Inclusive Education and Classroom Practice in Secondary Education

Summary Report

2005

European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education

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SUMMARY

This project **Inclusive Education and Classroom Practice in Secondary Education** is an extension of the work that has already been completed in relation to primary education. It makes use of the same study framework, goals and methodology. Based on an international literature review, case studies in 14 European countries, expert visits in five countries as well as various discussions involving experts and the European Agency National Co-ordinators, a number of features regarding the development of inclusive classrooms within secondary schools have been identified. These findings could be regarded as possible strategies for improving inclusion within secondary schools. In addition, the country case study reports and the reports of the exchange site visits provide expansion upon some of the strategies identified.

In line with the conclusions of the primary school phase study, it can be argued that within the secondary school phase **what is good for students with special educational needs (SEN) is good for all students**.

> *Case study, UK: In particular the school was identified as being particularly successful in that it: achieves high standards in GCSE examinations [national, public 16+ examinations], provides good teaching in all areas of the curriculum (…) provides well for students who are physically disabled or who have significant learning difficulties (...) It reinforces other evidence that inclusive schools are generally effective on a range of measures and address the needs of all students.*

This study was confined to the secondary school phase, i.e. the age group of 11–14 year olds. The earlier study that was focussed on the primary school phase looked at the 7-11 year old age group.

The findings regarding **classroom practice** suggest seven groups of factors that are thought to be effective for inclusive education:

Co-operative teaching

Teachers need support from, and to be able to co-operate with, a range of colleagues within the school as well as professionals from outside the school.

Co-operative learning

Peer tutoring is effective in cognitive and social-emotional respects. Students who help each other, especially within a system of flexible and well-considered pupil grouping, benefit from learning together.

Collaborative problem solving

For teachers who need help in including students with behavioural problems, a systematic way of approaching undesired behaviour is an effective tool for decreasing the amount and intensity of disturbances during the lessons. Clear class rules, agreed with all the students (alongside appropriate incentives) have proven to be effective.

Heterogeneous grouping

Heterogeneous grouping and a more differentiated approach to education are necessary and effective when dealing with the diversity of students in a classroom.

Effective teaching

The arrangements mentioned above should take place within an overall approach where education is based on assessment, evaluation and high expectations. All students - including students with SEN - demonstrate improvements in their learning with systematic monitoring, assessment, planning and evaluation of their work. The curriculum can be geared to individual needs and additional support can be introduced adequately through the Individual Educational Plan (IEP). This IEP should fit within the normal curriculum.

Home area system

In some schools the organisation of the delivery of the curriculum has been changed drastically: students stay in a common area consisting of two or three classrooms

where nearly all education takes places. A small team of teachers is responsible for the education provided in the home area.

Alternative ways of learning

To support the inclusion of students with special needs, several models that focus on *learning strategies* have been developed over the past few years. Such programmes aim to teach students how to learn and to solve problems. Furthermore it can be argued that giving students greater responsibility for their own learning can contribute to the success of inclusion in secondary schools.

1 INTRODUCTION

Provision of special needs education within the secondary phase of schooling is a complex topic in the special education and curriculum field. Various reports (see European Agency studies on provision of special education in Europe, 1998, 2003 as examples) suggest that inclusion generally develops well in the primary education phase, but in the secondary phase serious problems emerge. It can be argued that increasing subject specialisation and the different organisational strategies in secondary schools result in serious difficulties for student inclusion at the secondary level. This situation is reinforced by the fact that generally, the gap between students with SEN and their peers increases with age. Furthermore, in many countries, secondary education is usually characterised by a "streaming" model: students are placed into different streams (or class groupings) on the basis of their perceived levels of achievement.

> *Literature review, Sweden: Older students experience significantly more barriers in school than younger ones (...) Problems are not related to diagnoses and mobility, but more to school activities and organisation.*

> *Literature review, Switzerland: The transition from the usually integrative schooling at the primary level to the generally segregated secondary level may be regarded as the decisive selection moment in the students' careers. The transition from the more integrative forms of schooling within a class to the division into achievement groups leaves its mark on the remaining time spent in school – in addition, students with SEN cannot simply set aside their "baggage" from the time spent in primary school, but bring it along into this sharply segregated form of instruction.*

Another complex topic particularly relevant in the secondary phase is the current emphasis on *educational outcomes*. The pressure for increased academic output being placed on

education systems can be seen to contribute to student placement in special schools and classes.

> ***Literature review, Spain****: The fact that secondary education is characterised by following an excessively academic curriculum for a homogeneous group of students, makes it difficult nowadays to establish curricular adaptation processes for evidently heterogeneous students.*

Of course, it is not surprising that societies generally demand that far more attention is paid to the outcomes of investments in education. As a result, "market thinking" is introduced into education and parents start to behave as "clients". Schools are made "accountable" for the results they achieve and the tendency to judge schools on the basis of their academic output increases. It should be stressed that this development poses significant dangers for vulnerable students. In this sense, the wish to achieve higher academic outputs and the wish to include students with SEN could be seen as being mutually exclusive. However, examples from the current study suggest this is not necessarily the case:

> ***Case study, UK****: The head teacher commented on the way that the school had developed since the initial inclusion both in the range of special educational needs which it was able to address and also in terms of its overall academic achievement. The school had successfully dealt with the tensions between these two developments. Ten months prior to the research visit, the school had been subject to a formal inspection by the Office for Standards in Education, which operates a national programme of inspection for all maintained schools in England. The report was extremely favourable and the school was rated as 'good'. [The OFSTED report stated] "It is justifiably proud of its inclusive and multicultural ethos within which it achieves high standards for its students and fosters a climate of mutual care. Relationships between management, staff and students are very good and the school is led with*

> *commitment and integrity. It provides good value for money."*

Earlier European Agency studies suggest most countries agree that the topic of inclusion within secondary phase education is a main area of concern. Specific problem areas are perceived as being insufficient teacher training and less positive teacher attitudes. Teacher attitudes are generally seen as decisive for achieving inclusive education and these attitudes depend heavily on their experience – specifically with students with SEN - their training, the support available and other conditions such as the class size and their workload.

> ***Literature review, Austria****: (...) it was clearly established that the positive attitude of teachers and the school community vis-à-vis inclusion is the primary driving force for successful inclusion, whatever model is selected. The innovative momentum generated by those schools can even overcome difficult constraints (e.g. insufficient number of hours allowed for related monitoring, poorly equipped classes, too many teachers in the team, etc).*

Within secondary education, teachers seem to be less willing to include students with SEN in their classes. Dealing with students with SEN does indeed ask for dedication and sensitivity towards needs.

> ***Case study, the Netherlands****: (Referring to a 12-year-old boy with Asperger's syndrome). Once one of his teachers concluded that he hadn't done all his homework. When the tutor asked him, she found out that because of the limited space in his diary he could not write down all the homework in one line. The student refused to use the other lines because he felt these were reserved for the other subjects. Also in the classroom he hadn't corrected all his errors during lessons because there wasn't enough space in his notebook. The tutor suggested to write down his lessons on the right page and to make*

notes about corrections on the left. Since this solution doesn't result in his notebook becoming a mess, the student agreed and the problem was solved. He was very rigid about this.

In this study the focus will be on these and other issues that relate to inclusion at secondary school level. Readers interested in the documents that form the basis of this synthesis report are referred to the Inclusive Education and Classroom Practice area of the Agency website www.european-agency.org (link on the home page) where the following documents can be found:

1. The International Literature Review on classroom practice: *Inclusive Education and Effective Classroom Practice in Secondary Schools*
2. The reports of the Exchanges in five countries
3. The country Case Study reports from the 14 participating countries.

Readers are also able to access all the information from the primary school education project from this web area.

2   FRAMEWORK, GOALS AND METHODOLOGY

Framework

The general framework for the secondary education project was similar to the one conducted within the primary education phase. The focus of the study was effective classroom practice within inclusive education. It was assumed that inclusive education mainly depends upon what teachers do in classrooms. However, what teachers do in classrooms depends on their training, experiences, beliefs and attitudes as well as on the situation in class, school and factors outside the school (local and regional provision, policy, financing and so on).

> *Literature review, Spain: It is clear that students' learning problems are not exclusively derived from their difficulties to learn, but from the way schools are organised and the features of the educational response in classrooms are directly related to it [i.e. such learning problems].*

> *Literature review, UK: Although the case studies showed variations in understanding of "inclusion", expected outcomes and the process needed to get there, there was consensus that inclusive practice necessitated whole school reform, the elimination of the concept of "remedial teaching" and curriculum development by way of content and presentation.*

Compared to the earlier study focussing upon the primary educational level, in secondary education the challenge is even greater, as in many countries the organisation of the curriculum is subject-driven and as a result students have to regularly move between classrooms.

> *Literature review, Austria: External differentiation implies an organisational separation of the class as a whole, as children do not remain with their core group, but change to different classrooms for joint lessons with other students from parallel classes. In many instances, this has turned out to be a serious*

disadvantage for the integration of SEN children, since social continuity cannot be ensured.

The way secondary education generally is organised in many countries results in some serious challenges for students with SEN. It is therefore highly relevant to identify some of the strategies schools have taken to overcome this problem.

The way in which teachers and schools realise inclusion within classrooms can take different forms. It was the stated goal of this study to describe these various approaches to inclusive education and to make information about them more widely available.

In order to achieve this goal, a number of key questions were addressed within the study. The main question was: *how can differences in the classroom be dealt with?* An additional question also had to be considered: *which conditions are necessary for dealing with differences in classrooms?*

The centre of attention for the study has been the work of teachers. However, it was also recognised that teachers mainly learn and develop their practice as a result of input from significant key people in their immediate environment: the head teacher, colleagues and professionals in or around the school. These are the professionals who are therefore considered to be the main target groups for this study.

Goals
The main task of this study has been to provide key people with knowledge about possible strategies for handling differences in the classroom and school and to inform them about the conditions necessary for the successful implementation of these strategies. The project has attempted to answer key questions concerning inclusive education. In the first instance, it is argued that an understanding of *what* works within inclusive settings is necessary. Furthermore, it is felt that a deeper understanding of *how* inclusive education works is needed. Thirdly, it is important to know *why* it is working (the conditions for implementation).

Methodology

Different types of activities have contributed to answering the questions described above. As a first step, the study has resulted in a report with literature-based descriptions of the different models of inclusive education and the conditions necessary for those models to be successfully implemented. Both the methodology and the results of the literature reviews are described extensively in the publication: *Inclusive Education and Effective Classroom Practice in Secondary Schools*, which has been published as a downloadable e-book (Middelfart, 2004: www.european-agency.org). The goal of the literature review phase was to reveal *what* was working in inclusive settings.

For the second phase - the case studies - the focus was on *how inclusion works* and *what is required to make it work.* The member countries of the European Agency analysed examples of good practice (case studies) within their countries. They were asked to focus on the classroom practice and to describe the characteristics of the educational programme. In addition, the context and conditions for that programme were taken into account; particularly those conditions and context variables that were regarded as necessary for implementing and maintaining the programme. These conditions and context variables may exist at several levels: the teacher (skills, knowledge, attitudes and motivation); the classroom; the school and the school team; support services; financial and policy issues and so on.

Finally, through a programme of exchanges, experts have visited, analysed and evaluated examples of practice in order to reveal the most important features of effective inclusive classroom practice. Through visits to different locations where inclusive education is practised and discussions with the experts participating in these visits, a more qualitative and broader understanding of what, how and why inclusion may or may not work was achieved. The following countries acted as hosts for the exchanges: Luxembourg, Norway, Spain, Sweden and UK (England). The exchanges were held during the Summer, 2003.

Different sources of information have been used for the findings presented in this summary report: firstly, the findings of the reviews of literature (both national and international). Secondly, the descriptions of all the site examples (case studies) in the 14 participating countries were used. Finally, the information regarding the exchange activities was drawn upon. In this way, a holistic approach to the issue of classroom practice was achieved, relying on both research and information from daily classroom practice**.**

In the next chapter, an overview is given of the features of classroom practice in inclusive schools for secondary education. An indicative list of conditions for inclusion is presented in the last chapter.

3   EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM PRACTICE

Dealing with diversity forms one of the biggest challenges within European schools and classrooms. Inclusion can be organised in several ways and on different levels, but essentially, it is the team of teachers who has to deal with an increasing diversity of student needs within their school and classes and has to adapt or prepare the curriculum in such a way that the needs of all students - those with SEN and their peers - are sufficiently met.

> ***Literature review, Spain****: This is why, if schools intend to go further in [paying] attention to the heterogeneous characteristics of students, it is necessary that they think over such aspects as their organisation and performance, the existence of co-ordination and co-operative work among teachers, the co-operation of the whole educational community, the use of resources and educational practice.*

The overall study points to at least seven groups of factors that seem to be effective for inclusive education. Not surprisingly, some of these were also mentioned in our study on primary education: Co-operative Teaching, Co-operative Learning, Collaborative Problem Solving, Heterogeneous Grouping and Effective Teaching approaches. In addition, two factors seem to be specifically relevant for secondary education school level: Home Area System and Alternative Learning Strategies.

In the sections below these seven factors are defined, expanded upon and illustrated with direct quotes from reports from the country exchange visits, the case studies and the literature reviews.

(i) Co-operative Teaching

Teachers need to co-operate with and need practical and flexible support from a range of colleagues. At times a student with SEN needs specific help that cannot be given by the teacher during the daily

classroom routine. In such circumstances other teachers and support personnel come on to the scene and the issues of flexibility, good planning, co-operation and team teaching provide the challenges.

The study suggests that inclusive education is enhanced by several factors that can be grouped under the heading of co-operative teaching. Co-operative teaching refers to all kinds of co-operation between the class teacher and a teaching assistant, a teacher colleague or another professional. Characteristic for co-operative teaching is that students with SEN do not have to be removed from the classroom in order to receive support, but that this support can be provided in the classroom. This stimulates the sense of belonging for the student and boosts his or her self-esteem, which in itself is a strong facilitator for learning.

A second feature of co-operative teaching is that it provides a solution for the problem of the isolation of teachers. Teachers can learn from each other's approaches and provide appropriate feedback. As a result, co-operation is not only effective for the cognitive and emotional development of students with SEN, but it also seems to meet the needs of teachers. It is often mentioned in country case studies of good practice that teachers are eager to learn from approaches used by other colleagues.

Case study, Ireland: The school has a School Support Team that consists of the Principal Teacher, the Deputy Principal, the guidance teachers, the learning support teacher, the resource teachers and the Home/School/Community liaison teacher. This team meets every week to discuss the needs of students with behavioural and learning difficulties and to plan to meet these needs.

Case study, Austria: Teamwork requires an increased capacity for communication and conflict management, for assigning tasks and for consultation with all players. This part of the work is

particularly time-consuming. However, teamwork and team teaching are extremely fascinating aspects in the work of all players. The need to work closer together than "normal secondary general school teachers" was a crucial motivating factor for taking on this task. Teamwork and the related exchange of experience are perceived as immensely enriching.

Expert visit, Luxembourg*: All teachers wrote down their observations in a book, which is accessible to those who are involved in teaching a specific class. It is a kind of internal communication between the teachers sharing information about behavioural and learning difficulties of the students to those who work with them.*

(ii) Co-operative Learning

Students that help each other, especially within a system of flexible and well-considered student grouping, benefit from learning together.

The study appears to show that peer tutoring or co-operative learning is effective in both the cognitive and social-emotional areas of students' learning and development. In addition, there are no indications that the more able students suffer from such situations in terms of lacking new challenges or opportunities.

There are different concepts used to describe educational techniques where students work together in pairs: peer tutoring, co-operative learning and peer coaching. In most of these techniques the teacher forms heterogeneous pairs (and sometimes trios) consisting of roles as tutor and student (and sometimes also an observer). All roles are reciprocal: the less able student also plays the role of tutor.

This approach has a significantly positive effect on the self-confidence of students and at the same time it stimulates social interactions within the peer group. All students benefit from co-

operative learning: the student who explains to the other student retains information better and for longer and the needs of the student who is learning are better addressed by a peer whose level of understanding is only slightly higher than his or her own level.

Findings suggest that co-operative learning approaches not only have positive outcomes, but also that they are relatively easy to implement.

> ***Expert visit, Sweden****: We saw students discussing their tasks not just during the lessons, but also during the breaks. Co-operation with schoolmates with special needs is a natural situation for them to develop and experience empathy. Students experience being together, listening to each other's opinion.*

> ***International literature review****: Classwide peer tutoring sessions were scheduled twice a week for fifteen minutes. Teachers were asked to form heterogeneous teams that included three students of different performance levels. During the sessions each student played the role of tutor, tutee, and observer. The tutor would select a problem or task to be completed by the tutee and the observer provided social reinforcement. The teacher developed assistance procedures.*

(iii) Collaborative Problem Solving

Collaborative problem solving refers to a systematic way of approaching undesirable behaviour in the classroom. This includes a set of clear class rules, agreed with all the students alongside appropriate incentives and disincentives for behaviour.

Findings from country reports and the international literature review show that the use of collaborative problem solving

techniques decreases the amount and intensity of disturbances during lessons.

It is emphasised that the development of effective class rules are negotiated with the whole class and that these rules are clearly visible in the classroom. In some of the case studies, the set of rules were included in a contract to be signed by the students. There are several ways of developing class rules, but the case studies point at the need for a designated meeting at the beginning of the school year. It is also important that the class rules and the incentives and disincentives are also communicated to parents.

> ***Expert visit, Luxembourg****: Development of a class-contract: Students and teachers negotiate and agree upon ten rules. That is to say that everyone should respect the rules and orientate his/her behaviour according to them. The target of this method was a type of collaborative problem-solving situation.*

> ***Expert visit, UK****: An equal opportunities policy was employed and this was openly displayed on classroom walls. A behaviour code was also shared. Pastoral lessons were held to reinforce these codes. School assemblies were used as a platform for feedback on student behaviour. Classroom and school rules were negotiated with students. Parents were also called upon to support their child's compliance with the school code of practice. They had to sign an agreement to pledge their commitment. These contracts with parents and students were signed every school year.*

> ***Case study, Germany:*** *At the end of the week so called "Friday circles" or the classroom committee takes place. Here the events of the week are reflected upon, problems discussed, and solutions developed together. Teachers, as well as students, can express criticism, but also their joy and experiences of success during the school week.*

(iv) Heterogeneous Grouping

> Heterogeneous grouping of students refers to the implementation of educational settings where students of the same age stay together in mixed ability classrooms. The basis of the concept of a mixed ability class is to avoid selection and to respect natural variability in characteristics of students.

Heterogeneous grouping and a more differentiated approach to education are necessary and effective when dealing with a diversity of students in the classroom. It underlines the principle that all students are equal and that streaming in secondary education contributes to the marginalisation of students with SEN. Advantages of this organisational approach are obvious at the cognitive and especially emotional and social levels. It also contributes to overcoming the increasing gap between students with SEN and their peers. Furthermore it promotes positive attitudes of both students and teachers towards students with SEN.

This finding is very important given the expressed needs of countries in relation to handling diversity within classrooms. Of course, heterogeneous grouping is also a prerequisite for co-operative learning.

Expert visit, Norway: Students are grouped in multiple ways for different reasons, all according to what is happening in the school or to the goals the school tries to achieve. At first all the students at the school are grouped by their age into grade levels and then each grade level is grouped into two classes that still collaborate very often. During lessons, learning groups of different sizes - beginning with pairs and ending up with the whole class working together - are formed.

Case study, Austria: The students work one third of the lessons with individual weekly plans, subjects

like biology or geography are mainly organised in projects, sometimes in a cross-curricular way. Partner and group work dominate the daily work. In German, Maths and English students are not separated in three ability levels (3 different rooms) as usual. Most of the time they work together on one topic in a common class according to their abilities.

(v) Effective Teaching

Effective education is based upon monitoring, assessment, evaluation and high expectations. The use of the standard curriculum framework for all students is important. However in many cases adaptation of the curriculum is needed, not only for those with SEN at the lower end of the continuum, but for all students. With regard to students with SEN this approach is defined and set out within the framework of the Individual Educational Plan (IEP).

The case studies highlight important effective education approaches as being: monitoring, assessment, evaluation and high expectations. All students benefit from these approaches, but this is particularly the case for students with SEN. Effective teaching approaches also contribute to the goal of decreasing the gap between students with and without SEN. An important consideration emerging from the country case studies is that the IEP should fit within the normal curriculum framework.

Case study, Spain: We use the mainstream curriculum as a basis and then introduce substantial modifications, but let the students participate as much as possible in the general learning experiences, thereby they can feel integrated in the school. It is crucial that the students are completely integrated in their ordinary group. To guarantee their integration their participation in the current activities of their group must be fostered and they must share at least three basic curriculum subjects, the tutor

lessons and the optional subjects with their classmates.

Case study, Iceland*: Although the student spends most of her school time included in the classroom a big part of the classroom teaching and learning organisation is individual teaching and learning. The student mostly works on her own tasks or projects during language, art, Icelandic and mathematics. The tasks and work in the classroom are differentiated both in mathematics and language. Her study material is adapted and modified to her needs.*

(vi) Home Area System

> In the home area system the organisation of the delivery of the curriculum changes drastically. Students stay in a common area consisting of two or three classrooms where nearly all education takes place. A small team of teachers is responsible for the education provided in the home area.

As pointed out earlier, the increased subject specialisation and the particular organisation of lessons within secondary schools pose some serious difficulties for student with SEN. The case studies show that there are more appropriate ways of dealing with this issue. The home area system is one such model: students stay in their own area consisting of a small number of classrooms and a small group of teachers cover almost all subjects as a group task. For students with SEN in particular, this supports their need to feel a sense of "belonging". It also contributes to the wish to provide a stable and continuous environment and to the need to organise education in a non-streamed way. Finally it enhances teacher co-operation and it provides informal training opportunities for teachers.

Case study, Sweden*: The school has about 55 teachers. They are organised in five teams of 10-12 teachers in each. Every team has responsibility for 4-*

5 classes. Every working team is self-governed economically and has its own educational platform, a concrete plan of the vision of the school. It means that the flexibility of ways of working, schedule (…) and in service training for teachers might be dealt with differently in the five working teams and amongst the students. The students are in mixed aged groups and two teachers teach most of the theoretical subjects. Although the teachers are specialised to teach one or two subjects, in this model they teach other subjects as well. The reason for changing numbers of teachers in class was as the principal says, "to get rid of a tough atmosphere and conflicts among students and between teachers and students. You feel there must be other ways of working to make the students safe. At the school we thought it would be a safer setting if the same teacher were with the class as much as possible". This means that in the school some teachers teach subjects they didn't have in their exam. But as the principal says it has worked: "Firstly, because teachers have an interest in this other subject. Secondly because these teachers get support from a subject mentor, an expert in the subject of interest".

Expert visit, Norway*: The school emphasizes that each class level must be a physical, social and academic unit where all students have a strong connection to their class. The team of each class level consists of two to three class teachers, a special educator, resource or subject teacher, and social educator and/or assistant. The team shares an office, knows all the children and has a joint responsibility for the class-level. The members of each team support each other, collaborate as they plan the work, and co-operate with parents.*

Case study, Luxembourg*: If possible, the class should remain as the same group of students for three years. There is a restricted number of teachers per class, each teacher can take on several subjects.*

The number of teachers is reduced to a minimum in order to ensure a good atmosphere. A permanent team of teachers covers the lessons for three years in order to strengthen the group and build up a better relationship between students and teachers. There is a personalised classroom that reassures the students.

Expert visit, Sweden*: At the school a two-teacher model is used – in every class there is a team of two teachers who are teaching together most of the time. They teach almost all subjects, although they are not qualified for all of them. Besides common teaching duties they observe children, assess them if it is needed and propose special support for their education. As a result teachers always have a partner to plan the process and the activities, get feedback and have a competent partner to observe, evaluate and assess students.*

Literature review, Austria*: Major elements for successful co-operation are small and manageable teams, even if some subjects are taught by teachers without the necessary formal qualifications, and the willingness and ability to co-operate among the participating teachers.*

Literature review, Norway*: Key to this is also ensuring that all students experience good relationships and a sense of belonging, student participation and influence, and good conditions for working together in order to assist the development of good classroom practice.*

(vii) Alternative Learning Strategies

The implementation of alternative learning strategies aims at teaching students how to learn and how to solve problems. Associated with this, schools give students greater responsibility for their own learning.

To support the inclusion of students with special needs, several models that focus on *learning strategies* have been developed over the past few years. In such programmes students do not only learn strategies, but also how to apply the right learning strategy at the right time. It is argued that giving students greater responsibility for their own learning will contribute to the success of inclusion in secondary schools. Information from the countries suggests that a greater emphasis on giving the ownership for learning to students is a successful approach.

> ***Expert visit, Sweden***: *Students are managers of their own learning process. They plan their working time; choose goals and levels and ways to reach goals (...) Another example of building up the responsibility is the timetable. Starting times of lessons in the morning are not strictly set, but there is a half an hour interval and students can choose, but will stay longer after the lesson if they come later in the morning.*

> ***Case study, Iceland***: *The school emphasises enhancing the learning environment and using multiple teaching methods. It is very important to the school staff to have a positive relationship with the students, and that students are responsible and independent in their learning behaviour.*

> ***Case study, Sweden***: *The problem for all students has been to ask questions and to ask for support, which they hadn't learned in their earlier school. In this model where the responsibility for learning is more dependent on each student, questioning is of great importance. But as the teacher says, "the students have started to understand that they are here to learn, that the teachers are there to help them understand and that they, for that reason, must ask for help".*

In this and previous sections a number of effective approaches in secondary schools have been described. These approaches contribute to the process of realising inclusive education:

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education that focuses on providing a curriculum for all. It should be stressed that there are several ways of achieving this goal, but that the case studies have shown that the combination of these approaches is particularly effective. In the next section an indicative overview of conditions for implementing these approaches is presented.

4   CONDITIONS FOR INCLUSION

The goal of this study has been to identify approaches within the curriculum that appear to work within inclusive classes. However there are also many prerequisites for inclusive education. The (research) literature that has been studied as well as the information from case studies and discussions amongst experts all reveals that a number of conditions need to be met with respect to successful inclusion. An indicative overview of these suggested conditions is presented below.

Teachers
Develop positive teacher attitudes:

> ***Literature review, Spain****: (…) it seems that some teachers are learning too easily how to "segregate" our students; to consider that "these" students belong to the support teacher (...) they are the "specials" (...) that are to be the charge of other "specialists".*

Create a sense of "belonging":

> ***Expert visit, Luxembourg****: The students with SEN were looked on as people with their own specific and unique histories and identities. Teachers tried to make students feel as members of a family and of a community as well, increasing in this way their self-esteem. There was a constant effort towards building up the students' self confidence via positive interactions between the members of the class (including the teacher).*

> ***Literature review, Switzerland****: the feeling of "we" is emphasized within the class, which promotes the social integration of all students. In addition, there must be sufficient situations available in which the students really can work, experience and learn together – too much segregation makes the sense of community impossible.*

Introduce appropriate pedagogical skills and time for reflection:

> ***Case study, Norway****: At the same time, taking account of and basing our work on the students' academic and social skills means that we have to allow teachers to develop their own skills. We have therefore offered them courses on (...) preventing reading and writing difficulties. Besides this we plan to provide them with a course about behavioural difficulties – so they know what to do should these arise. We are also interested in ensuring that teachers get the time they need for reflection and to discuss common problems and experiences.*

> ***Literature review, France****: Training and information are the major prerequisites for success in educational integration. All experiments describe the training and exchanges between teaching, educational, and therapeutic teams and parents and students prior to initiatives and during integration (...) Knowing the challenges of integration, the specificities of the disability, their impact on learning, are all types of prior information essential in eliminating the usual reservations when a team receives one or more adolescents with SEN and in creating a dynamic process and favouring personal involvement.*

School
Implement a whole school approach:

> ***Case study, UK****: Whereas it is possible, on account of the way in which most primary schools are organised, for an individual teacher to provide an inclusive classroom in which a group of students can be exposed to the range of the curriculum, this is not possible in secondary schools where there is invariably subject specialism and students move around different teachers in different classrooms. An individual student is not going to have his/her needs met unless all teachers are operating effectively in*

relation to those needs.

Literature review, Spain*: The stronger the feeling of collective responsibility in the high school, the better the educational response towards these students. The collective awareness about some students' difficulties is more effective than the personal will of many teachers that are concerned with providing an appropriate response to their particular issue.*

Provide a flexible support structure:

Literature review, Switzerland*: The instructional form of team-teaching by regular teachers and special education teachers offers many advantages. The students remain in their class without having to leave it for special education measures. Even the other children can profit from and become acquainted with the special education teacher. Both of the teachers can profit from one another professionally, support one another mutually in difficult situations, and derive personal gain from it.*

Case study, Greece*: The co-operation between the support teacher and the class teacher improved gradually over time. The dynamics of the class had changed sufficiently and the class had responded positively. The class teacher was not alone and the exchange of thoughts and the reflection on the methods used helped to modify and conceptualise strategies with respect to the students' needs.*

Develop leadership within the school:

Expert visit, UK*: The principal is a very professional, skilled and visionary leader. He contributes to a good school ethos. He has been there for a long period of time and thus he knows the school very well. He served as an ordinary classroom teacher at the school and thus appears*

empathetic with the conditions under which teachers teach and the learning environments of students.

Case study, Portugal*: The Executive Council of the school has a strong leadership/authority, which is perceived by all. All the internal rules for the development of the school's work are settled in the pedagogic council of the school and belong to an internal regulation act that is strictly applied.*

External Conditions
Implement a clear national policy:

Case study, Iceland: *The Reykjavik Education Service (RES) has a newly established policy for special education. The policy for special education builds on theories of inclusive schooling and practice where each school provides services for all students with or without disabilities. To meet students' needs in general classrooms the RES recommends that schools provide alternative teaching methods, and co-operative teaching, differentiate instruction for all students, use multi-level tasks and projects and create an individual curriculum for students with special needs.*

Case study, Ireland*: Successive Irish governments have adopted a "comprehensive" approach to post-primary schooling, as opposed to the dual approach favoured in other European countries. This policy encourages the enrolment of all students within second-level schools and seeks the provision of a broad curriculum suitable to the aptitudes and interests of the student group.*

Provide flexible funding arrangements that facilitate inclusion:

Expert visit, UK*: The school exercises its right to decide on how to distribute its available funding. Money is allocated to addressing more immediate needs. For example, employing additional teachers*

takes priority over building maintenance, repairs and increasing accessibility.

Develop visionary leadership on the level of the community:

> ***Expert visit, Norway****: The following conditions have a positive influence on the practice at the school: visionary leadership on the level of the school and the level of the municipality and a shared vision and approach to students with SEN. National and local support from policymakers is important.*

> ***Case study, Denmark****: The municipality has adopted a development programme on inclusion and children's development and well-being. The main objective is to keep as many children and young people as possible in ordinary day-care centres and in the mainstream education system, and to create here the necessary framework for their development and well being.*

Create regional co-ordination:

> ***Case study, Portugal****: The Specialised Education Support Services are composed of specialised support teachers, of the Psychology and Guidance Services and by Social Education Support Services and there is a good co-operation between all the professionals (e.g. preparing transition from students' primary-secondary school, description and discussion of cases, development of an IEP and evaluation).*

> ***Case study, Ireland****: It is envisaged that the National Educational Psychological Service will play a major role in the development of a comprehensive system of identifying and assisting all students with learning difficulties and disabilities. An important operating principle for the NEPS is close liaison with psychological and other services provided and funded by Regional Health Boards.*

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5   CONCLUSIONS

Through an international literature review, case studies in 14 European countries, expert visits in five countries as well as various discussions involving experts and the European Agency's National Co-ordinators, inclusive classrooms in secondary schools have been extensively studied. This study has attempted to reveal, analyse, describe and disseminate information on effective classroom practice in inclusive settings.

The study shows that many of the approaches that appeared to be effective in primary schools also contribute to effective inclusion in secondary schools: co-operative teaching, co-operative learning, collaborative problem-solving, heterogeneous grouping and effective teaching. Additionally, the introduction of a home area system and a re-structuring of the learning process seem to be crucial approaches at secondary school level.

The case studies have highlighted the importance of each single factor. However it should be emphasized that some of the case studies seem to have demonstrated that *the combination* of some of these approaches is important for effective classroom practice within inclusive secondary schools.

In particular, the "home area system" – an area that consists of two or three classrooms and where a (small) group of teachers delivers the whole curriculum within a stable environment - appears to be important and effective.

The study also shows that inclusion in secondary schools is a reality: many countries have submitted reports which demonstrate that students with learning difficulties and other special needs can benefit from approaches within mainstream secondary schools.

> ***Case study, Germany****: The passion and the strong will of the parents are the reason for getting an integrative education for N. If she had stayed at the school for mentally disabled children, the challenge she would have been offered would have been*

inappropriately low for a girl of her ability, which would have had subsequent cognitive consequences.

Literature review, Spain: *Other experiences point out that inclusion in regular classes, with support adjusted to the students' special needs in the group context, has a positive influence on their learning process, self-esteem and self-concept and, at the same time, improves their relationship with their friends.*

A final remark needs to be made about the management of change within the secondary education sector. Many of the schools described in the case studies and in the exchange reports have undergone processes of developmental change over many years. The change processes in these secondary schools have sometimes been extensively documented and these reports are a rich source of information for every school that is planning to become more inclusive.

Case study, UK: *The school is unique in that a record of its initial move towards inclusion, which resulted from its response to the Education Act 1981, was published as a book by the head teacher and the head of Learning Support who were at the school through the 1980s (Gilbert and Hart, 1990).*

It has been the intention of this European Agency study to provide findings and raise issues that are worthy of discussion at national, local or school level. The study demonstrates that inclusion is a reality at the secondary education level and there are many ways to take the first steps towards implementing effective inclusive education within secondary schools. It is hoped that this report has provided some ideas of how and where these steps might be taken and under which conditions these steps need to be taken if they are to be truly effective for students with special educational needs.

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