Values are shared, not imposed by a document. Staff meetings are not only aimed at organisational issues; staff meetings among professionals (teachers and assistants) are meant to share potentialities, difficulties and strategies related to each class setting, or each group in a class, or each individual learner, whether or not they have disabilities.

#### **Measure 8: To reduce the negative effects of early tracking (the early streaming of pupils by ability into different types of provision or schools) and to reduce the extensive use of grade retention<sup>6</sup>**

Agency recommendation	Findings
8.1 Legislation across relevant public sectors has the goal of ensuring educational services enhance developments and processes working	8.1.1 Subsequent regulations have specified the educational and didactic measures to be applied from pre-school education to support the correct process of teaching and learning. Law 170/2010 has been implemented through the Ministerial Decree and Guidelines (12/7/2011), the Agreement between state and regions concerning procedures for diagnosis and certification (25/7/2012), and the Inter-

<sup>6</sup> Early tracking means the early streaming of pupils by abilities into different types of provision or school; this includes placing children into separate schools.

The extensive use of grade retention means holding students back to repeat school years, instead of providing flexible individual support.



Agency recommendation	Findings
towards equity in inclusive education.	<p>Ministerial Ministry of Education, Universities and Research-Ministry of Health Decree (17/4/2013) concerning early detection in schools (OoP, p. 10).</p> <p>8.1.2 Italian law does not allow for streaming of pupils until the age of 16 (the age limit for compulsory education). Schools take into account reports from previous schools in order to settle classes of mixed levels and equally distribute pupils with disabilities (usually one or maximum two in each class). Some upper-secondary schools hold entrance exams, but people with disabilities are exonerated by law. Grade retention is highly unusual in primary school; learners with disabilities may not repeat school years, unless family and health services agree.</p>
<p>8.2 Policy outlines how support structures that impact upon inclusive education are diverse and easily available.</p> <p><i>(Support structures prevent early tracking and streaming of pupils at an early age).</i></p>	<p>8.2.1 Law 104/1992 states that every pupil with disabilities has the right to receive teaching support and assistance, in addition to a personalised curriculum, with the agreement of family, school and health services. Since 2012, this has also been extended to other impaired and disadvantaged pupils.</p>
<p>8.3 Assessment mechanisms are in place to identify the support needs of learners at an early stage.</p>	<p>8.3.1 The outcome of each assessment is documented through papers specifying the pathology, according to the World Health Organization's international classification. In the case of a particularly severe disability, the number of support teaching hours may be higher than the standard amount provided for by law. The papers are given to the parents who, in turn, deliver them to the school. These assessment papers are essential for starting the administrative procedures for school integration (Decree of the President of the Council of Ministers 185/2006) (OoP, p. 6).</p> <p>8.3.2 Assessment of pupils with disabilities focuses on their behaviour and on disciplines and activities included in their personalised education plan, taking into account pupils' progress rather than results. The first cycle leaving exam can be made up of differentiated tests and may allow the use of specific didactic tools (OoP, p. 7).</p> <p>8.3.3 The upper-secondary education leaving exam can also be carried out with the help of special</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	didactic tools. Pupils with severe intellectual disability who cannot follow the regular study plan, follow a differentiated study plan. Therefore, rather than obtaining the final qualification, these pupils receive a document stating the course of study, the subjects, the length of studies, the competences acquired and the relevant credits obtained at the final exam (OoP, p. 7).
8.4 Data is available relating to learners' rights to age appropriate education.	–

*Measure 8 evaluative comments*

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**Measure 9: To support improvement in schools with lower educational outcomes**

Agency recommendation	Findings
9.1 Clear mechanisms exist to identify schools with lower educational outcomes. <sup>7</sup>	9.1.1 Since 2015, the National Institute for the Evaluation of the Education and Training System (INVALSI) has asked schools to self-evaluate through an online review (RAV). The RAV takes account of school results related to key management factors, both in organisational and didactic terms.
9.2 Policy outlines how methods of assessment, inspections and other accountability measures contribute to school improvement processes.	9.2.1 Local authorities provide social services, together with NGOs or associations in the field. Schools and social care services collaborate to identify and manage situations of socio-economic disadvantage and to prevent problems in developmental age (OoP, p. 7). 9.2.2 Linguistic disadvantage is mostly related to recent migration. During the initial period of

<sup>7</sup> This recommendation does not directly come from the Agency work covered in the CPRA activities. A number of project recommendations have implicitly, but not explicitly referred to this issue. However, the piloting work and detailed discussions with PG countries showed it is necessary to have this explicit recommendation linked to this measure.



Agency recommendation	Findings
<p><i>(Accountability measures support inclusive practice and inform further improvement of provision for all learners.)</i></p>	<p>integration, the school assesses the foreign learner’s language knowledge. It then organises Italian classes according to their level (OoP, p. 7).</p> <p>9.2.3 Schools with lower educational outcomes will be subsequently submitted to external inspections, aimed to implement an Improvement Plan (PdM), which will identify the measures to enable the school to get better results (DPR 80/2013 and Ministerial Directive 11/2014).</p>
<p>9.3 Policy aims to increase the capacity of all schools to meet a greater diversity of needs and support learners within their local communities.</p> <p><i>(Schools are supported to use innovative teaching methods, practical learning approaches and individual plans, focusing on learners’ capabilities.)</i></p>	<p>9.3.1 The Ministerial Directive of 27 December 2012, on ‘Measures for pupils with special needs and local organisations for school inclusion’, cites all the initiatives taken for different types of pupils with special needs: pupils with assessed disabilities, with specific developmental disorders or with socio-economic, linguistic and cultural disadvantages.</p> <p>The inclusion process for foreign pupils consists of two aspects: ‘integration’ and ‘inter-culture’. Specific guidelines concerning the inclusion of migrant pupils (2014) provide a regulatory framework, as well as suggestions concerning school organisation and teaching in order to increase the quality of education (OoP, p. 4).</p> <p>9.3.2 Provisions for migrants are also included in Framework Law 328/2000, for the creation of an integrated system of social services and social intervention (OoP, p. 4).</p> <p>9.3.3 Socio-economic, cultural or linguistic disadvantages are identified at local and school level. In these cases, if needed, teachers can draw up personalised education plans.</p> <p>Additional measures may include forms of support (e.g. exemption from some fees). In the case of foreign pupils, schools can set up language laboratories, either individually or in groups, to facilitate language learning.</p> <p>Foreign minors, including those in a situation of irregular migration, have the same rights to education and health as Italian minors. The state, regions and local authorities guarantee the right to education (OoP, p. 12).</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>9.4 Policy outlines clear incentives for schools to take all learners from their local community.</p>	<p>9.4.1 The role of teachers is crucial to identify suspected situations of neglect, abuse or violence. In these cases, the school (through the principal) should invite the family to contact social services. If the family fails to do so, the school can make a referral to the social care service (OoP, p. 7).</p> <p>9.4.2 As mentioned previously, schools are widespread all over the country. All schools have to provide the same provision, in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Therefore, each community has all types of schools. As stated, there are only mainstream schools, welcoming all learners with SEN. Parents can choose to enrol their children either near home or near their workplace. This is particularly the case in large cities, where a lot of time is needed for transportation. Parents' participation is fully welcomed. Schools cannot refuse any enrolment.</p>
<p>9.5 Policy requires school strategic plans to outline preventive educational action against dropouts.</p> <p><i>(Including necessary measures so that learners who become disengaged find new educational alternatives.)</i></p>	<p>9.5.1 The Ministerial Directive of 27 December 2012, on 'Measures for pupils with special needs and local organisations for school inclusion' asks school to adopt a PAI for the school year in order to strengthen efforts to prevent dropouts and failure.</p>

*Measure 9 evaluative comments*

One of the goals of the 2014–2020 *PON for School* National Operational Programme is to promote equity and social cohesion, including by supporting learners with difficulties or disabilities. Indeed, one of the actions aimed at reducing school failure and dropouts is specifically intended to support vulnerable learners, including those with disabilities (Action 10.1.1). Other actions regarding school innovation, learning environments, teacher training and school evaluation could affect the school as an inclusive system.



**Measure 10: To improve the quality of school staff, focusing on the quality of teachers, quality in continuing professional development, developing teacher competences and reinforcing school leadership**

Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>10.1 Policy outlines how all school staff develops the skills to meet the diverse needs of all learners.</p> <p><i>(Appropriate training and professional development is provided to all school staff including teachers, support and administrative staff, counsellors, etc.).</i></p>	<p>10.1.1 Support teachers are curricular teachers. Initial training for teachers (all school levels) consists of a master’s degree, a specialisation and a traineeship in schools lasting one year (TFA). In addition to the basic training common to all teachers, those wishing to work as support teachers must also acquire a specific qualification, awarded by universities, in which they must obtain at least 60 credits. Training includes at least 300 hours (12 credits) of traineeship activities related to the school level in which they are going to work. Each university organises and regulates training activities in compliance with general criteria established by the Ministry of Education.</p> <p>10.1.2 Support teachers are part of the team of regular class teachers and participate in all the planning and assessment activities. Support teachers are also facilitators of all inclusion processes (OoP, p. 11).</p> <p>10.1.3 Each year, the MIUR regional offices allocate support teachers to each school, according to the number of pupils and the typology of disabilities. Support teachers are part of the teaching team: they work with curricular teachers and participate in all activities that concern the class as a whole, such as planning and assessment.</p> <p>Not all teachers are support teachers, but all support teachers are teachers (OoP, p. 15).</p>
<p>10.2 Policy supports the development of high quality and appropriately trained teacher educators.</p> <p><i>(With improvements in recruitment, induction and continuing professional development.)</i></p>	<p>10.2.1 According to the collective school staff employment agreement, school staff have the right and the duty to undergo in-service training. Law 128/2013 introduced the principle of compulsory in-service training.</p> <p>All the school staff are responsible for pupils with SEN, not just the support teachers. Therefore, teachers and school principals at all school levels undergo specific in-service training for pupils with SEN. Training activities focus on topics such as early risk identification, didactic measures to be adopted both with the pupil and with the class group, assessment procedures and guidance. The</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>specific training plans are drafted by the MIUR and by schools, according to their autonomy. Training activities may also involve universities, research institutes, scientific organisations, associations and local health authorities (OoP, p. 15).</p> <p>10.2.2 Teacher education is currently favoured by the most recent legislative innovations in the field of SLD (implementation decree of Law 170/2010 no. 5,669 dated 12 July 2011), which gave various incentives to in-service teachers in compulsory education. Education dedicated to learning disabilities promotes inclusive practices, starting from educational paths that require digital and innovative methodological-didactic expertise (ICT4I, p. 8).</p> <p>10.2.3 Law 107/2015 delegates to the government the reform on initial teacher training by introducing a unitary and co-ordinated system that includes both teachers' initial training and the procedures for access to the profession, entrusting this to universities and to state educational institutions.</p> <p>The draft of the reform is changing initial training towards more inclusive practices, by foreseeing 20% of the curriculum for curricular teachers and up to 100% for support teachers' specialisation.</p>
<p>10.3 Policy supports flexible training opportunities in initial and continuing professional development, for all teachers.</p> <p><i>(Schools and teacher education institutions will work together to ensure good models in practice schools and appropriate placements for teaching practice.)</i></p>	<p>10.3.1. All the school staff are responsible for pupils with SEN, not just the support teachers. Therefore, teachers and school managers of all school levels receive specific in-service training for pupils with SEN. Training activities focus on topics such as early risk identification, didactic measures to be adopted both with the pupil and with the class group, assessment procedures and guidance. The specific training plans are drafted by the Ministry and by schools, according to their autonomy. Training activities may also involve universities, research institutes, scientific entities, associations and local health authorities.</p> <p>10.3.2. According to the collective school staff employment agreement, school staff have the right and the duty to undergo in-service training. Law 128/2013 introduced the principle of compulsory in-service training.</p> <p>10.3.3. Currently in Italy there are 8,406 schools, with 7,816,408 pupils enrolled, of which 224,509 are</p>





Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>pupils with disabilities. The Italian Ministry of Education is making a great effort to quickly train all teachers – whether already employed in schools or newly qualified – to face new challenges (learner-centred education, ICT, inclusive educational practice, diverse learning needs, strategies, etc.) (please also refer to TALIS, 2013). It includes master’s degrees and distance learning programmes.</p> <p>10.3.4. According to Law 107/2015, PTOFs are linked to a national triennial teachers’ and school staff’s training plan, considering all the training needs in each school, inclusive practices, information and awareness.</p> <p>10.3.5. Law 107/2015 provides EUR 40 million for compulsory in-service teacher training, including in the field of inclusion.</p>
<p>10.4 All teaching staff are supported and develop a clear understanding of effective learning strategies.</p> <p><i>(Such as learning to learn and active learning approaches.)</i></p>	<p>10.4.1 At school level, both the school principal and the teaching staff are responsible for quality assurance. The principal organises the school activities according to educational efficiency and efficacy criteria and is responsible for the results of this activity. The teaching staff plan and verify the didactic activities (OoP, p. 15).</p> <p>10.4.2. Staff meetings are not only aimed at organisational issues; staff meetings among professionals (teachers and assistants) are meant to share potentialities, difficulties and strategies related to each class setting, or each group in a class, or each individual learner, whether or not they have disabilities.</p>
<p>10.5 Policy supports schools to develop strategic plans of staff training in inclusive education.</p>	<p>10.5.1 Law 107/2015 linked compulsory in-service training for teachers and school staff to the PTOF, considering all the training needs in each school, inclusive practices, information and awareness.</p> <p>The law allocates EUR 40 million each year to this aim.</p>
<p>10.6 Policy outlines the specialised training pathways for specialists who support school communities to implement inclusive education.</p>	<p>10.6.1 The MIUR has founded a network of schools named Territorial Support Centres (CTSs). CTSs are schools (106 units spread all over Italy) dedicated to special needs, with teachers/researchers specialised in technologies for inclusive teaching. Using a peer-to-peer approach, teachers working in CTSs compile and disseminate best practices, support colleagues in managing special needs and supply</p>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<p>technological devices to schools (OoP, p. 16).</p> <p>CTSs can rely on CTIs (local support centres), which are smaller networks at a municipal level directly linked to the CTSs.</p> <p>10.6.2 There are 106 CTSs distributed throughout the provinces. Each centre employs two teacher-operators, who are specialised in new technologies for inclusive education. There are currently 200 operators working in the centres. Each CTS headquarters is located in a 'leading school' (ICT4I, p. 1).</p>
<p>10.7 Policy supports research into the effectiveness of different routes into teaching.</p> <p><i>(Including course organisation, content and pedagogy to best develop the competence of teachers to meet the diverse needs of all learners.)</i></p>	<p>10.7.1 Schools and universities frequently work together. These partnerships allow both schools and universities to improve themselves through sharing their particular expertise.</p> <p>Schools are often the settings for the early stages of research in the education field.</p> <p>Regions also work with universities by founding projects or appointing universities to arrange in-service training for teachers.</p> <p>Research is also carried out by the CNR (National Centre for Research). The network of CNR research institutes, which are distributed all over the national territory, is multi-disciplinary. Its purpose is to conduct research activities in pursuit of excellence and strategic relevance within the national and international ambit, through its network of research institutes.</p> <p>Moreover, the MIUR founded master's degrees on SLD and specific disabilities to improve support and curricular teachers' competences and knowledge of the latest pedagogical and scientific findings in the field of education.</p>

*Measure 10 evaluative comments*

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**Measure 11: To improve transition from education to work by increasing the coherence between employment incentives, education and VET; improving the quality and accessibility of apprenticeships; promoting cross-sector co-operation; simplifying the systems of qualifications**

Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>11.1 Policy ensures that VET programmes should address labour market skill requirements.</p>	<p>11.1.1 The new School Reform Act (Law 107/2015) introduces a new vision of vocational education and training, providing a large number of hours (from 200 to 400 each year) that learners spend in transitional activities.</p> <p>11.1.2 Legislative Decree 104/2013 (Law no. 128 8/11/2013) decrees and supports the training experimental programme 2014–2016.</p> <p>Senior students spend part of their school time training in workplaces (chosen depending on the type of school) as part of their educational curricula. The educational part of activities are tutored by school staff.</p>
<p>11.2 Policy aims at matching labour market skill requirements and learners' skills, wishes and expectations.</p>	<p>–</p>
<p>11.3 Policy outlines the development of partnerships and networking structures.</p> <p><i>(Partnerships with a pool of local employers to ensure close co-operation with regard to learners' supervised practical training and finding employment after graduation.)</i></p>	<p>11.3.1 In 2015, the MIUR, INDIRE and Federmeccanica (the Italian engineering industry federation) established an agreement protocol.</p> <p>In September 2015, regional school offices agreed to the 'Traineeship' pilot project and selected 50 vocational schools all over the country to participate in the project. It focuses on the fields of mechanics, mechatronics, energy, electronic devices, electrical, information technology, telecommunications and transportation and logistics.</p> <p>During the pilot year, pupils were to spend 400 hours in factories with the following main goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improve project activities such as internships, curricular and extra-curricular traineeship, transitional improvement, etc.;</li> </ul>



Agency recommendation	Findings
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improve VET school pupils' work safety expertise;</li> <li>• disseminate good (training) practices.</li> </ul> <p>Additionally, in December 2015, the MIUR and Grimaldi Lines established an agreement protocol.</p> <p>The 'Grimaldi Educa' project aims to provide beneficial competence in this line of work. This project also contributes to encouraging excellent pupils by rewarding them and promoting educational trips.</p>
11.4 Policy outlines how transition from education to employment is supported by adequate provision.	–
11.5 Policy supports the availability of meaningful VET options for learners to choose from.	–
11.6 Policy supports the availability of supervised practical training.	–
11.7 Policy outlines how sustainable employment opportunities are supported through the availability of appropriate, on-going support.	–
11.8 Policy outlines how VET programmes are reviewed periodically. <i>(Both internally and/or externally in order to adapt to current and future skill needs.)</i>	–



*Measure 11 evaluative comments*

There are some regulatory developments underway regarding these points, especially about widening the possibility for all learners to do work placements as part of their curriculum.

**Measure 12: To improve educational and career guidance across all phases of inclusive education**

Agency recommendation	Findings
<p>12.1 Policy outlines the mechanisms for ensuring effective transition across educational sectors and phases.</p> <p><i>(There are well-organised transition processes among services to ensure continuity in the support required when learners move from one form of provision to another.)</i></p>	<p>12.1.1 Schools are autonomous in managing transition across schools. However, they are required to share information about disadvantaged pupils and pupils with disabilities before they leave; usually there is a teacher in charge of this in each school.</p> <p>The information is about the pupil’s health condition, learning style and appropriate teaching methodology, barriers, facilitators and general requirements for the pupil’s well-being.</p> <p>Information is shared under strict conditions, as required by Italy’s national regulations on privacy.</p>
<p>12.2 Policy outlines how career counsellors/officers support learners and employers regarding employment possibilities.</p> <p><i>(Support is provided with job applications, inform and support employers and facilitate contact between both parties.)</i></p>	<p>12.2.1 The new School Reform Act (Law 107/2015) ensures that learners with disabilities will be engaged in transitional programmes.</p> <p>Law 134/2015 ‘Provisions on diagnosis, treatment and professional habilitation of persons with autism spectrum disorders and on family assistance’ provides for updating autism guidelines and creating/identifying co-ordination centres for autism networks (employing trained staff).</p>



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*Measure 12 evaluative comments*

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