MENNTUN FYRIR ALLA Á ÍSLANDI
Úttekt á framkvæmd stefnu um menntun án aðgreiningar á Íslandi

EDUCATION FOR ALL IN ICELAND
External Audit of the Icelandic System for Inclusive Education

Annex 4: Fieldwork Illustrative Evidence Report

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European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This Annex presents illustrative evidence for the main findings from the Audit fieldwork activities. Each Audit Team member analysed focus group (FG), school visit and interview recordings and notes to identify key information. This included the main issues raised, the context of comments and, where relevant, the language/terminology used. The main findings from the fieldwork data collection, based on the data analysis of all Team members, are presented in line with the core issues. The analysis focused on identifying different Icelandic stakeholders' perceptions of the Audit's core issues. The analysis did not attempt to evaluate or 'judge' the data collected during the fieldwork; it focused on collecting and organising information in line with the Standards and Standard descriptors.

The overall findings, linked to each of the 7 Standards and 39 Standard descriptors, were collated, summarised and edited (repetition removed, language cleansed, etc.). These main findings are indicated in bold text in the tables below.

Direct quotes were also identified as illustrative evidence against each of the specific Standard descriptors. These illustrative quotes are from Icelandic stakeholders and are transcriptions from audio recordings, or direct quotes recorded within Team members' notes. They are presented in quotation marks in the table below.

The illustrative evidence presented in this Annex cannot be attributed to any individual stakeholder or stakeholder group.

1ˢᵀ STANDARD – INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IS DEFINED BY ALL STAKEHOLDERS AS AN APPROACH FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION OF ALL LEARNERS

Core issue underpinning this Standard and all the Standard descriptors: *Clarity and common understanding of inclusive education shared by all stakeholders*.

Main question used to explore the core issue with stakeholders: *What does inclusive education mean for you?*

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
1.1 The concept of inclusive education and its implications is well understood by all stakeholders, including parents and pupils.	There is a **general consensus about the concept/ideology of inclusive education as being linked to concepts of social justice**: 'Every child is welcome in the school and gets a challenging education'.
	There are references to the Salamanca Statement: everybody has the same chance to study, same opportunities, education should enable all learners, meet all learners' needs.
	All learners should be educated together and learn from one another.
	Inclusive education means a whole-school approach, all members of staff, and participation in the learning community.
	'Inclusive education means everybody, all children.'
	It is when all kinds of learners have their needs met and have the same opportunities with a developed support system to enable this.
	'It means that all children can go to the same school.'
	The need to 'turn diversity into a positive thing' is recognised.
	'It is not about the different subjects, it is about the school atmosphere and democratic values.'
	'It's more than learning – it's the whole school atmosphere and making the school welcoming.'
	Parents of learners with special needs/disability say they 'agree with it, where you can help the student who needs help in a good environment'.
	Parents emphasise support and friendship at an early age.

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	Parent: everyone goes to school together and gets the help they need.
	Voice of a learner: 'Your friends cheer you up … if you're different, they don't care'.
	The issue of **a clear definition of inclusive education within the Icelandic context is crucial**.
	'Stakeholders accept and are advocates for inclusive education – it's not a difficulty to "sell it". The problem is defining what we mean by it.'
	'There is no common understanding of inclusive education.'
	'There are individual understandings of the concept.'
	Inclusive education needs to have a broader understanding (e.g. special needs, talented and gifted learners, immigrants).
	There are many different concepts for inclusive education in Icelandic – 'This makes it sometimes hard to understand each other'.
	'Do we need the concept of inclusive education in our daily lives? Maybe you need it so you don't ignore anyone, but you shouldn't have it if it only focuses on a few learners.'
	Debates need to be more transparent and conceptually clear. There are **difficulties for policy-making if stakeholders are unclear about the policy**.
	There are issues over the administration of schools by municipalities. Questions are raised over the role of the Ministry, apart from setting the laws and regulations guiding the policy that is then put into practice.
	A need exists to undertake an 'ideology debate', involving ministries, municipalities, unions, schools and parents. We need a 'clear discussion on what is the ideology and philosophy underpinning inclusive education'.
	The term 'inclusive education' is problematic, as there is no equivalent term in Icelandic. They rather say 'school without any distinction'. Other 'language and terms are being used'.
	Consensus is lacking: 'The word is misunderstood in Iceland'.
	There is a need for everyone to understand the same thing by inclusive education. There is a gap between the

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	understanding of it and what is written on paper. 'Something special for every child, how the school can do that?'
	'There is also a problem what is the main goal of the school, is it a curriculum or is it a person, there is a lot of conflict about looking at the pupil as an individual with needs to sort of survive and … in the community or the future, are we just addressing it from the curriculum view, so there are lots of different things coming into this sort of discussion about inclusion.'
	Inclusive education **ideology/theory and practice are very separate**. There are differences between what inclusion should mean and what it does mean in practice.
	While there is a broad consensus about and agreement with inclusive education ideology, there appears to be a gap between this and inclusive education practice: 'Many schools have "inclusive education" as a label, but they didn't change their practices'.
	The laws have changed, but nothing else has – 'the expectations are you teach to the middle'.
	'Inclusion is a beautiful idea, but it's unfair if the idea doesn't work as it should … it's unfair to keep to a system that doesn't work so everybody gets the quality they need.'
	Stakeholders use terms such as 'good education for all in ordinary classrooms', 'a system that adapts to the children instead of children having to adapt to the system', 'opportunity for all learners to flourish'. They refer to justice, equality and belonging, but also recognise that inclusive education is like 'looking for the holy grail' and that the systemic change required will take time. 'Schools are mirrors of society' – **discussion is needed about society as a whole, not just schools**.
	What will it cost and take to 'do it properly'?
	'… in order to do any restructuring, […] I think we need to think about it holistically and just, you know, involve our society in the equation because it is something out there that is not working and we cannot just change the education system to help anxious students, we just have to do this with the parents too.'
	The current focus is too much on the economic purpose of education, rather than learners' holistic development.
	Inclusive education should be in your local school, but the form of teaching should be what you [as an individual] need.

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Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	The **boundaries with special education are not clear**. Teachers do not have a full understanding.
	Ideology – 'that would ensure students quality education'. From teachers' point of view, that is 'special education'.
	'It's frowned upon if children are taken out and given individual support.'
	'Inclusive education gives all pupils a chance to be educated regardless of disability', etc., and get the support they need. All learners are educated together – and learn from each other, meet the learner where they stand – multicultural – **but the school system is not ready**. 'It is not about inclusive schools, it is about inclusive systems.'
	Parent: if you want an inclusive system, you can't do it 20% – it has to be all in!
	'The [current] school system is made for those that "fit the box"'.
	A dilemma exists regarding **consensus about problems in implementation**, to meet every learner at their level – get needs met. 'We have the law, the values, but need more resources', i.e. educated teachers, special education teachers, money.
	There are parental concerns. Parents of non-SEN learners think learners with SEN get too much. Parents of learners with SEN think mainstream schools do not offer enough.
	There is a tension between parental choice versus professional views and versus policy.
	'The kids are ready for inclusive education … the teachers are less ready.'
	Concerns exist about quality: 'Teaching methods that can accommodate all children's needs'.
	The concept of inclusive education is understood as a system for all learners, but it may not be connected with high quality education for all.
	How well things go or not is dependent on head teachers and school boards.
	Every school should be able to meet all needs, but you know 'the [local] school has to take the kid, but there's no way they can meet their needs'.
	A school for everyone needs a different type of teaching, including two teachers per class.

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	'We have a beautiful notion, [but] in action we need more support to make it happen.'
	Concerns exist about participation: 'Important to realise that participation is based on that people are different – not doing the same thing – all children are not on the same level'.
	'What type of people are we creating as a result of the policy? How can we involve parents and learners in these discussions?'
	On a positive note, there are a lot of fine, talented people in the system, who work hard. There could be more help for those who do not have very serious problems – do not diagnose so much.
	There are clear pressures from both ends of the learner spectrum – the needs of learners who are gifted and talented and those with recognised SEN. It is hard to strike a balance.
	The value of the social aspects of education gets pushed aside, as academic success is perceived as the only form of success.
	For parents, it is not just about learning – the social aspect of education is vital. 'When you have a disabled kid, you have to choose for the social aspect'.
	There are **different conceptions of inclusive education at pre-school (PS), compulsory school (CS) and upper-secondary school (USS)**.
	Inclusion is being relatively defined within different schools' contexts.
	The profiles of learners' needs across schools – especially in USS – are very different; you cannot ignore these differences. Some USS are more 'inclusive' because they only take certain types of learners. That is not 'representative' inclusion.
	Different school leaders have different conceptions of inclusive education. Not all USS are accessible.
1.2 Inclusive education is understood by all stakeholders as being an	**There is consensus about inclusive education being an approach for all learners.**
	Many school leaders understand it as being for all learners.
	'… the opposite to exclusion'.

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
approach for all pupils.	All learners are included in the understanding of inclusive education (all diagnoses and also talented). It is about ALL learners.
	The Teachers' Union and teachers in general are accepting of the policy.
	'We say school is for everybody, and everybody should get like this special education, not just special needs children, everybody should get it.'
	'It means for me everyone – both ends of the learning spectrum and everyone in between.'
	Very often, learners are more tolerant than adults.
	Many stakeholders express the dilemma that there is **a large difference between theory and practice**.
	There is consensus about inclusive education as 'equal education for all adapted to the needs of the student' – but the follow-up, support and money have been very much lacking.
	Even if the approach is understood, the demands on teachers are overwhelming. Teachers' responsibility to understand and have knowledge and the role of teachers are discussed.
	Inclusive education is understood as being for all learners, but it is not possible to implement it due to a lack of resources.
	Inclusive education is 'about every child in the school, the problem is how we are going to help them'; 'I think that we don't have the right tools'.
	'The new curriculum is great – we don't need a new curriculum, we just need to implement what we already have.'
	Inclusive classroom – what is that if we do not work differently?
	How do people see the policy – what it really is and what needs discussing.
	Special circumstances for learners who live in remote places – 'We all have the same policy – to have the children in the hometown to be with their family, friends and their class'.
	Inclusion is **easier to implement in pre-school** than in later school stages.

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	USS have to organise learning opportunities differently – there is currently streaming in order to meet learning needs.
	Different understanding in special schools: 'What is inclusive education in a special school? Teachers meet you where you stand – you get opportunity as everyone else'.
	Reykjavík wanted to close one special school, Kletta skola (120 learners). Parents wanted to keep it. Now, more learners are moving into the participation class, and into the special school with a special curriculum for each learner.
	Inclusive education is still generally equated with special needs/disability. Other learners, such as gifted learners, those from immigrant backgrounds and others with needs who do not get a 'diagnosis' are not always taken into account.
	Inclusive education is very focused on only 'handicapped' learners.
	Some confusion arises from the view that inclusion is about the needs of 'each and every child' – and that this means individual schedules, etc., for everyone, which is then seen as an impossible task. Many feel that the emphasis on individual teaching makes inclusion seem difficult.
	The approach is to 'try to bring about inclusive education by buying into practice that is segregating in itself, in the name of individual learning'.
	Two examples of opposite practices: the first one concerns one school leader who says 'it is difficult to be in a class with the others' – in their school they have several units 'to meet the needs of everybody with mental problems, behavioural problems, linguistic problems, there are a lot of SEN, we all have special needs'.
	The second example concerns a school with 74 learners of different ages; they managed to have a system for everybody, 'not from the problem perspective, but the idea that we are all different'.
	The concept of inclusive education is mainly related to special needs education, instead of high quality education for all.
	• 'We need the label to get the money.'
	• The label is both a price tag and a cookbook.
	• Today there is segregation in special programmes. It is rooted in the system.

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Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	• Learners who are not diagnosed are a grey area, as they do not receive additional funding. The school thinks the learner is included if they have an extra person to give them support. Teachers understood inclusive education as an 'ideal' approach for all. The focus is still on meeting SEN. There is no focus on meeting all learners' individual needs. There is a perception that, for policy-makers, inclusive education means SEN/disability. 'How can we educate people in a different way? How can we make inclusive education the normal way of running schools?' 'But that is not being inclusive, having money only for that child, not on the others, what about the others that doesn't have formal diagnosis?'
1.3 Research on inclusive education is supported by all stakeholders.	There is **wide agreement that there is too little research in the Icelandic context** – decision-makers do not pay sufficient attention to findings from studies, e.g. on school improvement. Funding should be used to increase internal capacity in Iceland and fully use the available expertise to increase evidence-based practice – what works in inclusive education – and the use of technology. 'Resources for education studies are very low at the university. There are few studies on what is going on in the classes.' There is a 'break' between universities and the reality of schools – they are not in touch with that reality. Higher education could do more to stimulate good practice in schools. Special school – has no links with universities. It is not involved in joint research, but does implement in-house action research projects. A process of identifying and learning from best practice is crucial. Iceland is very focused on looking out (international). There is a need to also look in. **Inclusive education ideology/theory and practice are very separate.** The 'ideology debate' – involving ministries, municipalities, unions, schools and parents – needs to consider theory and actual practice.

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	'We are struggling to achieve a holistic view.'
	There is a struggle between policy-makers and 'experts' from different disciplines.
	Inclusive education discourses have developed in different ways in the system. Various 'sectors' have different particular perspectives – there are disputes over definitions.
	Some fields – minority group education, etc. – are taking discussions forward more than general education.
	Inclusive education principles may not be accepted at all levels of education: it is more complicated in primary and upper-secondary education.
	The nation has to accept and discuss that our educational system is not for everybody – we want to believe that it is – and make it democratic and open to everybody.

2ND STANDARD – LEGISLATION AND POLICY FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION HAS THE GOAL OF PROMOTING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL LEARNERS

Core issue underpinning this Standard and all the Standard descriptors: *How far legislation and policy supports an equitable education system for all learners.*

Main question used to explore the core issue with stakeholders: *How do you feel that current legislation and policy supports an equitable inclusive education system for all learners?*

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
2.1 Legislation clearly articulates rights to appropriate education for all children.	The **legislation framework exists** and the values are highlighted in a way that schools can take on board. The new curricula really focus on important values such as democracy, etc., 'but we need to implement it'. Our democratic society is a clear strength. There is a need to frame expectations of what diversity can offer: the majority of citizens understand the benefits for all of a diverse society; the level of tolerance is high and can be built upon. There is a need to work with clear evidence that inclusive education improves citizens' quality of life. There are **distinctions between different stages of education**: there is a gap in the legislation between PS/CS and USS. The implementation of inclusion in USS is not always adequate. There is a gap between the implementation of inclusive education in the two sectors (CS and USS). The Ministry does not 'enforce' inclusive education in USS. There is streaming, schools are competing for 'high achievers' and inclusive education is not viewed, implemented or prioritised in the way it is – and is expected to be – in PS and CS.
2.2 Policies provide operational definitions of what is understood by access and appropriateness.	**Inclusion is often described as an inclusive environment**, i.e. the physical environment. Operational definitions seem to be defined at school level in relationship to theoretical frameworks and embedded in architecture and school organisation. In pre-school, the teachers seem more positive towards **the implementation of inclusion** and have an attitude that they can support all learners, with more confidence that they can manage. 'Despite delay in diagnosis, early intervention is possible.' 'You have to work with the children and we work with what

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	we get and try our best. Because we are specialists.'
	Inclusive education is a right for all learners – school is the best place to teach learners to be tolerant. Schools have a responsibility to be inclusive as a benefit for all – 'levelling the field'.
	Access to support is an equity issue – inclusion is seen as access – not as being part of the group and engaged. 'We often think of it as just participation – it is not the same as being accepted – The school thinks the child is included if they have an extra person'.
	Policy concerning bullying (mobbing) is not well implemented.
	The schemes and plans on paper 'look wonderful', but the decentralisation means it is not working well everywhere.
	There are no norms for allocating support and no 'equity between municipalities in terms of service provision'.
	There are no reference points in terms of agreed service levels.
	Policies are seen as broadly OK, but implementation plans and clear goals are lacking. There is also a lack of clarity regarding terminology. (The terms 'access' and 'appropriateness' were not specifically mentioned in FGs.)
	'Good coherence between policies at different levels, but it is forgotten how to support schools in doing that.'
	There is conflict between inclusive education and literacy strategy (encouraging increased diagnosis and technical responses).
	The values underpinning inclusive education at national level seem to be clear enough to be taken on board at school level.
	'It's an old system with new ideas, but no change … need a new system to make it work.'
	The legislation is perceived as 'good and comprehensive', but there are difficulties in implementation of the policy.
	The policy is good, but implementation is weak.
	There is a cross-ministerial policy working group to look at legislation and articles and implementation issues, but this area and way of working needs development.

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	When we want to implement policy, it needs to be better prepared. We stop when we have the policy document.
	Key question – how can the Ministry and stakeholders support policy implementation more effectively? 'We stop when we've published an abstract idea.' 'We always stop at the point of publication.'
	Responsible bodies need to be reminded that things do not just happen on their own. 'We say what, but not how … therefore no-one has really done it properly.'
	An operational definition of inclusion is lacking – sometimes related to a focus on problems with inclusion, problems with the prerequisites for inclusion and implementation.
	Some say that inclusion needs a change in attitude from the teachers, to attend to the group and the individual at the same time. This is complex.
	The lack of a functional operational definition creates difficulties at every stage. The lack of a definition is related to a tendency to focus on inclusion as relevant only for learners with diagnosed disabilities and on special education. Diagnosis is seen as a ticket to support for the school, teachers and learner. Many learners are left without the required support. For the older learners, problems worsen.
	There is a lack of clarity over a formal disability strategy for education.
	The boundaries between special education and inclusive education do not appear clear for all stakeholders.
	How to define inclusive education – that is the challenge we have.
	Stakeholders accept and are advocates for inclusive education – it is not difficult to 'sell it'. The problem is 'defining what we mean by it'.
	A balancing act is more difficult when you cannot 'measure' what inclusive education is and how it is implemented. It is difficult when you do not have a clear set of metrics based on clear and agreed definitions.
	There are no shared agreements/understandings of key concepts on inclusive education. There has never been a wider stakeholder dialogue on what is meant and why.
	This makes the 'assessment/evaluation' of the policy very difficult.

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	If the 'metrics' are blurry, then the expectations are wrong.
	SEN has a huge impact for parents – 'how to support them and ensure their child has as normal a life as possible' [is a challenge].
	The previous evaluation study 'hit a rock' when a definition of inclusive education for implementation could not be agreed upon.
	The health sector is very strong on 'selling of ideas' across sectors and so a 'medical approach dominates in defining user services'.
	Financing is often described as a barrier for inclusion: many municipalities do not have or allocate the required funding.
	Political people must be influenced to think in new ways – change the attitude of teachers so they think in the same way, organise the system so the money flows equally to all schools – all teachers have the same chance to meet the learners with SEN.
	Parents see the linking of money for educational support to a diagnosis as problematic.
	Earmarked money for learners with SEN is used for other learners – this has pros and cons.
	The funding 'system isn't working as it should'.
2.3 All schools and municipalities have policies and action plans detailing how national-level policies on inclusive education will be implemented and funded.	**There are differences between school phases.** Upper-secondary just started to provide education for all, but learners are sometimes segregated in special programmes.
	Both policy and education is inclusive in pre-school. 'We are doing a good job in the pre-schools – why, more staff, longer tradition, more extra staff, … differences between children are less in pre-school.'
	Innovations – e.g. distance learning – in upper-secondary are not funded.
	It is important to promote links between primary and upper-secondary schools.
	Some see weaknesses in the curriculum. 'Weakness of curriculum – very flexible. Development of own school curriculum. Large freedom to the municipalities'.
	'Curriculum exists, but you plan depending on the profile of the class.' 'Curriculum and daily planning is around all the

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Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	children in the school.'
	Special support staff at local resource centres and services help teachers to build up an individual plan for the learner, class, whole school, to reorganise the classroom or the whole school.
	'There is a problem – no time for individual curriculum – it does not always exist.' 'No guidelines for children with autism in schools.'
	Local policy is not coherent across the country: 'It is different in each community and depends on the political parties'. For example, 'There are more than 30 upper-secondary schools. The nation thinks that the best schools are the schools that have no support. Diversity is second-class. The worst school is the one with immigrant children … The population think that the non-diverse schools are better'.
	Action plans based on the national curriculum in schools and municipalities and dealing with how inclusive policies should be implemented are not often mentioned per se. It seems that there are different interpretations of national plans, so they are adapted to what is more feasible and how funds are allocated at the local level.
	On site visits in pre-schools, it was noted that plans for development, learning and social competency in pre-school based on specific theories were common. Here the development and learning of all learners is integrated.
	Municipalities/schools vary across Iceland, but most seem to adopt national policy with little amendment – there is a perceived lack of clarity at municipality level.
	Some see municipality policy as more restrictive than national policy regarding inclusive education (e.g. promoting individualisation, tracking – particularly lower-secondary).
	Municipalities ask for some co-ordination in the implementation of the policy: 'What do we really want? What is the next step to be taken? They are not visible in the legislation'.
	While policies may exist, action plans may fail – 'there are differences between different municipalities'. Some municipalities provide more resources and time than others.
	There is a **lack of interest in the plans on national level**.
	Difficulties related to the local-level consequences of the national-level plans are often mentioned, for example with

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	funding, staff, differences in municipalities, problems for the smaller municipalities, geographical factors, etc.
	In many FGs, 'we do the best as we can' was mentioned frequently.
	'The teachers want to do their best.'
	Old models of one teacher to one class do not work anymore.
	Funding or the lack of funding and differences in funding are frequently mentioned as a large problem.
	'We have the law, the values, but need more resources.'
	Leaders feel inclusive education has been 'thrown into schools' – and while they know what to do, they lack resources.
	There is a high staff turnover at municipality level – many lack an understanding of schools and how they work.
	The resourcing model leads to an 'industry of diagnosis' – reinforcing the emphasis on SEN/disability. The use of 'learning centres', special classes, etc., is increasing.
	Some municipalities still feel the need for special schools – SEN are seen as detracting from the attention given to others.
2.4 Legislation is fully in line with international normative instruments, in particular the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and EU policy directives and policy guidelines.	Very few FGs raise this perspective.
	Salamanca Statement – the role of inclusion in a democratic society is mentioned.
	'Salamanca Declaration – education that meets different needs of students on their level. Quality issue, no discrimination based on physical, mental disability, quality – schools should assess and meet different needs, recognition of evidence-based stages of students – met with the right challenges, teaching methods.'
	'Equal right to education' … 'promote participation in a democratic society'.
	'Sometimes you feel their rights are being met.'
	'Inclusive education – every child has a right to go – celebrate differences.'
	'A need to fight for the rights of the children.'

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	'A question of it was started long time ago, now what is inclusion, what is it for, why do we do it? The schools are the best tools for equality in society.'
	'Everybody has their rights.' It is important the learner gets what is best for them.
	Iceland broadly shares **EU 2020** goals and benchmarking indicators. Current priorities align with policy levers noted in EU Monitor 2015 – early childhood education and care, modernisation of school education, early school leaving.
	Teachers, learners and schools could take part in **European exchanges**, school visits and training sessions in other European countries.
	Convention on the Rights of the Child – 'we have put it into our laws, that happened 2013'.
	Policy is aligned with international legislation, but the worry is whether practice is meeting policy requirements. Is there clear evidence to say all learners' rights are being met?
	The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – **UNCRPD has not yet been ratified**. There is a need for more comprehensive equal treatment legislation for all minority groups. 'We signed it 2007, but it hasn't been ratified yet.' 'There are some challenges there.'
	There is pressure to ratify Article 24, so legislation is being changed in line with this.

3RD STANDARD – POLICY FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IS EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTED AT ALL LEVELS

Core issue underpinning this Standard and all the Standard descriptors: *How adequately stakeholders at all levels are enabled to effectively implement inclusive education policy.*

Main question used to explore the core issue with stakeholders: *How well do you feel that policy for inclusive education is being implemented in practice?*

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
3.1 Every member of the school community is made to feel welcome and valued.	**The majority of FG participants agreed that all members of the school community feel welcome.** School policies, especially at pre-school and primary level, try to develop an inclusive school ethos. In some schools, there are welcoming meetings for parents or transition strategies from pre-school to school. Parental support networks are viewed very positively – 'We were so green when she started school'. The learners say that their classmates are mostly friendly and helpful – 'Teachers can help, I can talk to them'. Special support staff are 'responsible' for learners with special needs. Parents recognise the social benefits of inclusion for all learners. A small number of parents are **concerned that time/resources for those with additional needs would detract from other pupils' learning**. **Learners feeling unwelcome** – 'There are some kids in the school that are not good, they make me feel bad'.
3.2 There are high expectations for all pupils.	**Every learner should get their needs met.** How this should be done differs in the groups, and the focus, work, tasks, background and expectations are different in the FGs. High expectations are a feature of the Icelandic system – academic education and university are seen as the most desirable route for all learners. Other options are seen as of lower status. 'Inclusive education or system where everyone has a place and can develop strengths and abilities.' When school heads develop a policy for inclusive education embedded in a framework, schools have high expectations

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	for all learners without feeling a need to label them.
	Some school leaders are very outspoken about a school for all. The staff say that this is their goal.
	'We always try to have high expectations on every student'.
	The physical environment of schools is a strength area – buildings are mainly accessible and welcoming.
	The gap between having high expectations and meeting needs is mentioned. It is difficult to set individual expectations without assessment and evaluation. This is visible when a diagnosis is needed in order to get support. The learners who fall in between, 'grey-zone children', are at risk of low expectations.
	Many learners follow an academic route without sufficient advice/consideration of the longer-term prospects and this may contribute to dropout. 'Stepping stones' in accreditation are needed to keep learners engaged.
	'Schools try to amend children, but not re-organise the school environment.' Problems are seen as the learners' problems.
	School leaders need to be made more responsible for what is happening in the schools: 'They are stuck in the old idea that what happens in a classroom is the teachers' concern'.
	School leaders need to be 'leaders of learning'.
	A problem with developing this is teachers' contractual arrangements – perceived as having an 'unhealthy impact' on school organisation. They are seen as too detailed and too rigid, which steers school organisation and mitigates against flexibility.
	There are **some unequal expectations**.
	There is **a gender gap**. 'Girls doing male professions have difficulties in finding jobs because "girls have kids".'
	'Children without diagnosis may be unequally treated.'
	There are high expectations for self-development and a sense of responsibility at pre-school level, while expectations may not be high for learners with SEN.
	'There are too low expectations for students that are good in practical subjects.'

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	Parents' view is that there are dangers when some schools are known to 'be good at inclusion', as parents and other schools start pushing learners there.
	Results-oriented work is lacking in schools – teachers are not ambitious enough for all learners. Evaluations in the Ministry show learners at both ends of the spectrum are 'left aside'.
3.3 Schools have formal and objective procedures that assist in the early identification of students' individual needs.	There are **differences between phases**, **municipalities and schools** and **differences** due to **geographical** factors. Without a diagnosis, no support or less support and funding are provided at all levels.
	'The diagnosis industry has grown very fast because of the system of financing.'
	The identification of learners as having SEN may be in line with labelling mechanisms.
	In pre-school, the attitude is more outspoken – all learners should get the support they need; the staff are also the specialists on learners' social development and learning in pre-school. The need for more support is expressed. 'Child without diagnosis may be unequally treated compared to physical or visible disability.'
	In pre-school: 'No-one asks if there are special needs – it is just for everyone'.
	In the school visits, a more diverse picture of assessment was given. The pre-school teachers in one site said that they have a lot of experience and work together looking for learners who need extra support and early intervention. At the first sign of difficulties, they talk to the parents and the person in charge of the special needs unit. Formal assessment is carried out, which may result in more time or extra staff being allocated. There is also communication with specialists and other resources.
	In upper-secondary school: 'Values and ideas very good in line with policy, but not very good as it comes to assessment'. 'A heavy burden that children are not diagnosed, grey-zone, do not receive funding.'
	Parents complain about the **lack of school counsellors**. One example underlines that there is only one school counsellor for 800 learners.
	In remote areas, it is difficult to intervene early due to lack of personnel/specialists.
	In smaller municipalities without resource centres and at a distance from central Iceland (Reykjavík), the aim is to keep families together and provide support close to the home. They have to be innovative with the resources that are there

Annex 4

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	and work with external professionals, sometimes through the internet (distance therapy).
	It is difficult to get support: 'We have to fight for support'. 'It takes one to one-and-a-half years to get the kids in for support.' For some learners with behaviour problems, for example, teacher assistants are with them the whole day. The attitude seems quite often to be: 'We wait and see and do the best we can'.
	Identification procedures are not always clear. 'You are not supposed to label children.' This is why it is so difficult to know their needs.
	Screening was introduced as part of a literacy strategy. However, it is believed to have led to an increase in 'special' support that is not effective or in line with inclusive education policy.
	'The processes for evaluating students are too long. The waiting time is too long.'
	Identification and early intervention come too late and lead to more costs.
	Inclusive education is perceived to be more cost-effective – 'begin the help now … don't wait until it's a huge problem'.
	How much does it cost if you do not give support early enough and for the 'grey-zone' learners?
3.4 All schools have well educated staff fit for their purpose.	Learners generally feel supported, but it depends on individual staff – there is not a systemic approach to pastoral support, etc.
	The learners express the view that the teachers are 'good'.
	Teachers are teaching learners with special needs on the same level as everybody else.
	There are differences related to the school level, community size and financing. It depends on the heads of the school and their ability to recruit and allocate and find funding. There is a tendency to ask for a better system for support that can attend to all learners' needs, asking for more specialists in the school and teamwork.
	Attitudes differ: the FGs representing pre-schools and schools are more positive about the work done by the local system, while representatives from the national support systems related to the medical and paramedical professions are more negative towards the schools for not using their kind of services enough.
	Smaller municipalities seem more inclined to ask for and use external support.

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	More people with relevant expertise are needed, more specialists.
	A generation gap is visible: 'Most teachers are quite old, many have not seen a pupil with disability, handicapped, sometimes afraid. Do not know what to do'.
	The teacher education master's degree means that newly graduated teachers are well prepared. However, there is no support system for them.
	Some schools cannot afford to get more highly qualified teachers, but diagnosis of learners allows for more hours.
	'We make people who have less education responsible for that group', i.e. assistants for learners in need of support.
	'Teacher culture in upper-secondary focus on school subjects, not on students' possibilities to learn.' 'Teacher education and training is needed, especially at the upper-secondary level, change the culture, challenge it.'
	There is a lack of competence among teachers. 'We do the best we can.'
	'We lack specialised teachers … we're just teachers … I'm not a psychologist or a nurse.'
	Make more pre-school teachers – 'We need 1,300 teachers to have the minimum of what the law says'.
	A formal support system for teachers is lacking.
	In smaller municipalities at a distance from central Iceland (Reykjavík), it is difficult to recruit teachers: 'When I need a teacher if I get one I am very happy'. 'People do not want to live outside Reykjavík. The circumstances lead to the solutions.' 'We have pragmatic solutions and help each other.'
	'How can we enable people on a day-to-day basis – if more money exists?'
	More practical courses are needed to train teachers on teaching methods.
	More support in the classroom.
	More education about learners' needs.
	More in-service training needed.
	A site visit to a pre-school provided a more positive perspective on competency: 'If we have enough teachers and get the

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	power to decide what to do – this would be good'; 'Teachers in Iceland are not proud enough of their work'; 'All these kids are telling us – experience is a goldmine.' This points to the need for integrating the practice perspective and tacit knowledge with theory in teacher education to allow for experience transfer and development. **Strengthening the bridge between theory and practice.** **A lack of professional development is impacting on the development of inclusive education – lack of collaboration** between teachers and other professionals, although some small-scale examples exist. Leaders believe 'teachers not all ready to meet the needs of each child'. Use of learning support assistants (LSAs) is increasing – many unqualified – despite the fact that they often work with learners with the most severe needs, 'where you would expect people with a strong professional background'. Support teachers are not always educated. There is a lack of trained teachers at pre-school level. Teachers seem to lack skills to implement inclusive education on a daily basis, especially when starting their job. More support staff are needed to be able to implement the idea of inclusive education. 'We are just teachers' – teachers express the view that they do not have the knowledge to support learners with autism for example. 'We need to have more special trained staff.' 'Many teachers lack special educational skills.' The school does not have all the professions that are necessary for learners with special needs. 'Teachers need more training in special needs kids.' Special support staff need more 'teaching methods' in their education. Teachers lack experience and practice in their teacher training. (Teachers' Union wants to increase the practice time).

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	Increasing collaboration is a challenge. 'Today it is a lot about collaboration […] now more teachers have to learn to collaborate, how to ask for help.' There is a 'need of creative problem solvers'; 'The surveys show parents trust teachers; it is need to empower teachers'.
	Regular teachers are responsible for the academic aspect and the special support staff for the social part.
	Teachers are left alone with their problems too much. There is not enough collaboration among teachers.
3.5 The division of labour between different types of teachers within schools is clear and promotes successful implementation of inclusive education policy.	There is an **unclear distinction between teachers and special support staff** (who are not teachers).
	However, there are differences across school levels. At the pre-school level, there are examples of staff working together from a common view about how the learners develop and learn. For example, one pre-school focused on having few toys and working a lot with blocks as a material for social and academic learning, in different ways. Another pre-school worked from the perspective of 'Flow' – follow initiatives from learners, where all staff were aware of all learners' progress. A difference was that uneducated staff did not get preparation time, which was four hours a week for pre-school teachers. All staff met one hour a week for common discussions on methods and ideas. Other pre-schools worked based on response to intervention (RTI), others based on an adaptation for pre-school of 'The Seven Characteristics of a Good Leader', or Diane Gossen's restitution theory that facilitates the bringing together of various educational partners to enhance current educational practices. The fact that they had a common basis facilitated their work with the learners.
	The division of labour between teachers and teacher assistants, or support persons for the learners varied – sometimes the teacher assistant or support person only works with an individual learner and sometimes as an aid to the teacher.
	In schools in larger communities, a local resource team works together with the teachers to enable inclusion. In this team, special education teachers, psychologists and other professions work together with the class teacher and parents.
	Smaller communities have difficulties with receiving support. Teacher assistants are the most common resource. They try to provide individual support through different channels, often together with parents. Examples include visits from the national support teams, internet communication with experts, etc. The only other alternative is for the family to move.
	As staff from more disciplines work in school, greater clarity and collaboration skills are needed.

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	A **lack of clarity** leads teachers to pass on responsibility for learners with additional needs to other teachers/professionals.
	'We need teams with different skills.'
	Need for more teamwork: 'teams with different skills … more professionals working together on the floor'.
	The division of labour between teachers could be more flexible.
3.6 All pupils have access to good teaching materials that suit their needs.	**Efforts towards good teaching:**
	Examples – PCs available in classrooms, open libraries.
	In connection with the special school: 'Technology has increased being more specific' (special school and special unit staff).
	The 'new' teaching method, which is more focused on the individual learner, helps all learners. It is more individual and can therefore promote inclusive education.
	'We are trying to get away from the books. The iPad and computer makes it possible to find teaching materials that suits every student.'
	However, there are negative views – 'It is not based on the individual' – everyone needs to do the same things.
	'We've gone from teaching to instruction essentially. So we are not teachers as such anymore than we stand to give lectures and you know everybody takes from there what they need to and does their assignments. We are more involved with the learning of the students all the time so we are trying to support them through all kind of […] more guidance … more instruction than teaching.'
	What was the reason for adopting the assessment method? 'I think it was the curriculum really, the new curriculum that encouraged it, more than anything, and the main aspects of that that lead us to more … sort of instruction teaching and putting the emphasis on the students' learning, rather than our teaching.'
	The challenges and benefits of diversity are being recognised and built upon by some schools, but not others.
	This issue was seldom discussed in the FGs. The environment as a whole is important: 'Space – physical space important

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	for the ability to teach – differs a lot' (staff from local resource centres).
	'Educational material, no-one is working with this, i.e. with inclusion, special materials were taken away in the law.'
	Teachers still use a lot of textbooks – there is relatively low investment in technology.
	Division of labour between regular teachers and support teachers depends on schools' policies and strategies.
	New national curriculum – it looks good, but we are not doing it.
	Not all schools (USS) have the same resources – e.g. a school with a lift – there is a perceived tendency for learners with mobility issues to be 'directed' there.
	The information flow between CS and USS is not good.
	USS profiles are changing due to learner profiles and demands. There is an **increasing 'push for academic subjects'**, not VET routes.
	There is negativity over how some USS are 'allowed' to operate so differently from others: **inequitable provision and practice**.
	Differences between USS are based on social class, ability, gender and ethnic groups.
	USS 'units' are questionable – some see them as a retrograde step.
	The high dropout rate in USS is a clear sign that learners are not getting what they want or need. They are not getting what they could out of education.
	'Children have different profiles, but in the end they all take the same tests … The tests make some kids feel like they are dumb.'
	'We're not doing much for kids who are academic … they don't get any challenge … top 5% are not getting challenged.'
	Voice of a learner: 'Sometimes I get so bored'.

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
3.7 There are clear and objective procedures implemented for monitoring the achievements of pupils who are at risk of exclusion.	**Since assessment differs across levels and municipalities, so too does monitoring.** Without assessment, it is difficult to monitor more than on group level. When procedures that assist in the early identification of learners' individual needs are lacking, monitoring on an individual level is lacking, too. This is a local issue, depending on the system in the municipality. An important function of the head teacher is to make this system work. Pre-schools have individual systems for monitoring, depending on the pre-school's focus or approach. It is **generally agreed that there is a lack of data** – in particular for vulnerable groups at school/municipality levels. The data is insufficient to disaggregate for such information. There is a lack of recognised systems for monitoring more complex needs – greater clarity is needed about **what** to measure. Many teachers fear not being able to adequately meet learners' needs due to a **lack of means and support**. 'The processes for evaluating students are too long. The waiting time is too long.'
3.8 All students have a voice and are appropriately involved in school-level decision-making, as well as decision-making about their learning programme.	'**Voice of children important** – listen to what they have to say.' This was implicit in many of the FGs when talking about adapting to the learners' needs, meet the learners where they are, peer interaction, etc. Some schools allow learners to organise themselves in working groups, take decisions concerning cultural life, and express themselves in front of the others. You can ask anyone and they help you. **Variations exist between schools and teachers** – many traditional teachers 'deliver' subjects, with few opportunities for learner involvement. Many schools do not appear to have a culture that enables learners' systematic involvement – need more learner choice – learners as resource. Teachers 'say stuff – write stuff – go out'. 'Secondary educators care more about their subject than methodology.' This depends on schools' policies and the school heads' commitment.

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	It varies among school levels (easier at pre-school and primary) and municipalities.
	Learners' involvement as a challenge:
	If you could change something, what would it be? 'To involve the pupils in the decision-making.'
	'Teachers don't [praise] enough … shouting at kids makes me want to leave.'
3.9 All national government bodies and agencies work collaboratively to ensure joined-up policy delivery.	There is **no consensus on how to work together**. An implementation gap exists. The national government bodies and agencies work collaboratively to ensure their interpretation of inclusion. Most bodies point to problems with attitudes and financing and at the system level that are barriers to inclusion.
	There is a need for increased and more frequent formal communication between the Ministry and municipalities. Variations exist between municipalities.
	There is a lack of collaboration among stakeholders at all levels.
	A gap exists between what is advocated on a national level and what is said on municipality level.
	'There needs to be much more co-operation between the Ministry and the schools. They just tell us what to do, but they are not familiar with the daily school work.'
	'Grey zones' have been identified, where it is not clear which authority has responsibility for the learner. Much more co-operation is needed.
	There is no clear distinction between the roles of national and more local authorities.
	Problems exist in agreeing responsibilities – 'Who does (and does not) do what and pay for what'.
	Teachers need to be more involved in policy-making.
	'The policy of inclusive education is poorly implemented in the daily school work.'
	There is a difference between the ideology of inclusive education and practice.
	'The main problem of the implementation is that it came from above. It was decided by the authorities and the teachers didn't have much to say about it.'

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	'There were no steps in the implementation.'
	'There is a difference of what inclusive education means and what it is in practice' – not fully implemented.
	'The curricula is amazing, but we need to work to implement it.'

4TH STANDARD – ALL STAKEHOLDERS, AT ALL LEVELS ARE ENABLED TO THINK AND ACT INCLUSIVELY IN THEIR DAILY PRACTICE

Core issue underpinning this Standard and all the Standard descriptors*: How effectively the education system enables all stakeholders in education to be inclusive in their day-to-day work (i.e. school organisation, curriculum, assessment, pedagogy, support for learners, development opportunities for all stakeholders, effective communication across and between system levels).*

Main question used to explore the core issue with stakeholders: *In your role, how well supported do you feel to ensure that learners' diverse needs are met?*

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
4.1 Support services have the ultimate goal of empowering students, families and teachers.	At site visits in pre-schools: **the local system worked quite well**, but more time for collaboration was asked for.
	Services vary – so access is not equitable across the country.
	Support services have different goals. There are varying approaches to the ultimate goal of empowering learners, families and teachers.
	Teamwork is frequently mentioned: a team around the learner including parents, teacher, assistant and local support services.
	There is a gap between the health system and the school system – it is hard to do something between the two systems.
	Some schools think that there should be professionals from the health services in the local teams to facilitate inclusion.
	The system on the national level seems to serve learners with disabilities and their families. It is not always available for families and learners too far from Reykjavík.
	Services follow a 'disability' model, mostly intervening on 1:1 basis to 'fix' problems. The system pushes parents/teachers to want a label – this does not support a pedagogical response or increase capacity.
	Leaders say that the 'support system doesn't understand what we are doing in school' (support comes from 'social development' teams).

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	There are difficulties in remote areas: 'That is both because of funding and it is also because it is difficult to get psychologists to come because those specialists want to work together and have colleagues … so being a single psychologist somewhere […] it is difficult, so they want … to have colleagues around them, to share experience with'. **Support systems do not aim to empower all stakeholders.** Systems in some towns employ special education teachers. Support staff are not always educated in the same way. Municipal or local support services act as consultants helping to solve problems and/or providing visits when available, rather than services on which schools can build. Regional differences exist – 'There are no local support services'. 'The support system does not understand what we are doing in the school, they are not in our classes, they come with beautiful ideas … sometimes it is possible to do that, sometimes is not.'
4.2 Schools are effectively supported by the specialist/school services as appropriate in delivering the provision required by students with individual educational needs.	One strength of the system is that **all schools genuinely support the ideal of inclusive education**. Another strength is the social dimension of education for everyone. **Schools need a new way of working** – more flexibility in learning methods – involving learners much more in asking what works (and does not work) for them. 'Get rid of the dinosaur settings in schools.' Specialist/school services need more support to enable learners with individual educational needs. A hindrance for this was financing, management and attitudes. Schools lack quality support – services focus on individual learners' difficulties, rather than on supporting teachers to increase capacity. A teacher says, 'I'm not the professional for this …'. Current services (including LSAs) help individuals 'survive' in class – and not disturb others. There are short-term solutions. There are insufficient skills to manage the needs of all learners. There is some concern that segregating practice is increasing in pre-school (taking learners out). There appears to be an increase in requests for support, as education at this level becomes more formal. Schools have to advocate to get support from their municipalities and it is related to additional resources; there are

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	waiting lists.
	Teachers may feel disempowered and discouraged.
	More support is needed in the classroom.
	There is a need to face the challenge of having a system with different provision types – 'Can we have mainstream schools and special schools and still achieve the goals we have for inclusive education?'
	Stakeholders who want different forms of provision should not be seen as 'opponents in the game'.
	Head teacher's vision: 'The future is counselling in mainstream schools'.
	There is a need for more flexible placements between specialist separate provision – school and classes – and mainstream.
	Very few learners in the school go back to mainstream.
	It is increasingly recognised that a new way of working is needed – including among the teachers' unions.
	There is a need to recognise that many see education as too old-fashioned and rigid. Can there be pilots for 'loosening up the structures'?
	'Teachers are living in a box … change means you have to change what you are doing in the box, but also come out of the box.'
	Feelings of isolation among teachers are an issue. Mechanisms for support in schools are perceived as being reduced.
	There are calls for the Ministry of Education to increase funding in 'creative ways in co-operation with school teams'.
	Schools talk about individualisation in learning, but didactics do not match the rhetoric.
	The biggest challenge is that learners are too passive. Learners 'do their own thing' in projects, but that does not mean individualised learning.
	'The focus is on the average student.'
	Some **voices call for separate provision** – maybe not more in actual numbers, but more in their volume and effect.

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	It is unclear how many parents really want special education. There is little evidence until now as to whether the perceived pressures are real or the result of a very vocal minority.
	Inclusive education is an increasingly political topic. It is not the 'hottest' topic, but has been increasing in political importance recently.
	Special schools create a feeling of 'separation' from the rest of the system. There are implications for them and for mainstream schools.
	Some links with mainstream schools exist, but there could be more – policy does not facilitate possibilities for joint work.
	The social aspect of learning in mainstream is viewed negatively by parents in comparison to special schools.
	Special school numbers are rising – mainstream schools put pressure on parents to apply for a place.
	Very few learners are referred in pre-school. Referrals increase around USS transfer time.
4.3 The support system is co-ordinated and easy to understand.	**Better co-ordination and a good map of the eco-system for inclusion are needed.**
	Services are seen as 'fragmented'. In Reykjavík, services are fragmented between schools and service centres – there are poor connections to different city areas. 'Spreading butter too thin.'
	It is difficult to differentiate responsibility between education/health due to:
	'Grey areas between the systems […] educational system in this case and the health system. Who owns that problem each time? Because the schools are where the children are always, every day […] a big responsibility which sometimes really would need a much more co-operation […] of the healthcare and the health system in the schools … you are kind of throwing the kids and the parents between systems […] Everybody tries to kind of reduce his own responsibility, but the school never passed that, the school always kind of takes care of its responsibility, but without really having the right expertise, because the right expertise is with another system. So this co-operation between the systems, the openness between the systems it is something that would really help, I think, make a lot of difference in many cases.'
	Co-operation 'exists on paper'; 'the school nurses are really trying to make a connection, but it seems a little bit difficult'. It is especially needed with 'kids that have some mental problems, they need a doctor, they need the health system'.

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	'There are mental issues, social issues, educational issues. The question is who funds these?'
	There is a disconnect between CS/USS in terms of support.
	Co-ordination mechanisms at national, local and municipal level are unclear.
	The responsibilities of different stakeholders (municipalities, government, etc.) are unclear regarding who is responsible for what.
4.4 Appropriate training is available for all staff in order to ensure all staff can respond positively to student diversity.	Professional learning communities in Akureyri show a **successful approach to training**.
	Special support staff feel well prepared, but 'we are too few'.
	More support to teachers and teaching methods is needed, as are more practical courses in teacher education.
	Appropriate training is asked for, both in initial teacher training and in-service training. In-service training is not only for teachers, but also for teacher assistants and other support staff.
	Disability studies are needed in teacher education.
	'We are not special education teachers … we are not specialised for handicapped … we are just teachers.'
	Universities may fail to develop tools that enable teachers to be convinced of their abilities.
	The teacher education master's degree means that newly graduated teachers are well prepared. However, when they start to work in a school, the situation is not as they had anticipated. They want to try out new things, but there are difficulties in the school situation. There is no support system for young teachers from the first day. Teachers should work more together and have more time to discuss professional matters. There is too little time to do that.
	'There is a lack of competence/skills among staff.'
	'Teachers are not always trained/prepared to meet the diversity of all learners. Could do better in universities.'
	'There is a lack of further training for teachers.'
	Teachers need more training in special education to be able to take care of learners with special needs.

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	All school leaders should be educated for inclusive education.
	'There is not enough practice within the teacher training.'
	All teachers must be aware of their responsibilities.
	Teachers are perceived as having a lot of freedom and choice – policy implementation is seen as being too much down to school and teacher choice.
	This results in inequalities and was described as a 'form of discrimination'.
	Meeting needs in inclusive education should not be based on 'getting a good teacher'.
4.5 The staff and resourcing levels of resource services at all levels is adequate to meet the needs of the schools and pupils.	**Learners generally feel supported**, but it depends on individual staff – there is no systemic approach to pastoral support, etc.
	There is **wide agreement that more resources are needed**. A small number of FG participants believed different organisation could make more effective use of resources.
	The higher school levels in particular lack resources. This is especially true at upper-secondary level: there is a need for resources for inclusion, not just special programmes.
	'All the teachers have to learn how to work with SEN; teachers don't feel ready for it. It is important to implement in all the courses, not only some of them.'
	We have the law and the values, but need more resources.
	'There have to be different options possible in different schools.'
	Special support staff feel isolated and are quite alone in the school despite being well trained.
	The perception is that class teachers prioritise subjects and learners' grades, and not meeting the wider learning and social needs of learners.
	Class teachers hand over responsibility for learners with the severest needs to SEN support staff.
	Professionals with the least training are often responsible for the learners with the greatest needs.

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	Support – 'might mean not getting the right help from teachers … it's a bit strange'.
4.6 There is an adequate access to diagnoses in the health and the welfare system.	**The question of diagnoses is a burning issue** – the problem is that having a diagnosis is seen as the ticket to services. One reason is that the grey-area learners risk being without support and extra funding. Another reason is that the medical model still prevails, which hinders many learners from getting support and only provides support to learners with a diagnosis.
	Parents and municipalities criticise the long diagnosis process – it takes eight months for a learner to be diagnosed with ADHD.
	Talk should be about ability not disability – we are getting more negative – there is a need to find the power to do it.
	There is a perception that needs identification takes too long to be relevant for meeting immediate learning needs.
	Parents see the system as unfair at the moment.
	The 'speed of diagnosis' is problematic.
	There are **'grey' areas between the systems** – 'who owns the problems?' Education/schools take on issues, but need closer co-operation with health.
	There is a need for more different professionals in schools, e.g. psychologists, counsellors. An increase in mental health issues shows there is a greater need to work with healthcare.
	Small municipalities cannot provide equitable services, e.g. no access to psychiatrists, no clear referral paths.
	Overall, the roles of schools, healthcare centres and social services need further clarification. Communication between services requires improvement, along with evaluation of the effectiveness of services (Ombudsman Report).
4.7 School administrators are able to act as leaders in inclusive education settings.	School heads seem to be skilled and **very committed** – they try to overcome lack of means/resources.
	Inclusive education is a complex issue and depends on the politicians in the municipality, financing and the management system.
	'More resources and staff is needed, and proficiency of how to organise the school. Teacher education, special needs teachers, people that can go from one school to another to help the teacher with difficult students, e.g. Asperger,

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	teacher needs a better education and good support staff. Heavy burden on teachers to have diverse pupil needs. Difficulty to meet all. Support in how to organise services.'
	Leaders need support – and to develop thinking/attitudes regarding inclusive practice. There are some small-scale examples of informal meetings of leaders.
	Change is viewed as a challenge for school leaders: 'The attitude of directors in schools is very important. This is not a new system. Changes make them afraid'.
	Schools 'don't have the right tools to make sure every child gets their education'. The Ministry should have closer connections to schools – through dialogue and by acknowledging and giving feedback on school innovation.
	Leaders do not feel that municipalities trust them.
	Leaders acknowledge the importance of co-ordination, but they have less control over teachers: 'To build a professional learning community, it is better to have a team to help each other with inclusion, often teachers don't feel ready for that'. 'The teachers have to believe they are the right resources.'
4.8 There is a recognised forum for teachers to meet and share experiences.	Working **at the local level** – for example, in the site visits, the teachers met and discussed ways to handle the learners, teaching methods, etc. In-service training and seminars on specific topics seemed to be frequent in some pre-schools and schools.
	'It is mostly staff within school that are able to meet and discuss problems and issues.'
	There are school leaders' meetings every month.
	The **lack of possibilities is mentioned** – 'No support system for the young teachers from the first day. Teachers should work more together, more time to discuss professional things. Too little time to do that'.
	Some areas (Akureyri Professional Learning Community), led by school development centre, have some informal school links. It is widely believed that there are insufficient mechanisms to recognise and share good practice.
	'Most teaching is done in isolation.'
	More preparation time is needed in pre-school; forum depends on school's management.

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	'It is hard to meet staff from other schools.' 'There are not enough collaboration between teachers.'
4.9 There is a recognised forum for training providers to meet, share experiences and facilitate effective co-ordination of service provision.	**Presence of a recognised forum for training providers.** This would be part of training and in-service training. It is mentioned at pre-school level. 'One-day course on inclusive education; conference. Possibility to go to classes exist if you reach out for it, especially when SEN in class. Replacement possible when course; learn from each other from other schools. After school closed: once a month staff meeting: informs on ADHD for example.' In the site visits, this was done in the pre-school/school or local level. The pre-school teachers had possibilities for further training and visiting relevant conferences in Iceland and other countries, e.g. training on special programmes. **Teacher educators identified the need for support for the universities** regarding inclusive education and technology. Differences between universities: generalist (Akureyri) and subject and specialist training (University of Iceland).
4.10 Parents understand the philosophy of inclusive education.	**Parents agree with the ideology of inclusive education**, but are influenced by the need to get a diagnosis to get additional resources for their children. Some believed that expertise is lacking in mainstream, so they wanted the option of special schools. Parents say they understand the philosophy of inclusive education, but that it is hard to implement. Often the problems are not academic but social, such as being with friends and playing with other learners. This aspect, relating to participation and engagement, is not prioritised. 'It means that all children can go to the same school.' Parents may find assurance about the quality of their child's education in special settings detrimental to inclusion. **Parents do not understand in-class 'support'** – they see special education as being withdrawn from class, etc. Parents seem to favour inclusive education at pre-school level and primary level. 'Parents often wish special education outside the regular classroom,' according to class teachers.

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	Parental involvement and information provided to parents may not reassure them about the quality of education and teachers' skills.
4.11 Parents have the opportunity to participate in the decisions that affect their child's education.	'**Parents do not have the choice** of a special school any more. The kids must have several difficulties. It is "harder" to be enrolled in a special school. The parents do not have a choice anymore.' 'Sometimes they don't know what their right is and don't have the energy to fight …'

5TH STANDARD – RESOURCE ALLOCATION IS EQUITABLE, EFFICIENT AND COST-EFFECTIVE

Core issue underpinning this Standard and all the Standard descriptors: *The effectiveness, equity and enabling effects of resource allocation (including work with other agencies beyond education).*

Main question used to explore the core issue with stakeholders: *In what ways do you feel that the current systems of resource allocation enable you to support all learners in equitable, efficient and cost-effective ways?*

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
5.1 Funding mechanisms support successful implementation of the policy of inclusive education.	**Financing and attitudes are barriers to the development of inclusive education.** In almost all FGs and site visits, it emerged that labelling and funding go together. There is not enough funding for all the learners who have difficulties, but do not have a diagnosis. Many mention that the equalization fund does not work because there is no monitoring or evaluation. 'Labelling is a ticket to get funding'; 'Diagnoses allow for more hours'. There are many different study paths, not only for learners with disabilities, but also for learners within the 'grey zone'. However, there is no funding for this. No-one gets sign language as their first language, so they are excluded from the school. Sign language is provided on a small scale in one institution. They should learn sign language first; instead, they learn Icelandic first. Funding is lacking. Funding – equalization fund. Tax funds were allocated when responsibility moved from regions/central to municipalities. The follow-up is not thorough; they only allocate the funds. Part of this is that diagnosis is related to funding. At the end of the day, it is always about funding. More funding! 'It all depends on money.' 'Do we use our sources in the right way?' There is a lack of accountability regarding funding additional support (almost 30% receive some special education – no visible impact). Municipalities lack trust in school leaders and teachers.

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	Funding focuses on disability – not wider needs (influences thinking).
	It is difficult to prioritise needs with limited resources.
	Financial cutbacks lead to a lack of resources:
	- Lack of pre-school teachers - Small municipalities do not have the resources to create support.
	Current resource allocation mechanism for additional support may favour labelling of learners in order to have more resources.
	- Credit system affects learners who have disabilities. - Funds are not based on incentives for inclusion. Most upper-secondary schools have special education programmes. Funds are allocated in four categories on a 1–4 scale, per learner.
	Support at school level needs to be bought-in by school heads – 'We have to have the resources to be able to serve the range of children that comes to our school'.
	'We do not have enough funding.'
	Parent's view: 'You have to be very pushy to receive support'.
	Many groups referred to cuts in funding and resources (support staff, class teachers). However, is this a reality or a perception?
	'We are aware of the policy of inclusive education, but it is hard to do it because we lack money.'
	'There is a lack of resources.'
	There is no earmarked funding for SEN as it is perceived differently – some see it as a problem ('no-one asks how they use it'; the learners it is meant for lose out); some see it as offering flexibility (some learners with SEN are lucky as they can share other learners' SEN resources).
	All agree that the system of no funding without a label is not working. Schools place huge pressure on parents to get

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	their children 'diagnosed' and a label that gives funding.
	'Labels are awful [but] we need the resources to work with the kids.'
	One cannot ignore the system weakness that smaller areas and schools do not have access to the resources bigger ones do.
	There are not enough resources for learners with special needs.
	Only learners who have diagnoses get extra resources.
	The interventions come too late and therefore cost more.
	Our system is striving for diagnoses. There needs to be a diagnosis to get money from the equalization fund.
	'As a parent you always have to fight to get the right support.' A system for the strong?
	Cost is the central issue – how can we do it more efficiently?
	The equalization fund has two parameters for fund allocation: demographics and diagnosis.
	Diagnosis is driving the system – there are clear incentives to get a diagnosis for parents, schools and municipalities.
	The use of the equalization fund is clear strategic behaviour.
	There is no mechanism for municipalities to contribute to the on-going review of the equalization fund.
	The differences between education system levels regarding resources are too great – resourcing in pre-school is not viewed as the same level as upper-secondary.
	Changing attitudes as a solution:
	'It always come round to a question of money … but it isn't just about money. Attitudes can lead to a lot of changes.'
	It is necessary to think much farther ahead – more than four years at a time. There is a need to think about the economic arguments looking 20 years ahead.
	Investments in schools earlier on will help in the longer term.

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
5.2 There is a strong inter-ministerial co-operation in the financing of the policy of inclusive education.	Questions municipalities are asking themselves include: 'Is the way we are doing the policy correct?', 'Can we have a new discussion on how we can make the system function better?', 'How are we using resources?', 'Can we prove inclusive education saves money in the long term?' The key issue is: 'How is money coming into the system?' There is a **lack of clarity on what is being spent and how**. There is a need to use existing resources in better ways. **Inter-ministerial co-operation is lacking at all levels and between all administrations.** There is a gap between the health system and the school system. It is hard to do something between the two systems. Existing collaboration is defined at local level in relation to economic, demographic and social issues. Some municipalities support inclusiveness in order to avoid families leaving the area. The importance of communication between ministries cannot be overestimated. 'And then there are problems in agreeing responsibilities – who does (and does not!) do what and pay for what?' Inclusive education policy has 'come from above' – municipalities have had very little input into the policy. Long-term implementation of the inclusive education policy has a fundamental flaw: there was never a cost assessment. The costs of support are rising – early identification of needs should lead to reduced support costs, but this is not happening. There is no clear explanation – this needs examining.
5.3 School resources are distributed in a fair and equitable way to support inclusive education.	The equalization fund builds on an assessment at the diagnosis centre and provides additional (individual) support to schools. **The system is not clear and many feel it is unfair.** The system is much discussed with the responsibility at different levels, ministry, municipalities, head teachers, school managers, school units. Discussions especially focus on the need for a label to be eligible for support, and the needs of grey-area learners who do not get funding for support. Differences between municipalities depend on their attitudes and priorities in schools. There are differences between schools depending on how head teachers, etc., choose to use funding, and the extra hours related to funding.

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	Many mention that the equalization fund does not work because there is no monitoring or evaluation.
	Leaders feel under-resourced in schools.
	Resource allocation mechanisms depend on local policy contexts.
	Resource allocation mechanisms may fail to take account of learners in need of support, but not in need of a label.
	'We want to do so much more, but we can't because we don't have the resources or training.'
	'There is a lack of resources.'
	'There are now budget cuts, and it is taken from the kids with special needs.'
	'And then there are problems in agreeing responsibilities – who does (and does not!) do what and pay for what?'
	The rights of all learners are being called into question – the least and the most able. There is a need to make sure all learners reach their potential.
	There is a lack of transparency about the funding system.
	School leader: 'Never quite understood it'.
	The costs of SEN support are high – there is no clear evidence if the resources available are being used in the best ways.
	Parents feel they need to fight for resources – there is concern regarding those not able to.
	Families have to move to the right municipality. If you have a child with special needs, you have to move to a specific municipality that can provide that assistance.
	'That's discrimination based on location.'
	The system is perceived to require the 'survival of the fittest' – parents who can fight get things, others do not.
	'It's always a fight – that's why we have so many support groups.'
	Schools 'encourage' parents to 'fight' with municipalities to get extra resources.
	The issue of co-ordination between resource provision is huge for parents. There are perceptions that it is cheaper to

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	pay for inclusive education than separate provision.
	Support is given too late and that makes it more expensive.
	It is bad that money is earmarked for learners with special needs.
	The money must be available more quickly. There is not time to wait for a diagnosis.
	The system with the equalization fund does not work very well.
	There is a shared perception among parents that learners with needs are often identified far earlier than support is provided/available for them.
	There are great differences within the educational system. 'There is a lot of money in USS, but almost no money in pre-school.'
	'Special education teachers are used when other staff are ill. It means that the resources that were meant for the special needs pupil are taken away.'

6TH STANDARD – GOVERNANCE AND QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS ENSURE CO-ORDINATED AND EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY AND PRACTICE

Core issue underpinning this Standard and all the Standard descriptors*: The effectiveness of educational governance and quality assurance/accountability processes at all system levels.*

Main question used to explore the core issue with stakeholders: *What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the current quality assurance processes for informing improvement in inclusive education?*

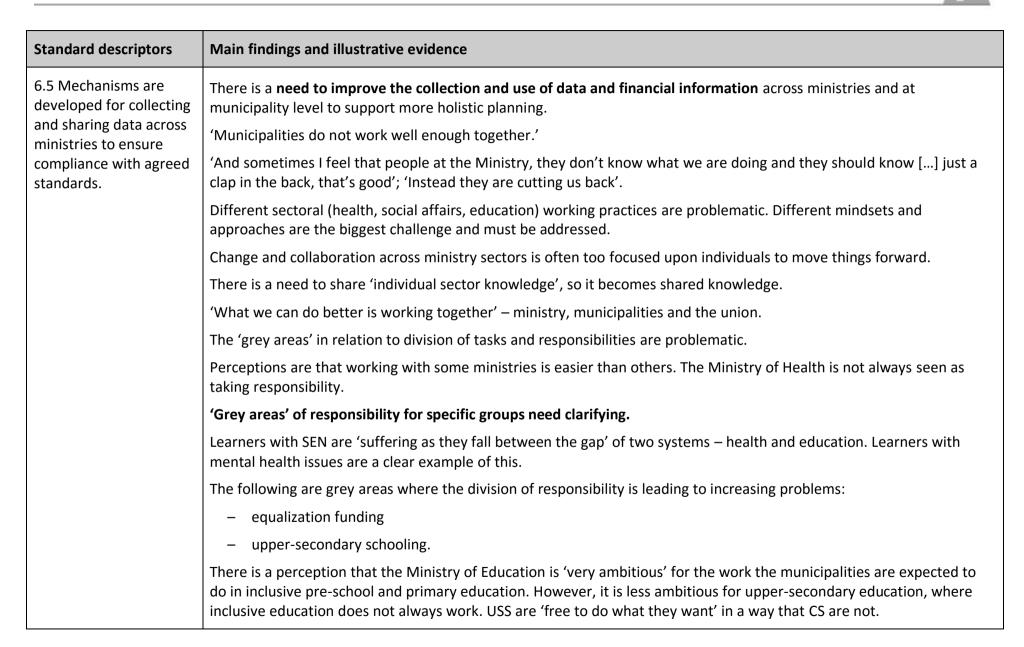| Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
6.1 There is a national evaluation and assessment framework that covers the needs of all pupils, including those with the most complex needs.	**Assessment mechanisms are unclear and insufficiently precise** to support effective teaching and learning.
	Values and ideas are well aligned with policy, but not very good when it comes to assessment.
	The national level lacks the information needed to monitor its policy effectively.
	The Directorate does not have enough information about learners' needs on higher levels; systematic evaluation is needed.
	We do not know how many hours are available for each learner.
	The national assessment is very limited.
	There are differences within the country. 'It is better in Reykjavík.'
	There is a need for clearer inclusive education policy goals linked to clear actions that can be evaluated.
	'There is freedom for schools to do it different ways. No-one had really done it properly 20 years later.'
	A functioning **national evaluation and assessment framework that covers the needs of all learners**, including those with the most complex needs, is absent. Differences exist between school levels and schools and organisations for support.
	Learners with the most complex needs do not access national curriculum/assessment (schools/units' own adaptations).
	Special arrangements are made for end-point exams, but not at other times.

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	Schools are 'exam factories not adapted to new ways of learning, new ideas and techniques'.
6.2 External evaluation standards address directly the diversity of pupils' needs and the means to address them in schools.	The **perceived benefits of Quality Assurance (QA)** are that it permits teachers' and learners' voices to be heard.
	Following a recent evaluation by a team from the University of Akureyri, one school suggested strengthened collaboration between university and schools on innovative projects.
	Standards and evaluators are out of date – they are not aligned with inclusive practice. The focus is on tangible/concrete aspects, not quality classroom practice.
	'When change is implemented, success is judged based on old system – not changing thinking …'
	Schools do not always fulfil this role – 'We have the laws and the rules, but no "enforcement"'.
	Evaluation standards fail to focus on innovation and skills:
	We cannot identify when inclusive education started – when it was and when it was not.
	We must have some way to measure whether or not we are being successful in implementing the policy.
	We would be interested in information on whether there are internationally developed tools we can use to measure our targets – for policy level, school level (which then inform policy level).
	External evaluation is connected with funding, but this mechanism is weakened by a lack of resources.
	The QA procedures in place are seen as bureaucratic and do not provide information that can direct school development.
	The burning issue is really the clarification of the higher order concepts.
	It is necessary to deal with local problems more responsively at school and local community level.
	Problems are 'passed up' to the Ministry too soon and too often.
	The underpinning issue here is effective leadership at different system levels.
	No-one comes to school to check what is happening.

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	There is no definition of the 'baseline' all schools must fulfil. There is a need for transparent guidelines on schools' obligations.
	It is difficult to know whether policy for inclusive education works. It is never fully implemented, monitored or evaluated. Evaluation cycles do not support schools and do not support Ministry-level work.
	Inclusive education is a key policy pillar, but head teachers and teachers do not know what it means, how to do it or when they are doing it well.
	'QA is a weak link in our system … there is no real support for this.'
	'We never evaluate before we change things.'
	'We're occupied with doing things right, but not doing the right things.'
	'We're trying to improve our QA, but we don't know how … we don't get support from outside.'
6.3 Systematic monitoring is conducted to ensure compliance with all quality assurance standards.	**Schools' self-evaluation** – involving action research – is seen as a powerful tool for supporting developments.
	Regular self-evaluation of the school takes place within the upper-secondary school.
	Some schools and local communities have a clear focus on self-development and review – but not all.
	'Comparing across schools is good.'
	Only a few schools have been evaluated. External involvement in school development is limited.
	Self-assessment exists, but there is nothing that acts cumulatively – no culture of self-review. The TALIS results serve as evidence.
	Some piloting work is going on (8 to 10 schools a year, as a joint initiative of municipalities and the Ministry). Reykjavík is the only municipality with more of an evaluation culture.
	We have 'so much to learn in this area'.
	The Ministry sets regulations – schools can choose how to implement them. That is a strength, but they need guidance and advice to do this properly.

Annex 4

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	Developing necessary tools for monitoring needed:
	The issue of a clear definition of inclusive education within the Icelandic context is crucial.
	A concept against which things can be measured and decisions made is needed.
	We have a heavily resourced system, but can the outcomes really be justified against the expenditure?
	Where are the results of inclusive education? Is inclusive education an expensive solution?
	A good school system cannot be measured by single factors – quality is a hugely complex factor.
	'We do a lot, but not that efficiently.'
	There is a perception that the review should focus on quality issues – are we getting it right?
	Procedures for diagnosis and resource allocation should be reviewed (example given of changing learner 'profiles' from ADHD to autistic as 'autism gets more money').
	How can we develop tools for knowing we are doing the right thing?
	The state diagnostic centre has nothing to do with education. Cannot see any possibilities for changing the way SEN is funded.
	Monitoring is needed to ensure a quality system.
	Schools develop weak monitoring systems.
	The data used at municipality and national level (test/PISA data, parent surveys) does not include all learners – a need exists to align with what is valued in education. There is insufficient data on learner progress/impact of support.
	Funding – equalization fund. Tax funds were allocated when responsibility moved from regions/central to municipalities. The follow-up is not careful.
	Secondary school – evaluation. We need to go further to check how policy functions in real life.
	'Quality assurance is very weak in our system.'
	'There are no assistance for QA at all. I have been looking for this ever since I started as a head master. I really cry for

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	help with this.'
	'We don't have the real competence for QA. We have to think out for ourselves how to do it.'
	'There is no help from the outside. Not at all.'
	'We must have some way to measure if we're being successful in implementing the policy or not.'
	The evaluation work is poor. There are no regular evaluations of all schools. There are no resources for this.
	The system itself is not good at reviewing – it is 'time for an extensive review' of thinking and doing.
	We need a better description of and better measures for inclusive education in order to improve the system.
	Not being able to answer why something is being done opens the Ministry up for criticism.
	Iceland is a small country and every individual counts – the school system must maximise the benefits from the education system so every one can contribute in future.
	A main weakness of the system is quality assurance. 'Very little effort' is put into evaluating the quality of schools' work or teaching.
	The Ministry of Interior does not consider QA – how the money is being used is not in their remit.
	Challenges include that the system for identifying needs is not good enough – trialling a new system. There is no input from other ministries in this – potential conflicts?
6.4 Results of assessment procedures are communicated and explained to parents by teachers and others involved with pupils' learning programmes.	Meetings between schools, parents and other professionals following assessment are **generally satisfactory**.
	There are **differences depending on where the learners live**, and the possibilities for support. It works quite well in pre-school where contact between parents and teachers and support staff and external support works quite well, but maybe not for 'grey-zone children'. The team around the learner includes parents and the persons they meet in everyday life, but also involves specialists at local and sometimes national level.
	The gap between the statementing centres and the schools may hinder adequate information to parents.

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
6.5 Mechanisms are developed for collecting and sharing data across ministries to ensure compliance with agreed standards.	There is a **need to improve the collection and use of data and financial information** across ministries and at municipality level to support more holistic planning. 'Municipalities do not work well enough together.' 'And sometimes I feel that people at the Ministry, they don't know what we are doing and they should know […] just a clap in the back, that's good'; 'Instead they are cutting us back'. Different sectoral (health, social affairs, education) working practices are problematic. Different mindsets and approaches are the biggest challenge and must be addressed. Change and collaboration across ministry sectors is often too focused upon individuals to move things forward. There is a need to share 'individual sector knowledge', so it becomes shared knowledge. 'What we can do better is working together' – ministry, municipalities and the union. The 'grey areas' in relation to division of tasks and responsibilities are problematic. Perceptions are that working with some ministries is easier than others. The Ministry of Health is not always seen as taking responsibility. **'Grey areas' of responsibility for specific groups need clarifying.** Learners with SEN are 'suffering as they fall between the gap' of two systems – health and education. Learners with mental health issues are a clear example of this. The following are grey areas where the division of responsibility is leading to increasing problems: – equalization funding – upper-secondary schooling. There is a perception that the Ministry of Education is 'very ambitious' for the work the municipalities are expected to do in inclusive pre-school and primary education. However, it is less ambitious for upper-secondary education, where inclusive education does not always work. USS are 'free to do what they want' in a way that CS are not.

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	Data does not allow for appropriate monitoring and accountability. Governance issues between ministries and municipalities are a huge issue. In 1996, schools entered municipality control – 'a lot of mistakes were made at that time'. One of these was not keeping the system of designated school support offices. The resources went into municipalities and the support became too thinly spread – especially in smaller municipalities. 'And then there are **problems in agreeing responsibilities** – who does (and does not!) do what and pay for what?'

7TH STANDARD – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES AT ALL SYSTEM LEVELS ARE EFFECTIVELY ADDRESSED

Core issue underpinning this Standard and all the Standard descriptors*: How stakeholders at all levels are enabled through their initial education and continuing professional development to implement inclusive education as a rights-based approach for all learners.*

Main question used to explore the core issue with stakeholders: *How well prepared do you feel through your initial education and continuing professional development to meet all learners' rights to a high quality inclusive education?*

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
7.1 Teacher education is viewed as a lifelong continuous process.	**Most teachers see the value of continuous professional development opportunities and lifelong learning.** Teaching is a lifelong learning process that involves the 'ability to study by yourself'. 'Teachers' education is important', but university training 'cannot cover everything'. A bridge between educational and continuous professional education (lifelong learning) is expressed as crucial for improving inclusive education. Initial teacher education (ITE) and continuous professional development (CPD) are available, but are too rigid – more flexibility (especially for age range specialisms) is needed. 'We pay for 150 hours [CPD] for every teacher every year, but they don't use it.' There is a problem for teachers to get away to further training. It is hard to replace them when they go to a further training course. **Teachers need training** on teaching methods, especially at upper-secondary education. More courses for teachers on the job are necessary. These must be paid for and deal with special needs, providing fast help to teachers. The lack of qualified teachers at pre-school level leads to a gap between claimed values and skills. 'Do not feel enough supported.'

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	A top-up course is required for teachers who have not received five-year training.
	Teachers are ill prepared from teacher education, too little education, only a small eligible course, same in the universities. Have asked why – prejudice at the University of Iceland. High professors do not want to teach behaviour modification, for example. 'The roots are very deep.'
	The teacher education system is not the best. The existing teacher programmes are too similar. They need to be more diverse.
	There is a need to bridge the current gap between ITE and CPD. Discontinuity between the different stages of professional development is a long-standing problem.
	A proposal for re-organising all CPD at system level is with the Minister.
7.2 All professional development opportunities aim to develop a framework of attitudes and values, knowledge and skills that are aligned with national policy goals for inclusive education.	Voice of a learner: 'Supportive teachers are best, [they are] friendly and you can go to [them]'.
	More education for all is needed, in different areas from systems level to the individual teacher and support staff.
	It is widely believed that gaps in teacher knowledge lead to SEN being seen as an 'obstacle' or additional burden. Teachers need mentoring/support (small-scale example of training leaders as mentors).
	The realities of inclusive education need different forms of preparation – more practice and less theory. The 20% placement benchmark in ITE is not being met.
	Teacher education is seen as 'too theoretical'.
	Teachers establish a difference between 'resources' and 'techniques'. The techniques are based on experience and 'experience is coming from meeting the students, not from being shy'. After their initial training, teachers have the diploma, but not the experience.
	Inclusive education builds more upon belief and commitment than training and skills.
	Learners – best thing at school – when everyone works together.
	'I think it is needed to be started in the teachers' education, in the way we are educating teachers, we have to inform them how to be able to control the class.'

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	Another area of weakness is that teachers are not being prepared for inclusive education. There is a need for more discussion with the training providers about the quality and focus of ITE and CPD. Current ITE is not in line with education policy.
	CPD funding possibilities appear very complex and uncoordinated. It is unclear how head teachers, schools or municipalities can co-ordinate individual teachers' CPD so it is more coherent and aligned with schools' needs.
	CPD: 150 hours is allocated to teachers, but only 4–5% is being used.
	This could be done differently. 'There has to be a better way of using this.'
	A clear answer is needed to the question of why everyone sees inclusive education as SEN.
	More information is needed on what parents think of inclusive education and separate provision – what and why?
	ITE and CPD do not prepare teachers for inclusive education in line with the policy and legislation.
	The Ministry should focus on aligning policy-making for CPD with teachers' professional development needs.
	CPD has developed in different ways across the system.
	Different funding for CPD is held with different groups:
	– Universities – ITE and long courses
	– Municipalities – in-service training
	– Unions – teacher professional development.
	The current system allows teachers to organise their own CPD, but there are huge inequities. These are due to geography, but also to sector (PS, CS, USS) and subjects.
	The system must be made fairer.
	The potential for overlap and poor co-ordination is clear.
	'We are aware of the policy of inclusive education, but it is hard to do it because we lack money.'

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
7.3 Inclusive education is an embedded element within all training for school leaders and teachers.	There is a **need for more training for school leaders and teachers**.
	There are differences in teacher education between the two universities.
	Teaching practice is insufficient. Innovative schools see the university offer as not relevant/behind own practice – seen as offering 'more of the same'.
	Even five-year training does not sufficiently prepare teachers for inclusive education. They need to develop a mindset of lifelong learning – 'professionalisation' of teachers/leaders to increase status.
	Training on disability is limited.
	It is not embedded enough in the teacher training. It is good to learn within the school. 'Learning by doing.'
	There is a wish for more time in the school/in the field within teacher training.
	'If we want to improve inclusive education, teachers' professional development is a critical lever.'
	Schools do not have strong enough policies or practices on teacher co-operation of teacher professional development.
	Teachers do not have enough knowledge about specific special needs.
	'Teachers don't know about it (diagnoses, etc.).'
	There needs to be some course on special education within the teacher training at the university. It does not exist at present. Teachers are not prepared to implement the legislation.
7.4 Appropriate general and specialist training are available for all staff in order to ensure all staff can respond positively to student diversity.	There is **great variation in teachers' ability** – 'It depends on individuals'.
	Younger teachers are perceived as being better prepared for inclusive education generally.
	The perception is that SEN training should be for everyone.
	There is a **need for more general training.** There is also a **need for more focused training**, including learners with behaviour problems, mentioned as the most difficult learners, learners in difficult socio-economic situations, and migrant learners.

Standard descriptors	Main findings and illustrative evidence
	School leaders would like to have more appropriate training. They organise best practice exchanges between themselves in Akureyri, but they do not all benefit from the help of University (of Akureyri) specialists.
	A teacher talked about a 'supermarket of courses', referring to school. 'We have to think outside the box.'
	There are no evidence-based training opportunities.
	Parents' view on teacher training: 'Teachers don't all get education on SEN – it's shocking that it's optional and not compulsory'.
	'How well prepared by my training am I? On a scale of 1 to 10 … 2.'
	'We're struggling to survive the year.'
	'We need more hours in schools and less theory.'
	No co-ordination of CPD at school level is a real issue.
	Current CPD appears to be fragmented. It does not effectively draw on resources in universities, so it lacks continuity and coherence. A school-oriented, resourced professional development model is needed.
	There is potential for school development if they could be 'freed' to work more flexibly.
	A recent development regarding CPD for inclusive practice is that it is now in the general education rather than the special education department. Teacher educators need support, for example to introduce blended teaching, etc.
	The current ways of funding CPD do not make effective use of resources – they are used by a small number of teachers (e.g. travel abroad).
	Teachers make their own decisions about further training – therefore it is not always what the school needs, etc.