7 Mathematics Skills

In the 2006/2007 school year, the Czech School Inspectorate conducted the first series of inspections looking at the development of mathematics skills. The inspections were conducted at 16 primary schools and 14 secondary schools. In the primary schools, the inspectorate monitored 23 mathematics classes at the 1st primary school level and 34 classes at the 2nd level. At the inspected secondary schools, the inspectorate conducted 43 in-class inspections. During the inspections, the inspectorate utilized the experience gained during the TIMSS international studies, which the inspectorate carried out in the previous school year in partnership with the Institute for Information on Education.

7.1 Primary Education

The inspected primary schools are trying to provide good conditions for the development of mathematics skills by their students. None of these schools was rated as 'high risk' in terms of the conditions in the teaching of mathematics. In one-eighth of the inspected schools, the inspectorate found excellent staffing conditions and 74% of the mathematics teachers possessed the requisite qualifications.

The schools are equipped with the traditional tools and mathematics teaching software and, in accordance with the Education Act, they offer their students free textbooks. Most of the schools are equipped with presentation equipment and professional literature.

Three-quarters of the inspected primary schools are working on improving the quality of their mathematics programmes. 69% of the schools offer their students after-school programmes to improve mathematics skills. The support for mathematics skills development is also evident in the ongoing preparation of school educational programmes for the schools.

The administrators at 81% of the inspected schools have been monitoring the quality of their teachers' work and the activities carried out by the teachers both within and outside their mathematics classes. Half of the inspected primary schools have created a comparative testing system, which allows them to compare the results achieved in their mathematics programmes and to implement targeted remedial steps. The schools seem to be lagging somewhat behind in the utilization of the results of this testing – a quarter of the schools do not work with these results.