

COUNTRY POLICY DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

Country Repository – Malta



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INTRODUCTION

The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (the Agency) developed the [Country Policy Development Support \(CPDS\) Framework](#) to be completed with individual country information about policies and their implementation into practice across the whole inclusive education system.

The framework is based on the [Key Principles 2021](#) (European Agency, 2021a). These focus on policy development and implementation in inclusive education systems, at different levels and in different contexts.

Completing the framework is the first step in the CPDS activity. CPDS is at the heart of the Agency's [Multi-Annual Work Programme \(MAWP\) 2021–2027](#) and will inform, and be informed by, all Agency activities. CPDS is in line with the Agency's intention to act as an active agent for change. This work has emerged from [Country Policy Review and Analysis \(CPRA\)](#) and Representative Board member (RB) requests to extend the outputs and build on existing methodologies.

The overall goal for CPDS is *to support countries from where they are* in their policy development and implementation work. CPDS is an individualised activity for all Agency member countries. It will provide each country with a record of its recent participation in Agency activities and projects and evidence of policy development and implementation across all the Agency's Key Principles **at a given point in time**.

This completed framework has become the CPDS Country Repository for Malta. It will be the basis for later steps in the CPDS work.

The country repository

The repository has **15 sections**, with 14 sections based on the Agency's **Key Principles**, and 1 section addressing policy related to **unforeseen global events**.

Each section begins with an overall statement, drawn from the Agency's **Key Principles**, followed by a number of sub-sections. Each sub-section has a Policy statement which focuses on an aspect of the section's overall statement. The Policy statements aim to guide policy-makers and other stakeholders to identify evidence of relevant information on legislation/policies and their implementation under each topic.

Below each Policy statement is a table with **two columns**:

- **Column 1** provides **indications of policy** in relation to the Policy statement.

This column includes direct quotes from official policy documents. These documents may include:

- **Existing legislation** on inclusive education and the rights of learners and their families (i.e. public laws, bills, resolutions, hearings, etc.)
- **National policies and policy statements** containing principles and a broad course of action adopted by the national government in pursuit of inclusion



- **Policy strategies:** high-level plans designed to achieve a particular long-term aim for inclusive education. These should address major issues, principles and beliefs. Policy strategies may arise from government aims across a number of policy areas
 - **Official public documents** or reports
 - **Policy tools** or levers to accomplish relevant legislation
 - **Policy recommendations.**
- **Column 2** provides **indications of implementation** of the policy into practice.

Some broad types of evidence of implementation may include:

- **Regulations, policy directives:** statements of and instructions for implementing important, high-level internal direction and positions that guide the schools' decisions and actions
- **Implementation strategies:** clear guidance on strategies and processes to follow
- **Existing standards** that support practice that aims at high expectations for all learners, as well as effective and equitable education systems
- **Tools and guidance** empowering stakeholders to be innovative and inclusive on a daily basis
- **Quality assurance mechanisms**, supporting high-quality inclusive education policies and practices
- **Monitoring mechanisms** (e.g. existing data) to ensure effectiveness, quality, equity and cost-effectiveness
- **Requirements outlined to schools** that describe the commitments required from school stakeholders to ensure that inclusive education is embedded within schools' policies and strategic action plans
- **Guidelines for schools/education professionals**, in the form of statements/instructions/recommendations on how to ensure high-quality inclusive education services.

The main source of information is the [Country System Mapping \(CSM\) Country Report](#) and/or other **Agency activities** the country has participated in since 2015. Additional sources may be used for each country, such as publicly-available policy documents and reports from international organisations in English (i.e. from OECD, GEM reports, etc.). The [references](#) section at the end of the repository lists the main sources used.

The [operational definitions](#) section provides clarifications of terms used in the repository.

The repository is a **dynamic document**. The Agency team will continue to use it to record the country's on-going policy development and implementation.



CPDS COUNTRY REPOSITORY – MALTA

Section 1: Legislation and policy

There must be a clear concept of equitable high-quality inclusive education, agreed with [stakeholders](#). This should inform a single legislative and policy framework for all learners, aligned with key international and European-level conventions and communications, as the basis for rights-based practice.

Policy statement 1.1: There is a clear concept of equitable high-quality inclusive education within the single legislative and policy framework implemented for all learners, in all phases of education and into adult life

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>A Policy on Inclusive Education in Schools: Route to Quality Inclusion embraces the concept, values, and principles of Inclusive Education into the realm of responding positively to all learners’ diversity (...) It also offers a comprehensive and holistic definition of Inclusive Education.</p> <p>The Policy was issued in 2019, but was amended in 2022 to include other policies, the implementation of which fell under the remit of the National School Support Services (NSSS).</p>	<p>Implementation for policy started in school year 2021–2022 and policy targets (30 targets in all) will be completed by 2030.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 8</i></p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
–	<p>Published in 2019, revised in 2022, A National Inclusive Education Framework is a practical guide for schools, designed over ten central themes.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 11</i></p> <p>The Framework was planned and compiled in the Inclusion policy and is a practical document for implementing the policy in schools. The ten themes selected in the framework support schools to create true inclusive learning-friendly environments. The Inclusion framework aims at supporting school leaders to monitor the quality and standards in inclusive practice and identify strengths, school development priorities, staff training, improvements in teaching/learning strategies, etc., for all identified themes and ways to enhance the inclusion process in schools. These policy documents set the direction for a stepped approach to strengthen the current provision so that it meets the needs of all children, young people and their families in feeling included and supported.</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The Inclusion policy gives a vast definition of Inclusive Education moving away from support only for learners with disability. The policy states that inclusive education should be <i>‘available and accessible to all learners of all ages, including those facing challenges, such as those with special needs or who have a disability, those originating from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, migrant backgrounds or geographically depressed areas or war-torn zones, regardless of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation’</i>.</p> <p>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 33</p> <p>The Inclusion policy defines inclusive education holistically in accordance with the conclusions of the Council of the European Union (2017, p. 3) and considers issues around intersectionality. The definition of intersectionality is provided on page 11 of the policy. All support services revolve around the student and their needs, taking into consideration intersectionality for equitable access to education.</p>	<p>There are various initiatives to support students in schools. For example, if they are from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, Scheme 9 and BM40 are funds to support their learning. They are provided with uniforms, stationery, or even extra-curricular activities so that they are still provided with opportunities for learning.</p> <p>All teaching, learning and support services are provided to all students irrespective of their ability, socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicity, etc.</p>
<p>In 2022, the Inclusion policy was amended to include other policies (Annexes of Policy), the implementation of which fell under the remit of the National School Support Services (NSSS).</p>	–



Policy statement 1.2: There is a single legislative and policy framework, aligned with key international and European-level conventions and communications, as the basis for rights-based practice

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The two policy documents, A Policy on Inclusive Education in Schools: Route to Quality Inclusion and A National Inclusive Education Framework, adopt a whole-school approach philosophy, based on which Maltese schools are to develop environments that are conducive to learning for all, in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 – ‘Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’.</p> <p>The two documents are complementary, and were developed within the context of the Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta 2014-2024, the National Curriculum Framework for All, and the Respect for All Framework. They also draw on international commitments – related to the provision of education for all – of which Malta is a signatory, namely the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006).</p> <p>Source: Eurydice, 2023</p> <p>The Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030) establishes as its first strategic priority improving quality, equity, inclusion and success for all in education and training.</p>	<p>The inclusive education policies adopt a whole school approach to systematically planning how schools are to develop educational environments conducive to good learning outcomes for all students. Activities thus pertain to the promotion of inclusive, strategic and collaborative school leadership, with a view to changing attitudes of educators. Trust-based collaboration with parents and community engagement constitutes another key set of activities (...) The community and employers are engaged to increase the relevance of curricula and work opportunities (...) Activities also aim to promote the well-being of all teachers, school staff and learners. Educators also access continuous professional development to cater for the needs of all learners. Inclusive practices are already present in schools. Schools will be able to reflect on and evaluate the 10 themes in the framework, while the best practice indicators incorporated in the framework will steer towards improvement. This should guarantee an approach that complements and builds upon existing approaches.</p> <p>Source: Compendium of inspiring practices on inclusive and citizenship education (See Theme 3, p. 319)</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>In A Policy on Inclusive Education in Schools: Route to Quality Inclusion, a diversity wheel was created with six sections that describe student diversity: Cognitive & Learning Diversity, Multiculturalism & Language Diversity, Religious Belief Diversity, Socio-Economic Diversity, Gender & Sexual Diversity & Physical & Psychological Diversity.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 46</i></p>	<p>In the local education system colleges and respective schools are transforming into inclusive settings with a required shift from a ‘one size fits all’ educational model towards a socially just education, i.e. an inclusive and equitable learning system for all learners. The intention is to empower all learners by an inclusive education system with the aim to increase the system’s ability to respond to all learners’ diverse needs, as evident in the Diversity Wheel.</p> <p>The inclusion of newly-arrived learners is actively promoted at the Migrant Learners’ Unit (MLU). The well-being of those involved is also valued through the provision of a holistic educational journey which allows for the acquisition of linguistic and sociocultural competences. The unit recognises the need to succeed and stakeholders are involved throughout the educational experience to sustain such attainable goals. See examples of the MLU’s project and services.</p>



Policy statement 1.3: The implementation of the legislation and policy framework ensures support for [learners who are vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education](#), throughout their school careers

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>In A Policy on Inclusive Education in Schools: Route to Quality Inclusion a diversity wheel was created with six sections that describe student diversity: Cognitive & Learning Diversity, Multiculturalism & Language Diversity, Religious Belief Diversity, Socio-Economic Diversity, Gender & Sexual Diversity & Physical & Psychological Diversity</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 9</i></p>	<p>Over the years, there has been substantial investment in special schools, turning them into resource centres that support mainstream schools and provide all the required facilities and services, as per the reform in 2010. As a result, learners with disabilities in other special schools or in mainstream schools can make use of the facilities and services provided at these schools.</p> <p><i>Source: European Agency Country information – Malta: Systems of support and specialist provision (updated 2020) and CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 20</i></p> <p>Resource centres offer part-time placement and services for students so that learning support educators (LSEs) accompany the students. LSEs are upskilled on appropriate strategies to work with the student. They will also be able to implement these strategies on the days they are in the mainstream school. Additionally, the resource centres organise several activities together with other schools, e.g. Helen Keller organised Cycle for Charity and other mainstream schools joined the activity.</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The National School Support Services (NSSS) are responsible for all the services provided to learners with disabilities in both mainstream and resource centres (...) All psycho-social services are the responsibility of the NSSS. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • guidance and counselling; • school social workers; • the School Psychological Service; • youth workers; • the Education Medical Service; • the Safe Schools Programme. <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), pp. 19–20 and Teacher Professional Learning for Inclusion (TPL4I) (European Agency, 2020a), p. 14</i></p>	<p>–</p>
<p>Learners with disabilities are generally included within the mainstream education system rather than resource centres. However, five resource centres (one at post-secondary level, non-compulsory education) cater for the more demanding needs of students with severe disabilities. These centres cater for primary school learners, middle and secondary school learners, secondary/post-secondary learners, and post-secondary learners, who may receive better educational provision in a centre than in a mainstream school.</p>	<p>–</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>It is estimated that only 0.2% of the total learner population attends resource centres. The resource centres are networked so that they can complement each other's services and facilities and work more closely with mainstream schools. The centres aim to tailor education to the needs of the individual learner. The skills covered are cognitive, gross motor, social, language (both receptive and expressive), self-help, independent living skills and others. The centres promote and give utmost importance to functional skills related to good health, personal hygiene and training for adult life. A central unit provides educational and professional support to the resource centres.</p>	<p>Individual Education Programmes (IEPs) are designed by educators and discussed with all stakeholders including families and learners (when possible) during a meeting organised at the start of the school year. The targets are implemented during the year and a review meeting with all stakeholders is organised at the end of the year to discuss progress and whether these targets have been achieved or not.</p> <p>Through the platform My School teachers can create their own IEPs. Guidelines for reviewing the IEP are also available.</p> <p>Resource centres also take part in Prince's Trust Achieve programme where authentic assessment is used to monitor learners' progress.</p> <p>Students attending on part-time basis attend both the resource centre and mainstream school. In such cases the IEP is devised collaboratively.</p>
<p>Learning support centres support learners who are experiencing marked social and emotional behavioural difficulties.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 19</i></p>	–



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>There is a holistic and inclusive approach to tackle early leaving from education and training in Malta: Early Leaving from Education and Training Policy – The Way Forward 2020–2030</p> <p><i>Source: Legislative Definitions (European Agency, 2023b), p. 10</i></p>	<p>Early Leaving from Education and Training (ELET) 2023-2030 strategy entails a holistic and inclusive approach to tackle ELET up to 2030.</p> <p>Tackling ELET risk factors in the initial stages of children’s educational journey supports a more inclusive and holistic educational system, which is why Malta’s strategy adopts prevention and intervention strategic pillars as the first two actions to tackle ELET. Here, Malta recognises the pivotal importance of early childhood education and care. There are various initiatives being carried out by the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education (DQSE) to offer quality provision of early childhood education and care.</p> <p>Adopting a whole-school approach to parental engagement is the flagship of Malta’s ELET strategy, followed by monitoring, reviewing, following up, and intervening in the progress of the strategic actions, together with adopting a whole-school approach to addressing ELET risk factors such as achievement, behaviour and well-being, disability and learning difficulties, engagement, and family issues. Gender and health are considered as underlying risk factors within Malta’s ELET strategy given that they are closely intertwined with other risk factors.</p> <p>The third pillar within Malta’s ELET strategy entails a series of compensation measures that target post-compulsory education, including adult learning provision, thus aiming for an increase in student enrolment and retention within this sector.</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
	<p>Consequently, Malta is currently in the process of designing a comprehensive parent-teacher-student-community programme aimed at fostering educational equity within its educational system. The primary objective of this initiative is to enhance student agency by empowering them with the necessary tools and resources to take charge of their educational journey. Central to this effort is the focus on bolstering the capabilities of significant adults, including parents, teachers and community members, to actively support and guide students in their academic and personal development. By cultivating a collaborative and supportive environment that values the contribution of all stakeholders, Malta endeavours to create a more inclusive and equitable educational landscape that promotes the holistic growth and success of every student.</p>



Policy statement 1.4: The general legislation and policy framework ensures support for some learners/groups of learners and ensures rights-based practice, in line with key international and European-level conventions and communications

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>A Policy on Inclusive Education in Schools: Route to Quality Inclusion and A National Inclusive Education Framework, developed within the context of the Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta 2014-2024, the National Curriculum Framework for All, and the Respect for All Framework, draw on international commitments – related to the provision of education for all – of which Malta is a signatory, namely the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006).</p> <p>Source: Eurydice, 2023</p>	–



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The Education Act reinforces the State's commitment towards providing a quality holistic education for all citizens (...) Persons with disability and/or persons who are for various reasons such as health reasons cannot work are also entitled to education and vocational training.</p> <p>Source: Eurydice</p>	<p>The Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability (DRLLE) within the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation provides personalised and supportive learning systems for all adults in the Maltese Islands.</p> <p>The Directorate is led by a vision that learning should be a lifelong journey for everyone. Individuals and communities need to acquire skills that are relevant to their lives, their needs, and their work.</p> <p>The Directorate offers policy guidance on lifelong learning and organises adult learning courses through personalised and innovative approaches to education. It aims to ensure that there are learning benefits for numerous different sectors: individuals, communities, employers, and society.</p> <p>See: Lifelong Learning Courses and Lifelong Learning website</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The targets of the Inclusion Policy ‘A Policy on Inclusive Education in Schools: Route to Quality Inclusion’ are continuously being evaluated and further enhanced</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 43</i></p>	–



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>A shared national understanding of school quality provides a basis for aligning internal and external review processes as outlined in the NCF (2012:32) ‘Quality Assurance is to be realised through a system of ongoing self-evaluation, monitoring and review within schools complemented by an external review system that together foster school improvement.’</p> <p>This attempts to create a balance between autonomy and accountability and between a centralised and decentralised system of quality assurance mechanisms.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 47</i></p>	<p>QAD Standards, with clear success criteria, have been developed with stakeholders. These criteria tackle Educational Leadership and Management, Learning and Teaching, and School Ethos</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 47</i></p> <p>The QAD has invested in developing nationally-agreed criteria for school quality and in aligning internal and external review processes. These processes form the basis of its functions and mirror the National Curriculum Framework for All (2012).</p> <p><i>Source: TPL4I (European Agency, 2020a), p. 20</i></p> <p>A Quality Assurance Framework for Education in Malta (0-16 years), pp. 11–12</p> <p>External Reviews are carried out by a team of Education Officers within the Education Review Section (ERS), one of whom is the review leader. The Whole School External Review lasts 3–5 days, depending on the size of the school.</p> <p>Following a Whole School External Review, the ERS issues a report to the Head of School and the Head of College Network (or equivalent in the case of Church and Independent Schools), highlighting the school’s strengths and areas for improvement. The Head of School shares the report, or a comprehensive version of it, with educators and parents.</p> <p>Following the external review, the Head of School explains to the ERS representatives how the school started/intends to address the recommendations listed in the report in a post review meeting.</p>



Policy statement 4.2: Structures and processes are in place to monitor and evaluate whether learners at risk of marginalisation receive high-quality provision and equitable opportunities

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>There is a Commissioner for Education and a Commissioner for Children in addition to the Commissioner for disability (CRPD)</p>	<p>The Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting at the start of the scholastic year and IEP Review Meetings at the end of the scholastic year are monitoring mechanisms. The aim of these meetings is that multi-disciplinary teams supporting the learners along with the parents plan individual education goals which are then reviewed at the end of the scholastic year.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 48</i></p> <p>Students are usually included in the process for at least part of the IEP. The plans are flexible in that if they are reached, or amendments are required an addendum is compiled to suit the needs of the student.</p>



Policy statement 4.3: Processes are in place to ensure that the quality assurance and accountability framework supports and reviews the quality of provision for all learners

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The Educational Assessment Unit (EAU), within the Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes (DLAP) monitors and supports teaching and learning through formative and summative assessment procedures. Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategies are promoted by AfL Education Officers in primary and post-primary schools, focusing on the process of learning. Learners develop practices whereby the standard of performance they are expected to reach is recognised. Learners are supported to self-monitor their own learning and self-reflect on their own work.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 45 + Eurydice</i></p>	<p>AfL strategies in schools are promoted to improve metacognition skills, particularly the capacity to learn how to learn. Additionally, the EAU monitors and moderates Assessment of Learning (AoL), examined through end-of-year examinations which take place during the last three years of primary school and throughout secondary education; national benchmark examinations at the end of primary school; and school-based assessment. Students' summative assessment results are monitored by the EAU, in collaboration with the Heads of Department within schools.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 45 + Eurydice</i></p>
–	<p>In addition to IEPs carried out for individual learners, end-of-year Evaluation Reports for services within National School Support Services are written at the end of the scholastic year or on an annual basis</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 48</i></p> <p>Every year as part of the implementation of the Inclusion policy a sample of IEPs are evaluated to see where improvements can be carried out.</p>



Policy statement 4.4: Accountability measures are built into the framework to ensure that there is on-going review, with evidence of the allocation of inputs and resources to ensure equitable opportunities for vulnerable learners across the education system

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The Council of the Teaching Profession's role includes initial teacher training, continuous professional development of teachers and establishment of standards for teaching profession.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 45</i></p>	<p>Regular visits in schools are conducted to support and monitor National School Support Services by Education Officers.</p> <p>Also, professionals, practitioners and educators working within different services are provided with Induction Training and Job Shadowing and mentoring by an Education Officer at the induction phase of their new role.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 48</i></p>
<p>There are various objectives behind the external reviews carried out by the Education Review Section (ERS) and Regulatory and Compliance Section (RCS). One of the most important characteristics brought about by the role of external evaluator is the consistent presence in schools through the different external review models.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 47</i></p>	<p>A Quality Assurance Framework for Education in Malta (0–16 years): Guideline to ensure high-quality school development and planning.</p>



Policy statement 4.5: There are early indicators in place, at all levels, to identify and address when aspects of policy or provision of support for learners and families vulnerable to exclusion are unlikely to be fulfilled

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>This is evaluated by the Quality Assurance Department during audits – A Quality Assurance Framework for Education in Malta (0–16 years)</p> <p>Best practice indicators are available in Inclusion Policy (p. 18)</p>	<p>School attendance policy and procedures for schools are also available and social workers monitor attendance of students and start working with the students and their families to mitigate this.</p> <p>See: Inclusion Policy, Annex 1, p. 28</p>



Section 5: Learning opportunities for all teachers and all educational professionals

There is a continuum of teacher professional learning – initial teacher education, induction and continuing professional development for teachers and [teacher educators](#) – that develops areas of competence in all teachers regarding assessment and needs identification, curriculum planning (universal design), inclusive pedagogy, engagement with and in research, and use of evidence.

Policy statement 5.1: Teacher education – from initial teacher education, through induction and continuing professional development – gives teachers the skills and competences required to teach in inclusive classrooms and schools, such as assessment and needs identification, curriculum planning (universal design) and inclusive pedagogy

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Initial teacher education is offered mainly by the University of Malta (UoM) and the Institute for Education (IFE). UoM offers the Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTL), which is a two-year postgraduate degree.</p> <p>Those wishing to teach at pre-primary level follow a two-year Advanced Diploma in Children’s Care, Learning and Development offered by Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), pegged at Level 5 of the Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF), or equivalent.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 35</i></p>	<p>Theme 7 of ‘A National Inclusion Education Framework’ focuses on staff well-being. The inclusive best practice indicators state that ‘Mentoring for educators needs to be enhanced in the school, especially newly appointed staff. Hence, all new staff is helped to settle into the school’ (p. 36).</p> <p><i>Source: TPL4I (European Agency, 2020a), p. 8</i></p> <p>Responding to Student Diversity: Tutor’s Manual has been one of the main reference materials for preparing student teachers to teach in diverse primary school classrooms. The students receive both theoretical knowledge and practical training on addressing diversity and inclusion in the classroom. At first, the module was offered as an optional course at the University of Malta. It was later made compulsory for second and third year bachelor’s student teachers enrolled at the Department of Early and Primary Education. In October 2016, the course was integrated into the new master’s programme on teaching and learning.</p> <p><i>Source: Compendium of inspiring practices on inclusive and citizenship education (p. 321)</i></p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p><i>Training of learning support educators</i></p> <p>Learning support educators (LSEs) in state schools follow a compulsory evening training course in inclusive education when they qualify. This introductory course gives participants basic skills, knowledge and understanding of working with and supporting learners with disabilities in mainstream education. The course has a practical component in which LSEs are monitored and supported in their place of work. This course is now also being offered to prospective LSEs who wish to complete the course prior to employment.</p> <p>Following the compulsory training course, LSEs have the option of furthering their studies up to degree level. Through these training courses, participants gain both practical and theoretical knowledge on supporting learners with disabilities.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 36 + TPL4I (European Agency, 2020a), p. 15</i></p>	<p>Some continuous professional development (CPD) courses are free or available for a minimal fee which can be reimbursed through the Get Qualified Scheme or scholarships scheme.</p> <p><i>Source: TPL4I (European Agency, 2020a), p. 23</i></p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Theme 8 of A National Inclusion Education Framework focuses on CPD: 'Continuous professional development is important and necessary for an inclusive and equitable school, since educators must respond to new challenges given a greater diversity of learner needs' (p. 38).</p> <p>The National Curriculum Framework for All (2012) promotes 'initial teacher education and further opportunities for training and support in the use of pedagogies that are inclusive in nature and cater for diversity' (p. 43).</p> <p><i>Source: TPL4I (European Agency, 2020a), pp. 7–8</i></p>	<p>The Institute for Education is dedicated to providing high quality professional learning opportunities for all educators seeking to improve their knowledge, competences and practice related to their role in education.</p> <p>Institute for Education Professional Development page</p> <p>Schools are obliged to offer their educators professional training in relation to their School Development Plan in the form of Community of Professional Educators (CoPE) sessions. The IfE has compiled a list of Professional Learning Areas that schools can choose from. SLTs can communicate their requested CoPE session/s by completing the online</p> <p>Institute for Education list of CoPE sessions for schools</p>



Policy statement 5.2: A continuum of teacher professional learning is available to all teachers, at all stages of their careers, enabling them to build capacity throughout their careers

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The Institute for Education offers continuous professional development and training to all educators. It also serves as a main driver in these fields, targeting all educators at the different levels of leadership. The Institute offers short courses, Bachelor's and Master's Degrees of Education in a number of streams.</p> <p><i>Source: TPL4I (European Agency, 2020a), p. 6</i></p> <p>The Institute of Education offers part-time after school hours and the use of blended learning modality. This increases accessibility for those who work full-time or are supply teachers but want to improve their qualifications and have the chance to increase their salary scales. There are also Erasmus+ teacher training opportunities</p> <p><i>Source: TPL4I (European Agency, 2020a), p. 13</i></p>	<p>Management-driven CoPE sessions include School Development Planning (SDP) and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) sessions. The management have at its disposition a maximum of 40 hours during normal school hours of which 12 hours are to be dedicated to whole school development planning sessions.</p> <p>Self-sought CPD may be of three broad types:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Professional learning opportunities in a school/college setting;2. Professional learning opportunities based on externally designed programmes;3. Professional learning opportunities based on self-development. <p>This form of CPD allows for flexibility and relevance as it is the teacher who chooses the area of professional development.</p> <p>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 36; Eurydice</p> <p>Since 2018, the CoPE sessions have been fully implemented. National School Support Services (NSSS) also issues a letter circular to schools at the start of every school year on CoPE sessions (focuses on services)</p> <p>CPD is monitored by educators as it also plays a role in the accelerated progression of teachers.</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Theme 7 of A National Inclusion Education Framework focuses on staff well-being. 'Staff is encouraged to meet personal and professional goals and are given access to appropriate continuing professional development' (p. 36).</p> <p><i>Source: TPL4I (European Agency, 2020a), p. 8</i></p> <p>The new National Education Strategy 2024 – 2030 has a pillar focusing on well-being (educators and students)</p>	–
<p>Continuous professional development for teaching staff features across all levels of education. Those teaching at pre-primary, primary and secondary levels of education are required to attend 40 hours of Community of Professional Educators (CoPE) time during school hours as agreed in the collective agreement signed between the Government of Malta and the Malta Union of Teachers (MUT) in 2017.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 35 + Eurydice</i></p>	–



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>All teaching grades rendering a service in state schools are required to actively participate in Management-driven Community of Professional Educators (CoPE) sessions and are also encouraged to take part in self-sought continuous professional development (CPD) sessions provided that these may be undertaken during/or outside normal on-site hours.</p> <p>The Institute for Education offers several CPD courses (face-to-face, blended and online) for teachers on their prospectus and educators can apply for those which suit their interests.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), pp. 35–36 + Eurydice</i></p>	<p>Inclusive best practice indicators are described in the ‘National Inclusive Education Framework, Theme 8 – Continuous Professional Development’, pp. 38–39</p> <p><i>Source: TPL4I (European Agency, 2020a), p. 4</i></p> <p>The school plans 25 hours (based on the finding of the internal review) and centrally driven training accounts for 15 hours.</p> <p><i>Source: TPL4I (European Agency, 2020a), p. 6</i></p> <p>The Framework suggests these indicators which can be used as a self-evaluation in schools.</p> <p>As part of the implementation of the Inclusion Policy every year the Heads of Department (HoD Inclusion – former Inclusion Co-ordinators) provide examples of best practices observed in the schools they support (activity organised every May).</p>
<p>All educators have to attend the Community of Professional Educators (CoPE) sessions organised at school or by the Department. Moreover, Theme 8 of A National Inclusion Education Framework states that ‘Inclusive education is the responsibility of all education professionals and therefore training should be a priority’ (p. 38).</p> <p><i>Source: TPL4I (European Agency, 2020a), p. 7</i></p>	<p>The CoPE sessions are also monitored by the Head of College Network</p>



Policy statement 5.3: Teacher professional learning is provided by teacher educators and trainers with the knowledge and experience in inclusive education required to develop essential competences in others

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p><i>In-service training</i></p> <p>On-going continuous professional development training is offered by the Institute for Education in various areas of inclusive education. It is offered to all educators and support staff working in resource centres and in mainstream schools. It includes courses and workshops in communication, information and communication technology, leadership, curriculum development and planning, assessment and early intervention.</p> <p>Source: <i>CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 37 + European Agency Country information – Malta: Teacher education for inclusive education (updated 2020).</i></p>	<p>Senior Leadership Teams (SLTs) and educators engage in professional development and training in different areas on their preference, and according to their needs.</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The Institute for Education has a number of professional development training initiatives for educators.</p> <p>The National School Support Services (NSSS) offers several CoPE Sessions and Information Sessions on Services to schools.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 47</i></p>	<p>Other targets in A Policy on Inclusive Education in Schools: Route to Quality Inclusion also address the need for training for educators, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A mentoring programme for learning support educators is developed.• Support is given to newly appointed LSEs through the development of a toolkit.• Upskilling of educators through the support of Head of Department (Inclusion) and Psychosocial Team. <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), pp. 46–47</i></p>
<p>Specialist teachers and the psycho-social team fall under the remit of the National School Support Services (NSSS). In-house training and other training initiatives are organised by the NSSS.</p> <p><i>Source: TPL4I (European Agency, 2020a), p. 9</i></p>	<p>The CoPE Sessions focus on different training themes centred around the definition of inclusive education set in the policy, such as support for learners with individual education needs, learners with behaviour challenges, learners who come from different multicultural backgrounds and learners who are LGBTIQ. The information sessions focus on the different services given by educators, practitioners and professionals at National School Support Services.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 47</i></p> <p>Monthly meetings are held for support practitioners of National School Support Services (NSSS) which are used for upskilling through training and CPD.</p>



Policy statement 5.4: Systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the skills and competences of teacher educators and trainers and the content and quality of professional development training and courses

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
Malta Further and Higher Education authority (MFHEA) evaluates the skills and competences of any training institution locally for content and quality including that of IfE (Institute for Education)	–

Policy statement 5.5: There are opportunities for teachers to use evidence from research to inform their practice, and to engage in education research within university settings or through in-school action research projects

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>CPD is a priority for the Ministry of Education and Employment (MEDE). It is encouraged and educators who wish to further their studies are eligible for sabbatical.</p> <p>A Master of Education Degree in Inclusion and Educational Needs is also available for those wishing to specialise further in this area (Eurydice, National Education Systems, Malta, Initial Education for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education).</p> <p><i>Source: TPL4I (European Agency, 2020a), pp. 10–11</i></p>	<p>Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Education pilot project</p> <p>The proposed project will consist of two parts: Part 1 – The development of an AI-powered adaptive learning system. This system aims to support students’ outcomes through personalised learning programmes based on student performance, ambitions and needs (...)</p> <p>Its focus will be on delivering predictive insights to assist in identifying potential early school-leavers. This shall help educators take preventative actions to drive better educational outcomes for all students and reduce the risk of early school leaving.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 29</i></p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The Faculty of Education, the Institute of Education and the Ministry for Education and Employment are currently conducting teacher training for vocational and applied subjects. VET subjects form part of the Secondary Education Certificate run by the MATSEC Board.</p> <p><i>Source: Preventing School Failure (PSF) (European Agency, 2020b), p. 69</i></p>	<p>Towards Becoming a Dyslexia Friendly School – Guidelines for schools</p> <p>In May 2021 the Specific Learning Difficulties Service (SpLD Service) within the Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes (DLAP) launched a set of guidelines for primary schools interested in becoming a Dyslexia Friendly School. A Dyslexia Friendly School is an inclusive school which caters for the diverse needs of students within the classroom.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 29</i></p> <p>Dyslexia Friendly Schools Initiative</p>

Policy statement 5.6: [Educational professionals](#) and [everyone who works with teachers](#) and schools have on-going learning opportunities that align with the key goals for inclusive education

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The Institute for Education (IfE) is a Further and Higher Education Institution providing initial teacher training and professional development that inject 21st century skills and competences into the educators at all levels of leadership and infuse equity and social justice within all programmes.</p>	<p>The IfE offers various courses to all educators.</p>



Policy statement 5.7: Teachers and everyone who works with them have regular opportunities to collaborate and engage in reflective professional learning, as an important aspect of their diverse professional development

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>As part of the SDP [school development planning] process, schools will perform the internal review and elicit the actions to be implemented in the following year together with the professional development identified as required by educators to be able to implement those actions (Institute for Education, Circular of 11 September 2019).</p> <p><i>Source: TPL4I (European Agency, 2020a), p. 12</i></p> <p>The Inclusive Education and Special Education/Resource Centres sections within the National School Support Services (NSSS) collaborate with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• non-governmental organisations;• the Child Development Assessment Unit;• the National Commissioner for the Rights of Persons with a Disability;• various professionals within the healthcare services;• mainstream schools;• resource centres;• other educational establishments. <p><i>Source: TPL4I (European Agency, 2020a), p. 14</i></p>	<p>Heads of Department (Inclusion) – formerly known as Inclusion Co-ordinators (INCO) – support primary and secondary schools in implementing the inclusive education policy. The Heads of Department (Inclusion) support senior management teams, parents, teachers and LSEs. They help to co-ordinate service provision for learners with additional needs attending mainstream schools (European Agency, Country information for Malta, Systems of support and specialist provision).</p> <p><i>Source: TPL4I (European Agency, 2020a), p. 12</i></p>



Section 6: Curriculum framework

There is a [single curriculum framework](#) that is sufficiently flexible to provide relevant opportunities for all learners, and an [assessment framework](#) that recognises and validates attainment and [wider achievement](#).

Policy statement 6.1: The single curriculum framework is sufficiently flexible to provide relevant learning opportunities for all learners, including learners who are vulnerable to exclusion

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta 2014–2024 includes the following goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• to reduce the gaps in educational outcomes between boys and girls and among learners attending different schools; decrease the number of low achievers and raise the bar in literacy, numeracy, and science and technology competence; and increase learner achievement;• to support educational achievement of children at risk of poverty and from low socio-economic backgrounds; and reduce the relatively high incidence of early school-leavers <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 22</i></p> <p>The draft National Education Strategy 2024–2030 will replace the Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta 2014–2024</p>	<p>Lessons are delivered in Maltese and English as necessary to suit the needs of the students.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 29</i></p> <p>Depends on the cohort of learners, i.e. if they are Maltese students, lessons are carried out in Maltese. If there is a foreign student in class, then lessons are carried out in English (except for Maltese lessons). Maltese and English are taught in schools (Maltese for Foreigners for foreign students). Students are assessed in the level of subjects they are learning, and certified accordingly.</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>One of the benchmarks in <i>A Policy on Inclusive Education in Schools: Route to Quality Inclusion</i> is: 'All Educators employ effective teaching approaches that are more representative of and responsive to diversity and that foster a Universal Design for Learning Environment'.</p> <p>Source: <i>CSM report (European Agency, 2023a)</i>, p. 22</p>	<p>Average levels of basic skills – as measured by the PISA test – <i>are low and significantly below the EU average</i>. A large percentage of pupils fail to achieve minimum proficiency levels. While the proportion of top performers has decreased since 2015, the percentage of underachieving pupils has remained practically unchanged and is above the EU average across the entire socio-economic distribution. Around 51% of pupils from the bottom socio-economic quartile lack basic skills in reading (EU 36.4%). This is more than twice the rate in the top quartile — even though the rate for the top quartile is also comparatively high (24.3% vs 9.5% at EU level).</p> <p>Source: EC European Semester Malta 2022 + <i>CSM report (European Agency, 2023a)</i>, p. 19</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>As per the National Policy and Strategy for the Attainment of Core Competencies in Primary Education, early screening ensures that pupils requiring additional support in literacy and numeracy skills get this support as early as possible to improve their learning outcomes later on. To this effect, a checklist was drawn up to record competences in grades 1 to 3 in literacy, numeracy, and e-literacy.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 15</i></p>	<p>Public consultation on A National Literacy Strategy in Malta and Gozo 2021–2030</p> <p>In June 2021, the Ministry for Education, through the National Literacy Agency launched the National Literacy Strategy for All in Malta and Gozo 2021–2030 for public consultation. The strategy’s goal is to reduce the number of individuals who are socially excluded because of a lack of or a low level of literacy skills. It aims to consolidate and extend further the strategic goals and actions of the 2014 Strategy, build on the successful actions, recognise the challenges of an ever-evolving world, and address ways in which these can be overcome.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 29</i></p> <p>Several National Literacy Agency initiatives are being undertaken in schools, for families and after school hours. They have also initiated a Reading Recovery project which is very beneficial in schools with positive results.</p>
–	<p>The XL/Achieve Programme, developed by Prince’s Trust International (PTI), has been running in seven secondary schools in Malta since November 2015. Young people aged 13 to 16 who are at risk of underachievement or exclusion are offered a personal development programme as an opportunity to re-engage in education. According to data from June 2019, 44 centres have delivered and presented work in relation to the Achieve Programme.</p> <p><i>Source: PSF (European Agency, 2020b), p. 19</i></p>



Policy statement 6.2: The assessment framework recognises and validates attainment and achievement beyond academic success, such as certifying and marking achievement across a range of measures and over time, to highlight individual learner progress

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The National Curriculum Framework for All (Ministry of Education and Employment, 2012) is an important tool for inclusion and employability that aims to empower learners to achieve their full potential as lifelong learners.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 21</i></p> <p>The draft National Education Strategy 2024 – 2030 has a pillar focusing on well-being (educators and students).</p>	<p>One of the ten themes in the Inclusion Framework is ‘Learner and Staff Wellbeing’ which emphasises the need to support learners and staff in their holistic well-being in schools.</p> <p>There are various initiatives taking place in schools planned for the upcoming year.</p> <p>Autism friendly environment guidelines have also been compiled for schools to support students and educators with sensory issues.</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The Learning Outcomes Framework (LOF) built on the National Curriculum Framework covers a single curriculum framework for Malta. The aim of the LOF is to support the National Curriculum Framework (NCF).</p> <p>The NCF proposes universal education entitlement built around eight Learning Areas, inspired by the EU eight Key Competences Framework. It also proposes a Learning Outcomes Framework as the keystone for learning and assessment throughout the years of compulsory schooling.</p> <p>The aim of the LOF is to free schools and learners from centrally-imposed knowledge-centric syllabi, and to give them the freedom to develop programmes that fulfil the framework of knowledge, attitudes and skills-based outcomes that are considered national education entitlement of all learners in Malta. The LOF is thus intended to eventually lead to more curricular autonomy of colleges and schools, so as to better address the learning needs of their students.</p> <p>Both the NCF and the LOF will form the backbone of our education programmes and will serve as national benchmarks of excellence for all schools, providing parents, teachers and other stakeholders with an understanding of what children and young people should know and should be able to do during each of the three cycles – the early, primary and secondary years – and at the end of compulsory education.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 31</i></p>	<p>DLAP (Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes) has Education Officers responsible for certain at-risk groups, such as migrant learners or children with specific learning difficulties, to ensure that they can fulfil their potential through the provision of a differentiated curriculum, where appropriate.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 46</i></p> <p>The Learning and Assessment Programme (LAP) for Ethics document is aimed at policy-makers, educators and teachers in the classroom. The LAP comprises of ‘The Learning Outcomes Framework’ (LOF) and ‘Notes on Pedagogy and Assessment’. These documents have been issued for all subjects as guidelines for teachers. Teachers have also been provided with continuous training on LOFs.</p>



Policy statement 6.3: Systems are in place to ensure that all learners have access to relevant learning opportunities across all stages of the education system, including preparations for and access to further, higher and vocational education and employment opportunities

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The Framework for the Education Strategy for Malta 2014–2024 aims to address all cycles of education from early years to adult learning. It includes the following goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- to increase participation in lifelong learning and adult learning; and- to raise levels of learner attainment and retention in further, vocational and tertiary education and training. <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), pp. 21–22</i></p> <p>A new National Education Strategy 2024 – 2030 has been drafted and will soon be up for consultation.</p>	<p>The ‘National Inclusive Education Framework’ builds on the Inclusion Policy, where barriers to inclusion are considered and suggestions are made on how to overcome them. Also, ten themes with best practice indicators and local scenarios are presented that guide schools in the implementation of inclusive practices.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 33</i></p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The legislative framework for educational provision in Malta is the Education Act which in turn provides the legal basis for the National Curriculum Framework for All (NCF).</p> <p>The NCF specifies the supportive infrastructure that is needed by all learners to develop their full potential and for educators to implement the curriculum effectively.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 32</i></p> <p>The national holistic and inclusive approach to tackle Early Leaving from Education and Training (ELET) in Malta: Early leaving from Education and Training Strategy</p>	<p>The Early Leaving from Education and Training (ELET) – The Way Forward 2020–2030 policy document is based on the principles of prevention, intervention, and compensation. These include ensuring inclusive and quality education for all and promoting lifelong learning; reducing the gaps in educational outcomes between boys and girls and between students attending different schools, decreasing the number of low achievers, raising the bar in literacy, numeracy, and science and technology competence, and increasing student achievement; supporting the educational achievement of children at-risk-of-poverty and low socio-economic status; raising the levels of student retention and attainment in further, vocational, and tertiary education and training; and increasing participation in lifelong learning and adult learning.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 33</i></p>
<p>A National Inclusive Education Policy: Route to Quality Inclusion is being implemented through 30 targets in schools. It has four annexes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance Policy • Managing Behaviour and Addressing Bullying Behaviours in Schools Policy • Trans, Gender Variant and Intersex Students in School Policy • Whole School Approach to Healthy Living: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Policy <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 32</i></p>	<p>Every month, updates are provided to the Policy Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate</p> <p>Anti-Bullying Teachers are specially designated members of school staff who act as a key reference point within educational environments and help to address the issue of bullying.</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
	<p>The number of reported cases of bullying has risen in the years since the measure was introduced. In 2013, schools reported 212 cases of bullying to the Maltese Anti-Bullying Services. This figure rose to 259 in 2014, and then to 273 in 2015, and 423 in 2016. Whilst this rise could be attributed to an increase in incidences of bullying, it is possible that the introduction of the anti-bullying policy in 2014 has simply led to a rise in reported cases, which can be seen as an indicator of effectiveness.</p> <p>Source: Compendium of Inspiring Practices on Inclusive and Citizenship Education (Theme 3, p. 318)</p> <p>According to the Malta LGBTIQ Rights Movement (MGRM), in the last two years since the introduction of the policy on trans, gender-variant and intersex students in schools, a number of children and young people have transitioned with minimal difficulties and with support from MGRM's Rainbow Support Service. The policy has also been used to guide schools that are not strictly bound by state policy, including for example religious schools. The measure is deemed to be sustainable by the MGRM, given that there is a pre-existing legal and policy framework in place to support it going forward, and the education directorates within the Ministry of Education have a monitoring system in place for all policies.</p> <p>Source: Compendium of Inspiring Practices on Inclusive and Citizenship Education (Theme 1, p. 138)</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The four benchmarks in the Inclusion Policy and the 30 targets aim to implement equitable and quality inclusive education for all learners through accessibility of opportunities for participation in educational systems and structures, through fostering Universal Design for Learning approaches, through flexible education and training opportunities that support quality inclusive education for all educators and through a shared culture and ethos of diversity.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 37</i></p>	–
<p>The Work-Based Learning and Apprenticeship Act provides regulations, governance and administration of accredited training programmes for work placements, apprenticeships and internships.</p> <p>Since 2019, the five VET subjects taught in schools have increased to nine: retail, media literacy, hairdressing and beauty, textiles and fashion, agribusiness, engineering technology, health and social care, hospitality, and information technology.</p> <p><i>Source: PSF (European Agency, 2020b), p. 69</i></p>	<p>The Ministry for Education and Employment (MEDE) has launched several vocational subjects aiming to tackle early school leaving further and to provide a system for all learners by addressing their different learning aptitudes, intelligence and patterns.</p> <p>A public campaign launched in 2016 continues to provide information about the reform. In its first year of implementation, almost 60% of year 9 learners opted to study a vocational subject.</p> <p>Source: Cedefop, 2020</p> <p>The following websites support students in their career choices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore more website• Euroguidance Malta



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The National School Support Service (formerly known as the Student Services Department) within the Ministry for Education, Sports, Youth, Research and Innovation ensures that support services are in place in all state schools. Amongst its objectives, this department must ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the provision of counsellors, social workers, psychologists and other professional according to the needs of students and their families;• the resources required for inclusive and special educational programmes and for other schemes related to individual educational needs;• the supply and the co-ordination of vocational and career guidance services, including the implementation of programmes aimed at achieving improved school-workplace links and assist in the transition stages, including those from school to work. <p>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), pp. 32–33 + Eurydice</p>	<p>To introduce vocational subjects in secondary schools, some education initiatives are already in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 77 laboratories have been set up in 13 secondary schools to offer facilities for teaching vocational and applied subjects.• An interactive career guidance platform (Explore more and Euroguidance Malta) was launched in December 2018 to facilitate career choices for secondary school learners between the ages of 11 and 15. <p>Source: PSF (European Agency, 2020b), p. 61</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p><i>Psychology and Counselling Services</i></p> <p>Psychology and Counselling services offer personal support and counselling services to learners and aims to instil in students a positive attitude towards learning by providing them with a safe and secure psycho-educational environment. Psycho-educational assessments and interventions are carried out by College psychologists for pupils and learners with special needs recognised as having physical, mental, perceptual, emotional, or behavioural difficulties (...) Personnel involved in providing psychological counselling work in close collaboration with different entities to determine the right kind of support required for children at risk both in and out of school. Special arrangements during examinations for students with learning difficulties are determined by the school psychologists.</p> <p>The ‘Safe Schools Programme’ is part of the psycho-social team that specialises in three main areas of abuse: Child Safety Service; Anti-Substance Abuse Service and the Anti-Bullying Service.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 34 + Eurydice</i></p>	<p>The School Psychological Service (SPS) works towards promoting a healthy psycho-educational environment that facilitates the learning and overall development of school-aged children.</p> <p>The National School Support Services (NSSS) (psychologists, counsellors and psychotherapists) oversees this service (recruitment, training and monitoring of the service being provided).</p>



Section 7: Collaboration and communication

Structures and processes are in place to enable [collaboration](#) and effective communication at all levels – between ministries, regional- and local-level decision-makers and between services, sectors (public and private) and disciplines, including non-governmental organisations and schools.

Policy statement 7.1: Processes for co-operation and collaboration (negotiation and shared activities) are structured and implemented between all relevant stakeholders working within and across all levels and sectors

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>There has been an educational assessment procedure involving a multi-disciplinary team. The multi-disciplinary team includes members from within and external to the child's/learner's (pre-)school. A legal document describes the support the child/learner is eligible to receive and is used as the basis for planning.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), pp. 21–22</i></p>	<p>Inclusion Policy Implementation involves a number of professionals, educators, practitioners, SLT members, learners and parents in collaborating through the implementation of various targets.</p> <p>However, the Audit's findings suggest that the relatively fragmented system of provision in Malta creates a culture of individual, rather than collaborative, practice. Fieldwork data suggests that effective co-operation among professionals in schools and services often depends upon individual working bonds and relationships.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), pp. 52–53</i></p> <p>Since the audit the number of HoD (Inclusion) have increased in schools (30). As they are responsible for applying for services that the student might benefit from, working with different stakeholders and bringing them together, upskilling of educators and implementation of the inclusion policy among others, this fragmentation has improved.</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
	<p>The National School Support Services (NSSS) has also issued SOPs and guidelines to harmonise practices among schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statementing process • LSC procedures (Learning Support Centres)
<p>One of the targets in the Inclusion Policy is: <i>‘Creating or reviewing memorandum of understanding with other services and agencies outside the National School Support Services (NSSS) and involvement in inter-ministerial committees’</i></p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 52</i></p>	<p>A report of how this target has been compiled until now. Personnel from the National School Support Services (NSSS) are involved in several inter-ministerial meetings and MOUs have also been established with other entities.</p>

Policy statement 7.2: Structures and processes are in place to monitor and evaluate the transparency and effectiveness of collaboration between decision-makers working within and across all levels and sectors to ensure successful and sustained communication outcomes

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The Policy Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate within the Education Strategy and Quality Assurance Department is tasked to monitor and evaluate the Policies.</p> <p>The Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education and the School Internal Review within the Education Strategy and Quality Assurance Department develop and implement internal and external quality assurance mechanisms.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 43</i></p>	<p>–</p>



Policy statement 7.3: Existing structures and processes enable sustainable partnerships that bring about long-term, effective collaboration and communication at all levels and across all sectors

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>One of the targets in the Inclusion Policy is on the need for ‘<i>Schools and services shall provide potential networking opportunities</i>’.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a) p. 53</i></p>	<p>Speakers / trainers from the University of Malta and the Institute for Education provide training for different support services.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a) p. 53</i></p> <p>This is a target of the Inclusion Policy and an annual report. To implement this target, throughout the school year 2022–2023, 11 networking opportunities and activities were organised. The report provides a table of these activities and a series of photos taken during these activities.</p>
<p>In Malta, state schools are organised in colleges made up of a number of primary schools and a middle and senior school at secondary level. This college system facilitates networking between schools. As a system, it aims to support partnerships, sharing of resources and joint problem-sharing (European Agency, Country information for Malta, Systems of support and specialist provision).</p> <p>There is collaboration among schools belonging to the same college with regards to inclusive education. However, resource centres are used for services on a part-time basis irrespective of the college they belong to. These resource centres support learners from all over Malta and Gozo.</p> <p><i>Source: TPL4I (European Agency, 2020a), p. 16</i></p>	<p>The Audit’s findings suggest that many stakeholders do not see professional self-review as relevant or useful for them or their learners. Conversely, many stakeholders are quick to identify failings within the system and the actions of other actors, rather than engaging in critical self-review based on a clear understanding of personal professional responsibility.</p> <p>(...) limited possibilities for formal and informal inter-professional communication result in differing perceptions and expectations among stakeholders.</p> <p><i>Source: European Agency, 2019, Special Needs and Inclusive Education Malta Audit Report, p. 71 and CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 53</i></p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The resource centres are networked so that they can complement each other's services and facilities and work more closely with mainstream schools. The centres aim to tailor education to the needs of the individual learner. The skills covered are cognitive, gross motor, social, language (both receptive and expressive), self-help, cooking and others. The centres promote and give utmost importance to good health, personal hygiene and training for adult life. A central unit provides educational and professional support to the resource centres.</p> <p><i>Source: TPL4I (European Agency, 2020a), p. 21</i></p>	<p>The Heads of Resource Centres meet together with personnel from the National School Support Services (NSSS) for their monthly meeting and to plan together, share concerns etc. Transition meetings are held between one Resource Centre and another to ensure continuity</p>



Section 8: Early childhood education and family support

There is a strategy to increase participation in [quality inclusive early childhood education](#) and support families experiencing disadvantage.

Policy statement 8.1: Processes are in place to increase access to and participation in early childhood education

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Early Childhood Education and Care Policy</p> <p>Early Childhood Education and Care October 2021 (0–7 years): National Policy Framework for Malta and Gozo</p>	<p>Since 2014, childcare has been free for all 0–3-year-olds <i>Source: IECE – Malta Country Survey Questionnaire, p. 1</i>.</p> <p>As of November 2019, a total of 143 childcare centres were registered. <i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 14</i></p> <p>National Standards for Early Childhood Education and Care Services</p>
–	<p>Following early childcare, children move into kindergarten which is provided for children aged two years nine months to five years. Although it is not mandatory, parents are encouraged to send their children to such centres. <i>Source: Eurydice</i></p> <p>See Early childhood education and care services</p>



Policy statement 8.2: Processes and strategies are in place to reach and support those families who experience disadvantage, to ensure their greater participation in early childhood education

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>A Policy on Inclusive Education: Route to Quality Inclusion defines the term school as ‘<i>all State Church and Independent Primary, Middle and Secondary Schools, Child Care Centres and other educational institutions</i>’, thus, emphasising the importance of inclusion even at this young age</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 14</i></p>	<p>Children with individual educational needs are usually admitted in mainstream kindergarten centres but it is also the duty of the kindergarten educators to refer to relevant professionals any child who they consider requires extra support. Such referrals are processed by the Statementing Moderating Panel and action taken accordingly.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 20</i></p> <p>Statementing process guidelines have to be followed in schools. HoD (Inclusion) ensures this and is involved in the referral process.</p>
<p>The Child Development Assessment Unit (CDAU), which is part of the Ministry for Health, caters for very young children. It assesses children’s needs in a trans-disciplinary way (Malta’s Country Information). The CDAU works in close collaboration with the National School Support Services (NSSS) to provide early intervention for children born with a disability or one that was detected in the early months.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 20</i></p>	<p>The CDAU issues reports that parents provide to schools – some of them have recommendations for schools. CDAU may also refer children to early intervention service (NSSS) who follow these children at home, in childcare and eventually in Kinder in primary schools. Therefore, the early intervention practitioner also plays an important role in the transition between schools and information is passed during these meetings and their subsequent support.</p>



Policy statement 8.3: Measures of quality are in place in early childhood education, and undergo a process of monitoring, evaluation and review at local, regional and national levels

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The Ministry for Education has organised its quality assurance responsibility in early childhood and school education to the following entities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internal quality assurance performed by the educational institution – in the case of state schools (hosting children age 3 to 16), these are supported by the School Internal Review and Support Unit• External quality assurance performed by the Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes (DLAP)• Internal Quality Assurance by the Directorate for Education Resources• Setting standards and guidelines, monitoring and enforcing external quality assurance by the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education (DQSE)• Regulation of the teaching profession by the Council for the Teaching Profession. <p>Source: Eurydice</p>	<p>A national screening programme for autism, the Lenti Project, was launched in 2017, aimed at children from 18 months of age (Source: IECE – Malta Country Survey Questionnaire, p. 14; Malta’s Country Information)</p> <p>The Lenti Project is currently being evaluated. This programme is in collaboration of Ministry for Education, Sports, Youths, Research and Innovation (MEYR) and the Ministry for Health. MEYR is involved in issuing the invitations and reminders to parents of children of 24 months of age. The Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers is carried out. Students who are screened and are of medium to high risk are seen by the Ministry of Health. The School Psychological service (SPS) is also involved later for students who had scored high risk.</p>



Policy statement 8.4: There is a strategy to increase participation in early childhood education that actively promotes the benefits for children and families in overall child development, improving social inclusion and academic development, and increasing life chances

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2012 outlines the Early Years Cycle and emphasises the development of general competences developed through cross-curricular themes that contribute to the establishment of the foundations of lifelong learning.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 20</i></p>	<p>A new approach to teaching and learning for the early years, built on the emergent curriculum approach, has been implemented. From a curriculum perspective, the Early Years Department, under the Directorate for Early Years, Languages, and Humanities within the MEYR, collaborates with the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education. This joint effort aims to provide support to childcare centres and enhance the quality of their pedagogical services.</p> <p>Additionally, support provided to kindergarten educators emphasises child-initiated initiatives and pedagogical approaches. These are shaped by educators to cultivate an age-appropriate and conducive learning environment.</p> <p>Digital resource for emergent curriculum</p>



Section 9: Support for transitions

There is a strategy to support all learners at times of transition between phases of education – and particularly as they move into adult life – through vocational education and training, further and higher education, independent living and employment.

Policy statement 9.1: Strategies are in place to support all learners at times of transition between levels and phases of education

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Career guidance services are available for all learners to help them in their curricular and career choices.</p> <p>The aims of the guidance services are laid out by the National School Support Services. These services are provided throughout the educational system.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 33, 38 + Eurydice</i></p>	<p>A transition co-ordinator works specifically and supports Year 11 students with disabilities in their transition to work or to further their studies in a post-secondary resource centre, MCAST or ITS.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 38</i></p> <p>The Transition co-ordinator service aims to create awareness of the best possible post-secondary provision options which are available to suit the needs of students with disabilities. Orientation visits with the student and their families and transition meetings are held so that the student is introduced to the post-secondary option and prepared appropriately.</p> <p>Students in primary and secondary schools have career advisors and careers guidance teachers who provide them with support. Although students with disabilities can make use of the career services in schools, usually the career advisors work collaboratively with the transition co-ordinator for students with disabilities who supports them individually, identifying their strengths, attending IEPs, holds meeting with students and their parents, etc.</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The Career Guidance Services promote guidance in support of the education of students by facilitating the transition of students from primary to secondary school, and from secondary to post-secondary educational institutions and/or work. The service provides curricular guidance on subject options and choice of courses at different levels, particularly at Year 8 when students choose two option subjects as areas of specialisation.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 33</i></p>	<p>In Malta, meetings are held to prepare transition documents for learners with an official decision of SEN when they move from primary to middle school and then to secondary school. A transition co-ordinator also supports learners with SEN in the transition from compulsory schooling to further education or employment.</p> <p><i>Source: PSF (European Agency, 2020b), p. 64</i></p> <p>Euroguidance Malta focuses on career guidance in schools. Also, Explore more is used with Year 8 students to help them make their subject choices. It provides insight to different jobs, required courses and necessary qualifications.</p>
<p>Two targets in ‘A Policy on Inclusive Education in Schools: Route to Quality Inclusion’ address learner transition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learners’ transitions are prioritised and plans are devised between schools.• Learners and parents are aware of the different academic, vocational or applied pathways available.	<p>These targets are currently being implemented and on target and annual reports written for record purposes.</p>



Policy statement 9.2: Strategies are developed and implemented at different levels of the education system, through processes of collaboration between educational professionals and others in each sector

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Several categories of disadvantaged learners are provided with support measures to help them in their educational experience. These include children from families with socio-economic and personal challenges; immigrant children (accompanied or unaccompanied); and children of asylum seekers or given refugee status.</p> <p>One measure is aimed at the integration into mainstream schools of immigrant minor children, the children of asylum seekers or of refugees.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), pp. 38–39</i></p>	<p>Refugees under the age of eighteen who arrive in Malta unaccompanied by adult relatives are considered as learners at risk. Support measures are aimed at eliminating or reducing the educational disadvantage that such students experience due to linguistic, social, and cultural barriers. Supporting measures include the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social workers who prepare care plans to help such children integrate in mainstream institutions and to prepare individual transition programmes 2. Specific language support for such children to learn Maltese and/or English 3. The raising of classmates’ awareness of the child’s native language, customs, beliefs and ethnic diversity to facilitate the child’s inclusion in class 4. Liaison with non-educational social welfare institutions to ensure that such children and their families enjoy the basic living requirements 5. Continuous evaluation of such children within the Maltese education system and society at large. <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 39 + Eurydice</i></p> <p>See also: Migrant Learner Unit website</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Learners who are absent from school for a prolonged period of time are provided with home tuition. This aims to provide the learner with continuous education and to minimise the ill effects of being away from school and to help the student reintegrate back in school at the appropriate time.</p> <p>This service is available for learners who are diagnosed as being chronically ill (non-contagious), have a medical condition which causes them to be away from school for not less than four weeks, are staying at home recovering from an injury or medical surgery, or not attending school due to school phobia.</p> <p>Hospital classes are also available for learners having a prolonged stay in a Maltese hospital, providing that such activity is not deemed harmful to the learner or the educator. Both the home tuition and the hospital classes cover the teaching of the basic subjects of Maltese, English and Mathematics.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 39 + Eurydice</i></p>	–

Policy statement 9.3: Strategies are in place to ensure that teachers and other educational professionals are provided with training, time and resources to collaborate and support all learners at times of transition between levels of education

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
–	Letter Circulars are issued by the relevant departments to school to inform them of any mandatory training or other opportunities for training.



Policy statement 9.4: Strategies are in place to ensure that learners and their families are supported as they transition from school to post-school educational destinations (such as vocational education and training, further and higher education), independent living and employment

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The government finances initiatives by Jobs Plus. The Jobs Plus courses are free for the unemployed; however, a small fee is charged for some courses.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 26 and European Agency Country information – Malta: Financing of inclusive education systems (updated Feb 2020).</i></p>	<p>The Lino Spiteri Foundation is a public social partnership between Jobs Plus and Empower, a leading co-operative that employs people with disabilities in collaboration with the corporate sector. The foundation aims to collaborate with employers and provide target services to people with disabilities, including training, on a one-stop-shop basis. It aims to bridge the gap between companies and individuals to bring out untapped potential and create employment opportunities.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), pp. 26–27 and European Agency Country information – Malta: Financing of inclusive education systems (updated Feb 2020).</i></p>



Policy statement 9.5: Strategies are in place to raise awareness among stakeholders from different sectors to enable them to co-operate and co-ordinate their approaches, to ensure that the delivery of provision continues smoothly between all levels and towards all post-school destinations

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>I Choose fair is organised every summer for Year 11 students, where various employers and post-secondary school representatives speak to students and encourage them to engage in non-formal/extra-curricular initiatives which enhance their self-development, acquisition of skills and enrich their CV. Students attending the fair can attend talks on career opportunities within various sectors, and speak to post-secondary school representatives to acquire information about courses within the respective institution. Besides this, an invite by all the State Colleges is sent to Year 11 students who had just finished compulsory schooling so that they could request an individual one-to-one career guidance session with the respective career guidance practitioner/s. This is known as the Walk-In Service. Career guidance also works in close collaboration with the National Skills Council.</p>	<p>Another initiative is Start-Up which is organised by Malta Enterprise which was held on 5 October 2023. Malta Enterprise invited schools to encourage students to attend this event to hear about entrepreneurial opportunities and how to seek help to start a business. Guidance teachers and career advisors guided students who showed entrepreneurial inclinations during the 1-1 sessions held during the I Choose fair and the Walk-In service. Students who attended the fair could also acquire further information while visiting the stands represented by various companies and entrepreneurs and/or by attending the talks held in relation to Finance, Economics, Green economy, ICT, etc.</p>



Section 10: Co-operation between school-level stakeholders

Structures and processes are in place to facilitate co-operation between [stakeholders in schools](#), families and local communities. Strategies are in place to ensure that all stakeholders support inclusive school development and enhance learner progress.

Policy statement 10.1: Structures and processes are in place to establish and sustain co-operation between schools, families and local communities

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Local Councils are very active in the field of adult education and lifelong learning programmes and courses. Such programmes are developed and run by the Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability and in close collaboration with local industry. A variety of courses (held both in the morning and in the evening) are held at the premises of the Local Councils and/or at the primary schools of the localities.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), pp. 41–42</i></p>	<p>State College Networks have been set up since September 2005. Currently there are eleven State College Networks, ten of which are made up of several primary and secondary schools. The eleventh College Network is responsible for educational institutions falling within the remit of the Education Directorates having students beyond compulsory school age. Each network has the same managerial structure with each school within the network having its own Head of School and staff. Each college network is led by a Head of College Network who facilitates the whole network and who chairs a Council of Heads (COH) of schools making up the network.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 24</i></p> <p>The 10 Colleges are also grouped in clusters of threes (except Gozo college) e.g. St Clare, St Theresa and St Ignatius who work collaboratively together on different matters such as sharing of resources, etc.</p> <p><i>Evidence can be seen through various activities uploaded on the college Facebook pages, e.g. Maria Regina College, St Clare College</i></p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>All state schools in Malta now form part of one of ten College Networks (See Education Act Article 32(2)) where each College Network is a body corporate with its own legal and distinct personality. The Head of College Network can take decisions concerning the schools within the College The Head of College Network chairs the Council of Heads for the schools within their college. The main aim of the Council of Heads is to nurture a spirit of collegiality in the running of the College as a network of schools while developing a common ethos and identity.</p>	–

Policy statement 10.2: There is a strategy to enhance learner progress through co-operation with families and communities, using a range of interactions and initiatives which result in measurable and sustained learner progress

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Each public school has a School Council made up of parents, students (when they are 16 years of age or older) and teachers who work together to improve the school environment and to make school a better place where students can be educated in a holistic manner. Members sitting on school councils are selected by regular School Council elections held every two years. The role of school councils is a consultative one to the school's senior management team.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 24 + Eurydice</i></p>	<p>Certain decisions are taken with school council e.g. one diversity day has to be organised every term by each school. Schools have taken this up during councils to plan such activities and participate in other decision-making for the best interest of the school and its students. At times council members also support the school activities by their participation in the activities (evidenced in school Facebook pages).</p>



Policy statement 10.3: There is a strategy to ensure sustainable development and on-going progress in inclusive schools through collaboration and interaction between schools, families and members of the local community

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
–	<p>Local councils participate in activities or sponsor activities. Schools organise activities to include the participation of families.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• First day of school mXlokk primary supported by local council• Mellieha primary school carried out a new initiative towards sustainable living by the participation of a parent who sponsored 50% of the fruit, and to the School Council parents who volunteered to help prepare the bags.

Policy statement 10.4: Strategies are in place to publicly recognise and acknowledge that active family involvement in the education process is crucial, because it enriches learning experiences and supports young people to develop the competences they need

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
In the National Inclusion Education Framework there are various best practice indicators to support schools in the implementation of the Inclusion policy (See example on p. 28)	All activities including ones where families are invited to participate in schools are uploaded on their Facebook pages.



Section 11: The use of system data and information collection

A system is in place for data and information collection that provides feedback to inform [on-going improvement](#) across the whole system and supports decision-makers at all levels to identify 'signals' that indicate the need for urgent action regarding schools needing additional support.

Policy statement 11.1: The data and information collection system is linked to a process of providing feedback to inform on-going improvement across the whole education system

No information.

Policy statement 11.2: Data collection mechanisms aim to have a positive and sustained impact on monitoring access to formal and informal education, leading to increased participation, learning and accreditation

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
Quality assurance as specified by Chapter 327 of the Laws of Malta, the Education Act , establishes that the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education (DQSE) is required to establish, regulate, assure and monitor standards and quality in education of all the educational establishments attended by students of compulsory and pre-compulsory school age, irrespective of which sector they pertain to. <i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 44</i>	–



Policy statement 11.3: Monitoring processes are in place to ensure access to valid and reliable system data, as an essential evidence base for decision-makers to develop educational policy at all levels

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education and the School Internal Review within the Education Strategy and Quality Assurance Department develop and implement internal and external quality assurance mechanisms.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 44</i></p>	–

Policy statement 11.4: System data provides an early and accurate means of identifying, monitoring and following up on ‘signals’ that indicate the need for urgent action regarding schools requiring additional support

No information.

Policy statement 11.5: System data is used as an evidence base to inform and develop educational policy and recommendations at regional, national and [international](#) levels

No information.



Section 12: Transforming specialist provision

There is a strategy to transform [specialist provision](#) to support all learners and increase the capacity of mainstream schools, detailing cross-sectoral working and professional development for all staff.

Policy statement 12.1: Strategies and processes are in place to transform specialist provision to support a more inclusive school system

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
Since the National School Support Services (NSSS) has the overall view of personnel in colleges and also monitors the support services in colleges, additional resources are recruited by NSSS in schools / Colleges where necessary. NSSS has its HR plan for the recruitment of support services and psycho-social teams in Colleges together with their monitoring and training.	–

Policy statement 12.2: Collaborative practices/strategies ensure that the expertise and resources from specialist provision support the education system to become more inclusive

No information.



Policy statement 12.3: Processes are in to place to implement shared, cross-sectoral (mainstream and specialist) professional development opportunities for all staff, to increase the capacity of mainstream schools to support all, and not just some, learners

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
–	When conferences are carried out, they are organised for all educators in mainstream, resource centres and learning support centres (e.g. Inclusion conference in February 2023, conference on challenging behaviour in March 2023). Another one on PMLD is being organised for May 2024 where staff from Resource centres and mainstream will be participating and sharing their experiences



Section 13: Inclusive school leadership

There are strategies in place to develop and support school leaders who work with others to create an inclusive and equitable school ethos with strong relationships, high expectations, proactive and preventative approaches, flexible organisation and a continuum of support to intervene when learners are at risk of failure and exclusion.

Policy statement 13.1: Policies demonstrate a clear understanding of the qualities, skills and competences needed for school leaders to be effective in inclusive and equitable schools

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>One of the themes in the National Inclusion Education Framework is <i>Inclusive and Strategic Leadership</i></p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 52</i></p>	<p>The Attendance Policy as an Annex of A Policy on Inclusive Education in Schools: Route to Quality Inclusion gives guidelines on reducing absenteeism in schools. Also, one of the targets in the policy is ‘Schools are supported to promote a culture and climate for sustained school attendance’</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 23</i></p>
<p>Current initiatives in Malta include courses for senior management teams/school leaders organised by the Institute for Education. Entry requirements and eligibility criteria to apply for the position of head of school include a course on educational leadership. The University of Malta and the Institute for Education currently provide this course.</p> <p><i>Source: Supporting Inclusive School Leadership (SISL) (European Agency, 2019a), p. 30</i></p>	–



Policy statement 13.2: Processes are in place to develop and support effective school leaders, who work with others to create an inclusive and equitable school ethos

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Current initiatives in Malta include courses for senior management teams/school leaders organised by the Institute for Education. Entry requirements and eligibility criteria to apply for the position of head of school include a course on educational leadership. The University of Malta and the Institute for Education currently provide this course.</p> <p><i>Source: TPL4I (European Agency, 2020a), p. 16</i></p>	<p>Review Guidelines are disseminated so that all educators, including the school leadership have a clear understanding of the review parameters.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 44</i></p>
<p>Malta's 'A National Curriculum Framework for All' promotes distributed forms of leadership in schools. It states that: '... whilst school leaders play both a visionary and strategic role, they also need to focus on developing a collaborative culture which draws upon the full range of professional skills and expertise to be found among the members of the organisation'</p> <p><i>Source: SISL (European Agency, 2019a), p. 28</i></p>	<p>Councils of Headteachers are organised in every College together with the Head of College Network. There are on-going discussions on current initiatives, projects, policies, etc. Any feedback received is relayed to the various departments by the Head of College Network.</p> <p><i>Source: TPL4I (European Agency, 2020a), p. 18</i></p>
<p>Malta is also granting sabbatical opportunities for school leaders and educators to further their studies and carry out research.</p> <p><i>Source: SISL (European Agency, 2019a), p. 31</i></p>	<p>Paid Study Leave for educators</p>



Policy statement 13.3: Strategies are in place to support school leaders to have high expectations for their team and for all learners, and to establish a continuum of support for staff and learners with both proactive and preventative approaches

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>A number of targets support School Leadership Teams (SLT), educators and specialised professionals in the Inclusion Policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• SLT and other educators attend training with regards to support services available.• SLT and educators engage in professional development and training in different areas of inclusive education every school year.• Practitioners and Specialised Educators are provided with opportunities of continuous professional development that upskill their knowledge and understanding. <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 52</i></p>	<p>Phase courses are organised by the Institute for Education for new SLTs – some of the phase courses are mandatory, including those on inclusive education and support services.</p>



Policy statement 13.4: Strategies are in place to monitor and ensure effective leadership has an on-going, sustained and positive impact on learner achievement, teaching quality and staff motivation in schools

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The Quality Assurance Department, through different review models, is committed to guiding schools in further understanding and developing their potential for growth. This is done through discussion on the internal review exercise carried out by the school and the review of the implementation processes currently adopted by the school. All review models work towards ensuring that each learner gets the best educational experience and quality education.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 44</i></p>	<p>The Standards for use in school external reviews (2016) guide the whole external monitoring and review process in schools. External reviews aim to evaluate how far schools are planning to and actually managing to achieve the required quality standards to fulfil the curricular and equitable entitlement of all learners</p> <p><i>Source: TPL4I (European Agency, 2020a), pp. 19–20</i></p>
–	<p>Standards for school external reviews with indicative success criteria require the head of school to have a clear vision and to provide continuous evaluation and support for teaching and learning. They may do this through an established system of formal observations and a commitment to promoting good practice and continuous professional development, among other ways.</p> <p><i>Source: SISL (European Agency, 2019a), p. 34</i></p>



Policy statement 13.5: Processes are in place to ensure that effective leadership is flexible and able to intervene when learners are at risk of failure or exclusion, to support them to more positive outcomes

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
–	School Leadership Team (SLT) members are free to use appropriate strategies for students at risk of failure or exclusion. There is also a fund (budgetary measure 40) that SLT can use to provide for such students including any uniforms, lunches, anything applicable for their learning or medical needs, etc.



Section 14: Learner voices

A guidance framework is in place to develop learning and teaching environments where learners' voices are heard and included in decision-making processes and learners' rights are fulfilled through personalised approaches to learning and support.

Policy statement 14.1: Strategies are in place to ensure that all school-level stakeholders (learners, teachers, families and communities) equitably and ethically co-create goals for supportive learning and teaching environments, and the goals undergo regular monitoring, evaluation and review processes

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
–	<p>When the <i>Inclusion Policy and Framework</i> were being drafted, learners were asked what they understand by Inclusion. Through the project, educators drafting the policy were guided by the learners' feedback.</p> <p>Another project where learners voice was ensured was when learners on the Autism Spectrum through the Drawing and Talking Method were asked about likes and dislikes within their school environment. This research guided the personnel drafting the Autism Friendly Environment Guidelines (2019) and in eventually setting up the REACH units.</p> <p>As the REACH Units are still in their second year of being set-up, constant evaluation is taking place. Learners (and their parents) attending the units were asked about their thoughts and learning experiences within the REACH Unit. Malta also participated in the Agency's Voices in Action project to capture learners' and parents' voices on the experience of attending the REACH Unit.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 51</i></p>



Policy statement 14.2: Strategies are in place to ensure that all schools acknowledge, promote and implement the importance of all learners, teachers, families and communities working together to support progress towards shared goals

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
One of the themes in the National Inclusive Education Framework is Parental Involvement and Community Engagement <i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 51</i>	–

Policy statement 14.3: Strategies are in place to ensure that all stakeholders listen to learners' voices and ensure learners can meaningfully participate in learning and support processes, by implementing approaches that consider the concepts of '[space, voice, audience and influence](#)'

No information.

Policy statement 14.4: Processes are in place to enable learners and families to fulfil their rights as active participants in decisions around their own/their children's learning and support, with emphasis on the practical and ethical aspects of '[space, voice, audience and influence](#)'

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
One of the targets in the Inclusion Policy is Parents are aware of support services available and training is organised. Also, training initiatives for parents are organised by Institute for Education and the National School Support Services (NSSS) . <i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 51</i>	School councils and ad hoc working groups or research include parents. Letter circulars and posters issued in schools for the current school year.



Section 15: Resilience within the education system

Policy and practice have developed in response to unforeseen events to build [resilience](#) within the education system.

Policy statement 15.1: There are processes to identify aspects of education policy and practice that have been amended in response to unforeseen events

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
A policy monitoring and evaluation directorate has been set up in 2023 which oversees all current policies and their implementation. Should any changes or new policies be drafted they have to be reviewed and evaluated by this directorate.	–



Policy statement 15.2: There are long-term strategies in place to identify changes made in response to unforeseen events that have had a positive effect on the education system, on schools or on learners

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
–	<p>Summer Catch-up educational programme</p> <p>During scholastic year 2020-2021 the Ministry for Education, Sports, Youth, Research and Innovation in Malta re-opened all its State Schools with all the necessary preventive measures for all school children from childcare to Year 11. The Ministry provided around 12,000 lessons on demand accessible on teleskola.mt (Recorded Lessons) free of charge covering all syllabi from pre-primary to Year 11, opened three virtual schools for vulnerable students from primary, middle and secondary schools, and opened a summer catch-up educational programme. Around 90 educators were engaged to run the catch-up programme and 500 students from Year 1 to Year 10 benefited from an eight-week educational programme during the summer holidays of 2021 and 2022. The lessons were delivered face-to-face in seven centres around Malta and Gozo and online in a virtual school.</p> <p>The initiative set up by the Ministry for Education is another bid to help eligible students catch up on education lost through the pandemic. The specific programme includes a variety of academic and enrichment activities, from Maths, English, Maltese, science lessons to activities designed to build confidence, friendships and improve well-being.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 29</i></p>



Policy statement 15.3: There are processes/strategies in place to monitor when unanticipated and unavoidable events have helped progress towards a more inclusive education system

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
–	<p>Literacy assessments in Year 3 and Year 4</p> <p>In view of the possible risk of learning loss due to the Covid-19 pandemic the College Literacy Teams within the Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes, in conjunction with the National Literacy Agency, has carried out literacy assessments in Year 3 and Year 4 state primary classrooms to provide a snapshot of learners’ literacy achievements and to identify learners who are struggling with their literacy and who would need additional literacy support.</p> <p>Different literacy skills in both Maltese and English were assessed to support class teachers in providing follow up interventions that are appropriately matched to the learners’ needs.</p> <p><i>Source: CSM report (European Agency, 2023a), p. 30 + Eurydice</i></p> <p>Catch-up classes are still carried out on a Saturday in designated localities and Teleskola is still available. Virtual classes / school is no longer available.</p>

Policy statement 15.4: There are processes/strategies in place to indicate when unanticipated and unavoidable events have disrupted progress towards a more inclusive education system

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
–	<p>There are various initiatives on contingency planning currently taking place in the Department – including for every College</p>



OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

The intended meaning of some key terms or phrases in the framework's Policy statements require additional clarification. The table below provides these clarifications in the form of operational definitions. Some of these operational definitions are from the Agency's [glossary](#). Other terms are clarified in the context of their use in the Policy statements. These are marked with *.

Accountability

'A government's mechanism for holding education institutions to account for the delivery of high quality education' and 'the practice of holding educational systems responsible for the quality of their products – students' knowledge, skills and behaviors' ([Brill, Grayson, Kuhn and O'Donnell, 2018](#), p. 1).

Accountability may be vertical (top-down) or horizontal (e.g. school-to-school or peer-to-peer support systems). It may include compliance with regulations, adherence to professional norms and/or be driven by outcomes. The purpose of accountability is widely accepted as one of strengthening the education system (ibid.).

All learners*

All those in education or training, particularly, but not exclusively, of compulsory school age, with no exceptions in relation to characteristics or markers.

Assessment framework

Assessment frameworks enable the wider learning and achievements of all learners to be recognised and valued. They allow systematic monitoring of learners' progress (and related school performance) in areas that were often regarded as less important than academic progress but are now recognised as essential to learning and success, such as mental health and well-being.

Assessment refers to the ways teachers and other people involved in a learner's education systematically collect and then use information about a learner's level of achievement and/or development in different areas of their educational experience (academic, behaviour and social). Assessment enables adjustments to the curriculum and teaching approaches, identifies and overcomes barriers to learning, and informs support decisions ([European Agency, 2021a](#)).

Autonomy

'The freedom for a country, a region or an organization to govern itself independently';
'The ability to act and make decisions without being controlled by anyone else'
([Oxford Learner's Dictionaries](#)).

In education, autonomy may include local-governance autonomy, school autonomy and teacher autonomy (the extent to which teachers can make autonomous decisions about what they teach to learners and how they teach it). Also important are parent autonomy



(around curriculum, school performance) and learner autonomy (giving learners control over their own learning process) (adapted from 'autonomy' in the Great Schools Partnership [Glossary of Education Reform](#)).

Collaboration*

Working together with others through processes of listening, sharing and dialogue to reach decisions based on mutual agreement.

Discretionary funding

A system of flexible resource allocation, where actors at different levels (e.g. communities/schools/school leaders/teachers) are able to access funds, in addition to their general funding arrangements, to meet an identified need for support or as a preventative measure to address an emerging issue, to support learners and to decrease exclusion.

Educational professionals*

All professionals who work in education, at all levels, across all sectors and disciplines, and in all contexts.

Everyone who works with teachers*

All those who work alongside and support teachers, in any capacity, such as teaching assistants, specialists, experts and other professionals.

International*

In relation to levels of educational policy, this refers to initiatives and directives from internationally renowned bodies, such as the European Commission or the United Nations.

Leaders/leadership

School leadership:

... refers to all those in key leadership roles in schools and learning communities. Such leaders may also be referred to as headteachers, school directors or principals. There are various stages of school leadership, including teacher, middle and senior leadership. In this role, they focus on enlisting and guiding the talents and energies of teachers, learners and parents to achieve common educational aims.

Leading a school involves both leadership and management. It is important to acknowledge that school leaders need a balance of these two processes. Leadership is focused on values, vision and the future, whereas management is concerned with making the present work ([European Agency, 2020c](#), p. 42).



Learners vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education

The framework refers to **all learners**. This phrase is intended to include learners who are vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion from quality inclusive education.

Learners vulnerable to exclusion encompasses all learners whose educational experience is 'impacted upon by a number of pressures, forces, levers, discriminations and disadvantages' (European Agency, 2021b, p. 6). 'These learners may or may not fall into categories of special needs and a special type of provision may or may not be available to support them' ([European Agency, 2022](#), p. 34).

The following are some **examples** of how learners vulnerable to exclusion should be considered in the framework. These are not definitive.

In terms of **monitoring and evaluation**, the framework should show progress made towards implementing policy into practice for learners vulnerable to exclusion, and towards **embedding quality education in teacher education** to build understanding and capacity within schools and teachers to support all learners.

It is also important to consider the importance of building teachers' understanding of the structures and cultures of **exclusionary policies and practices**, as a necessary aspect of mitigating their negative impact.

The processes in place to **mitigate challenges** encountered when developing or implementing policy for some learners/groups of learners are crucial to ensure more equitable educational opportunities for all learners.

The strategies that are in place to enable the **voices of marginalised and vulnerable** communities, groups and families to be heard and included in educational decisions should also be considered. These include working with vulnerable stakeholders (including learners and their families) to build **co-operation and collaboration** across all levels of the education system.

On-going improvement*

A range of strategies and processes to plan, promote and support the implementation of new initiatives, then systematically monitor their effects to collect evidence that will be used to plan and implement further initiatives.

Quality inclusive early childhood education

Early childhood education (pre-compulsory education in most countries) should be for all children, in inclusive settings, and meet internationally-agreed quality standards (such as those from the OECD) in terms of access, structures, processes and outcomes ([European Agency, 2017](#)).

Resilience*

The ability of educational systems, policies and practices to prepare for, work through, respond to and mitigate unforeseen external challenges.



School-level stakeholders*

School leaders, teachers, all staff, learners, families/carers and community leaders and members who are involved in the education, care and support of learners in schools.

Sectors*

All bodies, organisations and ministries, whether public, private or non-governmental.

Single curriculum framework*

A curriculum structure for all learners (rather than specific curriculum framework(s) for different groups of learners).

'Space, voice, audience and influence'*

These are the four key elements of the Framework for Meaningful Participation from the Agency's [Voices into Action](#): Including the Voices of Learners and their Families in Educational Decision-Making activity (adapted from Lundy, 2007).

Specialist provision

This covers different types of specialist provision services, specifically:

- in-school provision, which ensures assistance to learners who are in mainstream classrooms, or partially out of mainstream classrooms (special classes, units, programmes, inclusion classes, and parallel support, i.e. one-to-one provision by specialised staff);
- external provision to schools aiming to empower them to act inclusively (resource centres, networks of special schools, networks of mainstream and special schools);
- external provision to schools through individualised support to learners enrolled in mainstream settings (physiotherapists, speech therapists) with the support of education, health or welfare authorities;
- external provision to learners, such as special schools dedicated to learners requiring intensive support, under the responsibility of education, health or welfare authorities ([European Agency, 2019b](#), p. 10).

Stakeholders

Policy-makers, education professionals, school leaders, learners/peers, families and the members of the community ([European Agency, 2019b](#)).

Teacher educators and trainers*

Professionals who work in higher or further education contexts, or in private schools, organisations and companies, and who provide initial and further education, training and professional development to teachers.



Wider achievement*

Showing progress in aspects of learning that go beyond the academic curriculum and include social, emotional and physical development, as well as skills in leadership or voluntary, cultural or sporting activities, for example.



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