Inclusion – cautious yet bold approach

On 25th June 2014, the State Parliament of Saarland unanimously passed the act on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the education system.

The significance of this initiative is wide-reaching: creating a society of cooperation, free from exclusion and discrimination is not only a matter for schools to address. It is in fact a task for society as a whole. Inclusion begins in our minds. We need a change of mentality and awareness that cannot be enacted by law. It is a transition that can only be achieved if all participants learn from and with each other, and enter into dialogue with one another.

I am convinced that together we can advance our education system even further. Inclusion is a virtue of the Saarland and we have repeatedly proven that in the past, having already played a pioneering role in the education of children with disabilities at mainstream schools more than three decades ago.

Let us continue to work together, paving the way forward to ensure the educational institutions of the Saarland further meet the diverse needs, interest and abilities of our children.

Yours,

[Signature]

(Minister for Education and Culture)
At inclusive schools every child is a priority. The close co-operation of mainstream school teachers, teachers of children with special educational needs and parents is a matter of course at schools in Saarland, as is the networked cooperation with experts outside the school environment.

The regulation for inclusion has been in effect in all primary schools since 1st August 2015, and will also apply to children in Year 5 at general secondary schools from 1st August 2016. All pupils benefit from inclusive education.

In principle, all school-aged children in Year 1 are enrolled at their local primary school. Parents are also within their rights to choose for their child to be educated at a school for special educational needs.

Pedagogical and organisational tools are available in all primary schools to facilitate the implementation of inclusive education.

The design of Year 1 and Year 2 as a flexible and extendable entry phase reinforces the focus on the individual child and his needs. The possibility of setting up mixed-age learning groups, in order to ensure children learn together for longer, represents an ideal supplement to this structure.

The advanced training programme for teachers has been extensively developed, with special attention given to the topics 'Inclusive Education', 'Handling Heterogeneity', 'Competence-oriented Teaching' and 'Diagnosis and Support'.

Following the start of the 2016/17 academic year the implementation of the regulation for inclusive education will be staggered on an annual basis, meaning a new set of students will benefit from the initiative each year. As of the 2018/19 academic year, vocational schools will be integrated into the expansion of the inclusive school system.

The former pilot scheme 'Inclusive School' will be applied in all year groups at comprehensive schools from the 2016/17 academic year onwards.

This affects the comprehensive schools at Illingen, Merzweiler, Nohfelden-Turkismühle/ Nonnweiler-Primstal, Tholey-Theley, Völklingen-Ludweiler, Dudweiler, Freisen, Gersheim, Losheim, the all-day comprehensive school at Neunkirchen and the comprehensive school at Saarlouis (Martin-Luther-King School). The school’s experiences continue to feed planning on a national level.

Where can I find more information?

For all further questions regarding inclusion in schools please contact the State Commissioner for Inclusion in Schools and Daycare Centres at the Ministry for Education and Culture. The State Commissioner is supported at the ministry by contact personnel from the individual education sectors.

In addition, a broad regional and specialised advice service is available for parents, schools and other interested parties. An updated contact list, together with further information about inclusion, can be found on the Saarland Education Server (Bildungsserver).

Questions from parents and teachers about support for a pupil with special educational needs can be answered by the support centres of rural districts and the Saarbrücken Regional Association (Förderzentren der Landkreise und des Regionalverbandes Saarbrücken).

The Competence Centre for Gifted Promotion (Kompetenzzentrum Begabungsförderung) can be contacted regarding the support of gifted and talented pupils.

The Advice Centre for Integration / Inclusion in Schools for the State Institute for Education and Media (LPM) and the Institute for Teacher Training and Further Education (ILF) are responsible for further advising schools, colleges, teams of teachers and individual teachers on the topic of inclusion.

For all questions regarding integrated language learning, please contact the advice centre German as a Second Language (Deutsch als Zweitsprache) for the LPM.

Our next steps

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