

4 Foreign Language Studies

4.1 Preschool Education

During the inspections conducted in 635 kindergartens in the 2006/2007 school year, the inspectorate reviewed the fulfilment of the objectives of the 'Action Plan for Foreign Language Studies in Preschool Education'. Approximately half of the schools (47.2%) offered some type of foreign language programme. The administrators of these schools were responding to the interest of the parents in having their children enrolled in foreign language classes (mostly in English). Most of these studies were organized in the form of clubs oriented around the study of the foreign language (82.4%). The inspectorate learned that there was either a lack of suitable lecturers and qualified teachers (this was especially true for English) or that there was a shortage of financial resources that would enable the schools to pay for these studies. 5.6% of all kindergarten teachers were trying to improve their professional qualifications for teaching a foreign language by enrolling in continuing education programmes. There is a great deal of interest in obtaining additional support for the studying of English and for propedeutic activities in the area of preschool children's foreign language studies.

Based on the interviews conducted with kindergarten administrators, the inspectorate was also able to determine that the majority of the kindergartens that have already been offering some type of regular foreign language studies (13.3%) were also planning to incorporate this type of school work into the school educational programmes of their school.

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4.2 Primary Education

16% of the 175 inspected primary schools, at which the inspectorate looked at their foreign language study programmes, had their own concepts for teaching foreign languages. Approximately half of the schools are developing such concept plans along with their school educational programmes and a third of the schools had included concept plans in the area of foreign languages as part of their strategic objectives, as outlined in the concept documents prepared for their schools. The steps that were being taken by the schools in this area were most frequently based on the objectives of framework educational programmes, the objectives