

Migrant Education in Ireland Pointers for policy development

SUCCESSSES AND CHALLENGES FOR MIGRANT EDUCATION

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

POLICIES TO IMPROVE MIGRANT EDUCATION OUTCOMES

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

FURTHER READING

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