

OECD Reviews of Migrant Education

DENMARK

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Immigrant students with a non-Danish mother tongue make up 10% of the student population in Denmark, representing many countries, cultures and languages.

The immigrant population in Denmark is one of the smallest in Western Europe, but it is made up of highly diverse groups coming from about 200 different countries. On average, immigrants in Denmark have lower socio-economic status and are at a higher risk of experiencing poverty and/or unemployment than the native Danes. Students with a non-Danish mother tongue now make up 10% of the student population, with the largest groups coming from Turkey, the Middle East, Iran, the former Yugoslavia and Pakistan. Immigrant students are distributed unevenly across Denmark, with a quarter of all immigrants attending schools in just four municipalities. Nonetheless, all municipalities have immigrants in their resident population and thus need to respond to the increasing diversity in the school system.

Compared to their native Danish peers, immigrant students face greater challenges in reaching high performance levels in compulsory education and in completing their upper secondary education successfully.

National and international studies show that, compared to their native Danish peers, immigrant students on average leave compulsory education with significantly weaker performance levels in reading, mathematics and science. Students with less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds and those with a non-Danish mother tongue face the greatest challenges in achieving good education outcomes. On completion of the *Folkeskole*, students progress to the youth education sector. Immigrant students are more likely than native Danish students to go to the VET sector, which qualifies primarily for access to the labour market. Overall, of those students who start a VET programme, 51% are expected to complete the programme. Among the immigrant students, however, only 39% of those who started are expected to complete their chosen VET programme. Completion rates are greater for immigrant women at 47% compared to 30% for men.

In Denmark's highly decentralised system, developing the capacities of leaders and teachers in schools and VET colleges is the top priority.

The high degree of school autonomy in Denmark means that the effectiveness of migrant education policy depends very much on the capacity of school leaders and teachers to implement such strategies at the school level. Teachers need to have the understanding, capacity and support to carry out formative assessment, differentiate instruction and support their students' language development. School leaders must adopt a resource-oriented approach to diversity and consider it in the everyday planning and practice of the school. Important steps have been taken in Denmark in recent years to adapt and update teacher training for diversity. However, the take-up of such training remains insufficient and uneven. To enhance the capacity of school level professionals to cater to the needs of all their native and immigrant students, it is essential to professionalise school leadership through better training, improve the pedagogical skills of teachers necessary to meet the needs of heterogeneous classrooms, and recruit high quality teachers including those from immigrant backgrounds.

While an overall framework for teaching Danish as a Second Language (DSL) is in place, further efforts are needed to standardise, structure and mainstream the language support offered across all municipalities and school types.

There is recognition across the education system that proficiency in the language of instruction is an essential requirement for success in school. The Ministry of Education has developed guidelines for DSL as a separate subject and for the inclusion of DSL in all subjects. But the type of provision, teaching programme and progress evaluations of DSL vary between municipalities and schools. There are few opportunities to share experience and best practice across municipality boundaries. The main focus of language support currently remains on developing proficiency in basic communicative Danish in the earlier grades. This is not sufficient for immigrant students to gain academic achievements on a par with their Danish peers. Basic language support needs to be complemented and followed up by consistent language support throughout all compulsory and upper secondary education, with a special focus on developing academic language (and technical language in the VET programmes). To strengthen the language support offered, further efforts are needed to standardise the provision of language support, integrate language and content learning, and value and validate proficiency in languages other than Danish.

For immigrant students to succeed in education, it is essential that their parents and communities are involved as partners in their children's education

Parental involvement in education is associated with improved student outcomes. In Denmark, it is particularly important because school only lasts for half a day and a high responsibility for support with homework and educational choices is placed with the parents. Those immigrant students who do not receive parental support are likely to fall further behind their peers. A number of initiatives exist to ensure good co-operation with parents, including in-service training for teachers to become “parent guides”. There are also efforts at the school and local level to provide help with homework and other learning opportunities for students whose parents cannot provide such support. But there is room to improve the availability of appropriate information for immigrant families and promote communication between schools and parents. Simultaneous work is also needed to attract immigrant parents back into education and thereby enhance their ability and confidence in engaging in their children's education.

Important progress has been made in improving guidance and mentoring services in the VET sector; the core business of teaching and learning in VET needs to be further adapted to increasingly diverse learner needs.

In 2006, the government prioritised and set its new goals for retention in education to the end of Youth Education. By 2010, 85% of young people are expected to complete a qualifying education and this should rise to at least 95% by 2015. To achieve the 95% goal, the education system must raise overall completion rates, but particularly those of immigrants who have a disproportionately high drop-out rate. While many successful initiatives, such as mentoring and guidance, have been implemented around the VET colleges, there is a need to adapt the core business of teaching and learning in the VET classroom to increasingly diverse learner needs. This should include a strong focus on basic skills, a greater emphasis on language support and mainstreaming language instruction in all subjects, and an enhanced initial training and professional development framework for VET teachers. The Ministry along with stakeholders involved in VET also must continue to provide clear leadership for a more inclusive VET and apprenticeship system.

Denmark has already developed a strong policy framework to improve equity in education, but needs to ensure greater consistency of support for immigrants across all schools and municipalities

A strong policy framework has been developed to improve the education outcomes of weak performers and early school leavers. There are universal measures at the national level to improve the education outcomes for all students in Denmark, as well as specific targeted initiatives to close the performance gap between Danish and immigrant students. The universal measures include reforms of initial and in-service training for Folkeskole teachers and a range of initiatives to reduce early school leaving in the VET sector. Among the more targeted measures, the government has launched a “task force for bilingual pupils” to assist municipalities in improving the quality of education for immigrant students and many municipalities now have consultants to help schools better meet the needs of immigrants. The DSL training for teachers and the language support offer for immigrant students has also been strengthened at all levels of education. However, the availability and quality of such support varies between schools, VET colleges and municipalities due to implementation lags, inconsistent efforts and varying degrees of prioritisation. To achieve real improvements for immigrant students, more efforts are needed to ensure that policies are consistently implemented across the entire education system.

For equity and migrant education policies to be effective, arrangements for monitoring and evaluating progress need to be strengthened

The past years have witnessed important progress towards implementation of a culture of evaluation in schools. However, the encouraging signs of progress are compromised by systemic blind spots in the arrangements for monitoring education. Gaps in data reduce the visibility of problems encountered by immigrants in education and the limited capacity of schools to use data has adverse consequence for immigrants and others who under-perform. To strengthen the culture of evaluation, it is essential to strengthen the capacity at the municipal and school level to implement assessment and evaluation strategies, use existing data and design effective improvement strategies. Moreover, the Ministry should set specific targets to reduce the gap between Danish and immigrant students and increase the availability of disaggregated data, the municipalities should include information on the participation and performance of immigrants in their Education Quality Reports and schools should strengthen the use of Personal Education Plans.

Political leadership is essential to build support for an appreciative approach towards diversity and the immigrant population as assets that open opportunities for Denmark

Over and above these specific policy options, it is critical to sustain political leadership and build support for integration and inclusion as assets that open opportunities for Denmark. The OECD Economic Survey of Denmark highlights that for Denmark to reap the full benefits of globalisation it must become more open and welcoming to unique and ethnically diverse talent from abroad (OECD, 2009). For the education system, this means that the Ministry, municipal authorities, school leaders, teachers, parents and community leaders must acknowledge that a culturally and linguistically diverse student body is a permanent and welcome feature of Danish schools. The education system as a whole must take responsibility for catering to the needs of diverse students and have high aspirations and high expectations for the immigrant students.

CHAPTER 1

IDENTIFICATION OF CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES

This chapter explains the focus of the Country Note, describes the broader context of immigration and integration of immigrants in Denmark and identifies priority areas for the education of immigrants. Bilingual pupils make up about 10% of the Danish student population. The Danish education system has traditionally aimed to provide inclusive and student-centred education to achieve equitable results for different groups of students. However, national and international studies show that compared to their native Danish peers, immigrant students have weaker education outcomes at all levels of education. The greatest challenges are concentrated in the Folkeskole (primary and lower secondary education) and the upper secondary Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector. By the end of compulsory education, immigrant students show significantly lower performance than their native Danish peers, especially those who speak a language other than Danish at home. This is also true for second generation immigrants who were born and raised in Denmark. Moreover, of those immigrant students who enrol in the upper secondary VET sector, 60% do not complete their programme. Policy action is necessary both to increase the learning outcomes of immigrants in the Folkeskole and to raise retention rates in upper secondary education, especially in VET.

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 Denmark presents selected policy options designed to respond to the main challenges high priority issues and supported by evidence, research and policy examples from other countries (see Annex A for the Terms of Reference and Annex B for the visit programmes). This review should be read in conjunction with the Country Background Report prepared by the Danish authorities (Danish Ministry of Education, 2008a).

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?***

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 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.

Immigrant groups covered in this report

Comprehensive data sets concerning the education outcomes and background characteristics of immigrant students are scarce in Denmark. As in many other OECD countries, there are important gaps in the availability of data on certain student characteristics. This review draws on both international and national data to provide a broad picture of the situation of immigrants in the Danish education system. However, as different available data sets do not cover exactly the same groups of immigrants, the review had to refer to different groups depending on the availability of data. Therefore, it is important to clarify the terminology from the outset:

- The OECD review focuses on *first- and second-generation* immigrants. Following the definition adopted by the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), “first-generation immigrants” refers to those persons who were born abroad and whose parents were also born abroad, while “second-generation immigrants” refers to persons who were themselves born inside the receiving country but whose parents were born abroad. Together, the group of first- and second-generation immigrants are simply referred to as “immigrant students”. By contrast, all students born in the receiving country who have at least one parent who was also born inside the country are referred to as “native”. The terms first- and second-generation immigrants may include many individuals who actually have Danish nationality.
- Statistics Denmark generally uses the terms **immigrants and descendants** when providing data on people with an immigration background in Denmark. According to the definition of Statistics Denmark, an “immigrant” is a person born abroad and whose parents were also born abroad or are foreign nationals. This category thus includes only first-generation immigrants. A “descendant” is a person who was born in Denmark but whose parents were born abroad or are foreign nationals. This category thus includes second-generation immigrants but in addition also includes the persons of the third and fourth immigrant generation whose parents do not have Danish nationality.
- Statistics Denmark further distinguishes between immigrants from **Western and non-Western countries**. “Western” countries comprise the EU countries, Iceland, Norway, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino, Switzerland, the Vatican State, Canada, USA, Australia and New Zealand. Non-western countries comprise all countries which are not defined as Western countries.
- In the Danish education statistics, students with an immigrant background were until recently identified based on linguistic criteria. Students are considered **bilingual** when they have a mother tongue other than Danish and begin to learn Danish for the first time when they get into contact with the surrounding society, possibly through the teaching at school. From the school year 2007/08, the primary and lower secondary school statistics in this regard have switched to using data from Statistics Denmark on immigrants and descendants (see above). The overall proportion remained essentially the same, but there were some changes at the school level, indicating that the different definitions do not cover the exact same groups.

This review is mainly interested in **the sub-group of immigrant students that faces difficulties in the education system**; this includes immigrants who have low socio-economic status (SES) and whose parents may not speak Danish or have low levels of education. These immigrant pupils are likely to face a double disadvantage in education related to their immigrant status and to the educational and/or financial handicap of their parents. These two disadvantages are often closely intertwined as many immigrant groups experience higher levels of poverty than the mainstream native groups. Many of the policy options proposed in this review will be equally relevant to native Danish students from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds. The review focuses less on those immigrants who have already successfully integrated into Danish life and its education system. It underlines that this existing success must be recognised and acknowledged.

Summary of the position of immigrants in Denmark

Immigration history and trends

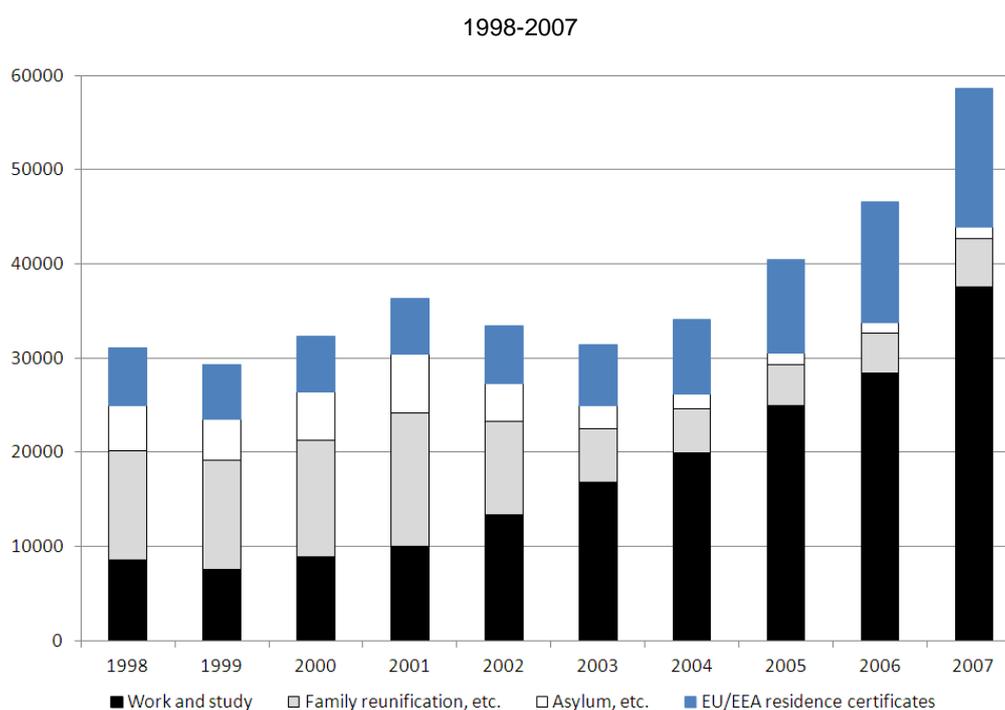
Denmark has a relatively recent history of immigration. Until the mid-twentieth century, the country experienced more emigration than immigration and most immigrants came from neighbouring Nordic and

European countries. From the late 1950s to 1973, there was a limited but steady inflow of immigrants through labour migration (so-called “guestworker” programmes) and subsequent family reunification, mainly from Turkey, Yugoslavia and Pakistan. But immigration remained a marginal phenomenon, with immigrants accounting for less than 3% of the population until the mid-1980s (Liebig, 2007).

Immigration only accelerated in the late 1980s and in the 1990s. The majority of the Danish immigrant population are thus relatively recent arrivals. Over the past two decades, immigration has been strongly dominated by family reunification and humanitarian immigration (asylum seekers and refugees). Despite the rapid growth, Denmark still has one of the smallest immigrant populations in Western Europe. According to Statistics Denmark (2008), immigrants and their descendants comprised 9.1% of the Danish population – about 6.9% are foreign-born (versus 8.7% in Norway and 12.9% in Sweden) and 2.2% are descendants of immigrants (for a definition, see previous section).

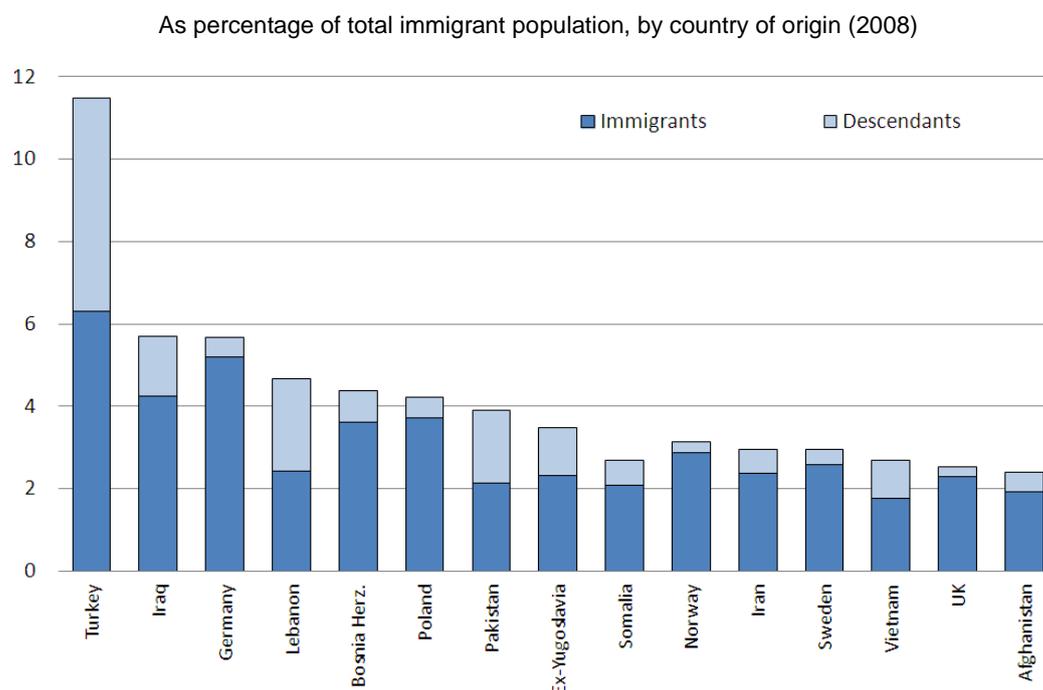
In recent years, the Danish government has favoured more restrictive entry policies for some immigrant groups. The rules for family reunification in Denmark are now among the most restrictive in the OECD. At the same time, Denmark seeks to respond to labour shortages by increasing labour migration and attracting highly skilled immigrants. Figure 1.1 illustrates the decline of residence permits granted for family reunification and humanitarian migration since 2001, and the parallel increase of work and study permits.

Figure 1.1. Overview of all residence permits granted in Denmark



Source : Danish Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs (2008).

The immigrant population in Denmark is highly diverse comprising individuals from about 200 different countries (Statistics Denmark, 2008). The immigrant groups from each individual country of origin are very small, with the largest group of immigrants and descendants (Turks) comprising only 12% of all immigrants and descendants. The majority of immigrants and descendants come from Turkey, Iraq and Germany. An important number come from Lebanon, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Poland, Pakistan, Somalia, Norway, Iran and Sweden (Figure 1.2) (Statistics Denmark, 2008).

Figure 1.2. Immigrants and descendants in Denmark for the 15 most frequent countries of origin

Source : Statistics Denmark (2008), Table 18.

Geographical distribution, housing and socio-economic status

Denmark operates a dispersal policy for recognised refugees. Under this policy, newly arrived refugees are distributed across the country through a quota system. Refugees must stay in their assigned municipality for three years, during which they are offered an integration programme comprising language courses and labour market integration measures. The dispersal policy is based on the idea that a more equal spreading of immigrants across municipalities will facilitate their integration and distribute challenges and opportunities related to immigration more evenly among municipalities (Liebig, 2007).

As a consequence of the dispersal policy, all municipalities have immigrants in their resident population. But the proportion of immigrants (and the extent to which municipalities adapt policy and practice) varies widely between different municipalities. The majority of immigrants live in and around the major Danish cities. Immigrants and descendants (for a definition, see above) constitute 15.5% of the resident population in Copenhagen, 13.4% in Aarhus and 12.7% in Odense (Danish Ministry of Education, 2008a). While the largest number of immigrants live in the municipality of Copenhagen, four smaller municipalities in the greater Copenhagen area actually have higher concentrations of immigrants (above 20%).

There has been a continuous trend towards segregation of immigrants within the larger towns and cities. Typically, immigrants are concentrated in certain areas of town or city districts, such as a few housing blocks (Danish Ministry of Education, 2008a). The concentration of immigrants in these enclaves is due to some extent to a normal tendency of new arrivals to cluster together. But the phenomenon has been compounded by the way in which municipalities have allocated refugees to social housing estates where the proportion of immigrants was already high (Roseveare and Jorgensen, 2004). In 2007, 60% of immigrants from non-Western countries (for a definition, see above) lived in social housing, whereas this

is the case for only 16% of immigrants from Western countries and 14% of Danes (Danish Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs, 2007).

While the socio-economic status of immigrants varies and is often related to their country of origin, immigrants in Denmark have on average lower socio-economic status than native Danes. A Danish economic think tank found that though poverty in Denmark is low compared to other countries (about 4% of adults in Denmark¹), the incidence among immigrants from Western countries is over 10%, and among immigrants from non-Western countries, over 20% (De Økonomiske Råd, 2006).

Immigrants in the Danish economy

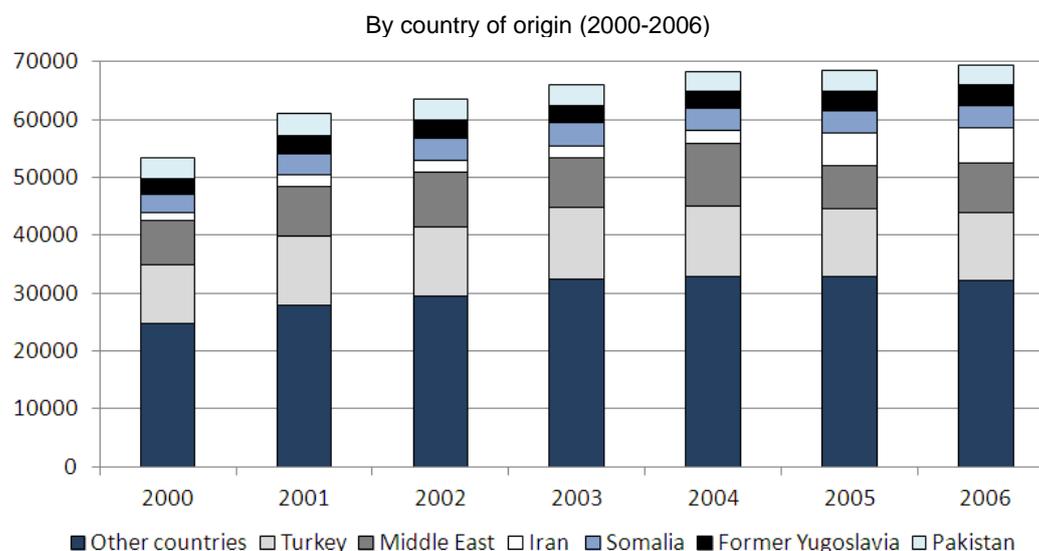
While many immigrants are successfully participating in the Danish labour market and society, there is much underused potential in immigrants and their children. An OECD report on labour market outcomes (Liebig, 2007) found the gap in employment rates between immigrants and native workers to be greater in Denmark than in all other OECD countries. Such gaps are particularly pronounced for both poorly qualified and highly qualified workers, and they are found for both first- and second-generation immigrants. The unemployment rate of immigrants is more than twice as high as that of Danes.

Liebig (2007) points out that these large differences in employment outcomes cannot be explained by differences in educational attainment alone. In fact, compared to other European countries with a history of guestworker migration, a relatively large share of the Danish immigrant population has tertiary education.² Likely reasons for this employment gap include immigrants' lack of networks, language obstacles, issues of recognition of foreign qualifications, information asymmetries and discrimination (Liebig, 2007; OECD, 2009). The Danish government has introduced a highly developed framework for integration to tackle these disadvantages and improve the labour market outcomes of immigrants and their children.³

Ensuring the full participation of immigrants and their descendants in education and the labour market is not just a matter of providing equal chances to all residents. It is essential for Denmark if it is to confront the challenges of population ageing and labour supply. As in most OECD countries, the proportion of retired people in Denmark is increasing while the workforce is shrinking.⁴ It will be difficult to sustain today's welfare state unless more people, including currently marginalised immigrant groups, are joining the labour force. Even though the current financial and economic crisis is reducing labour demand in the short term, labour shortages are likely to reappear and grow as the economy recovers (Poskakukhina, 2009). Education and labour market policies must go hand in hand to upskill those immigrants who have low levels of education to match their skills to available jobs while at the same time ensuring that immigrants have equal access to the labour market.

Identification of priorities in the education of immigrant pupils

Immigrants constitute a sizeable and growing proportion of the student population in Denmark. "Bilingual" students (who have a mother tongue other than Danish and do not learn Danish until they come in contact with the surrounding community or through the teaching of the school) comprised 10.1% of the Danish student population in the *Folkeskole* in 2006, up from 8.4% in 2000. Among the bilingual pupils, more than half are from Turkey, the Middle East, Iran, Somalia, the former Yugoslavia, or Pakistan (Danish Ministry of Education, 2008b).

Figure 1.3. Number of bilingual students in the *Folkeskole*

Source : Danish Ministry of Education (2008b), Table 4.3.

The Danish Ministry of Education aims to achieve world-class education for all pupils in Denmark. To achieve this objective, the Ministry has set specific goals and targets for each level of education. This section looks at the goals and outcomes of the Danish education system from the perspective of immigrants. While immigrant students on average have weaker education outcomes than their native Danish peers at all levels of education, the greatest challenges are concentrated in the *Folkeskole* and VET sector. Towards the end of *Folkeskole*, around 50% of immigrant youths show performance levels on the PISA 2006 science test that put them at risk of not completing upper secondary education successfully; the figure for native Danes is approximately 16% (OECD, 2007). Upon completion of the *Folkeskole*, of those immigrants who enrol in the VET sector, 60% do not complete their programme – a drop-out rate twice as high as that of native Danes.

Quality and equity in the Folkeskole

The goals of the Danish Ministry of Education for primary and lower secondary education include that all pupils should have excellent academic skills and knowledge. The Danish pupils should be among the best in the world in reading, mathematics, science and English.

Implicit in these goals of educational quality for all pupils is the ambition to achieve equitable results for different groups of students. The Danish education system has traditionally aimed to achieve equity-based and student-centred education (Holmen, 2009). Rather than segregating children on the basis of ability or social background, schools are seen as the primary institutions where equality between individuals from different backgrounds can be established. According to Ekholm (2004, p. 37), in the Danish educational history “it was first seen as important to establish equality between young people coming from different regions, then between the gender groups and between different socio-economic groups and most recently between groups with different ethnic backgrounds”.

However, results from national and international studies indicate that the Danish *Folkeskole* falls short of achieving its educational objectives in terms of both quality and equity. While students in grade four of the *Folkeskole* perform comparatively well internationally in reading, mathematics and science, there are already pronounced performance differences among students with different demographic backgrounds at this stage (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1. Performance of fourth grade students in reading, mathematics and science

By immigrant status (PIRLS 2006; TIMMS 2007)

Subject	International average of all students	Average of all students in Denmark	Both parents born in Denmark	Only one parent born in Denmark	Neither parent born in Denmark
Reading (PIRLS 2006)	500	546	551	546	511
Mathematics (TIMMS 2007)	500	523	529	516	482
Science (TIMMS 2007)	500	517	525	513	463

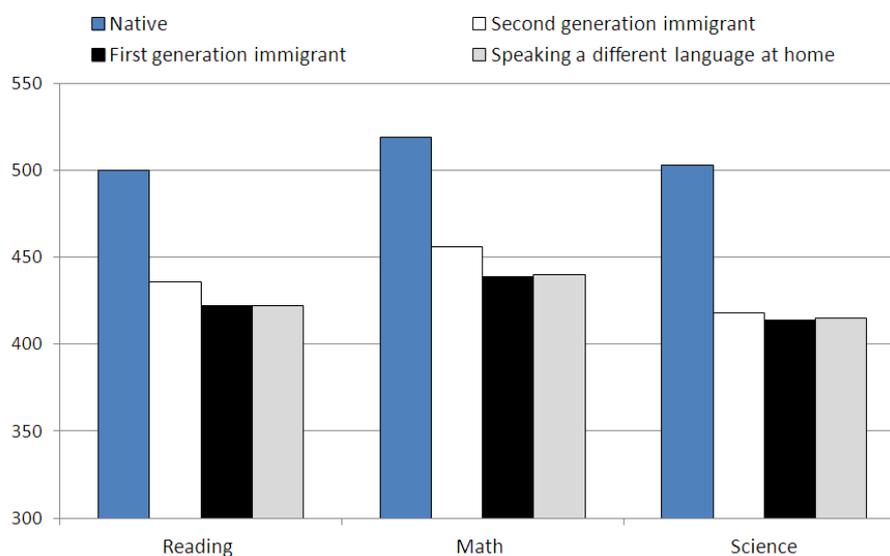
Note: PIRLS: Progress in International Reading Literacy Study; TIMMS: Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study.

Source : IEA, 2007; IEA, 2008a; IEA, 2008b.

Towards the end of compulsory schooling, results from PISA show that the performance of Danish students is at or slightly above the OECD average, depending on the subject⁵, and that it is also very significantly affected by students' socio-economic background and immigrant status (Figures 1.4 and 1.5). In PISA 2006, the score point differences between natives and immigrants on the science scale were among the highest across the OECD (87 points difference in PISA), and also very high in reading (71 points) and mathematics (70 points). These gaps are very considerable. For example, 38 score points in PISA 2006 science is roughly the equivalent of one school year's difference (OECD, 2007).

Figure 1.4. PISA performance of 15-year-olds in Denmark

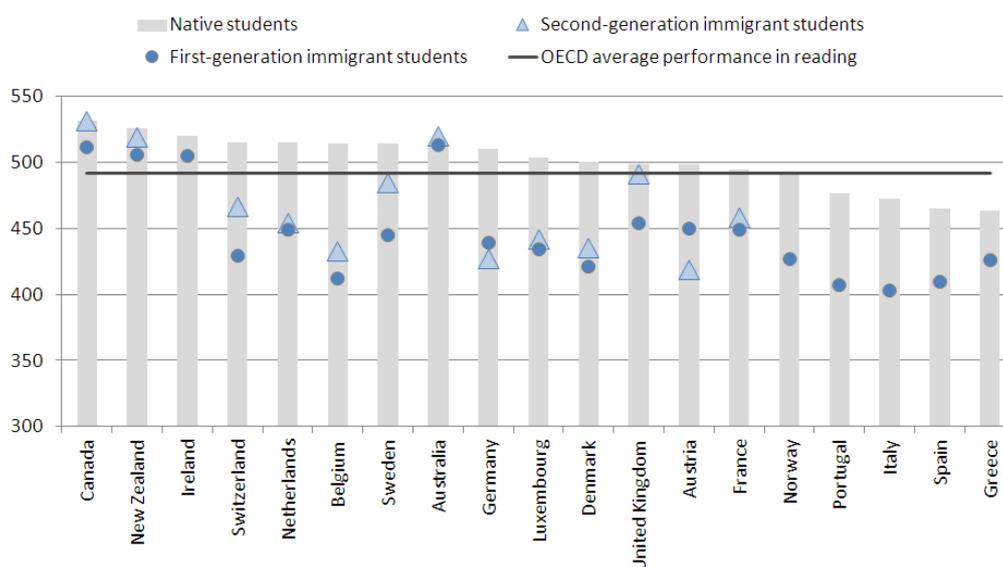
By immigrant status and language spoken at home (PISA 2006)



Note: The performance scales in PISA were constructed to have a standard deviation of 100 points. The OECD average scores were 500 points in science, 492 points in reading and 498 points in mathematics.

Source : OECD PISA 2006 database, Tables 4.2c, d, e; 4.3a, b, c.

Figure 1.5. PISA performance of 15-year-olds in OECD countries on the PISA reading scale
By immigrant status (PISA 2006)



Note: The reading scale in PISA 2006 has a mean score among OECD countries of 492 points and a standard deviation of 100 points.

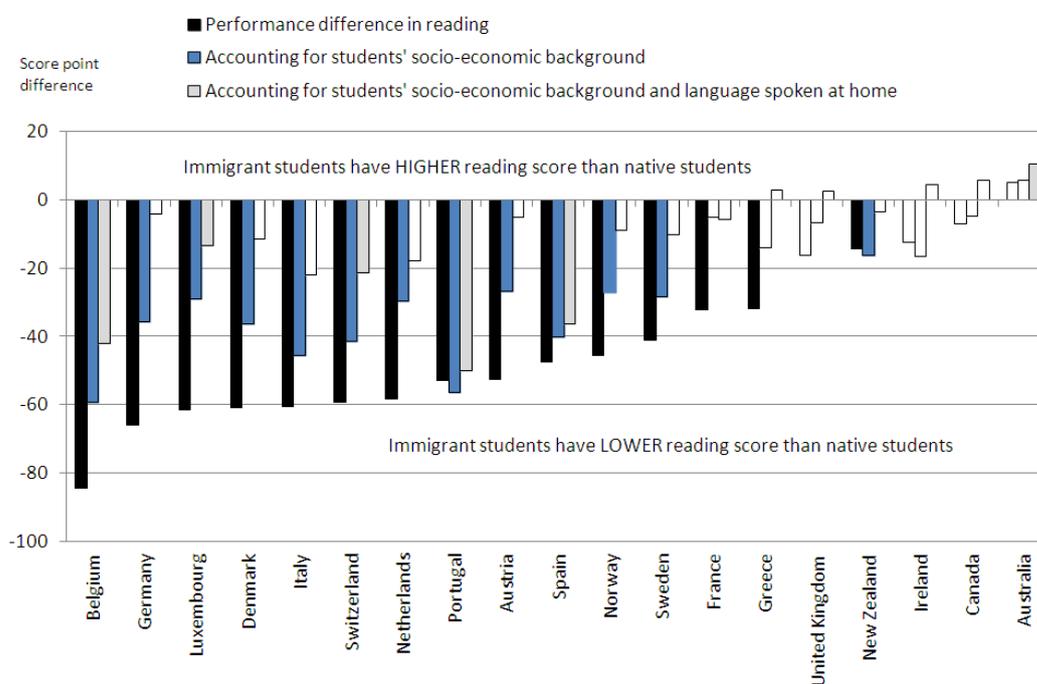
Source : OECD PISA 2006 database, Table 4.2a.

Moreover, there are hardly any performance advantages for second-generation immigrants (*i.e.* who are born in Denmark) *vis-à-vis* first-generation immigrants (see Figures 1.4 and 1.5). This is surprising because one would expect that those students who have spent their entire schooling in Denmark should perform better than those who have arrived only recently. These results may to some extent reflect the different composition of the population groups from which first- and second-generation students are drawn.⁶

National research confirms the pattern of underachievement of immigrants in the *Folkeskole*. A Danish replication of PISA 2004 (referred to in English as “PISA Ethnic”⁷) in which students from non-Western backgrounds were oversampled showed a similar gap between immigrant and native Danish pupils (Egelund and Tranaes, 2008). Data from school leaving examination for students at the end of the *Folkeskole* also shows native Danish students out-performing immigrants (Danish Ministry of Education, 2008a).

One factor contributing to the relatively weak performance of immigrant students in Denmark is that many of them also come from low socio-economic backgrounds. Data from PISA 2006 shows that immigrants in Denmark have a significantly lower index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS) than native Danes (OECD, 2007). Accounting for socio-economic status of students considerably reduces the performance disadvantage of immigrant students in reading (Figure 1.6). This suggests that while targeted measures for immigrants are important, many immigrants will also benefit from more universal equity policies focusing on low-SES students in general.

Figure 1.6. Difference in reading performance between immigrant and native students
Before and after accounting for SES and language (PISA 2006)



Note: Where differences are not statistically significant, they are marked in white.

Source : OECD PISA 2006 database.

At the same time, the data also conveys that SES alone cannot explain the performance differences between natives and immigrants, as a large gap remains even after accounting for SES. Danish research appears to show that the largest performance differences between native and immigrant students in Denmark exist between middle class Danes and middle class immigrants (Saarup, 2004 in Holmen, 2009). This indicates that immigrant-specific factors other than socio-economic background are also at play. In particular, those immigrants who speak a language other than Danish at home are facing difficulties. As in most other OECD countries, after accounting for both lower socio-economic backgrounds and for not speaking the language of instruction at home, the performance differences between native and immigrant students in Denmark are no longer significant. Targeted measures that focus on immigrant students in particular are thus needed as well.

A qualifying education for all young people

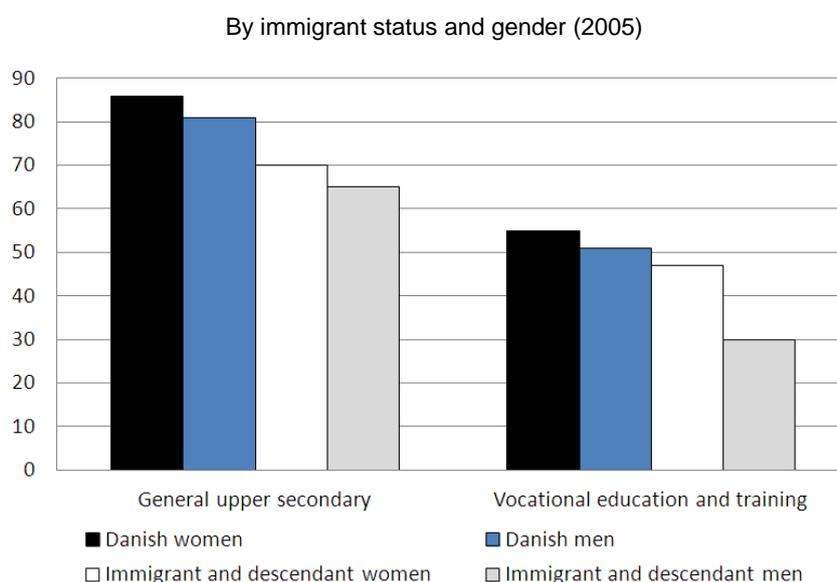
On completion of the *Folkeskole*, students progress to the youth education sector. The Danish Ministry of Education aims that all young people should complete a qualifying education. The medium term goal is that at least 85% of youngsters complete a youth education by 2010, and a target of 95% by 2015. Therefore, the youth education programmes on offer need to be attractive and of the highest quality (Danish Ministry of Education website).

The education system will need to get the immigrant students on board if the 95% objective is to be achieved. While 81% of the youth age group completed upper secondary education (gymnasium, commercial gymnasium, technical gymnasium and vocational schools) in 2005, this was the case for only 64% of first- and second-generation immigrants (Uni-C, 2007).

The youth education sector is divided into general upper secondary education which qualifies for access to higher education, and the vocational education and training (VET) sector which qualifies primarily for access to the labour market. The proportion of immigrants enrolling in the VET sector is slightly higher than that of native Danes. While 60% of bilingual students chose the VET sector over general upper secondary education, this is the case for 54% of native Danes (Danish Ministry of Education, 2008b).

Completion rates vary widely between the different upper secondary programmes. While about 82% of all students in the general upper secondary programmes are expected to complete their education, this is the case for only half (51%) of those who enter a VET programme. Among the immigrant students, 66% of those who enrol in general upper secondary education complete their education, compared with 39% of those who enrol in VET sector. Completion rates are considerably higher for girls than for boys for both natives and immigrants and in all upper secondary programmes (Danish Ministry of Education, 2008b).

Figure 1.7. Completion rates in upper secondary education



Source : Danish Ministry of Education (2008b).

Given the challenges identified above, the OECD and the Danish Ministry of Education agreed that the aim of this review should be to identify possible explanations for the educational outcomes of immigrant children in Denmark and uncover weaknesses in the approach of the Danish education system to this group, and on this basis suggest relevant remedies. The review should have particular focus on the following to areas:

- The ability of the *Folkeskole* (primary and lower secondary school) to develop the academic competencies of immigrant children.
- The high drop-out rates among students with an immigrant background in the VET-area.

NOTES

- 1 Using a poverty threshold of 50% of median income.
- 2 According to the European Labour Force Survey (2005), the proportion of foreign-born immigrants having attained tertiary education is eight percentage points higher than for native Danes, while the proportion of those who have attained upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education is 12 percentage points lower.
- 3 The national integration framework introduced by the Ministry for Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs in 2004 stipulates that municipalities have to offer a three-year introduction programme to immigrants from outside the European Economic Area. The programme includes language courses and labour market integration measures.
- 4 The number of people aged over 65 in Denmark is expected to increase by 50% over the next three decades; at the same time the labour force is projected to contract by 10% (OECD, 2005a).
- 5 In 2006, the Danish students showed average performance in reading and science and above average performance in mathematics.
- 6 The great majority of second-generation students come from Turkey, the Middle East and Pakistan. Their parents tend to have relatively low levels of education (Roseveare and Jorgensen, 2004). The group of first-generation students is more diverse in terms of parents' country of origin and levels of education.
- 7 In 2004, the Rockwool Foundation carried out a special PISA survey in Denmark, in which the participating students were not chosen randomly, but on the basis of their migrant background. Participating schools were selected so as to include the maximum possible number of students of non-Western backgrounds in the survey. This procedure resulted – as intended – in pupils of non-Western backgrounds being heavily overrepresented in the sample. Nearly 1 200 non-Western pupils were tested, representing approximately a quarter of all non-Western ninth-grade pupils in Denmark and making up 30% of the total PISA Ethnic sample (Egelund and Tranaes, 2008).

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CHAPTER 2

POLICY ORIENTATIONS

This chapter identifies five priority areas for policy development to improve the education outcomes of immigrant students in compulsory education (Folkeskole) and Vocational Education and Training (VET). Overall, there is now in place a broad range of measures to strengthen the education outcomes of immigrants in Denmark. But availability and quality of support vary between individual schools, VET colleges and municipalities, due to implementation lags, inconsistent efforts and varying degrees of prioritisation. In order to ensure that all immigrant students receive adequate support, this chapter argues that (1) adaptations must be made in the daily practice of every individual school, including changes in school leadership, teacher training and teaching strategies (2) school practice should be guided by a clear, consistent and research-based language policy; (3) parents and communities must be engaged as partners in their children's education; (4) a special focus should be on increasing the proportion of immigrant youth completing their VET education, and (5) the education system as a whole needs to achieve greater consistency of support for all immigrant students and further strengthen the "culture of evaluation".

Teaching and learning environments: strengthening the capacity of practitioners

This section looks at policies and practices at the school level that can help improve the teaching and learning environment in schools and VET colleges with a diverse student intake. The high degree of school autonomy in Denmark means that the effectiveness of strategies for migrant education depends very much on the capacity of school level professionals to implement them. Probably the most important aspect of improving the education of immigrants is to ensure that school/VET leaders and teachers have the understanding, capacity and support to improve and adapt education to cater for the needs of all students – native and immigrant.

For some school leaders and teachers, dealing with diversity is a relatively new challenge. Research indicates that many of them do not feel sufficiently qualified to teach immigrant students and/or have lower expectations of immigrants than of their native peers (EVA, 2005; Rangvid, 2007a; Holmen, 2009). Some schools report that their traditional teaching approaches do not seem to work with demographically more heterogeneous student groups.

The capacity of schools to meet the needs of increasingly diverse student bodies needs to be strengthened. This section argues that for immigrants to succeed in the Danish education system, it is essential that their schools (1) provide effective school leadership on diversity and integration, (2) enable all subject teachers to provide high quality learning environments for a heterogeneous student body and (3) manage to recruit high quality teachers including those from diverse backgrounds. Their practice also needs to be guided by a research-based language policy – this will be addressed in the next section.

Strengths

Extension of teacher training in Danish as a Second Language and intercultural pedagogy

The Danish Ministry of Education has taken steps to update and adapt teacher training so that teachers are provided with adequate pedagogical tools to respond to the needs of diverse student populations. The Ministry 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.

As part of the 2006 reform of initial teacher training for *Folkeskole* teachers, 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. In addition, student teachers can choose Danish as a Second Language (DSL) as one of their main subjects of specialisation in teacher training.

The offer of in-service training in intercultural education and DSL has also been extended. In the *Folkeskole*, professional development is generally optional for teachers, but schools or municipalities can set requirements for teachers to complete certain professional development activities. Independent "Resource Centres" provide in-service teacher training that municipalities or schools can order. The courses typically last between 36 and 240 hours and can be tailored to the particular needs and contexts of the school or municipality. The shorter courses are typically offered to subject teachers and provide them with tools to facilitate language development through their subject content teaching. The longer courses may lead to a pedagogical diploma degree and include training related to formative assessment, intercultural pedagogy and second language acquisition. The municipality of Copenhagen has pioneered

the provision of in-service teacher training on a large scale. About half of the municipality's 2 500 teachers have participated in the courses.

The basic training of teachers in the VET sector also includes modules on cultural diversity. Elements of intercultural education are included in the learning goals of the initial training for VET teachers. In addition, as part of the campaign "We need all youngsters", a number of in-service courses have been developed for the VET sector. Different courses are available for VET contact teachers, VET internship advisors, and VET teachers in general. They focus on issues such as understanding students' social, personal and cultural backgrounds, dealing with various learning styles, and developing linguistic competencies (Danish Ministry of Education, 2008a).

Commitment to diversity in the teaching force

Making the teacher workforce more representative of the student population has also been stated as a desirable policy goal by the Ministry of Education. The additional knowledge and language skills of immigrant-origin teachers, especially their familiarity with the language and culture of immigrant children, are valued as an asset in the Danish school system. The Ministry recommended that municipalities should employ bilingual teachers in schools with a high proportion of immigrant students. In Copenhagen and several other municipalities, teachers who are familiar with the language and culture of immigrant children are also given a higher salary (Danish Ministry of Education, 2008a). In addition, in 2007, the Ministry of Education co-organised a campaign with the Ministry of Integration to encourage more students with an immigrant background to become teachers. The campaign included targeted advertisement, flyers, a website, conferences and other events where "role models" provided information about the career pathway of teachers.⁸

Challenges

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

International research shows that effective leadership is an important characteristic of successful schools in challenging circumstances (Leithwood *et al.*, 2004). Common features of successful leadership in challenging schools have been found to include a culture of high expectations, a core belief that all students can achieve irrespective of context or background, alignment of others to shared vision and values, distributed leadership, staff development and community building (for a summary of research, see Mulford *et al.*, 2008).

In Denmark, there is a concern that school and VET college leaders lack awareness, training and support to take the lead in addressing challenges and opportunities related to diversity. An evaluation report (EVA, 2007) based on a quantitative, questionnaire-based study among 186 school leaders and 59 school administrators from across Denmark finds that several schools see the teaching of bilingual students as remedial rather than as part of their core more prestigious activities. Only a few of the surveyed leaders and administrators believed that teacher in-service training in intercultural pedagogy and second language learning should be a main priority for their school or district. Moreover, in their recruitment decisions, most school leaders are hesitant to give priority to candidates with qualifications in second language acquisition (EVA, 2007).

Principals in Danish schools are former teachers and many of them have not received any professional preparation for school leadership. There is no mandatory pre-service training for school leaders and many of them do not prioritise the time to attend in-service training on diversity and integration issues. The evaluation report found that less than half of the 186 surveyed school leaders had taken part in professional development in this area (EVA, 2007).

Inadequate pedagogical preparation for teachers

For some teachers, dealing with heterogeneous student populations is a relatively new challenge. A 2004 survey showed that about 75 to 80% of teachers did not feel sufficiently qualified to teach immigrant students (Saarup, 2004). An evaluation report (EVA, 2007) highlights that many teachers tend to focus more on the deficits than on the resources of their bilingual students. This “deficit view” may lead them to lower their expectations for these students.

There is evidence that immigrant students in Denmark tend to experience weaker teacher expectations than native students. Analysing data from PISA Copenhagen 2004, Rangvid (2007a) finds that principals at schools attended by many immigrant students reported more often that learning was hindered by teachers’ low expectations and by a lack of encouragement for students to achieve to their full potential. Principals in these schools also reported to a lesser degree that teachers valued academic achievement.

These findings are troubling in the light of international research showing the devastating effect of low teacher expectations on student motivation and performance. Experimental research has shown that low teacher expectations can become self-fulfilling prophecies, *i.e.* they can lead students to perform at levels consistent with these expectations (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968; Brophy and Good, 1974; Rosenthal and Rubin, 1978). A comprehensive review of research in this area suggests that students from stigmatised social groups, such as immigrant students, are particularly vulnerable to such self-fulfilling prophecies (Jussim and Harber, 2005).

The survey results mentioned above point to the fact that teacher training does not prepare teachers sufficiently for the challenges and opportunities of working in schools with diverse student bodies. There is a concern in Denmark that teacher training colleges are not revising and adapting pedagogical instruction enough in the light of national and international research on effective pedagogy for diverse classrooms that are now a reality all over Denmark. According to Rasmussen (2008), Denmark is the only Nordic country that does not have and is not preparing to launch a research-based teacher education programme.

While the supply of teacher training in the areas of intercultural education and second language acquisition has increased, the take-up remains insufficient and uneven. In initial teacher training, there are several obstacles for students to choose Danish as a Second Language (DSL) as part of their specialisation. The subject is not available in all teacher training institutes, so that many students do not have the possibility to specialise in DSL. In 2009, six of the nineteen teacher training institutes offered DSL. The structure of teacher training makes it difficult for students to choose DSL as it is one of the “small subjects” which bring few credit points⁹.

There are no national statistics on the provision of in-service training but there is evidence that commitment to teacher training varies widely across municipalities and that some municipalities do not prioritise it. While between 1 000 and 2 000 (out of 2 500) teachers in Copenhagen have participated in in-service training, in the municipality of Holstebro only ten (out of 1 200) teachers undertook training in this area, to serve the needs of about 1 000 bilingual students in the municipality.

There is also little knowledge in the system about how the training is translated into practice and whether it has any impact on student learning. While some municipalities, especially Copenhagen, have invested heavily in teacher professional development, the effectiveness of training programmes for teachers in intercultural education and DSL has not been systematically evaluated.

After the training, there are few possibilities for teachers to refresh what they have learned or network among themselves to follow up the training. Teachers who have taken in-service training report difficulties in applying their new knowledge and skills once they are back at school. In most schools, there are only a

few teachers with formal qualifications in second language acquisition, and there seems to be little organisational structure to improve the ways in which knowledge is shared and communicated between teachers (Holmen, 2009).

Continuing concerns about the diversity of the teaching force

As recruitment of school leaders and teachers is the responsibility of municipalities, there is no national policy to recruit individuals with a migration background or to monitor developments in the demographic composition of the teaching force. A recent survey (EVA, 2007) suggests that the demographic composition of the teaching force remains more homogenous than that of the student population.¹⁰ While no such survey is available in the VET sector, the Country Background Report indicates that VET colleges have serious difficulties in attracting immigrant-origin teachers (Danish Ministry of Education, 2008a).

It was suggested during the interviews conducted by the OECD team that there may be little backing from the home or immigrant community to encourage their young people to become teachers. If a young immigrant is achieving academically, the parents may want him or her to study towards professions which are higher status occupations within their culture or in Danish society, such as doctors or lawyers.

No information is available on the number of school and VET college leaders with a migration background in Denmark. But in the interviews with the OECD team, it was suggested that this number is probably close to zero. School leaders in Denmark are chosen from among the teaching staff. The recruitment generally relies on self-selection of qualified candidates rather than on clear strategies to identify and develop future leaders. Research from other countries has shown that in such a situation qualified teachers, especially those from minority backgrounds, may not apply because of self-doubts or lack of support (Bush *et al.*, 2005; Pont *et al.*, 2008).

Policy options

Professionalise school leadership through mandatory pre-service training, distribution of leadership tasks and ongoing training and support in dealing with diversity.

Over the past three decades, research on school effectiveness and school improvement has highlighted school leadership as one of the most important factors in improving school outcomes (*e.g.* Scheerens and Bosker, 1997). While effective leadership is important for all schools, research in different countries indicates that the effects of successful leadership on student learning are greatest in schools in more challenging circumstances, *e.g.* schools with high proportions of students from low-SES and/or culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Leithwood *et al.*, 2004, Mulford *et al.*, 2008).

School leadership in Denmark needs to be recognised as a profession distinct from teaching. Leadership requires a specific set of knowledge and competencies which need to be acquired through formal training (Pont *et al.*, 2008). To ensure that all schools have effective leadership, municipalities should make it mandatory for new school leaders to complete pre-service leadership training, such as that required to meet the “National Professional Qualification for Headship” in England (Pont *et al.*, 2008) or the “Standard for Headship” in Scotland (OECD, 2007a).

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 of pedagogy and they need to be able to monitor their teachers’ practice. Targeted initial and in-service training is therefore necessary for all school leaders. In California, for example, the Principal Leadership Institute, which prepares future leaders for urban schools with diverse student populations, has included a module on second language acquisition in the initial training for school leaders¹¹.

Professional training for school leaders in these areas could be embedded in whole-school professional development. There is evidence that whole-school professional development is particularly effective and relevant for professionals in challenging schools as it is situated in actual school contexts and involves both teachers and school leaders. In England, for example, the whole-school professional development programme “Raising the Achievement of Bilingual Learners” has helped raise the confidence of teachers to support their bilingual students and has led to improved student performance (White *et al.*, 2006; Benton and White, 2007). The programme involved the following elements: support with building school leadership teams and creating an inclusive school culture, appointment of a second language consultant within the schools, diagnostic visit by a specialist, development of an immigrant student achievement plan, professional development for teachers, and additional support in the classroom.

In schools with students from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds, 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 Danish Ministry and municipalities 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 DSL 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 need clear guidelines and support from the system level on how to best address diversity issues and language learning. In England, for example, the National College for School Leadership has developed a “Guide to Achieving Equality and Diversity in School Leadership”¹². 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. In Ireland, new Guidelines on Intercultural Education have been prepared, taking a whole-school, cross curricular approach and providing advice to the whole school team (www.ncca.ie).

Municipalities can play an important role in providing guidance and support to school leaders and ensuring that they share good practice with other schools. The Ministry should require that each municipality has a consultant or coordinator who works with school leaders on migrant education issues, and provides expert advice and networking opportunities. In the United Kingdom, for example, an evaluation shows that the use of additional school funding provided through an “Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant” was most effective where local authorities provided active management support, advisory services, professional development for school leaders, information sharing and progress management (Tikly *et al.*, 2005).

Strengthen the pedagogical skills of teachers necessary to meet the needs of the diverse student population.

There are pedagogical approaches that teachers can apply to ensure that all students are held to high expectations and given the support they need to achieve these expectations. In the inclusive *Folkeskole* system in Denmark, particular attention must be paid to adapting teaching to large variations in performance and providing additional support for those who fall behind. 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).

A Danish evaluation report (EVA, 2007) concludes that pre- or in-service training of teachers in these areas does make a difference for the everyday teaching practice at schools. According to the evaluation,

well-trained teachers could easily be identified and distinguished from other teachers during classroom observations and interviews.

The teacher training colleges need to strengthen the research and evidence base on which their instruction in pedagogy is based. A previous OECD review had already questioned whether teacher training was optimally located at the teacher training colleges, away from the universities where pedagogical research takes place (OECD, 2004a). As long as this arrangement is in place, extra efforts must be made by both universities and teacher training colleges to ensure a good flow of information. The Ministry should consider establishing a clearinghouse and funding research to support evidence-based teacher education in intercultural pedagogy and second language acquisition.

While high-quality initial training is necessary and important, efforts must be made to conceive teacher education more in lifelong learning terms (OECD, 2005). The preconditions for this is a clear and concise statement by the Ministry of Education of what teachers are expected to know and do – this teacher profile should include competencies necessary to teach effectively in diverse classrooms. Based on this statement of necessary competences, the stages of initial teacher training, induction and professional development should be better connected. Additionally, it should be made easier for teachers just starting their careers to determine themselves, after a year or two of experience, what additional continuing professional development they need to support their initial training¹³. Throughout the different stages of teacher training a coherent appreciative view of diversity should be communicated to all teachers. To develop a more coherent professional development policy for teachers, municipalities should be encouraged to collect and monitor data on training participation as part of municipal Quality Reports.

It is also important to monitor and evaluate how training translates into practice. Currently there is too little knowledge about which types of training are most effective and whether there are obstacles to implement the new pedagogical approaches in schools. For teachers having participated in training, there should be incentives and fora for continuous teacher exchange and networking after the training, as well as web-based learning resources for teachers to refresh what they have learned. The Ministry and municipalities could provide these or encourage training providers to do so.

Develop coherent policy approaches to increase the number of immigrant-origin teachers and school leaders.

Teachers who are familiar with the experiences, culture and language of immigrant students can serve as role models and enhance the self-confidence and motivation of immigrant students. Their knowledge of the mother tongue of immigrant children can be helpful in allowing students to use their full repertoire of languages to make sense of the content covered in the classroom. Immigrant-origin teachers can also play an important role as school-home liaison and help bridge the gap between families and schools.

There is evidence from international research that using more immigrant-origin/minority teachers is likely to improve the educational experience and outcomes of immigrant students. Research conducted in the United States has shown that teachers tend to have more positive perceptions and higher expectations of students who share their demographic backgrounds (Beady and Hansell, 1981; Ehrenberg *et al.*, 1995; Quijano and Rios, 2000; Dee, 2005). There is also some tentative evidence that performance outcomes increase in certain subjects when students are assigned to a teacher with similar demographic background characteristics (Dee, 2004; Lindahl, 2007).

However, having a similar socio-demographic background is of course neither necessary nor sufficient to teach students successfully. Concerns with teachers' origin should not override other important considerations in recruitment decisions, such as academic achievement, pedagogical know-how and work experience. Rather, the goal should be to redress the current disparity between a largely

homogenous teaching force and an increasingly diverse student population. The diversity of Danish society should be reflected in children's school environment, so that different languages and cultures become a normal and positive aspect of school life. Complementary policies are necessary to improve the intercultural awareness and effectiveness of all teachers and school leaders.

Municipalities should collect and monitor data on the linguistic backgrounds of teachers in the Danish education system. Currently, there is little information at the national or municipality level about the proportion of teachers who have an immigrant background and/or speak immigrant languages. Such data is necessary to identify areas and schools where targeted diversity recruitment policies would be necessary.

In the VET area, the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the Ministry of Integration, should support a targeted recruitment campaign similar to the one conducted in the *Folkeskole* area in 2007. Information and outreach should be targeted at skilled workers with a migration background; the campaign should concentrate on the professional organisations in the craft areas, which can play a role in presenting teaching as a positive career move. Teaching needs to be marketed as an attractive and high status professional option.

In addition, the Ministry could consider setting diversity recruitment targets for teacher training colleges. Entry could be facilitated through offers such as mentoring schemes, taster courses or support in achieving the necessary Danish language requirements. To ensure that qualified immigrant-origin teachers also progress on the career ladder towards school leadership positions, it is important that schools and municipalities develop succession planning strategies taking diversity into account. Potential leaders from diverse backgrounds need to be identified early on in their career and be supported through mentoring or training to develop their leadership skills (Pont *et al.*, 2008).

It is important to focus not only on the quantity of teachers with a migration background, but also on the quality of support that they can provide to immigrant students. Especially in those municipalities where immigrant-origin teachers receive a higher salary, school leaders should ensure that full advantage is taken of the added value that they bring to the system. They could take leadership for areas such as school-home cooperation and community liaison tasks. They should also play a role in ensuring that immigrant cultures and languages form an integral and positive part of school/VET college life.

Developing and implementing a consistent language policy for the education system

This section focuses on policies and practices in the area of language support that can support school professionals in responding effectively to the language development needs of all their students. International research shows that proficiency in the language of instruction is an essential factor in students' educational success, and that immigrant students who do not fully master the language of instruction are at a significant disadvantage in schools (Schnepf, 2004; Christensen and Stanat, 2007).

The Danish "Pisa Ethnic" study shows that immigrant children who often or always speak Danish at home perform only slightly below native Danes (Egelund and Tranaes, 2008). But immigrant children who rarely speak Danish at home perform very significantly below the two other groups.¹⁴ At the upper secondary level, a 2006 evaluation report concludes that the greatest challenge for immigrants in general upper secondary education is the Danish language (Danish Ministry of Education 2008a).

There is recognition across the system that proficiency in the Danish language is an essential requirement for success in school. While an overall framework for teaching DSL is in place, shortfalls in implementation remain. For Denmark to develop a research-based language policy and improve the provision of language support, it is important to (1) ensure consistency in the provision of DSL support, (2)

integrate language and content learning so as to ensure proficiency of immigrants in academic Danish and (3) value and validate proficiency in languages other than Danish.

Strengths

A needs-based approach to language learning

Denmark has adopted a needs-based approach, where every child's language needs are assessed and support is provided accordingly. All immigrant students undergo a language evaluation when they first enter the school system, at age six, or when they change school. The aim of this language assessment is to determine if and to what extent the student needs language support. To support municipalities in this language assessment, the Ministry of Education provides testing material to municipalities (Danish Ministry of Education, 2008a).

A well developed early language support system

In the pre-school sector, Denmark has a well developed early language evaluation and support system. Since 1999, bilingual children undergo early language screening at age three and receive language stimulation if the screening shows that they need it. Children who do not attend day care are obliged to complete the language stimulation course if the professionals judge that they need it. From 2007, native children are also offered a language assessment and language stimulation activities if the professionals, based on the assessment, judge that they need it. Between 2002 and 2008, the proportion of bilingual children who receive language stimulation has increased from 46% to 65% (Danish Ministry of Education, 2008a; Hornbek Toft, 2009).

Introduction of Danish as a Second Language in the Folkeskole and VET sector

In the *Folkeskole*, support in Danish as a Second Language also received increased attention. In 1995, the Ministry has formally introduced Danish as a Second Language as a subject in the *Folkeskole*. As for other subjects, the description of the DSL subject includes formulations of purpose, aims and teaching guides (Sorensen, 2008). The subject is taught to all pupils who are deemed to need such instruction in order to perform on a par with their native peers in the other subjects. There is also increasing focus on the integration of language and content learning. The subject description of DSL states that language development should be integrated in other subjects, such as math, history or music when bilingual students are present in class. The non-binding guideline part of the curriculum for each subject also states that a second language acquisition perspective should be included in the teaching of the subject – including in the preparation of lessons – when bilingual students are present in the class.

Within the VET sector, a subject called “vocational Danish as a second language” has been developed for bilingual students who need to improve their Danish language proficiency in order to complete a VET programme. The subject is an optional part of the VET programmes. Several VET institutions have hired DSL teachers or made arrangements with local language centres to provide support for immigrant students.

Challenges

Inconsistency of provision

While the Ministry has established guidelines for DSL as a separate subject as well as for the inclusion of DSL in all subjects, there are great variations in the interpretation and implementation of these guidelines at the municipality and school level. There are few opportunities to share experiences and exemplars of best practices across municipality boundaries.

The type of provision, teaching programme and progress evaluations of DSL support vary between municipalities. According to Holmen, “there is no guarantee that the guidelines [for DSL] are being followed, no monitoring of the quality and quantity of the actual teaching carried out and no formal assessment of the students’ progress”. Holmen cites evaluation reports of DSL provision (Saarup *et al.*, 2004 and EVA, 2007) which found that “there is serious doubt at the local level about the status of the formal rules and guidelines as well as about the implementation in practice”.

Moreover, there are no specific requirements concerning the qualifications of teachers providing DSL or the type of DSL instruction. For example, it is up to municipalities to decide whether to hire specialist teachers who give additional DSL support or whether to use classroom assistants in classes with a high proportion of immigrants. While there is a requirement that teachers providing DSL must have the necessary qualifications, these qualifications are not further specified at the national level. Schools report that it is not always possible for them to find enough teachers with DSL qualifications. There is also a lack of clarity about the role of the DSL teacher in class and their relationship with mainstream class teachers.

The effectiveness of the language support is not consistently evaluated. There is hardly any research in Denmark on the effectiveness of different approaches to providing DSL support. There is little knowledge in the system as to whether the investment in DSL support has actually led to an improvement in students’ language capacity.

Often only basic (not academic) Danish support

As Holmen (2009) points out, in Denmark, language proficiency is often understood as a precondition for learning, which should preferably be acquired through early language programmes before school, or through remedial programmes outside normal school hours. It is rarely approached as a competence that develops on an ongoing basis throughout all instruction and school contexts (EVA, 2007). DSL is intensely provided at the pre-school level, but at the school level it is often limited to basic remedial instruction for beginners. DSL classes concentrate on students in the first years of *Folkeskole* where they develop basic conversational Danish skills. This support is often not followed into the later years of *Folkeskole* to enable immigrants to enhance their proficiency in academic Danish.

Once having acquired basic communicative Danish skills, immigrants often attend only mainstream classes. Their further language learning then depends on the capacity of the mainstream teachers to differentiate instruction. There is a great deal of uncertainty among school leaders, teachers and parents about the most effective ways to support the language learning of immigrant children. In practice, proficiency in communicative oral Danish seems to be the standard norm that is sought for the immigrants. This is not sufficient if they are to gain academic achievements on a par with their Danish peers.

In the general upper secondary sector, a 2006 evaluation report states that while bilingual students are familiar with everyday Danish, they do not have command of the more academic language used in general upper secondary education (Danish Ministry of Education, 2008a). In spoken Danish, they lack vocabulary and the necessary accurate and varied language and in written Danish they lack skills in grammar, sentence structure and punctuation (Danish Ministry of Education, 2008a).

There are other aspects of the language support system which may lead to interruptions in the DSL learning process of students. For example, once bilingual students leave the DSL support system, they no longer hold the right to get back into the system or to receive DSL support at a later stage of education. In the VET sector, the provision of DSL support relies on self-selection of students rather than on a mandatory needs assessment.

Mother tongues are not recognised and valued in the school system

Denmark does not provide mother tongue instruction to immigrant students. This is a justifiable policy in view of the financial and practical difficulties of providing mother tongue education in a country in which immigrants speak more than 100 languages. However, valuing and recognising students' knowledge of other languages should be an important goal in itself. Danish research highlights the importance of building on students' prior knowledge as a basis for their learning and for seeing them as persons with resources rather than with deficits (Institut for Uddannelsesforskning, 2006).

There is a widespread perception in Denmark that immigrants' knowledge of several languages is not recognised and valued as an asset in the school system, and in society more broadly. Even in schools with a high proportion of immigrants, different mother tongues are often not seen as a positive and normal aspect of school life; they are seen more as a problem than a resource. Under current practice, students are allowed to take their mother tongue as an elective subject in secondary education. However, they rarely do. Schools do not encourage students and it was also reported by students and parents that employers do not value knowledge of non-European languages. In a discussion with a group of 20 VET students enrolled in an institute outside Copenhagen, the OECD review team was told by one student that he would never mention on his CV the fact that he knew Turkish; the others agreed.

Children's proficiency in their mother tongue is not assessed at any point in the education system, and they are not supported or encouraged in improving or using their mother tongue. Educational authorities lack information about students' language backgrounds. Except in the municipality of Copenhagen, information on children's mother tongues is not included in administrative registers. Through the complete exclusion of immigrant languages in school life, the education system is missing a chance to affirm immigrants' additional knowledge and cultural and linguistic background in a positive way, as an opportunity and not just a challenge.

Without having to make a commitment to provide mother tongue tuition to all immigrants, there is much room in Denmark to approach immigrant languages in a more positive way. Many different arrangements using students' native languages to differing degrees can be useful in helping immigrant students achieve in education, such as using bilingual classroom assistants, or ensuring that the most common mother languages be part of the foreign language learning in the formal curriculum.

Policy options*Ensure systematic and standardised language support for all immigrant students across Denmark*

In a recent study, Christensen and Stanat (2007) have compared the characteristics of language learning programmes in those countries that seem to succeed best in teaching the language of instruction to immigrants. Their main finding is that language support in the more successful countries is systematic and consistent across grade levels. Three characteristics are of particular importance: (1) language support is based on centrally developed curriculum documents, (2) teachers must be specifically trained in second language acquisition and the (3) programmes are time-intensive and offered in a continuous way throughout primary and secondary schools.

This means that while approaches to language support must be adapted at the local level, a set of comprehensive frameworks and guidelines from the municipality or even the national level would help to create consistency across grades and transitions (Grubb, 2008). The Danish Ministry of Education should develop a succinct, research-based language policy document. This document should outline the main principles on which language instruction should be based. For example, it should emphasise the need to integrate language and content learning and highlight the importance of a positive approach to mother

tongues other than Danish. There should be clear requirements as to who is entitled to DSL support (both conversational and academic) and how this support is to be provided. Municipalities should be required to adhere to this basic set of principles and support schools in implementing them.

The Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages can provide a good basis for a consistent language policy. In Ireland, for example, the education authorities have prepared Primary and Post-Primary Assessment Kits which use the Framework (www.ncca.ie). 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.

But developing such a policy document is not enough. It must be implemented, monitored, reviewed and evaluated. Municipalities have an important role to play in communicating consistent criteria for language learning. Every municipality should have an action plan for language learning in line with the overall Ministerial policy and a consultant or coordinator for migrant education who can give consistent guidance to school leaders and help share good practices between schools. EVA and the Task Force on Bilingual Pupils should be part of the process, providing evaluations, and giving guidance and exemplars of good practice, so that providers can share their knowledge.

To ensure that all immigrant students are guaranteed the same quality support, there should be specific requirements concerning the qualifications needed to become a DSL teacher. These requirements should be accompanied by measures to increase the number of teachers who have a qualification in DSL. Such efforts should include resolving structural issues in initial teacher training to make it easier for students to choose DSL as part of their specialisation and extending in-service training in DSL. In addition, efforts could be made to upskill language teachers to become DSL teachers, as they already have expertise in linguistics and language teaching. For schools with very few immigrant students, municipalities could encourage them to cooperate and share DSL teacher resources through formalised networks.

There is also a need for greater focus on evaluation and development of effective teaching strategies and didactic materials for second language learning.

Enhance integrated language and content learning to ensure that all students develop the academic language needed to succeed in education and the labour market

There is evidence from Denmark and elsewhere that time-intensive sustained language support is necessary for students to develop academic language. International research indicates that while children develop "communicative" language skills relatively quickly, it takes much longer for them to become proficient in the "academic" language used in school environments (Cummins, 1979).

Several Danish schools and municipalities report that the benefits of early language support seem to "fade out" in grades four to five, when instruction becomes more complex and academic in nature. This can be seen from the results of reading tests carried out by schools at the local level. From then on, the gap between natives and immigrant children often widens and becomes a barrier for success in the *Folkeskole* and beyond. The observation that the achievement gap between immigrants and natives seems to become larger in secondary education compared to primary education is consistent with experiences in other countries (e.g. Cummins, 1984; Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2007).

The duration of second language support is important. For immigrant students to develop the academic language necessary for more complex instruction, language instruction in DSL must be provided on an ongoing basis, not only for their first few years in school. Fluency in speaking does not mean that

students fully master academic and written language. Throughout the *Folkeskole* as well as upper secondary education, the needs-based approach to DSL support should be sustained. In Sweden, for example, all students whose mother tongue is not Swedish have the right to study Swedish as a second language, and this right applies to both compulsory and upper secondary school. The subject SSL is equivalent to Swedish (as a first language) with respect to eligibility for admission to university or other post-secondary study (Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 2008).

In addition, DSL instruction should not only happen in separate classes but there is a need for all teachers to realise their role in building on the language capacity of their students as they teach specialist subjects. A whole-school approach is required to address the language needs of all students, but particularly the immigrant students. It is essential that language development takes place across all subjects of the curriculum. Mainstream (subject) teachers need basic knowledge about language development and they need to understand their own key role in strengthening the linguistic capacities of students, as well as in showing respect for other languages and cultures.

Research points to a number of techniques to facilitate language acquisition in all subjects, such as frontloading (analysing the linguistic demands of a course and teaching these demands up front), scaffolding, providing graphic illustrations and using vocabulary explicitly and strategically so that all students can learn effectively in Danish (Dutro and Moran, 2003, in Grubb, 2008). Such language development techniques need to be part of initial teacher training and targeted in-service training.

Each school needs teachers with specialist training in DSL that other teachers can turn to for advice and support. Subject teachers need to interact and teach in teams with DSL specialists to coordinate language progress of all students. This cooperation between subject and DSL teachers needs to be formalised. School leaders must value such cooperation and they must provide timeslots in the schedule of both subject and DSL teachers to coordinate their instruction.

Value and validate mother tongue proficiency

Research shows that students learn best when they can draw on their full linguistic and cognitive repertoire to achieve new objectives (Cummins, 2000). Valuing the mother tongue of immigrant children is an essential part of developing a positive and appreciative approach towards diversity. It means seeing students' language capacities as part of their personal, social and cultural identity and welcoming it as a tool for learning and understanding (Holmen, 2009). This will help children bridge the gap between their home and school and ensure that their cultural and language background is valued as much as that of the majority (Brind *et al.*, 2007).

Without having to make the – very costly – commitment to teach everyone in their mother tongue, the Ministry can create the incentives and means for municipalities and schools to offer immigrant students the possibility of enhancing their mother tongue proficiency, and to have mother tongue proficiency properly recognised.

As part of this approach, the Ministry should consider broadening the existing language screening at age three to assess immigrant children's linguistic competencies both in Danish and the language(s) they speak at home. This can be a way to validate and signal proficiency in another language and to devise best suited support strategies in language learning for each individual child. Moreover, to acknowledge that a student knows a language other than Danish is a first step towards attaching a value to that knowledge.

The Ministry should also promote and strengthen existing policy concerning “immigrant language as an elective subject”, offering students to take foreign languages such as Turkish, Arabic, Urdu or Farsi as elective subjects within the teaching programme and allowing them to take this subject in the leaving

examination of the *Folkeskole*. These foreign language subjects should be offered as of grade seven, on an equal footing with French or German. In the Netherlands, for example, immigrant students can choose their mother tongue as a second foreign language as part of the formal school curriculum.

Across the curriculum, many different approaches using the native language of children to differing degrees can be useful in helping immigrant students achieve in education. Municipalities and schools should consider drawing more on bilingual classroom assistants. But also the Danish subject teachers, without being able to understand immigrant languages, can encourage children to draw on their mother tongue for learning and understanding. More research is needed on effective ways to optimise the use of immigrants' language resources for learning in Danish. The Ministry should consider funding and encouraging research activity in this area. This could be conducted as action research, where teachers themselves participate in trying out and evaluating different approaches.

Notwithstanding the political and financial difficulty of actively supporting bilingual education, the Ministry could strengthen incentives for language learning by requiring that the Municipal Quality Reports indicate how many students take their mother tongues as one of their subjects in their *Folkeskole* leaving examination. The Ministry should also explore, with embassies of sending countries the possibility of adapting literacy and language programmes that have been developed for use in those countries, to the learning needs of young people as well as adults now living in Denmark¹⁵.

A positive approach to language diversity will offer multiple values: it will strengthen the language options available for students, support and affirm the cultural identity of immigrant students and enhance the language pool of Denmark.

Capitalising on parental and community resources

Immigrant parents living in Denmark are a very heterogeneous group. This section is concerned with those immigrant parents who, for example, do not speak Danish, who may not have been through the Danish education system or who have low levels of education, who live in immigrant neighbourhoods, who are from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds, may be unemployed and who do not understand how the Danish education system works. Some of the policy options proposed for this area may be equally relevant to Danish parents of less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds. This section is not concerned with the many other immigrant parents who understand the Danish education system and who, with their children, are successfully integrating into Danish life and its education system.

Research in different countries shows that parental involvement (at home and at school) in education is associated with improved student outcomes (Jeynes, 2005; 2007; Schofield, 2006). In Denmark, parental involvement is particularly important because school only lasts for half a day and a significant responsibility for support with homework and choice of educational pathways is placed with parents. OECD (2004a) noted that family backgrounds have a comparatively stronger effect on student results in Denmark than in other countries. Those students who do not receive parental support are likely to fall further behind their peers.

While parental involvement matters for all children, immigrant parents, especially those with lower socio-economic status (SES), are often less involved than native born parents. Research from other countries shows that many immigrant parents are likely to encounter difficulties of a linguistic or cultural nature, (Eurydice, 2009) or because of resource constraints, lower levels of education or lack of knowledge of the school system (Field *et al.*, 2007). They may also feel alienated and unwelcome in a foreign school environment (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003).

Immigrant parents in Denmark have varying educational backgrounds. The average educational attainment of immigrant mothers and fathers is about 7.5 and 9.5 years respectively, compared to 11 to 12 years for native Danish parents and they have a low rate of labour market integration, compared to native Danish parents (Colding *et al.*, 2005). Data from the Danish Ministry of Education (2008a) noted that the highest completed level of education for almost 40% of immigrant parents of pupils in compulsory schools was primary or lower secondary.

Strengths

Legislation

The Basic School Act recognises the importance of the co-operation of parents in the provision of education to their children (Danish Ministry of Education, 2008a). Schools are, by law, required to co-operate actively with parents in order to promote the well-being and educational success of their children and support their learning. All schools have a school board which has a majority of parent representatives and many schools with a high proportion of immigrant pupils have taken special initiatives to involve their parents (Danish Ministry of Education, 2008a).

National and municipal projects

There are a number of national and municipal projects which highlight the many opportunities and challenges for schools connected to cooperating with immigrant parents (Danish Ministry of Education, 2008a).

- The project “This Works in Our School”, *inter alia*, recognised immigrant parents as a key resource in the education of their children, particularly in relation to mother tongue. It affirms parental involvement and recognises and respects their cultural diversity.
- A project on “friendship families” aims to enable immigrants to get better acquainted with the society, informal codes and norms.
- The “Retention Caravan” project aims at equipping VET staff with competencies to help them provide immigrant parents with advice and guidance to make informed decisions about their children’s education.
- The Ministry of Integration has developed in-service courses on parental involvement for teachers to become full-time or part-time “parent guides”.
- Municipalities distribute welcome materials in common immigrant languages and are encouraged to employ teachers with immigrant backgrounds (Danish Ministry of Education, 2008a).

Local projects

At the local and school level, there are many examples of good practice where school leaders and teachers are reaching out to parents (both immigrant and Danish) to facilitate their involvement and integration in the school system:

- Projects, such as the “morning café” in a Copenhagen school, allow parents to learn about the school, meet teachers and create mutual understanding and respect. Parents are contacted personally and invited to attend.
- Some schools provide after school programmes from 14:00 to 17:00, others have “hot lines” for parents to help them if they have queries, others organise father/son or mother/daughter/son clubs.

- Some schools have experimented with “family classes” where parents and children together participate in instruction, learn skills and patterns that reduce disciplinary and learning problems.
- Some schools, for example in Norrebro, work with parent organisations to convince the native parents not to opt out of the local schools.

In addition, there are also efforts to provide help with homework and other learning opportunities for students whose parents cannot provide such support. The development of all day schools is being piloted to create time and opportunities for different ways of learning and increased support to help pupils reach the same academic level as students from more privileged areas (Danish Ministry of Education, 2008a). Different forms of out-of-school support such as homework cafés and youth evening schools are offered by a range of non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Challenges

Diversity in the Danish society

School stakeholders reported a lack of integration between native and immigrant parents. Social networks tend to be ethnically divided so it is difficult for immigrant students and their parents to get support and guidance from their Danish peers and their parents (Colding *et al.*, 2005). The review team noted that immigrant communities in Denmark do not have strong community associations that advocate for them, compared to other countries. This may be linked to the relatively recent nature of immigration in Denmark (Liebig, 2007). The community associations that exist are not particularly involved in education matters and there seems to be hardly any communication between the school system and organisations such as the Council of Ethnic Minorities.

Availability of appropriate knowledge for parents

Many immigrant parents have little knowledge of the Danish society and school system, its services and what is available to enable them and their children to integrate. Parents may not know where to get information, *e.g.* in the context of choosing between the academic and vocational options in youth education. Many immigrant parents may not understand the VET system and may not deem it to have high status, and they may not be aware that it is possible to proceed from VET to higher education.

The high degree of school choice in Denmark may pose an important challenge for immigrant parents. In the United States, Schneider *et al.* (2000) found that while choice policies increase the level of information of all parents, the quantity and quality of information seems to be highly correlated with parents’ level of education. Practical problems such as a lack of transportation, concerns about security, operating hours of schools and workplace arrangements can also hinder parents’ exercise of school choice (Andre-Bechely, 2008). Research in the United States suggested that proximity to schools seems more important to low-income ethnic minority parents (Hastings *et al.*, 2005).

In Denmark, school choice patterns are clearly influenced by socio-demographic factors. Native (Danish) students tend to choose schools with fewer immigrants and low-SES students (Bloem and Diaz, 2007). Rangvid (2007b) found that native Danes tend to “opt out” of local schools when the proportion of immigrants is above 35 to 40% and that immigrants who speak Danish at home do opt out from schools with high shares of students from low-SES parents. At the same time, students who speak another language than Danish at home, especially those from less advantaged socio-economic backgrounds, are much less responsive to the school composition. Rangvid (2007b) also noted that “parents may not be sufficiently informed to make choices in the best interest of their children”.

Parental responsibilities in the Danish education system

In the Danish system of half-day schools and below-OECD average compulsory instruction time (for ages 7 to 11), parental support with homework and other learning activities is important for students' success. The length of the *Folkeskole* day, mornings only, is an issue for parents and is a particular problem for some immigrant parents whose own education levels are low compared to Danish parents.

In the Danish education system, unlike in the countries of origin of many immigrants, parents are expected to play an active part in their children's education and school life. It was reported to the OECD team that very few immigrant parents attend parent teacher meetings since parent/school co-operation may not be a part of their original culture. Some immigrant parents take their children on long holidays to their home countries but may not realise that this will leave their children at a significant disadvantage when they return to their classes.

At least 40% of immigrant parents have not experienced education beyond compulsory education. Remaining in and progressing through education, post 16 years, may be alien to their cultures or personal experiences, but it is the way to social and economic integration and to success in the Danish society.

Policy options

Improve availability of appropriate information for immigrant families

Relevant and timely data must be easily accessible for immigrant parents. A central repository of information is required. As noted above, many of the government departments, municipalities and schools have different initiatives. The findings of these initiatives need to be shared to achieve best practice and minimise duplication of effort and expense. In Ireland, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment's DVD *The What, Why and How of Children's Learning in Primary School* is an example of an information resource for parents. It is available in English with language subtitles in four other languages (www.ncca.ie).

In a system using free school choice, it is especially important that immigrant parents are supported with information on the different choice options. In the United States, there are examples of good practice in this area. In one large district in North Carolina, for example, a school choice campaign involved home visits to low-income and immigrant families, choice booths in shopping malls, information fairs and hotlines provided in different languages to explain the school programmes. Godwin *et al.* (2006) suggest that the campaign was successful in convincing more low-SES and minority families to exercise school choice.

Personal contact, at least in the initial stages, is key to ensuring that immigrant parents engage, understand the data and have the opportunity to seek clarification in a friendly, comfortable and respectful manner. The Danish parents in particular have an important role to play in making the immigrant parents feel welcome in the school community. The National Association of School Parents should proactively advocate for and involve immigrant parents. No question should be deemed unimportant. The municipalities and the Ministry should continue to actively support parent groups such as "Use Your Local School" in Norrebro, which work together with school leaders to convince native parents not to opt out of schools with high proportions of immigrants and to provide an attractive school offer for all.

To promote communication between schools and immigrant families, Eurydice (2009) suggests the use of interpreters in various situations in the school life (for example in parent meetings) and the appointment of resource persons with responsibility for liaising between immigrant pupils, their families and the school. In Ireland, home co-ordinators build bridges between schools and the family. Through the Home School Community Liaison Scheme, each targeted school assigns a home-school coordinator to be a

mediator and contact person to gain 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 (www.education.ie). In California, the Puente programme provides non-traditional forms of counselling, which facilitate the contact between schools and parents, offers information about the requirements for college and helps to create a supportive network for students and parents (www.puente.net).

Immigrant parents need to be affirmed by the school in a positive way. Such an approach would involve immigrant parents as competent and active players in the school system and in their children's learning. It would give their children a positive attitude towards their heritage culture. In Upper Austria, through the "backpack parents" project, parents are invited to school to learn about pedagogical approaches used in school and receive materials to teach their own children in their mother tongue at home. The idea is to empower mothers and involve them as the experts able to provide additional support in the mother tongue (Nusche *et al.*, 2009).

Immigrant parents who have been through the education system should act as mentors for others trying to understand and participate in the system. Where parents do not have the confidence, information or skills to understand the importance of remaining in education then the immigrant community leaders have a responsibility to ensure that their members understand and believe in the benefits of education and know where to access education services for themselves and their children. The leaders must promote high expectations and aspirations for all their members but particularly for their younger members. For example, the Council of Ethnic Minorities, or another such organisation, should engage and take a lead role in this area. In Ireland, for example, immigrants have a strong advocacy voice through the Immigrant Council of Ireland (www.immigrantcouncil.ie).

Assist and upskill immigrant parents by providing flexible learning opportunities

Research suggests that efforts to improve the social and economic well-being of the parents would also benefit their children (Colding *et al.*, 2005). The Guidance Services should engage immigrant parents when their children present for language assessment at three years of age. The Services should provide them with accessible information in a format that they can understand and give them the confidence and opportunity to ask questions. This would also provide an opportunity to outline where Danish language classes are available, where and how they can re-engage in learning themselves and provide them with pathways of access and progression, acknowledging their prior learning.

In some countries, broader services for parents are directly offered at schools to connect parents' own development to that of their children. In Austria, the city of Vienna offers mothers German language courses at the kindergarten or school where they drop off their children. Although no data are collected to report the impact on student performance, an evaluation exercise reports positive effects on school climate and school-parent communication (Nusche *et al.*, 2009).

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 (Brind *et al.*, 2008).

Immigrant parents and adults also need to be enticed back into education. Upskilling will not only enhance their employment prospects but will also enhance their ability to interact with their children in helping them with their education and will also give them the confidence to interact with the school and its

many activities. In Ireland, the National Skills Strategy (2007) aims, *inter alia*, to progress all members of the labour force up at least one level in the National Framework of Qualifications by 2020.

In Denmark, the Municipality Guidance Service, adult and vocational education services and enterprises should all work together to maximise the opportunities for adult immigrants to access education and then progress on into employment. Opportunities for flexible learning could be highlighted, whereby, for example, home based parents could attend morning classes and working parents attend evening classes (with kindergarten facilities).

Increasing retention in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector

This section is concerned with young immigrants who, having completed the *Folkeskole*, are participating in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) programme and are at risk of dropping out. It is not, for the most part, dealing with those who are successfully navigating their way through the VET programme and into the labour market or progressing onto higher education.

On completion of the *Folkeskole*, students progress to the Youth Education Sector. Sixty percent of the immigrant students go to the VET programmes, versus 54% of the native Danes (Danish Ministry of Education, 2008a). The VET programmes typically consist of a 20- to 60-week basic course followed by a main course which students complete, alternating between learning in a company that offers practical training and school-based periods at the VET college.

As discussed in chapter 1, only 51% of those who start a VET programme are expected to complete it. This is much lower than the completion rates in general upper secondary education. The situation is further compounded by the fact that only 39% of immigrants and descendants who start VET are expected to complete it. Completion rates are greater for immigrant women at 47% compared to 30% for men (Danish Ministry of Education, 2008b).

In 2006, the government prioritised and set its new goals for retention in education to the end of Youth Education. By 2010, 85% of young people are expected to complete youth education and this should rise to at least 95% by 2015 (Danish Ministry of Education, 2008b). To achieve the 95% goal, the education system must raise overall completion rates, but particularly those of immigrants who have a disproportionately high drop-out rate.

The immigrant students who enrol in the VET programmes on average have lower socio-economic status than the native Danes. However, Colding *et al.* (2004) find that their socio-economic family background only has a small effect on immigrant drop-out rates in VET. This suggests that other factors, such as the academic and linguistic demands in the basic VET programmes, or difficulties in finding an apprenticeship place in the main part of the programmes, are also at play.

Strengths

Existing success

It is important to remember that almost 40% of immigrants are succeeding in VET. From the point of view of education, the descendants manage considerably better than their parents, particularly the girls who are breaking with the social heritage (by completing youth education) (Hummelgaard *et al.*, 2002). This success must be acknowledged and celebrated and worked on to continue to improve completion rates.

Stakeholders thinking strategically

Over the last ten years a significant amount of strategic thought and actions have already improved the VET programmes and the educational circumstances of immigrants. This includes the government, the Ministry of Education, the enterprise sector, VET providers and researchers.

The Ministry funds the VET system directly through a taximeter system based on student enrolment numbers. It supervises and is responsible for general education policies and has established the Advisory Council for Initial Vocational Education and Training to provide advice and guidance. The Ministry of Education also stipulates a number of political priority areas each year. The VET providers are self-governing institutions. They are enabled to formulate local or regional projects within these priority areas, and to apply for funding from the Ministry. Programmes can be evaluated by the Danish Evaluation Institute which also conducts research and disseminates knowledge amongst all stakeholders.

Since the year 2010, there is a new and more in-depth training programme for teachers in the VET area at diploma level. The programme is a one year full time programme equivalent to 60 ECTS points. In general, colleges are required to draw up plans for the competence development of their teachers.

There have been a range of successful initiatives in the VET area including:

- “The Retention Caravan” – a four-year initiative (2008-12) at a cost of DKK 71 million (Danish kroner), which focuses on young people from immigrant youth. Initiatives include retention coordinators at school, contact with parents, role models, development of teacher competencies, networks between actors in the area, homework support options and pedagogical development. The Retention Caravan is a collaborative project between the Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and integration Affairs and the Ministry of Education.
- “We need all Youngsters” launched by the Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs in 2002. The campaign involved role models with immigrant background to inform immigrant students about the Danish education system, collaboration with voluntary organisations and homework cafés, including “homework cafés online”. An evaluation showed that 50% of the students in the initiative found that the role models inspired them to a great or very great extent to enrol in or complete a youth education programme.
- The 46 municipal Youth Guidance Centres provide guidance to pupils as well as their parents, irrespective of the pupil’s cultural background, in grade schools and at municipal level. Parents and students are also informed about VET in local radio programmes and via leaflets about VET available in Danish, Turkish, Somalia, Arabic and Urdu.
- The Ministry has made it mandatory for all students at risk of dropping out to be offered mentorship by the VET colleges. In addition, contact teachers make an assessment of the students’ prior learning and help them draw up an individual education plan.

Role of the enterprise sector

The Confederation of Danish Employers (2008) published a report on *Non-Western Immigrants and the Labour Market* which acknowledges the positive contribution to reducing the shortage of labour that immigrants make to Danish companies. The report highlights a number of problems and suggests improvements for Non-Western immigrants living and working in Denmark.

A compilation of reflections by Danish business and organised industry on *Business and Migration* (Poskakukhina, 2009) also highlights a number of key points concerning the needs of residents from a non-Danish background. They note, for example, the fact that there is space for the Danes to become more accessible and welcoming to the foreigners living among them and the need for the public to become more open-minded towards non-Europeans settling in Denmark. This requires the political establishment to be honest and consistent in communicating the message that Denmark may have to welcome increasingly more foreigners. They further state that the homogeneous Danish society will inevitably have to change, the Danish mentality has to change.

Supports at the VET college level

There are many structures/policies that support the students while in the VET programme. These include membership of the Board of Governors, mentoring programmes, their contact teachers, the student's Personal Education Plan, involvement of the family, new flexible education pathways, the log book, the web-based planning tool *Elevplan* and guidance in the VET colleges, along with the 46 Municipality Youth Guidance Centres.

The basic VET programme provides students who have poor educational attainment levels on leaving *Folkeskole* with the opportunity for compensatory education in a less academic environment where practical and applied learning can concentrate on the interests of the learners.

Challenges

Academic and linguistic demands on students in the basic VET programme

Drop-out rates are greatest in the basic programme. Students are most vulnerable when they leave the *Folkeskole* and initially enter VET. Thirty percent of students who entered a VET programme drop out during the basic course.

Inadequate educational preparedness from grade school is one of the main reasons for drop out from the basic VET programme (Colding *et al.*, 2005). The immigrants graduating from the *Folkeskole* tend to have lower school leaving grades in the core subjects (math and Danish) than their native peers (Colding, 2005). The Danish "PISA Ethnic 2005" study indicates that, towards the end of *Folkeskole*, 54% of students with non-Western backgrounds and 22% of pupils with Western backgrounds (for a definition, see chapter 1) did not have functional reading skills, which must be considered an obstacle to completing upper secondary education successfully (Egelund and Tranaes, 2008).

In recent years, there has been a debate concerning the level of academic requirements in the basic VET programmes. In 2004, a qualitative research project examined the reasons why so many immigrant youth drop out (Jensen and Jorgenson, 2004).¹⁶ The study found that immigrant youth who had dropped out felt that their weaker language and subject skills had been an obstacle to participating actively in the instruction. Colding *et al.* (2005) suggest that VET students do not realise that the curriculum in VET includes academic subjects and may choose VET precisely because they did not do so well in academic studies at grade school. The Danish Council for Strategic Research (2008) indicates that there has been a scholasticisation of the education content in VET causing students with strong practical, but with less theoretical potential, to drop out.

Jensen and Jorgenson's (2004) study further found that students' difficulties with academic demands in VET training were connected with their weak Danish language proficiency. In particular, during the OECD visit, stakeholders voiced concern that there is insufficient emphasis on helping students who have a good command of conversational Danish acquire necessary pre-technical and technical Danish, which is an important precondition for them to achieve in the VET system and the workplace.

In 2007, amendments to the Act on Vocational Education and Training included revisions to address the concerns described above. Among other things, revisions in the basic course curricula aimed to ensure a closer connection between the general and the vocational parts of the programmes. The VET colleges have also been obliged to develop "basic course packages", *i.e.* specially designed courses for different target groups. Many of these "packages" were developed with an emphasis on students who learn in a more practical way. These amendments have been implemented since 2008, and so far, no evaluation results concerning the impact on completion rates and performance are available.

While increased efforts are necessary in the *Folkeskole* to improve students' academic and linguistic skills, the VET sector itself also needs to focus further on adapting and revising instruction to meet the needs of all learners in the VET programmes. Unlike in the *Folkeskole* sector, there has been less focus in the VET sector to provide teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to differentiate instruction for diverse learning needs and take the language development needs of their students into account. Teachers need to be able to upskill their students' language proficiency and literacy skills, while at the same time teaching their specialist vocational content as part of language in subject. While in-service training in DSL is available for VET teachers, very few have taken such training.

Learning and social environment in the VET sector

There is also a perception among stakeholders that the VET sector does not provide a sufficiently responsive school and social environment for students to stay on. The Danish Council for Strategic Research (2008) found, *inter alia*, that increased individualisation and the pedagogical idea of giving vocational students responsibility for their own education and learning make vocational students with poor technical and social qualifications more likely to drop out. Researchers consulted during the OECD visit agreed that with the increased individualisation of VET programmes, there had been fewer opportunities for students and teachers to form learning communities and learn through social interaction. Jensen and Jorgenson (2004) found that teaching methods requiring independent work were perceived by immigrant students as an obstacle to completing their course.

The VET sector does not have a positive image, unlike the general upper secondary sector. It does not have the same positive social climate and, as the Danish Ministry of Education (2005) put it "students who do not thrive socially are more likely to drop out". Compared to the upper secondary academic sector, there are fewer after-school activities that would provide opportunities or incentives for students to spend more time at the colleges. According to Jensen and Jorgenson (2004), immigrant students in the VET sector tend to form social networks exclusively with other immigrants. This ethnic division of social networks makes it more difficult for them to receive support and guidance from their Danish peers and their parents. Those immigrant youth who managed well in the VET system were typically those who learnt and socialised as an integral part of a group with native Danish students.

There is a tendency for immigrant students to cluster in a few of the VET programmes, namely mechanics, services, and health programmes, especially dentistry. Jensen and Jorgenson (2004) suggest that this relatively one-sided choice of courses may be explained by the fact that young people generally draw on their ethnic network in making a course choice. While guidance counsellors are available at the *Folkeskole* and at the municipality level, immigrant students are less likely to use the services of these counsellors than native students (Colding *et al.*, 2005).

Finding an apprenticeship

There is a somewhat lesser vulnerability when students move from the basic to the main programme but students continue to drop out. Twenty percent of the students who enter the main programme of the VET sector do not complete it.

To start the main part of a VET programme, students need an apprenticeship contract with a company. Jensen and Jorgenson (2004) found that the lack of apprenticeships for immigrant students was one of the most serious obstacles to completing vocational education. Although in recent years immigrants and descendants have benefited from higher numbers of contracts available to them in the main VET programme (Danish Ministry of Education, 2008b), immigrants continue to face greater difficulties than native Danes in finding an apprenticeship place. A group of students interviewed by the OECD team identified difficulties in obtaining an apprenticeship as the single most important reason for drop out.

Liebig (2007) suggests that these difficulties are linked to more general barriers for immigrants to integrate into the Danish labour market, such as lack of access to professional networks, limited knowledge of the Danish labour market, information asymmetries and discrimination.

Jensen and Jorgenson's study (2004) suggests that there is a discriminatory tendency among employers to judge potential apprentices based on preconceptions about the average skills of the socio-demographic group to which they belong. The study indicates that hiring apprentices from immigrant background was often seen by employers as entailing higher costs than hiring native Danes. Employers expected that the immigrants might not fit in with the company culture or have inferior skills than native Danes. To compensate for these perceived disadvantages, immigrant youth needed higher grades than their Danish classmates in order to be considered for an apprenticeship place.

There is a possibility for students who cannot find an apprenticeship place to complete their VET programme in school-based training. Immigrant students are overrepresented in these courses. The Ministry of Education has significantly reduced the provision of school-based training in recent years as graduates from these programmes had greater difficulties in integrating into the labour market.

Policy options

Adapt pedagogy and support offered to diverse students

While many successful initiatives have been implemented around the VET colleges, such as improved guidance and mentoring, there is also a need to adapt the core business of teaching and learning in the VET classrooms to increasingly diverse learner needs.

One way of responding to individual learner needs is to ensure accurate diagnosis of any basic learning difficulties, such as math or literacy problems, at the beginning of a VET course. Based on this assessment, help should be targeted from the beginning, rather than waiting to gradually discover the weaknesses – by which point in time the student may have dropped out. A developmental project in social and health education programmes in Denmark showed that helping immigrants to read and understand texts and exercises had a positive influence on retention (Dahlgard, 2007 in Danish Ministry of Education, 2008a).

In the United Kingdom, a large scale study conducted in the 1990s assessed the relationship between basic skills support and retention in further education (The Basic Skills Agency, 1997). The study found that among students with basic skills difficulties, those who did receive additional basic support in language, literacy and math were nearly three times as likely to complete their course compared to those who did not receive support. However, the study also found that there are barriers deterring students from using existing skills support offers, such as the stigma attached to being identified as having low basic skills levels, reluctance to spend extra hours in class, or failure to understand the assessment results or the importance of these skills for completing their course. Where possible, it is thus advisable that basic skills support be provided as an integral part of the course rather than an extra option.

Research in Denmark showed that difficulties with academic requirements are often related to language barriers, especially in academic and pre-technical Danish (Danish Ministry of Education, 2008a). Indeed, a 2006 evaluation report concluded that the greatest challenge for immigrants in youth education is the Danish language (Danish Ministry of Education 2008a). VET teachers and leaders need knowledge of the special pedagogy involved in teaching Danish as a vocational language that permeates all their work. As in the *Folkeskole*, there should be a greater focus in VET to include language development in the instruction of all other subjects, in addition to support provided by DSL specialists. The Council of

Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages can be used in this context as a tool in understanding language requirements for successfully accessing the curriculum.

The reform of the initial training of VET teachers should provide opportunities to include modules for teachers to understand the particular language, academic, social and cultural needs of the immigrant students. VET colleges and their teachers need to have access to the detail of different models of successful practice in language acquisition and be encouraged to share their ideas so that professional cross-fertilisation takes place. A systematic approach to in-service training is also needed to ensure that all teachers in VET colleges receive basic training on techniques such as differentiated instruction and language development. These areas should become an integral part of the training programme for all involved in VET, irrespective of their specialist areas. To ensure that all teachers receive such in-service training, there should be a formal framework facilitating this. For example, time for in-service training should be scheduled in teachers' timetables.

The individual education plan used by VET colleges is a key tool for informing the students, their parents and their teachers on their progress. Young immigrant or descendant students should work in groups with Danish students (Danish Council for Strategic Research, 2008). This will allow for collegiality, team work, problem solving and can result in both academic and social competencies being achieved. Teachers could play a greater role in creating learning groups in which students from different backgrounds are mixed (Jensen and Jorgenson, 2004).

In providing guidance services, special attention needs to be paid to transition phases. The *Folkeskole* and the VET providers, in collaboration with parents, guidance counsellors and local enterprises need to interact with potential students when they are in year nine and, in particular, if they chose to participate in year ten. This will help inform the students about the various VET programmes and they will be able to make informed decisions about the specialist area they may wish to follow. To provide appropriate guidance and support, more data are needed on students' backgrounds so that accurate and informative profiles can be developed. Risk indicators could be established for this purpose, for example, failing grades, school absences, disciplinary problems, and lack of engagement. These data should be shared among the *Folkeskole*, the guidance counsellors and the VET colleges to optimise and adapt support. Monitoring of those students at risk should be linked to interventions to improve outcomes and prevent drop out. It would also be important to monitor and evaluate VET colleges and system interventions.

In Switzerland, for example, a new "case management" initiative is being gradually introduced in the VET sector that draws on individual student data to improve support for and retention of academically weak or socially disadvantaged students. The project targets students during their second year of lower secondary education and continues until completion of their VET programme. The goal is to identify young people at risk, support them during their transition from lower to upper secondary and prevent drop-out throughout their VET education. If a youngster is identified as "at risk" of dropping out, a case manager is appointed to work with the student and ensure collaboration with all relevant services working with 13-to-24-year-olds, such as career guidance, mentoring, counselling, housing, drug-use advice or other relevant services (OECD, 2008).

The Quality Assurance in VET could examine the quality assurance approach prepared by the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) in Ireland, where their policy areas for quality assurance include "equality" as well as "facilitation of diversity." FETAC's quality assurance guidelines state that programmes should be delivered in a manner that "accommodates diversity, combats discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity". The guidelines propose specific actions for staff equality training, equality planning, and adaptations/support for diverse learners, along with examples of evidence of good practice.¹⁷

Provide leadership for an inclusive VET and apprenticeship system

The Ministry of Education amongst its key objectives for the VET sector has prioritised that: “It has to be an inclusive system, ensuring the integration of immigrants and weak learners, and hereby contributing to social cohesion and coherence. In this respect, VET constitutes an important element in integration and social policies” (Danish Ministry of Education, 2008c). The Minister and the Ministry have to continue to proactively support this objective with all the partners involved in the VET sector.

To motivate immigrant students to complete their education, equal access to the apprenticeship and labour market must be ensured. The positive attitude displayed by the Confederation of Danish Employers (2008), and by the Danish *Business and Migration* report (Poskakukhina, 2009) must become a reality for all stakeholders in VET. It must continue to be reflected in employers’ commitment to enter contracts with VET students and provide them with employment when they qualify.

The issue of discrimination and lack of apprenticeship places for immigrants reflects the broader issue of unequal access to the Danish labour market. Tackling this issue will also require labour market policies that are beyond the scope of this study. What education policy can do is to coordinate with labour market policy, promote dialogue with social partners and encourage diversity in the apprenticeship market. This might be done by proactively working with potential training employers, and perhaps also by taking more apprentices from diverse backgrounds in the public sector, which accounts for a large part of employment in Denmark.

Moreover, an appreciative approach must be adopted towards diversity and the immigrant population within the VET sector, as well as in society more broadly. If the achievements of those who do successfully attend and graduate from VET are not acknowledged, it will be hard to motivate others to follow. The VET colleges should try to employ teachers with immigrant backgrounds and the main immigrant languages should be core subjects in the VET programme. A pool of young people who are skilled craftspeople and also proficient in several languages will be an important asset to Denmark, as she competes in a global society.

System management: ensuring consistency of support for all immigrant students

This final section focuses on policies and practices to ensure coherent provision of support for all immigrant students throughout the entire education system. As presented in the previous sections, there are now many examples of promising practices across schools and municipalities. But the availability and quality of support varies between schools and municipalities, due to implementation lags, inconsistent efforts and varying degrees of prioritisation. The challenge lies in learning from successful practices and implementing them on a wider scale. Of critical importance are clear policies informed by a strong evidence base, monitoring and evaluation of practices and effective knowledge management.

To improve the education outcomes of immigrants, and more broadly to serve the learning needs of increasingly diverse student populations, it is particularly important to achieve greater consistency of support for students at risk of falling behind. This can be done by setting clear targets to reduce the proportion of low-performing students and the gap between natives and immigrants, identifying students whose performance falls short, providing incentives and means for schools to address differentiated learning needs, and sharing information and good practice between schools and across municipality boundaries.

Moreover, to monitor and improve the capacity of schools to cater to the needs of diverse students, it is essential to further strengthen the culture of evaluation in Denmark. In recent years, important steps have been taken to strengthen approaches to assessment and evaluation in Denmark. But there are still little data

on education outcomes, and, where data are available, few shed light on the situation of immigrants. The resulting gaps in feedback render the problems they encounter less visible and make it more difficult for educators to effectively manage strategies and programmes for improvement. There is also a need to further develop the capacities of practitioners at the school and municipality level to use data and feedback effectively.

Strengths

Commitment to a strong policy framework to address underperformance

There is now in place a broad range of measures to strengthen access of immigrants to education, and to improve their performance. After the publication of the first PISA results in 2001, the Danish authorities drew on the advice of international experts as well as experts and stakeholders within the country to address the problem of under-performance. There are universal measures at the national level to improve the education outcomes for all pupils in the Danish *Folkeskole*, as well as targeted initiatives to close the performance gap between Danish and immigrant pupils.

The universal measures include mandatory testing of pupils, the “Retention Caravan” to reduce early school leaving, and reforms of initial and in-service teacher training. In addition to actions taken by the Ministry of Education, the association of municipalities (Local Government Denmark – LGDK) encouraged municipalities and schools to support in-service training for teachers, and review contract provisions regarding teaching time. Importantly, the municipalities have at their disposal more tools such as school leaving results and the “Quality Reports” that allow them to keep track of school performance on a number of variables. Once national testing is more fully implemented, municipalities will to a certain degree be able to determine how well schools are able to meet the needs of different student groups. Schools and municipalities will also be able to compare their students’ achievements with the average in Denmark. But due to the confidentiality of the test results, there will be only limited possibilities of benchmarking performance in order to more accurately identify promising policy and practice.

The Ministry undertook additional targeted steps to shed light on the quality of education for immigrant students, how the content and methods of education might be adapted (including Danish language instruction), and how the school day might be better organised to accommodate their need to learn Danish without falling behind in other courses. In collaboration with the Ministry of Refugees, Immigrants and Integration, the Ministry of Education launched a media campaign to encourage more individuals with immigrant backgrounds to become teachers. Danish authorities have also made it easier for immigrants to have their mother-tongue “validated” by permitting them to take mother-tongue language courses as an elective in secondary education, though few actually do it. Moreover, there are extra resources where immigrant students are present, training is available to better equip teachers to adapt to the learning needs of immigrants, municipalities with large numbers of immigrants have consultants to help schools better meet the needs of immigrants, and there are strategies to involve immigrant parents in their children’s education.

Finally, a revised national curriculum was launched in 2009. Among other things, the curriculum embeds strategies for improving education for immigrants in larger strategies for raising education outcomes overall. Rather than treating Danish as a Second Language only as a separate course for immigrants, the revised curriculum also contains an increased focus on integrating mastery of Danish into specific subject areas such as mathematics or history. The curriculum for each subject now contains guidelines for integrating a second language acquisition focus into the subject teaching. Like the previous curriculum, it also establishes mandatory attainment targets for municipalities and schools. When combined with the requirements for municipalities to indicate in their Quality Reports how weak

performance will be improved, this has the potential for reinforcing not just a culture of evaluation, but a culture of continuous improvement.

Communities of good practice

Aside from such “framework” conditions, the government also supports initiatives that education professionals and officials in municipalities can turn to for ideas, advice, and know-how in addressing the needs of immigrant students. The “Task Force for Bilingual Pupils” was established in cooperation between the Ministry of Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs and the Ministry of Education in 2008. Its aim is to assist municipalities in improving the quality of education for bilingual children. The work of the Task Force is overseen by a steering group of representatives from both ministries and the municipalities. It evaluates pedagogical approaches to migrant education, identifies promising practice and facilitates networking with interested teachers.

Another such initiative is the study “This Works in Our School”, which was funded by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and carried out by the Rambøll Corporation between 2006 and 2008 to identify, document and evaluate examples of what teachers consider to be successful strategies for meeting the learning needs of immigrant students. Reports on good practice, quality development, student composition and municipal support and coordination are available on a website for stakeholders to consult (www.dettevirker.dk). This increased reliance on the experience and expertise of practitioners complements academic research in the area of migrant education.

A comprehensive and concerted strategy to monitor and improve performance

In the wake of the publication of the first PISA results and the OECD review of the *Folkeskole*, and following further debate among stakeholders in Denmark, the Danish authorities adopted in 2006 amendments to the *Folkeskole* Act with a view to develop a “culture of evaluation”. This led to a range of measures to expand and improve information on the performance of Danish education. Four critical measures were:

- the introduction of mandatory national testing every year from years two through eight of the *Folkeskole*;
- the requirement that each student have a “Personal Education Plan” that is regularly updated;
- the requirement that each municipality prepare an “Education Quality Report” on the schools in its jurisdiction;
- the establishment within the Ministry of Education of the Agency for the Evaluation and Quality Development of Primary and Lower Secondary Education.

Collectively, these measures constitute an ambitious and promising framework for obtaining, analysing, and using feedback on the functioning and performance of the *Folkeskole* in general, and on the experience of immigrants in particular. The ultimate effectiveness of that framework however depends on how well the individual components of evaluation and assessment are implemented, and whether and how the information from evaluations and assessments is used within municipalities, schools and classrooms to improve the quality of teaching and learning provided to immigrant students who are academically challenged.

Two elements of the framework appear to be working well. The most successful has been the “Personal Education Plan” that teachers are now required to prepare for every student.¹⁸ The law requires that the plans set out learning targets for each student, and, taking into account the results of examinations and evaluations that measure proficiency and performance, are adjusted accordingly. On the basis of discussions with teachers, parents, students, and school leaders it would appear that the plans have been

widely implemented and are broadly supported. Teachers find the plans to serve as a useful basis for discussions between educators about the different learning needs of students and the effectiveness of different approaches to teaching. Teachers as well as parents expressed the view that the plans provided a “neutral” or “evidence-based” agenda for parent-teacher meetings. Some immigrant parents found this to be particularly important as a way of getting around the difficulty of relying entirely on oral communication for the parent-teacher meetings.¹⁹

A second element of the Ministry’s overall strategy for establishing a “culture of evaluation” in the *Folkeskole* is the Education Quality Report that each municipality is now required to submit. The purpose of the report is to provide a structure that allows municipalities to address the question of how well they are carrying out their obligation to provide education that meets the “common objectives” established by the *Folkeskole Act*. The Education Quality Report is intended to describe the municipality’s school system (number of schools, enrolment levels, number of staff, overall administrative arrangements), the schools’ academic levels (as measured by school leaving examination results, other examination results, national test results when the testing regime is in place), the measures the municipal board has taken in order to evaluate the academic level, and the steps the municipal board has taken in response to the challenges identified in the previous Quality Report (Danish Ministry of Education Website²⁰). As such, the Quality Reports serve two purposes: first, as an accountability tool for judging whether municipalities are meeting their obligation to take care of primary and lower secondary education; and second, as a tool for guiding strategies to improve the quality of education. The reports appear to have great potential as a tool to drive a more systematic approach to the collection and analysis of information on a broad range of dimensions, including how well schools are meeting the needs of immigrants.

The Personal Education Plans and the municipal Education Quality Reports appear to be complementary approaches for systematically tracking and improving performance at a student and classroom level, and at a more systemic school and municipality level. They have the particular strength of being non-targeted measures that make it easier to identify students with low levels of performance and bring in to play appropriate remedies at the level of the classroom as well as the school and municipal level. However, these measures will work only if (i) there is an adequate base of data and evidence, and that base allows one to differentiate between immigrants and non-immigrants; (ii), education professionals have the capacity to use the measures appropriately and (iii) the municipality prioritises specific improvement initiatives.

Capacity building to produce and use data for school improvement

Authorities at the level of the municipalities recognise the need to obtain better data and evidence and build up capacity to use it. The municipalities began to take steps to improve information on performance and support school improvement where evidence showed that performance was lagging. In 2007, Local Government Denmark (Kommunes Landsforening, KL), the association of the 98 municipalities in Denmark together with the Danish government and Danish regions launched a project to determine what kinds of indicators were needed in order to monitor the quality of the *Folkeskole* in Denmark. KL reports that most municipalities now have either experts on evaluation or persons who have had some training in the field so as to help schools with the development of Personal Education Plans and to prepare Quality Reports.

Additionally, KL has set up a Partnership with the *Folkeskole* involving 34 municipalities for the purpose of improving learning outcomes of students. This initiative is intended to provide teachers and school leaders with technical assistance and guidance for the purpose of developing assessment and evaluation practices in the classroom and at the level of the school that will help educators better identify students in difficulty, to better diagnose the sources of their problems, and develop Personal Education Plans accordingly. As part of this process of building up technical know-how and capacity at the level of

KL and individual municipalities, KL is also turning to municipalities in other countries for relevant experience (see for example Kommunes Landsforening, 2009).

Within the schools, the introduction of the Personal Education Plans has attracted the support of teachers because the plans align well with “whole-child” approach that has long been part of the *Folkeskole* ethos. The plans do not require teachers to have high levels of proficiency in complex evaluation and assessment techniques. The in-service training in Danish as a Second Language includes training in formative assessment to help teachers better identify and diagnose the learning needs of immigrant students. The evaluation consultants in the municipalities also provide training and support for teachers.

Importance of the culture of evaluation for the education of immigrants

As is clear from the preceding sections the past several years have witnessed important progress towards implementation of a “culture of evaluation” in schools. There is every indication from research outside Denmark that this progress will help reduce the “guess-work” and uncertainty in schooling about who is in trouble, why some students encounter difficulty in learning, and what strategies are most likely to improve performance.

This progress towards implementation of a “culture of evaluation” is particularly important for immigrants for two reasons.

- First, it raises the visibility of the problems they encounter in the *Folkeskole*. In the same way that PISA uncovered weaknesses in migrant education at a system level, the greater availability of evaluation and assessment results makes it easier for teachers, school leaders and municipal authorities to determine at the level of classroom and school who is in difficulty.
- Second, the more systematic use of formative assessment and individual lesson plans makes it easier to determine quickly which students are encountering difficulty and why. In contrast to assessments such as PISA, assessment tools such as the national tests generate results immediately. The Danish tests produce results that are available the day after the test is completed. The national tests and other forms of formative and summative assessment make it possible for teachers and schools to be proactive and identify those students that need help.

Challenges

Differing levels of progress in migrant education across municipalities and schools

While a wide range of universal and targeted measures have been introduced to improve equity in education and close the gap between natives and immigrants, results so far suggest that these framework measures are not sufficient to address the challenges faced by immigrants in Danish schools. During the review visits, the OECD team observed many examples of disparities in the implementation of the measures described above, and a high degree of variability in policy and practice at the municipal and school level. Many stakeholders voiced concerns about unevenness in the quality and availability of support for immigrant students, due to implementation lags, inconsistent efforts and varying degrees of prioritisation across schools and municipalities.

Much of the observed variability appears to be related to the differing levels of know-how and capacity at the level of municipalities and schools. One measure of unevenness in capacity is the extent to which teachers have had Danish as a Second Language (DSL) training, which includes training on intercultural pedagogy and the use of assessment and evaluation techniques. The Ministry of Education recommends that schools enrolling immigrants hire teachers with formal DSL qualifications. But this is not always done – sometimes because qualified teachers are not available, sometimes because it is not a local

priority. As a result, a high proportion of teachers report feeling insufficiently qualified to teach immigrant students both in DSL and in mainstream classes (Danish Ministry of Education, 2008a).

There are signs of progress in terms of increasing numbers of teachers who have received DSL training; for example the largest municipality of Copenhagen has been especially proactive in establishing programmes and measures to improve the education of immigrant children. But the majority of immigrant students are found elsewhere in Denmark where the extent of participation in DSL training is lower. Part of the unevenness in training participation is related to the fact that the subject has only been offered as a specialisation subject since 2001. The *Folkeskole* teachers' union notes that many of its members are unable to gain access to appropriate in-service training to meet the learning needs of immigrants.

The unevenness is reflected at the municipal level as well. More than a third of the municipalities in Denmark do not have consultants specialised in dealing with issues of migrant education. Also, there is a handful of municipalities – most of them with low numbers of immigrants – in which immigrants are much more likely to be enrolled in special education than are native Danes (UNI-C Statistics and Analysis for the school year 2008/09). This raises the question as to whether some municipalities choose to cope with the learning needs of immigrants by channelling them into special education. This may reflect the uneven rates of take-up across municipalities, with regard to building the capacity to meet the learning needs of immigrants.

Learning through the exchange of experience between practitioners is catching on, but still is limited. There are fairly well-developed communities of practice and informal networking in Denmark, among school leaders and DSL teachers in municipalities with large concentrations of immigrants. However, such networking remains *ad hoc* and unstructured. Resources are often a problem. It is also difficult to identify successful schools, as their performance is very similar across the country (the performance differences revealed by PISA are mostly within-school differences).

Academic research in the area of migrant education, particularly in the VET-area, is limited and there are few interactions between schools and research institutions. Results of initiatives still hinge too much on the individual teachers and school leaders, or on staff in teacher training institutions. Although information on programmes to serve immigrants may be available through initiatives such as the “Task Force for Bilingual Students” and research initiatives such as “This Works in Our School”²¹, use of such resources is uneven. It is often not a priority.

An uneven distribution of immigrant students across municipalities and schools

At least part of the inconsistency of support across municipalities is linked to the uneven geographical distribution of immigrant students around Denmark (Table 2.1). A quarter of all immigrant children are concentrated in 70 schools where they comprise 40% or more of the student population. Another quarter are spread among schools where they comprise less than 10% of the student population. The concentration of immigrants across municipalities tells much the same story, with a quarter of all immigrant students attending schools in just four municipalities. In the sample of students who took part in PISA Copenhagen 2004, the average immigrant student attends a school with 55% immigrants whereas the typical native student attends a school with only 18% immigrants (Rangvid 2007a).

Immigrant concentration plays a complex role in the experiences of immigrants in the education system. While a recent meta-analysis finds that the concentration of immigrant students has little effect on learning outcomes (Van Ewijk and Slegers, 2009), other studies suggest that on average across OECD countries a higher degree of concentration is associated with a higher unexplained test score gap between native and immigrant students, after controlling for other background factors such as socio-economic status

(Schnepf, 2004; Schneeweis, 2006). Further, it can be argued that immigrants in highly segregated schools are likely to have both less incentive and fewer opportunities to develop their Danish language skills.

On the other hand, it is the schools and municipalities with the highest levels of immigrant concentration that are often the most active and advanced in implementing targeted measures for immigrant students. In less concentrated areas, the relatively smaller numbers of immigrants combined with meagre evidence of education outcomes diminishes the visibility of the educational needs of the immigrant students. As described above, the education problems of immigrants are given lower priority in a number of these municipalities.

Table 2.1. Concentration of immigrants in schools (*Folkeskole*)

By immigrant status and descendant concentration levels, 2008/09

Concentration level	<10% immigrant	<10-20% immigrant	>20<40% immigrant	>40% immigrant	Total
Number of schools by concentration of immigrants and descendants	1 209	178	133	70	1 590
Total enrolment in schools with given concentration levels	408 534	85 540	61 893	26 168	582 135
Total number of immigrants and descendants in schools of given concentration levels	16 335	11 791	16 936	15 250	60 312
Total number of municipalities with immigrants and descendant students of given concentration level	73	20	4	1	98

Note: For a definition of “immigrants” and “descendants” see chapter 1. Pupils in *Folkeskolen* includes pupils in municipal basic schools and municipal youth schools.

Source : UNI-C Statistics and Analysis.

Some municipalities have introduced “bussing” policies to distribute immigrants more evenly across different schools. In Copenhagen for example, through the “Copenhagen Model for Integration”, schools with a predominantly native Danish student population are receiving immigrant students from other neighbourhoods. On the one hand, immigrant parents noted that this system isolates them since their only contact with the school is the bus driver and cooperation between the school and immigrant parents and communities is limited. On the other hand, in Aarhus for example, 34% of pupils bussed to a new school experienced an above normal progression in their linguistic development, 45% had developed as expected and 20% below expectation (data from Danish Ministry of Education, 2009).

Even though a better mix of immigrant and Danish pupils in schools may further the language development of immigrants, there is evidence that such “immersion” is insufficient for immigrants to develop the academic language and other skills necessary to succeed in school. No matter how immigrants are spread or concentrated in schools, local, municipal and national policies need to ensure that the same quantity and quality of language and other support is consistently offered to them. Diversity in Danish schools will increase not decrease in the future. School leaders and mainstream teachers in all schools need to adopt a positive and appreciative approach towards diversity and be skilled to respond to diverse learning needs.

Gaps in data and evidence mask problems encountered by immigrant students in education

The encouraging signs of progress noted so far are compromised by systemic blind spots in the arrangements for monitoring education, and incomplete and uneven implementation of measures to support a culture of evaluation. Progress towards realising the “culture of evaluation” in Denmark is hindered by gaps in evidence of problems, and shortfalls in the local implementation of the national framework. There is a lack of certain critical data broken down in a way that permits differentiating statistically between

immigrants and natives. This makes it difficult to determine the nature and severity of problems facing immigrant children and to identify factors associated with those problems.

Some municipalities (including Copenhagen and Aarhus, municipalities with large numbers of immigrants) publish breakdowns of enrolments that differentiate between Danish and immigrant students; there are also breakdowns at a national level of the proportion of pre-school immigrant children needing “language stimulation”, and the leaving exam results (at the end of compulsory schooling) for immigrants and native Danish students. However, even at the level of the municipality there appears to be virtually no data on language spoken at home.

The resulting gaps in data at a national and municipality level complicate the task of policy makers trying to estimate resources required to meet the needs of immigrants, or trying to gauge the impact of policies and practices that aim to improve outcomes. The gaps also make it impossible to get comprehensive or comparable data across all municipalities, or to effectively monitor the equity of education access, enrolments and performance. Not only does this reduce the visibility of the difficulties that immigrants may face in schools, but it also limits the ability of municipalities to compare experiences and exchange appropriate strategies. It also means that at a national level it is difficult to describe or monitor the situation of immigrants, thus limiting the extent to which surveys such as PISA can be interpreted and related to a national context.

The gaps in data and evidence for assessing performance are closing, but remain. At the national level, the ambitious programme to introduce annual testing was not fully implemented in 2007/08 as originally planned because of the technical and psychometric difficulties of developing, testing and disseminating material. The delays in implementing national testing mean delays in the ability of educators to obtain feedback on performance of the *Folkeskole* according to criteria that are most relevant to Denmark.

Schools lack capacity to use data and evidence, and this has adverse consequences for immigrant children and others who under-perform

Even if educators had adequate data and evidence on hand, they do not necessarily have the capacity to use it effectively to identify and address the needs of immigrants. Too few educators in Denmark have the training, background or incentive to design and carry out assessments and evaluation, and to effectively use the information they collect to improve learning outcomes overall and for groups encountering particularly difficulties. Teachers, school leaders, and municipal officials do not appear to be adequately equipped to carry out these tasks. Pre-service training for teachers, already criticised for being too short and insufficient to prepare teachers for the challenges of teaching a more diverse student population, and preparing a greater proportion than ever for post-secondary studies, presently does not provide future teachers with the necessary grounding in evaluation and assessment (OECD, 2004a).

Teachers themselves noted that their initial training left them poorly equipped to interpret external evaluation results, or to develop formative assessment instruments for use in the classroom. Some DSL training includes modules related to gathering and using assessment and evaluation data; but most teachers do not take such training and many of those who are trained do not choose such optional modules. Consequently, although the Ministry and some municipalities have assembled libraries of testing and assessment material, teachers are poorly equipped to take full advantage of them. School leaders are no better prepared. There is no formal education-specific training programme or qualification for school leaders that provides them with the needed skills²². Standardised testing materials are available for reading, spelling and math, but for other subjects there still seems to be a lack of information of how students are expected to perform at different ages in different subjects. During the review visit, several stakeholders reported that the available testing and reference materials were considered inadequate for diagnostic testing of bilingual children.

While more data in this area has been collected recently, better knowledge is needed at the national level concerning the adequacy of initial qualifications of teachers and the extent of participation in in-service training. A survey on the specialisation levels of teachers has been conducted in 2009, and municipalities are required to provide information on the extent to which teaching in DSL is carried out by teachers with the required qualifications. Nonetheless, there is little information aggregated in a way that would make it possible to identify gaps in the nature and level of qualifications of the teaching workforce. This makes it more difficult to take stock of the readiness of education professionals to meet the teaching challenges and opportunities posed by immigrant students, as well as the more general challenge of conducting and interpreting results of assessment and evaluation.

Policy options

Further enhance the culture of evaluation at all levels of the education system

A comparative analysis of institutional arrangements in several countries that performed well on PISA concluded that well-developed arrangements for system monitoring were one of the factors that are strongly associated with good performance on PISA (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).

This international evidence suggests that external examinations help steer teachers and students by setting standards against which performance can be judged. But external examinations are not the end of the story. The findings do not demonstrate how educators respond when external examinations show signs of student or system under-performance. Nor do they indicate precisely how educators, students and families use feedback to change curriculum or teaching methods, for example, or to make more informed choice of schools. They also do not imply that feedback alone (*i.e.* more testing) would improve performance.

Looking across OECD countries there is a broad spectrum of methods for taking stock of ‘education performance’. The spectrum embraces everything from formative assessment carried out by teachers on a day-to-day basis; to internal self-assessment by schools; to external evaluations of schools carried out by inspectorates; to national assessments carried out at fixed intervals during the schooling process; to ‘high stakes’ examinations conducted at the end of particular cycles of education. The different methods are characterised by different degrees of coverage, specificity, and robustness; they generate results over different time horizons and serve different users; and have different consequences. It is essential that such different evaluation and assessment approaches are well-designed and fit together effectively in a coherent strategy for improving school outcomes and for securing accountability.

The Ministry of Education in Denmark should require municipalities to set targets to raise overall performance, with a particular emphasis on reducing very low performance amongst Danish as well as immigrant students and reducing gaps between average performance of Danish and immigrant students. This would allow municipalities and schools to take a more structured approach to the development of remedies where targets are missed. Practice from other countries provides examples on how such targets can be established. For example, targeting on mean performance and the weakest performers is a core feature of United States federal education legislation “No Child Left Behind” that was designed to address the problem of chronic under-achievement of ethnic minorities and immigrants in the United States. Though there has been much criticism of the remedies for poor performance as provided for in the legislation, the strategy of setting performance targets has been widely supported and works reasonably well (Tulip and Wurzburg, 2008).

To monitor progress towards quality and equity targets, the Ministry should ensure that there are data on enrolments and education outcomes at the level of each municipality, broken down by gender, immigrant status, and language spoken at home. In the absence of comprehensive data on enrolment and performance of different groups of students, it is difficult to identify gaps in the skills and know-how of educators. The availability of such data would make it easier for educators and the public to see how effectively schools are responding to the educational needs of all students. By making it possible to determine whether gaps exist in performance between different groups of students, such data would also make it possible to signal the presence of systemic shortcomings at the level of municipalities.

Experience from other countries provides some examples on how this might be done. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a survey-based assessment carried out in the United States since the 1960s, demonstrates the value of being able to assess the impact of various reforms in education policy and practice, on different groups of students.²³ In Scotland, education authorities complement results of national examinations with regular survey-based assessments of performance (Scottish Survey of Achievement, Scottish School Leavers Survey) (OECD, 2007a).

The Ministry should also require municipalities, in cooperation with schools, to include information on participation and performance of immigrant students in the Municipal Quality Reports. The greater availability of the kind of information discussed above will make it possible for municipalities to set more precise performance targets and ensure that particular groups of students are not overlooked just because average performance of a school or municipality is adequate.²⁴ Locally generated information appears to be particularly valuable as a tool to interpret national mandates in a local context, to gauge performance against objectives that are meaningful locally. The Scottish initiative “How Good is our School?”, for example, is an attempt to improve the robustness of school self-assessment and provide a better foundation for improvement (OECD, 2007a). Scotland relies heavily on Her Majesty’s Inspectorate to provide methodological support and guidance; in Denmark, the Ministry or municipalities could play a similar role.

In addition, school leaders and teachers should encourage and enhance the use of individual Personal Education Plans. National level testing when fully implemented will provide a statistical picture of strengths and weaknesses at a systemic level. But teachers in the classroom will continue to have the essential complementary tasks of monitoring day-to-day progress of individual students. The Personal Education Plans appear to be a useable and useful means for following progress of individual students, diagnosing their strengths and weaknesses, evaluating mother-tongue language proficiency, and personalising instruction. It is particularly important that the Plans are well-developed and followed for immigrant students because they are more likely to encounter difficulty in engaging with more traditional curriculum and teaching practice. The Victoria (Australia) Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has found that individualised plans are especially useful for students with language difficulties, and provide considerable support to educators as they prepare and use them²⁵.

As testing is carried out, individual student performance should be benchmarked against school, municipal and national performance levels so that teachers can make better-informed decisions about the comparative strengths and weaknesses of students, and can adjust learning plans accordingly. Teachers and parents should continue to draw on the Personal Education Plans as guiding tools for their discussions of student performance. The Ministry should support networking at the level of municipalities and through the Danish Teachers Union (*Danmarks Lærereforening*) to facilitate the exchange of experience and good practice between teachers in fine-tuning the use of Personal Education Plans.

Importantly, the Ministry and municipalities should ensure that professionals in municipalities and schools know how to use system-level and student-level data to assess participation and performance, and to design effective strategies for improvement. As was already underlined in the 2004 OECD review, improving capacity requires changes in the content of pre- and in-service training, and action by

municipalities to ensure adequate opportunity for in-service training of those already teaching (OECD, 2004a). At least one of the explanations for the strong performance of Finland in PISA is pre-service training of teachers which requires at least a Masters degree and the strong emphasis on developing the capacity to carry out robust assessment and evaluation (Stewart, 2008).

Provide incentives, means and information for schools to adopt teaching and learning strategies adapted to differentiated learning needs

Presently it is unclear what strategy municipalities have with regard to supporting schools with differing populations, providing adequate funding, overseeing their performance, and taking appropriate action where needed. Municipalities should use the Quality Reports as a tool for creating an incentive structure for schools, by requiring them to report how they diagnose the learning needs of immigrant and other students, and how they differentiate teaching and learning strategies with respect to variables such as class size, the presence of language support teachers, the availability of resources for in-service training, and the availability of resources for strengthening home-school liaison.

The Ministry should establish or designate a one-stop “clearinghouse” for collecting and disseminating information on how to close the achievement gap between natives and immigrants. Such a “clearinghouse” should be accessible by municipal authorities and educators and keep track of various testing and assessment instruments and information on their use, as well as relevant academic research (national and international) on migrant education. It should also allow sharing exemplars of best practice. The clearinghouse should be able to draw on evidence to identify promising practice from both researchers and practitioners. This would make it easier for schools to locate and use appropriate diagnostic tools to identify students in difficulty and the appropriate pedagogical tools for helping teachers to work with students in overcoming learning barriers. Whoever assumes the role of clearinghouse, it would be important to involve experts who are qualified to judge the robustness of evidence.

The Ministry should complement such a clearinghouse by facilitating networking of practitioners as well as researchers. Given the difficulty of ring-fencing central government payments to municipalities, the Ministry should explore ways to support networking and exchange of practice among practitioners, such as through “scholarships” paid direct to schools to cover the costs associated with in-service training (*e.g.* replacement teachers, travel/subsistence). The “Ideas Schools” in Sweden are another approach that could be explored as a model to exchanging experience and ideas between schools and education professionals facing similar challenges.

Municipalities also play a key role in implementing education mandates of the Ministry and providing guidance, advice and assistance to schools. They need to prioritise support for students from different socio-demographic groups and Danish as a Second Language (DSL) support, also when they have lower numbers of immigrant students. Yet, more than a third of municipalities do not have evaluation consultants²⁶, and only about half of the 98 municipalities have DSL consultants or a similar function²⁷. Gaps in expertise at this level would undermine the robustness and reliability of the municipal Quality Reports, and limit the capacity of municipalities to advise effectively on corrective actions. Expertise at this level needs to be built up as well.

Embed strategies for improving education outcomes of immigrants in the mainstream strategy for raising educational outcomes

The difficulties encountered by immigrants are symptomatic of more general weaknesses in the education system’s capacity to address a broad spectrum of learning needs. Therefore it is important that strategies for improvement are not formulated or viewed narrowly as “strategies for immigrants”. This makes sense on equity grounds. As participation in schooling and higher education increases, education

can no longer afford to be selective, but must be inclusive – and respond to a broader spectrum of learning needs than in the past.

In enhancing the capacity to adapt to the learning needs of immigrant students, the *Folkeskole* and VET colleges will also enhance the capacity to meet the learning needs of native Danes who, in the past, might have left school early (see Field *et al.*, 2007). It is important that promising tools and practice not be fragmented between targeted programmes for immigrants and targeted programmes for students facing other barriers to learning: immigrants do not necessarily face only language barriers; immigrants are not the only ones facing language barriers. Indeed the experience in Denmark with the language stimulation programme for pre-school children has demonstrated its value to not only immigrant children, but also to native Danes having language problems.

Mainstreaming also makes sense on political grounds by minimising the chance that policy and practice that provides a general good is characterised as one that serves only a small minority of the population. Policy and practice that improves quality of teaching and learning serves not only the immigrant students who may require additional support, but all students requiring such support. Ireland and the Netherlands have also taken steps to frame as general improvement strategies programmes that originally emerged to address difficulties of immigrants. This approach is in line with the goal set by the Danish government that 95% of young people in Denmark should, by 2015, have a “qualifying education”. This target will be achievable only if primary and lower secondary education can meet effectively the learning needs of virtually all students.

NOTES

- 8 The results of this campaign have not been evaluated but one teacher training college reported an increase in new students with an immigrant students. In this particular teacher training college, around 50% of the students enrolling in the 2008 term and about one third of the total number of students had a migrant background (Danish Ministry of Education, 2008a).
- 9 By early 2010, 4.7% of the student teachers of the first cohort since the 2006 teacher training reform, taking non-mandatory specialisation courses, had chosen DSL. Out of the fifteen available non-mandatory subjects, DSL was the ninth most popular choice.
- 10 The survey covers 76 primary and lower secondary schools with varying proportions of migrant students. It reveals that almost 60% of the schools did not employ any bilingual teachers. On average, bilingual teachers constituted 3% of the teaching staff in schools with a low concentration (less than 20%) of bilingual students, 5% of the teaching staff in schools with medium concentration (20 to 40%), and 10% in schools with a high concentration (above 40%) of bilingual students (EVA, 2007, p. 86).
- 11 For information on the Principal Leadership Institute, see <http://gse.berkeley.edu/program/Principals/pli.html>.
- 12 www.ncsl.org.uk/achieving-equality-and-diversity.pdf.
- 13 This would be similar to the approach in Scotland of providing for an initial induction period of a year or so before teachers are finally hired (OECD, 2007a)
- 14 This gap is most important in reading where migrants who often or always speak Danish at home score on average 494 points while those who rarely speak Danish at home score on average only 408 points, a score point difference roughly equivalent to two school years (Egelund and Tranaes, 2008).
- 15 An example of this kind of programme is the “Bridges to the Future” initiative developed by the Literacy Institute at the University of Pennsylvania in cooperation with international and governmental agencies, non-profit organisations, and governmental authorities in India. Similar literacy programmes have been developed by the Literacy Institute in South Africa, Morocco, and Turkey. For further details see www.literacy.org and www.ALEF.ma/.
- 16 The study is based on 42 individual qualitative interviews with strategically selected persons such as potential employers and youngsters in the VET programmes, and contact and dialogue with a further 131 young people at various VET colleges.
- 17 www.fetac.ie/qa/Policy_and_Guidelines_on_Provider_QA_v1.3.pdf.
- 18 www.eng.uvm.dk/Uddannelse/Primary%20and%20Lower%20Secondary%20Education/The%20Folkeskole/Evaluation%20Tests%20Student%20Plans.aspx.
- 19 The plans also mirror a shift found in other countries towards greater ‘personalisation’ of learning, particularly with regard to teacher practice (see Järvelä, 2006).
- 20 www.eng.uvm.dk/Uddannelse/Primary%20and%20Lower%20Secondary%20Education/The%20Folkeskole.aspx.

- 21 The report was prepared by Rambøll Corporation, a private consulting firm under contract to the Ministry of Education; all outcomes of the report are available at www.dettevirker.dk.
- 22 While there is no mandatory training for school leaders, all public leaders of institutions have the right (since 2007) to go through a leadership training programme. This training is provided at diploma level for public leaders across different sectors (and therefore not specifically aimed at the needs of the education sector). One of the modules that may be chosen deals with quality development, documentation and evaluation. It aims to give the participants tools to analyse and follow up on results from quality documentation and evaluation projects (in general, not specifically aimed at pedagogical evaluation and follow-up). The modules can to a certain degree be tailored towards the need of the participants, particularly if they come from the same sector.
- 23 For details on NAEP see <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>; for analyses of the differentiated impacts of different policy and practice on students by gender, ethnicity, and education of parents, refer to the Special Studies. NAEP also provides a basis for work by independent researchers into similar questions, e.g. Grissmer and Waltz (2000).
- 24 This is one of the distinguishing feature of “No Child Left Behind”, the current U.S. federal legislation that aims to improve the quality and equity of schooling outcomes. Though there has been considerable controversy over the remedies that are imposed when schools perform badly, there has been strong support for setting performance targets and judging outcomes for particular sub-groups of students, not just overall. The OECD endorsed retention of this particular feature of the legislation; see OECD (2007b), chapter 5.
- 25 www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/lsp/mod3-2.htm.
- 26 According to estimates by Local Government Denmark (Kommunes Landsforening, KL).
- 27 According to estimates by the association of municipal consultants for teaching bilingual children (FOKUTO).

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ANNEX A: TERMS OF REFERENCE

Education has long been one of the most important aspects of Danish society and is certainly a key element in Denmark's strategy to remain competitive in a world of increasing global competition. At the same time, education is seen as central to creating equal opportunities for all citizens. Ensuring that all groups benefit fully from the educational offers provided by society is thus of great importance to maintaining social cohesion as well as putting the human resources of the Danish population to the best possible use

For these reasons, education of immigrants remains high on the political agenda in Denmark. Education statistics and surveys show that the school performance of immigrant children is significantly below that of ethnically Danish children. In addition, international comparison shows that the performance gap between immigrant students and native children is higher in Denmark than in comparable countries. A number of initiatives have been taken in the area of immigrant children in the education system. However, the knowledge of effective strategies in migrant education is limited.

The purpose of participating in the review is to have the efforts and results of the teaching of immigrant children in Denmark examined in the context of the available knowledge of international research and good practice. Its intended outcome is to identify possible explanations for the educational outcomes of immigrant children in Denmark and weaknesses in the approach of the Danish education system to this group and on this basis suggest relevant remedies. The review should have particular focus on the ability of the **primary and lower secondary school** to develop the academic competencies of immigrant children and the **high drop-out rates among students with an immigrant background in the VET-area**.

The review will address the following questions:

1. How is Denmark doing? The educational outcomes of immigrant children in the Danish school system in an international perspective.
2. What are main causes of the problems immigrants experience in the Danish education system?
3. What are the weaknesses in the approach and efforts of the Danish education system concerning the education of immigrant children and youths?
4. What policy changes and initiatives at state, municipal and school level could have a positive impact on the learning outcomes of immigrant children in Danish schools?

ANNEX B: POLICY REVIEW VISIT OF DENMARK

Programme for OECD review on Migrant Education **Fact Finding Mission**

Monday, 27 October to Friday, 31 October 2008

Monday 27 October

16.00-18.00	<p>Welcome and initial briefing and discussions</p> <p>Officials of the Ministry of education, responsible for the review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter Grønnegård, head of department of primary and lower secondary education • Oluf Engberg , head of the division of goals and content of primary and lower secondary education • Jørgen Balling Rasmussen, teaching consultant, department of general upper secondary education • Anne Margrethe Johannesen, head of section, department of vocational upper secondary education • Christian Lamhauge Rasmussen, head of section, department of primary and lower secondary education 	<p>Ministry of Education Frederiksholms Kanal 26 1220 København K</p>
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Tuesday 28 October

9.00-10.15	<p>Meeting with officials from the Ministry of Refugee, Immigrant and Integration affairs, the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Ministry of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oluf Engberg , head of the division of goals and content of primary and lower secondary education • Christian Lamhauge Rasmussen, head of section, department of primary and lower secondary education • Helene Hoff, head of section, Ministry of integration 	<p>Ministry of Education Frederiksholms Kanal 26 1220 København K</p>
10.30-12.00	<p>Meeting the principal stakeholders in the primary and lower secondary school area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Danish Municipalities, Anette Aunbirk, consultant • Danish Union of teachers, Aksel Kramer, consultant • The National Association of school parents, Niels Chr. Andersen, head of secretariat • The Association of School Leaders, Dorrit Bamberger 	<p>Ministry of Education Frederiksholms Kanal 26 1220 København K</p>
13.00-14.00	<p>PISA Ethnic – meeting with researchers from the team behind the survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camilla Hvidtfeldt, Researcher, Rockwool Foundation Research Unit • Marie Louise Schultz-Nielsen, Researcher, Rockwool Foundation Research Unit 	<p>Ministry of Education Frederiksholms Kanal 26 1220 København K</p>
14.30-16.00	<p>Meeting researchers and experts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jørgen Søndergaard, Chairman of the government's school council, Director of the Danish National Centre for Social Research, 	<p>Ministry of Education Frederiksholms Kanal 26, 1220 København K</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anne Holmen, Professor of Danish as a Second Language, The Danish School of Education, • Thomas Gitz-Johansen, Associate Professor, Roskilde University, The Department of Psychology and Educational Studies • Torben Tranæs, Research Director, Rockwool Foundation Research Unit, • Camilla Hvidtfeldt, Researcher, Rockwool Foundation Research Unit, • Beatrice Schindler Rangvid, Researcher, Danish Institute of Governmental Research • Bolette Moldenhawer, Associate professor, University of Copenhagen, Department of Media, Cognition and Communication 	
16.30-17.30	<p>Meeting with the parents' association "Brug folkeskolen" (Use the Public School)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mette Kirk, coordinator • Members of the association 	Forældreforeningen Brug Folkeskolen på Nørrebro. Søllerødgade 33, 2200 København N

Wednesday 29 October

09.00-10.00	<p>Discussion with the office for integration in the school system in the Municipality of Copenhagen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Søren Hegnby, Head of Office, Section for Integration and Diversity, Municipality of Copenhagen 	Amager Fælled Skole Sundholmsvej 2a 2300 Copenhagen S
10.00-12.00	<p>Visit to Amager Fælled School. Discussions with the school leader, teachers and pupils.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yasar Cakmak, school leader • Teachers • Pupils 	Amager Fælled Skole Sundholmsvej 2a 2300 Copenhagen S
13.00-14.30	<p>Visit to the day care facility Marthahjemmet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anna Fisker, leader of centre • Pedagogues carrying out language stimulation activities 	Marthahjemmet, Brohusgade 7 – 9, 2200 Copenhagen N
15.00-16.30	<p>Discussions with the principal stakeholders in the vocational education and training area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Association of school leaders, Mette Tram Pedersen, Head of education, Selandia vocational school • Teachers' Union in the technical education area, Ruth Friis Linderod, member of board • The Confederation of Danish Employers, Berit Toft Fihl, consultant, • Researcher in the VET area, Michael Svendsen Pedersen, Associate Professor, Roskilde University, The Department of Psychology and Educational Studies 	Ministry of Education Frederiksholms Kanal 26 1220 København K
17.00-18.00	<p>Visit to a homework café at the library on Nørrebro</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anders Hasseris Gormsen, Volunteer contact • Students using the homework café 	Nørrebro Bibliotek Bragesgade 8b 2200 København N

Thursday 30 October

08.30-09.30	<p>Visit to UC2, Ressourcecentre for Bilingualism and Interculturalism, a national resource centre, which provides in-service teacher training with focus on teaching bilingual children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jens Skovholm, leader • Tore Sørensen, pedagogical consultant • Mette Ginman, Lecturer 	<p>UC2 Videnscenter for tosprogethed og interkulturalitet Titangade 11 2200 København N.</p>
10.00-11.00	<p>Meeting with EVA and Rambøll Management – responsible for evaluations and surveys regarding teaching of immigrant students in the Danish primary and lower secondary schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Katja Munch Thorsen, Director of Projects, The Danish Evaluation Institute • Mikkel Thøgersen, Business Manager, Labour Market, Integration & Education, Rambøll Management 	<p>Ministry of Education Frederiksholms Kanal 26 1220 København K</p>
11.30-12.30	<p>Lunch with the Minister of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bertel Haarder, Minister of Education • Niels Preisler, permanent secretary • Peter Grønnegård, head of department of primary and lower secondary education • Roland Svarrer Østerlund, chief advisor, department of higher education and international cooperation • Lene Beyer, secretary to the Minister of Education • Christian Lamhauge Rasmussen, head of section, department of primary and lower secondary education 	<p>Ministry of Education Frederiksholms Kanal 21 1220 København K</p>
13.00-15.00	<p>Visit to TEC – an education centre for upper secondary education with a relatively high proportion of immigrant students Discussions with leader, teachers and students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Johnny Bengtson, Head of education, TEC • Teachers 	<p>TEC – Mechanical educations Stamholmen 215, 2650 Hvidovre</p>

Friday 31 October

09.00-11.00	<p>Visit to Selsmoseskolen, an all-day school with a high proportion of immigrant students Discussions with principal, teachers, parents and officials from the municipal department of education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ellis Andersen, school leader • Teachers • Pupils 	<p>Selsmoseskolen Taastrupgårdsvej 3, 2630 Taastrup</p>
14.00-16.00	<p>Concluding meeting with the Ministry of Education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter Grønnegård, head of department of primary and lower secondary education • Oluf Engberg, head of the division of goals and content of primary and lower secondary education • Jørgen Balling Rasmussen, teaching consultant, department of general upper secondary education • Søren Hansen, head of department of vocational upper secondary education • Christian Lamhauge Rasmussen, head of section, department of primary and lower secondary education 	<p>Ministry of Education Frederiksholms Kanal 26 1220 København K</p>

Programme for OECD review on Migrant Education Policy Mission

Tuesday, 3 March to Friday, 6 March 2009

Tuesday 3 March

9.00-10.30	<p>Meeting with the Ministry of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oluf Engberg, head of the division of goals and content of primary and lower secondary education • Jørgen Balling Rasmussen, teaching consultant, department of general upper secondary education • Steen Albertsen, teaching inspector, department of vocational upper secondary education 	<p>Ministry of Education Frederiksholms Kanal 26 1220 København K</p>
10.30-12.00	<p>Meeting with representatives from municipalities regarding cooperation and sharing information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jonna Rud Jensen, consultant, municipality of Holstebro • Ulla Danstrøm, consultant, municipality of Copenhagen • Mubeen Hussain, Task Force for bilingual pupils in the folkeskole • Jonna Wrigley, Task Force for bilingual pupils in the folkeskole 	<p>Ministry of Education Frederiksholms Kanal 26 1220 København K</p>
13.00-14.30	<p>Visit to an institution which trains teachers in the vocational educations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Susanne Gottlieb, head of department, Danmarks Erhvervspædagogiske Læreruddannelse, Metropolitan University College 	<p>Danmarks Erhvervspædagogiske Læreruddannelse, Metropolitan University College, Rosenørns Allé 31, 1970 Frederiksberg C</p>
15.00-16.30	<p>Discussions with the principal stakeholders in the vocational education and training area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Danske Erhvervsskoler (association of school leaders) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Charlotte Gjermansen, development consultant, TEC vocational school • Uddannelsesforbundet (association of teachers) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ruth Friis Linderod, member of board 	<p>Ministry of Education Frederiksholms Kanal 26 1220 København K</p>

Wednesday 4 March

8.00-10.00	<p>Visit to the all-day school Selsmoseskolen. Discussion with the school leader and teachers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ellis Andersen, school leader • Teachers 	<p>Selsmoseskolen Taastrupgårdsvej 3, 2630 Taastrup</p>
11.00-12.00	<p>Meeting with the Minister of Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bertel Haarder, Minister of Education • Niels Preisler, permanent secretary • Peter Grønnegård, head of department of primary and lower secondary education • Søren Hansen, department of vocational upper secondary education • Lene Beyer, secretary to the Minister of Education • Christian Lamhauge Rasmussen, head of section, department of primary and lower secondary education 	<p>Ministry of Education Frederiksholms Kanal 21 1220 København K</p>

13.00-14.30	<p>Meeting the principal stakeholders in the primary and lower secondary school area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Danish Union of teachers, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stig Andersen, vice chairman ○ Jan Trojaborg, board member, chairman of the Copenhagen Union of Teachers ○ Aksel Kramer, consultant • Danish Municipalities, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Anette Aunbirk, consultant • The National Association of school parents, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Benedikte Ask Skotte, chairman • The Association of School Leaders, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Claus Hjortdal, vice chairman ○ Dorrit Bamberger, consultant 	<p>Ministry of Education Frederiksholms Kanal 26 1220 København K</p>
15.00-16.15	<p>Meeting with the department of vocational upper secondary education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Søren Hansen, head of department of vocational upper secondary education • Steen Albertsen, teaching inspector, department of vocational upper secondary education 	<p>Ministry of Education Frederiksholms Kanal 26 1220 København K</p>
16.30-17.30	<p>The parent perspective. Meeting bilingual parents and parents' associations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilingual parents from the schools Blågård Skole and Kildevældsskolen • Mette Kirk, coordinator, "Brug folkeskolen" (Use the Public School) • Solveig Gaarsmand, consultant, School and Society (association of parent representatives in school boards) 	<p>Ministry of Education Frederiksholms Kanal 26 1220 København K</p>

Thursday 5 March

9.00-10.00	<p>Meeting with researcher Anne Holmen regarding research in the primary and lower secondary school area</p>	<p>Ministry of Education Frederiksholms Kanal 26, 1220 København K</p>
10.30-11.30	<p>Immigrant students, the vocational educations and the labour market – meeting the social partners of the labour market</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berit Toft Fihl, consultant, DA (The Confederation of Danish Employers) • Morten Smistrup, consultant, LO (Danish Trade Union Confederation) 	<p>Ministry of Education Frederiksholms Kanal 26 1220 København K</p>
13.00-14.30	<p>Visit to Blaagaard/Københavns Dag- og AftenSeminarium (KDAS), a teacher training institution with a high proportion of students with immigrant background.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lone Wulff, lecturer, KDAS • Janet Reid, lecturer, KDAS • Dorrit Mondrup, lecturer and guidance councillor, KDAS • Students in teacher training 	<p>Teacher Training College, Blaagaard/ KDAS, Mørkhøj Park- alle 5, 2860 Søborg</p>
14.30-15.30	<p>Discussion with lecturers and researchers regarding teacher training in Denmark</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jens Rasmussen, professor, centre for research in primary and secondary school 	<p>Teacher Training College Blaagaard/KDAS Mørkhøj Parkalle 5 2860 Søborg</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lone Wulff, lecturer, KDAS • Janet Reid, lecturer, KDAS • Dorrit Mondrup, lecturer and guidance councillor, KDAS 	
16.30-17.30	<p>Meeting researchers in the VET area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Svendsen-Pedersen • Torben Pilegaard Jensen 	<p>Ministry of Education Frederiksholms Kanal 26, 1220 København K</p>

Friday 6 March

8.30-10.30	<p>Concluding meeting with the Ministry of Education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter Grønnegård, head of department of primary and lower secondary education • Oluf Engberg, head of the division of goals and content of primary and lower secondary education • Steen Albertsen, teaching inspector, department of vocational upper secondary education • Trine Ingemansen, head of section, department of higher education and international cooperation • Christian Lamhauge Rasmussen, head of section, department of primary and lower secondary education 	<p>Ministry of Education Frederiksholms Kanal 26 1220 København K</p>
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