

EUROPEAN AGENCY STATISTICS ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Malta 2014/2015 data background information

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

How the official decision of special educational needs (SEN) used in the country relates to the agreed EASIE operational definition

An official decision leads to a pupil being recognised as eligible for additional educational support to meet their learning needs.

Pupils' legal entitlements under what legislation

Inclusion Policy 2000.

How additional support is understood within the country context

Support from a Learning Support Assistant in one of the following forms:

- Full-time one-to-one
- Shared support in the same class
- Shared.

Other support services are provided by the National School Support Services (NSSS), within the Directorate for Educational Services (DES).

The criteria for an official decision are

There has been an educational assessment procedure involving a multi-disciplinary team

Educational assessments are usually carried out individually by an educational psychologist, dyslexia specialist or by a multi-disciplinary team within an Assessment Unit that falls under the Ministry of Health.

The multi-disciplinary team includes members from within and external to the pupil's school

The multi-disciplinary team comprises the following members:

- Psychologist
- Occupational therapist
- Speech pathologist
- Physiotherapist
- Medical consultant
- Ear, nose and throat specialist
- Ophthalmology specialist
- Early intervention teacher (DES) for children under the age of 5.



There is a legal document which describes the support the pupil is eligible to receive and which is used as the basis for planning

There is a document, but it is supported by a policy, not by legislation. Said document is the Statement of Needs Report, issued by the Statementing Moderating Panel. The Statement provides recommendations to the DES for the provision of a Learning Support Assistant. It provides guidance for the school administration on initiating the Individual Education Plan (IEP) process and on referrals to any other recommended services.

The official decision is subject to a formal, regular review process

Since the establishment of a separate Review Panel, more often than not the Statementing Moderating Panel now recommends a review date for the Statement.

The Review Panel may review a Statement based on the Statementing Moderating Panel's recommendation. The Review Panel usually sends an inclusion specialist to observe the pupil in school and issue a report on the current situation. The school is requested to provide any new assessments, teacher feedback, IEP reports and other documents.

Alternatively, the Review Panel may review a Statement when parents, the school or both so request. The parents, or the school together with the parents, have to fill in the Review Form, formally requesting a review of the Statement. They must also submit any new documentation, IEP report and other documents.

Finally, the parents, together with the learner and the school, are invited for an interview with the Panel. The Panel evaluates all relevant documents and interview proceedings and issues a review of the Statement of Needs.

Proxy indicator(s) for the 80% benchmark used for the country's data collection

Placement in a mainstream class implies over 80% or more with non-disabled peers.

Details on what the country proxy is

Pupils with SEN in mainstream classes with non-disabled peers.

Why this proxy was used

Data on individual pupils exists, but is not readily available since it is not held in a database. Steps are being taken to develop such a database.

Difficulties in using any proxy

As a rule, all pupils who attend mainstream classes spend most of their time in mainstream classes. They may receive services from resource centres, but the amount of time is less than 20%.



Detailed description of what is meant by ‘out of formal education’ within the country’s data collection

The 2011 International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) defines Formal Education as follows:

*[...] education that is institutionalised, intentional and planned through public organizations and recognised private bodies and, – in their totality – constitute the formal education system of a country. Formal education programmes are thus recognised as such by the relevant national education or equivalent authorities, e.g. any other institution in cooperation with the national or sub-national educational authorities. Formal education consists mostly of initial education [...] Vocational education, special needs education and some parts of adult education are often recognised as being part of the formal education system. Qualifications from formal education are by definition recognised and, therefore, are within the scope of ISCED. Institutionalised education occurs when an organization provides structured educational arrangements, such as student-teacher relationships and/or interactions, that are specially designed for education and learning (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2011, *International Standard Classification of Education ISCED 2011*, p. 11).*

Information on pupils considered out of education (i.e. those not in formal education as per the ISCED definition)

This may include newcomer children who are asylum seekers, refugees or economic migrants both from EU countries and third countries. It may also include migrant citizens who settle in Malta, but do not register their children in schools. In the case of EU citizens, due to Schengen Area procedures, very limited data is available about their arrival.

A small number of Maltese children are not registered in a local school. However, this is negligible since during the calendar year the Good Shepherd Programme is conducted, which cross-checks the birth register with the school registers. Social support workers contact any parents who have not registered their children in a school in order to ensure that they do so.

Country definitions of formal, non-formal and informal education

In Malta, home tuition only exists in exceptional circumstances when children may be absent from school for long periods, due to illness or other conditions which prevent them from attending school.

Provision of data on private sector education

The data collection covers all sectors of education, including numbers for the pupil population in the private sector.



Private sector education in the country

The private sector includes church schools, which are grant-maintained schools, and independent schools.

Pupil population counted for each relevant question

All sectors have been included. Information is sourced from the Quality Assurance Department.

Pupil age ranges

Usual pupil age ranges in the country at ISCED level 1: 5 to 11 (primary education)

Usual pupil age ranges in the country at ISCED level 2: 12 to 13 (middle school)

Usual pupil age ranges in the country at ISCED level 3: 14 to 16 (senior school)

As a result of the reform, the secondary cycle has been divided into middle school and senior school. Age 16 marks the end of compulsory education.