

# **COUNTRY POLICY DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT**

**Country Repository – Iceland**



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The information in this document was current in April 2024

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You may cite this publication as follows: European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2024. *Country Policy Development Support: Country Repository – Iceland*. Odense, Denmark



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## INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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### The country repository

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Some broad types of evidence of implementation may include:

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

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

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

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



## CPDS COUNTRY REPOSITORY – ICELAND

### Section 1: Legislation and policy

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

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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>‘Iceland’s Education Policy 2030 (EP2030) is an education strategy document that outlines aims to achieve a dynamic and flexible education system to drive economic and social change. Its vision is ‘to accomplish high-quality education through life’, underpinned by the values of resilience, courage, knowledge and happiness. It has five pillars to attain this vision: equity, teaching, skills for the future, well-being, and education system quality.’</p> <p><a href="#">OECD (2021)</a></p> <p>Iceland Education Policy 2030 Action Plan to the EP 2030</p>	<p>The OECD (2021) makes four implementation recommendations, to enable Iceland to achieve these aims, over a ten-year period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Review the design of EP2030 to make it actionable</li><li>- Consider the approach to the engagement of stakeholders throughout EP2030</li><li>- Fit implementation of EP2030 for its decentralised context</li><li>- Define an actionable implementation strategy.</li></ul> <p>‘The OECD understands EP2030 as a ‘strategy document’ that Iceland can use to guide the selection of particular policy options as it develops its implementation strategy.’</p> <p>Source: <a href="#">OECD (2021)</a>, p. 3</p> <p>A revision of the first action plan is under way and work on the second plan has begun. The second plan for 2024–2027 will be launched in May 2024.</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p><a href="#">Preschool Act 90/2008</a></p> <p><a href="#">Compulsory School Act 91/2008</a></p> <p><a href="#">Upper Secondary Education Act 92/2008</a></p> <p><a href="#">Higher Education Institutions Act 63/2006.</a></p> <p>Source: Country System Mapping (CSM) Country Report (European Agency, 2023), pp. 31–32</p>	–
<p>‘Compulsory education is organised in a single structure system, i.e. primary and lower-secondary education are part of the same school level (<a href="#">Compulsory School Act No. 91/2008</a>). The most common form of organisation is that all ten grades are in one school building, although different arrangements exist.’</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), p. 16</p>	–
<p><a href="#">Law on the education and competence of teachers 2023</a></p>	–



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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>‘A suitable general education is one of the fundamental rights of all Icelandic citizens. This right is guaranteed by article 76 of the <a href="#">Constitution of Iceland</a>. The Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights, incorporated into Icelandic law by Act 62/1994, also guarantees the right to a general education’</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), p. 31</p>	<p>The Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report indicated a number of areas of education policy that have made progress towards implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 targets. <a href="#">VNR Report</a> (Government of Iceland, 2023), pp. 64–65.</p> <p>Source <a href="#">Planipolis 2019</a>: Iceland undertook a <a href="#">voluntary review</a> of SDG targets (including SDG 4 – Education), to evaluate and align its progress towards achieving the targets.</p>
<p>‘The main objective of Iceland’s education policy is to offer all citizens equal opportunities to receive education, regardless of age, domicile, financial situation, disability, sex, mother tongue or religion.’</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), p. 31</p>	–





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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Guidelines for services for special needs pupils in primary and compulsory schools are given in a Regulation on Support for Learners with Special Needs no. 585/2010 (<a href="#">reviewed in 2015</a>) and a Regulation on Municipalities Specialist Services in Schools no. 584/2010 (<a href="#">reviewed in 2019</a>)</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), pp. 11, 32</p>	<p>Revision will be available when the new law on school services is launched in spring 2024.</p>
<p><a href="#">Pre-primary School Act</a></p> <p>Regulation on Specialist Services in Schools no. 584/2010. <a href="#">Compulsory School Act</a></p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), p. 32</p>	<p>–</p>

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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Learners with disabilities are addressed in <a href="#">The Act on Integration of Services in the Interest of Children's Prosperity no. 86/2021</a></p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), p. 12</p>	<p>Revision will be available when the new law on school services is launched in spring 2024.</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Learners vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education are those who have difficulties with learning due to general or specific learning disabilities, emotional or social difficulties and/or disabilities, cf. <a href="#">Act on Services for Persons with Disabilities with Long-term Support Needs no. 38/2018</a>, learners with long term illness, with developmental disorders, mental disorders and learners with other health-related special needs (Regulation on support for learners with special needs in compulsory school 585/2010). This group also includes learners with a foreign language background.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), p. 12</p>	<p>–</p>
<p><a href="#">The Act on Integration of Services in the Interest of Children’s Prosperity no. 86/2021</a> addresses that no child should be left behind. It focuses on cross-sectoral co-operation addressing the educational system, the system of social affairs and the health system to collaborate with Municipalities and schools on the matter of every child and their families.</p>	<p>–</p>
<p>The current thinking around learners considered vulnerable to exclusion has broadened in the last decade, from being focused on different disabilities to now being all learners that for some reason do not thrive in the education system. The reasons can be various, and more and more the focus is directed towards mental and behavioural problems such as anxiety, depression, etc., that can lead to school avoidance.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), p. 12</p>	<p><a href="#">Child Friendly Cities</a>  <a href="#">Child Rights School Programme</a>            EP 2030            Action Plan to EP 2030 – revised 2023  <a href="#">UN Convention on the Rights of the Child</a></p>



## Section 2: Flexible mechanisms for funding and resource allocation

Mechanisms exist to support the on-going development of inclusive school communities and enable them to increase their capacity to respond to diversity, support all learners and meet the full range of their diverse needs.

### Policy statement 2.1: Funding mechanisms are flexible enough to support the on-going development of school communities

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Policies allow for variation across municipalities.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), pp. 52–53</p>	<p>The discussion with municipalities has been continued and a report is due soon.</p> <p>A report (only in Icelandic) is available on funding of compulsory schools from 1996–2022 on behalf of municipalities</p>
<p>Compulsory schools are gradually gaining more autonomy concerning human and financial resources and teaching content. In many cases, head teachers have their own budgets for operation costs, while others have full autonomy concerning staff recruitment. Head teachers have autonomy regarding instruction, teaching methods and the schools' internal affairs.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), p. 52</p>	–



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>ECEC: The construction and the running of pre-primary schools (including all salaries and operation costs) are by law at the expense and the responsibility of the municipalities. Funds are allocated to the municipalities from the national income taxation to fund, among other things, the construction and running of pre-primary schools. Local taxes may also be used for the financing.</p> <p>There are no nationwide co-ordinated rules concerning such contributions. It is up to municipalities concerned to allow other parties to operate a pre-primary school according to guidelines in the Pre-Primary school act ...</p> <p>Parents contribute a substantial amount towards operating costs of the pre-primary school level. The share that the parents contribute varies from municipality to municipality and to some extent, on the circumstances of the parents.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 4.2, pp. 52–53</p>	<p>–</p>

**Policy statement 2.2: Mechanisms are in place to ensure that stakeholders in communities and schools are aware of the resource allocation and funding processes**

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Reykjavík Capital city – LOI index</p>	<p>Reykjavík capital city has started to revise their allocations and fundings by using Learning Opportunity Index – LOI</p> <p>Information on the project only available in Icelandic</p>



**Policy statement 2.3: The funding mechanisms in place are flexible enough to enable schools to build capacity to support all learners**

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
–	The state uses an allocation model for funding of upper-secondary schools – still in progress.

**Policy statement 2.4: Processes are in place to ensure that the allocation of funding supports capacity building in individual schools to reduce barriers to learning for learners vulnerable to exclusion**

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
Individual head teachers have some autonomy in the allocation of funding within the school.	See the comments in 2.1 and 2.3.



**Policy statement 2.5: Requirements are in place for schools to report back and justify their additional [discretionary funding](#) to national or regional bodies**

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>All pre-primary, compulsory and upper-secondary schools are required to implement internal evaluation methods to evaluate their work. Schools are free to choose among systems for its own use, but these should include significant elements of internal monitoring. An internal evaluation is to include the school’s policy and objectives, a definition of the ways in which these are to be achieved, an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the school’s operations and a plan for improvements ...</p> <p>Internal evaluation must be part of a continuous effort in all pre-primary, compulsory and upper-secondary schools. It has a long-term perspective, rather than being an isolated action.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 5.2, p. 56</p>	<p>The central government provides funds to municipalities to meet the needs of learners with disabilities at compulsory school age. This is provided through the Local Authorities Equalization Fund.</p> <p>Payments to the municipalities for learners with disabilities depend on levels of disability. The same amount is expected to be paid per pupil with the same degree of disability, irrespective of whether the special education provided varies from one municipality to another.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), p. 29</p> <p>Fund for learners whose mother tongue is not Icelandic</p>
<p>By law, the Ministry of Education and Children is responsible for regular external evaluation of the pre-primary, compulsory and upper-secondary schools but is authorised to extend its amendment to the Directorate of Education.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 5.2, p. 51</p> <p>New law on the Directorate of Education has been approved and it is now clear that the Directorate will not be responsible for performing external evaluation (at the moment at least).</p>	<p>–</p>



## Section 3: An effective governance plan

An effective plan is in place that sets out clear roles and responsibilities, opportunities for collaboration and levels of [autonomy](#) throughout all system levels and [sectors](#).

### Policy statement 3.1: Roles and responsibilities are clearly presented

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The Icelandic parliament and the <a href="#">Ministry of Education and Children</a> bear political and legal responsibility for the education system and are responsible for establishing its administrative framework and principal goals. The Ministry prepares educational policies, including national curriculum at all school levels and ensures their implementation ...</p> <p>Local authorities are responsible for the operation of pre-schools and the single structure compulsory school level (primary and lower-secondary schools) in their area.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 2.1, p. 14</p>	<p>There is a clear structure of roles and responsibilities from the Icelandic Parliament, the Education Ministry, municipalities (local authorities), school head teachers, teachers, school boards; department and project managers; school, parent and learner councils.</p> <p>Further information is to be found in the law on the prosperity of children and can also be found in new law on the Directorate of Education and new law on school services</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The <a href="#">Upper Secondary School Act</a> no. 92/2008, contains provisions concerning the National Curriculum Guide for Upper-Secondary Schools and school working guides.</p> <p>The law stipulates that individual schools are to write their own school working guides which, among other things, are to specify what areas individual schools have chosen to emphasise, define the education they offer, and their teaching methods and administration.</p> <p>The state is responsible for upper-secondary schools. They are steered directly from the ministry, which until 2008 gave the schools very little freedom to decide on curriculum issues. The latest legislation for secondary schools (<a href="#">Lög um framhaldsskóla nr. 92/2008</a>) provided each school with more independence, requiring them to decide on curriculum matters and make their own plan of education.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 2.1, pp. 17–18</p>	–
<p>There are no differences in the provision of private education or in the legislative framework compared to the public sector.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 2.3, p. 21</p>	–





**Policy statement 3.2: Measures are in place to monitor, evaluate and review the governance plan's effectiveness at different levels across the education system**

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Private Sector: The municipalities and <a href="#">Ministry of Education</a> and Children are to monitor and evaluate private schools in the same way as local schools.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 2.3, p. 21</p>	–



**Policy statement 3.3: Opportunities exist for collaboration between stakeholders at every level of the education system, and across different sectors (including all public and private sectors)**

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Pre-Primary and Primary: Local authorities formulate a general policy for pre-primary school operations in the municipality and present it to its inhabitants.</p> <p>The <a href="#">Local Government Act</a> and agreements made with the municipality in question apply to school board elections and operations.</p> <p>The pre-primary school board, or the school board where applicable, is in charge of the affairs of pre-primary schools in a local municipality, and parents’ representatives have the right to attend the board’s meetings, address them and make proposals.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 2.4, pp. 22–23</p>	<p>There is a structure of boards, councils and meeting opportunities for extensive formal collaboration within each sector, and some cross-sector collaboration between schools and municipality authorities.</p> <p>A pre-primary board, elected by the local authorities, oversees pre-primary school affairs on behalf of the local authorities. Pre-primary school head teachers, pre-primary school personnel and parents of the municipality elect each one representative and one alternate to represent them at board meetings, with the right to address the meetings and propose motions.</p> <p>Pre-primary head teachers are required to hold regular meetings with the staff concerning the functioning of the school and the welfare of each child.</p> <p>Pre-primary head teachers are obliged to promote collaboration between the parents of the children attending the schools and the staff of the schools. Parents in all pre-primary schools elect representatives to a parent council. At least three parents sit on the parent councils.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 2.4, pp. 22–23</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Primary</p> <p>The <a href="#">Local Government Act</a> and agreements made with the municipality in question apply to school board elections and operations.</p>	<p>Local authorities formulate a general policy for school operations and present it to its inhabitants. Local authorities are to establish cooperation between pre-primary school and compulsory school on the one hand, and between compulsory school and upper secondary school on the other ...</p> <p>Within each municipality, matters concerning compulsory schools come under the authority of the school board, which oversees educational affairs in the municipality in question. The school board is elected by the relevant local authority at the beginning of each elective term. The <a href="#">Local Government Act</a> and agreements made with the municipality in question apply to school board elections and operations.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), pp. 22–23</p>
<p>Private primary schools have their own regulation: <a href="#">Regulation on independently run primary schools 1150/2018</a></p>	<p>Regulation on independently run primary schools 1150/2018 deals with the implementation of the provisions of the Basic Education Act, no. 91/2008, according to Article 43.</p> <p>The regulation is only available in Icelandic. Principally the same rules apply for private schools and public schools, but the private ones need to succumb to a stricter process with a formal contract.</p>
<p><a href="#">Regulation no. 547/2012</a> on the education of foster children in primary schools</p>	<p>The main goal of the regulation of the education of foster children in primary schools was to secure appropriate education for those children that often live temporarily in foster homes in other municipalities, and their schooling was often disrupted during foster care. This is a great improvement, organised in co-operation with other ministries and various stakeholders.</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
–	<p>In every upper-secondary school there is a school board with five members: three representatives nominated by the Ministry of education and children and two representatives nominated by the municipality. There are three non-voting observers, with a right to address meetings and propose motions, one nominated by the teachers' assembly, one by the pupils' association and one by the parents' council.</p> <p>The head teacher attends school board meetings as a non-voting observer with the right to speak and propose a motion. The school council provides consultation and assistance to the head teacher. The head teacher serves as chairman of the school council, which, in addition to the head teacher, consists of the head teacher's assistant and representatives of teachers and pupils.</p> <p>Upper-secondary schools are required to organise a school assembly at least once every school year. All school personnel and pupils' representatives, according to further decision by the head teacher, have a right to sit in the school assembly. The school assembly discusses school matters.</p> <p>The head teacher is obliged to summon a school assembly if one third of permanent staff so requests. Upper-secondary schools must organise a teachers' assembly at least twice every school year.</p> <p>A parents' council is to be operated in each upper-secondary school. The head teacher calls its inaugural meeting. The role of the parents' council is to support school activities, tend to pupils' interests and collaborate with the school in strengthening co-operation between the staff and the parents or legal guardians of underage pupils in the school. Members shall be parents of pupils in the upper-secondary school. The parent council nominates one observer to sit on the school board. The parent council sets its own rules.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 2.4, pp. 25–26</p>



**Policy statement 3.4: There is sufficient autonomy within the governance plan to enable all [leaders](#) at different levels across the education system to use their discretion in making decisions**

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>See Section 3.3</p> <p>Also: Under the Upper Secondary School Act from 2008, the daily administration of upper-secondary schools is managed by the head teachers, who ensure that school operations comply with acts, regulations, national curriculum guidelines and other existing statutes at any given time. They are also responsible for adhering to the budgetary plans of the school. The head teacher serves as director of the school board, and hires administrative staff, teachers, and other school personnel in consultation with the school board. The head teacher is responsible for devising a financial plan and ensuring that the school budget is followed, they shall take initiative in formulating the school curriculum guide and organise developmental work within the school.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 2.4, p. 25</p>	<p>Head teachers in compulsory schools have some autonomy within schools, but laws and policy also control some aspects. Individual municipalities have considerable autonomy in some areas.</p>



**Policy statement 3.5: The governance plan sets out clear roles and responsibilities, at every level of the education system, with processes in place to resolve conflicts**

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p><a href="#">Regulation on the responsibility and obligations of all in compulsory schools</a></p> <p><a href="#">Regulation on the responsibility and obligations of all in upper-secondary schools</a></p> <p>Rules for the professional advisory on bullying matters</p>	<p>See Sections 3.3 and 3.4</p>
<p>–</p>	<p>Processes are in place to resolve conflicts at different levels of the education system and/or between groups or individual stakeholders, but will be revised when the new law and school services come into operation.</p>



## Section 4: Quality assurance and accountability

There is a comprehensive framework of quality assurance and [accountability](#) for monitoring, review and evaluation that supports high-quality provision for all learners, with a focus on equitable opportunities for those at risk of marginalisation or exclusion.

### Policy statement 4.1: There is a framework to monitor and evaluate high-quality provision for all learners across the whole education system

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Laws on <a href="#">pre-primary</a>, <a href="#">compulsory</a> and <a href="#">upper-secondary</a> education stipulate that the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture is to conduct comprehensive external evaluation at these school levels with the Directorate of Education.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 5.1, p. 49</p>	<p>No provisions are to be found in laws or regulations on the frequency of the external evaluations of schools except in the Upper-Secondary School Act. There it is stated that evaluation of upper-secondary schools shall be carried out no less than every five years.</p> <p>Internal evaluation must be part of a continuous effort in all pre-primary, compulsory and upper-secondary schools. It has a long-term perspective, rather than being an isolated action.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 5.2, p. 51</p> <p>At the current Directorate of Education there is a list of reports on external evaluations (only in Icelandic)</p>
<p>Every three years, the Minister of Education, Science and Culture is to deliver comprehensive reports to the Parliament on pre-primary, compulsory and upper-secondary education.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), p. 49</p>	–



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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Laws on <a href="#">pre-primary</a>, <a href="#">compulsory</a> and <a href="#">upper-secondary</a> education state that educational opportunities and additional support are to be provided for all learners.</p>	<p><a href="#">The Compulsory School Act</a> contains additional practices for some groups (Section II, Article 5):</p> <p>Foster children (Regulation (nr. 547/2012))</p> <p>Several reports are available on school drop-out in compulsory and upper-secondary schools, mainly on monitoring</p> <p>The national curriculum for compulsory education was reviewed in 2023 adding a chapter e.g. concerning danger of school drop-out</p> <p>New law on school services will be launched in spring 2024</p>





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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The results of external evaluation are to be used by the school to improve its work. Educational authorities also make use of evaluation results. At pre-primary and compulsory school levels, the municipality is responsible for implementation of improvements.</p> <p>Internal evaluation results are intended for use by the school to improve various aspects of its own performance and activities and to call attention to good practices and results in the work of the school. Schools' internal evaluation reports are to be made public, for example on school websites.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 5.2, p. 56</p>	–
<p>In internal evaluation, reliable information is gathered on such matters as school management, academic achievement, <b>the academic experience of the pupils</b>, teaching methods and their influence on academic achievement, and communications within the school and between the school and parents and other acting parties outside the school.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 5.3, p. 56</p>	–



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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
–	<p>CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 5.4, p. 57 indicates that measures are present in relation to ‘Efficiency and effectiveness of funding mechanisms’: ‘To some extent. Audit outcomes on the finance of compulsory schools’</p> <p>In 2019, Iceland drew on the Agency’s Financing Policies for Inclusive Education Systems (FPIES) work to present a <a href="#">seminar</a> to Agency countries. Following the work, 13 municipalities took part in a pilot study using the FPIES open source <a href="#">self-review tool</a>. The goal was to identify the attitudes, practices and systems that support inclusive education and to define the funding mechanisms in resource allocation. Finally the goal was to prepare a criteria for local authorities when making budgeted plans for compulsory schools.</p> <p>A description of an on-going follow up is to be published soon in a new report (has not yet been published so no summary is available)</p>



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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The <a href="#">Act on Integration of Services in the Interest of Children's Prosperity no. 86/2021</a></p>	<p>The implementation of the law on integration of services in the interest of children's prosperity is on-going but there is not yet evidence of effectiveness.</p> <p>The government has developed a dashboard to monitor children's prosperity in Iceland and to support the implementation of the legislation. The dashboard holds statistics that give an overview of the prosperity of children and young people in Iceland. The data is collected through questionnaires developed together with the University of Iceland and sent to children through their schools. The dashboard consists of five dimensions based on the general principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: Education; Quality of Life, Health and Wellbeing, Security and Protection, Participation and Social Connection. The dashboard provides information that governments and municipalities can use to prioritise projects, funding and policy development, with an emphasis on vulnerable groups of children.</p>



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

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

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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>In January 2020, a new framework of legislation on education, competency and recruitment of teachers and school leaders of preschools, compulsory schools and upper-secondary schools (Act 95/2019) entered into force, repealing Act 87/2008 on the education and recruitment of teachers and administrators. The act lays down licencing requirements in Iceland. A significant novelty is that licenced teachers move up and down school levels, although with more requirements for teaching in specific subjects at the upper-secondary school stages (ISCED 3 or grades 11, 12 and 13).</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 3.3c, p. 38</p>	<p>There are different requirements for the training and qualification of teachers in the various sectors of the education system.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), pp. 37–39</p> <p>There are demands on specific competences related to inclusive education in the regulation on the competence framework for teachers and school leaders but since it only came into force/was published in 2022, there is no evidence yet.</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Act 95/2019 stipulates the general educational requirements to become a Pre-primary, Compulsory and Upper-secondary school teacher.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 3.3c. p. 39</p>	<p>The law (Act 95/2019) requires for <b>most teachers</b> a Master's degree (300 ECTS) in education or in respective field of study together with Teacher Certification Studies. For vocational teachers, educational requirements include 60 credit units in Teacher Certification Studies in addition to a final diploma in vocational field, such as qualification as Master craftsman in a trade.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 3.3c, p. 39</p> <p>The new act from 2019 refers to ALL teachers. Prior to the former act from 2008, teacher education was only 3 years. From 2008, all qualified teachers had to graduate with a Master's degree, so fully qualified teachers that graduated before 2008 graduated with a Bachelor's degree.</p>

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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>There is no single comprehensive legislation that applies to the professional development of teachers and their further education.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), p. 39</p>	<p>Varied level of provision. The policy is of 'encouraging' teachers to initiate and develop voluntary CPD, beyond the minimum stipulated by their contract.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), p. 40</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Continuing professional development of teachers and head teachers is proposed in laws and arranged in accordance with wage agreement. Usually, upper-secondary school teachers have a minimum of 80 hours/year for professional development. Compulsory school teachers have 170–190 hours/year.</p>	<p>Local municipalities, individual schools and craft associations may all provide training opportunities.</p> <p>Provisions concerning in-service training for pre-primary, compulsory and upper-secondary teachers are in their wage contracts, in laws and regulations for individual teacher education institutions and in central legislations on individual school levels.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), p. 39</p> <p>A continuum of professional development is available for all teachers and they are all supposed to use a certain amount of time for CPD. However, the Ministry has no information on what kind of CPD they participate in.</p>
<p>Continuous professional development of compulsory school teachers and upper-secondary school teachers is part of their contracts on salaries and working conditions. CPD is optional in negotiations of municipalities and their pre-primary school teachers.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 3.3, p. 37</p> <p>The Ministry does not oversee these negotiations.</p>	<p>–</p>
<p>ECEC teachers do not have a set number of hours for their professional development.</p>	<p>There are various CPD offers for ECEC teachers, e.g. within the Universities that educate teachers.</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>There is no single comprehensive legislation that applies to the professional development of teachers and their further education.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), p. 39</p>	–
<p>Continuing Professional Development for Teachers Working in Early Childhood and School Education</p> <p>Emphasis has been placed on making it possible for teachers to have access to in-service training or further education. Teacher education institutions offer such programmes.</p> <p>Educational authorities, at state level and municipal level, have adopted the policy of encouraging teachers themselves to bring about innovations and initiate developmental and in-service training projects. Individual pre-primary schools, compulsory schools and upper-secondary schools are required by law to develop local professional development schemes for teachers. In-service training projects are often initiated by associations of teachers of a given subject and in some cases by local education offices.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 3.3, p. 40</p>	<p>The Act on teacher education no. 95/2019 and the regulation on the competences of teachers and school leaders ensure regulation for monitoring and evaluation is in place for quality teacher education courses, uptake and outcomes.</p>



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

<b>Indications of policy</b>	<b>Indications of implementation</b>
<p>Based on Act no. 95/29029, the Teachers' Council (appointed by the Ministry of Education), the Association of municipalities, the universities offering teacher education and associations of teachers and headteachers make policies on in-service education and professional development.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 3.3, p. 38</p> <p>Update February 2024: Based on Act no. 95/29019, the National Council is now called the Teachers' Council.</p>	<p>Provision is by a range of organisations and higher education institutions. The Universities that provide teacher education are in charge of quality assurance.</p>





Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Revised version:</p> <p>‘National Council on professional development of teachers, appointed by the Ministry of Education and Children, Association of municipalities, the universities offering teacher education and associations of teachers and headmasters, makes policies on in-service education and professional development.’</p> <p>Eurydice, section 9 (Last updated 27 November 2023)</p>	<p>There is <b>no evidence</b> of knowledge and experience of all teacher educators in all sectors (special education/VET).</p> <p>Source: Teacher Professional Learning for Inclusion (TPL4I) Policy Mapping Grid (European Agency, 2020a), p. 8; 2.2.6.1 and 2.2.6.2</p> <p>‘Section 2.2.5.1 ... states that approximately five per cent of teachers employed at compulsory schools are trained as special educators. However, <b>due to a shortage of special educators, many schools hire regular teachers on a temporary basis ...</b></p> <p>3.1.1.3 ... quotes: “Program for teachers in special education has been provided since 1974 and is currently offered as <b>elective line of study</b> at master’s level at the School of education at the University of Iceland.”</p> <p>Source: TPL4I Policy Mapping Grid (European Agency, 2020a), p. 9</p> <p>The government launched a 5-year action plan in 2019 aiming at increasing the number of qualified teachers, providing financial incentives/study grants and also at increasing the number of mentors on site.</p>



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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The Act on the education, competency and recruitment of teachers and school leaders of preschools, compulsory schools and upper secondary schools <a href="#">no. 95/2019</a> states the requirements and focus of teacher education.</p> <p>This <b>new law</b> states that a teacher’s committee shall be established, which decides on policy regarding the professional development of teachers and their further education.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 3.3a, p. 37</p> <p>Further detailed information about the systems for teacher professional learning in Iceland are available from the TPL4I <a href="#">Policy Mapping Grid</a> – Iceland (European Agency, 2020a). This document indicates some gaps in monitoring (see Section 4, pp. 19–26).</p> <p>Clarification: Educators are part of the academic staff in teacher education programmes in the Universities. A trainer is a qualified teacher on site.</p>	<p>The new law (2019) has been implemented but the monitoring and evaluation is under way.</p> <p>Quality assurance for teacher ‘educators’ and ‘trainers’ is in the hands of the Universities.</p> <p>Statistics Iceland collects, processes and disseminates data on the economy and society. This includes statistics on the educational system. See Eurydice, National Education Systems, Iceland.</p> <p>Source: TPL4I Policy Mapping Grid (European Agency, 2020a), p. 25.</p> <p>Currently there is no formal planning policy on teachers’ supply and demand. Such planning policy is needed as the supply of teachers is not meeting demand, especially as the teacher population ages and graduating classes of teachers are smaller than the annual group of retiring teachers. (Eurydice, National Education Systems, Iceland, <a href="#">Conditions of service for teachers working in early childhood and school education</a>)</p>



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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Educational authorities at state level and municipal level have adopted the policy of encouraging teachers themselves to bring about innovations and initiate developmental and in-service training projects.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 3.3, p. 40</p>	<p>In 2021, the government established an <a href="#">Education Research Fund</a> which awards grants for applied research in the fields of pre-school, compulsory school and upper-secondary school education. The aim of the Education Research Fund is to strengthen the foundations of applied education research. The term ‘applied education research’ refers to research that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• creates and communicates practical knowledge about the subject matters of pre-schools, compulsory schools and upper-secondary schools, studies at the upper-secondary level, and after-school activities, which leads to the improvement of learning and teaching;</li><li>• promotes and further strengthens the co-operation between schools and after-school activities on the one hand and researchers on the other, based on mutual experiences, leading to the creation of knowledge; all in favour of the prosperity of children;</li><li>• furthers academic knowledge and the adoption of new research methods.</li></ul>



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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Each pupil is to have a <b>supervisory teacher</b>. Supervisory teachers are to follow closely their pupils’ studies and their personal development and general welfare. <b>All pupils</b> at the compulsory level have the right to receive educational and <b>career guidance and counselling within the compulsory school by appropriate specialists</b>.</p>	<p>Supervisory teachers are usually chosen by schools, on the basis of their rich experience and ‘right attitude’.</p>
<p>Pupils in upper-secondary school have the right to receive educational and <b>career guidance</b>.</p>	<p>School and career counsellors provide career guidance.</p>

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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>CPD is optional in negotiations of municipalities and their pre-primary school teachers.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 3.3, p. 40</p>	<p>–</p>
<p>–</p>	<p>Supervisory teachers are to follow closely their pupils’ studies and their personal development and general welfare.</p> <p>Schools choose teachers that have rich experience and the ‘right attitude’ to be supervisory teachers.</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>All pupils at the compulsory and upper-secondary levels have the right to receive educational and career guidance and counselling within the school by <b>appropriate specialists</b>.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 3.4a, p. 41</p>	<p>School and career counsellors work as specialists.</p>



## Section 6: Curriculum framework

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

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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The <a href="#">Ministry of Education and Children</a> ... prepares educational policies, including the national curriculum, at all school levels and ensures their implementation.</p> <p>Schools at all educational levels follow educational policies as determined by local authorities and the Ministry. Such policies are a general guideline for schoolwork and the educational and pedagogical aspects that society wishes to focus on.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 2.1, p. 14</p> <p>The Pre-School Act no. 90/2008 and the National Curriculum Guide state that pre-school is for children below compulsory school age and emphasis is on the value of play and the importance of democracy and equality in all school activities. It illustrates guidelines for the municipalities on the formulation of policy for pre-school activities, and is a flexible framework for pre-school authorities and teachers to decide on objectives of pre-school activities. It is a contract for the benefit of children based on their integral view and aimed at their welfare, and it serves parents as a point of reference for criteria and requirements in children's education and upbringing.</p>	<p>Evidence of implementation in this section will be within the new law on school services to be launched in 2024.</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The <a href="#">Compulsory School Act No. 91/2008</a> and the <a href="#">National Curriculum Guide</a> state that compulsory schools are obliged to <b>educate all children effectively</b>. Each school is required to prepare a school curriculum and work plan based on the national curriculum. School curricula are a guideline for learners, teachers, other school employees and parents.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 2.1, p. 17</p>	–
<p>All learners have the right to <b>appropriate education</b> in compulsory schools, including academic, vocational and artistic studies, and local authorities are obliged to provide learners with the <b>appropriate learning opportunities</b>, regardless of their physical and mental capacity, social and emotional condition or level of language development.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 2.1, p. 16</p>	–
<p>Teachers and the supervisory teachers of individual classes prepare the class curriculum. The curriculum stipulates the study programme for the school year or for individual classes during the school year.</p> <p><b>An individually oriented curriculum</b> is a schedule for all learners. It suits those who need further educational or social assistance, on top of what is offered by the class curriculum.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 2.1, p. 17</p>	–



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>ISCED 3: The <a href="#">Upper Secondary School Act no. 92/2008</a> contains provisions concerning the National Curriculum Guide for upper-secondary schools and school working guides. The <a href="#">National Curriculum Guide</a>, issued by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, defines, among other things, the objectives of individual subjects and branches of study. It also describes the overall structure and the contents of individual subjects and branches. The law stipulates that individual schools are to write their own <b>school working guides</b> which, among other things, are to specify what areas individual schools have <b>chosen</b> to emphasise.</p>	<p>–</p>
<p>School curricula are issued in all secondary schools. The curricula describe available study programmes, the length and content of courses, division according to subject matter, <b>teaching methods, learning assessments</b> and administrative methods. The school board of the school in question must approve the curriculum for it to take effect, and the board monitors its implementation.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 2.1, pp. 17–18</p>	<p>–</p>
<p>The <a href="#">National Curriculum Guide</a> emphasises equal study opportunities for all pupils and a chance for them to select subjects and learning approaches. <b>The objectives and practice of study and instruction</b> aim at preventing discrimination based on origin, gender, sexual orientation, geographic location, social class, religion, health condition, ability or situation in general. All school activities shall encourage a healthy lifestyle. It is also to consider the variation of personality, development, talent, abilities and interests of each individual pupil.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 3.5, pp. 34–35</p>	<p>–</p>





Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>From the beginning of their compulsory education, <b>pupils shall have the possibility of choice regarding their studies, such as of topics, learning methods and subjects</b>, according to the framework provided by the <a href="#">National Curriculum Guide</a> and the school curriculum guide. The objective is to encourage pupils to assume responsibility for their studies and create flexibility in school activities. <b>Distance education and web-based learning</b> may account for part of pupils' schoolwork.</p> <p>The <a href="#">Compulsory School Act</a> sets the pupils' minimum number of hours of school instruction. This is generally the definition of the minimum instruction to which pupils are entitled. <b>Local authorities may offer pupils a longer stay at school</b> in addition to their daily hours of instruction.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), pp. 34–36</p>	–



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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p><b>Most upper-secondary schools</b> in the country have special programmes or units for <b>pupils with disabilities</b> where they are taught according to individual curriculum that is based on the general curriculum for upper-secondary schools. Everyone is entitled to education for the first two years of the secondary school level (age 16–18) but <b>pupils with disabilities are entitled to education for four years at the secondary level</b>. Specialist advice and suitable conditions are to be ensured. In their studies, disabled pupils follow the ordinary curriculum and take courses with other pupils as far as possible.</p>	<p>–</p>
<p><b>Pupils who are multilingual or whose mother tongue is not Icelandic</b> are entitled to learn Icelandic as a second language in compulsory schools. This subject has developed in this country in recent years. There are also provisions in the general curricula that learners whose native language is not Icelandic <b>may be exempted from learning a third language</b>.</p> <p>Compulsory schools may recognise pupils’ skills in their mother language as part of the compulsory education.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 3.2, pp. 36–37</p> <p>See the <a href="#">Regulation on the rights of students to learn Icelandic if it is not their mother tongue</a></p>	<p>Article 5 of the <a href="#">Regulation on the rights of students to learn Icelandic if it is not their mother tongue</a> states:</p> <p>Secondary schools are allowed to assess learners’ mother tongue for units of free choice or for units instead of another foreign language.</p> <p>Learners with a mother tongue other than Icelandic should be given the opportunity to maintain their mother tongue as an elective, if they so wish.</p> <p>A secondary school can offer such a programme in a local or distance learning programme or evaluate a programme that is conducted elsewhere. The relevant secondary school must then approve the programme if the learner wishes to have it evaluated for credits.</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>There are no specific central provisions on mother language education for learners of foreign origin, but according <b>to a survey conducted a few years ago</b> almost half of the learners of foreign origin received some mother tongue education at compulsory school level.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 3.2, p. 37</p>	–

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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Under the <a href="#">National Curriculum Guide</a>, the matriculation examination, one of the paths toward concluding the upper-secondary school level, must include courses with various levels of strength to ensure deeper knowledge and skills.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 2.1, p. 17</p>	See comments in 6.2.
<p>The <b>latest legislation</b> for upper-secondary schools (<i>Lög um framhaldsskóla nr. 92/2008</i>) provided each school with more independence, requiring them to decide on curriculum matters and make their own plan of education.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 2.1, p. 18</p> <p>See also 6.2.</p>	Aspects of this legislation will be updated to some extent when the new law on school services is launched in 2024



## Section 7: Collaboration and communication

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

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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The Act on Integration of Services in the Interest of Children’s Prosperity <a href="#">no. 86/2021</a> addresses that no child should be left behind. It focuses on cross-sectoral co-operation addressing the educational system, the system of social affairs and the health system to collaborate with Municipalities and schools on the matter of every child and their families.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 1.4, p. 12</p>	<p>Act <a href="#">no. 86/2021</a> is in the <b>process of implementation</b> across education, health and social systems.</p>
<p>–</p>	<p><b>Education Policy 2030 and Action Plan to 2023</b> indicate plans for a new Act on School Services for pre-primary, compulsory and upper-secondary school will be set in spring 2024.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 1.5, p. 13</p> <p>A revised Action Plan to the EP 2030 will be launched in 2024.</p> <p>The new law on School Services will address inclusive education at all school levels. In the process there has been rich co-operation with all stakeholders involved.</p>



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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Laws on <a href="#">pre-primary</a>, <a href="#">compulsory</a> and <a href="#">upper-secondary</a> education stipulate that the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture is to conduct comprehensive <b>external evaluation</b> at these school levels with the Directorate of Education.</p> <p>Each school or institution is required to systematically evaluate internal activities with the active participation of staff, pupils and parents, as relevant. They are to publish information on <b>the internal evaluation, compliance</b> with the school curriculum guide and plans for <b>improvement</b>.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), pp. 47–48</p>	<p>The processes are embedded into the system, from national to individual school levels.</p>

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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Policy is in place but undergoing changes.</p>	<p>See comments in Section 7.1, re: change in law and provision for inter-sectoral partnerships.</p> <p>Current structures and processes are to be further implemented through the law on the prosperity of children.</p>



## Section 8: Early childhood education and family support

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

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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Early childhood education and care (ECEC) is divided into centre-based provision and home-based provision. From age 1 until age 6, when primary education starts, children can attend pre-school centres (<i>Leikskóli</i>), which fall under the overall responsibility of the Ministry of Education. There is also a system of regulated and publicly subsidised <b>home-based provision</b> (<i>Dagforeldri</i>), aimed at the youngest children (from birth up to age 2), which falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Welfare.</p> <p>Pre-primary education is defined by law as the first level of the educational system, providing education and care for children who have not reached six years of age, at which point compulsory education begins (<a href="#">Pre-School Act No. 90/2008</a>).</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 2.1, p. 16</p>	<p>The pre-school is not a part of compulsory education but around 96% of children from the ages of 2–5 attend these schools.</p> <p>Source CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 2.1, p. 16</p> <p>A report on how to strengthen pre-primary education: <a href="#">A report on the first 1000 days of a child in Nordic cooperation</a></p>
–	<p><b>The challenge</b> has been to provide children with placement in pre-schools directly after the conclusion of parental leave, <b>or from the age of one</b>.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 2.1, p. 16</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p><b>Parents contribute a substantial amount</b> towards operating costs of the pre-primary school level. The share that parents contribute <b>varies from municipality to municipality</b> and to some extent, on the circumstances of the parents.</p> <p>Pre-primary education is funded through municipalities.</p> <p>Overall, parents contribute ten per cent to a quarter of the operating costs of pre-primary schools.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), pp. 26–27, 51, 53</p>	<p>In general, single parents and students pay substantially lower fees than others and <b>many municipalities</b> offer reduction to parents who have two or more children at pre-primary level.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 2.5, p. 28</p>
<p>Integration of all learners in mainstream education, as far as possible, is therefore the policy in Iceland <b>and no separate legislation exists</b> covering special education either at pre-primary, compulsory or the upper-secondary education level. The general aims of the legislation on each school level apply to all pupils, including those with disabilities and special needs.</p> <p><b>Guidelines</b> for services for special needs pupils in compulsory schools are given in the Regulation on Support for Learners with Special Needs <a href="#">no. 585/2010</a> and the Regulation on Municipalities' School Services no. 584/2010.</p> <p>Source : CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 3.4c, p. 32</p>	<p>–</p>



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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The regulation on municipality professional services to the local <b>pre-primary</b> (including children from at least 1 year old) and compulsory schools and on learner protection councils in primary schools (no. 585/2010) focuses on professional services by the municipalities to support learners in <b>pre-primary</b> and compulsory schools and their parents, and to support the schools' activity and staff.</p> <p>The municipalities' professional services aim to use pedagogical, psychological, developmental and sociological knowledge in schools. Professional services should be aimed at promoting schools as professional organisations that can solve most of the challenges that arise in schools and provide the school staff with guidance and assistance to their work as appropriate.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 6.3, pp. 60–61</p>	<p>We are working on new law on school services at all school levels, so these will be a bit different, hopefully in spring 2024.</p>





Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>A number of policies are in place:</p> <p><b>Development of a shared vision for inclusive education:</b> Cross-ministerial co-operation after the Audit, shared meetings in 2018, a steering committee.</p> <p><b>Policy development, implementation and co-ordination:</b> Education Policy 2030, <a href="#">OECD (2021)</a></p> <p><b>Identification of needs / referral for services:</b> <a href="#">Act on Integration of Services in the Interest of Children’s Prosperity no. 86/2021</a></p> <p><b>Data collection and sharing:</b> Dashboard on the Matters of Children</p> <p><b>Monitoring and evaluation:</b> New Act on the new Directorate of Education in autumn 2023</p> <p>Quality assurance and accountability</p>	–
<p><a href="#">Act on Services for Persons with Disabilities with Long-term Support Needs no. 38/2018</a></p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), p. 12</p>	–



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The <a href="#">Act on Integration of Services in the Interest of Children’s Prosperity no. 86/2021</a> addresses that no child should be left behind. It focuses on <b>cross-sectoral co-operation</b> addressing the educational system, the system of social affairs and the health system to collaborate with Municipalities and schools on the matter of every child and their families.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 1.4, p. 12</p>	<p>The Government of Iceland Children’s Prosperity Handout report on <a href="#">Act no. 86/2021</a> indicates that progress is being made in its implementation, and that by the end of 2022, most municipalities had begun the process.</p> <p>‘Within the areas where the implementation of the Prosperity Act is the furthest along, parents have experienced that the response time for services was quicker than before, and issues were resolved in a more structured way. Children received the support they needed in their local environments and communities sooner than before. The cooperation between Case Managers and liaison officers has worked well and yields good results for children, families, and professionals.’</p> <p>Source: <a href="#">Children’s Prosperity Handout</a>, p. 2</p>
<p><b>Funding</b></p> <p>The cost estimate on <a href="#">Act on Integration of Services in the Interest of Children’s Prosperity no. 86/2021</a> and a special financial project built on the Agency project, <a href="#">Financing Policies for Inclusive Education Systems</a> (FPIES), carried out in 2019 in 13 Municipalities in Iceland.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), p. 53</p>	<p>There is some information in the FPIES Iceland report (see <a href="#">Section 4.4</a>). A follow up report will be launched in 2024.</p>



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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Laws on the four levels of education, <b>pre-primary</b>, compulsory, upper-secondary and higher education level, all highlight the importance of systematic internal evaluation to measure and improve quality. Each school or institution is required to systematically evaluate internal activities with active participation of staff, pupils and parents as relevant. They are to publish information on the internal evaluation, compliance with the school curriculum guide and plans for improvement.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 5.1, p. 54</p>	<p>Evidence will be found in the new law on school services in 2024</p>
<p>By law, the Ministry of Education and Children is responsible for regular external evaluation of the pre-primary, compulsory and upper-secondary schools but is authorised to extend its amendment to the Directorate of Education.</p> <p>External evaluation is based on the internal evaluation report of the school, a site visit, classroom observations in compulsory schools and interviews with the administrators, staff, parents and pupils' representatives.</p>	<p>–</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>At the <b>pre-primary</b> and compulsory school levels, municipalities are to conduct their own evaluation of schools and schools' activities along with the Directorate of Education.</p> <p>Schools are free to choose among systems for its own use, but these should include significant elements of internal monitoring. An internal evaluation is to include the school's policy and objectives, a definition of the ways in which these are to be achieved, an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's operations and a plan for improvements.</p>	–
<p>The Ministry reports to the relevant school, and to the municipality in the case of compulsory schools and pre-primary schools, on what needs to be improved in the school's activities. Schools then have a predefined time to send the Directorate of Education information on how the school intends to work with the results of the evaluation.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 5.2, pp. 54–55</p>	External and internal standards are being revised



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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The results of external evaluation are to be used by the school to improve its work. Educational authorities also make use of evaluation results. At pre-primary and compulsory school levels, the municipality is responsible for implementation of improvements.</p> <p>Internal evaluation results are intended for use by the school to improve various aspects of its own performance and activities and to call attention to good practices and results in the work of the school. Schools' internal evaluation reports are to be made public, for example on school websites.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 5.2, p. 56</p>	–



## Section 9: Support for transitions

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

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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
–	<p>There is a single school from 6–16 years old, reducing transitions between schools.</p> <p>At the upper-secondary school level <b>many special units</b> include preparation for adult life. This includes job training, either in the labour market, in sheltered workshops or in other facilities that are organised for the disabled. The aim is to find a permanent job for the pupils that suit their abilities and interests. <b>Mainstream and special schools introduce employment opportunities and the rules of work</b> to their final year pupils with special needs, the aim being to have a successful <b>transition from school to work</b>.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 3.5a, pp. 43–44</p> <p>Transition project and support for vulnerable groups:</p> <p>An organisation called <a href="#">Throskahjálp</a> is in charge of an on-going pilot project, with the support from two Ministries. The organisation undertakes <a href="#">advocacy work with education, business and other organisations</a>, particularly for all vulnerable people.</p> <p>Support for transitions for learners with special needs:</p> <p>For transition from compulsory to upper-secondary school, the support is stated in a regulation for students with disabilities, particularly, Article 13: Individual Relocation Plan.</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
–	<p>Efforts are directed at combating drop-outs of learners with a <b>foreign language background</b> from secondary schools by providing support at all school levels, including through increased emphasis on native language teaching and promoting active bilingualism or plurilingualism.</p> <p>Sources: <a href="#">VNR Report</a> (Government of Iceland, 2023), p. 41; CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 3.5c, p. 44</p> <p>Section 6.2 provides more information on native language teaching, bi- and plurilingualism.</p>

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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
–	<p>Local authorities <b>are to establish</b> co-operation between pre-primary school and compulsory school on the one hand, and between compulsory school and upper-secondary school on the other.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 2.4, p. 23; 4.1, p. 47</p>



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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
–	<p>Support indicated as available for some learners (see Section 9.1).</p> <p>A course is taught in pre-school and primary teacher education called Transition from pre-school to primary school.</p> <p>Topics in the course are transition and continuity between pre- and primary school and leisure centres, from the perspectives of children, teachers and parents. Continuity in children’s learning will be addressed and emphasis placed on teaching diverse approaches that involve children’s participation, such as play, project approach, play with unit blocks and philosophical discussion with children.</p>

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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
All pupils at the compulsory and upper-secondary levels have <b>the right</b> to receive educational and career guidance and counselling within the school by appropriate specialists.	The rights are stated in the law on compulsory and upper-secondary education.





Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>See Section 9.1.</p> <p>At the upper-secondary school level, <b>many special units</b> include preparation for adult life. This includes job training, either in the labour market, in sheltered workshops or in other facilities that are organised for the disabled. The aim is to find a permanent job for the pupils that suit their abilities and interests. Mainstream and special schools introduce employment opportunities and the rules of work to their final year pupils with special needs, the aim being to have a successful <b>transition from school to work</b>.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 3.5a, pp. 43–44</p>	<p>For comments on learner support, see section 9.1.</p>
<p>–</p>	<p>Efforts are directed at combating <b>drop-outs of learners with a foreign language background</b> from secondary schools by providing support at all school levels, including through increased emphasis on native language teaching and promoting active bilingualism or plurilingualism.</p> <p>Source: <a href="#">VNR Report</a> (Government of Iceland, 2023), p. 41</p>

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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>None found.</p>	<p>See Sections 9.2 and 9.3</p>



## Section 10: Co-operation between school-level stakeholders

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

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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The <a href="#">Act on Integration of Services in the Interest of Children's Prosperity no. 86/2021</a> addresses that no child should be left behind. It focuses on cross-sectoral co-operation addressing the educational system, the system of social affairs and the health system to collaborate with Municipalities and schools on the matter of every child and their families.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 1.4, p. 12</p>	<p>In the new law on the prosperity of children, co-operation with families and local communities is stated but there is still no evidence of the implementation.</p> <p>Many stakeholders have a strategy on the co-operation but it is not on legal terms.</p>



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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>According to the <a href="#">Compulsory</a> and the Pre-primary School Acts 2008, all compulsory schools must have a <b>parents' council</b>. The head teacher is responsible for its foundation and for ensuring that it is provided with all necessary assistance. <b>The role of the parents' council</b> is to support school activities, ensure pupils' welfare and <b>promote relations between school and home</b>. The parents' council of each compulsory school shall set its own rules, e.g. regarding elections for its board and election of representatives to the School Council.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 4.1, pp. 47–48</p>	<p>There is a regulation on school council in compulsory schools in Icelandic.</p> <p>No overall information is available as schools have different approaches.</p>
–	<p>A <b>regulation</b> was released in 2011 concerning compulsory schooling of <b>foster children</b> with the main goal to secure appropriate education for those children that often live temporarily in foster homes in other municipalities, and their schooling was often disrupted during foster care. This is a <b>great improvement</b>, organised in co-operation with other ministries and various stakeholders.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 4.1, pp. 42–43; No. 547/2012 on compulsory school education of foster children; <a href="#">The Icelandic national curriculum guide for compulsory schools, 2014</a> (p. 243)</p>



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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>One of the purposes of external evaluation processes is in relation to, various features of the school’s activities, such as administration, development work, co-operation and communications within the school, study achievements, and <b>communications between the school and parents as well as other acting parties</b> outside the school.</p> <p>Internal evaluations include information on, <b>communications within the school and between the school and parents and other acting parties outside the school.</b></p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 5.2, p. 55</p>	<p><a href="#">Child Friendly Cities</a></p>

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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The 2008 <a href="#">Compulsory School Act</a> has four objectives. The fourth is ‘to encourage good co-operation between the school and the home, with the objective of ensuring successful school operation, general welfare and safety for pupils.’</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 3.2, p. 34</p>	<p>Some regulations and rules support the contribution of active family involvement.</p>



## Section 11: The use of system data and information collection

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

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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Mandatory internal and external evaluation processes are in place, as legal requirements.</p> <p>An internal evaluation is to include the school's policy and objectives, a definition of the ways in which these are to be achieved, an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's operations, and a plan for improvements.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 5.2, p. 55</p>	<p>Findings from internal evaluation processes are shared within schools, with parents and other groups outside the school.</p> <p>Some indication could be found in citation of reports from the current Directorate of Education to indicate improvement.</p>
–	<p>External evaluations consider the documentation and data presented by schools and how this data has been processed. Data analysis is done against Quality Indicators. Results are made public at Ministry level. Schools and the municipality must indicate plans for addressing the results of the evaluation.</p> <p>Some indication could be found in citation of reports from the current Directorate of Education to indicate improvement across schools and municipalities.</p>



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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>–</p>	<p>Local authorities use <b>different ways of assessing need and allocating additional funds</b> to secure inclusive education of vulnerable groups, and to support learners with general and specific learning needs. Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 2.6, p. 29</p> <p>Some information can be found in the <a href="#">Financing Policies for Inclusive Education Systems</a> (FPIES) project, carried out in 2019 in 13 municipalities in Iceland (see <a href="#">Section 4.4</a>).</p>
<p>EP2030 (a ten-year plan) has Five Pillars, each with corresponding focus points. Some of these are in response to internal and external (e.g. PISA, TALIS) data, highlighting areas of challenge (e.g. early drop out from secondary education, lower than average or declining attainment in Maths, Reading and Science; lower numbers in vocational education; low perception by teachers of the value of the teaching profession; improving teacher competencies; age and numbers of teachers; supporting student wellbeing; variation in attainment for students from non-Iceland backgrounds or from low socio-economic groups).</p> <p>Source: <a href="#">OECD (2021)</a></p>	<p>Some aspects of the EP2030 are currently in a phase of implementation, although the move from policy statements to actionable implementation is a feature of the OECD Report alongside developing the means to measure the ‘impact’ of policy changes.</p> <p>Source: <a href="#">OECD (2021)</a>, pp. 10–12, 15</p> <p>The first action plan to the EP2030 is in revision and the next plan will be launched in 2024.</p>



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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
–	Monitoring processes are available at school and municipality levels for compulsory schools.

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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
Policy requires external evaluation to take place in upper-secondary schools <b>every three years</b> . Schools schedule their internal evaluation that emphasises and prioritises the needs of the school. Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 5.3, p. 56	–
–	Data collected on early school leaving (drop-out rates) is being used to develop new strategies to address this challenge, as part of EP2030.



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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>According to the Educational Policy 2030, a focus should be on constant development of school practices in accordance with educational policy and standardised performance measures. Schools must base their teaching on clear and reasoned criteria and include systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data. It is important that there is clear responsibility for the implementation and quality of school and educational work. Educational institutions themselves shall be responsible for internal evaluation, while ministries and local authorities shall be responsible for external evaluation. <b>External evaluation</b> must be regular and followed up with targeted improvement support in collaboration with the state, local authorities and other education providers.</p> <p>Source: <a href="#">OECD (2021)</a>, Section E6, p. 51</p>	<p>OECD indicates that system data from Iceland is currently being developed for use at national level.</p> <p>Aspects of Iceland’s educational policies are used as examples of effective policy and practice at international level.</p> <p>Source: <a href="#">OECD (2021)</a></p>
<p>–</p>	<p>Iceland draws on international policy and recommendations in the development and implementation of its educational policy.</p> <p>Iceland participates in country cluster activities with the Agency and consistently provides European Agency Statistics on Inclusive Education (<a href="#">EASIE</a>) data.</p>





## Section 12: Transforming specialist provision

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

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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p><a href="#">Compulsory School Act 2010</a> ensures that most children are educated in the mainstream school, where ‘Support for learners or groups of learners consists of a flexible and varied learning environment and teaching methods designed to meet the needs of all learners.’</p> <p>Guidelines for services for learners with special needs in pre-primary and compulsory schools are given in Regulation on support for students with special needs in compulsory school no. 585/2010 and Regulation on Municipalities ‘Specialist Services in Schools no. 584/2010.</p> <p>0.5% of children attend Iceland’s four special schools.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 2.1, p. 14</p>	<p>Integration of all learners into mainstream education, as far as possible, is therefore the policy in Iceland. The general aims of the legislation at each school level apply to all learners, including those with disabilities and special needs.</p> <p>Future plans: A new <a href="#">The Act on Integration of Services in the Interest of Children’s Prosperity 86/2021</a>. Education Policy 2030 and an Action Plan to 2023 are in revision and a new Action Plan will be launched in 2024</p> <p>The act will be launched in 2024 but it is not yet decided on how the implementation process will be.</p>
<p><a href="#">The Act on Integration of Services in the Interest of Children’s Prosperity 86/2021</a> indicates that no child should be left behind. It focuses on cross-sectoral co-operation, addressing the educational system, the system of social affairs and the health system to collaborate with Municipalities and schools on the matter of every child and their families.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 1.4, p. 12</p>	–



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
–	<p><a href="#">EASIE data</a> (2020/2021) gives further detail about the numbers of children in different types of specialist provision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 0.36% at ISCED 1 and 0.4% at ISCED 2 are educated in separate special education organised by the Ministry.</li><li>• 0.7% at ISCED 1 and 1.54 % at ISCED 2 are in separate education within mainstream schools.</li></ul> <p>Clear evidence is not available but the trend seems to represent an increase.</p>
–	<p>Following the implementation of the <a href="#">Act on Integration of Services in the Interest of Children’s Prosperity 86/2021</a>, further indications of measures and provisions will be available.</p>



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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>According to the <a href="#">Compulsory School Act</a>, municipalities must ensure that specialist services are provided in compulsory schools, determine the organisation of such services and their provision within the compulsory school itself. <b>Specialist services</b> include support for pupils and their families, as well as support for compulsory school activities and personnel. A regulation on specialist services (Regulation 584/2010) describes what kind of specialist services should be provided for both pre-primary schools and compulsory schools.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 2.3, p. 21</p>	<p>In the new law on school services, information on how expertise and resources from other aspects of specialist provision support the education system will be collected.</p>
–	<p>The <b>four segregated special schools (including a fairly new private school) provide consultation</b> services for the whole country/regions.</p> <p>One school aims to provide other compulsory schools in Akureyri district with education and advice on the issues of the school's target group.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 2.1, p. 18</p> <p>Various additional specialists are available but are very different between schools and municipalities. This will be addressed in the new law on school services.</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>In terms of funding, the local authorities can either provide an educational opportunity in the pupil's school or <b>use the money to buy services in another school</b> in the local community or in another community. This could include a special class or a special school. <b>Communities can share the running of a special class or a special school</b> and local authorities set aside extra money for this purpose.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 2.6, p. 30</p>	<p>–</p>

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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Act no. 95/2019 on the education, competency and recruitment of teachers and school leaders of pre-schools, compulsory schools and upper-secondary schools states the requirements and focus of teacher education.</p>	<p>In force since January 2020.</p> <p>‘A significant novelty is that licenced teachers may move up and down school levels, although with more requirements for teaching in specific subjects at the upper-secondary school stages (ISCED 3 or grades 11, 12 and 13).’</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), p. 38</p>
<p>A programme for teachers in special education has been provided since 1974 and is currently offered as an <b>elective</b> line of study at Master's level at the School of Education at the University of Iceland.</p>	<p>–</p>



## Section 13: Inclusive school leadership

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

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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>A new act on education and recruitment of teachers is in preparation, which emphasises, among other things, <b>competence and flexibility</b> in the work of teachers at all school levels. A review is also underway of the support system for professional staff development of teachers at all school levels.</p> <p>Sources: <a href="#">VNR Report</a> (Government of Iceland, 2023), p. 40; CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), 6.3, p. 60</p> <p><b>Leadership is noted as a focus area in the EP2030</b>, and a recommendation of the OECD Iceland Report (Issues for consideration, <a href="#">OECD, 2021</a>, p. 38).</p>	<p>Regulation no. 1355/2022, based on Article 8 in Act on Teachers' Education no. 95/2019:</p> <p>'A Regulation to be issued by the Minister will contain a more detailed description of the competency framework, including criteria for the general and specific competencies of teachers and school administrators. The Regulation should contain provisions on teachers' Icelandic language skills. The Teaching Council referred to in Article 7 is to draw up proposals on the content and review of the Regulation in consultation with the Association of Local Authorities in Iceland.'</p>



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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
–	Information about how school leaders are supported to foster the skills and personal characteristics to become effective will be stated in the law on a new Directorate of Education and new law on school services

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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
–	The new law on school services will show the strategies in place.

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

No information.

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

No information.



## Section 14: Learner voices

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

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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>Under the <a href="#">Compulsory School Act 2008</a>, learners are entitled to express their opinions about their education, and should have further opportunities to do so through their representatives on the pupils’ association board in the school council.</p> <p>This is also written into the <a href="#">National Curriculum Guide</a>.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), pp. 59–60</p>	<p>The importance of <b>the voices of young people</b>, as part of ‘active democracy’ at all school levels, is under development in the next phase of reform (Action 8) Education Policy 2030.</p> <p>Information in relation to families and communities can also be found in the Conventions on Children’s Rights and UNICEF school.</p> <p>The evidence lies in the increased number of child-friendly cities and rights-based schools that are working with the ministry and UNICEF.</p>
<p>According to the law, all schools have a parent council, whose role is to support school activities, support pupils’ welfare and improve the relations between school and home. <b>This gives parents a forum</b> to discuss children’s schooling, together with other questions concerning child rearing and education. Success of the council may depend on a number of factors.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), pp. 60–61</p>	<p>–</p>



Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The <a href="#">National Curriculum Guide</a> indicates that it is the teachers' responsibility to co-operate with school administrators on the development of school curriculum guides consistent with conditions and special emphasis at each school level.</p>	<p>A large amount of people, e.g. parents and pupils, were involved in the process of building the new law on school services, which will be launched in 2024.</p>
<p>According to the <a href="#">Compulsory School Act</a>, municipalities must ensure that specialist services are provided in compulsory schools, determine the organisation of such services and their provision within the compulsory school itself.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), p. 21</p>	<p>In most cases there is good discussion and co-operation between the providers and the family.</p>

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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
<p>The processes of internal evaluation incorporate a range of views from learners, parents and teachers. Both internal and external evaluations include the views of other stakeholders, gained through a range of means, including documents and visits. School internal evaluations are made public.</p> <p>Source: CSM Country Report (European Agency, 2023), pp. 55–56.</p>	<p>See the reports from the current Directorate of Education</p>





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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
–	The processes by which information is gained and voices are heard may be found in the National Curriculum to some extent.

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

No information.



## Section 15: Resilience within the education system

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

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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
The EP2023 and Action Plans <a href="#">Draft Outline</a> : Ensuring Full Recovery from COVID-19 educational disruption describes the Government's commitment to Iceland's recovery from the effects of COVID-19.	–

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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
The EP2023 and Action Plans	–

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

Indications of policy	Indications of implementation
The EP2023 and Action Plans	–



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

No information.



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## OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

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

### **Accountability**

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

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

### **All learners\***

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

### **Assessment framework**

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

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

### **Autonomy**

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

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



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

### **Collaboration\***

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

### **Discretionary funding**

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

### **Educational professionals\***

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

### **Everyone who works with teachers\***

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

### **International\***

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

### **Leaders/leadership**

School leadership:

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

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

### **Learners vulnerable to exclusion from inclusive education**

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

### **On-going improvement\***

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

### **Quality inclusive early childhood education**

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

### **Resilience\***

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

### **School-level stakeholders\***

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

### **Sectors\***

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



### **Single curriculum framework\***

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

### **'Space, voice, audience and influence'\***

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

### **Specialist provision**

This covers different types of specialist provision services, specifically:

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

### **Stakeholders**

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

### **Teacher educators and trainers\***

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

### **Wider achievement\***

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



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