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REPORT ON SWALS PROVISION IN THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS

Board of Inspectors (Secondary)

Meeting on 17 February 2009

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The integration of students without a language section (SWALS) into the European Schools is a long-standing and natural process which has been brought sharply into focus by the enlargement of the European Union. Providing a high quality education for all in such a diverse, multi-linguistic and multi-cultural environment poses a number of challenges and opportunities for all of those involved.

One of the initiatives taken prior to enlargement was “*The Pilot Project on the Integration of Pupils for whom there is no Language Section in their School corresponding to their Mother Tongue*”. This project was launched in Bergen, Mol and Varese in September 2002. Phase 2 began in Luxembourg in September 2003. ¹

In April 2004 the Board of Governors approved a report on the project, including a list of recommendations. ²

The report highlighted some aspects considered essential for the successful inclusion of SWALS. These included: a well resourced language support room; a coordinator with appropriate time allocation; the provision of adequate funding.

1.2 DEFINITION OF LANGUAGE PROFILES

It is clearly essential that all schools apply the same definition for ‘SWALS’. In order to do this we must examine the range of language profiles our pupils bring to the European Schools.

1. Students with a dominant/mother tongue (EU) corresponding to their language section.
2. Students with a dominant language (EU) and/or language of education, in a section corresponding to that language, but one which does not correspond to their mother tongue or home language.
3. Students with a dominant language (EU), available as L1 only (not as a section), who are either:
 - i. in a section corresponding to one of the three EU working languages or
 - ii. in a section not corresponding to one of the three EU working languages.
4. Students with a dominant language (EU) but for whom no L1 teacher of their language can be provided.
5. Pupils with a dominant language corresponding to an official language of the EU, but one which, by governmental agreement, cannot be the language of a section.
6. Pupils with a mother tongue, dominant language or educational language from a non-EU state.

The following has been used:

- a. Mother tongue – language of home, family and possibly education,

¹2002-D-484 – *Report to Board of Governors concerning the pilot project on the integration of pupils for whom there is not in their school a language section corresponding to their mother tongue*

2003-D-482-en-3 – *Pilot project on the integration of pupils for whom there is not in their school a language section corresponding to their mother tongue;*

² 2003-D-7710 – *SWALS Project - Report*

- b. Dominant language – language in which the student is most at ease for speaking, listening, reading and writing.
- c. Educational Language – language used for a significant part of a student’s schooling,
- d. Working language – French/German/English.

1.3 SWALS AND RELEVANT DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

SWALS pupils are those whose dominant language is an official language of an EU member state but for which no language section exists in their school. These pupils receive mother tongue teaching as L1, on the condition that it is their dominant language and that a teacher can be provided by the school. These students can belong only to language profiles 3, 4 or 5.

Relevant decisions of the Board of Governors:

The Board of Governors on 28-30 April 2004 accepted the extension of the pilot project on the integration of SWALS to all schools, see Document 2003-D-7710-en-3.

The Board of Governors 2008 approved changes to the General Rules of the European Schools concerning the possibilities for choice of language section at its meetings of 21-22-23 October 2008.

In April 2004 the Board of Governors approved the allocation to each school of 30 hours/periods per week for tuition in the language of the section in which SWALS are enrolled (because they are not being educated in their mother tongue), in order to facilitate their integration:

- 20 hours (60 minutes) for the nursery and primary levels,
- 10 periods (45 minutes) for the secondary level.

In line with the original aims of European Schools, and recognising the reality of providing appropriate language teaching, the choice of section and L1 are of prime importance. In cases of doubt concerning mother tongue/dominant language, the school may request proof of the standard of linguistic attainment and abilities.³

2 PROPOSAL

2.1 THE SWALS COORDINATOR

The European Schools support their SWALS pupils in a number of ways. However, the key role of the SWALS coordinator should be to promote a coordinated approach throughout the school. Currently, in most European Schools, the duties and authority attached to this important role have not been officially defined. Therefore the SWALS working party has produced a model job description. (See appendix 1)

The time required for the tasks outlined in the job description will vary between schools. However, if these duties are to be carried out in an effective and professional manner then a minimum of one hour should be allocated to the SWALS coordinator. The time given should be attached to the number of SWALS pupils and not simply to those requiring support, as the latter will fluctuate both during the school year and from year to year.

³ General Rules, art. 47 e)

Adequate time allowance will lead to improved communication between parents and school, improved communication between pupils and school, the raising and maintaining of awareness concerning the particular challenges faced by SWALS students and the development of specific methodology and acquisition of resources to meet specific needs.

In calculating the recommended time allowances the following factors were considered to be the most relevant:

- a) The number of SWALS pupils in the school
- b) The number of SWALS languages taught in the school
- c) The size of the school

In order to calculate the time to be given in each school, a proposed 'Time allowance calculator' has been provided. This is applicable only to secondary schools and suggests coefficients which could be attached to 1, 2 and 3 above.

(See appendix 2)

THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE ABOVE RECOMMENDATION IN THE SECONDARY CYCLE ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Proposal

31 periods at 262€/month x 12 months = **97 464.00€**

Already approved (decision Board of Governors April 2004)

14 periods at 262€/month x 8.5 months = **31 178.00€**

Additional cost

97 464.00€- 31 178.00€= **66 286.00€**

Benefits accruing from increased expenditure:

- The more rapid integration of students into the school.
- The avoidance of the development of serious learning difficulties.
- Minimising the risk of emotional and behavioural problems developing.
- Better decision making regarding the allocation of resources.
- Fewer demands on LS resources.
- General improvement in learning in the host section.
- Maintenance of the quality of the language used in the host section.
- Allowing teachers to focus on their subjects, to the benefit of all.

2.2 MODELS FOR THE PROVISION OF SWALS SUPPORT

There are many different models for the provision of support. In the conclusion to the report written following the completion of the Pilot Project on the 'Integration of Students without a Language Section' (July 2004), several suggestions were made including:

- a) The withdrawal of pupils from class (on an individual basis and/or for a short period only),
- b) The provision of in-class support,
- c) The setting up of a 'reception class' to provide short term, intensive language teaching,

- d) The extra-tutorial model (extra language support during free lessons outside the main timetable).

In addition the Working Group has discussed:

- The ‘Luxembourg Model’ where separate SWALS classes have been created in the Anglophone section. Pupils join these classes and remain in them until S7. (This provision is dependent on pupil numbers and local circumstances).
- The provision of induction courses during the summer, prior to a pupil entering the schools.
- The problems created for SWALS pupils by strict adherence to The Table of Equivalentents when choosing the school year in which a pupil is admitted.
- The idea of an adapted curriculum for SWALS pupils.

The ten periods allocated in 2004 no longer meet the needs of individual schools and are frequently insufficient in the light of subsequent enlargements. Local conditions, such as the size of the school, the level of pupils’ language skills and the numbers of SWALS pupils in a class, should be taken into consideration in the allocation of hours and resources. The Working Group recommends a thorough examination of the existing rules for SWALS support.

2.3 RECOMMENDED ADMISSIONS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR SCHOOLS

If SWALS pupils are to be successfully integrated into the schools then it is essential that relevant information be provided as quickly as possible to the SWALS Coordinator.

Prior to ‘Admission’ the SWALS coordinator needs to know:

- a) The pupil’s dominant language and/or language of education,
- b) parents’ languages,
- c) the pupil’s level of academic attainment (provision of a school report and if necessary a translation into one of the three working languages),
- d) the number of years a pupil has been learning different languages,
- e) information regarding previous learning support provision and/or special needs.

2.4 PROCEDURES

- a) Dossier screening – this is an essential task and should be allocated by the school to an appropriate person.
- b) Admissions tests – these should be provided, as needed, across a range of subjects and sections in order to ensure a pupil is placed in the appropriate class.
- c) Placement tests should be given in L2 (and the language of the section if this is different) to assess the need for ‘Rattrapage’ or other support.

All relevant information regarding a SWALS pupil should be made available to the SWALS coordinator.

2.5 POST ADMISSION: RECOMMENDATIONS OF GOOD PRACTICE

- Teachers should be asked to complete a request form (see appendix 3) or a progress form (see appendix 4) for each SWALS pupil three times a year.
- The Coordinator can use this information to begin the initial assessment of need, organise support where appropriate and monitor pupils' progress.
- The Coordinator could use this information to create more SWALS provision, if necessary, and if appropriate to inform parents of their child's progress.

2.6 'LEARNING CENTRE'

In order to enable schools to make most effective use of the allocation of time and resources the Working Group recommends that the coordination positions for SWALS, LS and SEN be held by one person or a small team of people working closely together. This will also create a focal point for the provision of all academic support services.

Currently, schools provide a wide range of support for their pupils. However, this support is not always visible or easily accessible. In particular, for SWALS pupils and their parents, it can be difficult to know whom to contact when difficulties arise or advice is needed. Schools should have clear, well publicised policies, advising parents whom to contact to discuss their child's needs. In order to increase the awareness of the work being done to support pupils with a diverse range of needs, schools could consider establishing a 'Learning Centre' to centralise and make best use of resources and experience.

The 'Learning Centre' could:

- act as a point of reference for teachers, parents and pupils
- provide a library or bank of differentiated support materials
- provide a range of curriculum documents from the SWALS countries for teacher reference
- store examples of good practice
- act as a base for the keeping of records

This could be partly financed using the 7 000€ allocated to each school annually by decision of the Board of Governors in April 2004.

2.7 EVALUATION

It is important to evaluate the efficacy of the SWALS Programme. The Working Group considered a number of ways of doing this; two main possibilities were considered:

Mere Quantitative Evaluation through tests and grades, whilst useful in some cases, was not considered fully appropriate as it does not provide a complete picture of a pupil's progress. It therefore does not show the impact of the SWALS support programme. It should be mentioned that there are many differences in the demands made by language sections, and indeed by different languages, and this too would need to be taken into consideration.

Qualitative Evaluation seemed to be more reliable for the purpose. This could be carried out in a number of ways, for example:

- by using a questionnaire for pupils (appendix 5) and parents,

- by using a questionnaire for teachers (pending),
- by considering comments made in ‘Class Conferences’,
- by reading school reports.

This evaluation could be carried out by the SWALS Coordinator and a report provided to the relevant Inspectors and School Management (appendix 6)

3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

While it may be true that there are many examples of good practice in schools, there is no doubt that a number of SWALS pupils continue to have difficulty integrating into the European School system. There are many ways in which schools could work towards giving greater support to these pupils and to their teachers, for example by:

- Asking teachers to provide pupils (and parents) with lists of topics to be covered so that the SWALS pupils can prepare subject specific vocabulary in advance.
- Providing teachers (working with SWALS) with advice, materials and if necessary in-service training on methods that could be used to best meet the needs of these pupils.
- Ensuring, as far as possible, that SWALS pupils are taught by teachers who are either working in their mother tongue or at least have an excellent and flexible command of language. Teachers must be able to adapt their language in the classroom to meet the multiple levels of language proficiency and experience of their pupils.
- Making greater use of mother tongue advisory teachers in helping SWALS pupils to choose options and make choices for their future education.
- Providing parents with advice on how best to support their child and on how to get help and support in school.
- Monitoring teaching groups containing significant numbers of SWALS pupils and considering the possibility of dividing these groups.
- Making an effort to encourage differentiation, thus enabling SWALS pupils to access the curriculum.
- Providing adequate time and facilities for the SWALS coordinator.

It would be interesting if a number of schools were to establish pilot projects in order to examine the impact of allocating time to SWALS support teachers during which they could help subject teachers in the production of materials aimed at making lessons more accessible.

4 SWALS PROVISION

The integration of SWALS pupils has many implications for the European Schools. In view of the complexity of this issue the Working Group recommends a thorough examination and evaluation of the existing provision for SWALS pupils in each of the schools.

SWALS COORDINATOR – JOB DESCRIPTION

The SWALS coordinator is responsible for providing support and assistance to SWALS pupils, parents and teachers. He/She works to create a safe, caring and welcoming school environment; one which is free of discrimination and promotes cultural tolerance.

Directors are encouraged to appoint a person with appropriate professional and interpersonal skills.

What follows is clearly a demanding job specification, but is essential for the proper inclusion of SWALS pupils in the European schools. Evidently this requires an adequate time allowance for the appointee.

The SWALS coordinator should fulfil the following tasks except in cases where the Director decides they are already being covered.

Administration

- to ensure SWALS provision is in line with school policy
- to ensure that appropriate screening of pupils has taken place
- to propose and organise SWALS support lessons in response to identified needs
- to attend meetings as required
- to monitor the success of the SWALS programme and write reports for the school management
- to liaise with the primary school, deputy head and relevant national inspectors as well as LS and SEN coordinators
- to track the progress of pupils and maintain individual records
- to draw the attention of management to any information and advice which might help teachers to meet the needs of SWALS pupils

Pupils

- to identify pupils' needs, using teacher assessment, student self-assessment forms etc.
- to be available for students
- to promote the social integration of the students (e.g. mentor or peer support)
- to enable pupils to access relevant resources
- to manage the SWALS budget

Teachers

- to inform teachers about SWALS pupils in their classes
- to ask teachers for specific information about students' needs, (e.g. by providing them with profile forms)
- to act as a point of contact for teachers, encouraging liaison between support – and subject teachers
- to ascertain and respond to teachers' needs
- to participate in the induction of new teachers
- to maintain contact with teachers of SWALS L1
- to share 'good practice' between all sections
- to coordinate the development of resources

Parents/Guardians

- to welcome new parents
- to provide a welcome/information pack
- to inform parents about the challenges of the system and the help available
- to assist parents in making decisions about their child's education and to advise them on how to help their child
- to act as a point of contact as required

CALCULATION OF TIME ALLOWANCE FOR THE SWALS COORDINATOR

School Population	basic	Number of SWALS languages taught	x	Number of SWALS pupils	y
0-1000	1	1-3	1,0	0-25	1
1001-2000	1,5	4-6	1,2	26-50	1,5
2001-3000	1,5	7-9	1,5	51-75	1,7
		10-12	1,7	76-100	1,9
				101-125	2,1
				126-150	2,3
				151-175	2,5
				176-200	2,7

To calculate the time allowance due:

Look up the basic, x and y coefficients. Multiply them together and round off to the nearest 0,5.

e.g. A school of 1500 pupils, with 7 SWALS languages and 63 SWALS pupils:

basic = 1,5: x = 1,2: y = 1,7.

multiplying these coefficients gives 3,06. Rounding off gives 3 periods per week.

SWALS TIME ALLOWANCE CALCULATOR

12/02/2009

School	School Size (1000 above)	SWALS languages	SWALS pupils (25 above)	basic	x	y	calculation	allowance
Alicante	1000	6	25	1	1,2	1	1,2	1
Bergen	1000	7	25	1	1,5	1	1,5	1,5
Brussels I	2000	3	75	1,5	1	1,7	2,6	2,5
Brussels II	2000	3	100	1,5	1	1,9	2,9	3
Brussels III	2000	2	75	1,5	1	1,7	2,6	2,5
Culham	1000	4	75	1	1,2	1,7	2,0	2
Frankfurt	1000	7	50	1	1,5	1,5	2,3	2,5
Karlsruhe	1000	9	75	1	1,5	1,7	2,6	2,5
Luxembourg I	3000	10	150	1,5	1,5	2,3	5,2	5
Mol	1000	2	25	1	1	1	1,0	1
Munich	1000	9	175	1	1,5	2,5	3,8	4
Varese	1000	12	125	1	1,7	2,1	3,6	3,5
Total								31

The figures are based on F5, g1G1 and H1 tables of Rapports de rentrée 2008/2009
 allowance = (basic)*x*y rounded off to the nearest 0.5.

If this file is being used in Microsoft Excel,
 Coefficients (basic, X and Y) can be changed in the table below for automatic re-calculation

School Population	School Size	basic	SWALS langs	coeff. X	SWALS pupils (up to)	coeff. Y
0-1000	1000,0	1,0	1	1,0	25	1,0
1001-2000	2000,0	1,5	2	1,0	50	1,5
2001-3000	3000,0	1,5	3	1,0	75	1,7
			4	1,2	100	1,9
			5	1,2	125	2,1
			6	1,2	150	2,3
			7	1,5	175	2,5
			8	1,5	200	2,7
			9	1,5		
			10	1,5		
			11	1,7		
			12	1,7		

SWALS SUPPORT

Subject teacher's request form

Dear Colleagues,

Pupils takingL1 are considered to be SWALS. These pupils are entitled to some extra help, if needed, to enable them to cope with following lessons in their L2.

If you feel that a SWALS pupil in your class would benefit from specific help, not available through our normal Learning Support classes, please complete this form.

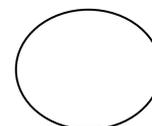
Many thanks,

Subject teacher:

Date:

Subject:

Year Group



Reasons for providing SWALS support:

(as many reasons as are relevant may be circled)

- a. Gaps in knowledge caused by a late arrival in the system
- b. New pupil with little experience of the language used in your subject
- c. An insufficient level of academic English/French/German
- d. General academic weakness
- e. Special learning difficulty
- f. Other.....

Permission			Name of the student			Reason					
Letter given	of parents		NAME	First name	Class	a	b	c	d	e	f
	no	yes									
			1.								
			2.								
			3.								
			4.								
			5.								

essential information

YES

Time of lesson: _____ Day: _____ Period: _____

Teacher: _____ Room: _____

SWALS PROGRESS CHART

STUDENT:
TEACHER:

Class:
Subject:

Please circle a number in the October/February/May column.
1 = strongly disagree : 2 = disagree : 3 = agree : 4 = agree strongly

Comments can be written at the end of the document.
 Please return to

before/...../.....

Question		October	February	May
1	The student is at ease in understanding classroom instructions	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4
2	The student watches and observes others in order to imitate them and join in activities	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4
3	The student's language is sufficient to follow the class	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4
4	The student uses non-verbal gestures to indicate meaning	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4
5	The student only responds in single words or simple phrases that are necessarily grammatically correct	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4
6	The student is beginning to communicate in comprehensible, if not grammatically correct, language	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4
7	The student has sufficient language to communicate fluently his/her thoughts orally	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4
8	The student reads a simple unfamiliar text with understanding	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4
9	The student reads a more complex text with understanding	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4
10	The student writes simple text with the support of an adult	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4
11	The student writes simple and easily comprehensible sentences independently	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4
12	The student writes a comprehensible complex text	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4
13	The student uses a variety of tenses	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4
14	The student is able to maintain focus for a reasonable length of time	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4
15	There are signs of unacceptable behaviour as a result of his/her linguistic difficulties	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4
16	He/she uses material in his/her own language as reference	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4
17	The student appears well integrated in the class	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4	1..2..3..4

October comment:

February comment:

May comment:

SWALS Questionnaire – Pupils

Please answer the questions below.

1. For how many years had you studied en/fr/de (language of the section) before coming to the European School?

--

2. How adequate was your previous knowledge for studying subjects in en/fr/de?

1=very poor, 2=poor, 3=adequate, 4=good

Please circle appropriate answer.

Understanding	1	2	3	4
Oral	1	2	3	4
Written	1	2	3	4

3. How many periods of support did you receive this year?

3.1	One-to-one	
3.2	In a group	

In the following questions:

1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree, 4=strongly agree

Please circle appropriate answer.

4. How much do you agree with these statements?

The support gave me more confidence in class	1	2	3	4
The support raised the level of my en/fr/de	1	2	3	4
The support was sufficient	1	2	3	4
The support teacher understood my needs and helped me	1	2	3	4
I found the support superfluous	1	2	3	4

Experience in Class

This applies to subjects normally taught in mother tongue i.e. Maths; Integrated Science; Human Sciences; Biology; Chemistry; Physics.

5. I found the following lessons difficult to follow because of my level of en/fr/de (as many subjects as are relevant may be circled)

Maths	
Physics	
Chemistry	
Biology	
Integrated Science	
Human Science	

6. How much do you agree with these statements?

On the whole teachers are easy to understand	1	2	3	4
Teachers make allowances for my language difficulties	1	2	3	4
I feel intimidated by the level of native speakers of en/fr/de in class	1	2	3	4
My progress in class has been held back because of problems in en/fr/de	1	2	3	4
My future choice of options will be restricted by my command of en/fr/de	1	2	3	4

7. My progress would have been improved by:

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this questionnaire.

SWALS Coordinator's Report

should contain :

1. Number of SWALS pupils; by year group, section and L1 (refer to pupils profiles).
2. Number of SWALS pupils receiving support by year group, section and L1.
3. Total number of hours given in SWALS support.
4. Number of teachers giving SWALS support.
5. Use of resources budget.
6. Evaluation of:
 - i) Social integration of SWALS pupils (based on questionnaires)
 - ii) Language progress
 - iii) Overall academic progress (based on report grades)
 - iv) Number of SWALS pupils failing the year
 - v) Teacher satisfaction (based on questionnaire)
 - vi) Pupil satisfaction (based on questionnaire)
 - vii) Parental satisfaction (based on questionnaire)