

# OECD Reviews of Migrant Education

## Austria

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## **AUSTRIA**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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*Immigrant students with a non-German mother tongue make up 16% of the student population in Austria, representing many countries, cultures and languages.*

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Austria has a considerable history of immigration, shaped by different phases of immigration policy since the 1960s. Students with a non-German mother tongue now make up 16% of the overall student population in Austria, and 21% of students enrolled in primary schools. About half of these students have Austrian citizenship, and many were born in Austria. There are large variations in the geographic distribution of immigrant students: while 39% of the students in Vienna have a non-German mother tongue, this is the case for only 8% in Styria and Carinthia. Overall, however, less than 20% of Austrian schools do not have students with a non-German mother tongue. This means that teaching immigrant students is not an isolated task for a small group of specialists, but rather an important part of the reality facing teachers every day.

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*Immigrant students face tougher challenges than other students in achieving good education outcomes.*

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Compared to their native Austrian peers, immigrant students on average have weaker education outcomes at all levels of education. At the end of primary education, the average student with neither parent born in Austria already performs well below his or her peers in reading, mathematics and science. Nearing the end of compulsory education, at age 15, there are very significant performance disadvantages for immigrant students on average. These gaps are especially pronounced for second-generation immigrants (*i.e.* students who were themselves born in Austria but whose parents immigrated to Austria).

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*The performance differences between immigrant and native students are partly explained by socio-economic differences.*

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Immigrant students are significantly over-represented among less socio-economically advantaged groups. The differences in socio-economic background account for a large part of the performance gap between native and immigrant students. This indicates that immigrant students would benefit from broader equity policies targeting less socio-economically advantaged students. However, even after accounting for socio-economic background, significant performance gaps remain between native and immigrant students. This highlights the need for targeted support measures for immigrant students to complement other equity measures.

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*Austria has already developed measures to respond to some of the key challenges in migrant education, but is facing a number of challenges related to reform implementation.*

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A range of universal measures were launched in recent years to promote equity and reduce the performance gap between students from different socio-economic groups. These include structural and pedagogical reforms in both early childhood education and care (ECEC) and compulsory education. In addition, migration-specific issues have received increased attention. The provision of language support – both in German and in the 20 languages most commonly spoken by immigrants in Austria – has been expanded in recent years. Intercultural education has been introduced among the general educational

principles and as a priority for teacher training. However, to achieve real improvements in the education outcomes for immigrant students, more efforts are needed to ensure successful implementation of policies.

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*For equity and migrant education policies to be effective, a range of underlying issues related to educational governance, policy design and implementation need to be addressed.*

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The existing legislation concerning equity and migrant education policies is phrased in vague and non-binding terms and the availability and quality of support for immigrant students vary significantly across provinces, cities and schools. This reflects more general inconsistencies in the governance and organisation of the Austrian education system, which need to be addressed for equity and migrant education policies to be effective and sustainable. First, the education system needs to clarify responsibilities for implementation of national migrant education strategies and ensure that the different levels of education co-operate to provide consistent support to immigrant students. Second, Austria needs to increase the inclusiveness of the education system by overcoming the early sorting of students and reducing the concentration of immigrant students in the lowest tracks of secondary education. Third, there is a need to further develop the culture of evaluation in the education system to ensure that both policy makers and practitioners have better information at hand to study success factors of immigrant students and evaluate the effectiveness of support policies.

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*Efforts should be made to improve the quality of the educational and language support offered in early childhood education and care and encourage participation of immigrant children at early ages.*

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Evidence from Austria and elsewhere confirms that if early childhood education and care (ECEC) starts at a sufficiently young age and in a high quality institution, it significantly aids the development of children from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds. It can also play an important role in promoting immigrant children's linguistic development. Austria has launched language screenings for 4-to-5-year-old children and introduced a free and compulsory half-day kindergarten year which should offer language stimulation and support to children in need of this. However, one year of kindergarten may not be sufficient to reach the desired effect in terms of language development. Further efforts are needed to improve access to ECEC services and language stimulation for children from a younger age. At the same time, Austria needs to address concerns about the quality of the educational and language support offer in kindergartens, including the low educational level of kindergarten pedagogues.

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*Immigrant students will benefit considerably from a consistent offer of language support throughout compulsory education. This means strengthening, structuring and mainstreaming the language support offer.*

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While early language support is important, it needs to be followed up by systematic and consistent language support throughout compulsory education. Austria has shown political recognition of the key role that language development plays in students' learning and successful participation in school. The compulsory school system provides language support in both German as a Second Language (GSL) and the languages most commonly spoken by immigrants in Austria. However, the education system needs to address a number of implementation challenges including large variations in the quantity and quality of language support across provinces and schools and a deficit-oriented approach to language development. To optimise the language support offer for immigrant students, policy makers and practitioners need to promote a positive approach to linguistic diversity, structure and strengthen the language support offer, integrate language and content learning and increase the benefits from mother tongue instruction.

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*Diversity training should be provided to both teachers and school leaders – improving their capacities to respond to diverse learner needs is the top priority.*

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Teaching students from different social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds takes a complex set of skills that need to be developed by strong initial and in-service training. All teachers, not only language teachers, need to be able to carry out formative assessment, differentiate instruction and support their students' language development. School leaders need to be prepared to consider diversity issues in the everyday planning and practice of the school. Austria needs to take quick action to increase capacity among current school leaders and the existing teacher force to effectively address the needs of a more diverse student group. Therefore, school leader and teacher participation in in-service training and whole-school professional development should be strongly encouraged. For improvements in the longer term, Austria should also include diversity training in the core pedagogical training of all teachers. To develop the expertise of practitioners, the Ministry and the provinces should encourage research on and sharing of successful school practice in migrant education.

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*Equity can be promoted by providing immigrant students with additional opportunities to learn and by reinforcing co-operation between schools and immigrant parents and communities.*

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To promote equity it is essential to offer adequate learning opportunities to immigrant students and especially those from less-advantaged socio-economic backgrounds. These students may not be able to rely on educational support at home, *e.g.* due to their parents' limited proficiency in German or even limited level of education. In Austria the importance of the parents' role in education is heightened due to the system of half-day schooling. Schools should provide those immigrant students who need extra support or stimulation with additional opportunities for learning and personal development outside the regular half-day school offer. Further, research from different countries shows that parental and community involvement in education is associated with improved student outcomes. Schools and kindergartens should, therefore, make greater efforts to engage immigrant parents as partners in their child's education.



**CHAPTER 1: IDENTIFICATION OF CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES**

*This chapter identifies challenges in the education of immigrant students in Austria and discusses the policy conditions necessary to improve their results in the long term. Immigrant students on average have weaker education outcomes than their native Austrian peers at all levels of education. This review focuses on early childhood education and care (ECEC) and compulsory education, where many challenges are concentrated. While a number of programmes for equity and migrant education are in place, these measures are unlikely to be successful unless a range of underlying issues related to educational policy design and implementation are addressed. This would include (1) clarifying responsibilities for policy implementation, (2) increasing the inclusiveness of the school system, and (3) strengthening the culture of evaluation.*

## OECD Review of Migrant Education

This review is one of a series of policy reviews of migrant education in OECD countries and follows the policy evaluation framework established for the OECD Review of Migrant Education (Box 1.1). However, policy challenges and priority issues for immigrant students vary from country to country. To this end, each country was invited to tailor the focus of the policy review in consultation with the OECD Secretariat in order to ensure that the immediate output of the review will meet the specific needs of the country.

This policy review of Austria presents selected policy options designed to respond to the main challenges and supported by evidence and research drawn from other country practice (see Annex A for the Terms of Reference and Annex B for the visit programmes). It was agreed with the Austrian authorities to focus this review on the ISCED levels 0 to 2 (early childhood education to lower secondary education). This Review should be read in conjunction with the Country Background Report prepared by the Austrian authorities (Wroblewski and Herzog-Punzenberger, 2009).

### Box 1.1. OECD Review of Migrant Education

The OECD launched the Review of Migrant Education in January 2008. The scope of the project includes pre-school, primary school, and secondary school. The overarching question of the review is ***what policies will promote successful education outcomes for first- and second-generation immigrant students?***

The target group covered by the review is defined as follows:

- **First-generation immigrant students:** Students who were born outside the review country and whose parents were also born abroad.
- **Second-generation immigrant students:** Students who themselves were born in the country of review but whose parents were born in a different country, *i.e.* students who are following/have followed all their pre-school/schooling in the review country.

To examine the question from a relevant policy perspective, “education outcomes” are defined as follows:

- **Access** – Whether immigrant students have the same access to quality education as their native peers; and if not, what policies may facilitate or hinder their access.
- **Participation** – Whether immigrant students may drop out more easily or leave school earlier than their native peers; and if so, what policies may influence immigrant students’ completion of schooling.
- **Performance** – Whether immigrant students perform as well as their native peers; and if not, what policies may effectively raise immigrant students’ performance at school, especially for those from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds.

The project consists of two strands of activities: analytical work and country policy reviews.

- **Analytical work** draws on evidence from all OECD countries. It includes an international questionnaire on migrant policies, reviews previous OECD work and academic literature regarding migrant education, and explores statistical data from PISA and other sources.
- **Country policy reviews** aim to provide country-specific policy recommendations. Reviews are being conducted in Austria, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. Each participating country has prepared a Country Background Report based on common OECD guidelines. The results of both the analytical work and country policy reviews will feed into a final comparative report.

## Summary of the position of immigrants in Austria

### *Recent immigration history and trends*

Austria has a considerable history of immigration, shaped by different phases of immigration. Foreign nationals and naturalised foreign-born individuals comprised 16.3% of the Austrian population in 2007 (Österreichischer Integrationsfonds, 2008).

Until the 1960s, Austria was a country of net emigration, with considerable labour migration to Germany and Switzerland. In 1961, when Austria started its first phase of active recruitment of immigrant workers through the so-called “guestworker” programmes, foreign nationals constituted only 1.4% of the Austrian population. Throughout the 1960s and early 70s, there was a steady inflow of immigrants through labour migration and subsequent family reunification, mainly from Turkey and Yugoslavia. But when the “guestworker” programmes were stopped in 1974, foreign nationals still only comprised about 4% of the population.

Immigration accelerated between 1989 and 1993, due to the economic boom in Austria and the disintegration of former Yugoslavia. After 1993, immigration stagnated due to stricter immigrant policies, but it started to increase again from 1998 on as a result of stronger labour demand and a change in immigration policies (Österreichischer Integrationsfonds, 2008). With the EU enlargement in 2004, immigration pressures became stronger, partly due to the concentration of new members in a small geographical region bordering Austria, with very large wage differentials (OECD, 2009a).

A new immigration law was introduced in January 2006, which makes immigration for family reunification and formation more difficult, requiring the sponsor in Austria to have a regular income at or above the minimum wage (OECD, 2008a). The 2006 law also makes access to Austrian citizenship more restrictive. Over recent years, there has been a decline in the number of immigrants coming from traditional sending countries, such as Turkey and former Yugoslavia (OECD, 2008a). At the same time, the share of EU citizens, in particular German nationals, in the foreign work force has increased considerably since 1995.

### *Geographical distribution, labour market participation and socio-economic status*

As in other OECD countries, immigrants in Austria tend to settle predominantly in cities and urban areas. Among Austrian provinces, Vienna has by far the largest immigrant population in Austria, with the largest groups coming from Serbia/Montenegro, Turkey, Poland, Germany and Bosnia/Herzegovina (Table 1.1). Besides Vienna, the provinces with the largest immigrant populations are Vorarlberg and Salzburg.

**Table 1.1. Concentration of immigrants in Austria**

2008

	Vienna	Vorarlberg	Salzburg
Total population	1 677 867	366 377	530 576
Share of immigrant population in the total population, %	30	17	16
Major immigrant groups by country of origin	Serbia/Montenegro Turkey Poland Germany Bosnia/Herzegovina	Turkey Germany Serbia/Montenegro Bosnia/Herzegovina Italy	Germany Bosnia/Herzegovina Serbia/Montenegro Turkey Croatia

Source: Wroblewski and Herzog-Punzenberger (2009).

The share of foreign-born individuals in the Austrian labour force was 16% in 2006 – the highest share among European Union countries after Luxembourg (OECD, 2009a). The unemployment rate for foreign-born men at 9.7% was three times as high as the unemployment rate for native-born men (3.3%) in 2006 (OECD, 2008a). Those employed are often in low-skilled jobs: foreign-born individuals constituted 45% of the low-skilled workforce aged 25 to 29 in 2006 (OECD, 2008a). Despite a recent influx of high-skilled immigrants, the average educational attainment of immigrants in Austria remains among the lowest in the OECD (OECD, 2009a).

On average, foreign nationals in Austria have lower socio-economic status than native Austrians and some immigrant groups are more vulnerable than others: 46% of Turkish nationals and 35% of ex-Yugoslavian nationals were living in poverty or at risk of doing so in 2006, compared to 19% of Austrian nationals (Österreichischer Integrationsfonds, 2008).

### Identification of priorities in the education of immigrant students

#### *Early childhood education and care (ECEC)*

In Austria, around 85% of 3-to-5-year-olds are enrolled in kindergarten.<sup>1</sup> However, there is very limited participation in ECEC for children under the age of three: 10.8% were enrolled in 2007 (Städtebund, 2009). There is also evidence that socio-economic background plays a role in ECEC participation: while 97% of university-educated parents send their children to kindergarten, this is the case for only 83% of parents who have only compulsory schooling (Thonhauser & Pointinger, 2008).

There are no national data available on the proportion of immigrant students who attended ECEC services and for how long. However, results from different international surveys – although not strictly comparable – seem to indicate a positive trend in participation for immigrant children. Results from a recent survey of second-generation immigrants with a Turkish background indicate pronounced differences in ECEC attendance among older immigrants: just over half of 18-to-35-year-olds reported that they had participated in ECEC by age 5 – the lowest rate reported among participating countries (Table 1.2). In 2006, reports by students aged 15 in PISA 2006 also indicated lower participation in kindergarten for immigrant students compared to their native counterparts (Wroblewski and Herzog-Punzenberger, 2009).<sup>2</sup>

**Table 1.2. Age of entry into education for second-generation immigrants with a Turkish background**

Survey of 18-to-35-year-olds (2007/08)

	Percentage of 18-to-35-year-olds who reported having been enrolled in education:			Number of individuals surveyed
	By age 3	By age 4	By age 5	
Austria	17%	41%	56%	458
Belgium	87%	93%	97%	582
France	90%	96%	99%	500
Germany	39%	67%	77%	490
Netherlands	13%	90%	97%	499
Sweden	53%	67%	80%	232
Switzerland	1%	12%	77%	464

Source: TIES survey 2007/08, in Crul and Schneider (2009).

However, current ECEC attendance rates indicate a comparable situation for all children: in 2006/07, 11% of children in crèches, kindergartens and day homes were foreign nationals and 22% spoke a different mother tongue to German (Wroblewski and Herzog-Punzenberger, 2009), which does not seem significantly below their share in the age group. Results from the PIRLS 2006 also indicate that among students aged 10 to 11, in comparison to their native counterparts, second-generation immigrant children

had more often attended kindergarten for more than two years (Wroblewski and Herzog-Punzenberger, 2009).

Provision of ECEC services varies considerably between provinces with regard to the extent to which offers are free of charge, whether this covers all day provision or just mornings, the extent of offers to children below the age of three and whether or not meals are free.

### *Primary education*

Primary school in Austria starts at age six and lasts for four years. In 2007/08, 21% of pupils in primary school had a mother tongue other than German and around half of these pupils held Austrian citizenship. The major mother tongues other than German are Bosnian, Croat, Serbian and Turkish (Table 1.3).

**Table 1.3. Pupils in primary school, by mother tongue**  
2007/08

	All pupils		With Austrian citizenship	
	N	%	N	%
<b>Total all mother tongues</b>	<b>344 219</b>		<b>304 506</b>	88
German	270 577	79	266 585	99
Different mother tongue to German	73 642	21	37 921	51
<i>Of which:</i>				
Bosnian/Croat/Serbian	23 441	7	10 426	44
Turkish	20 612	6	12 630	61
Albanian	5 217	2	2 514	48
Rumanian	2 847	1	1 510	53
Arabic	2 515	1	1 953	78
Polish	1 913	1	779	41
<b>Other language</b>	<b>9 058</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3 838</b>	<b>42</b>

Source: Statistics Austria, School Statistics 2007/08 database.

At the end of primary education, Austrian pupils read at least as well as the average pupil internationally (Table 1.4). But there is a significant performance advantage for pupils with both parents born in Austria. Pupils with neither parent born in Austria perform well below international averages in mathematics and science. It is noteworthy, however, that students with neither parent born in Austria perform at the international average of all students in reading.

**Table 1.4. Student performance in the 4th grade of primary education**

Reading performance from PIRLS 2006 and mathematics and science performance from TIMSS 2007

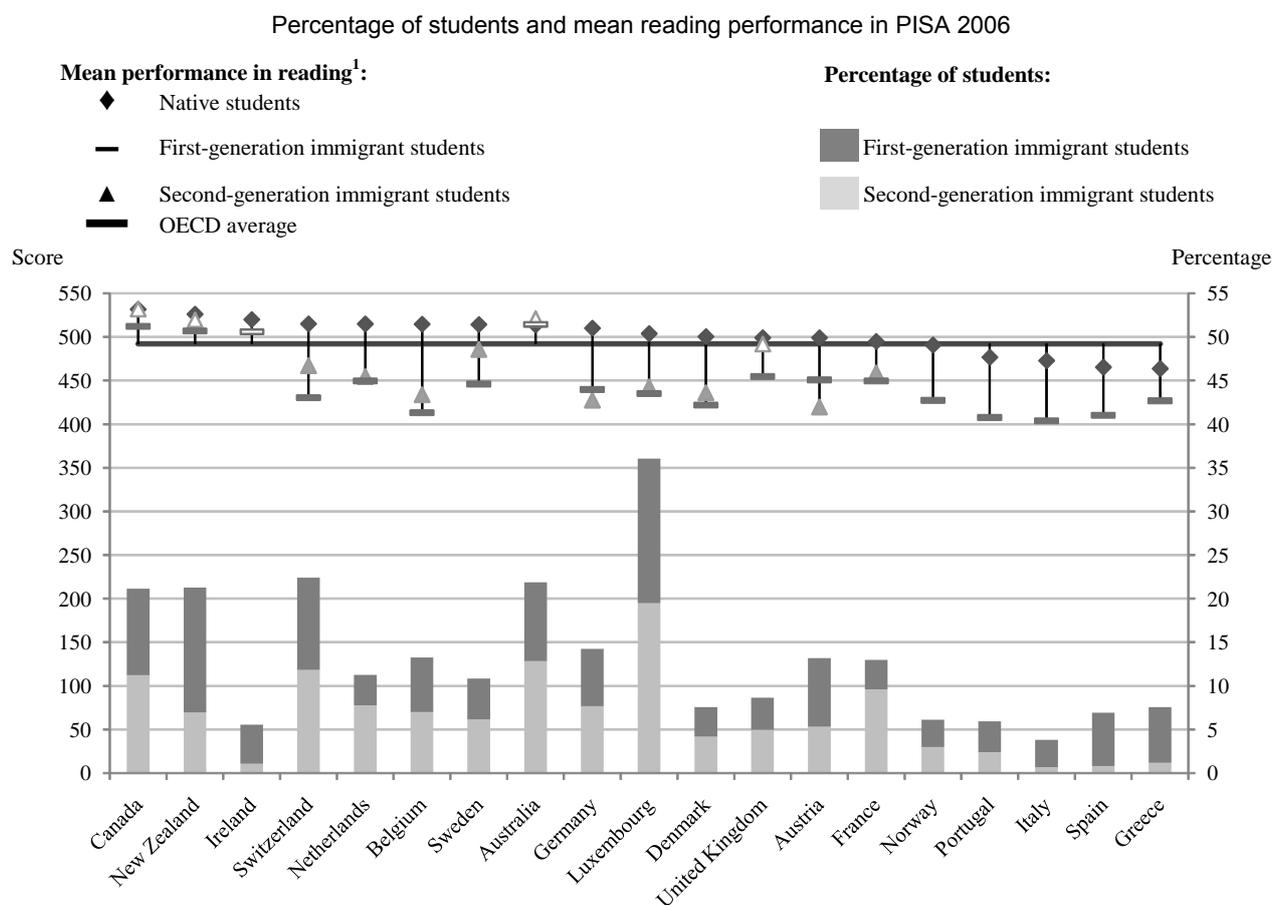
	Parents born in Austria:			International average for all students
	Both	Only one	Neither	
Reading	548	540	501	500
Mathematics	515	498	470	500
Science	541	514	467	500

Source: IEA (2007); IEA (2008a) and IEA (2008b).

### ***Lower secondary education***

After four years of primary school, children are selected into one of three distinct types of lower secondary school: the first stage of academic secondary school, lower secondary school or “new middle school”. The latter school type was established in 2007/08 as a pilot project limited to a certain number of schools. There are also schools offering special education from primary through to lower secondary level. A second sorting of students into four different school types takes place at age 14.

Results from PISA 2006 show that the reading, mathematics and science performance of students in Austria towards the end of compulsory education is around the OECD average, but is significantly affected by immigrant background. First- and second-generation immigrants have much lower scores than native students. The reading performance disadvantage of second-generation immigrants compared to their native counterparts is one of the largest among OECD countries (Figure 1.1).

**Figure 1.1. Differences in reading performance at age 15, by immigrant status**

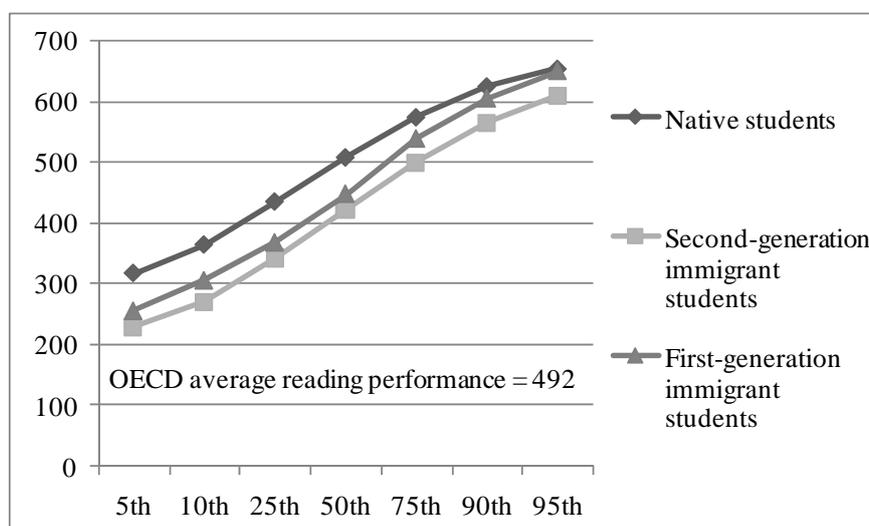
Source: OECD PISA 2006 database.

Note 1. Unshaded symbols indicate that performance differences between native and immigrant students are not statistically significant.

While 25% of immigrant students performed around or above the OECD average in the PISA 2006 reading assessment, this was the case for at least 50% of their native counterparts (Figure 1.2). Notably, among both the top and bottom performers, second-generation immigrant students have a comparatively lower performance than other students (OECD, 2007).

**Figure 1.2. Reading performance at age 15**

Distribution of reading performance in PISA 2006



Source: OECD PISA 2006 database.

Given the challenges identified above, the OECD and the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture (BMUKK) agreed to focus the policy review of Austria on the following levels of education:

1. Early childhood education and care (ECEC), and the interface between ECEC and the school system.
2. The educational situation of immigrant students in compulsory education (primary and general secondary education).

### General issues of education policy design and implementation

#### *Overview of equity and migrant education policies*

##### *Universal measures to improve equity in education*

Evidence indicates that many immigrant students would benefit from broader equity policies targeting less socio-economically advantaged students: differences in socio-economic background account for a large part of the performance gap between native students and immigrant students (OECD, 2007). In Austria, as in most OECD countries, immigrant students are significantly over-represented among less socio-economically advantaged groups.

A range of universal measures were launched in recent years to promote equity and reduce the performance gap between students from different socio-economic groups. At the ECEC level, these measures include the introduction of German language screenings at age four/five and a free, mandatory kindergarten year for all children starting at age five. At the level of compulsory schooling, both structural and pedagogical reforms have been introduced to enhance the educational opportunities for all students (Table 1.5).

Recently, there has been strong political support to delay the age of selection of students into different school types. Increasing students' potential to access more academically demanding education has been at

the top of an ambitious education agenda in recent years. In 2008/09, 67 “new middle schools” were created in five *Länder* to provide comprehensive schooling to students aged 10 to 14. This has the practical effect of keeping students’ educational options open until age 14 which is hoped to benefit students who may be late developers or have to overcome additional obstacles to learning, *e.g.* difficulties with German as a second language or lack of educational support at home. In the 2009/10 school year, there are 244 new middle schools with 801 classes across all nine provinces.

**Table 1.5. Overview of recent equity initiatives**

School level	Intervention	Policy objective	Age group targeted	Year introduced
<b>ECEC</b>	Language screening	Identify children with language development needs (both native and immigrant children) and encourage parents to enrol them in kindergarten.	4/5	2005/06
<b>ECEC</b>	Mandatory half-day kindergarten year	Increase participation in ECEC and improve school readiness	5/6	2009
<b>Compulsory education</b>	“New middle schools”	Offer a comprehensive school type to delay tracking into “general” or “academic” secondary education; combine structural reform with pedagogical innovations	10-14	2008/09
<b>Compulsory education</b>	25 plus initiative	Reduce the maximum number of students per class to 25 and strengthen personalisation of teaching and learning	6-14	2007/08
<b>Compulsory education</b>	High quality afternoon care	Provide additional learning time through an increase of afternoon care by 40% (95,000 places); introduce a quality seal for afternoon childcare	6-14	2008

Source: Wroblewski and Herzog-Punzenberger (2009); complemented by information provided by BMUKK.

#### *Targeted measures to promote diversity in the education system*

However, evidence also highlights the need for targeted measures: even after accounting for socio-economic background there are significant performance differences between native and immigrant students (OECD, 2004a; 2007). This indicates that it is indeed necessary to address immigrant-specific issues such as those related to language learning, in addition to general equity policies.

In recent years, migrant education has received increased attention at the policy level. In 2008, the BMUKK created a Department for Migration, Intercultural Education and Language Policy to bring together and co-ordinate all the factors that matter for the educational success of immigrants. The department aims to engage governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to build a coalition to improve the education outcomes of immigrant students.

Austria has a well established tradition of providing remedial German language support and mother tongue instruction to immigrant children, since the early years of the 1970s guestworker programmes. However, the original goal for mother-tongue instruction was to adequately prepare children to return to their countries of origin. In the early 1990s the policy focus in compulsory education shifted more towards acknowledging diversity as a permanent and positive feature of the Austrian education system. Mother tongue and German language support were formalised in Austrian law and complemented by a third strategy to provide intercultural education to all students. Together, these provisions constitute the three basic pillars of the Austrian migrant education strategy. They have been expanded over the past two decades and now apply to all school types in compulsory education (see Box 1.2).

**Box 1.2. The “three pillars” of migrant education in Austria**

1. **Support structures in German as a Second Language (GSL):** Students who need German language support obtain “non-regular” status and trigger additional earmarked funding for their school to provide language development courses. In addition, since autumn 2009, schools with a high proportion of GSL students receive additional earmarked funding for language support.
2. **Mother tongue teaching:** Courses in the 20 most frequent mother tongues of immigrants are offered by about 340 teachers across Austria, almost exclusively in primary and lower secondary schools. About half of the mother tongue instruction offer is concentrated in Vienna.
3. **Intercultural education as one of the 13 general educational principles:** Intercultural education is one of the topics which teachers are encouraged to take into account across the curriculum. The principle of intercultural education includes furthering understanding between students of different backgrounds and nurturing the values of tolerance, understanding and respect. The principle also states explicitly that diversity and multilingualism should be acknowledged as something positive by teachers.

Source: Wroblewski & Herzog-Punzenberger (2009); BMUKK (2008).

Beyond the three pillars of the national strategy for migrant education, a number of initiatives have been introduced by the different levels of the educational administration and in co-operation with other partners and stakeholders. For example, the BMUKK has made efforts to strengthen the capacities of teachers in supporting immigrant students. Migrant education has become one of the 9 suggested priority areas for the pre-service and in-service training provided by teacher training colleges. The Ministry has also developed a core curriculum for teacher training in linguistic diversity and intercultural education. There are also many examples of good practice at the provincial, local and school level. These will be explained in more detail in Chapter 2.

***Challenges related to the design and implementation of reforms***

Despite the increased awareness of migrant education issues at the Ministry level, Austria has not yet developed a comprehensive strategy to narrow the achievement gap between native and immigrant students. The current legislation focuses mostly on remedial support in the German language, but does not provide a consistent approach to analysing and addressing the various causes for underperformance of certain immigrant groups.

Moreover, the existing legislation concerning equity and migrant education policies is phrased in vague and non-binding terms. Therefore, the successful implementation of these policies depends very much on whether the provinces, the school administration and teachers decide to prioritise the issue or not (Wroblewski and Herzog-Punzenberger, 2009). Many policies for immigrant students are introduced as “pilot projects”, but they are rarely thoroughly evaluated, upscaled or extended on a system-wide basis.

The provision of national equity and migrant education policies varies significantly across provinces, cities and schools regarding the availability and quality of support. This reflects more general inconsistencies in the governance and organisation of the education system in Austria. A set of interrelated factors such as co-operation, funding, streaming and evaluation arrangements make education reform implementation challenging in Austria. These broader policy issues are briefly described here as they will have to be addressed if Austria's strategy for equity and migrant education is to be effective in the medium and long term.

### *Fragmentation of decision-making in education policy and practice across Austria*

Education policies for immigrant students seem somewhat isolated from other relevant public policies. Compared to other countries, there is little inter-ministerial co-operation on integration issues. The overall responsibility for the integration of immigrants lies with the Ministry of Interior, which has launched a National Action Plan for Integration. This plan provides an opportunity for much-needed enhanced co-operation between Ministries. Its success will depend on acknowledging that all sectors play a key role in achieving enhanced integration and cannot do so in isolation.

Co-operation between different layers of the educational administration itself is also limited. Decision-making power in the Austrian education system is extremely dispersed with several federal ministries, the Länder governments and municipal authorities all playing an important role in the development and implementation of new education policies (Box 1.3). During the OECD review, many stakeholders voiced concerns about a lack of transparency as to what level of the system is responsible for taking the lead in addressing the various migrant education issues.

#### **Box 1.3. Educational governance in Austria**

Within the federal government, the Ministry of Social and Family affairs is responsible for kindergarten education (but not for the training of kindergarten educators), the Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture is in charge of primary and secondary education, the Ministry of Science and Research is in charge of university education and of teacher training for academic secondary and vocational upper secondary schools, and the Ministry of Labour has responsibility for vocational and continued training.

School administration is shared between the federal and provincial governments. The federal government sets the broad legislative framework and the detailed legislation is developed and implemented by the provincial governments (Länder). Länder governments are responsible for pre-school, primary and general lower secondary education, whereas the federal government is responsible for academic secondary and vocational schools. Municipal and local authorities are involved in maintaining schools. But the federal level has responsibility for the education system as a whole, especially the employment and conditions of teachers and other staff. This fragmented organisation has resulted in parallel structures at the federal and Länder levels, which do not always pursue the same principles and policies.

School leaders have some autonomy in budgetary and curricular matters, and individual teachers are personally responsible for interpreting the curricular guidelines. School governance arrangements are highly consultative, with teacher, student and parent organisations all holding the right to participate in decision-making.

*Source: Delannoy et al. (2004); Stoll et al. (2007); OECD (2009a).*

There is also a lack of co-operation among professionals working in different types of schools. For example, the law on transfer of student records between educational levels does not allow educators in kindergarten, primary and secondary schools to share information about students as they move from one level to the next. This means that teachers in a student's new school do not benefit from previous diagnosis

of his or her cognitive and linguistic ability and development over recent years. Here, a crucial opportunity to offer targeted support during school transitions is wasted.

Co-operation between teachers is also made more difficult by the fact that teachers are educated separately depending on the school type that they will teach in (Box 1.4).

#### Box 1.4. Teacher training in Austria

Kindergarten teachers are generally trained in special training colleges at the upper secondary level. Teachers for primary schools, general lower secondary schools, special schools and pre-VET schools pursue a three-year programme at the teacher training colleges (Pädagogische Hochschule), which aims to combine theoretical knowledge and practical aspects of pedagogy. The Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture is responsible for this training. Teachers for academic lower and upper secondary schools follow a university-based 4.5 year programme with a strong focus on mastering content in two school subjects and only a small amount of training on the practical aspects of teaching. This training is overseen by the Ministry of Science and Research. There is a set of highly differentiated programmes for VET teachers.

Source: Delannoy *et al.* (2004).

Finally, the federal legislation for migrant education is not systematically supported by earmarked funding. This leads to variations in the implementation of the national migrant education strategy as some of the provincial and local education authorities do not prioritise funding for initiatives in this area. For example, the decentralisation to the provincial level of funding for German language courses in 2001 led to a decrease of resources allocated for this purpose (Wroblewski and Herzog-Punzenberger, 2009).

#### *A system based on sorting and selectivity*

The sorting of students by ability is at the heart of the organisational and pedagogical strategy of the Austrian education system. The high degree of differentiation in the Austrian education system allows teachers to sort initially weak performers into lower school types or ability groups or to have them repeat a year. This system could act as a disincentive for teachers to take responsibility to improve student performance. By extension, schools may not necessarily see themselves as the responsible unit for addressing the achievement gap between native and immigrant students.

#### Selection for entrance into primary schools

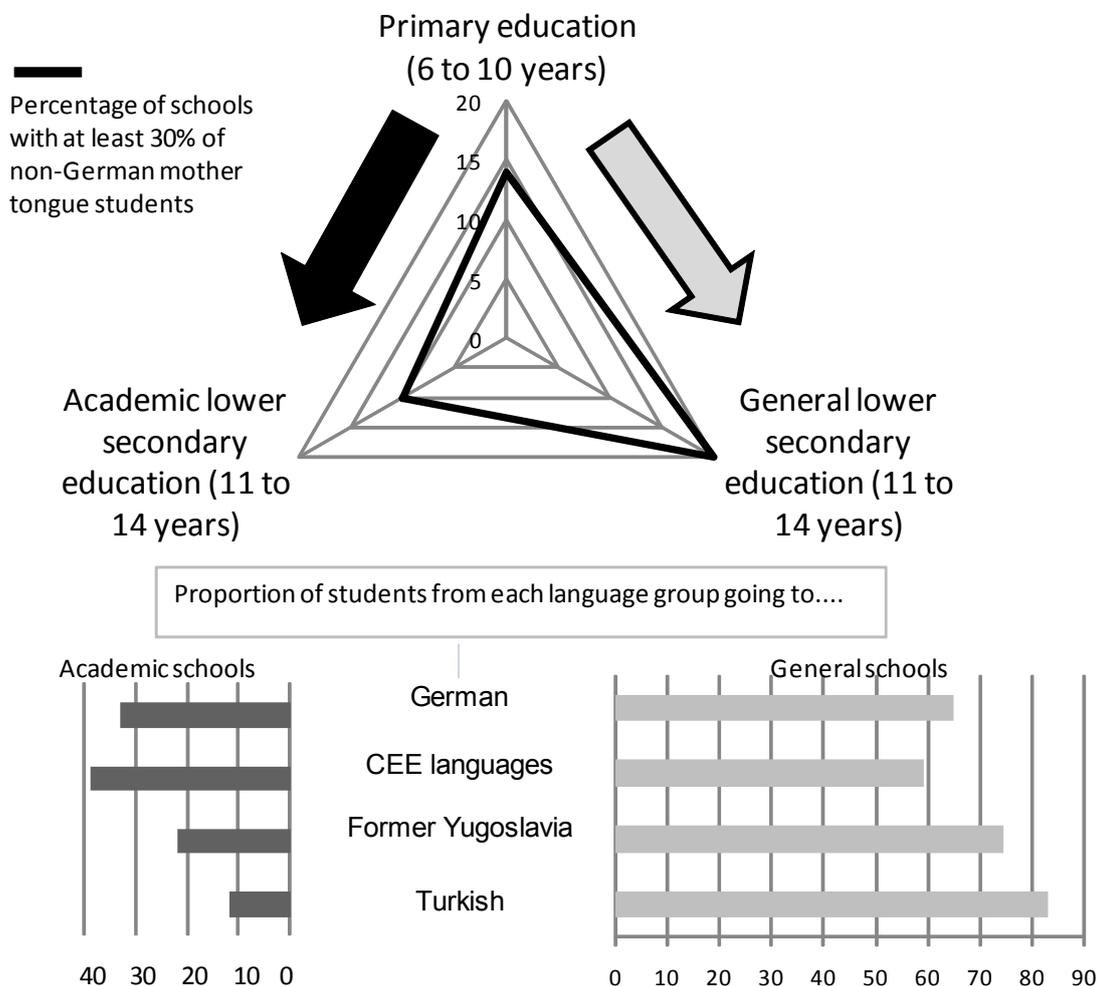
The first crucial diagnosis of students' cognitive and linguistic development is made at age six when students start primary school. Some students who are judged not to be cognitively or emotionally developed enough to start primary school are selected to attend an extra year of pre-school. Law states that having weak German language skills is not a criterion to qualify for an extra year of pre-school. Therefore, children with weak German language skills should go directly into primary school, but be given adequate support in German. However, during the OECD visit to Austria, a concern was raised that some of the children with weak German language skills might rather be diagnosed as "not ready for school".

Moreover, despite the official policy to prevent channelling of children with language difficulties into special educational needs schools, immigrant students are disproportionately oriented towards these schools. Relatively, the greatest concentration of immigrant students is found in special educational needs schools: while students with a non-German mother tongue make up 16% of the overall student population, they constitute 27% of the student body in special needs schools (Specht, 2009).

### Selection for entrance into lower secondary schools

The first “tracking” of students into different school types takes place at age 10, earlier than in any other OECD education system except Germany – the OECD average first age of selection is 14 years. After four years of primary school, Austrian children are selected into one of three distinct types of lower secondary school: the first stage of academic secondary school, general lower secondary school or “new middle school” (the latter school type was established in 2007/08). National data reveal that the distribution of students among the traditional lower secondary school types at age 15 (excluding the “new middle school”) accentuates the concentration of students with a mother tongue other than German in certain schools: 14% of primary schools had at least 30% of their student population with a mother tongue other than German, but after selection the proportion decreases to only 10% of academic lower secondary schools and increases to 20% of general lower secondary schools (Figure 1.3).

**Figure 1.3. Selection into different school types at age 10 and concentration of immigrant students**



Source: Statistics Austria, School Statistics 2007/08 database.

Such early sorting may not give children with an immigrant background sufficient time to develop the linguistic, cultural and social skills necessary to be selected for more academically demanding schools. International evidence tends to show that in systems using early tracking, socio-economic background has

a large impact on student achievement (OECD, 2004a; 2007). Analysis of PISA 2006 data reveals clear differences among schools in terms of their socio-economic composition, most notably between academic upper secondary schools and other schools (Table 1.6). An indicator of how this affects immigrant students is the fact that students with a mother tongue other than German are underrepresented in academic lower secondary education and some language groups are strongly underrepresented (Figure 1.3).

In general, national data indicate limited social mobility within the Austrian education system: 15-to-19-year-olds whose parents have no more than basic compulsory education make up only 4% of the student population in academic upper secondary schools, compared to 18% of students in apprenticeship training (Statistics Austria, School Statistics 2007/08 database).

**Table 1.6. School composition in different school types**

Student reports on family background in PISA 2006

	School composition in terms of average:			
	Parental education level		Student socio-economic and cultural status	
	Years	S.E.	Index	S.E.
Academic upper secondary school	15.0	(0.11)	0.82	(0.04)
Higher vocational school	13.7	(0.08)	0.31	(0.03)
Apprenticeship	13.2	(0.09)	-0.13	(0.03)
Middle vocational school	13.2	(0.31)	-0.16	(0.09)
Vocational programme	13.3	(0.11)	-0.17	(0.04)
Lower secondary school	12.7	(0.36)	-0.28	(0.11)

Source: OECD, PISA 2006

#### Selection for entrance into upper secondary schools

A second tracking of students into a range of different programmes takes place at age 14. National data indicate that students with a mother tongue other than German are over-represented in the lower tracks of vocational education, including in polytechnics and in intermediate vocational schools and underrepresented in apprenticeships and vocational higher colleges (Table 1.7). Generally, students in polytechnics spend one year studying (their final year of compulsory education) before enrolling in an apprenticeship (Hoeckel, forthcoming). Among the Austrian students participating in PISA 2003, performance was markedly higher in academic schools and vocational higher colleges than in the polytechnics and intermediary vocational and apprenticeship schools (OECD, 2009a).

**Table 1.7. Distribution of students among upper secondary school-types by language group**

	Percentage of students in school type, by mother tongue				
	German	Not German (Total)	CEE languages	Former Yugoslavia	Turkish
Academic (Grades 9 to 12)	88.6	11.4	2.5	3.4	1.6
Vocational higher colleges (Grades 9 to 13)	90.0	10.0	1.6	3.8	2.0
Vocational intermediate schools (Grades 9 to 12)	84.8	15.2	1.4	5.8	4.5
Apprenticeships (Grades 10 to 12)	91.9	8.1	0.6	4.1	2.6
Others including polytechnics (Grades 9 to 12)	80.0	20.0	1.8	6.3	4.6

Source: Statistics Austria, School Statistics 2007/08 database.

*A relatively undeveloped culture of evaluation*

Currently, it is difficult for education policy makers in Austria to effectively monitor the education outcomes and progress of immigrant students. The framework for taking stock of education performance was until recently particularly limited in Austria. In 2006, there were no external examinations, no periodical assessments, and no requirements for regular school evaluation, or school self-evaluation (OECD, 2008b). As a consequence, there is little national data on education outcomes at a school or system level, and no breakdowns that would shed light on the situation of immigrants.

International studies such as IEA's PIRLS and TIMSS and OECD's PISA provide the only source of comparable performance data from different socio-demographic groups, with the major disadvantage that these data are available only for a given age cohort. National education statistics disaggregate some information on enrolment and participation by nationality, but in fact 83% of the second generation and 44% of the first generation immigrants hold Austrian nationality. Therefore, the category of "students with a non-German mother tongue" is used as a proxy for immigrant students. But there is no information on whether they are born in Austria and / or on their age of arrival.

The resulting lack of information renders the problems that immigrants encounter in the education system less visible and makes it harder for policy makers and practitioners to develop adequate strategies for improvement. The lack of data on how immigrants fare in the education system also complicates the task of policy makers to estimate resources needed to meet the needs of immigrant students or to measure the impact of policies and practices in the area.

In recent years, the Austrian education system has already taken steps to improve the evidence base of educational policy. In 2008, the BMUKK created the National Institute for Educational Research (Bifie) to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation of education outcomes in Austria. This reflects a political will to move towards a more outcome-oriented approach to education. Among Bifie's core tasks are the development and implementation of national education standards. These standards define what students should have learned in mathematics, German and English at the end of grades 4 and 8. As of 2012, national proficiency tests will be introduced to assess student performance against these standards. Bifie will collect performance results together with a range of background data. The pilot and pre-testing phase of the national standardised assessments is already completed.

But closer to the operational level, school leaders and teachers lack the diagnostic tools and training needed to track the performance of students regularly and to identify and effectively address problems as they occur. During the OECD visit, teachers reported that pre-service training did not provide them with the necessary grounding in assessment and evaluation. They are not prepared to interpret external evaluation results, or to develop their own diagnostic testing materials for use in the classroom. Some in-service training offers exist, but it is difficult to know at a system level how many teachers actually take such training.

The lack of training in diagnostic testing and assessment is especially problematic because teacher assessments have an impact on student transitions, such as transfer to special schools or different types of lower secondary schools. There is currently much responsibility given to primary school teachers in assessing students' ability and future schooling career. While in the long term such a key decision to select students into different types of schools should be delayed to a later age (the average age of selection in OECD countries is 14 years), as long as such a system is in place it is essential that teachers are given tools to aid their assessment. Without such tools they are wide open to accusations of discrimination when making their recommendations.

The tradition of school evaluation is not established in Austria. Data from the OECD TALIS study showed that compared to other OECD countries, Austria had a very high proportion of schools (58%) that had not been evaluated in the past five years (OECD, 2009b). While the Ministry encourages school participation in the “Quality in Schools (QIS)” self-evaluation process, this internal evaluation is voluntary and not embedded in the inspection process. During the OECD review, Bifie reported that while it had a role to support evidence-based school improvement it played no role in encouraging or supporting schools in self-appraisal.

### *General suggestions for policy development*

Given that over 20% of primary school students in Austria have an immigrant background, narrowing the large performance gap between native and immigrant students should not be seen as an isolated issue on the periphery of the education policy agenda. It concerns almost a fifth of the student population. Policy makers at the central level need to put the topic squarely on the education policy agenda. Specific objectives and strategies to reduce the achievement gap between native and immigrant students should be included in all aspects of education policy, for example in the curriculum, accountability requirements, school development plans, preparation of school leaders and teacher training.

International research indicates that a broad range of factors at the individual, classroom, school and system level contribute to the educational disadvantage of immigrant students across the OECD. The BMUKK needs to take the lead in developing a comprehensive and coherent mix of universal equity policies and targeted measures for immigrants to address the increasing heterogeneity in the school system. It is unlikely that the current “three pillars” for migrant education will be sufficient to close the gap between native and immigrant students.

### *Clarify responsibilities for implementation*

A comprehensive strategy for migrant education should be part of a national strategy for integration, coordinating education, labour, immigration, housing and social policies. To ensure effective co-operation among Ministries, responsibilities for implementation must be clearly assigned within the Austrian government. It needs to be clear to all actors which Ministry and which level of decision making have the ultimate responsibility for action in each area. This requires commitment of different Ministries and the different levels of the educational administration to a common strategy for integration. In Norway, for example, such a common strategy has been developed (Box 1.5).

#### **Box 1.5. The Norwegian action plan for integration and social inclusion of immigrants**

To ensure a coherent whole-of-government approach, Norway has published an “Action Plan for Integration and Social Inclusion of the Immigrant Population” which was developed jointly by relevant Ministries under the leadership of the Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion. The plan is organised around a set of concrete goals and indicators against which progress can be measured. For each goal, the Action Plan indicates the responsible Ministry which can be held accountable for action in this area (including the Ministries for Children and Equality; Education and Research; Health and Care Services; Justice; Local Government and Regional Development; Government Administration and Reform; and Culture and Church Affairs).

Among the goals for education and childhood for which the Ministry for Education shares responsibility, the strategy lists: increasing the number of children with immigrant backgrounds in daycare; increasing the number of preschool teachers with immigrant backgrounds; ensuring immigrant students master the Norwegian language sufficiently to follow instruction, increasing the proportion of second-generation immigrants completing upper secondary education etc. For each goal, the action plan provides the indicators of success and the current status (based on data from Statistics Norway) from which progress can be monitored and measured.

*Source:* Norwegian Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion (2006).

The BMUKK itself also needs to ensure consistency of support for immigrant students across school types and levels of education. To facilitate co-operation across levels of education, the government should consider revising the law on transfer of student records to make it easier to transmit information and offer continuous targeted support.

Moreover, it would be helpful to reconsider the current arrangements for teacher training. The Ministry should continue to explore options to provide a common basic training in pedagogy for all teachers.<sup>3</sup> Throughout teacher training, there needs to be a common and consistent approach to dealing with heterogeneity. This could help establish consistency in approaches and facilitate contact between teachers in different school types and education levels.

In addition, targeted measures could help enhance co-operation in the area of migrant education across the different levels of the education system. In Germany, for example, a model programme (*Förderung von Kindern und Jugendlichen mit Migrationshintergrund – FörMig*) was introduced to support students with a migration background through the transitions from one level to the next (see Box 1.6).

#### Box 1.6. The German “FörMig” Programme

The model programme aims to offer **continuous language development** approaches in German, other mother tongues and foreign languages across all levels of education and to **facilitate the transition from school** into vocational education and the job market.

The project structure is geared to improve co-operation between different school levels and types, the educational administration and other partners such as parents and local agencies. At the local level, the programme is based on partnerships between different “basic units”, e.g. a kindergarten, a primary school, a secondary school, a local authority, a parent initiative, an after-school centre and a “strategic partner” such as a library, psychological support centre, or educational authority. These basic units serve to transfer information, experiences and evaluation results on a local or regional level. They also have to establish and maintain regional internet platforms and have regular contact with the central project coordinator.

At the central level, the project coordinator provides a range of support services to the basic units. This includes professional development offers at the central and local level; advice and support in the development of local initiatives; support in monitoring and evaluation; guidelines and materials on related topics; facilitation of external expertise; support in collecting and interpreting data and establishing an internet platform; networking between different project units (e.g. between different Länder).

The evaluation of the project reports positive results. Among the success factors, the project coordinators highlight the holistic approach that is being pursued. Language development is not seen as the task of individual teachers, but of the school as an organization, of the education system as a whole, and of the students’ broader environment including parents and the local community.

Source: Institut für International und Interkulturell Vergleichende Erziehungswissenschaft (2009).

Funding needs to be used strategically to meet objectives. The BMUKK should consider using earmarked funding to a greater degree to ensure that national policy concerning the education of migrants is translated into practice at the local level and that a specific institution can be held accountable for progress. Practice from other countries provides some interesting examples. In Sweden, it was found that targeted grants given to municipalities had a positive and significant effect on school spending whereas general untargeted grants had an insignificant or even negative impact (Ahlin and Mörk, 2005). In the United Kingdom, an Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant has been introduced, which can be used only for policies targeting specific nationally underachieving immigrant groups. The evaluation of the grant reports positive results for some immigrant groups (see Box 1.7).

### Box 1.7. The Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant in the United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom, funding from the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant is allocated based on numbers of pupils from nationally underachieving minority groups and English language learners. Local authorities receiving the grant are required to devolve the largest share (85%) directly to schools, while the remaining 15% are earmarked to be spent on the particular purpose of improving the results of underachieving ethnic groups. This ensures that local authorities with tight resources are not tempted to use the money on other priority areas. The funding is based on concrete targets to raise the achievement of certain immigrant groups and schools are required to collect and analyse achievement data disaggregated by students' ethnic backgrounds in order to identify inequalities, introduce specific interventions and monitor success.

An evaluation of the grant (Tikly *et al.*, 2005) shows that the local authorities most successful in raising student outcomes provided active support to schools through good practice guidelines, advisory services and professional development for school managers. Overall, the results of the intervention are mixed. While Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean students remain the most at risk of underachieving, the achievement gap was narrowing for Pakistani and Bangladeshi students. The evaluation highlights the following aspects of the Grant as success factors: (1) it focuses not only on language learning but more broadly on addressing underachievement, (2) the funding formula is clear with transparent funding earmarked explicitly for underachieving ethnic and language groups, (3) the role of local authorities has been strengthened to ensure that they provide support to schools in managing the funds and offer a broad range of support services.

Source: Gomolla (2006); Tikly *et al.* (2005).

#### *Increase the inclusiveness of the school system*

At the school level, school leaders and teachers need to acknowledge that the student population is increasingly diverse and that teaching strategies must adapt to this diversity through differentiated instruction and second language development. To overcome what is perceived to be a “sorting mentality” and make sure that teachers take responsibility for raising the achievement of *all* students, Austria is currently exploring structural policies to enhance the inclusiveness of the education system through a comprehensive lower secondary school type (new middle schools).

The OECD has already recommended that Austria should “overcome the early streaming of students, notably by encouraging the development of new middle schools, which requires equipping them with adequate teaching resources and curricula” (OECD, 2009a). It is imperative to ensure that new middle schools offer pedagogical improvements and an educational climate with high expectations for educational achievement.

The new middle schools aim to be leaders in offering innovative teaching methods, such as individualised learning for students, and enjoy strong political backing. These schools should, therefore, attract students who may traditionally have attended academic schools at age ten. In this way, the student composition has the potential to be more socio-economically and academically diverse and to benefit from a climate of high academic expectations for all.

#### *Continue to develop a culture of evaluation*

International research suggests that external assessments and evaluations help steer the work of schools by setting standards against which performance can be judged. A comparative analysis of institutional arrangements in several countries that performed well on PISA concluded that well-developed arrangements for system monitoring were strongly associated with good performance in the PISA 2003 test (OECD, 2004b). Subsequent analysis drawing on PISA 2000 and 2003 found that the presence of student assessment systems appears to be strongly related to student performance as measured by PISA, more so than system level features related to autonomy or parental choice (Wößmann *et al.*, 2007a; 2007b).

But these findings do not necessarily mean that external assessments alone (*e.g.* more testing) would automatically improve performance. The findings do not indicate precisely how educators, policy-makers, school leaders, teachers and students use such results when they show signs of system or student underperformance. Across the OECD, countries use a broad spectrum of methods for measuring education performance at the different levels of the system. This spectrum embraces formative assessment carried out by teachers on a day-to-day basis, internal self-assessment by schools, external evaluations carried out by inspectorates and national assessments at the system level (OECD, 2008c). International research highlights the importance of school leaders and teachers continuously monitoring their own progress and performance, as well as that of their students (*e.g.* Scheerens and Bosker, 1997; Robinson, 2007).

Austria is beginning to implement steps towards an evaluation culture and currently focuses on educational standards and their regular assessment. Such standard tests should help teachers establish student performance against a national benchmark. In the Netherlands, for example, a range of different testing materials are at the disposal of schools to help teachers establish students' ability on a nationally approved benchmark at the age of 12, 14, 16 and 18 years. Research shows that the most commonly used test seems to be a relatively robust predictor of student performance (see Box 1.8).

#### **Box 1.8. Standardised testing materials in the Netherlands**

In the Netherlands, different educational measurement institutions offer a test for children aged 12 to facilitate their orientation in different secondary school types. It is up to schools to choose the test that they use. In 85% of the primary schools students take the test developed by the National Institute for Test Development (CITO)<sup>4</sup>. Research and analysis of student performance on the CITO test and their subsequent educational pathway show that the test is a robust predictor of academic ability. Where teacher recommendations have differed from students results in the CITO test, students have later changed to a different school type.

Along with the common standards, the Dutch government now aims to introduce "reference levels" of performance. These levels can be a leverage to show the performance status for students as an instrument for teachers to monitor students' progress in learning and provide tailored support to them. The CITO test will be connected with the reference levels.

Unlike the situation in many other OECD countries, in the Netherlands data are available by individual student and ethnic group. Results from national tests such as the longitudinal study COOL and the national standard assessment at the end of primary education (grade 8) are a rich resource of information, and demonstrate improved educational outcomes for certain ethnic groups over the past 20 years.

*Source: Shewbridge et al. (2009).*

In Austria, many questions remain as to the exact nature and use of the data that will be obtained through national tests. It is essential to clearly define the purpose of assessment data. The BMUKK should ensure that data on participation and performance can be broken down by gender, immigrant status and language spoken at home. The system needs feedback that provides information not just on the level of student performance, but also provides insights as to possible explanations for what is observed, and how underperformance might be addressed. At the school level, it should be ensured that school leaders and teachers receive rapid feedback from external assessments on how their students are faring, so that they can make adjustments to teaching strategies that are immediately useful to their students.

In addition, participation of schools in the QIS project should be further promoted, and indicators relating to immigrant students' educational outcomes included in the school self-evaluation where relevant. Schools should be supported in their self-evaluation. School leaders and teachers need to be adequately prepared to interpret external results and to develop their own assessment and evaluation techniques for use at the school level. This support could be given by the inspectorate, or another institution such as the Bifie.

In Ireland, for example, the inspectorate plays a role beyond monitoring and enforcement of regulations and proactively supports school improvement (Box 1.9).

**Box 1.9. Ireland: Role of the Inspectorate in monitoring the quality and equity of education**

In Ireland, the Inspectorate helps schools build capacity for analysing assessment information gathered at the classroom and school levels, and provides access to comparative data on the performance of other schools with similar student profiles. The Inspectorate school reports are public documents, and used by other schools to compare performance. The reports also provide a barometer by which organisations such as the Department as a whole, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) and other bodies can assess the extent to which their efforts are actually resulting in good practice. The Inspectorate avoids the use of league tables because of the associated risks it has observed in other countries. This makes it even more necessary that it provides schools with alternative ways to access comparative data at a greater level of sophistication than a national norm. The Inspectorate is in a pivotal position to bring about a greater focus on effective provision of support for immigrant students, through its regular cycle of visits, its use of school level standardised assessment data in its whole school evaluations, and its access to the teachers, programmes, plans, resources and self-reviews.

Source: Taguma *et al.* (2009a).

Finally, teachers themselves need better training to evaluate performance of their students regularly, thereby offering the necessary support to weak performers and sufficient challenge to strong performers. Evidence suggests that frequent and brief formative assessment is a very cost-effective strategy for raising education performance in diverse classrooms (OECD, 2005). It increases student engagement and enhances the capacity of teachers to differentiate instruction and manage a range of diagnostic and performance information.

Equipping teachers to address the learning needs of immigrant children also requires effective diagnostic tools to assess the language development of the individual student, taking into account their language background, including competencies in their mother tongue and other competencies relevant for their second language acquisition. It is therefore vital to develop testing materials either especially for or adapted to bilingual pupils both for general language assessment at all levels and for detecting special needs in children (*e.g.* dyslexia) (Box 1.10).

**Box 1.10. Materials for diagnostic testing adapted to plurilingual students**

In **Denmark**, The Ministry of Education has financed a specialised assessment material for bilingual children which can be used to assess the proficiency and language development needs in the language of instruction in bilingual children in different age categories. The material was developed by a researcher in the field of second language acquisition and is placed at the disposal of schools and local authorities in an electronic form.

In **Norway**, diagnostic tests have been developed by the Centre for Multicultural Education (NAFO) to help teachers assess a student's ability considering language development, dyslexia and impairments to their cognitive development.

Source: UVM (2007); Taguma *et al.* (2009b).

## NOTES

- 1 According to Eurostat figures collected at the end of 2005 cited in Städtebund 2009, participation was 48% for children aged 3 to 4, 83% for the age group 4 to 5 and 93% for the age group 5 to 6.
- 2 These results are from a special data collection in Austria as part of the PISA 2006 survey. The PISA 2006 Student Questionnaire did not include a question on participation in early childhood education and care.
- 3 In early 2009, an inter-governmental commission was set up dealing with the issue of a common teacher training for all teachers. Results will be published in 2010.
- 4 For more information on the CITO test see the brochure developed for parents: [www.onderwijsconsument.nl/php/forms/download.php?did=230](http://www.onderwijsconsument.nl/php/forms/download.php?did=230).

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## CHAPTER 2: POLICY ORIENTATIONS

*This chapter identifies four priority areas for policy development to improve the education outcomes of immigrant students in Austria: (1) enhancing participation and quality in early childhood education and care, (2) providing adequate language support to all students, (3) improving teaching and learning environments, and (4) engaging parents, communities and schools to support immigrant students.*

### Policy Priority 1: Enhancing Participation and Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care

Evidence from Austria and elsewhere confirms that if early childhood education and care (ECEC) starts at a sufficiently young age and in a high quality institution, it significantly aids the development of children from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds (OECD, 2009). There are also indications that ECEC could play a particular role in promoting linguistic school readiness of immigrant children (PLS Rambøll, 2002; EVA, 2008).

However, in Austria, enrolment of children under 3 is low and participation in kindergarten seems to be influenced by parents' socio-economic status (see Chapter 1). There are also concerns about the quality of the educational and language support offer in the ECEC system, including the low educational level of kindergarten pedagogues. This section argues that to provide optimal learning and development opportunities for immigrant children at an early age, the Austrian education system should (1) implement structures that promote immigrant children's access to and participation in ECEC institutions, and (2) improve the quality and content of the educational offer in ECEC institutions.

#### *Strengths*

##### *Introduction of a compulsory kindergarten year*

Immigrant children will benefit from the universal measure to introduce a compulsory half-day kindergarten year free of charge starting autumn 2009. The strong political commitment to this initiative by the Austrian government is reflected in the allocation of increased resources to the State Secretariat for Economics, Family and Youth (OECD, 2009).

##### *A new focus on early support for children whose mother tongue is not German*

In order to strengthen the early language learning of children, the government in 2005 launched an initiative to provide language screenings for 4-to-5-year-olds. If the screening showed a need, parents received assistance to finance language support.

When discovering that the language support measures taken to follow up on the screenings did not provide the intended effect, Austria very quickly took steps to improve the offer, introducing a new set of language development screening tests, taking place for the first time in 2008. If the test shows a need, the child is recommended to attend kindergarten for the last year before starting school.

In addition, Bifie was commissioned to develop a GSL version of the language assessment, which is adapted to the needs of plurilingual children. A pilot version of this assessment is currently being tested.

##### *Development of a national curriculum framework for kindergarten pedagogues*

The BMUKK has developed a national curriculum framework for ECEC kindergarten pedagogues, as well as an all-Austrian curriculum for children aged 3 to 6 in the area of early language learning and standards for German as a language of instruction for children entering school.

In addition, a number of local initiatives exist, including:

- In Vienna, an education plan for children aged 3 to 6 has been put in place, and is now under development nationwide,
- Lower Austria has developed language screening material, which includes competencies in the mother tongue using mother-tongue-speaking staff.

## Challenges

### *Insufficient focus on disadvantaged children at earlier ages*

Except for the last year of kindergarten (see above), enrolment in ECEC services is optional and depends on the initiative of parents as well as availability of places and the cost of services. Before the last kindergarten year, children do not have a guarantee or entitlement to a place in ECEC. The review team for Austria in the OECD review *Starting Strong*, visiting Austria in 2004, was told that the neighbourhoods most likely to experience difficulties in access or quality were low-income and immigrant districts (OECD, 2006).

Social and family policy, especially the Child Care Benefit scheme, provides incentives for parents to care for young children at home rather than enrolling them in ECEC. One effect of this benefit scheme might be to lower the participation rate of children with immigrant or less advantaged socio-economic background, the very group that is likely to benefit the most from early childcare, especially in terms of developing language competencies. This policy might also give a signal to the provinces not to invest in ECEC services for young children.

Perhaps as a consequence of these structures, enrolment is especially low among children aged 1 to 3, and children from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds. Even though the new compulsory last year of kindergarten is an improvement, there also needs to be increasing focus on improving enrolment of disadvantaged children at earlier ages.

The language screening at age 4/5 might be too late to provide the amount of targeted language support necessary to improve the school readiness of immigrant children. An evaluation of early language support measures from 2005/06 (Breit, 2007) points to the short duration of the language offer as a problem. Although the offer has been increased, the half-day kindergarten year with language support may not be enough to further the language development of immigrant children sufficiently to prepare them adequately for school. In addition, some provinces have struggled to implement the compulsory kindergarten year due to difficulties in providing a sufficient number of places for all children.

### *Concerns about the quality of language support in ECEC*

While there is increasing focus on language learning in ECEC, there is still a need to further develop the quality of the content of ECEC. In official documents, the language support in day care facilities is often described as “remedial”, something we also noted in discussions during our visit. This could be seen as reflecting a deficit approach in the sense that children with an immigrant background are primarily seen as lacking something in terms of German proficiency, which should be “repaired”, rather than as competent individuals with a language background which makes it necessary for them to go through a certain language development, which can be stimulated and supported by qualified staff. This deficit-oriented approach could lead to low expectations towards immigrant children.

There are indications of that being the case. For example, the aim of the “language ticket” programme from 2005 was that children should be able to take part in and follow a simple conversation in German when entering school (Wroblewski and Herzog-Punzenberger, 2009). This is not a very ambitious goal and may not be enough to ensure that children are able to use the language of instruction as a learning tool. The language ticket programme has since been replaced by a new programme (“*Sprich mit mir*”) which pursues more ambitious learning goals.

At least one study (Peltzer-Karpf *et al.*, 2006) has identified a need to intensify support for the development of children’s first and second language in kindergarten. Language support is not provided in every kindergarten where children have a need, and not many pedagogues have acquired special

qualifications in the area of second language development. There is also a concern that language assessments do not seem to be sufficiently adapted to the language development and needs of plurilingual children.

The descriptions of language development programmes seemed quite oriented towards the aim of school readiness, running a risk that the activities will have more character of teaching, which could make it hard to integrate the language support into the activities of a kindergarten system, which places a lot of emphasis on the all-round development of the child. An evaluation of the early language stimulation activities in Denmark, where the kindergarten system has a similar tradition and focus, shows that it is important to create consistency of practice between language development activities and the other pedagogical activities of the kindergarten in order to make language support a natural mainstreamed part of the kindergarten's activities (EVA, 2008).

#### *Insufficient training for kindergarten educators*

The training for kindergarten educators at upper secondary school level is among the lowest in Europe. The challenges in the job are increasing, as kindergarten educators have to assume new responsibilities of supporting less socio-economically and culturally advantaged families and children with a need for special support. New knowledge about the complexity of the early development of the child also puts increased emphasis on the need for staff in kindergarten to keep up with new knowledge and pedagogical methods and practises. At the same time, better educated parents used to a high level of public welfare services make increasing demands on individualised treatment.

These developments mean that the education level of yesterday's kindergarten educator may not be sufficient for the challenges of today. In addition, giving attention to the language development of immigrant children requires knowledge of both the cognitive and linguistic development of children in general, but also second language development and bilingualism.

During the OECD policy visit, we were informed that rules concerning protection of privacy prevent systematic transfer of information concerning the language development and support needs of children between day care facilities and schools. This means that valuable knowledge that would help schools and teachers address the needs of immigrant children as early and accurately as possible is lost, preventing the children from getting the best possible support from the start of their school career.

#### ***Policy options***

##### *Implement structures in the ECEC system that promote participation of immigrants*

Scandinavian research shows that there is a significant connection between attending pre-school language stimulation activities and reading proficiency in 4<sup>th</sup> grade (Wagner, 2004) and that the longer children attend kindergarten, the better is their proficiency in the language of instruction at the time they start school (Sand & Skoug, 2002; 2003; Sand, 2006). As one year may not be sufficient to get the desired effect in terms of language development, it should be a policy goal for the BMUKK and the provinces to explore the possibilities of further improving access to ECEC services for children from a young age, expanding the duration of free, if not compulsory attendance of day care facilities. If expanding the offer for all children is not possible, it should be considered to introduce a programme specifically targeting children with language development needs. In Denmark, for example, a language evaluation of young children is conducted at age 3. Even children who do not attend ECEC programmes are required to complete a language stimulation course if the professionals judge that they need it (Box 2.1).

### Box 2.1. Compulsory language screening and support for children in Denmark

In Denmark, all bilingual children undergo a language screening at age 3. Children who are found to have a need for language development are required to participate in a language stimulation programme for as long as the need exists, which for many children means that they attend the programme until they start school at age 6. If they do not attend a day care facility, they are required to attend a free, 15-hour-a-week language stimulation programme. Most schools and municipalities find that the language competency level of immigrant children in the language of instruction when entering school has improved after the introduction of the programme.

Source: Nusche *et al.* (2009).

#### *Improve the quality and content of ECEC offers*

In order to help immigrant children develop their language proficiency beyond basic communicative skills, they should be offered not only a place in the kindergarten, but targeted language stimulation activities. The activities should take into consideration the age and development of the children, and take as a starting point the pedagogical practices of the rest of the kindergarten's activities rather than integrating teaching activities in a narrow sense into the practice of the kindergarten.

The BMUKK should encourage the development of pedagogical methods and materials for effective language support/stimulation activities, and encourage research in this area at university level. A longer education for kindergarten educators would give them a more solid theoretical framework for dealing with diversity and adapting their daily practice to support children with different support needs. The Ministry should consider the possibilities for upgrading kindergarten educator training to tertiary level. In Denmark, for example, the length of kindergarten educator training is equal to that of teachers. In order for kindergarten educators to be able to identify the language development needs of children and carry out language support and stimulation activities, they need specific training to equip them for this important task (PLS Rambøll, 2002; EVA, 2008). Participation in in-service training should also be encouraged by regions, for example by targeting funding to participation in such training.

Language assessments should as far as possible include mother tongue proficiency. The resources of parents or available professionals with proficiency in the mother tongue of the child should be used in this regard.

The government should take the initiative to amend the rules concerning the protection of personal information so as to allow a structured transfer of information between day care facilities and schools. The BMUKK should publish guidelines and inspiration materials containing examples of best practice for passing on knowledge about the language level and needs of the children who have received language support from the day care facility to the school, to allow the school to continue the language support in a manner suiting the needs of the child. This can help remove doubts about the exact content of the new rules and provide inspiration on good ways of transferring information. In Denmark and Norway, for example, programmes exist to facilitate the transition of children from kindergarten to the school system (Box 2.2).

### Box 2.2. Strengthening the links between kindergartens and schools

In **Denmark**, The Ministry of Education has published a booklet with articles by experts about different subjects related to the transfer of children between the day care system and school as well as descriptions of good examples of organising the co-operation between schools and day care providers.

**Norway** has introduced a number of projects to facilitate transitions for children from kindergarten to the school system. The programme *Reading Friends* focuses on strengthening the links between primary school and kindergarten children with an immigration background. It aims to develop both children's mother language and Norwegian, strengthen the multicultural perspective in school and kindergarten, develop good co-operation between schools, kindergartens and home, and increase the use of local library among immigrant families. Children aged 10 prepare themselves to tell stories in their mother language. They practice reading books at school and read for their families at home. After practicing, they visit two kindergartens, where they sit with kindergarten children sharing the same mother language and read the stories to them. The parents of the kindergarten children can borrow the same books after the reading sessions.

Source: UVM (2006); Taguma *et al.* (2009a).

## Policy Priority 2: Providing Adequate Language Support to All Students

Proficiency in the language of instruction is essential for students to participate and perform successfully in the education system. In Austrian schools, 16 % of students have a mother tongue other than German. In primary schools the share is 21% (BMUKK, 2009). Less than 20 % of all schools have no students with another mother tongue than German. This means that teaching pupils with an immigrant background is not an isolated task for a small group of specialists, but rather an important aspect of the reality facing most teachers in school every day.

Austria has recognised the importance of helping students develop adequate language skills to perform well in school. The education system has opted for a policy of providing both mother tongue and German as a Second Language (GSL) support. The focus on improving language capacities is laudable, but the system faces a number of challenges including large variations in the quantity and quality of support across regions and schools and a deficit-oriented approach to language development. To optimise the language support offer for immigrant students, this section provides recommendations to (1) promote a positive approach to linguistic diversity, (2) structure and strengthen the language support offer, (3) integrate language and content learning and (4) increase the benefits from mother tongue instruction.

### *Strengths*

#### *A commitment to provide GSL and mother tongue support to all immigrant students*

Austria has in a number of ways shown its commitment to strengthening the language skills of children with an immigrant background and helping them achieve in the education system. For example, Austria has opted for a policy of providing both German as a Second Language (GSL) and mother tongue support in 20 different languages. GSL support has been offered in primary, general secondary, special needs and pre-vocational schools since 1992, when the respective curricula were introduced. In 2001/02, such curricula were also introduced in academic lower secondary schools and in 2006 this was extended to upper secondary schools. The actual offer of language support, however, depends on the financial resources available. There are now also curricula available for mother tongue support in compulsory schools and academic secondary schools.

It is possible to choose immigrant languages such as Turkish and Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian as modern foreign languages in secondary school. In practice, however, these languages are rarely chosen, as the majority of students take only one foreign language: English. It follows from the curriculum related to the principle of intercultural education that multilingualism should be seen as positive and that pupils should be encouraged to bring knowledge of their mother tongue into the classroom in an appropriate fashion.

Pupils who are not able to follow the instruction because of an insufficient command of German are classified as “non-regular”. They are not graded which means they cannot fail and may advance to the next grade and can be admitted to the next level of schooling without meeting the normal requirements if it is judged to be pedagogically responsible.

#### *Recent initiatives and programmes to further language development*

In recent years, a range of additional initiatives has been taken to strengthen the language skills of children with an immigrant background. These include:

- Language screening at age 4/5 to detect language support needs and offer children with such needs individualised training in the last year of kindergarten,
- Funding to provinces and schools for extra language support courses for non-regular students in addition to the GSL instruction already given (*Sprachförderkurse*),
- Local initiatives like “*OK. Living together*” and Vienna’s intensive language support courses for newly arrived children of school age.

#### *The Language Education Policy Profile*

Austria’s decision to take part in the process of developing a Language Education Policy Profile (LEPP) was a further sign of its commitment to providing high quality language development opportunities for all students. The LEPP process featured linguistic diversity, including mother tongues of immigrants, and second language acquisition as important areas. It highlights the need for the education system to adapt to the increase of Austria’s pool of languages in order to fully exploit the economic potential of citizens with an immigrant background.

#### **Challenges**

##### *A deficit approach towards immigrant languages*

Despite the positive trends outlined above, the diversity of the student population in Austria does not seem to be accepted as an established feature of the education system. It is not yet widely accepted that the whole school system needs to adapt to this reality and assume responsibility for all students’ language learning.

Multilingualism is sometimes seen as a problem rather than a resource. Only half of the teachers who took part in a migration specific survey in 2007 saw advantages in multilingualism (Weiss *et al.*, 2007). The discourse regarding immigrant children in the education system sometimes seems dominated by a focus on the deficits of students in German rather than the potential benefits of an increasingly plurilingual student population.

A deficit-oriented approach to the language development needs of immigrant children seems quite widespread and is reflected at many levels. For example, the status of non-regular student can be extended for another 12 months after the initial 12 months, if “it is not the student’s fault that he/she has not learned

the language of instruction properly”. This seems to reflect the attitude that the responsibility for the linguistic development of immigrant children lies with the individual child rather than the school system.

This deficit approach creates a serious risk that teachers lower their expectations for the learning outcomes of this student group. Changing this attitude and creating a culture where teachers have high expectations and aspirations for their immigrant students will require a significant effort to promote professional development of teachers within the areas of intercultural education and second language acquisition as well as teacher professionalism more generally.

During the OECD visit, we several times heard the view expressed that it is necessary for children to be better prepared when entering school in order for teachers to be able to perform their job. But while early language support can improve the linguistic school readiness of immigrant children, the idea of a “quick fix” of the challenges through early language support is not consistent with research on language development. Research indicates that while children can develop communicative competencies in a second language in a relatively short time, acquiring the “academic” language necessary to access the more complicated content of particularly the higher grades of school takes significantly longer (Cummins, 2000). This suggests that while early language development should in no way be ignored, the school system still has an important role to play in supporting the continued development of the academic language of immigrant students.

#### *Inconsistent provision of language support*

Immigrant students do not have a legal right or guarantee for German as a Second Language support. While legislation recommends additional language support for students in need, the actual quantity and type of provision is decided at the school level. As a consequence, two students with very similar needs of language support may well receive different offers depending on which school they attend. The decision to decentralise funding of language support has led to a significant reduction in lessons in German as a Second Language. The decentralised funding strategy can also lead to unintended consequences of national measures, such as the reduction in locally funded support experienced in connection with the introduction of “*Sprachförderkurse*” (Wroblewski and Herzog-Punzenberger, 2009).

A range of different types of language support exists in ECEC, primary and secondary schools with separate curricula. While flexibility of provision is necessary to provide effective support at the local level, the current fragmentation of support may counteract the development of a common approach to language development within the education system, such as common training possibilities and sharing good practice across different school types. In addition, lack of co-operation and exchange of information in the transitions between different school types means that valuable knowledge about the linguistic development and needs of the individual child is lost.

The non-regular status may not be adequate to support the language learning of children who start school with insufficient competencies in the language of instruction. The classification as non-regular allows the student and his/her teachers to focus on progress in language learning rather than on the standard content of the subject. But although the legal text says that additional lessons should be offered, there is no standardised offer as regards the magnitude of support, which is decided at the school level. The government policy for GSL states that “up to twelve hours of remedial instruction can be offered” to students with non-regular status (BMUKK, Informationsblatt 6/2008). But the decision about how many hours are actually offered, and in what format they are provided, is at the discretion of the provincial authorities and school leaders. Furthermore, there are no firm guidelines regarding the organisation of support for non-regular students for example regarding the use of parallel instruction outside the normal class.

Provinces differ greatly in the ways they handle non-regular status for students. For example, in Burgenland or Tyrol, about 5% of the students with another mother tongue have non-regular status compared to 47% in Upper Austria (Wroblewski and Herzog-Punzenberger, 2009). This might be due to some degree to differences in the composition of the immigrant groups, but the very large differences suggest variations in the procedures used to decide on attribution of non-regular status. The variation may reflect different funding strategies providing different incentives for schools to classify pupils as non-regular, different views of the level of language competency in the language of instruction needed to follow the instruction satisfactorily, different approaches to language assessment or different approaches to mainstreaming of language support and development.

Part of the language support activities take place as “parallel” or “pull-out” teaching, where students are being taken out of the class to receive language support. Unless the parallel teaching is very well coordinated between the language support teachers and the teachers of the other subjects, this means they miss out on the regular teaching and thus the academic content, which increases the risk that they fall behind their fellow pupils. Such “pull-out” programmes where students are withdrawn from mainstream classes have been reduced or banned in several countries, except for students who have so little competencies in the language of instruction that they cannot benefit at all from the mainstream teaching. Research has revealed several disadvantages of this approach: it produces almost no additional teaching time, it requires students to miss parts of the normal curriculum, it may have a stigmatising effect, it is often taught by less qualified teachers, and there may be little coordination between the language teacher and the classroom teacher (Karsten, 2006).

The curricula for teaching GSL in the various school forms do not distinguish between students who lack basic competencies in German and students who understand and speak the language relatively well. The curricula and the interviews during the policy visit seem to indicate a lack of awareness of the distinction between everyday and academic language. In addition, there are no specific guidelines for use of different ways of organising instruction, *e.g.* use of parallel or integrative instruction, use of support teachers, organising the students in teams etc. At least one study (Peltzer-Karpf *et al.*, 2006) has identified a need for a greater focus on second language acquisition as a distinct subject and area of expertise, taking the issue well beyond the question of whether immigrants just need extra support in German.

#### *Low status of mother tongue support*

During the OECD visit, several stakeholders commented that the effectiveness of mother tongue support could be further enhanced, especially the coherence of support across different levels of education. In fact, the curricula for mother tongue teaching at different levels of education were developed at different points of time and reflect the principles of curriculum development at the time of publication. For example, the curriculum for upper secondary school (which is the most recent) refers to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages whereas the other curricula do not. This makes it difficult for teachers to offer coherent language support across student transitions.

There is no pre-service training for mother tongue teachers in Austria and the foreign qualifications of mother tongue teachers are not fully recognised. This contributes to unfavourable working conditions and low status among mother tongue teachers and in turn to the low status of mother tongue instruction in schools. A new education for mother tongue teachers with equal status to other teachers and better possibilities for recognition of foreign qualifications were seen as crucial to improving the status and quality of mother tongue instruction.

Parents sometimes do not value their mother tongue and are unsure about how to best support the language learning of their children. Our impression from meetings with representatives from parent and

migrant organisations was that many parents feel that they get conflicting signals about the use and value of the mother tongue in this respect.

### ***Policy options***

#### *Promote a positive approach to linguistic and cultural diversity*

Given the increasing proportion of immigrant students in the Austrian school system, it is necessary to enable the system to adapt to this new reality. This means acknowledging that a linguistically diverse student population is a permanent feature of Austrian schools. As a consequence, the education system should assume the responsibility for developing the language competencies of their students as well as the more traditional academic competencies. This requires setting a new agenda and developing a new mentality throughout the education system, particularly among school leaders and teachers.

For such a change to take place, it is necessary for the national authorities to provide a clear direction for the efforts of all levels of administration and all actors in this area. This could take the form of an explicit national language policy for the education system. Building on the LEPP report, it should have a strong focus on language development of children with another mother tongue than German and have a broad and positive approach to language learning. It should state that schools have a responsibility to develop the language competencies of students and that all languages are valuable. The school should have a positive approach to immigrant students, focusing on their resources and potential. Language development should be seen as an important aspect of the school's mission rather than the need to mend a deficiency in the children in order to be able to proceed as normal. Effective communication of the policy is vital.

Research indicates that knowledge and competencies acquired in one language can be relatively easily transferred to another language (Cummins 1979, 1980). Parents should therefore be encouraged to speak as much as possible with their children in the language they are most comfortable in. This will give the children the opportunity to be exposed to richer vocabulary and a more varied language which will improve their concept formation and their general linguistic competencies, thus forming a good basis for second language acquisition. A possible way of encouraging this development would be for the BMUKK to publish a folder with advice for parents on their possibilities of supporting the language development of their children. Different ways of communication with parents should be explored (see policy priority 4).

All levels of the system must further work to recognise proficiency in languages other than German and English as an asset, contributing to increasing the language pool in Austria. The BMUKK should promote and strengthen existing policy regarding the possibility to choose immigrant languages as modern foreign languages.

#### *Structure and strengthen language support offers*

In order to further the language development of each student as effectively as possible, efforts should be made to standardise the provision of German as a Second Language support. The BMUKK should work towards changing the legislation in order to *adopt a needs-based approach to language acquisition* in the education system.

This would imply that all students with a need thereof should have a legal right to receive German as a Second Language support to an extent that matches their needs. The needs of the students should be assessed by qualified personnel using materials specifically made for assessing the language development needs of children with another mother tongue than German, and there should be clear criteria for the support offered to students with different levels of need (Box 2.3). To ensure a consistent implementation

across different regions, it could be considered to make more use of earmarked funding, and possibly to return to centralised funding for language support.

The BMUKK should *also reconsider the arrangements related to “non-regular” status*. The students who today have non-regular status are students whose language competencies are not sufficient to allow them to follow the instruction. Such students have a need of developing basic aspects of their command of the language of instruction. This often requires a more structured offer than being exempted from grading in order to focus on language learning. Learning the very basic aspects of a language usually requires separate courses where this can be dealt with in a structured and coherent way.

The language support courses now offered to non-regular students are a step in the right direction, but there is a need of a more mainstreamed offer for this group of students. They should be given a minimum number of hours per week of instruction in GSL significantly higher than that of other bilingual pupils. The decision to classify a student as non-regular should be taken on the basis of a language assessment carried out by a qualified person and clear criteria should be established for these decisions. The Council of Europe’s Common Framework of Reference for Languages can provide a good basis for consistent language assessment and support, as in Ireland (Box 2.3).

#### **Box 2.3. Consistent assessment criteria for determining the provision of language support**

In **Denmark**, municipalities have an obligation to assess whether or not bilingual children have a need of language support when they enter school. The assessment must be made by a person with the necessary qualifications and should include standardised assessment materials or tests. The Ministry of Education has financed the development of assessment material specifically tailored to the language development needs of bilingual children, which is placed at the disposal of schools and municipalities. The municipalities have an obligation to give the bilingual students a language support offer of an intensity and duration matching the needs identified in the assessment of the individual child. Students with a level of competence that does not allow them to benefit from the mainstream instruction must be referred to separate classes or teams focussing on basic second language acquisition and are then gradually channelled into mainstream classes over a maximum period of two years.

In **Ireland**, the education authorities have prepared Primary and Post-Primary Assessment Kits which use the Council of Europe’s Common Framework of Reference for Languages. In primary school, the kit recommends that students are continuously assessed at levels A1, A2 and B1 and the kit notes that “when pupils are capable of performing in the assessment tasks at this level [B1], and of achieving the scores indicated, then their full integration into mainstream learning is possible” and this assessment has to be in all four separate language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Source: Nusche *et al.* (2009); Taguma *et al.* (2009b).

The BMUKK should *consider revising the GSL curriculum* to ensure it contains clear learning goals within the different areas of competence related to the age of the pupils and the number of years they have been enrolled in the Austrian school system. Moreover, the Ministry could consider implementing a separate curriculum or independent section of the curriculum for students who today have non-regular status, with ambitious learning goals for these students to reach the level of proficiency in German needed to benefit from the teaching in all subjects. In Denmark, the curriculum for Danish as a Second Language contains both final learning goals for the primary and lower secondary school, but also intermediary learning goals after the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades within different areas of competence.

Some teaching materials for use in GSL are already available, but there were varying opinions among the experts we spoke to as to whether or not more are needed. The Ministry should *make sure an adequate supply of high-quality teaching materials is available* to support not only basic second language learning, but also development of academic language. In this context it should also be considered developing

teaching materials for other subjects that take the needs of bilingual pupils into account, including development of the necessary “grey zone vocabulary” *i.e.* words that are non-subject specific, but more advanced than every-day language and necessary to follow the instruction in the subject.

### *Integrate language and content learning*

In order to improve the language development and overall learning outcomes of students with another mother tongue than German, it is important to strengthen the integration of language support with content teaching in the other subjects and to ensure the co-operation between language support teachers and teachers in the other subjects. All subjects in school have a linguistic component or dimension. Accessing complex academic content in a given subject not only requires a well-developed command of the language of instruction, including a rich and nuanced general vocabulary. It also requires knowledge of subject-specific vocabulary and often also places extra demands on knowledge of certain areas of grammar, vocabulary and literacy.

This requires adopting a dynamic approach where GSL is taught not only in specialised classes, but also in all subject classes. When language support teachers are available, their competencies should be fully utilised, for example by involving them in the planning of the instruction. In lessons where no separate language support resources are available, the subject teachers should also have a focus on language. This should be an element in their daily practice, both developing the vocabulary of the students, but also the other linguistic and literacy components of particular relevance to their subject. This should be reflected in the curriculum for German as a Second Language and preferably for all subjects of the school.

The subject teacher must also be able to discern whether a student, who possesses good general communicative competencies in the language of instruction, including a good pronunciation, lacks the competency level required to fully benefit from the instruction. In order to be able to do this and realise integration of language and content, all subject teachers need basic knowledge about language learning, in particular second language acquisition, and they need to understand their key role in strengthening the linguistic capacities of students. Therefore, a compulsory module on second language acquisition should be part of initial teacher education, and in-service training should be offered to all teachers (more on this below). The linguistics module should have a strong focus on second language acquisition as a distinct area of expertise separate from both mother tongue teaching and foreign language teaching.

While all teachers need basic competencies in language support and intercultural pedagogy, schools also need GSL specialists to provide additional support to students, both inside and outside the mainstream classroom, and in close collaboration with subject teachers. Schools and regions should aim to use their resources in a way that promotes building up specialised competencies that can support mainstream teachers and counsel and advice them in their daily practice (Box 2.4).

#### Box 2.4. Collaboration between subject teachers and language specialists

In **England**, the focus is on placing English language learners in age-appropriate classes as soon as possible, rather than keeping students in separate language classes. All teachers are expected to provide development opportunities in English as an Additional Language (EAL) through special curriculum activities in mainstream classes. In addition, EAL specialist teachers provide advice and guidance to subject teachers on how to include English language learning opportunities in content lessons. The specialists also collaborate with mainstream teachers to provide collaborative support in classes with EAL learners.

In **Denmark**, many schools have gathered the teacher lessons and other resources allocated to language support in a centre in each school, usually called the language centre, with a small number of teachers who use a significant portion of their working time teaching second language and mentoring their colleagues. Evaluations have shown that these centres, when well implemented, have a positive effect on the learning environment for immigrant students.

Source: Leung (2004); UC2 and KLEO (2004); EVA (2007).

#### *Increase the benefits from mother tongue instruction*

The BMUKK should explore the possibilities of improving the level of qualification among mother tongue teachers, for example by making it easier for persons with a foreign teacher education to obtain recognition of their qualifications and upgrade their qualifications if necessary (Box 2.5). There should also be opportunities for existing mother tongue teachers without formal qualifications to complete teacher training in combination with their job, including a flexible system of recognition of prior learning. When mother tongue teachers and other teachers cooperate in the classroom, it is important to organise the co-operation in a way that avoids the risk of the mother tongue teacher being reduced to a teaching assistant, which would signal low status for the mother tongue teachers and in consequence, the subject.

#### Box 2.5. Recognition of foreign teacher qualifications in Norway

In **Norway**, persons with bilingual/multicultural backgrounds who have basic teacher training from their native countries and who wish to become formally recognised teachers in Norway are eligible for stipends/grants so that they can acquire the supplementary education they need to qualify as teachers. In 2004, seven university colleges in Norway developed a common framework for a net-based three-year teacher-training programme for mother-tongue teachers, bilingual teachers and bilingual assistants who wished to complete their competence. The aim was to provide a Bachelor's degree in bilingual education to participants who successfully completed the three-year programme. This programme, which started in 2005, has been very successful. Today, nine university colleges are offering the programme. In 2007, eight teacher training colleges and universities have been given financial support from the government for a project running from 2007 to 2010 that is developing and testing a Bachelor's degree for multilingual pre-school teachers.

Source: Taguma *et al.* (2009a)

The Ministry should also consider revising the curriculum for mother tongue tuition to ensure it contains clear and ambitious learning goals. The aims of the subject should be made clearer and the learning goals should be targeted towards furthering these aims. Better coordination between mother tongue teachers and teachers in other subjects, including provision of mother tongue teaching as integrated instruction in other subjects and involvement of mother tongue teachers in planning the instruction, could

provide better opportunities for using mother tongue instruction to support the learning of the children in all subjects.

A way to stimulate this development could be for the BMUKK to fund research or development projects aiming at identifying effective methods of achieving this and disseminating the results among practitioners for inspiration. In Denmark, The Ministry of Education has had good experiences with this approach in the related area of drawing on mother tongue competencies in the mainstream teaching. An action research project in Denmark, called “This Works at our School”, funded by the Ministry of Education has explored different methods of drawing on the mother tongue knowledge of the students without the teachers having knowledge of any of those languages. The results have formed the basis of a teaching material which is being used in teacher training institutions and is available for download ([www.dettevirker.dk](http://www.dettevirker.dk)).

### **Policy Priority 3: Improving Teaching and Learning Environments**

The change in Austria’s student population means that schools need to adapt to an increasingly diverse student group in terms of linguistic and cultural background. This places additional demands on teachers to provide teaching that is inclusive and takes into account the language development needs of their students. Teachers and school leaders do not necessarily have the knowledge and skills necessary to establish whole-school policies to support equity among student groups, differentiate instruction and provide adequate language support.

Policy action is necessary to support teachers and school leaders in adopting research-based teaching methods and investing extra effort in overcoming skills and language obstacles. Different ways to support whole-school change and develop the expertise of practitioners related to migrant education are explored in this section. Policy approaches to adapt learning environments to more diverse student needs include (1) training teachers for diversity, (2) increasing the socio-demographic diversity among teachers and school leaders, (3) strengthening school leadership, and (4) encouraging research on and dissemination of effective practice.

#### ***Strengths***

##### *Initiatives to strengthen teachers’ capacities in dealing with heterogeneity*

The BMUKK has introduced several initiatives to strengthen the capacities of teachers in supporting immigrant students. Migrant education has become one of the nine suggested priority areas for the pre-service and in-service training provided by teacher training colleges. The Ministry has also developed a core curriculum for teacher training in linguistic diversity and intercultural education.

Modules in intercultural pedagogy and teaching multilingual classrooms are usually provided as a part of pre-service training at university colleges of teacher training, either as elective or compulsory subjects. In-service training in second language acquisition and intercultural pedagogy is also available to teachers. Intercultural education has been selected as one of 13 educational principles for all general education schools to be taken into account in the instruction.

##### *A new focus on personalised education*

In 2007/08, the BMUKK introduced the “25 plus” initiative which aims to reduce the maximum number of students per class to 25 while at the same time strengthening the capacity of teachers to personalise teaching and learning.

Some schools are also taking the lead in experimenting with innovative pedagogical approaches to respond to the learning needs of diverse student bodies. The Europaschule Linz, for example, with a proportion of 40% immigrant students, has focused on providing positive learning environments for all students, by reducing age grouping, using small group settings, providing team teaching, individualising instruction and experimenting with innovative approaches such as “kids help kids” mentoring.

### **Challenges**

#### *Lack of teacher training related to dealing with heterogeneous classrooms*

Teacher quality is probably the most important school-level factor influencing student outcomes. For immigrant students to succeed in schools, it is essential that teachers have the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of heterogeneous classrooms. Training in intercultural education could help teachers to become more aware of diverse student needs, to focus on potentials and opportunities rather than deficits, and to develop didactic skills to support second language learners.

There is, however, no compulsory module on cultural and linguistic diversity in initial teacher training at universities and universities of education (*Pädagogische Hochschule, PH*). During the OECD visit, there was general agreement among the researchers we spoke to that the current pre-service teacher training does not sufficiently prepare future teachers to address the language development needs of plurilingual children and teach culturally diverse classes. The problem is also raised in the Language Education Policy Profile for Austria (Council of Europe, 2008). Weiss *et al.* (2007) show that teachers in Austria lack guidance and training in how to implement the educational principle of intercultural education.

The Universities of Education in Salzburg and Styria have “pedagogy of diversity” as a compulsory subject and some optional courses exist at PHs, but courses are not provided systematically and teachers do not seem to prioritise these courses. The Ministry has developed a core curriculum for intercultural education, but the decision to offer a particular course and to make it compulsory or optional lies with the PHs, many of which have not included it as a mandatory element in initial teacher training, and at the time of our visit there were no concrete plans to do so.

Linguistic and cultural diversity has recently been defined as one of the Ministry’s priority areas in in-service training. Such in-service training is available and offered by different providers, but it does not appear to be taken up by a great number of teachers. Figures on how many teachers have participated in in-service training in second language acquisition or intercultural education and how they are distributed in regions and schools do not seem to be available, making it difficult to get an overview of the need. In-service training is most often taken in the form of courses and seminars carried out at locations outside the school rather than as school based professional development with a whole-school purpose (Delannoy *et al.*, 2004).

School leaders and education authorities need to exercise leadership on this issue, making it mandatory for teachers to participate where appropriate. School leaders do not have the authority to make it mandatory for teachers at their school to participate in in-service training in particular areas. This makes it difficult for school leaders to create a school culture that puts emphasis on the learning needs of immigrant students. On the other hand, the regional boards of education of the provinces control a large part of the budget for in-service training and they can set priorities which the universities of education must take into account. For example, the city of Vienna has made training mandatory for teachers who teach GSL in language support courses. This illustrates the need for leadership at regional and school level to prioritise second language acquisition and intercultural pedagogy.

*Lack of diversity in the teaching force*

There is also a growing disparity in Austria between an increasingly diverse student population and a largely homogenous (native Austrian) teaching force, which can make school life more challenging for students with a migration background. This looks set to continue in the near future: according to the statistical overview of students with another mother tongue than German, this group made up 2.7 % of students in teacher training institutions compared to 16.2 % of the student population in all schools taken together (BMUKK, 2009).

*Lack of leadership at the school level for a positive approach to diversity*

The success of strategies and policies for immigrant students also hinges on school leadership and organisation favouring a positive approach to diversity. It is the role of school leaders to ensure that central policies for migrant education are embedded in a meaningful way in school improvement strategies. But effective leadership at the level of schools depends on the level of autonomy, training and support that school leaders receive (Pont *et al.*, 2008). In Austria, school leaders cannot choose their teaching staff, decide on teacher professional development or distribute leadership tasks among their teachers, which makes it difficult for them to engage their staff in school improvement strategies. School leaders have many administrative and managerial tasks to fulfil which limits their time to develop and implement strategies for equity and migrant education.

Most school leaders have no formal training on diversity, integration and language development. School leaders in Austria are former teachers and the induction training that they receive focuses on administrative management issues rather than pedagogical leadership. According to the Country Background Report for Austria (Wroblewski and Herzog-Punzenberger, 2009), currently school leadership training does not focus on diversity issues. While a “Leadership Academy” has existed since 2004 to provide in-service training in instructional leadership, this training does not provide any structured professional development on diversity issues. Participants in the Leadership Academy may freely choose the focus of their projects, but they rarely focus on migrant education. Out of the 1 500 school leaders who have participated in the Leadership Academy, only 9 chose to focus on a diversity topic.

Thus school leaders often lack the awareness, knowledge and skills necessary to guide their teachers in providing quality support to students with a range of different learning needs. Often, diversity is not taken into account when schools develop their programmes and profiles. There is great variation in the degree to which schools see themselves as responsible for addressing the needs of immigrant students. While there are many promising initiatives in areas like Vienna, Graz and Linz, there are still many schools which do not provide any induction, welcome materials or specific support for newly arriving immigrant students (Wroblewski and Herzog-Punzenberger, 2009).

*Lack of expertise on effective practice in migrant education*

School leaders and teachers reported that they lack evidence about effective practices to improve the education outcomes of immigrants. This means that even as schools become better equipped in formative assessment and identifying weak performers, they do not necessarily have the knowledge and tools at hand to respond to signs of underachievement and effectively support the language and cognitive development of immigrant students.

Academic research on effective practice in migrant education is limited in Austria. There is no distinct research programme, institute or university department that would ensure a systematic, continuous and consistent approach to research in areas such as intercultural pedagogy and second language development (Wroblewski and Herzog-Punzenberger, 2009). The Bifie is currently undertaking about 50 thematic

projects, but none of them focuses on migrant education. The research capacity of the pedagogical universities in this area is also limited. In some regions there are no research competencies in this area at all. The Country Background Report (Wroblewski and Herzog-Punzenberger, 2009) points out that not very much qualitative research related to migrant education has been carried out in Austria. During the OECD visit, representatives of the teacher unions also mentioned the need for more research into effective, practicable methods and approaches to meet the learning needs of immigrant students.

At the level of individual schools, there are of course initiatives and pilot projects to improve the educational outcomes of immigrants but there is little evidence that these are being adopted elsewhere or that adequate mechanisms exist for the evaluation and dissemination of good practice. There are no centralised feedback channels for schools to document and share their results. Systematic learning through the exchange of experience between provinces, municipalities or schools still is not widespread.

Even programmes and initiatives introduced on a larger scale by the provinces or the federal Ministry are rarely evaluated regarding their effectiveness in raising the education outcomes of immigrant students. It appeared that any programme for immigrant students was referred to as “good practice” even though there was no evidence on whether the programme had been effective or not.

Where national or international research results are available, they do not always reach educators, parents and others concerned with the education of immigrants. There is thus a need not only to support research in this area, but also to develop a communication strategy to disseminate good practice.

### ***Policy Options***

#### *Train teachers for diversity*

Teaching students from a wide range of different social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds takes a complex set of skills that many teachers may not have through formal training. International research highlights formative assessment, differentiated instruction and a focus on second language development throughout all subjects as particularly relevant in socially, culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. Such instruction is more tailored to individual needs and more challenging for teachers. It needs to be developed by strong initial and in-service teacher training (Field *et al.*, 2007).

To equip all teachers to meet the challenges connected with an increasingly diverse student population, initial teacher training should include a mandatory module or subject on teaching linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms. This course should be part of the core pedagogical training of all teachers. In Norway, for example, the national strategy plan *Equal Education in Practice* has introduced multicultural and inclusive education and cultural diversity as mandatory parts of all four-year teaching programmes (Taguma *et al.*, 2009a).

Elements of intercultural education and second language acquisition should also be mainstreamed in all teacher training subjects. This will help teachers become more aware of individual language development needs and reduce the risk that they categorise immigrant students as having special education needs or overlook such needs because of language difficulties. Mainstreaming diversity topics across all professional preparation and development programmes for teachers and school leaders will also help create a common positive approach to teaching immigrant students in all sectors of education.

Teacher trainers need to be adequately prepared to provide this training. As schools need both generalist teachers with a basic knowledge and specialists in diversity, teacher training institutions should offer elective subjects of a duration and content that would allow future teachers to specialise in this area during initial training. The Danish Ministry of Education is currently pursuing this approach and has had positive results (Box 2.6).

### Box 2.6. Training both specialist and mainstream teachers for diversity in Denmark

The Danish Ministry of Education has taken an approach that aims to balance between (1) mainstreaming knowledge about teaching bilingual students among all subject teachers and (2) training specialists to provide additional targeted support in intercultural education and second language acquisition. This balance is consistently sought in both initial and in-service teacher training.

For initial teacher training, the Ministry of Education introduced measures to ensure that all new teachers who complete their basic education have at least some knowledge of intercultural pedagogy and second language acquisition. Aspects of intercultural education, in particular being aware of students' language needs and adapting teaching accordingly, are now a part of several mandatory subjects of pre-service training. To ensure that there are also specialists in these areas, student teachers can choose Danish as a Second Language (DSL) as one of their main subjects of specialisation in teacher training.

In-service training is generally optional for teachers, but schools or municipalities can make it mandatory for their teachers to complete certain professional development activities. There is a diversity of training course offers of different durations. Shorter courses (generally around 36-50 hours) are typically offered to mainstream (subject) teachers and provide them with tools to facilitate language development through their subject content teaching. Longer courses (240 hours) lead to a pedagogical diploma degree and include training related to formative assessment, intercultural pedagogy and second language acquisition. A Danish evaluation report concludes that pre-or in-service training in these areas does make a difference in the everyday teaching practice at schools.

*Source: Nusche et al. (2009)*

While changes in pre-service training are essential to prepare the next generation of teachers, Austria also needs to take quick action to increase capacity among the existing teacher force to effectively address the needs of a more diverse student group. In order for more teachers to take up in-service training relevant to teaching diverse classrooms, several factors should be taken into consideration. First of all, a sufficient variety of courses should be available in all PHs, making it possible for teachers in all geographic locations to choose either shorter courses for mainstream teachers in all subjects or longer courses for those who want to become specialists. These courses should lead to diplomas or other official recognition that can have significance for career advancements. To make courses attractive to teachers, they should have a strong focus on didactical principles relevant to the challenges facing teachers at their schools and provide them with concrete, practicable methods and tools to make their every day work life easier.

Raising the level of qualification among teachers to address the need of migrants also requires commitment on the part of the provinces. In Denmark, the city of Copenhagen has developed a clear strategy defining the different types of competencies needed for migrant education (language specialists and well-prepared mainstream teachers) and deciding the level of training appropriate for different schools depending on their proportion of immigrant students. The city has developed a concrete plan for reaching the goals, including use of centrally controlled targeted funding. As a result, around half of the city's 2 500 teachers have completed courses in second language acquisition, either in the form of separate courses outside school or as school-based training (City of Copenhagen, 2009).

Both the BMUKK and the provinces should stimulate demand for taking up training, possibly through schemes providing incentives to schools and regions and through ministerial recommendations or guidelines. A way to encourage specific training activities could be for the BMUKK to offer co-funding, covering a share of the costs for provinces who choose to prioritise training in a certain area.

*Increase the diversity among teachers and school leaders*

Teachers and school leaders who are familiar with the experiences, culture and language of immigrant students can serve as role models and enhance the motivation and self-confidence of immigrant students. Teachers and school leaders with a migration background provide specific language competencies in the first languages of immigrant children, and combine valuable knowledge about a different culture with knowledge about Austrian culture and the school system. This allows them to build bridges between immigrant families and the school system.

The BMUKK and the PHs should work together to take steps to increase the number of immigrant-origin teachers and school leaders. Ways of doing so could be to set recruitment targets for teacher training institutions, raising awareness through recruitment campaigns, reducing obstacles for potential teachers with an immigrant background to enter the profession, and creating attractive opportunities for immigrants in the school system (Box 2.7). Among short-term initiatives could be a recruitment campaign targeting both immigrant students and their parents.

**Box 2.7. Policies to increase the share of immigrant-origin teachers**

In **England and Wales**, the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) has introduced measures to attract more visible ethnic minority entrants to the teaching profession. These measures have included targeted advertising, mentoring schemes, taster courses, training bursaries, and the setting of recruitment targets for initial teacher training institutions.

In **Denmark**, a teacher training college (KDAS) which already had a significantly above-average share of immigrant students, participated in a campaign to recruit more students with this background. Apart from advertising in relevant media, the campaign also used role models, teacher students with an immigrant background who went to schools and told students about their experiences. As a result of the campaign, the share of immigrant students went up from 21 % in 2006 to 30 % in 2007. The activities have continued with support from the Danish Government and in 2008, 50 % of the newly enrolled students had an immigrant background. The KDAS also carried out interviews on a small scale among teacher students and teachers with an immigrant background to learn about the barriers they encountered to enrol in and complete teacher training; and what helped them overcome those barriers. The results from the interviews have helped the teacher training college improve the effectiveness of their recruitment and retention efforts, including the value of an inclusive social environment in the institution.

*Source:* Carrington and Shelton (2003); Wulff and Sigurdsson (2009).

Moreover, the BMUKK should review the regulations and identify and reduce the barriers for immigrants with foreign qualifications entering the teaching profession, allowing flexible entry and upgrading (*e.g.* start as pedagogical assistant, take accelerated on the job training, helping them obtain a recognised Austrian qualification through a flexible, modulised upgrading).

To make the teaching profession more attractive to individuals with an immigrant background, the Ministry could consider changes to the organisational structures of schools and the wage system to provide immigrant-origin teachers with possibilities and incentives to assume specialist functions, for example in language support, communication with immigrant parents and mentoring for immigrant students. In Copenhagen, Denmark, the school authorities have created a wage structure, which recognises the linguistic and cultural competencies of immigrant origin teachers as a qualification which can qualify them for a higher salary in the same way as a formal qualification.

The BMUKK should also review the possibilities of providing attractive opportunities for existing mother tongue teachers to complete an ordinary teacher education through easier recognition of foreign qualifications or through flexible procedures for recognition of prior learning. Mother tongue teachers need a better position in terms of salary and working conditions, signalling equal status with other teachers. In-service training could allow mother tongue teachers to strengthen their pedagogical qualifications, but also

allow teachers with an immigrant background to acquire qualifications as mother tongue teachers. The long term goal should be for all mother tongue teachers to work on the same level as other teachers with similar qualifications, salary and working conditions.

### *Strengthen school leadership*

School leadership is one of the most important factors in school effectiveness and school improvement (Pont *et al.*, 2008). While effective leadership is important for all schools, research indicates that the effects of successful leadership on student learning are greatest in schools in more challenging circumstances (Leithwood *et al.*, 2004; Mulford *et al.*, 2008).

School leadership in Austria should be recognised as a profession distinct from teaching requiring a specific set of knowledge and competencies that must be acquired through formal training. Currently, school leaders are required to complete a compulsory school management training, half of which is pre-service training and the remainder is in-service training during the first few years of the job. This school management training focuses on the legal and managerial aspects of the profession. The Ministry should consider broadening this management training for school leaders to include subjects related to improving school outcomes, equity and diversity in the student population.

One part of the school leadership training should focus specifically on diversity issues. In order to establish a consistent school policy on issues such as intercultural pedagogy and second language support, school leaders themselves need knowledge in these areas and need to be able to monitor their teachers' practice. They must be aware of the need for whole-school approaches to address diversity issues and prioritise the area in the every-day planning and practice of the school. Training modules on diversity should be a mandatory, well-structured part of school leadership training provided by qualified trainers with expertise in these areas. In California, for example, the Principal Leadership Institute at the University of Berkeley, which trains school leaders for urban and diverse schools, has included elements of intercultural education and second language acquisition in the initial training for school leaders.

The Leadership Academy could play a role in providing professional development in this area, but it is important to include an element of structured learning anchored in evidence-based theory in order to provide leaders with tools to analyse their current situation and identify challenges and opportunities. The Leadership Academy is currently based on learning partnerships (pairs of participants) and collegial team coaching groups. In the current situation where not many school leaders have taken up in-service training on diversity issues, a common reflection on own experiences is not likely to sufficiently equip them to develop a whole-school approach for migrant education.

In-service training for school leaders could be embedded in whole-school professional development programmes. Such training offers the possibilities of tailoring the content of the training to the need of the individual school. Whole-school development projects can also make it easier to achieve the critical mass needed for the culture and practice of the school to change, as all or a significant number of teachers and the school leaders participate at the same time. The English school system has made positive experiences with whole-school professional development to improve the learning environment for bilingual students (Box 2.8).

### Box 2.8. Whole-school professional development in the United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom, the whole-school professional development programme “Raising the Achievement of Bilingual Learners”, introduced by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), aims to raise the confidence and expertise of primary teachers in supporting their bilingual students. The programme involved the following elements: support with building school leadership teams and creating an inclusive school culture, appointment of an English as an Additional Language (EAL) consultant within the schools, diagnostic visit by a specialist, development of a migrant achievement plan, professional development for teachers, and additional support in the classroom.

Qualitative case study evidence shows that the confidence of teachers and teaching assistants had been enhanced, and that the effect of the pilot activity had encouraged bilingual students to have higher expectations of themselves, to be more confident, to ask more questions and be more focused. The statistical evaluation using multilevel modelling finds that over the duration of the pilot (2004–06), Key Stage 2 results in English had improved more for programme schools than for similar non-programme schools. In 2006, the pilot became a national strategy programme and schools were provided with professional development materials to share best practice between schools.

Source: White *et al.* (2006); Benton and White (2007).

In challenging schools, it appears to be particularly important that leadership is shared within the school, with teachers taking care of certain areas of leadership (Leithwood, 2000; Silins and Mulford, 2002; Harris and Chapman, 2002; 2004). The BMUKK should encourage the distribution of leadership in schools. For example, specialist teams of teachers could be responsible for different areas of school improvement such as GSL support, or evaluation and assessment. Policy makers can encourage the distribution of leadership by offering training possibilities for leadership teams and middle managers and by recognising and rewarding teachers’ contributions to leadership (Pont *et al.*, 2008). In addition, school leaders and their teams need clear guidelines and support from the system level on how to best address diversity issues and language learning (Box 2.9).

### Box 2.9. Guidelines on intercultural education for school leaders

In **Ireland**, *Guidelines on Intercultural Education* have been prepared, taking a whole-school, cross curricular approach and providing advice to the whole school team. They are intended to support whole school planning, policy development within schools and classroom organisation to establish a climate that is welcoming, respectful and sensitive to the needs of all children. The guidelines cover issues such as school planning, classroom planning, assessment and cultural diversity and language and interculturalism. Each chapter provides references to the curriculum, checklists for considering how areas of practice can be improved, and exemplars for classroom activities to support the development of intercultural awareness and competence.

In **England**, the National College for School Leadership has developed a *Guide to Achieving Equality and Diversity in School Leadership*. The guide highlights the need for a clear diversity policy at the school level and outlines key equality and diversity actions for school leaders to follow, along with case studies and examples.

Source: Taguma *et al.* (2009b); NCSL (2008).

### *Encourage and support research and dissemination of effective practice*

There is a need for better knowledge within the system about effective and innovative pedagogical practice. Austria is already participating in the OECD project on *Innovative Learning Environments*. In addition, the Ministry should consider funding national research on effective pedagogical strategies, specifically for teaching immigrant students. Such research could be carried out as action research, to ensure that results are practicable and relevant to the everyday practice of teachers and to develop the competencies of participating teachers. Research should focus on developing practical tools and knowledge that are immediately useful for teachers and respond to concrete classroom challenges. Research topics

could include: didactics of second language acquisition, integration of mother tongue teaching in the mainstream classroom, ways for teachers to draw on the full range of the pupils' linguistic capacity without having knowledge of their students' mother tongue themselves, adapting subject-specific didactics to diverse classrooms, co-operation between GSL-specialists and other teachers, differentiating instruction for a range of different learner needs, etc.

Another way of stimulating the development of effective methods is to fund development activities at schools within well-defined areas that can be thoroughly evaluated to assess their effect. In Denmark, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Integration have jointly established a "Task Force for Bilingual Pupils" which aims to assist municipalities and schools in improving the quality of the education offer given to immigrant children. The Task Force evaluates pedagogical strategies to educating bilingual pupils, identifies promising practice, and facilitates networking between teachers. It enters into partnerships with municipalities and schools and funds specific development projects based on existing knowledge to create more robust knowledge of different methods or approaches through testing them out in different settings.

Once effective practices have been developed, it is important that there are ways for professionals to exchange and share experiences across schools and provincial boundaries. One obvious channel to spread good practice is to support peer learning networks between teachers and school leaders of different schools (Box 2.10). Another way of facilitating information sharing between practitioners is through conferences with participation of practitioners and policy makers, where schools are given stand in a "fairground area" to present projects and approaches that have shown positive results. Interested visitors can browse the different offers and enter into direct dialogue and networking with the people behind approaches that are relevant to their own situation and challenges.

#### Box 2.10. Sharing of ideas and good practice between schools

In **Sweden**, through the project "Idea Schools for Multiculturalism", the Ministry has provided incentives to schools to work together with the National Agency for School Improvement as "idea schools". The Agency selected schools that had a high proportion of pupils with a different ethnic, social, linguistic and cultural background and that had experience in goal-orientated work towards creating equal opportunities for all pupils. The selected schools were role models for other schools, participated in school networks, received visits from other schools, answered questions and presented their work on the project's web site. The initiative is designed to build professional networks, disseminate knowledge and inspire other schools that are less developed in their quality work. In the evaluation report it is noted that the project has benefited the idea schools themselves the most, through the act of describing the work to others, and the contact with other idea schools. The in-service training offered to participating schools has also been of benefit to the methods used at the schools.

In **Denmark**, the project "This Works at Our School" was funded by the Ministry of Education to identify, document and evaluate examples of what teachers consider to be effective practice in improving the education outcomes of immigrant students. The project examined schools with well performing immigrant students and identified elements of good practice. Results were disseminated via a website ([www.dettevirker.dk](http://www.dettevirker.dk)) with contact details of the responsible schools and teachers allowing other schools and professionals to get further information of approaches relevant to their situation. The project was very well received among teachers. Stakeholders in Denmark report that the project has helped increase exchange of experience and expertise to complement academic research in this area.

Source: Taguma *et al.* (2009a); Nusche *et al.* (2009).

In addition, a centralised structure is needed to synthesise and disseminate research results, and strengthen the link between research and practice. The Ministry should consider establishing a "clearinghouse" responsible for collecting and disseminating evidence on successful practice from both national and international research. This institution should also have a function of communication with stakeholders in order to ensure that know-how on effective practice is shared and spread systematically.

#### **Policy Priority 4: Engaging parents, communities and schools to support immigrant students**

Research shows that parental and community involvement in education is associated with improved student outcomes (Jeynes, 2005; 2007; Schofield, 2006). In Austria, parental involvement is particularly important because school only lasts for half a day and a significant responsibility for support with school and homework is placed with parents. This poses challenges for equity, as some children may not receive this home support, because of poor environments for home study or because of other pressures on parents, who may also lack the ability to engage with the subject matter or not understand their role in their children's learning.

This section analyses challenges related to the role of parents and communities in the Austrian education system and proposes a two-fold strategy to address these challenges. In order to provide better opportunities for students whose parents do not have the educational, financial and/or linguistic background to support their children's school- and homework, the education system should (1) make greater efforts to engage immigrant parents as partners in education and (2) provide these students with additional opportunities for learning and personal development outside the regular half-day school offer.

#### ***Strengths***

##### *Political support for initiatives to engage immigrant parents*

There is political recognition of the importance of engaging immigrant parents in their child's schooling and a growing number of initiatives are being tested by federal states and schools. The Ministry has created a DVD to inform parents on different issues about their child's schooling and importantly how to get involved with other parents and existing initiatives. The Ministry also publishes information folders on school in different languages and sends these to school boards.

There are examples of good practice at the provincial level. The Institute for Intercultural Pedagogy in Upper Austria, for example, has developed innovative projects across the province. It provides mentoring and after-school support, as well as parental involvement projects, co-operation projects between kindergartens and schools and neighbourhood work. Upper Austria has also recently produced an information leaflet "What is a parents' association?" and has translated this into several different languages. This will be distributed to parents with an invitation to actively participate in school.

Some federal states provide programmes to directly involve parents with their child's kindergartens and schools. For example, language courses are provided for mothers at their child's school (*Mama lernt Deutsch*). Other programmes encourage the involvement of parents in their child's education, e.g. "Rucksack parents" in Upper Austria and Salzburg where parents come to school with their child to learn about school activities and follow up on these at home. There are competency building programmes targeted to immigrant mothers in three primary schools in Vienna with almost 100% immigrant student population.

The Chamber of Labour organises information meetings and packages on educational and career choices at age 14 to 15 for students' parents. In the 15<sup>th</sup> district of Vienna there is an advisory centre resourced by a pool of teachers, social workers and volunteers from immigrant communities offering valuable advice and counselling to parents in many different languages.

##### *Some provision of educational support to immigrant students*

There is a growing recognition that the school system itself must provide additional learning opportunities for those students whose parents do not have the financial, educational or linguistic background to support their students' progress at school through homework supervision or private tutoring.

Over recent years several whole-day schools have been established in Austria. These offer students extended opportunities to learn and to improve core competencies such as German language skills.

There are also initiatives to provide extra support to schools with high proportions of immigrant students. For example, the Mentor Migration Nightingale project funded by the European Union's Comenius programme, where student teachers spend 2 to 3 hours per week with immigrant students. There are 16 student teachers in 2 schools offering after-school activities to encourage constructive leisure activities and both children and student teachers learn from each other. This has been successful and one participating school informed the OECD that it would look for sponsors to fund this in 2009 when the EU funding ends. There are also some remedial programmes with after-school assistance offered by immigrant communities.

### Challenges

#### *Compulsory education in Austria relies heavily on parental support*

As in other countries, parents in Austria play an important role in their child's education. However, it can be argued that the importance of parents' role is heightened in Austria due to the relatively shorter time children spend in schools compared to in other OECD countries. Net teaching time in Austria is lower than on average in the OECD throughout compulsory education – this is in spite of the fact that the total statutory working time for teachers is above the OECD average (Table 2.1 and OECD, 2008). Also, at age 15 student reports reveal relatively little time spent learning core subjects such as German language and mathematics at school compared to students in other OECD countries on average (Table 2.1).

**Table 2.1. Teaching and learning time in compulsory education**

	Austria	OECD average
Net teaching time	Hours per year	
In primary education	774	812
In lower secondary education	607	717
In upper secondary education	589	667
Learning time in regular school lessons	% of 15-year-olds reporting they spend at least 4 hours each week learning the subject	
Science	20%	29%
Reading	16%	46%
Mathematics	27%	48%

Source : OECD (2008) and OECD (2007).

During the review visit, representatives of Parents Unions reported a prevailing perception in the Austrian education system that parents hold the sole responsibility for ensuring that their child meets the requirements of the school system. They reported a lack of initiative by schools to organise educational provision to be of optimal benefit to children from less advantaged backgrounds, e.g. additional classes, study groups, homework clubs, time with mother tongue teachers. Further, it is not mandatory for schools in Austria to have a parents association and the degree of activity varies greatly from school to school and sometimes merely exists "on paper".

While some whole-day schools exist, the number remains limited and varies significantly among regions. For example, there are virtually no whole-day schools in Lower Austria, although there are some informal arrangements where teachers stay in the afternoon. In order to extend the traditional half-day school to a whole day offer, a two-thirds majority of parents at the school must agree to do so. In future, many immigrant students should benefit from a new whole-of-government commitment to extend the provision of whole-day schools.

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*Difficulties in engaging immigrant parents in school life*

On the other hand, in the schools the OECD visited, staff reported that engaging parents was a priority for them, but that they had varying degrees of success with different initiatives they had launched to try to do so. These reports were similar in other countries the OECD visited. Such difficulties are often linked to barriers of a cultural or linguistic nature, *e.g.* immigrant parents feeling under confident in the host country language or feeling alienated and unwelcome in a foreign school environment (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003). The Ministry does not have an available pool of interpreters and as such is not in a position to advocate the use of translators for communication with immigrant parents. There is a risk that in some cases parents may need to rely on their children for translation.

***Policy recommendations****Engage immigrant parents as partners in education*

While there are many initiatives under way in several parts of Austria and much information has been prepared centrally to support immigrant parents, there is no coherent strategy. The Ministry could effectively further efforts to engage immigrant parents by: 1) drawing up guidelines for communication with immigrant parents and promoting effective outreach programmes; and 2) better exploiting existing communication channels.

The Ministry in consultation with successful schools should draw up guidelines on how to communicate effectively with parents at different stages of education and provide the necessary printed/digital information for schools to do so. Parent association representatives reported that much information is sent to schools but does not get to parents. This suggests that new ways of co-operation must be found between schools and immigrant parents.

In the countries visited by the OECD, stakeholders reported that face-to-face contact was key to exchange relevant information with immigrant parents. Practice in different countries provides some examples of innovative communication channels. In the Netherlands and the Flemish Community of Belgium, policy makers have focused on engaging immigrant parents in school councils and parent associations. In Ireland, “liaison teachers” reach out to immigrant families and build bridges between schools and homes (Box 2.11).

### Box 2.11. Policies to increase parental involvement in their children's education

*Mandatory participation in school council:* In the **Flemish Community of Belgium**, high political priority is accorded to parental involvement at schools. Parental representation in the school council was made compulsory and now parental involvement in schools is well established. Parents vote for their representatives. However, representatives are usually native parents. Therefore, the Minister of Education has signed a covenant with the national parents' organisations to make it mandatory for parents to engage with their child's school from September 2010. Involving the parents' organisations should give more voice to immigrant parents. It is widely recognised that school leaders play a critical role in achieving parental engagement.

*The Platform for Ethnic Minority Parents and Education:* In the **Netherlands**, the Platform for Ethnic Minority Parents and Education (*Platform Allochtone Ouders en Onderwijs, PAOO*) was established in 2006 in addition to the general parents' association and takes a leading role in promoting parental involvement among immigrant parents throughout the country. The Government has financed the platform. There are local platforms in 30 large municipalities, which carry out their own activities supported by the national platform, including: helping immigrant parents understand the Dutch school system and the importance of parental involvement in their children's education; supporting training programmes through which teachers better understand the social and cultural context of immigrant families; participating in home visits; providing homework supervision; and supporting mixed school initiatives to mitigate segregation in education.

*Home School Community Liaison Scheme:* In **Ireland**, through the Home School Community Liaison Scheme, each targeted school assigns a home-school coordinator to be a mediator and contact person to recover trust of parents in the school system. The idea is that parents acquire a good understanding of the teachers' work and build a positive relationship with the school has been a proactive initiative in order to establish collaboration between parents and teachers. The HSCL scheme targets disadvantaged families and/or schools in disadvantaged areas rather than just immigrant parents *per se*. It provides various supports for parents to become more involved in their children's education, such as training in parenting skills, a parent room that is used to support parent activities and regular home visits by HSCL coordinators.

Source: Shewbridge *et al.* (2009); Taguma *et al.* (2009b).

Other existing channels can also be better exploited in Austria. The new year of kindergarten is an excellent opportunity to engage with immigrant parents at an early stage. The Ministry and the provinces should promote the role of kindergartens to reach out to immigrant parents and to point parents to information evenings on the education systems and how to choose among local schools. The Ministry and the provinces should consider prioritising programmes that give targeted language and cultural knowledge support to mothers at kindergartens. For new arrivals in Austria, there are information evenings and coaching interviews during which educational careers and options should be carefully explained.

The provinces should monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of existing initiatives in some provinces such as "Mum learns German" and "Rucksack-Parents" and ensure that successful approaches are regularly funded. The Ministry could play a role in identifying and disseminating effective practices across provinces. Further, such initiatives should be used to improve parents' understanding of the education system in Austria. For example, these programmes could have a core course content on relevant information on schools in Austria, *e.g.* from where to buy school supplies to choice of potential local schools at age 10.

*Promote and support initiatives to provide immigrant students with opportunities to learn outside regular school lessons*

The Ministry should strongly promote the provision of additional educational support to immigrant students who receive less educational support from their families than is expected by the school system.

This strategy can be twofold: 1) Extend existing initiatives of whole-day schools, prioritising schools with high proportions of immigrant students and / or provide after-school learning opportunities; 2) Consider immigrant communities as resources and capitalise on the linguistic and other resources that they have.

Offering additional learning time to students could help compensate initial disadvantages between students. Results from PISA 2006 showed that spending more hours per week learning science was associated with higher performance in science across countries (OECD, 2007). Whole-day schools can be a way to reduce the negative impact of the difficulties faced by less socio-economically advantaged families and immigrant families in school systems that operate on a half-day basis only and rely to a large extent on parental support. But whole-day schools may be difficult to implement on a large scale as they are quite cost-intensive and may carry an element of stigma if they are only introduced in schools with many immigrant students or students from less socio-economically advantaged background. Another possibility is to offer extended learning time offers with more project-based and experiential learning and after-school activities, as has been done in Massachusetts in the United States (Box 2.12).

#### Box 2.12. Compensatory educational support initiatives

In **Germany** there is growing support for whole-day schools. There were 6,918 *Ganztagschulen* either opened or agreed between 2003 and 2008 and Berlin has pledged half a million euro to fund such schools in 2009/10. There is an informative website for schools on how to establish a whole-day school and information on existing schools and their evaluations. The Ministry of Education is currently supporting a research team to evaluate the impact of whole-day schools, in comparison with half-day schools, on the integration and progress of immigrant students. The results of the evaluation are expected in 2011.

In the **United States**, the Massachusetts Department of Education and Mass 2020, a Boston-based “action tank” began an experiment to lengthen the school day in 10 schools in 5 districts in 2006. The “Expanded Learning Time (ELT)” initiative has grown markedly since then and today 26 public schools, serving a total of 13 500 students in 12 districts are participating in the ELT initiative. The Massachusetts state government provides extra funding to schools that participate in the ELT. The initiative includes more project-based and experiential learning, afterschool activities and community-based partnership for students. It also provides for regular professional development and common planning time for teachers. Preliminary results from the Massachusetts experiment suggest that the longer school day has positive effects on students’ achievement in English, mathematics and science. Furthermore, ELT appears to help mitigate the achievement gap between white and minority students, in part by providing enrichment activities for minority students with disadvantaged home learning environment.

Source: [www.ganztagschulen.org/112.php](http://www.ganztagschulen.org/112.php); Massachusetts 2020 Foundation (2009).

Offers of homework assistance may to some extent serve the same purpose. Associations and public institutions like libraries can play a part in such schemes, contributing to reduce costs. It is important to evaluate and monitor such arrangements in order to identify effective ways of organising homework support and ensure they are geographically well distributed in order to be accessible to as large a part of the target group as possible.

In some countries, “extended” or “community” schools have become established over recent years. Such schools offer access to school study and computing facilities as well as offering spaces for immigrant families and communities to organise social and cultural events. Community schools are alliances of schools, libraries, sports clubs, child care and health and welfare institutions and provide many community services. The particular services offered by these schools vary to meet local needs (Box 2.13).

### Box 2.13. Community schools offering extended services to students and families

In the **United Kingdom**, “Full Service Extended Schools” were developed in every local area to provide comprehensive services such as health care, adult learning, community activities, study support and childcare. These extended schools aim to address social, health and other concerns of parents while always highlighting education as the pathway to achievement, employment and inclusion. The final evaluation of the initiative found that the approach positively affects pupils’ attainment and that these results are clearest for pupils facing difficulties. The initiative also had a positive impact on engagement with learning, family stability, adult learning and employment.

In the **Netherlands**, an estimated 1 000 of the more than 7 000 primary schools and 350 of the 1 200 secondary schools were community schools in 2007. These are present in more than half the municipalities. Almost all primary schools in Amsterdam now offer extended services.

Source: Brind *et al.* (2008); Oberon (2007); Herweijer (2009).

During the OECD review visit, selected immigrant communities reported that there is a willingness to provide extra support to children, but no funding to help establish such programmes. Representatives also reported that Associations often do not know how to get funding. The Ministry should encourage immigrant communities to organise educational support programmes for children in compulsory schooling by offering resources and clarifying the application process for funding.

Schools should promote the use of successful immigrant students as mentors to younger immigrant students. Such pairings could provide valuable support and guidance to younger students on academic pathways, including school and study choice. In several countries, universities have formed partnerships with secondary schools to offer mentorship programmes (Box 2.14).

### Box 2.14. Involving adult immigrants as role models and mentors

In Leeds (**United Kingdom**), the *Black and Ethnic Minority Mentoring Programme* was developed to target ethnic minority students (African Caribbean, Black Other, Pakistani and Bangladeshi) who have the potential to move on to higher education, but who are also at risk of leaving education early through lack of motivation, or lack of academic support. In a cohort study to establish the added value of mentors in raising achievement, 83% of ethnic minority students met or surpassed their “value added” target in national tests at age 16.

In the **Netherlands**, an association for the empowerment of immigrant communities (FORUM) has a programme of ambassadors. Each year a brochure is published with a list of ambassadors who can serve as role models for younger immigrant students. A short biography of each ambassador details his/her background and educational pathway. There are also programmes for specific immigrant groups at risk of underachieving. For example, the *Moroccan Coaching Project* in The Hague, financed by the city council and schools, aims particularly at youngsters of Moroccan descent in a risk situation. The experience of mentoring projects indicate a positive effect on social skills and behaviour of ethnic minority “risk students” (*i.e.* students in the lowest tracks of pre-vocational secondary education) and preventing school dropout.

Source: Brind *et al.* (2008); Herweijer (2009).

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## ANNEX A: TERMS OF REFERENCE

### Purpose of the review

Country specific priority questions need to be in line with the overarching policy question of the Thematic Review on Migrant Education: *what policies will promote successful education outcomes for first and second generation migrants?* To make the country review visit as focused and relevant as possible, the overall purpose of the Austrian review will be:

- To review strengths and weaknesses of current policies and practices at the national, regional and local level.
- To identify effective comprehensive (equity) policies from which migrant students can benefit, as well as effective targeted policies for migrant students.
- To promote enhanced recognition of cultural and linguistic diversity as a resource for the education system and society.

### Scope

The review will focus on the following levels of education:

- **Early childhood education** and interface between ECE and school system (screening on language level, discussion of/demand for a compulsory pre-school year, etc.)
- Educational situation of immigrant students in **compulsory schools** (focus on primary and general secondary education)

While the focus should be on early childhood and compulsory education, the review should also address the need for **awareness of challenges in migrant education on all levels of the school system** – especially in upper secondary education and vocational schools.

### Policy areas to be addressed:

Within the scope defined above, the review should primarily address the following policy areas:

- Strengthening **leadership** at the national, regional, local and school level to ensure a positive attitude towards migrants as an integral and positive part of social and school life.
- Improving the **evidence and research base** and **strengthening a culture of evaluation** in order to identify and spread successful practice for migrant education.
- Ensuring consistent and effective **language support** for migrant students in German, as well as in their mother tongues.
- Recognizing not only the first language of migrant students but also their **cultural background** in order to support a successful education career
- Strengthening the **training and capacity of teachers** to address the needs of increasingly diverse student populations and to have high expectations and aspirations for all students.
- Supporting involvement of **migrant parents**.

## ANNEX B: POLICY REVIEW VISIT OF AUSTRIA

## OECD Fact-finding visit, 15-19 December 2008

## Monday, 15 December

<b>15.00</b>	<p><b>Meeting with officials from the Ministry of Education</b></p> <p>Josef Neumüller, head of department I/6</p> <p>Rüdiger Teutsch, head of department I/13 and national co-ordinator for migrant education</p> <p>Andrea Fraundorfer, project manager</p> <p>Elfie Fleck, head of unit “school and migration”</p> <p>Anna Lasselsberger, unit “school and migration”</p>	<p>Welcome &amp; Frame of the Thematic Review</p> <p>Purpose of the fact-finding visit</p> <p>Current status of the project</p> <p>Objectives, issues and focus of the visit</p> <p>Overview: visit programme</p> <p>Current strategies &amp; measures &amp; projects</p> <p>German as a second language,</p> <p>Principle for intercultural learning,</p> <p>Second language instruction</p>
<b>Break</b>		
<b>17.00</b>	<p><b>Meeting with scientists and authors of the country report</b></p> <p>Key Note: Barbara Herzog, Angela Wroblewski</p>	<p>Issues identified by the country report</p> <p>Strengths and weaknesses of the Austrian approach to migrant education</p> <p>Need for further research &amp; strategic plan</p>
<b>19.00</b>	<b>Drink &amp; buffet</b>	



**Wednesday, 17 December**

9.00	<b>Visit in a primary school</b> in Vienna "Regenbogenvolksschule"  Renate Kammer, headmistress+ teachers	Questions of intercultural pedagogy assistance and encouragement for teachers role of mothertongue-teachers, problems with minority languages (e.g. within the turkish group)
11.30	<b>Meeting with NGOs at Intercultural Center Vienna</b> Mari Steindl, manager of IZ Martin Wurzensteiner, Integrationshaus N.N.	Migration & social problems in schools  Activities of non-profit-organisations in the field of migration and intercultural education (Training courses for multipliers and teachers; projects with schools, ...)
1.00	<b>Lunch</b> with people from NGOs	Parents' involvement in migrant education
2.30	<b>Meeting with a representatives from Teacher Union</b> Irmtraud Fian, Head of "Bundessektion Pflichtschullehrer" and colleagues	Situation of teachers in reference to migrant education Claims of teacher union concerning working conditions in multicultural classes
3.30	<b>Meeting with social partners/ representatives of employees and economy/industry</b> Gabriele Schmid, Chamber of Labour Valerie Weixlbaumer, Union of Industries Anna Spinka, Union of Industries	Claims for educational policies & practices from the pointof view of "Arbeiterkammer" und "Industriellenvereinigung"
4.30	<b>Meeting with School Partners</b> (parents & pupils) Tomislov Peric, Karer Kaltan (students) Christine Krawarik und Asyje Sel (parents), GRG Rein-Prechtsstraße, 5. Bezirk  End of the meeting	Main problems from their point of view; experiences of immigrant children in our school system.

**Thursday, 18 December**

<p><b>9.00</b></p> <p><b>Meeting with representatives from Diversity Department of municipality of Vienna (MA 17)</b> and Department for Early Childhood Education (MA 10)</p> <p>Ursula Struppe, head of Department, MA 17 (City of Vienna)</p> <p><b>11.30</b></p> <p>Marina Schmied, member of staff , MA 17 (City of Vienna)</p> <p>Christine Spiess, head of Department, MA 10 (City of Vienna)</p> <p><b>Lunch Break</b></p>	<p>Municipal strategies &amp; programmes for migrants</p> <p>Educational programmes on municipal level</p> <p>Early childhood education: challenges in multicultural kindergarten and day care centers</p> <p>Intercultural skills of kindergarten teachers</p>
<p><b>2.00</b></p> <p><b>Meeting with officials from Ministry of Education</b></p> <p>Anton Dobart, Director General</p> <p>National Steering Committee</p> <p>Barbara Herzog, scientist</p> <p>Josef Neumüller, head of department for internationalRelations</p>	<p>Governance policies / strategies</p> <p>Promotion of successful education outcomes for first and second generation migrants</p> <p>Role of stakeholder groups for developing und implementing policies or initiatives for immigrant students</p> <p>Issues and focus of policy review in April</p>

**Friday, 19 December**

<p><b>9.30</b></p> <p><b>Meeting with representatives of “Integrationsfonds”</b></p> <p>Alexander Janda</p> <p>Alexander Schahbasi, teamleader science</p>	<p>“Report on integration”</p> <p>Migrant policies of “Integrationsfonds” and “Integrations-platform”</p>
<p><b>11.00</b></p> <p><b>Recapitulation of the visit</b></p> <p>Barbara Herzog, Rüdiger Teutsch</p> <p><b>end 1.00</b></p>	<p>Summary of the facts, open questions, further proceedings – agenda of the policy review</p>

## OECD Policy visit, 14-17 April 2009

## Tuesday 14 April

<b>Welcome session</b> <b>OECD-Delegation:</b> <b>Topic: Language instruction &amp; language policy &amp; preliminary recommendations</b>	Deborah Nusche, Claire Shewbridge, Christian Rasmussen BMUKK: Josef Neumüller, Rüdiger Teutsch, Andrea Fraundorfer, Elfie Fleck, Anna Lasselsberger, (experts from the ministry)
<b>Round table with scientists</b> <b>Topic: governance, early tracking, language support</b>	<b>Herbert Altrichter</b> , University of Linz (Governance) <b>Johann Bacher</b> , University of Linz (Early tracking and migration) <b>Babara Herzog-Punzenberger</b> , Austrian Academy of Sciences (Country Report) <b>Verena Plutzar</b> , University of Vienna (Language acquisition & policy)
<b>Topic: Pre-Service and In-Service Training for Diversity and Leader-Training</b>	<b>Michael Schratz</b> , University of Innsbruck, Teacher Trainer (Leadership Academy) <b>Elisabeth Furch</b> , Teacher Training University Vienna <b>Edwin Radnitzky</b> , BMUKK (Basic Training for School Leaders) <b>Elisabeth Frank</b> , Ministry of Science (Committee for Teacher Training) <b>Alfred Lurf</b> , Ministry of Science (performance agreement with universities)

## Wednesday 15 April

Meeting with representative from "Städtebund" (Association of Cities): (Topic: ECEC policies & financing; migrant policies on municipal level)	<b>Experts from the local government in Lower Austria</b> Mr. Thomas Weninger, Sevim Aksakalli, Marianne Erasmus, Renate Steger  <b>BMUKK</b> , department for training on early childhood education Ulrike Zug
Meeting with representatives from Department for Educational Planning scientists from the National Research Institute BIFIE Topic: Evaluation culture, assessment, educational planning, early tracking	Werner Specht (BIFIE)  BMUKK: Florian Sobanski, Andrea Werner-Thaler (New middle school)
<b>Meeting with Minister Claudia Schmied</b> <i>Blauer Salon, Minoritenplatz</i> <b>Topic: Preliminary recommendations</b>	Augustine Kern, Mark Nemet, Josef Neumüller, Rüdiger Teutsch, Andrea Fraundorfer
<b>Meeting with representatives from teacher union and heads of school</b>	<b>Gerhard Riegler</b> Teacher Union for Academic Schools <b>Irmtraud Fian</b> Teacher Union for Compulsory Schools <b>Susannah Bständig</b> Head of a primary school in Vienna <b>Erika Tiefenbacher</b> Head of a general secondary school in Vienna

**Thursday 16 April**

<b>Roundtable with local school authorities</b> (from Vienna)	<b>Manfred Pinterits</b> , school inspector for the 15th district of Vienna (responsible for integration) <b>Rupert Corrazza</b> , Bureau of Local School Authority Vienna <b>Rudolf Hornung</b> , Local School Authority of Lower-Austria
<b>Roundtable with representatives from parents' association</b>	<b>Maria Smahel</b> , umbrella association for compulsory schools <b>Migrant Representative</b> <b>Andrea Friendsberger</b> , BMUKK, responsible for school partners <b>Anna Lasselsberger</b> , BMUKK, DVD for migrant parents
<b>Round table with representatives from migrant organizations</b>	<b>Zwetelina Damjanova</b> , Verein Wirtschaft für Integration <b>Darko Miloradovic</b> , Serbian Community <b>Dordje Damjanovic</b> , Mothertongue Teacher <b>Andrea Härle</b> , <b>Romano Center</b>

**Friday 17 April**

Final Session Bureau of Anton Dobart, Minoritenplatz	<b>Anton Dobart</b> , <i>Director General (Directorate I)</i> <b>Theodor Siegl</b> , DG, <i>Directorate II</i> <b>Sepp Redl</b> , <i>Directorate V</i>  Josef Neumüller, Rüdiger Teutsch, Andrea Fraundorfer, Muriel Warga
Next steps and schedule for Country Note & recommendations	Josef Neumüller, Rüdiger Teutsch, Andrea Fraundorfer

# OECD Reviews of Migrant Education

## AUSTRIA

Net migration to the OECD has tripled since 1960. There has been extensive research on the successful integration of migrants into labour markets, but very little research at the international level focusing on the education outcomes of their children and the effectiveness of education policy interventions. In many OECD countries, immigrant students tend to have more restricted access to quality education, leave school earlier, and have lower academic achievements than their native peers. Therefore, improving the education of immigrant students is often high on policy agendas.

The OECD Review of Migrant Education was launched to help policy makers to design and implement migrant education policy successfully in their countries. It will provide solid facts about access, participation and student performance of immigrant students in comparison with their native peers and identify a set of policy options based on evidence of what works and examples of experience from many countries.

Compared to their native Austrian peers, immigrant students on average have weaker education outcomes at all levels of education. The gaps are particularly pronounced for second-generation immigrants. Austria has introduced a number of measures to promote equity and support the language development of immigrant students both in German and in their mother tongues. However, there is scope to:

- Improve the quality of the educational and language support offer in early childhood education and care (ECEC) and encourage participation of immigrant children at early ages.
- Strengthen and structure the language support offer in compulsory education and concentrate efforts on mainstreaming language support across all school subjects.
- Provide diversity training to both teachers and school leaders and focus in particular on in-service training for current teachers and school leaders.
- Reinforce co-operation between schools and immigrant parents and communities and provide additional learning opportunities outside the regular half-day school offer.

Moreover, for migrant education policies to be effective and sustainable in the long term, it is essential to:

- Clarify responsibilities for implementation of national migrant education strategies and ensure that the different levels of education co-operate to ensure consistent support.
- Increase the inclusiveness of the education system by overcoming the early sorting of students and reducing the concentration of immigrant students in certain school types.
- Further develop the culture of evaluation in the education system to monitor student progress and evaluate the effectiveness of support policies.

OECD is conducting policy reviews of migrant education in Austria, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden. This report is one in the series of country policy reviews and provides country-specific diagnosis and policy recommendations. The overall findings of the OECD Review of Migrant Education will be published in 2010 as a concise, action-oriented handbook for policy makers.

Background information and documents are available at [www.oecd.org/edu/migration](http://www.oecd.org/edu/migration).