

Development of the Educational System in the Czech Republic drawn up in 2005 and updated in 2007 and to make both the content and teaching methods more useful for children, pupils and students.

Enhancement of the level of language education is also supported by the introduction of the framework system of training courses of further education for language teachers and the extension of mobility of both pupils and teachers within EU programmes in cooperation with the National Agency *Socrates*. The degree of achieved improvement in teaching foreign languages is being monitored through indicators such as the proportion of unqualified foreign language teachers, the proportion of unqualified foreign language teachers who have completed relevant further education, the proportion of foreign language teachers who have achieved the internationally recognised level of foreign language knowledge, the share of pupils who have learnt a language abroad (exchanges, studies) and the participation of pupils in international programmes.

### **C.1.1 Pre-school Education**

The Czech School Inspectorate carried out extensive observations related to foreign language teaching in kindergartens in 2006/2007. The subject of observations was, in particular, assessment strategy, staffing and organisation of teaching. CSI also monitored the provision of schools and the interest of parents in foreign language instruction. The main objective was to find out whether the staffing and organisation of education in kindergartens enable the teaching of foreign languages. The course of instruction itself, including methods of teaching, was not observed within such inspections.

72% of kindergartens tried to collect information concerning the interest of parents in foreign language instruction, most often by using questionnaires or parent meetings, but also during the admission of children to kindergartens, by hang-up cards, leaflets or through individual interviews with parents.

Almost half of the visited kindergartens offered children the chance to learn foreign languages. Head teachers of those schools made decisions especially on the basis of interest shown by parents in foreign language teaching (most often English) and organised it primarily in the form of foreign language clubs.

The share of children who learn a foreign language in relation to the total number of children attending kindergartens varied from 10% to 50%. In total, almost one quarter of children learnt a foreign language (with English being the prevailing language). Kindergartens did not usually include foreign language teaching directly in their SEPs. Instruction took place most frequently once a week (69%), sometimes twice a week (26%) and was organised predominantly as language clubs. Such an organisation clearly related to the high number of external teachers in kindergartens. Only 5% of the kindergartens in question included foreign language teaching among daily activities. Time allotment ranged most often from 20 to 50 minutes a week. The course and quality of teaching were evaluated only in one third of kindergartens.

When inspecting staffing CSI ascertained insufficient qualifications of pre-school teachers for teaching foreign languages, a lack of suitable trainers or a lack of finance to remunerate external trainers. More than half of full-time teachers who taught a foreign language did not have the required language knowledge or had passed an examination in the Russian language, which parents are not currently interested in. Further education aimed at extending the knowledge and methodology of foreign language teaching in kindergartens was undertaken only by a few teachers involved in pre-school education. External trainers who implemented almost 60% of foreign language instruction did not often satisfy the requirements of professional qualifications.