



EUROPEAN AGENCY
for Special Needs and Inclusive Education



RAISING THE ACHIEVEMENT
OF ALL LEARNERS IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

RAISING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL LEARNERS IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Country Report: Croatia



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CROATIA COUNTRY REPORT

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1. What reference is made to raising achievement in national policies? How is raising achievement defined?

All children have the right to good quality education and should be encouraged to attend school to the highest level possible. The Croatian national educational policies provide conditions and help children to use and develop their talents and abilities. They enable all learners to attain and achieve to their full potential and to become responsible citizens, able to make effective contributions to society and at work.

Attainment and achievement, separately defined, are complementary components of national educational policies. Attainment is the formal recognition of achievement, generally evaluated in national examinations. Raising achievement is a process that enables all learners to achieve their full potential.

2. What national policies specifically target raising achievement?

Croatian National Educational Standard (CNES)

The Croatian national educational policy, which is orientated towards creating and developing a knowledge-based society, is outlined in the Education Sector Development Plan for 2005–2010. This was adopted by the Government of the Republic of Croatia on 9 June 2005. The changes have been initiated at all levels of the education system. The basic objective of the changes is to advance and improve the quality of the education system at all levels.

CNES – school tailored to learners

The CNES has been created as a basis for the changes in the teaching programme and work methods in the primary school system. Its purpose is to develop ‘school tailored to learners’. Workloads are reduced by abandoning redundant educational programmes and introducing modern teaching methods, with research-based classes and individual and group work and relevant knowledge and skills.

In the 2005/2006 school year, CNES elements were experimentally introduced in 5% of primary schools (49 schools) in the Republic of Croatia. In the 2006/2007 school year, all primary schools started to implement the CNES.



National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for pre-primary, general compulsory and secondary education

Knowledge, competences, success and competitiveness are strategic goals of the Republic of Croatia. General education and key competences are intended to equip each and every learner with necessary skills and prepare them for a changing and unpredictable world that requires lifelong learning. Educational areas and cycles create stronger links within educational contents and provide a more flexible way to programme and plan learner-orientated educational work.

The NCF requires transparency from educational institutions and closer co-operation between educational institutions and parents/legal guardians, the local community and the wider community.

The NCF presumes a high level of teacher competence. It also presumes teachers' ability to effectively use a range of methods and teaching aids and successfully organise education and teaching.

The basic characteristic of the NCF is a transition to a system based on competence and learner achievement (learning outcomes), unlike the previous system which focused on content.

The National Curriculum Framework defines:

- core educational values;
- educational goals;
- principles and goals of educational areas;
- principles of evaluation of learner achievements;
- principles of evaluation and self-evaluation of the implementation of the national curriculum.

The NCF instructs teachers to overcome subject specialisation and to take part more or less equally in developing learners' core competences. It requires the preparation of systematic training programmes to enable teachers, associates and principals to apply the curriculum-based approach. The NCF is also used to prepare textbooks and other teaching and educational resources. This is facilitated by cross-curricular topics, whose introduction serves to deepen topical content and boost learners' knowledge and awareness about:

- health rights;
- personal and social accountability;
- social, cultural, economic, technological and sustainable development;
- the values of learning, working, self-esteem and respect for others.

Life and work in a contemporary society of rapid changes and tough competition require new knowledge, skills, abilities, values and attitudes. The new competences of the individual require an emphasis on qualities including:

- innovativeness;
- creativity;



- problem-solving skills;
- critical thinking skills;
- entrepreneurship;
- information literacy;
- social skills.

It is not possible to foster these skills in a traditional education system, in which the main function is knowledge transfer.

The basic elements of the NCF are:

- socio-cultural and educational values;
- goals that demonstrate expectations of achievement throughout each learner's education, by defining the knowledge that each and every learner must acquire and the skills, abilities and attitudes they must develop;
- principles as the guidelines of educational activity;
- methods, means and forms of work;
- educational areas as the core substance;
- assessment and evaluation of learner achievements and schools.

Educational goals in the Republic of Croatia are:

- to provide a systematic method of teaching learners, which fosters and enhances their intellectual, physical, aesthetic, social, moral and spiritual development, in keeping with their abilities and aptitudes;
- to develop learner awareness regarding the preservation of Croatian national identity, as well as the material, spiritual, historical and cultural heritage of the Republic of Croatia;
- to promote and develop awareness of the Croatian language as a key factor in Croatian identity, systematically fostering the Croatian standard (literary) language in all areas, cycles and at all levels of the education system;
- to raise and educate learners in conformity with general cultural and civil values, including those of human rights and the rights and obligations of the child, rendering them competent to:
 - live in a multicultural world;
 - respect differences;
 - participate actively and responsibly in the democratic development of society;
- to ensure that learners acquire key (general education) and vocational competences, enabling them to live and work in a social and cultural context of change, according to the requirements of the market economy, modern



information and communication technologies and scientific knowledge and accomplishments;

- to encourage and develop independence, self-confidence, responsibility and creativity in learners;
- to train learners for lifelong learning.

These goals should be applied to basic educational content and everyday school life. Values and the general goals of education that arise from them are mandatory for all teachers and associates, in all education cycles, all areas and subjects and all school and extra-curricular activities. In order for schools to be able to contribute to attaining such values and objectives, they must collaborate with families and local communities.

The principles of the National Curriculum Framework

- High quality of education for all: providing material, technical, information technology, hygienic and other conditions, in order to attain the highest educational standards and boost professional standards among the implementers of educational activities.
- Equality of educational opportunities for all: every learner has a right to their highest educational development. Equality of educational opportunities is based on social equity; education and schooling cannot be a privilege of a minority, nor can they be reduced on the basis of discrimination (e.g. ethnic, gender, or others, based on social conditions).
- Compulsory quality of general education: acquiring key competences is a right and obligation of every person. It provides fundamental knowledge for life and is the basis for further learning. The compulsory quality of general education is a legally prescribed obligation to provide children with an education and to require school attendance up to a certain educational level.
- Horizontal and vertical mobility: providing opportunities for learners to change the type of school they attend (horizontal mobility) and giving them the opportunity to continue education at a higher level (vertical mobility).
- The inclusion of all learners in the education system, taking into consideration the educational needs of every learner, whether adult or child, and particularly those who are exposed to marginalisation and exclusion.
- Scientific foundation: the overall education system is changing, improving and advancing at the same rate as modern scientific knowledge.
- Respect for human rights and the rights of children: true respect of every child and every adult; human dignity.
- Competence and professional ethics: educational activity implies high levels of expertise and responsibility among all implementers of educational activities.
- Democracy: pluralism and democratic decision-making, including all key stakeholders in making and implementing educational policy.



- Independence of schools: a degree of freedom and independence for schools to design their own activities, programmes and projects for learners, parents, teachers and other school employees as a part of their curricula and the creation of school identity. Freedom of choice with respect to subject matter, the methods applied and the organisation of educational work in the implementation of the national curriculum.
- Pedagogical and school pluralism: a degree of freedom and independence in creating differences in pedagogical and school work.
- European dimension of education: training for co-existence in Europe.
- Interculturalism: understanding and embracing cultural differences, in order to reduce inequality and prejudice against members of other cultures.

Learner-centred education

The National Curriculum Framework promotes education that is centred on the learner. This implies the following:

- adapting educational and teaching forms, methods and work resources to the individual needs and capabilities of learners, in order to ensure the successful educational performance of every individual;
- the selection and application of educational forms, methods and means that will foster development in all areas of each learner's personality;
- planning and preparation of school and teaching work according to learners' abilities, by preparing a variety of instructional content, organisational styles and strategies;
- accepting different styles of learning from one learner to the next, as well as developmental differences between boys and girls and between individual learners in general;
- introducing appropriate forms and methods of teaching and learning that will enable active, independent learning and the practical application of mastered topics;
- using various relevant sources of knowledge and teaching aids that encourage participation, observation, independent research, experimentation, discovery, deduction, curiosity and learning to learn;
- creating a pleasant educational environment that will incite interest and motivation to learn in each learner, providing them with a sense of security and mutual respect;
- recognition and appropriate treatment of gifted learners, and of learners with learning and behavioural difficulties. Providing assistance to learners with difficulties and raising the awareness of other learners about their needs, providing assistance and collaboration.



Interdisciplinary themes

The planning and realisation of interdisciplinary themes represent the literal fusing of educational areas with common or complementary themes into single, harmonious wholes. They are used to foster a variety of key competences in learners:

1. Personal and Social Development

The purpose of teaching personal and social development is to enable learners to:

- recognise and critically assess their own opinions (as well as the impact of societal values on their own opinions and actions);
- develop a sense of personal responsibility;
- build positive relationships with others;
- participate constructively in social life.

Education for personal and social development enables learners to develop communication, organisational and social skills and abilities. These abilities strengthen self-respect, facilitate intercultural collaboration capabilities and encourage mature attitudes towards themselves and others. Such education also enables learners to develop the necessary abilities to express and meet their own needs and aptitudes, assess their own abilities, make decisions and collaborate with others.

2. Health, Safety and Environmental Protection

The interdisciplinary theme of health, safety and environmental protection is promoted in all educational areas. This ensures learners develop a positive and responsible attitude towards their own safety and the health and safety of others, and towards environmental protection and sustainable development. The theme encompasses all aspects of health: physical, mental, emotional and social. Learners are encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle on a permanent basis.

3. Learning to Learn

The development of the learning to learn competence enables learners to efficiently organise and manage their own education and develop a positive attitude towards learning. The competence of learning to learn is the basis for lifelong learning. It is significant for learners' further education and professional development.

4. Entrepreneurship

The basic objective of developing entrepreneurial competence is to equip learners with the characteristics, knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes that will help them take initiative and be successful. Entrepreneurial competence includes organisational skills, creativity and independence, which empower individuals to accept changes and take risks.

5. Use of Information and Communication Technology

Information and communication technology puts state-of-the-art educational aids and resources at the disposal of teachers in all educational areas. By means of multimedia display features and access to the internet and other networks, it enables instant access to a vast and quickly growing store of information from all over the world. It also helps learners learn independently, collaborate with others and communicate with all kinds of



people. It contributes to the development of a positive attitude towards learning, improving the way that learners research, solve problems and present their work.

6. Civil Education

Modern democracies need working, informed and responsible citizens. The purpose of teaching civil education as an interdisciplinary theme is to prepare learners for an active and effective civic life. The more significant elements of this theme include the knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes that develop learners' democratic awareness and encourage them to help foster democratic relations in school, in the local community and throughout society. Civil education also contributes to the development of personal identity, respect for others and problem-solving skills, according to democratic principles.

Strategy of Education, Science and Technology: New colours of knowledge

Croatia recognises education and science as developmental priorities that can enable its long-term social stability, economic prosperity and secure cultural identity. The Croatian Parliament adopted the Strategy of Education, Science and Technology on 17 October 2014 and appointed the Special Expert Committee for the Implementation of the Strategy of Education, Science and Technology.

The principles of education

Education will be built on the following principles:

- compulsory primary education;
- horizontal and vertical mobility within the system;
- everyone, especially marginalised and underrepresented groups, will be incorporated in the education system, based upon the scientific knowledge;
- competent employees in the system that respect the professional ethics;
- decisions will be made democratically with the participation of all key stakeholders;
- schools and teachers will be independent in defining methods of work;
- interculturalism and the European dimension of education will be respected.

This Strategy proposes measures that are aligned with the envisaged strategies and goals of the European Union up to 2025.

3. What information/data are collected at national level on attainment and achievement?

The State Graduation Exam

Pursuant to the Act on Primary and Secondary Education (Official Gazette, 87/08), secondary education of learners within grammar school educational programmes is completed upon learners passing the state graduation exam. Secondary education of learners within vocational and art educational programmes, lasting for at least four years, finishes at the creation and defence of the final paper, which is organised and conducted



by the school. Learners attending four-year vocational and art secondary schools may also take the state graduation exams if they wish to. The provisions on taking the state graduation exam refer to the learners who enrolled in the first grade of grammar school or four-year vocational and art school in the school year of 2006/2007.

The state graduation exam is a set of exams in certain subjects taught to learners during their four-year secondary education. The goal of the state graduation exam is to test and assess learners' acquired knowledge and aptitude, obtained through education, in accordance with the prescribed general education curricula.

Mandatory exams taken within the state graduation exam are those in general education subjects taught during secondary school: Croatian language, mathematics and a foreign language. Exceptions to the rule are rare; learners attending classes conducted in a national minority language are obliged to take an exam in the national minority language in which they are educated, in addition to the Croatian language exam. They then choose either mathematics or a foreign language for their third exam.

Those learners receiving education conducted in the Czech national minority language may choose either:

- to take the mandatory (Croatian language) part of the state graduation exam, without taking an exam in their mother tongue (Czech) in which they are educated, or;
- to take an exam in their mother tongue, in addition to the mandatory exam.

Compared to the previous graduation system, the main difference is that exams are neither conducted nor assessed by the school teachers, but by a public institution: the [National Centre for External Evaluation of Education \(NCVVO\)](#). The NCVVO creates exam catalogues for all subjects taken within the state graduation exam and working materials and handbooks for the preparation of exams, and prepares and delivers exam materials to schools. The introduction of the state graduation exam does not just ensure higher objectivity of learners' school achievements on a national level. It also encourages better teaching in primary and secondary schools and encourages learners to study harder, generally increasing the quality of school education.

As of the 2009/2010 school year, the state graduation exams are taken by all learners who successfully complete the fourth grade of secondary school.

The state graduation exams are conducted at the same time, with the same materials and in the same way for all learners in the Republic of Croatia. This produces mutually comparable results, making the selection procedure when enrolling into polytechnics and universities more just and transparent. Passing the state graduation exam serves as an objective indicator of a learner's preparedness.



Monitoring and evaluation of secondary education institutions

The methods, procedures and elements for the evaluation of educational achievements of learners in secondary schools and the rights and obligations of teachers, learners and parents/guardians are determined by:

- [Primary and Secondary School Education Act](#) (Official Gazette of the Republic of Croatia, 87/2008, 86/2009, 92/2010, 105/2010-cor., 90/2011, 16/2012, 86/2012, 94/2013 and 152/2014);
- [Ordinance on methods, procedures and elements of evaluation of students in primary and secondary schools](#);
- [Ordinance of the criteria for the imposition of pedagogical measures](#) (Official Gazette of the Republic of Croatia, 94/2015).

The State Matura exam

The State Matura consists of both the mandatory and optional state graduation exams. Mandatory exams are taken in the Croatian language, mathematics and a foreign language. In the compulsory part of the State Matura, learners can only take foreign languages whose content is prescribed by the test catalogue and in which they have been positively evaluated for at least two years in secondary education.

Exams in the mandatory part of the State Matura can be taken at one of two levels: higher (A) and basic (B). In the elective part of the State Matura, candidates can sign up to six elective course subjects during one examination period. The list of the State Matura optional exams is compiled by the NCVVO before the beginning of the exam application period each school year. The list is subject to the approval of the Ministry of Science and Education.

The State Matura was introduced in Croatian schools in the academic year 2009/2010. Since then, all learners completing their education in gymnasiums are obliged to take the State Matura exams to complete their secondary education. Learners who want to continue their education at university in the Republic of Croatia who have successfully completed four-year vocational secondary school courses or have come out of the Croatian education system are also obliged to take the State Matura exams.

All higher education institutions in the Republic of Croatia have accepted the results of the State Matura exams as a condition for the ranking of candidates for enrolment in their programmes of study. The requirements for admission to higher education institutions' study programmes in the Republic of Croatia are determined by the institutions themselves, which, based on the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, are autonomous and create their own admission policy.

Instructions for conducting national Graduation Exams for examinees with special educational needs

The instructions for conducting national Graduation Exams for examinees with special educational needs (SEN) deal with:

- the identification of examinees;



- their application;
- exam technology and adaptation of national graduation exams and national exams (exam materials and proceedings), depending on the type and the level of special educational need.

Therefore, the terms national graduation exam and national exam are used further on. Learners with SEN are not always able to demonstrate their skills in usual ways, despite the fact that they have acquired the knowledge prescribed by their study programmes. These difficulties can be avoided by exam technology adaptation that will not threaten the exam validity or put the learner in a privileged position. Adapted exam technology should be approved for those learners who have had SEN for a certain period of time or throughout their school education, and to those who have recently experienced health condition changes that require exam adaptations. Request for exam technology adaptation needs to be validated by the school principal, who then addresses the application to the NCVVO.

Learners with SEN include those with:

- specific learning difficulties, language and communication difficulties:
 - severe difficulties with reading, writing, speaking and number manipulation, related to difficulties in symbolic language processing, such as dyslexia, dyscalculia;
 - speaking and language difficulties causing problems in communication, such as aphasia, dysphasia, articulation problems, etc.;
- motor and sensory difficulties:
 - disorder of movement and body posture, lowered/disabled function of specific body parts, missing body parts;
 - hearing or sight impairment;
- health difficulties: chronic diseases and conditions such as heart conditions, epilepsy, asthma, cystic fibroses, haemophilia, anaemia, diabetes, kidney conditions, eczema, rheumatic conditions, allergies, leukaemia, cancer, etc.;
- emotional difficulties and behaviour issues:
 - running away from home or avoiding school, academic failure, attention deficit/hyperactive disorder, adjustment disorder, anxiety;
 - interpersonal behaviour disorder and obstinacy, antisocial behaviour, aggressive behaviour, deviant and delinquent behaviour, psycho-genetically conditioned behavioural disorders;
- other mental health difficulties: different psychotic states, eating disorders, fears, anxiety, emotional disturbances and similar.



4. What information/data on attainment and achievement (including the wider areas outlined above) are collected at school level?

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5. What information/data are used for school evaluation and quality assurance at national/local level?

Quality assurance

The quality assurance framework of the Croatian education system consists of three elements:

- external school evaluation;
- school self-evaluation;
- evaluation of educational outcomes.

The quality assurance system includes the internal quality assurance of schools, based on their self-evaluation and external evaluations based on objective standards and criteria, implemented by an independent agency.

Quality assurance is the result of the evaluation of institutions (procedures, material and human resources) and educational programmes (relevance, methods of acquisition and assessment of learning outcomes, etc.).

Primary school self-evaluation

The NCVVO has systematically conducted this project since the 2008/2009 school year. The project was planned to continue in 2013 in the form of support for primary schools in the self-evaluation process. Analyses and professional training of school quality teams should be followed by the preparation of a report on the process of self-evaluation in primary schools.

Secondary school self-evaluation

Self-evaluation of secondary schools continued in the 2012/2013 school year. Schools can conduct the self-evaluation individually or with the support of associates from the Network for the Support of the Self-Evaluation of Schools. Training and exchange of experiences among associates of the Network and all schools included in the project were planned for 2013, as well as the production of a report on the 2012/2013 project.

Self-evaluation of early childhood and pre-primary education institutions

The NCVVO started the Self-evaluation of early childhood and pre-primary education institutions project in the 2012/2013 school year. Its goal is to systematically monitor and improve the quality of work in kindergartens, independent of the establisher, and in primary schools which run the early childhood and pre-primary education programme. After the completion of analyses and the activities of all three evaluation cycles, a report



on the process of self-evaluation in early childhood and pre-primary education institutions is planned.

6. Are there any specific initiatives in place to support/enable teachers and/or school leaders to raise the attainment and achievement of all learners?

Development of licensing model on the basis of teacher competences

The NCVVO established a Committee for the development of the 'Model teacher licensing system', based on national qualification standards for teachers. It has a scientific-theoretical foundation, based on the analysis of documents from the field of teaching standards and licensing systems. End users of the project are primary and secondary school teachers and students in teacher education faculties. The production of a licensing system based on a defined qualification standard should contribute to the competitiveness in the labour market for teachers in Croatia and other member countries of the European Union.

External evaluation of experimental programmes

Civic education

External evaluation of the experimental civic education curriculum was conducted in 12 primary and secondary schools in the 2012/2013 and 2013/2014 school years.

Health education

The goal of this project was to conduct an independent and professional external evaluation of the experimental health education curriculum. It also examined attitudes and behaviours through accompanying questionnaires for teachers and parents. Pre-testing of the health education exam items was carried out in primary and secondary schools in 2013. The initial examination, which was held in September 2013, was followed by statistical and psychometric analyses of the initial examination results.

7. What other policies may influence levels of attainment and achievement for all learners?

- De-centralisation or level of local or school autonomy
- Accountability systems
- Curriculum policy
- School organisation and teaching approaches
- Support services
- Multi-agency working, etc.



8. Please provide a short commentary/critical reflection on the main policy challenges

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ANNEX 1. EXAMPLE OF PRACTICE TO RAISE LEARNER ACHIEVEMENT

Example submitted by: Jadranka Bjelica

Contact person: Jadranka Bjelica, principal of Fran Krsto Frankopan primary school, Zagreb.

1. Location of school/learning community and short description of context

Fran Krsto Frankopan primary school is located in the Croatian capital city of Zagreb and was founded in 1952. The economic trends are considered to be above average in comparison with the national level, considering the fact that the school is in the capital, which is considered to be the economic centre of the country.

2. Summary information on school/learning community

Fran Krsto Frankopan is a public school. The learners range from age 7 to 14 (1st to 8th grade). There are 440 learners in 24 forms, with two forms of learners with special needs. The teaching staff consist of 13 classroom teachers and 27 subject teachers. Besides the teachers, other members of school staff are as follows:

- management team: head teacher;
- professional support team: pedagogue, social pedagogue, speech therapist, school librarian;
- two special educational teachers;
- 18 staff who are not class-based.

Learners come from families with different socio-economic backgrounds. About 15% of learners in mainstream classes have special learning difficulties and 15% come from national minority groups. There are two forms which have learners with SEN included in mainstream classes. Some learners come from different countries. It is one of the schools in which learners who do not know enough Croatian language can learn it, supported by the Croatian Ministry of Science and Education.

3. Summary of key feature/strengths of current practice

The vision of Fran Krsto Frankopan school:

A school that enables the learners' regular and quality social and intellectual development, harmonised with labour market needs and modern teaching trends.



The school's mission is to:

- help learners and their parents to prepare for their successful participation in the labour market when they reach adulthood;
- build qualitative interpersonal relationships between learners, parents, teachers and the local community;
- nurture values such as trust, love and co-operation;
- teach and support learners during the learning process.

The long-term goals of the school are:

- to provide a high quality indoor and outdoor learning environment;
- to ensure that learners achieve through clear goals and that success is celebrated;
- to work in partnership with parents and the local community;
- to recognise the importance of quality professional development for staff.

The school motto is 'Success for all!'

The school aims to give learners opportunities to express themselves through a wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as:

- Choir
- Sport
- Journalism
- Drama
- Glagolitic script studies
- Traditional and modern dance
- Art and craft
- Cooking
- Chess
- Gardening
- Model rocket making.

The school is also keen for parents to be involved. Some parents offer their skills and support learners in a variety of ways, like helping with extra-curricular activities.

The school is a vital part of the community. Staff firmly believe that they can 'make a difference' by providing a quality education for all learners. There is a clear purpose in providing a caring and supportive environment in which learners can maximise their potential. The school achieves its primary purpose of a quality education by creating a safe, caring and respectful learning environment which is stimulating and challenging and by developing each learner's unique potential.



The school participated in Comenius Schools' Partnership 2013–2015: My Home, Our Planet, Your Choice (My Hope), with schools from Denmark, France, Turkey, Spain and Germany.

The school is one of four international entrepreneurial schools in Croatia, involved in a project about entrepreneurial learning organised by SEECEL.

It is also a centre for practice for students from the Department of Inclusive Education and Rehabilitation in the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation Sciences at the University of Zagreb and for students from the Academy of Fine Arts at the University of Zagreb.

The school has three teacher advisers in the areas of physical health culture, class teaching and teaching learners with special needs. Two of them are leaders of the county professional committee of teachers.

4. Data/information available

School Inspection

School inspection is one of the responsibilities of the Ministry of Science and Education. The activities, rights, duties, powers and the manner of work of school inspections are regulated by the School Inspection Act (Official Gazette of the Republic of Croatia No. 50/95 and 73/97).

School inspection oversees the legality of the activities performed by pre-primary, primary and secondary schools. It also oversees the activities of boarding homes and other legal entities that carry out educational activities, with the exception of higher education institutions.

The inspection procedure is initiated ex-officio. School inspectors must consider reports submitted by citizens that relate to activities within the scope of its responsibilities. They must also report back to the citizens on the measures taken. Teachers and management boards affected by an inspection receive a Review of Inspections as an internal document.

Self-evaluation and external evaluation of schools

This area is covered by the National Centre for External Evaluation of Education (NCVVO). School self-evaluation is a collaborative, reflective process of internal school review. It provides teachers with a means of systematically looking at how they teach and how learners learn. It helps schools and teachers to improve outcomes for learners.

During school self-evaluation, the principal, pedagogical service and teachers engage in reflective enquiry on the work of the school, under the direction of the NCVVO and in consultation with parents and learners. It is an evidence-based approach, which involves gathering evidence from a range of sources and making judgments, with a view to bringing about improvements in learning. Self-evaluation requires schools to address the following key questions with regard to an aspect or aspects of its work:

- How well are we doing?
- How do we know?
- How can we find out more?



- What are our strengths?
- What are our areas for improvement?
- How can we improve?

The external and self-evaluation reports for each school are internal documents.

5. Focus of example/work to raise achievement

Pedagogical and teaching approaches

'Quality teaching is based on personalised learning and the application of inclusive pedagogical principles. It includes the flexible use of various teaching strategies, as well as teacher collaboration, in order to increase understanding and determine how and when to use these strategies. It also requires the pedagogy for the application of technology which can promote personalised learning.'

Student-centred teaching

This is based on the results of action research undertaken by two classroom teachers, Sanja Božić (4.b) and Irena Mihaljevic (3.a), during the 2010–2011 school year. It includes work on modern strategies and methods that were implemented during the action research. Action research was conducted as part of research projects at the Faculty of Teacher Education: New Educational Technologies and Lifelong Learning, Learning by Discovery and Research in teaching nature and society. The research was carried out under the authority of the Ministry of Science and Education, with the consent of parents. During the action research, various elements of reform pedagogy were implemented (Montessori, Waldorf and Freinet pedagogy), as well as elements of democratic education and education for active citizenship. Sanja Božić won the ISSA Certificate of Excellence, international recognition from the International Step by Step Association awarded to educators and teachers for high quality teaching focused on children.

6. Summary information about developments/current work in this area

Target group: learners in the 3rd and 4th grades

Practical strategies

1. *The teacher offered activities that encourage higher-order thinking and problem-solving.*

Objective: to reveal individual interests and abilities, encourage learners to mentally solve problems.

Activities: Tasks were set in a classroom for a week. Learners chose them according to personal interests. Learners successfully implemented the tasks, the teacher was given an insight into the process of learning and the individual interests and abilities of learners.



2. *The teacher used a wide range of active learning that addressed all the learners' developmental areas.*

Objective: to involve every learner in communication, to detect personality, skills and abilities, to develop self-confidence, to adopt a culture of behaviour and oral expression.

Activities: In the morning, learners shared a favourite book. Most learners improved their communication skills, the questions that they asked were structured better and shy learners showed greater confidence.

3. *The teacher:*

- *offers activities that encourage exploration, experimentation, self-discovery and creativity;*
- *introduces the teaching objectives to learners and encourages them to think about the process and the results of their own learning.*

Objectives:

- Encourage learners to actively participate, connecting the content of school subjects, develop critical thinking, creativity, independence and educational objectives closer to life.
- Learners were asked to complete the self-assessment list, on which they should set a goal every day. At the end of the day, they marked their achievement.

Activities: Learners worked in groups. From material they brought, they built cities, naming the streets and institutions and creating a story about the city. They made a notice informing residents about a city tour. Each group chose a tour guide who described the city. It ended with a competition to determine house numbers and the appointment of what they learned about the city. Through this, learners repeated the nouns. On the board were the self-assessment lists that learners complete every day.

Learners were active and tried to achieve the goal. The level of knowledge acquired was higher, the creative work and independence were higher and they were more motivated and learned more.

4. *The teacher offers activities that foster children's sense of individuality and identity.*

Objective: to encourage learners to use a calendar and understand dates, months of the year and seasons by linking them with their date of birth and personal experience.

Activities: Games in a circle. Learners form a circle in order of date of birth, to make them aware of the continuum of time, connecting months with the season to which it belongs.

Designing calendars. Learners allocate a specific colour to each month. They make a circular panel displaying the months of the year with a single colour and include a photo in their birthday month.

The learners connect new concepts with personal data. They get to know each other better, expressing their experience of the seasons through colour and personal identity through birth dates.



5. *The teacher uses a wide range of active learning that addresses all of a learner's developmental areas.*

Objective: to encourage learners to actively participate and develop critical thinking, creativity, co-operation and independence.

Activities: Collaborative group reading, in which each group processes the book differently.

Group tasks:

- designing a cover story;
- creating an alternative ending to the story;
- creating a comic book of the story;
- dramatising the story;
- designing shoes from the story;
- write an advertisement to present the book to interested customers;
- write a letter to friend, explaining why the friend should read the story.

While working on common tasks, learners assign roles, collaborate, discuss, listen actively, respect the opinions of others and explore possible solutions.

6. *The teacher connects new concepts and skills with learners' previous knowledge and experience and offers learners activities that encourage exploration, experimentation, self-discovery and creativity.*

Objective: to introduce learners to eating habits and table manners and to link passive knowledge with everyday situations.

Activities: Development of the pyramid diet study – how to eat healthily. Learners:

- classify foods and determine research questions;
- design a daily menu that meets both their tastes and the criteria of a healthy diet;
- create a comic book on dining etiquette;
- survey parents and evaluate the results of their work, which teaches them to conduct research, infer and represent their results using graphs;
- keep a food diary over a weekend.

Outcomes

According to quality indicators related to educational standards, the following outcomes are visible:

- Learners' attitude to learning; their understanding of themselves and others and their levels of attainment. Learners enjoy their learning, are motivated to learn, and expect to achieve as learners.



- Learning outcomes. Learners demonstrate the knowledge, skills and understanding required by the primary curriculum, they achieve the stated learning objectives for the term and year.
- Learning experiences. These are demonstrated in learners' levels of engagement and self-reflection on their progress and development as lifelong learners.
- Teachers' individual practice. This is demonstrated in:
 - teachers' knowledge and skills;
 - teachers' use of practices that progress learning;
 - teachers' use of appropriate teaching strategies;
 - their responsiveness to individual learning needs.
- Teachers' collaborative practice. This is shown through:
 - teachers' professional development and collaboration;
 - teachers' co-operation to extend learners' learning opportunities;
 - their collective use of reliable assessment practices;
 - the value they place on professional development and professional collaboration and their engagement in it;
 - their contribution to building the capacity of all staff by sharing examples and expertise.

7. Key learning points from this example

A learner-centred model of teaching puts learners at the heart of teaching. Learners:

- are active participants in their processes;
- learn at their own pace and use their own strategies;
- are more intrinsically than extrinsically motivated;

Teaching is individualised rather than standardised. Using this teaching model, learners develop the skills required to learn, such as problem-solving, critical thinking and reflective thinking. The teaching is based on the adaptation of learners' different learning styles (National Centre for Research on Teacher Learning, 1999).

By introducing and using teaching strategies focused on learners, the following results are achieved:

- Learners' intrinsic motivation is increased.
- Interpersonal communication is promoted.
- Disruptive behaviour is reduced.
- A quality relationship between teachers and learners is developed.
- Research and active learning are promoted.



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- Learners have a growing sense of responsibility towards learning.
 - The efficiency and productivity of each learner is increased.

8. Supporting materials (web links, papers, presentations, etc.)

SEECCEL videos:

- [OS FKF prezentacija](#)
- [PhotoStory4](#)
- [Teacher Sanja Bozic, OS Frana Krste Frankopana, Zagreb](#)
- [Sanja Bozic and Irena Mihaljevic](#)
- [Pedagogie a la carte – Sanja Bozic and Irena Mihaljevic](#)