Migrant Education in Ireland
Pointers for policy development

SUCCESES AND CHALLENGES FOR MIGRANT EDUCATION

- Ireland has experienced the sudden inflow of immigrants in the past years.
- Between 8 and 10% of students in Irish schools have an immigrant background.
- Unlike most other OECD countries, students who are not born in Ireland perform, on par with, or better than, their Irish-born peers.
- But immigrant students who speak English at home do better in school than those who do not. Almost 8% of students born outside Ireland do not even reach the basic reading proficiency level, compared with only about 2% of native students.
- Ireland aims to provide "inclusive, high quality education for all students" and is currently undertaking measures with a strong focus on language support and intercultural education.

POLICIES TO IMPROVE MIGRANT EDUCATION OUTCOMES

- Improve access to quality early childhood education and care for all, especially immigrant children.
- Strengthen initial and ongoing learning opportunities for language support teachers.
- Mainstream language support and intercultural education into regular curriculum, teacher education and research.
- Reinforce a "whole-school approach" by enhancing capacities of teachers and school leaders to be more responsive to the growing linguistic and cultural diversity of students.
- Ensure access to school, home and community liaison services for immigrant families with careful attention to language and cultural barriers.
- Collect better data to further encourage schools to adopt diversity and inclusive education.
- Set up a coherent framework for continuous feedback – at classroom, school and system – embedded in policy evaluation and school inspection.

FURTHER READING

These pointers for policy development are drawn from the Policy Review of Migrant Education for Ireland (www.oecd.org/edu/migration/countrynotes). The policy review in Ireland was carried out within the framework of the OECD Reviews of Migrant Education. The overall findings of this review are presented in Closing the Gap for Immigrant Students: Policies, Practice and Performance, published in April 2010. Policy reviews in 6 countries (Austria, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden), background reports prepared by 12 countries and other documents of the review are also available on the OECD website www.oecd.org/edu/migration.