Assessment in Inclusive Settings

Key Issues for Policy and Practice

Assessment in Inclusive Settings

Key Issues for Policy and Practice

European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education

The report is available in fully manipulable electronic formats and in 19 languages in order to provide better access to the information. Electronic versions of this report are available on the Agency's website: www.european-agency.org/site/info/publications/agency/index.html

Cover picture: Francisco Bezerra, age 19. Francisco is a vocational training student at the LPDM Social Resources Centre, Lisbon, Portugal.

European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education

Secretariat	Brussels Office
Østre Stationsvej 33	3 Avenue Palmerston
DK-5000 Odense C Denmark	BE-1000 Brussels Belgium
Tel: +45 64 41 00 20	Tel: +32 2 280 33 59
secretariat@european-agency.org	brussels.office@european-agency.org

www.european-agency.org

CONTENTS

PREFACE

The Representative Board members of the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education highlighted the topic of assessment in inclusive settings as a major area of concern in 2004. It was felt that there was a need to examine the use of assessment processes within inclusive settings and highlight examples of good practice. A main question to be addressed was how to move from a deficit (mainly medically based) assessment approach to an educational or interactive approach.

The initial concerns of the Agency Representative Board members developed into a major project involving 23 countries – Austria, Flemish and French speaking communities of Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, the German Bundesländer, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom (England only).

This summary report presents the main findings from the first phase of the Assessment project. It is based on information from reports describing assessment policy and practice submitted by all participating countries. All of these reports are available from the Assessment project web pages: www.european-agency.org/ site/themes/assessment/

Fifty assessment experts from the participating countries have been involved in project activities so far. Experts' contact details are available at the end of this report and also on the Assessment project web pages. Their input, alongside those of Nick Peacey, Institute of Education, London (who acted as the external expert for this project), Agency Representative Board members and National Co-ordinators, are greatly appreciated. All of their contributions have ensured the success of the Agency Assessment project.

Cor Meijer
Director
European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Agency Assessment Project

In 2005, the Agency began an examination of assessment that supports inclusion in mainstream settings as a major thematic project involving Agency member and observer countries.

The original intention for the project was to examine assessment that informs teaching and learning in inclusive settings. Specifically, the focus of interest was initially identified as being upon a move away from a deficit, 'medically based' model of assessment to assessment that uses an educational/interactive approach that supports teaching and learning decision-making and considers the learning environment. The reasoning behind this focus was a perception shared by countries that a 'medical' approach to assessment increases the chances of segregation by focussing on a pupil's 'deficiencies'. By contrast an educational approach can increase the chance of successful inclusion by considering a pupil's strengths and applying assessment information directly to strategies for teaching and learning.

However, further discussions with Agency member and observer countries revealed that this focus needed to be broadened to also consider issues relating to legal/statutory frameworks and policies for assessment in special needs education settings and how these direct schools' and teachers' assessment practice.

In particular, discussions with the Agency Representative Board members (RBs) and National Co-ordinators (NCs) highlighted the fact that assessment of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) can have a range of potential purposes:
- Monitoring of overall educational standards;
- Administration (pupil placement; allocation of funding, resource decision-making etc);
- Initial identification of SEN;
- Identification of achievements (summative, or end of programme assessment);
- Informing teaching and learning decision-making (on-going, formative assessment).

There was a clear agreement amongst all participating countries that any examination of assessment in special needs education needed to consider all of these potential purposes.

The Agency project began in 2005, with 23 Agency member and observer countries participating in phase 1 project activities. The agreed overall goal for this phase was to examine how assessment policy and practice can support effective teaching and learning. The key question was: how can assessment in inclusive classrooms inform decision-making about teaching and learning approaches, methods and steps in the best possible ways?

It was also agreed that this phase would look at assessment in the primary education sector and inclusive education settings (mainstream schools and classes) only.

The specific aims were:
- To develop a knowledge base of information on assessment policies and practice in the participating countries;
- To examine innovative examples of effective assessment policy and practice and highlight recommendations and guidelines for assessment in inclusive settings.

However, in order to fully consider assessment that informs teaching and learning in primary inclusive settings it was necessary for the project to specifically consider how assessment is directed by country specific legislation and policies for:
- General educational assessment (i.e. national assessment arrangements covering all pupils, not just those with SEN);
- Initial and on-going assessment of a pupil's SEN;
- Pupil placement, provision and support allocations;
- Requirements for curriculum based examinations and assessment;
- Development of Individual Education Programmes (IEPs) or other pupil target setting approaches.

A number of activities were planned for the first phase of the project. The first was a short literature review (co-ordinated by the project staff team) looking at assessment in primary inclusive education settings in non-European countries. The review presented literature (available in English only) describing legislative frameworks, the

possible purposes of assessment and developments in assessment practice.

The main project activities centred upon inputs from nominated assessment experts in the participating countries. Each country nominated up to two national experts - one policy maker and one practitioner - to participate in projects activities. Their contact details can be found at the end of this report.

Project experts participated in two project meetings during 2005 where the aims, intentions and parameters for phase 1 activities were agreed. In 2006, there was an end of phase event, held in Vienna and linked to the Austrian Presidency of the European Union. The seminar was attended by project experts, Agency NCs as well as a number of RBs and invited Austrian guests. The seminar had keynote inputs from speakers representing the Institute of Education, London, and the OECD. In addition to workshop presentations focussing upon examples of country practice, there was a consideration of the project's outputs and results.

The most important information gathering activity of the project was the provision of country information. Each of the countries participating in this project has a unique system of educational provision and so each of the countries prepared a detailed report outlining policy and practice in relation to assessment in mainstream settings. These reports were prepared by the nominated project experts in collaboration with Agency RBs and NCs.

All of the Country Reports, the non-European literature review as well as presentations given during the Vienna seminar are available to download from the assessment project web area: www.european-agency.org/site/themes/assessment/

1.2 The Country and Summary Reports: coverage and objectives

The Country Reports provide descriptions of assessment policy and practice evident in the country, as well as explanations as to some of the reasons why policy and practice has developed in the way it has. A key objective of producing these reports was to have *clear information on the particular assessment policy situations in*

countries before the issues relating to assessment practice in primary inclusive classrooms could be examined and understood.

In relation to assessment policy, the reports covered:
- Descriptions of country legal systems for assessment (general and SEN related);
- Descriptions of implementation of national assessment policy;
- A consideration of challenges and tendencies, innovations and developments.

In relation to assessment practice in inclusive settings, the focus was upon best practice and specifically on:
- Best practice in methods and tools for assessment;
- People to involve in assessment;
- Learning and teaching issues;
- Examples of innovative practice.

Finally, each of the Country Reports attempted to highlight the features of best practice in assessment in inclusive primary classrooms and the features of assessment policy (general and SEN specific) that supports best assessment practice.

The goal of this summary report is to summarise this national level information in order to:
- Identify *the purposes of and approaches to assessment* in inclusive settings (the focus of chapter 2 of this report);
- Identify *what challenges countries have in common and what innovations they are introducing* in relation to assessment that supports inclusion (chapter 3);
- *Highlight European level recommendations* that emerge from the national level information. These are presented in the form of principles that appear to underpin assessment policy and practice that supports inclusion (chapter 4).

This report presents information about participating countries' policy and practice, but it does not compare or in any way evaluate countries' systems or approaches to assessment.

This report aims to provide a useful source of information for policy makers and practitioners working with assessment in primary inclusive settings. This obviously includes special needs education

practitioners who have a particular interest in policy and practice that supports inclusion. However, it also includes policy makers and practitioners who are responsible for developing and implementing mainstream assessment policy.

One important intention of this report is *to raise awareness of assessment issues in primary inclusive settings with general (non-SNE) assessment policy makers* so they are able to consider how all assessment policies need to account for pupils with SEN.

If this intention is to be fulfilled, an important area for clarification is the terminology used in the project overall and then in this report.

1.3 Working Definition

During the lifetime of the Agency Assessment project, all of the contributions from project experts, NCs and RBs to the work have shown that there is a real risk that professionals working at the international level may not be referring to the same thing - words, concepts, or procedures - when talking about assessment in primary inclusive settings.

There appear to be two main reasons for this. The first is that the English word 'assessment' does not have a direct translation into other European languages. In some languages the terms 'evaluation' and 'assessment' are almost synonymous. In other languages the terms are used to mean quite specific - and very different - things.

The second reason is that each country has different formal and informal procedures that may or may not be called assessment. These procedures are usually the result of different forms of policy and legislation for general education as well as special needs education. For example, in some countries there may be two very distinct sets of laws on assessment of all pupils: firstly, general educational assessment linked to national curriculum and programmes of study and secondly, identification of SEN. In other examples, there may be only one legal system that directs all forms of assessment.

With these issues in mind, a framework of ideas providing an agreed working definition of assessment in primary inclusive settings has been developed.

The non-European literature (2005) highlighted that even in English speaking countries, terminology and particularly the distinction between the terms assessment and evaluation is not clear-cut. Within that document, the Keeves/UNESCO (1994) definitions were applied - *assessment* is understood to refer to determinations and judgements about individuals (or sometimes small groups) based on some form of evidence; *evaluation* refers to the examination of non-person centred factors such as organisations, curricula and teaching methods. Assessment information relating to individual pupils might be collated for use as part of an evaluation and to contribute to judgements about schools and even systems, but this does not alter the essential distinction between the terms (see below).

This general description of assessment was one of the starting points for the agreed working definition used in the project. This working definition is also used as the basis for this report. It is:

> Assessment refers to the ways teachers and other people involved in a pupil's education systematically collect and then use information about that pupil's level of achievement and/or development in different areas of their educational experience (academic, behaviour and social).

This working definition covers all possible forms of initial and on-going assessment methods and procedures. It also highlights the fact that:
- There are different actors involved in assessment. Teachers, other school staff, external support staff, but parents and also pupils themselves can potentially be involved in assessment procedures. All actors can use assessment information in different ways;
- Assessment information is not only concerned with the pupil, but also the learning environment (and sometimes even the home environment).

This definition also highlights the fact that the Agency project was specifically focussed upon assessment and not the broader concept of educational evaluation. Evaluation is understood within the context of the Agency project to refer to a teacher or other professional reflecting upon a whole range of factors involved in the teaching and learning process in order to make decisions about next steps in their work. These factors may include programme content, resources, success of implementation strategies, etc. Information about pupils' learning gathered though assessment is one of the main factors considered in an evaluation process, but it is not the only factor.

Within the project, different terminology (for example, on-going, formative, diagnostic, summative and testing) referring to types of assessment procedures and methods were considered and described. These have been collated and presented in the Glossary of Terms at the end of this report.

As the focus of the Agency project was upon assessment in primary inclusive settings, then the final areas for clarification and agreement were: what is covered by the primary sector in countries and what is meant by an 'inclusive setting'.

The first aspect was dealt with in a pragmatic way - countries have clearly defined in their reports what age range and forms of provision are covered within the primary sector of education.

Agreements on what settings are considered 'inclusive' are not so clear. In other aspects of Agency work (for example Meijer, 2003) an operational definition of inclusive settings has been employed: *… those educational settings where pupils with special needs follow the largest part of the curriculum in the mainstream class alongside peers without special educational needs …* (p9).

Within the meetings with project experts, it was agreed that the UNESCO (1994) Salamanca Statement regarding inclusive education would be a guiding principle: *Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve*

the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system. (p8)

The range of settings and types of provision considered in Country Reports emphasises the enormous difficulties in comparing situations in countries. All countries are at: *… different points of the journey to inclusion signposted by the Salamanca statement …* (Peacey, 2006). The aspiration for this report is to support that journey by providing information necessary to develop a wider and deeper understanding of how assessment supports the process of inclusion.

The term 'inclusion' has itself been on a journey since it was initially introduced within an educational context. Firstly, it is now understood to concern a far wider range of pupils vulnerable to exclusion than those identified as having SEN. This means that while the Agency Assessment project focuses on SEN, it should be recognised that findings are likely to contribute to the success in education of a wider group of pupils.

Secondly, for many people the introduction of the term was an explicit attempt to move ideas of education for all beyond 'mainstreaming'. In its most basic form, mainstreaming can be seen as the physical co-existing of pupils with and without SEN in the same place.

Thirdly, most typically the early use of the term was characterised by the belief that pupils with SEN should have 'access to the curriculum'. This implied that 'the curriculum' was a fixed and static entity and that pupils with SEN require different types of support to access the mainstream curriculum. The current use of the term 'inclusion' starts from the proposition that pupils with SEN have a right to a curriculum that is appropriate to their needs and that education systems have a duty to provide this. The curriculum is not fixed, but something to be developed until it is appropriate for all pupils.

Alongside these ideas are three key propositions:
1. A curriculum for all considers academic and social learning. Curriculum goals and implementation should reflect this dual focus;

2. Inclusion is a process and not a state. Educators will always need to move their work forward to enable the learning and participation of all pupils;
3. As mainstream schools are the main means of educating the vast majority of pupils in Europe, 'mainstreaming' in terms of 'location' of pupils with SEN is still a vital part of inclusion.

In conclusion then, the term 'inclusive settings' within this project and report refers to mainstream educational provision in schools and classes that:
- Has pupils with or without SEN learning together;
- Works to develop a curriculum that enables the learning and participation of all pupils.

2. ASSESSMENT IN INCLUSIVE SETTINGS

For all countries, assessment of pupils' learning not only has different methods or processes, but also very different purposes. Educational policy as well as actual classroom practice results in the information different assessment methods may provide being used for very different reasons.

In terms of the purposes assessment information can be used for, assessment is not only something a teacher does in the classroom in order to make decisions about next steps in the pupils' learning programme. As well as informing teaching and learning, assessment information can be used for administration, selection, monitoring of standards, diagnosis and also resource decision-making. Different forms of assessment can determine pupil placement, provision and support allocations.

A statement from the Country Report from the German Bundesländer reflects the situation in the majority of countries: … *the assessment of pupil achievement is a pedagogic process; it is, however, an administrative act as well, based on provisions laid down by law.*

The general and special needs education policies in a country dictate what these purposes are and therefore what methods of assessment teachers in inclusive classrooms use. The possible similarities and differences in purposes of assessment in inclusive primary classrooms are focussed upon in the following sections.

2.1 Assessment within overall policies for education

Before discussing some main findings from the Country Reports, essential points regarding assessment within general educational policies in all the countries need to be highlighted.

Firstly, the education systems (policies and practice) in countries have evolved over time, within very specific contexts and are therefore highly individual. In the same way, whilst there are similarities in approaches and aims, the systems of assessment in all countries are also individual. Assessment policy and practice in a

country is a result of developments in legislation as well as understandings and conceptions of teaching and learning. [1]

Secondly, systems for assessment in inclusive settings are embedded in both the general and special education frameworks of provision that exist in individual countries. There is a need to examine assessment issues within both general and special education policy to fully understand how assessment can impact upon teaching and learning in inclusive settings.

Thirdly, definitions and understandings of what is meant by special needs education vary greatly within countries. There is no agreed interpretation of terms such as handicap, special need or disability across the countries. These differences are linked to administrative, financial and procedural regulations rather than reflecting variations in the incidence and the types of special educational needs in countries (Meijer, 2003). The approach taken here is to consider common issues relating to assessment in inclusive settings, whilst acknowledging that there are different definitions and perspectives within special needs education practice.

Finally, inclusive education in all countries is not a static phenomenon. It has been developing in different ways and it continues to be developed. Conceptions of, policies for and practice in inclusive education is constantly undergoing change in all countries. These changes also impact upon the demands placed upon assessment systems in inclusive settings and current assessment practice in countries needs to be considered within the context of wider educational reforms occurring in countries.

The following countries are in the process of reviewing and changing their policies and legislation for inclusive education, which specifically impacts upon assessment procedures: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Lithuania, Spain and Switzerland (specifically a new financing strategy for SEN).

---

[1] Readers are referred to the Assessment project country reports www.european-agency.org/site/themes/assessment for detailed information, but also to the National Overviews on the national pages of the Agency website: www.european-agency.org/site/national_pages/index.html

The French speaking community of Belgium is currently implementing 'pilot projects' as a result of recent legislative changes in inclusive education and the Flemish speaking community is in the process of changing their policy and legislation on inclusive education, based upon knowledge and experiences from on-going pilot projects. Austria, the Czech Republic, the German Bundesländer and Hungary are preparing to implement new policies/laws regarding quality systems and monitoring for education. These will impact on inclusion and assessment in inclusive settings particularly in relation to assessment and monitoring of national educational standards.

The factors outlined above all impact upon the way assessment policy and practice has developed in countries. This means that clear differences can be seen in the way individual countries approach the following key questions relating to assessment:
- Why are pupils assessed?
- Who uses the assessment information?
- Who carries out the assessment and who else is involved?
- What is assessed?
- How are pupils assessed?
- Against what are the assessment results compared?

These questions all relate to what purposes assessment procedures may have. Different perspectives on the essential purpose of collecting assessment information will lead to these questions being answered in different ways.

All countries use assessment information regarding pupils in inclusive settings in different ways. Countries may have general assessment procedures that apply to all pupils and aim to compare pupil achievements and monitor overall educational standards. All countries have more specific assessment procedures for individual pupils that aim to identify the exact nature of special needs and inform the teaching and learning. In different ways, there is an inter-relationship between these forms of assessment in countries.

In the following sections, the main purposes of assessment in inclusive settings evident in countries are described. An overview of the different purposes of assessment in inclusive settings as

determined by national educational policy in countries is presented in the Annex at the end of this report.

2.2 Assessment to identify special educational needs

Whilst there are clear differences in the ways assessment information is collected and used in countries, the necessity to precisely identify an individual pupil's special educational needs is recognised in all countries. All countries have clear legal procedures for the initial identification of the educational needs of pupils who are experiencing difficulties. However, how these needs are identified differs and each country has its own set of procedures for initial identification of needs.

Initial assessment of pupils who are thought to have SEN can have two possible purposes:
- Identification linked to an official decision to 'recognise' a pupil as having educational needs that require additional resources to support their learning;
- Informing learning programmes, where assessment is focussed upon highlighting strengths and weaknesses the pupil may have in different areas of their educational experience. Such information is often used in a formative way – perhaps as the starting point for Individual Education Plans (IEPs) or other target-setting approaches – rather than as a one off, baseline assessment.

In different ways, most countries have 'graduated' approaches to the identification of a pupil's SEN. There may be clearly defined stages in a process that begins with mainstream class teachers highlighting and attempting to address difficulties, then involving other specialists in the school and finally specialists from external support services.

This sequence of collecting information about a pupil's strengths and weaknesses that is increasingly detailed and more specialised is often linked to the involvement of professionals who come from different specialist areas - health, social and psychological - and who can carry out different forms of assessment (often diagnostic tests) that give particular insights into a pupil's functioning in different areas. In all countries, to one degree or another multi-disciplinary

teams are involved in assessment linked to initial identification of special educational needs.

In all countries, assessment with the purpose of initial identification of SEN applies to pupils in all educational settings - inclusive and segregated. However, pupils with SEN in inclusive settings might also be included in assessment procedures that pupils in segregated schools may or may not be involved in. These are described below.

2.3 Assessment to inform teaching and learning

In one form or another, all countries have on-going, formative assessment approaches that are usually linked to teaching and learning programmes.

Within inclusive settings, on-going assessment:
- Is directly linked to programmes of learning that all pupils (those with and without SEN) follow;
- Is mainly non-comparative with the focus being on information that helps teachers plan next steps for individual pupil's learning (formative assessment);
- May or may not have some summative elements linked to strategic points in teaching programmes.

In countries that have clearly defined national curricula, then on-going, formative assessment is usually goal-related and linked directly to the objectives for the curriculum for all pupils. National guidelines for assessment may state what is to be assessed and how it is to be assessed. Within countries using this approach, a key aspect is that developing and implementing assessment is mainly the responsibility of mainstream schools and class teachers. This fact fits in with the purpose of such assessment - informing decisions about next steps in an individual pupil's learning.

The assessment methods used are often the same in terms of focus (content area being assessed) and procedures (methods) for all pupils and because of this, countries highlight three main issues in relation to assessing the learning of pupils with SEN:
- The need for the findings of initial assessment of SEN to be linked to curriculum goals;

- Linking curriculum goals and assessment schedules to a pupil's IEP or other target settings tools or approaches;
- Modifying or adapting the assessment methods used in the mainstream classroom to meet the needs of pupils with specific needs and difficulties.

For on-going assessment in inclusive settings to be most effective, it is therefore important that mainstream teachers have access to and support from multi-disciplinary specialists who can assist in making these links as necessary.

2.4 Assessment to compare pupils' achievements

For some countries, the main focus of assessment procedures for all pupils in inclusive settings is to describe learning achieved at specific times in a pupil's educational experience. This most often takes the form of school-based summative assessment linked to:
- 'End point reporting' to parents and other interested parties;
- Awarding of marks or grades linked to learning outcomes.

Summative assessment summarises pupil achievements across a range of activities usually over a period of time - for example a school year. The purpose of summative assessment is to either compare a pupil's current achievements with previous achievements, or often compare an individual pupil's achievements with the achievements of their peers.

Comparing information on the achievement of a group of pupils can give insights into the relative progress of individual pupils, but can also be used for wider evaluation purposes such as the success or otherwise of a particular teaching programme.

This form and purpose of assessment is often the one parents - along with the majority of the general community - are most familiar with.

Summative assessment can be used as the basis for crucial decision-making about a pupil's school career. This can include for some countries, possibilities for pupils to repeat a school year, or decisions for pupils to be referred for specialist SEN related assessment procedures.

Summative assessment identifies successes and weaknesses in relation to specific goals, but it does not always provide formative feedback that can be used to direct future teaching and learning programmes.

Linking summative assessment requirements to the goals of a pupil's IEP is one issue for teachers in inclusive settings. A further consideration is how summative assessment marking or grading schemes can be modified to accommodate the needs of pupils with specific needs and difficulties.

2.5 Assessment to monitor overall educational standards

For a growing number of countries, the focus of procedures is upon the assessment of common goals (standards) for all pupils' learning and achievement. There is a move from assessment directed at the needs of an individual pupil towards assessment directed at the needs of groups of pupils. This is most often a policy-initiated movement linked to the wider issues of evaluation of standards within the educational system itself.

This is usually a form of summative assessment as information is gathered at a strategic point in relation to a national programme of study. However, the essential purpose behind a focus upon national standards related assessment is often a clear policy intention to raise standards of achievement for pupils of all abilities and improve school accountability and effectiveness. Assessing and monitoring pupil achievement is seen as a key tool in making decisions to meet these aims.

Pupils take externally set tests or assessment that have been 'standardised' so the measurement corresponds to national objectives and has a high degree of reliability. Results from individual pupil assessment are often collated and national and regional governments, school managers and teachers use the results to evaluate standards of achievement for individual as well as groups of pupils.

With this type of assessment pupils are assessed to see how far they have achieved common standards for learning, rather than assessed to see what they have achieved and what the next steps may be for

their learning (as is the case with on-going, formative assessment). Such assessment does not necessarily inform teaching and learning and in countries with this form of assessment, there are clear moves to link standardised tests to on-going assessment developed and implemented by schools and class teachers.

Within inclusive settings the entitlement of pupils with SEN to be involved in national tests and how these tests are modified to accommodate the needs of pupils with specific difficulties are issues countries are developing strategies to address.

2.6 Summary

The focus of the chapter has been on describing the main purposes of assessment in inclusive settings for countries participating in the Agency project. It is not possible to simply group countries' assessment systems based on which purposes of assessment they employ - to one degree or another, all countries assess pupils for all purposes described above. However, it is possible to see that different countries' systems are characterised by approaches to assessment developed in response to demands for specific types of information.

It is not possible to say here why these purposes of assessment are needed or not in a country - readers should refer to the Country Reports for such specific discussions. However, it is possible to say that whilst the approaches to and purposes for assessment are not static, most countries' assessment policies and practice appear to be more directed towards the collection of assessment information for one purpose more than another.

National assessment objectives can have the most impact on a pupil with SEN in an inclusive setting. These different forms of assessment can be considered to be what Madaus (1988) defines as 'high stakes assessment'. High stakes assessment consists of tests and procedures that provides information perceived by pupils, parents, teachers, policy makers, or the general public as being used to make important decisions that immediately and directly impact upon pupils' educational experiences and futures.

An example of high stakes assessment is the annual national assessment of pupils in the UK (England). Head teachers' careers and reputations can depend on this assessment as results are published in newspapers so that parents and the public can compare a school's results with those of other schools. This gives the assessment system great influence in the determination of school, regional and also national level education policy-making.

The four purposes of assessment described in the previous sections are all potentially 'high stakes' as the information generated is all used in different ways in countries to make important decisions about the future of pupils and possibly even teachers, schools and the educational system itself.

The different purposes assessment information is used for present different possibilities as well as issues and problems. All countries are currently facing a range of challenges in relation to their assessment policy and practice in inclusive primary schools. These challenges and how they are being addressed is the focus of the next chapter.

3. CHALLENGES AND INNOVATIONS IN ASSESSMENT

The main issues countries are facing in relation to their assessment policy and practice in inclusive primary schools can be seen as the result of changing ideas about the purposes of assessment and how assessment information can and should be used. Countries participating in the project are all considering to what extent their assessment system:

- Provides information that can be used to inform overall educational policy decision making;
- Results in positive or negative consequences for individual pupils (that is, are the procedures 'high stakes' or not);
- Supports inclusion or perpetuates segregation.

These issues compel countries to consider what the main focus of their systems and approaches to assessment should be. Despite the differences in approaches and current use of assessment, all countries appear to be debating three common concerns:

1. Raising achievement of all pupils - including those with SEN - by effectively using assessment information for different audiences and different purposes;
2. Shifting the emphasise of SEN related assessment away from initial identification linked to diagnosis and resource allocation, often conducted by people outside the mainstream school, to on-going assessment conducted by class teachers that informs teaching and learning;
3. Developing systems of on-going, formative assessment that are effective for mainstream schools; giving schools and class teachers the tools to take responsibility for assessing the learning of pupils with SEN and even identifying (initially) the special needs of other pupils.

These three concerns represent the main challenges being faced at both policy and practice levels in all countries.

Policy makers and practitioners are attempting to develop strategies that effectively address these issues and in all countries, examples of innovations in policy and practice relating to these challenges are evident. These innovations can be considered to be examples of best practice for assessment policy and practice.

In the following sections, the main issues surrounding each of these *challenges* are briefly described. These are presented in the form of key questions that countries are currently facing.

How countries are attempting to deal with these questions is presented in the form of specific examples from the Country Reports of *innovations* in assessment policy and practice. These areas of innovation are indicated by the use of text boxes.

It should be noted that the examples of innovations presented here have been selected to illustrate developments evident in a number of countries - readers are referred to the individual Country Reports for more specific examples of how countries are addressing these issues.

3.1 Using assessment information to inform monitoring of educational standards

All countries are considering the possibility of developing and using assessment of common goals (standards) for all pupils' learning achievement. With such an approach, pupils take externally set tests or assessment and the results are used by teachers or school managers, but mainly policy makers to evaluate overall standards of achievement.

For some countries such an approach is well established. The UK (England) Country Report highlights the intention behind a focus upon national standards related assessment: *All assessment in England must be seen in the context of the government's priorities of raising standards of achievement and school improvement. These priorities apply to all pupils of all abilities.*

Using assessment information from individual pupils - including those with SEN - to monitor and then raise educational standards, is an area of consideration that presents a major challenge for all countries. Whilst not primary education focussed, the likely effects of international, comparative studies of educational standards - most notably the OECD PISA studies (www.pisa.oecd.org) - cannot be ignored. There are increasing national level pressures for greater accountability in education - at national, regional and also school levels - leading to an increasing emphasis on using information on

pupils' academic performance as a factor in directing educational policy making.

Challenges

When facing this challenge, there are a number of critical questions country policy makers and practitioners have to consider in relation to their assessment policies and practice:
- To what degree should 'high-stakes accountability mechanisms' be linked to assessment evidence from pupils? How should the information gained from standardised assessment be used by policy makers to make decisions about the perceived quality of the educational system and elements within it? How is it used to make critical decisions affecting the future of schools, teaching programmes, teachers and sometimes pupils themselves?
- What are the entitlements of pupils with SEN to be involved in national tests? Do all pupils have the same rights to assessment within the mainstream setting?
- Do entitlements to take part in assessment include rights to have appropriate assessment methods that address individual special needs? How are national tests modified to remove barriers to assessment faced by pupils with different types of SEN?
- How can the inclusion of assessment information from pupils with SEN in national standards reporting be handled in the best way? How can the relative achievements and progress of pupils with SEN be accounted for and the dangers of 'ranking' or 'grading' individual pupils, schools and even regions be avoided?

The report from the UK (England) suggests that when there is a sharp focus upon using a standards approach to assessment, there are: *… dangers for pupils with special educational needs …* that have to be addressed. The report from Sweden suggests that there should be a: *… compromise between the requirements of the decision-making process and the local schools' conditions and opportunities …*

Innovations

From an examination of the Country Reports, a number of innovations in policy and practice are evident that address the challenges and issues associated with using assessment information

to inform the monitoring of educational standards. These innovations, along with a number of examples of how they are being implemented in countries, are presented below.

> Access to quality education as an entitlement for all pupils, including those with SEN.

Ensuring quality education for pupils with SEN by setting out entitlements in educational policies is an area of development and innovation in a number of countries. In the UK (England) the 'Every Child Matters' agenda focuses upon pupil outcomes and requires all schools to consider factors in meeting all pupils' needs. In Iceland, there is standard assessment - used for formative purposes - based upon the objectives of the national curriculum. These are leading to widening debates about quality and the monitoring of 'inclusion standards' at the school level.

For Hungary, monitoring standards informs the debate surrounding all pupils' rights to quality education and there are moves to use assessment information linked to national standards to ensure rights are met.

> Monitoring of standards as one, but not the only focus of national assessment policies.

For a growing number of countries, the use of assessment information to monitor educational standards is being used as an element of - rather than the sole focus for - assessment policy. In Iceland, a clear policy stating the main purpose of assessment should be formative for all pupils complements the policy of monitoring national educational standards. This is then supported by policy at individual community level that directs on-going assessment in mainstream schools.

Denmark is currently introducing an 'output geared system' of assessment with widespread national testing and summative assessment information being used to monitor educational standards. However, the introduction of this system is clearly associated with: *… formative assessment as the essential tool for quality assurance …*

In Austria, the Ministry of Education has taken a decision not to involve pupils with SEN in national testing schemes, but rather to define 'standards for special needs education' that focus attention on the environment and procedures for improving quality. An expert group is preparing guidelines for: the definition of standards in inclusive settings; using the IEP as an instrument for evaluation and quality assurance; the re-organisation of initial assessment of SEN procedures; introducing more flexibility in funding for SNE; re-thinking the professional roles of teachers linked to new teacher training opportunities.

> Ensuring all pupils' entitlements to take part in national standards testing.

The recognition of all pupils' rights to take part in national assessment procedures is evident in the majority of countries who either have, or are introducing such systems. This recognition is then linked to clear strategies for ensuring:
- Standardised assessment is made accessible for pupils with SEN;
- National assessment procedures are valid and aim at inclusion, rather than promote segregation by stressing weaknesses and leading to increased pupil labelling.

The concept of 'universal assessment' where all tests and assessment procedures are developed and designed to be as accessible as possible, is a developing issue for countries.

In the Czech Republic and Denmark, adapted assessment is an integral part of the newly developing system. In the UK (England), modified assessment for pupils with SEN has been developed over a period of time. An example of this is the 'P' scales, which provides specifically graded assessment tests for pupils with learning disabilities who are not able to achieve the lowest level national curriculum goals for all pupils.

> Re-focussing the emphasis of outcomes from national assessment and testing.

For some countries, innovations are centred upon the focus of the assessment procedures. An example of this is presented by Latvia, where assessment is geared towards problem solving abilities and not memorising information or facts.

In Portugal, national assessment tasks are clearly linked to criteria used for the assessment of learning competences. The intention is that all teachers should clearly understand what, how and when to assess and are then be able to use the results of national assessment for formative purposes.

However, ensuring the emphasis for national assessment is not upon using information to make comparisons between pupils, teachers, schools, or regions is a continuing issue for a number of countries. France presents a clear example of attempts to address this issue. Even if individual pupil assessment information refers to 'national assessment protocols' the results do not: *… encourage parents to make comparisons between schools … [and] are not related to the allocation of resources.*

> Using national assessment information to inform educational planning for individual pupils.

This area of innovation is one that all countries with systems of national assessment are aiming towards as it essentially highlights the educational intention behind such an approach - that is national level assessment information should be used to improve education for individual pupils.

The Country Report from Sweden highlights a dilemma faced by a number of countries - how is the correct balance reached between using: *… assessment information to support the student's development with the public interest for information around school improvement*.

In Iceland, one strategy for using national assessment information to inform educational decision-making that impacts upon individual pupils is to examine this information against demographic indicators. Policies for regional funding and provision are checked and evaluated through this process.

Looking across the information presented in the Country Reports, it can be seen that by implementing the innovations described above, countries are better able to fulfil the aim of using national assessment information to improve the educational experience of all pupils, including those with SEN.

3.2 Using initial identification of SEN assessment to inform teaching and learning

All countries are facing the challenge of ensuring the assessment procedures they have for initial identification of SEN provides information that can be used to inform teaching and learning. Essentially, this involves a move away from a deficit focussed, medical model of 'diagnosis' of SEN, to an educational, learning needs based approach where the mainstream teacher is more responsible for initial and then on-going assessment.

In all countries, multi-disciplinary teams of specialists from different disciplines (health, social and/or psychological) are involved in the initial identification and diagnosis of pupils' needs and for some countries this still leads to decisions about resources and placement.

Challenges

The change in focus of initial identification assessment to informing teaching and learning and away from labelling and categorisation as a result of diagnosis highlights the following critical questions that countries may have to consider:
- Do educational systems that are heavily geared towards initial identification of SEN and not other forms of assessment appear to have relatively high levels of segregation? Does a focus upon diagnosis and identification of SEN result in increasing numbers of pupils labelled as requiring support? How can fair and objective assessment procedures be developed that result in the minimum of labelling and do not result in increasing numbers of pupils being referred for special education provision?
- How can initial identification as 'high stakes' assessment be avoided? What are the consequences of linking an 'official' assessment of need directly to the allocation of resources? What strategic behaviour in requests for assessment from schools,

teachers and parents are evident if an assessment of need is directly linked to resources?

- How should the link between funding or resource allocation and diagnosis be re-evaluated? How can the possibilities for bias and subjectivity when assessment is being carried out with a view to provision or placement be avoided? How can the vested interests of some actors to keep the system of assessment focussed upon initial identification be addressed?
- What is the correct relationship between medical diagnosis and educational, learning focussed assessment? Can increasing medical advances provide useful information that informs learning?
- How can initial identification of needs involving multi-disciplinary professionals be managed in the best way? Who is ultimately responsible for the overall assessment? Who ensures the assessment information is useful from an educational perspective? Who ensures links to on-going assessment of pupils' learning using specialist SEN approaches (specialist tools and techniques, specialist teachers and support staff, IEP focussed)?
- How can assessment account for situations when an individual pupil's special needs are a result of school based and not pupil factors? How are school improvement factors accounted for in initial assessment of individual needs? How are school, home and other environmental factors considered in a contextual, not just pupil centred assessment?

Innovations

The Country Reports highlight areas of innovation in both assessment policy and practice that go at least some way to addressing these issues.

> Changes in perceptions of the role and function of initial identification assessment.

A number of countries refer to the changing role of initial identification of needs assessment as an area for development and innovation. Two key aspects are highlighted.

The first is clearly stated by France with the suggestion that initial assessment has to be conducted with the clear intention of supporting a pupil within a mainstream setting, rather than the assessment focussing upon the question of what form of segregated provision the pupil may require. This point is developed by the Netherlands: *… assessment teams [should] not aim at extensive descriptions of the pupil's deficiencies as an end product of assessment, but instead focus - from the start - on assessment in a perspective of taking decisions for teaching.*

The report from the Netherlands highlights the second main area of innovation being worked towards in a number of countries - initial assessment of needs should focus on decisions about teaching and learning and avoid unnecessary labelling or 'categorisation' of pupils. If such a change in the focus of the assessment is accepted, then the assessment information is not used solely for official decision-making, but: *… parents, pupils and teachers are the 'consumers' of the outcomes of assessment …*

Changes in the perception of the role of initial identification of needs are closely related to the link between initial assessment and resource allocation. This is the focus of a further area of debate and innovation in countries.

> Support and resources to meet a pupil's SEN are not solely dependant upon a 'formal' diagnosis and 'identification' decision being made.

The link between initial identification of needs that leads to some form of 'official decision' leading to support is an issue that all countries are re-considering in one way or another. Estonia and the UK (England) are two examples of countries where support to meet the needs of certain pupils with SEN in mainstream schools is not necessarily dependant upon some form of official decision based upon multi-disciplinary assessment. Other routes to support are open to schools, related to the financing and support structures for mainstream schools as a whole.

Innovations in this area are therefore rooted in changes in policies for special needs education generally. The examples of innovations in

the implementation and use of initial identification information presented below can be seen as examples of best practice that decisions regarding changes in policy could be based upon.

> Multi-disciplinary teams carry out initial identification assessment with mainstream classroom teachers, parents and pupils as full partners in the assessment process.

Changes in perceptions regarding what initial needs assessment is for, are necessarily linked to discussions about who should conduct such assessment. All countries are moving to a scenario where initial assessment of need is conducted by teams of 'stakeholders' in assessment. The parents' role is central in this process, but the involvement of pupils themselves, mainstream class teachers as well as specialists from different disciplines and professional backgrounds (including health, social and psychological services) are all being considered.

In Switzerland 'inter-disciplinary' teams that fully involve parents and pupils are seen as the way forward as they are able to take a well-informed 'contextual' approach to assessing a pupil's needs. This area of innovation is expanded upon in the report from the Netherlands: *… Teachers are seen as educational experts, parents as 'hands-on' experts and pupils are also seen as important partners in needs-based assessment. In all stages of assessment they provide important information and can thus function as co-assessors.*

The necessity to ensure a shared focus upon an educational approach to the assessment is highlighted by Spain where multi-disciplinary teams share the same criteria for their assessment work, even if they use different tools and theoretical approaches.

> Initial identification assessment should aim to inform the preparation of an IEP or other target setting approach.

The areas of innovation outlined above all point to a change in the sorts of information initial identification of needs produces. In most countries, there is a move away from assessment leading to a

statement of diagnosis and more towards recommendations for teaching and learning. In France, national policy relating to initial identification of needs states that the assessment should identify strengths and needs as well as weaknesses and should aim to inform an IEP or similar programme of learning for the pupil.

The reports from Cyprus, Italy, the Netherlands and Portugal to name a few countries all stress the need for the assessment to be contextual and then lead to conclusions and recommendations for concrete actions. An area of development in Spain is for multi-disciplinary teams involved in such assessment procedures to follow up their work in schools and see how their recommendations are being delivered though a pupil's IEP.

This area of innovation highlights the need for initial identification of needs assessment to link into on-going assessment. These two procedures are necessarily inter-connected and should inform each other. The report from Iceland clarifies this point: *… formal assessment of development by physicians and psychologists is important, but it is important to more effectively bridge the existing gap between assessment findings and practice in teaching and other school work.*

The IEP process can become very separate from 'mainstream' assessment. This has led some Governments - such as the UK (England) - to support moves that take individual education planning for SEN into whole-school systems of individual target setting and review for all pupils.

3.3 Developing assessment policies and procedures that promote on-going assessment

On-going, formative assessment that directly informs teaching and learning decision-making is used in schools by almost all countries in one way or another. Within the mainstream setting, assessment that informs teaching and learning is often linked directly to the school curriculum or programmes of learning that all pupils - those with and without SEN - follow. Such an approach can therefore be considered to be inclusive in practice, as assessment methods and tools are not 'specialised', but are most often the same in terms of focus and procedures for all pupils.

Challenges

From an examination of the Country Reports it appears that a key challenge for countries is not necessarily how to implement on-going assessment that informs teaching and learning in practice, but rather how to support this practice though policies and guidelines that promote on-going assessment.

In relation to this challenge, the following critical questions are apparent:
- Do all pupils in mainstream schools have an entitlement to on-going assessment? Are pupils with SEN entitled to the same on-going assessment procedures as all their class peers? Are these rights outlined in policy statements?
- Who has the responsibility for setting as well as implementing on-going assessment? Is the responsibility mainly the mainstream school and class teacher or is such assessment externally set? Does a degree of school autonomy in setting and implementing assessment support inclusion?
- How do mainstream schools and class teachers get advice for setting and implementing on-going assessment? How do specialist team members provide advice? If assessment is linked to stated government goals for education, what 'guidelines' for teacher assessment are provided?
- What links should there be between initial identification assessment, on-going assessment and IEPs (or similar target setting approaches) for pupils with SEN? What are the risks of labelling when an IEP only contains a 'diagnosis' and does not provide recommendations for teaching and learning? What are the respective roles of the mainstream class teacher and the members of specialist assessment teams in ensuring these links are there?

Innovations

The information from the Country Reports highlights clear examples of innovation with respect to both assessment policy and practice. These examples can be grouped around a number of key areas for innovation.

> The existence of national level policies that promote the use of on-going assessment in mainstream classes.

For national assessment policies to promote on-going assessment that informs teaching and learning, a number of aspects have to be considered. The first of these relates to the increasing perception that accountability for pupil progress is not just a matter for class-teachers, but for the whole school and perhaps also region/local and national level policy makers. Such a policy approach is taken in Norway where ensuring individual pupil achievement is now an accountability issue at national policy-making level.

Ensuring the entitlement of pupils with SEN to on-going assessment is an area of development in most countries. For example, in Lithuania there are no separate assessment procedures for pupils with SEN in mainstream schools. In Estonia all pupils in mainstream schools have the right to on-going assessment as a result of recent (2005) legislation.

As well as ensuring the rights of pupils to on-going assessment, policies need to support teachers and schools in setting and implementing those assessments. The provision of guidance and support for setting and implementing on-going assessment procedures is also an area most countries with national curricula or programmes are considering or already implementing. The Country Report from Norway highlights the essential purpose of providing guidelines for assessment: *… all teachers … gain a common understanding and concretisation of the content of the curriculum.*

As a result of an extended consultation period, Cyprus has developed more direct guidelines for mainstream teachers with a range of tools for assessment, teaching and learning.

In the Czech Republic, the National Programme of Educational Development has such guidelines written in. Similarly, in Estonia, the new curriculum programmes will include such guidelines and in the UK (England), alongside the national curriculum there are a series of 'standards' as well as guidance for all formative assessments.

> There should be clear statements relating to on-going assessment in school development plans.

Alongside national level policies that promote assessment that informs teaching and learning, the development of school level policies or statements is an important area of innovation. The Country Report for Denmark stresses the importance of clear school leadership and the necessity of a mission statement for assessment. Such statements are in evidence in Belgium (Flemish speaking community) and Hungary where assessment procedures have to be written into school development plans and mission statements. In Spain, all schools have 'attention to diversity' plans and assessment is an increasing feature of these plans.

> Developing co-operative teams to contribute to on-going assessment in mainstream classes.

Providing mainstream schools and class teachers with the appropriate support to develop effective assessment procedures for pupils with SEN is an area where different types of innovative practice is in evidence. With all these examples, the focus is on providing mainstream schools with support, information and resources. The focus is also upon developing collaborative partnerships, where specialists work with mainstream teachers, but do not take the responsibility for assessing pupils away from class teachers.

In Luxembourg, mainstream teachers often work in teams where they can collaborate and share expertise. In Iceland, Greece and Portugal, assessment is a mainstream teacher's responsibility, but they can request the involvement of and support from specialist centres with multi-disciplinary teams. In Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Italy and Poland, the class teacher and specialist support staff work in 'collaborative assessment teams' as is necessary.

In Austria, the Czech Republic and Greece, mainstream schools, class teachers and even parents can get advice and support from special education and counselling centres with specialist knowledge, expertise and resources. Similarly, in the German Bundesländer, co-operative networks between different assessment partners - for

example mainstream and special education schools and centres - are a developing feature of support. On-going assessment documented within an IEP is implemented in most regions with mainstream schools being responsibility for developing this work.

Co-operation is also the focus of pilot projects in Belgium (Flemish speaking community) where special education schools provide specialist advice to mainstream schools and 'expertise is shared'. Accessing assessment expertise from other mainstream schools is supported in Norway through the model of 'demonstration' schools, which are centres of excellence that other schools can learn from.

In the Country Reports from both Denmark and the German Bundesländer, the need for good co-operation between pre-school services, mainstream schools and specialist assessment teams is highlighted. Assessment procedures that link and follow-on from one stage of schooling to another are beneficial for the pupil with SEN, their family, but also their teachers.

> Broadening the focus of assessment to cover more than just academic/subject based content.

For a growing number of countries, extending the focus of assessment to cover all aspects of a pupil's educational experience - learning, behaviour, social and peer relationships etc. - is an area for different forms of innovative practice. Both Hungary and the German Bundesländer emphasise this as a necessary development to support the inclusion process for individual pupils.

As well as broadening the focus of assessment, ensuring assessment information helps the pupil as well as the teacher is an area for development in a number of countries. In Poland, there is a developing focus on using assessment information to provide pupils with clear, positive feedback on their learning. In Latvia and Lithuania, providing pupils with information about success in their learning is felt to be motivating, but by making sure pupils understand how they learned something (as well as what they learned) assessment becomes a tool for pupils to understand their own learning processes.

> Developing the links between IEPs (or other individual target setting approaches) and assessment.

In all countries, different strategies for clearly linking on-going assessment procedures and a pupil's IEP (or similar) are being implemented. Three specific examples highlight the main issues countries are focussing innovative practice upon.

Firstly, in the Netherlands, the 'Needs Based Assessment' model works to the principle that all recommendations from initial assessment of a pupil's needs should feed into their IEP and give clear guidance on goals for teaching and on-going assessment. Secondly, in Sweden, attention is being paid at policy and practice levels to exploring the links between assessment and IEPs and examining the best ways of ensuring the two work together in a supportive way. Finally, in Belgium (French speaking community) a key feature of inclusion pilot projects in mainstream schools is the use of integrated assessment procedures within IEPs.

> Developing the range of assessment methods, tools available to mainstream class teachers.

The development of new and different assessment methods and tools is a matter of real concern for all countries. Each of the Country Reports provides very specific examples of innovative tools that are being developed - these are not listed here and readers are referred to individual Country Reports for detailed examples.

Two general issues with regards to innovations in assessment methods and tools need to be highlighted however. The first of these is raised by Luxembourg where there is a move to change teachers', pupils' and parents' conceptions of the possibilities available with existing assessment tools. In particular, current school assessment procedures that are used mainly for summative purposes can be developed in order to provide useful: *… communication tools between parents, children and the school.*

However, the area where a great deal of innovation can be seen is that of pupil's self-assessment. Austria, Denmark, the German

Bundesländer and Hungary all refer in different ways to the need for pupils to: *… get directly involved in the assessment process ...*

Luxembourg stresses the need for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning by being involved in assessing it and in Iceland, involving pupils in self assessment and then setting goals for their own learning is a major area of development.

In different ways, all countries stress the need to develop the possible benefits self-assessment can offer a pupil with SEN and their teachers.

> Developing new ways of recording assessment information and evidence of pupil's learning.

Innovations in new assessment methods and tools are also linked to innovations in ways of recording assessment information and evidence of learning. Again, each of the Country Reports provide specific examples of practice, but some general areas of development that can be seen across countries can be highlighted.

Almost all countries refer to the developing use of pupil's own portfolios of assessment evidence - Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the German Bundesländer and Hungary all provide clear examples of different approaches that can be taken to developing portfolios of evidence of learning.

The use of information and communication technology to record evidence of a pupil's learning is highlighted by a number of countries. In Iceland for example, taped verbal interviews and videos of pupils in learning situations are being used.

The focus being paid in countries to developing new methods for assessing pupils as well as new ways of recording evidence of learning all aims to provide teachers in mainstream schools with a range of tools that help them individualise assessment for pupils with SEN. Belgium (Flemish speaking community) clearly points out that developments in individualising approaches to assessment are rooted in individualising education generally for pupils with SEN in mainstream schools – the two aspects cannot be disassociated.

This comment is echoed by Iceland: *…diverse teaching methods are the key to inclusive assessment … It is important to see inclusive assessment as part of the overall process of development of the inclusive school.*

3.4 Summary

The three challenges - and associated innovations - described above draw attention to the different purposes of assessment outlined in chapter 2. Essentially these challenges centre upon each of the countries re-considering the balance of the different purposes in their assessment systems. Three assessment processes are the main focus of attention: assessment for monitoring of standards, assessment for initial identification of needs and assessment to inform teaching and learning.

Each of these assessment processes has advantages and disadvantages for policy and practice and no single process is 'best' or appears to be the 'way forward'. Different pressures, an historical lack of attention on one form of assessment, or too much focus upon another, results in challenges and this is leading to change. Countries are also trying to develop the obvious positive benefits of these three assessment processes, whilst reducing the disadvantageous effects of others.

From an examination of the Country Reports, it appears that in different ways, all countries are aiming to get a balance of these processes and this could be the way forward. A balanced approach to assessment in inclusive settings is where each 'element' of assessment practice informs and supports the others. A balanced approach is also characterised by policy and practice that avoids 'high stakes' assessment and minimises the potential negative consequences of any assessment process or procedure for all pupils - especially those with SEN.

In summary, the main challenge facing countries centres upon developing their assessment systems to facilitate and not act as a potential barrier to inclusion. The essential features of policy and practice necessary to ensure assessment facilitates and not hinders inclusion are the focus of the following chapter.

4. WORKING TOWARDS INCLUSIVE ASSESSMENT - RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

Despite the very different starting points and issues facing countries, all are working towards using assessment as a facilitator rather than a barrier to inclusion. Furthermore, all countries are debating ways of making their systems of assessment genuinely more inclusive for pupils with different SEN.

In some countries - for example the German Bundesländer and Austria - this means considering the entitlements pupils with SEN have to be included in mainstream assessment procedures. For countries with policies that include national assessment procedures, moves towards making assessment more inclusive focus on adapting or modifying mainstream assessment procedures so they can be accessible for pupils with different SEN.

Adapting mainstream assessment procedures is the focus of a lot of attention and there is a move in countries towards 'universal assessment', where assessment materials are planned and designed to be accessible to the widest possible range of pupils without the need for further modification at later stages of their use.

However, it is clear that there is a broader concept that is emerging in countries that needs to be understood - that of *inclusive assessment*. This is the focus of the following sections.

4.1 Inclusive Assessment

From an examination of the information collected as a result of the Agency project, inclusive assessment can be described as follows:

> An approach to assessment in mainstream settings where policy and practice are designed to promote the learning of all pupils as far as possible. The overall goal of inclusive assessment is that all assessment policies and procedures should support and enhance the successful inclusion and participation of all pupils vulnerable to exclusion, including those with SEN.

For this goal to be achieved, a number of factors within inclusive assessment have to be made explicit.

The principles underpinning inclusive assessment

- All assessment procedures should be used to inform and promote learning for all pupils;
- All pupils should be entitled to be part of all assessment procedures;
- The needs of pupils with SEN should be considered and accounted for within all general as well as SEN specific assessment policies;
- All assessment procedures should be complementary and inform each other;
- All assessment procedures should aim to 'celebrate' diversity by identifying and valuing all pupils' individual learning progress and achievements;
- Inclusive assessment explicitly aims to prevent segregation by avoiding - as far as possible - forms of labelling and by focussing on learning and teaching practice that promotes inclusion in a mainstream setting.

The focus of inclusive assessment

- The purpose of inclusive assessment should be to improve learning for all pupils in mainstream settings;
- All assessment procedures, methods and tools should inform teaching and learning and support teachers in their work;
- Inclusive assessment may include a range of assessment procedures that fulfil other purposes in addition to informing teaching and learning. These purposes may be related to summative assessment, initial identification of SEN, or monitoring of educational standards. All these procedures should aim to inform learning, but the procedures should also be 'fit for purpose'. That is the methods and procedures should only be used for the reason they were designed for and not used for others purposes.

The methods used in inclusive assessment

- Inclusive assessment involves a range of possible methods and strategies to assessing pupils. The key point about all these possible approaches is that they all work to gather clear evidence about pupils' learning;
- Inclusive assessment methods report on the product or outcomes of learning, but also provide teachers with information on how to develop and improve the process of learning for an individual pupil or groups of pupils in the future;
- Decision-making based upon inclusive assessment draws upon a range of sources that are action based and presents evidence of learning collected over a period of time (and not snapshot, one off assessment information);
- A wide range of assessment methods are necessary in inclusive assessment in order to make sure that there is a wide coverage of areas (non-academic as well as academic subjects) assessed;
- Assessment methods should aim to provide 'value added information' on pupil's learning progress and development, not just snapshot information;
- Any assessment information should be contextualised and the educational environment as well as any home-based or environmental factors that influence a pupil's learning should be taken into account;
- Inclusive assessment should extend to assessing the factors that support inclusion for an individual pupil in order that wider school, class management and support decisions can be effectively made.

The people involved in inclusive assessment

- Inclusive assessment involves the active involvement of class teachers, pupils, parents, class peers and others as potential assessors, or participants in the assessment process;
- The procedures used in inclusive assessment should be developed based upon shared concepts and values for assessment and inclusion as well as the principles of participation and collaboration between the different stakeholders in assessment;
- Any assessment should aim to be empowering for the pupil concerned by providing them with insights into their own learning

as well as a source of motivation to encourage their future learning;
- All pupils are entitled to be part of inclusive assessment - pupils with SEN as well as their classmates and peers.

Inclusive assessment can be considered to be an important aim for all educational policy makers and practitioners. However, inclusive assessment can only be realised within an appropriate policy framework and with the appropriate organisation of schools and support to teachers who themselves need to have a positive attitude towards inclusion.

Within each of the Country Reports provided by countries participating in the Agency project, there are key messages relating to policy and practice that promotes inclusive assessment. It is possible to group these messages emerging from individual country situations around a number of key themes relating to the work of the main actors involved in inclusive assessment.

In the following sections, these messages are presented as a series of key principles (presented in highlighted texts boxes) with related recommendations for the different groups of practitioners and policy makers involved in inclusive assessment.

4.2 Recommendations for the work of mainstream class teachers

In all countries the key actor in ensuring the implementation of inclusive assessment in mainstream schools is seen to be the class teacher. The main principle emerging from Agency project work in relation to teachers' work in inclusive assessment is clear:

> If teachers in mainstream classrooms are to implement inclusive assessment, then they should have the appropriate attitudes, training, support and resources.

The specific recommendations that relate to this principle can be grouped as outlined below.

Teachers Attitudes

- The attitudes a mainstream class teacher holds in relation to inclusion, assessment and therefore inclusive assessment are crucial. Positive attitudes can be fostered by the provision of appropriate training, support, resources and practical experiences of successful inclusion. Teachers require access to such experiences to help them develop the necessary positive attitudes;
- Practical experiences, support and training should all work to develop positive teacher attitudes in relation to: dealing with differences in the mainstream classroom; understanding the relationship between learning and assessment; understanding the concept of 'fairness' and equal access in assessment; developing holistic approaches to assessment that inform classroom practice and are not focussed upon the identification of pupil's weaknesses; including pupils and parents in the learning and assessment process.

Teacher Training

- Initial, in-service and specialist teacher training should aim to prepare mainstream class teachers for inclusive assessment;
- Teacher training should provide information that makes the theory and rationale for inclusive assessment clear, as well as practical experiences in implementing inclusive assessment approaches, methods and tools;
- Teacher training should prepare teachers for using on-going assessment as a tool for their work. It should guide them in setting clear and concrete learning goals and using results of assessment as the basis for planning future learning experiences for all pupils. In particular, training should provide teachers with the information and tools to effectively develop the relationship between an IEP (or similar tool) and on-going assessment.

Support and Resources available for Teachers

- In order to effectively implement inclusive assessment, teachers need to work in a school environment that offers them the necessary flexibility, support and resources;

- Opportunities for teachers to work in teams, where there is the possibility for collaboration, joint planning and sharing experiences is a strategy for supporting inclusive practice in general and inclusive assessment practice specifically;
- Opportunities to involve pupils, parents and peers in on-going assessment should be planned and supported at the school, teaching team and individual class teacher levels;
- Specialist assessment information relating to initial identification of needs should be presented for teachers in a way that can be directly applied to classroom practice. The main way of ensuring this is for teachers to be fully involved in specialist multi-disciplinary assessment procedures;
- Teachers require information on the best methods and approaches to assessment for inclusion. This includes information providing concrete examples of innovative practice that they can learn from;
- Teachers require access to a variety of assessment tools and resources. This could include exemplar logbooks and portfolios as well as materials to develop assessment in non-academic subjects, self-assessment and peer-assessment;
- In order for teachers to be able to implement inclusive assessment and engage in the necessary co-operative tasks that are required, they need flexibility in their teaching commitments and also dedicated time for assessment related activities.

4.3 Recommendations for school organisation

Next to the work of classroom teachers, the way schools are organised is crucial for inclusive assessment. The main principle emerging from the Agency project work is:

> If mainstream schools are to implement inclusive assessment practice, then they should promote an 'inclusive culture', plan for inclusive assessment and be appropriately organised.

Effectively organising schools to support inclusive assessment includes the following aspects.

A school 'organisational culture' that promotes inclusion generally and inclusive assessment specifically

- Teachers and school leaders require a view of inclusion that leads them to re-think and re-structure their teaching - including their assessment practice - in order to improve the education of all pupils;
- There should be a shared understanding that 'school improvement' is the only way to effectively implement inclusion;
- Educational change in a school should focus upon addressing the needs of all pupils, not just those with SEN;
- School staff should work to develop a positive school philosophy and 'culture' that is based on the belief that effective assessment supports effective education and school improvement;
- School staff should share the attitude that assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning and that all staff have a responsibility to identify and overcome barriers to assessment for pupils with SEN that may exist in the school's assessment procedures;
- There should be a shared attitude amongst staff that assessment involves, as an entitlement, the participation of and active involvement of all pupils - those with and without SEN - and their parents.

Planning for inclusive assessment

- Staff should work to identify the features of their school environment and whole school assessment procedures that support or are barriers to the assessment needs of pupils with SEN;
- There should be the development and implementation of a whole school plan or policy for assessment of all pupils, including those with SEN. This plan should consider methods for assessment, reporting and monitoring of pupils' progress as well as overall programme evaluation procedures. It should also clearly show how the school should balance requirements to report assessment results to external authorities with the need to identify and improve the process of learning for all pupils, particularly those with SEN;
- School staff should have access to appropriate training in assessment methods. This includes training in using techniques

as well as training in implementing and interpreting different types of assessment information that fulfils different educational and administrative purposes;
- Teachers should be able to draw upon a wide range of assessment methodologies and tools that cover a broad focus for assessment (behaviour and social aspects of learning as well as academic subjects) and consider a wide range of contexts (not just the classroom or school environment).

Ensuring flexible organisation

- Schools should work to ensure the provision of resources and flexibility in working procedures to facilitate collaboration, partnership and effective communication between teachers, parents, external support services and professionals involved in school inspection systems;
- There should be strategies for peer support for teachers that allow sharing of positive experiences, opportunities for joint consideration and teacher-peer moderation of assessment information;
- All staff should work towards individualising the learning process for pupils, with pupils actively contributing to the assessment, collection and recording of evidence of their own learning as well as the planning of personal learning goals;
- Schools should actively promote the development of diverse approaches to assessment that reflect the different ways pupils learn and provide a variety of ways for collecting evidence about learning. This assumes that within a school, there is flexibility for teachers to make decisions about when to assess and what to assess and that teachers have access to assessment methods and tools that use a pupil's preferred method of communication;
- The role of school leaders is paramount - they have the ultimate responsibility for developing inclusive assessment practice. The work of head teachers and school managers should be effectively supported by external agencies as well as regional and national level assessment policies.

4.4 Recommendations for specialist assessment teams

Within all countries, there is agreement that multi-disciplinary teams of assessors from different professional fields are necessary to

provide specialist insights into different aspects of the learning of pupils with SEN. Depending upon the situation in individual countries, different specialists are members of these teams and their specific input may occur at different times in a pupil's educational career - initial identification of SEN as well as involvement in on-going assessment.

The main principle emerging as a result of the Agency project work is that:

> The work of all specialist support staff involved in assessing pupils with SEN should effectively contribute to inclusive assessment in mainstream classrooms.

The specific recommendations in relation to this principle are as follows:
- Specialists from the various disciplines should take a participatory approach to their assessment work. This means working in full collaboration with the pupil, their family and their class teacher;
- Specialist multi-disciplinary assessment teams should be based upon the principles of co-operation and inter-disciplinary working. Promoting inclusion that meets the diversity of all pupils' needs is best achieved through a process of co-operation and shared learning experiences for all those involved in inclusive education;
- No matter which professional field specialists in multi-disciplinary teams work within (medical, psychological and/or social), their assessment of pupils with SEN should: employ qualitative rather than purely quantitative methods; be based on a view that assessment is part of the wider learning process; aim to inform teaching and learning;
- Specialists in multi-disciplinary teams should ensure there is a balance between the need for effective and specific 'diagnosis' of an individual pupil's needs with the disadvantages of labelling and categorising the pupil as a result of diagnosis.

4.5 Recommendations for assessment policies

All countries have some form of legislation, policy or guideline statements directing assessment of different types in mainstream

inclusive settings. Ensuring that all policies support inclusive assessment practice is an issue in all countries and the main principle emerging with respect to this is:

> All educational policies concerned with assessment - both general and SNE specific - should aim to promote inclusive assessment practice and take into account the needs of all pupils vulnerable to exclusion, including those with SEN.

Specific recommendations that relate to this principle can be grouped around three key issues.

Views on the purposes of assessment

Why pupils should be assessed, who assesses them and how this information is then used are questions that are considered in different ways by policy makers and practitioners in different countries. However, for inclusive assessment to be supported by effective policy, it is clear that whatever range of purposes the different assessment procedures in a country fulfil, policy makers and practitioners should recognise that the ultimate goal of inclusive assessment is the promotion of learning and participation for all pupils.

This means that:
- All pupils should have an entitlement to be involved in all assessment procedures. Assessment should be accessible for all pupils, including those with SEN;
- All assessment procedures should help teachers support pupils' learning. Therefore, all assessment procedures should be linked to the school's curriculum and a pupil's IEP or other target setting approach and should aim to provide multiple forms of evidence about all pupils' learning;
- Educational standards should be evaluated, but 'snapshot' assessment should not be used as the basis for decision-making about individual pupils, teachers, schools, policies financing or resourcing;

- The allocation of support, placement and additional resourcing to meet a pupil's SEN should be informed by, but not be solely based upon initial identification or diagnostic procedures;
- When national tests are used, they should aim to provide 'value added' information for policy makers, raise teachers' and parents' expectations for pupils and help schools and teachers improve their practice;
- School performance should be evaluated using information on practice as well as longitudinal ('value added') assessment evidence about individual pupils' progress;
- If assessment information relating to individual pupils is used for a system purpose (such as the evaluation of progress made by a class), the possibilities for 'formative' purposes of the assessment to be distorted or lost should be avoided;
- The aims and purposes of all assessment procedures should be clearly communicated to pupils and their parents so that assessment is regarded as a positive process that highlights individual progress and achievement.

The focus of assessment policies and guidelines

Educational policies that aim to promote inclusive assessment practice should:
- Exist within a broad context of legislation, financing and resourcing that supports inclusion. Assessment policies should be clearly linked to broader policies on SEN and inclusion;
- Evaluate and identify best practice and then use evidence about best practice in teaching, learning and inclusive assessment to guide policy developments;
- Be based upon a consideration and understanding of the effects of decentralisation of responsibility for assessment within the national and local situations. Bureaucratic assessment procedures should be avoided and school autonomy in implementing inclusive assessment should be supported;
- Provide schools with on-going information and guidance about how assessment information - particularly standardised assessment information collected for national monitoring purposes - can be used to improve provision and practice for all pupils, including those with SEN;

- Aim to promote effective learning for all pupils by seeing assessment as an essential tool for monitoring pupil progress and informing curriculum planning and provision;
- Avoid promoting the use of quantitative assessment methods, but rather support the use of a variety of assessment procedures, methods and tools by schools, teachers and specialist assessment teams.

Provision of flexible support structures that promote inclusive assessment

As a result of the recommendations regarding the focus for assessment policies, four key recommendations for support structures are apparent:
- Policy makers need to evaluate and then act upon the resource implications of policy designed to promote inclusive assessment. Teachers need the correct tools to carry out effective assessments, but policy makers should also fully consider the time and resource implications if teachers, schools and support staff are to effectively implement inclusive assessment;
- There is a potential risk that some educational policy makers and managers will interpret inclusion as meaning that specialist expertise should be de-emphasised and potentially de-valued. An inclusive system of assessment should integrate specialist expertise and approaches within the overall model of assessment;
- The organisation of effective support services to schools is vital. This requires the organisation of support structures that allow collaboration and joint working between different educational and non-educational services and/or agencies that contribute to multi-disciplinary assessment. Reviewing the progress of support provided as well as service effectiveness from the perspectives of all the actors involved in the assessment process, is an important aspect of such collaboration;
- Appropriate training for inclusive assessment practice should be made available for teachers and specialist support staff. There should be clear policies for initial training and continuing professional development that provides all staff involved in assessment with the relevant knowledge and skills for inclusive assessment. A key element of such a policy is that training should focus upon assessment as problem solving and not assessment

as identification of pupils' deficits and weaknesses, which may in effect be a barrier to inclusion. Training should be focussed upon using assessment to identify and develop strengths and abilities as a key tool for supporting pupils' learning.

4.6 Summary

The recommendations in the sections above are presented in order to highlight the key aspects of policy and practice that are required to support inclusive assessment in mainstream primary schools. The intention is to stimulate debate amongst policy makers and practitioners as well as heighten their awareness of these key issues in relation to inclusive assessment.

These recommendations highlight how assessment can be used to support the learning of all pupils in mainstream primary classrooms. They require careful consideration by policy makers and practitioners if assessment in inclusive settings is to be a real facilitator of and not a potential barrier to inclusion.

Whilst the focus of the Agency study has been upon the primary education phase, it is argued that the basic principles, aims and intentions of inclusive assessment are applicable to other sectors of education such as early childhood intervention and post primary phases. The focus and methods of assessment may change, but the underlying principles outlined in the sections above apply to all inclusive education settings.

5. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

During recent years, the understanding of assessment has changed dramatically in the majority of European countries. Rapid changes are evident in relation to conceptions regarding the main purposes of assessment. There have also been developments in understanding how pupils with different special needs learn; a re-thinking of the focus for educational goals and programmes and, most importantly, a developing understanding of the weaknesses inherent within a purely 'testing' approach. Alongside these developments, different groups - policy makers, parents, even the media - are now interested in the results, if not the process, of assessment in schools.

There has been a move from looking at individual pupils in isolation, to considering the context of pupil's learning. At the same time, the assessment process has moved away from a 'snapshot' approach involving professionals from outside the mainstream classroom, to an on-going process of mainstream teachers, parents and pupils themselves developing an understanding of not just what pupils learn, but also how they learn it.

The approaches, methods and tools as well as the people involved in assessment have all developed in line with the view that assessment should be seen as a fundamental part of the process of teaching and learning. However, these developments have not completely overcome the potential negative effects of assessment - assessment methods being used might not be appropriate for the purpose of the assessment. Similarly, assessment information can be interpreted to make educational decisions that do not take full account of the initial reason for, or context of that assessment.

Wider tensions in countries' educational systems also impact upon debates surrounding inclusive assessment. In the 1996 UNESCO report *Learning: the Treasure Within*, seven tensions for education in the 21st century were identified. Of these, at least three focus upon issues relating to assessment that are still applicable and require consideration.

The tension between long-term and short-term educational considerations - there may be pressures to find quick answers and easy solutions to problems that require a long-term strategy of

reform. The use of pupil assessment information in monitoring educational standards is an example of one such area where pressures for change result in changes to policy and practice that may not always be evidenced based.

The tension between competition and equality of opportunity - there is a need to balance competition that provides motivation and incentives with co-operation that promotes equity and social justice for all. Assessment of pupils can be based upon a competitive system, or it can be geared towards promoting inclusion through co-operation and shared learning experiences.

The tension between the expansion of knowledge and the capacity of individuals to assimilate it - there is a need to ensure that the curriculum covers all the relevant knowledge a pupil requires, as well as opportunities for learning how to learn. Assessment is a key tool for teachers in determining not just what pupils need to learn, but also how best they can learn it.

Within this summary report, it is hoped that information on how these tensions can be addressed is clear. In addition, it is hoped that this report demonstrates how inclusive assessment can be a vital tool for teachers and other professionals in ensuring all pupils in inclusive settings learn more successfully.

A central argument of the Agency project is that inclusive assessment practice should give a lead to general assessment practice. Implementing inclusive assessment leads teachers, school managers other educational professionals and policy makers to re-think and re-structure teaching and learning opportunities in order to improve the education of all pupils.

Overall, it can be seen that the key messages presented in the contributions of the countries participating in the Agency Assessment project leads to the following general conclusion:

> The principles of inclusive assessment are principles that support teaching and learning with all pupils. Innovative practice in inclusive assessment demonstrates good assessment practice for all pupils.

REFERENCES

Meijer, C.J.W. (Editor) (2003) **Special education across Europe in 2003: Trends in provision in 18 European countries**. Middelfart: European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education

European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (2005) **Assessment Issues in non-European Countries - A brief Review of Literature**. Available from: www.european-agency.org/site/themes/assessment

Keeves, J. P. (1994) National examinations: design, procedures and reporting. **Fundamentals of Educational Planning No. 50** Paris: UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning

Madaus, G.F. (1988) **The influence of testing on the curriculum**. In Tanner, L. (Editor), *Critical issues in curriculum* (pp. 83-121). Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Peacey, N. (2006) **Reflections on the Seminar**. Presentation given at the Agency Assessment Project meeting, May 20th, 2006, Vienna, Austria

UNESCO (1994) **The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education**. Paris: UNESCO

UNESCO (1996) **Learning: the Treasure Within** Paris: UNESCO International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century

ANNEX

Purposes of Assessment within national policies

The table below provides an overview of which purposes of assessment are directed by national educational policies.

Country	Initial identification of SEN	On-going assessment	Summative assessment	Assessment of educational standards
Austria	✓		✓	Currently being developed
Belgium (Fl)	✓	✓		
Belgium (Fr)	✓	✓		
Cyprus	✓	✓		
Czech Republic	✓	✓		Currently being developed
Denmark	✓			Currently being developed
Estonia	✓	✓		✓
France	✓	✓	✓	✓
German Bundesländer	✓	✓	✓	Currently being developed
Greece	✓	✓		
Hungary	✓		✓	Currently being developed
Iceland	✓	✓		✓
Italy	✓	✓	✓	✓
Latvia	✓			✓
Lithuania	✓	✓		✓
Luxembourg	✓		✓	
Netherlands	✓		✓	
Norway	✓	✓	✓	
Poland	✓	✓	✓	✓
Portugal	✓	✓		✓
Spain	✓	✓		
Sweden	✓	✓		
Switzerland	✓		✓	Currently being developed
UK (England)	✓	✓	To be introduced	✓

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

This Glossary has been developed as a result of on-going discussions with project exerts during the project. It is therefore a glossary of 'working definitions' that were applied in the project. Often the descriptions of terms have been reached through a process of compromise as specific terms may be used in different ways in different languages and also country situations.

Assessment - Assessment refers to the ways teachers or other professionals systematically collect and use information about a pupil's level of achievement and/or development in different areas of their educational experience (academic, behaviour or social).

Assessment accommodation/adaptation/modification - an alteration in the way an assessment is conducted or test is applied. The purpose of assessment accommodation is to allow pupils with SEN to show what they know or can do by removing the barriers that may be intrinsic in the assessment itself (for example, providing written test questions orally to pupils with visual impairments).

Assessment for learning - is used in a general way in many countries to refer to qualitative assessment procedures that inform decision-making about teaching methods and next steps in a pupil's learning. These procedures are usually carried out in classrooms by class teachers and the professionals that work with class teachers. However, it has a very specific meaning in the UK (England) - the Assessment Reform Group (2002) defines *Assessment for learning* as the: *… process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there.*

Baseline assessment - a first assessment in either a general, or specific area of functioning to determine a pupil's profile of strengths and weaknesses at a particular time. Baseline assessment is often used at the start of teaching and learning programmes as a starting 'measure' to assess progress over a period of time.

Curriculum based assessment - assessment linked to programmes of learning; used to inform teachers about the learning progress and difficulties of their pupils in relation to the programme of study, so

they can make decisions about what a pupil needs to learn next and how to teach that material.

Diagnosis - is one particular use or purpose of assessment information where the information is used to identify particular strengths and weaknesses a pupil may have in one or more areas of their functioning. Diagnosis often implies the collection and interpretation of information from a medical perspective, although educational 'diagnosis' also occurs. Diagnosis is often one aspect of assessment processes linked to initial identification of special educational needs.

Evaluation - a teacher or other professional reflecting upon all the factors involved in the whole teaching and learning process (which may include assessment of pupils' learning) in order to make decisions about next steps in their work.

Initial identification - recognition/detection of possible special educational needs (SEN) in a pupil. This recognition leads to the process of collecting systematic information that can be used to develop a profile of strengths, weaknesses and needs the pupils may have. Initial identification of SEN may be linked to other assessment procedures and it may involve professionals outside of the mainstream school (including health professionals). In most countries there is separate legislation directing the procedures for initial identification of SEN.

Measurement - refers to assessment that is linked to some form of numerical quantifier (a score, mark or grade). Usually measurement implies some possibility to compare one pupil's score/mark against another pupil's.

Needs based assessment - is a decision-making process in which an assessor analyses the pupil's learning difficulties and tries to find possible explanations in order to make recommendations that can solve these problems. These recommendations are often used as the basis for an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

On-going assessment - assessment procedures carried out in classrooms, mainly by class teachers and the professionals that work with class teachers that inform decision-making about teaching

methods and next steps in a pupil's learning. The term *formative assessment* relates to the idea of on-going assessment.

Process oriented assessment - assessment that aims at developing pupil learning through change or improvement in their learning environment. The methods associated with this form of assessment are usually pupil oriented, for example pupil interviews, portfolios etc.

Screening - is a preliminary process for identifying pupils who may be at risk of future difficulty in a particular area and who therefore may be a priority for intervention. Screening is intended for all the pupils and so the measures/tests used are usually quick and easy to administer as well as easy to interpret. Screening is often the first step to further, more detailed assessment (for example diagnostic testing).

Specialist or multi-disciplinary assessment teams - teams of professionals from different specialisms (educational, psychological, social, health, etc) who can assess a pupil in different ways and then contribute broader, multi-disciplinary assessment information that will inform decisions about their future learning.

Standardised assessment - the collection of quantifiable information about a pupil's achievement that relates to a fixed test with a scale of possible scores. The test and scoring scales are standardised by trialling them with a large number of pupils so they are reliable (i.e. will produce the same results consistently over time) and also valid (i.e. measure what they are supposed to).

Summative assessment - a 'one-off' assessment used to get a snapshot of a pupil's level of achievement in relation to a programme of study. Usually, summative assessment is carried out at the end of a period of time, or the end of a programme of study. It is frequently quantitative and is often associated with a mark or grade that provides a comparison of the pupil's achievement in relation to other pupils. The term *product oriented assessment* is often linked to summative assessment.

Testing - is one possible method of assessing a pupil's learning in specific areas. Tests are quite specific and are linked to very particular circumstances and used for specific reasons.

CONTRIBUTORS

In addition to the contribution of all the Agency Representative Board members and National Co-ordinators (whose contact details can all be found on: www.european-agency.org/site/national_pages/index.html) the contributions of the following nominated experts in the preparation of the Country Reports and this summary report are gratefully acknowledged:

AUSTRIA	Mr. Peter Friedle	p.friedle@tirol.gv.at
	Mr. Wilfried Prammer	spz-uu@aon.at
BELGIUM (Flemish Speaking Community)	Ms. Inge Placklé	inge.plackle@xios.be
	Ms. Jetske Strijbos	jetske.strijbos@xios.be
BELGIUM (French Speaking Community)	Mr. André Caussin	andre.caussin@cfwb.be
	Ms. Danielle Choukart	danielle.choukart@cfwb.be
CYPRUS	Ms. Merope Iacovou Kapsali	miacovou@cytanet.com.cy
	Mr. Andreas Theodorou	atheodorou@moec.gov.cy
CZECH REPUBLIC	Mr. Jasmin Muhi_	muhicj@ippp.cz
	Ms. V_ra Vojtová	Vojtova@ped.muni.cz
	Ms. Zuzana Kaprová	kaprovaz@msmt.cz
DENMARK	Mr. Niels Egelund	Egelund@dpu.dk
	Mr. Martin Wohlers	martin.wohlers@post.opasia.dk
	Mr. Preben Siersbaek	siersbaek@uvm.dk
ESTONIA	Ms. Aina Haljaste	aina@eol.ee
	Mr. Priit Pensa	ppensa@veeriku.tartu.ee
FRANCE	Ms. Janine Laurent-Cognet	dpri@inshea.fr
GERMAN BUNDESLÄNDER	Mr. Ulrich von Knebel	von.Knebel@gmx.de
	Ms. Anette Hausotter	a.hausotter@t-online.de
	Ms. Christine Pluhar	Christine.Pluhar@kumi.landsh.de
GREECE	Ms. Mara Pantazopoulou	grssgraf33@sch.gr
	Ms. Maria Palaska	mpalask@sch.gr
HUNGARY	Ms. Zsuzsa Hámoriné-Vaczy	zsuzsa.vaczy@om.hu

	Ms. Mária K_patakiné-Mészáros	kopatakim@oki.hu
ICELAND	Ms. _óra Björk Jónsdóttir	thorabj@skagafjordur.is
	Mr. Arthúr Morthens	arthur@reykjavik.is
ITALY	Mr. Pasquale Pardi	pasquale.pardi@istruzione.it
	Ms. Lina Grossi	lgrossi@invalsi.it
	Mr. Raffaele Iosa	rafiosa@tin.it
LATVIA	Ms. Anitra Irbe	anitra.irbe@isec.gov.lv
	Ms. Solvita Zarina	solvita.z@inbox.lv
LITHUANIA	Ms. Laimut_ Motuzien_	laimute.motuziene@sppc.lt
	Ms. Ramut_ Skripkien_	ramute.skripkiene@spc.smm.lt
LUXEMBOURG	Ms. Joëlle Faber	joelle.faber@srea.etat.lu
	Mr. Lucien Bertrand	lubert@pt.lu
NETHERLANDS	Ms. Noëlle Pameijer	noelle.pameijer@xs4all.nl
	Mr. Sip Jan Pijl	s.j.pijl@rug.nl
NORWAY	Ms. Yngvild Nilsen	yngvild.nilsen@ude.oslo.kommune.no
	Mr. Bjarne Øygarden	bjarne.oygarden@utdanningsdirektoratet.no
POLAND	Ms. Jadwiga Brzdak	jbrzdak@oke.jaworzno.pl
	Ms. Anna Janus	annajanuska@poczta.onet.pl
PORTUGAL	Ms. Teodolinda Silveira	linda.silveira@netvisao.pt
	Ms. Margarida Marques	margaridaecae@portugalmail.pt
SPAIN	Ms. Mª Luisa Arranz	mlarranz@yahoo.es
	Mr. Victor Santiuste Bermejo	victorsantiuste@med.ucm.es
	Ms. Victoria Alonso	victorialonso@wanadoo.es
SWEDEN	Ms. Ulla Alexandersson	ulla.alexandersson@ped.gu.se
	Mr. Staffan Engström	Staffan.Engstrom@skolverket.se
SWITZERLAND	Ms. Annemarie Kummer	annemarie.kummer@szh.ch

	Mr. Reto Luder	reto.luder@phzh.ch
UNITED KINGDOM (England)	Mr. John Brown Ms. Tandi Clausen-May	brownj@qca.org.uk t.clausen-may@nfer.ac.uk

Assessment in Inclusive Settings - Key Issues for Policy and Practice presents the main findings from the first phase of the Agency Assessment project. It is based on information describing assessment policy and practice provided by 23 countries.

The main focus for the project was upon assessment that informs teaching and learning in primary inclusive settings. This report considers issues relating to legal frameworks and policies for assessment in inclusive settings and how these direct assessment practice. It also considers the key question of how to move assessment procedures away from a 'deficit' approach (or medical model) towards an educational approach. Overall, the report considers how assessment in inclusive classrooms can inform decision-making about teaching and learning in the best possible ways.

This report aims to provide a useful source of information for policy makers and practitioners working with assessment in primary inclusive settings. This includes special needs education practitioners who have a particular interest in policy and practice that supports inclusion. However, it also includes policy makers and practitioners who are responsible for developing and implementing mainstream assessment policies that should consider the needs of all pupils, including those with SEN.

European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education