

THE EUROPEAN SCHOOLS

GUIDELINES

for

NURSERY AND PRIMARY

EDUCATION

NURSERY AND PRIMARY SCHOOL REFORM

- 1990 -

Translated into English from the German and  
French versions.

## 1 . P R E F A C E

During the meeting of the Inspectors' Committee on the 18th and 19th March 1986, in Brussels, the primary inspectors considered the document : "A Preliminary Study for a Reform of the Curriculum of the Nursery and Primary Classes" first presented in 1971 by Inspector General Mr. F. Christiaens. They noted that this report

- ◇ had become outdated since its publication,
- ◇ was largely limited to a description of the situation pertaining in the member states at the time,
- ◇ put forward no guidelines for reforming nursery and primary education in the European Schools.

They further noted that the curriculum reform papers, presented since then, fell into no overall plan and did not possess essential coherence.

Upon his retirement in 1985, the United Kingdom Inspector, Mr. W.E. Husband, produced a discussion paper entitled : "The Philosophy and Aims of Primary Education", in which he raised the following points :

- ◇ the need for a precise definition of aims and objectives,
- ◇ a way of looking at organisation and teaching methods,
- ◇ the need to create stimulating learning environments in the classroom,
- ◇ improved support for children with special needs and for gifted children,
- ◇ the need for much closer contact between the teachers of each level, nursery/primary/secondary, in and between the different language sections,
- ◇ the implications in terms of equipment and resources,
- ◇ a revision of testing and assessment procedures,
- ◇ the need for appropriate inspection to further the evolution of the schools.

The report of Mr. Papapietro for the European Parliament (1983) and of Professor D. Swan for the European Commission (1984) also considered the aims of Primary education in the European Schools.

As a result, the Inspectors' Committee considered that all future curriculum development in the nursery and primary schools should be based on a well established philosophy and that it served no purpose to pursue reform without, first of all, clearly defining the new thinking underlying it.

The Inspectors were aware of the considerable work which this would entail. They decided that a new document should be produced :  
"Guidelines for Nursery and Primary Education" which would both

- ◊ take into account the principles already outlined in various documents adopted in recent years and
- ◊ reflect curriculum reform in the schools of the twelve member states.

Work on the new document should be pursued in the light of the aim of the European Schools to set a pattern in the education of young people called to live in a united Europe.

A work group, under the chairmanship of Inspector Ch. A. Hollaender (Netherlands) was set up, composed of the following members :

Mrs. Ch. Coillard (from Sept. 1989)	Karlsruhe	Nursery/Prim. teacher
Mrs. S. Fexer-Linder	Brussels II	Parents' Representative
Mr. R. Gobert	Luxembourg	Primary Teacher
Mrs. B. Gottlob-Negri (until 1989)	Karlsruhe	Nursery/Prim. teacher
Mr. J. Kirchner	Munich	Deputy Headteacher
Mr. A.J. Smith	Brussels I	Deputy Headteacher
Mr. S. Vermeulen	Mol	Primary teacher

The work group began its task in December 1986.  
The results of its labours are presented in this document.

These drew on, inter alia, the findings of an enquiry made among parents, teachers, headteachers and inspectors, details of which were published in the Pedagogical Bulletin No. 99 of December 1987. The education philosophies of member states have also been considered at length.

The work group hopes that the document "Guidelines for Nursery and Primary Education" will prove to be an invaluable help to all those committed to the development of our schools.

Ch. A. Hollaender

Spring 1990.

## 2 . I N T R O D U C T I O N

### 2.1. Point for the Reader's attention :

It is important for the reader to understand the spirit and appreciate the limits of this document. It describes the fundamental ideas on which the educational principles and the aims of the European Schools are founded.

In no way does it set out to give a detailed picture of the different subjects in the curriculum, as this is the task of particular workgroups. It does not claim to provide an answer to all questions.

It aims to

- ◇ create a link with previous initiatives and to fit them and any future developments into a common framework,
- ◇ promote fruitful discussions in the schools,
- ◇ pinpoint the practical and financial difficulties which have impeded the educational development of the schools,
- ◇ propose reasonable solutions based on the realities of the situation,
- ◇ establish a greater unity in the way work is seen and carried out in our schools.

It is particularly hoped that teachers

- ◇ will analyse the ideas put forward, with a critical eye on their own teaching experience,
- ◇ will be encouraged by the document to try out new ideas and approaches,
- ◇ will make use of all possibilities of working together,
- ◇ will renew and reinforce the drive which should be the mark of our schools which are unique in so many ways.

### 2.2. Form and contents of this document.

The document's main purpose is to present

- ◇ the ideal of the European Schools and their educational aims,
- ◇ the practical implications, not only for teaching but also for the infra-structure, organisation and resourcing of the schools.

In addition, it was felt necessary, in a preliminary chapter (III), to touch upon the many factors bearing upon the school which are determined by society at large.

### 3 . PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

Before developing a philosophy for the European School and its practical consequences, it is useful and necessary to define clearly the premises on which our reflection is based.

The first part of the document therefore sets out to describe the European Schools as they are today and as they might develop, contemporary views of the child and of the family, the role of parents and of teachers and the influence of society.

#### 3.1. The European Schools

3.1.1. As a consequence of the economic rapprochement of several countries in the Fifties, a need was felt to provide schooling for the children of the first European civil servants and the European School was founded.

Following the gradual enlargement of the European Community, the European Schools adapted themselves by welcoming new language sections and by taking inspiration from educational developments in the member states.

3.1.2. The European Schools are unique in their inter-governmental status, founded on the principles of non-elitist state education.

3.1.3. The European Schools are more than a mere juxtaposition of different language sections. They seek to develop a harmonised educational approach and to assimilate the best traditions and practises of the national systems of the member states. The schools have an innovative role, especially in the areas of multi-cultural education and of language teaching.

**3.1.4.** The principal, but not the sole purpose of the European Schools, is to provide a general answer to the problem of the education of children who are temporarily expatriate.

For the majority of parents who are called abroad to contribute to Europe's political, economic and social progress, the European Schools are the only option that they can turn to for the education of their children.

**3.1.5.** The European Schools are and wish to remain all-age schools, welcoming children from nursery through to the end of the secondary cycle.

This guarantees continuity in their education for the children and offers expatriate families a psychological and logistical support. The schools are, indeed, a stable and happy environment for their children and offer a reassuring solution to the problem of providing them with education in their mother tongue.

**3.1.6.** The European Schools are anchored in a democratic Europe, showing a profound respect for each child, without distinction of race, sex, nationality, language, belief or social class.

**3.1.7.** Despite the apparent homogeneity of their families, both socially and intellectually, the children of the European Schools represent a very wide range of intellectual capacity, of school skills, of levels of physical, social and emotional development. The European Schools accept them on a non-selective basis. The schools try to respond to the needs of each child, whatever his age, by adapting themselves to him and by adopting appropriate approaches.

**3.1.8.** The European Schools recognize the inestimable value of a clear cultural identity, expressed through a dominant language. They consider teaching in mother tongue to be the keystone of the curriculum, organised in separate language sections.

**3.1.9.** The European Schools provide for the teaching of a second language from the first primary year. They are convinced that it is the key to a better understanding between peoples and that it offers to all pupils the possibility of a bi-cultural education.

**3.1.10** From the child's enrolment in the nursery class, the European Schools attach great importance to the development of the physical, psychological, social, emotional and creative aspects which are essential to all children's educational success and well-being.

### 3.2. The Child

3.2.1. In their expatriate situation, most children develop the ability to adapt to and to integrate into their new surroundings.

3.2.2. The child needs these surroundings as a point of reference in the way he builds up his notions of the world and of society. In spite of social, cultural and linguistic obstacles, it is the host country which is destined to serve as the child's point of reference.

3.2.3. The children of the European Schools, most of whom enjoy a high standard of living, have many opportunities, outside school, of developing cultural and sporting skills. These activities, however, are often organised and structured by adults at the expense of free play, which stimulates initiative and fantasy and encourages group activities. Moreover, the mass media and electronic games, often used indiscriminately, provide the child with only "second-hand" experiences.

3.2.4. The picture which the child perceives of the world around him is, therefore, based less and less on his own direct experience. The place taken by technological considerations in so many areas of daily life (food, heating, transport...) give him an artificial image of his environment. The child is distanced from the life cycles of nature, in spite of the importance accorded today to ecology.

3.2.5. The child's school day is overloaded : his time of presence in school, travelling time to and from school, homework, cultural and sporting activities ... This is true also of weekends and holidays.

3.2.6. The patterns of a child's life are subject to the professional and social constraints which bear upon the parents. The time which children spend with their parents is often very short.

On the other hand, certain children are over-protected and have difficulty in acquiring a sufficient level of independence.

3.2.7. Subjected to stimulations of many kinds, the child is often confused and his powers of concentration develop all too little. He moves from one activity to another and is reluctant to commit himself to anything seriously. He readily assumes the passive consumer attitudes which are sometimes resorted to by parents and teachers in order to save time.

3.2.8. In spite of that, most children have a fund of vitality and of spontaneity befitting their age. Today's children are the objects of much adult consideration. It is recognised that children are first of all children in their own right, having specific needs and with every opportunity to blossom and to be happy.

### **3.3. The Family**

**3.3.1.** Most families of European School pupils are expatriate. Whether they have already lived for some time in an international milieu and travel frequently or whether they have come abroad for the first time, all experience the problems of adapting to the host country and of guaranteeing continuity in their children's education.

**3.3.2.** While it is potentially an enriching experience, expatriation is stressful for many families. Language difficulties, the absence of familiar points of reference, the dispersal of families in a foreign environment, the distances which have to be travelled and which separate a child from his school friends, the absence of the father or mother away on mission, are all factors which have an effect upon the children.

**3.3.3.** Certain families have a very complex cultural make-up. Sometimes there is neither dominant language nor clearcut cultural identity. For some children, the language of the family and the dominant school language are not the same.

**3.3.4.** Other families have lived through the separation or the divorce of the parents. Many pupils live with a single parent or share their school year and their holidays between two separated parents.

**3.3.5.** The school is an important reference point for many families, especially in the early years of their expatriation. It is, therefore, called upon to be a place of welcome, of advice and of support for both parents and children, a focal point for the expatriate European Community.

### **3.4. The Parents**

**3.4.1.** Parents have a unique role, especially in the early stages of the child's education. At a given moment of his development, they begin to share this responsibility with the school. The first and principal responsibility for the upbringing of child remains theirs, however.

**3.4.2.** The wish of parents, both fathers and mothers, to develop their own lives professionally and socially, is sometimes in conflict with the child's broad educational needs.

**3.4.3.** More and more parents keep themselves informed about education in general and wish to be kept fully in the picture about their child's education in particular. They seek close contact with the school.



3.4.4. By virtue of the enrolment contract entered into for their child, parents commit themselves to support and to help develop the educational action of the school.

3.4.5. The European School statutes provide for the participation and the representation of parents at all levels of consultation. This allows some parents to commit themselves to an active role in the school community.

3.4.6. The parents themselves are a source which can be tapped to enrich the cultural life of the school by making use of their particular talents and experience.

### 3.5. The Educational Team.

3.5.1. For each school, its educational team is a major asset.

3.5.2. The majority of European School teachers are recruited on the basis of their secondment by their respective governments, for a limited period, in keeping with the procedures followed in each country.

3.5.3. A certain number of teachers are recruited locally, to answer the particular needs of each school (part-time teaching, supply teaching, etc. ...)

3.5.4. For many teachers, secondment to the European Schools represents a first departure from their country of origin. For them and for their families, this entails a more or less protected period of adaptation to the host country.

3.5.5. Of the teachers, newly appointed to the European Schools, some have the possibility of making a preliminary visit to their school, or of obtaining the information which they need to prepare themselves for their new post.

3.5.6. Whatever his or her initial training and subsequent experience, a seconded teacher is expected to fit into a new structure, harmonised in terms of curriculum and educational approaches.

3.5.7. For the purposes of efficiency, both in social and educational terms, a knowledge of the school's working language is indispensable for the new recruit.

3.5.8. Teachers in the anglophone, francophone and German-speaking sections are required to teach their mother tongue as a foreign language. When they arrive, many of the newly seconded staff require training, in the absence of any experience in this area.

**3.5.9.** Within the framework of their timetable, teachers can use their particular linguistic, creative or sporting talents in the organising and running of European Hours and of extra-curricular activities, in coordination or in carrying out various teaching or non-teaching duties.

**3.5.10.** To harmonise teaching approaches and to keep abreast of developments in the field of education, the European Schools provide their staff with in-service training, both locally and at inter-school level.

### 3.6. Management and Administration

3.6.1. The management of a European School is entrusted to a Headteacher, who is responsible for the education of the three age-groups in his school and for its management. The school statutes lay down that a Headteacher must possess the qualifications required for appointment to a similar post in his own country.

3.6.2. In the management of the nursery and primary school, the Headmaster is helped by a Deputy Head.

3.6.3. In practice, due to the specific nature of nursery and primary education and to the volume of educational and administrative work, the deputy head carries heavy responsibilities. This is only possible within a framework of team management.

3.6.4. In particular, the Deputy Head is responsible for **carrying** out the reforms of the curriculum approved by the Board of Governors.

3.6.5. The Deputy Head is the leader of a European teaching team. He provides the link between the different language sections and oversees the harmonisation, the quality, the coherence and the continuity of the work of the school at nursery and primary level.

3.6.6. For this purpose he must show a great receptivity to the different cultures of the member states, especially in the area of education, thus widening the limits of his previous national experience.

3.6.7. Since most of the teachers are expatriate and are called to live and to work in unfamiliar and sometimes demanding conditions, the Deputy Headteacher must concern himself with the general ambiance of the school and with the well-being of each one.

3.6.8. The time he has for such duties is too frequently limited by the weight of administrative work which falls upon him.

3.6.9. The office and maintenance staff, devoted as it is, is often not equal to the size of the task, bearing in mind, in particular, the complexity of the language situation within each school.

3.6.10. Apart from its normal duties, the administrative staff has an important role to play in welcoming new teachers and in giving them whatever professional and practical help they may need.

3.6.11. Together, the Management and the administrative staff constitute a service alive to parents' hopes and wishes, prepared to cooperate constructively with all.

### 3.7. Society.

3.7.1. Society grants children a privileged and recognised place. They are not seen as adults in miniature but as individuals, respected for themselves.

3.7.2. In society today, more different models of the family unit are to be found than formerly. Certain children have to be able to adapt to new family situations.

3.7.3. At home and school alike, it is not always possible for children to have sufficient contact with both male and female adults, nor to define themselves in those terms and to find their own identity.

3.7.4. The way we live has been influenced by increased pressures, by new pursuits and by publicity. A certain balance, in eating habits for example, is not always guaranteed. This, added to a lack of physical exercise, can create problems for a child as he grows.

3.7.5. The consumer society has marked children out as a particular target. They are already subjected to concentrated pressure by commercial advertising, which manipulates them by encouraging competitiveness, acquisitiveness and conformity.

3.7.6. Life in today's world is not without its dangers for children : traffic, noise, atmospheric pollution, over-abundant demands on their attention, tobacco, alcohol, drug abuse ...

3.7.7. Access to the media and to various means of communication has widened the world with which children and adults now come into contact, and of which they receive a renewed image daily. Most feel more involved with what is happening in the world at large.

3.7.8. The presence of migrant workers, mixed marriages and present day professional mobility have all contributed to the birth of a multi-cultural society whose potential is often overshadowed by daily problems.

3.7.9. If, on the one hand, Europe is enjoying a long period of political stability, the speed of technological and economic change, on the other, can be unsettling.

3.7.10. Technology, in its multiple forms and by its rapid development, affects the private and professional life of everyone. This phenomenon requires of each a willingness to undergo re-training or, eventually, to change direction at different periods of one's professional life.

The world of work demands a greater degree of flexibility, of personal initiative, of inventiveness and of commitment. It requires new skills and a receptive mind.

3.7.11. In a world of rapid change, many traditional values which are associated with a stratified social structure are being transformed into a desire for greater equality, shared responsibility and independence.

The values of a static society are giving way to more open and dynamic thinking which, in turn, entails a search for a new definition of authority.

3.7.12. Democratic structures are developing in all spheres and at all levels.

Everyone, whether it be as a citizen, a worker or as a member of a group, can make his voice heard and can have a positive influence on policy.

Some take full advantage of their right to participate; others retreat into anonymity, submerged by the system.

## 4 . THE PURPOSE OF OUR SCHOOLS

### 4.1. A Curriculum centred around the Child

In the light of the general considerations described in the previous chapter, and in the perspective of a more closely united and enlarged Europe, the European Schools adopt as their aim the all-round education of their pupils in a European and international context.

4.1.1. Their educational policy is designed to allow each child :

- ◇ to become aware of himself and of his identity and to take stock of his possibilities and limitations,
- ◇ to know his body, to learn to respect and to develop it and to seek a balance between body and mind,
- ◇ to become aware of others, to show interest, respect and tolerance; to develop a feeling for what is right and a constructive critical approach to life,
- ◇ to learn to form part of a group, to show commitment, solidarity and team spirit and to discover the rules governing partnership,
- ◇ to develop a desire to communicate with an ever-widening circle, in his own language at first and, later, in the language of others,
- ◇ to enjoy nature to the full and to understand why and how it has to be respected,
- ◇ to acquire the literary and mathematical languages which will permit him to come to terms with and to describe events, facts, techniques, the environment, people and the world at large,
- ◇ to waken and to develop his creative potential in all spheres, by the acquisition of the greatest possible number of codes and skills, so that he can develop and express his feeling for beauty,
- ◇ to develop his ability to organise his time and work,
- ◇ to acquire an ever surer grasp of the notions of time, space, environment and society and of his own place in them,
- ◇ to cultivate a liking for personal research and for effort.

4.1.2. In addition, each European School has a particular double mission

- ◇ to recognise, protect and develop the cultural identity of its pupils, far from their home countries,
- ◇ to encourage a European spirit.

4.1.3. The school, having responsibility for the all-round education of the pupils, seeks to achieve it by providing :

- ◇ a balanced division of the time available between intellectual, technical, physical and creative activities, encouraging both discipline and self-expression,
- ◇ a variety of teaching approaches, whole class, group or individual,
- ◇ an inter-disciplinary approach to learning, to give pupils an integrated vision of society and of knowledge.

4.1.4. As it constitutes for many children the only available answer to their educational needs, the European School must give them every chance to develop and to achieve their potential by its recognition of and its respect for, their differences. In the final analysis, it is the school which adapts to the child.

#### 4.2. The School Staff.

4.2.1. To achieve these educational aims, the European Schools seek to recruit members of staff who fit the following description :

- ◇ well balanced and mature personalities, open to others and to different cultures,
- ◇ teachers of wide and varied experiences who have already shown professional initiative,

- ◇ teachers keen to form part of an international teaching team, desirous of making their own contribution and of widening their horizons,
- ◇ committed Europeans, speaking at least one of the working languages of the school,
- ◇ teachers with particular skills : able to teach foreign languages or physical education, for instance, or possessing artistic or musical talent ...

4.2.2. The successful integration of a new member of staff therefore call for :

- ◇ the careful choosing of staff by the national authorities in close collaboration with the school concerned,
- ◇ adequate information and preparation for new staff with a preliminary visit to their school,
- ◇ upon arrival, personal and professional help from the management, from the administrative staff and from colleagues,
- ◇ the close support of the teaching team to ensure the success of the new teacher's probationary two years period.

4.2.3. To achieve a coherent plan of action, the school needs :

- ◇ a balance of male and female teachers in each section,
- ◇ a complete range of expertise, notably in the areas of physical education, of music, of art education and of science teaching,
- ◇ good coordination structures in each year group, in each section and between sections,
- ◇ opportunities for teachers to meet and plan their work and activities together,
- ◇ coherent criteria of assessment of children's progress, at all levels and in all sections, corresponding to agreed and clearly defined aims and objectives and which are meaningful for children and for their parents.



4.2.4. To provide an up to date education service, each teacher has the duty :

- ◇ to keep himself well informed on the latest scientific findings in the area of child development,
- ◇ to maintain contact with the education system of his own country,
- ◇ to take an interest in the education system of the host country and of other member states.

The European Schools encourage their teachers' efforts in this respect. They also provide regular in-service training to allow teachers :

- ◇ to assimilate the ideas found in the papers published by the Curriculum Reform Committee and to translate them into a daily reality,
- ◇ to deepen their professional knowledge in defined areas,
- ◇ to enrich themselves professionally by exchanging ideas, traditions and teaching approaches with other colleagues.

4.2.5. The co-existence of the three age groups in all-age schools is a considerable bonus which permits real continuity :

- ◇ between nursery and primary and between primary and secondary,
- ◇ in terms of curriculum and teaching approaches.

Their organisation as all-age schools and the continuity this provides are fundamental to the philosophy of the European Schools.

4.2.6. The European Schools, in keeping with their tradition, attach great importance to co-operation with parents and to making a success together of the education of the children :

- ◇ by promoting a mutual respect for the role, achievements and aspirations of each party,
- ◇ by a frank exchange of useful information,
- ◇ by objective and constructive assessment,

- ◇ by the opportunities offered to the children to develop socially and to become independant,
- ◇ by encouraging parental involvement in the school's activities.

4.2.7. In order to help the teachers identify with their school and commit themselves fully, it is necessary :

- ◇ to accentuate the importance of the existing provision for staff representation,
- ◇ to adapt it to real needs,
- ◇ to replace it by new structures where necessary.

#### 4.3. The School, A Place of Learning and Encounter.

4.3.1. For the expatriate child, the European School must be, over and above its educational role, a warm and secure place of welcome, a home from home. For some time, the child's class teacher will be the only person he knows outside his family.

4.3.2. For children living abroad, the class teacher must be :

- ◇ the person who guarantees continuity in the development of the child's mother tongue and who compensates for his linguistic isolation by various teaching approaches,
- ◇ the person who, for the child of a mixed marriage or whose home language does not correspond to the language of the existing sections, will ensure that he acquires a school language,
- ◇ the person who will maintain the traditions and culture of the home country,
- ◇ the person who, at the same time, will help parents and children to avoid too national a view of education and of society.
- ◇ the person whose position gives him an ideal opportunity to develop contact between people in his own language community.

**4.3.3.** The second language teacher and the European Hours group leader must also be more than technicians in a certain discipline.

By their activities, they are ambassadors for their language and culture and, in helping children to discover other traditions, they can give children some appreciation of cultural differences.

They are the ones who will give the children a desire to communicate with others in spite of the language barrier and a taste for foreign languages in general.

**4.3.4.** To answer the global educational needs of its pupils, the school must be a lively and stimulating place.  
It makes provision for :

- ◇ a variety of environments suited to the age, the needs, the aspirations and the activities of each child,
- ◇ a rhythm of work and of school life in keeping with the child's age and aptitudes,
- ◇ work places, both inside and out, allowing class, group or individual activities, whether organised by the teacher or freely chosen,
- ◇ areas and time slots for the child to organise his own play freely with other children,
- ◇ opportunities for the child to take up a challenge, to stretch himself, to encounter difficulties and to face up to certain reasonable dangers without adult intervention,
- ◇ opportunities for out-of-school activities, allowing the child to get to know the environment and the world outside. Opportunities, too, to invite people or groups into the school to enrich its cultural and social life,
- ◇ a well-filled calendar of events for all ages, languages and cultures represented in the school and the organisation and means to make it a success.

**4.3.5.** The European Schools set out to be more than an mere school establishment or a public service. They endeavour :

- ◇ to answer the needs of the expatriate community by organising cultural and social activities for expatriate young people and for adults,
- ◇ to open their doors to the local community to promote mutual understanding by joint activities and the sharing of facilities,
- ◇ to share in the sporting and cultural life of the locality.

## 5 . PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CURRICULUM AND SCHOOL ORGANISATION

From the foregoing fundamental considerations a number of practical consequences result, some of which are proper to the European Schools.

This is explained by :

- ◇ their supranational and multicultural character,
- ◇ their particular structure and organisation,
- ◇ the additional subjects or activities they provide : foreign language, European Hours ... ,
- ◇ their varying sizes and their situation in different countries and localities,
- ◇ their evolution and growth to date : the number of member states and of schools, and of language sections.

### 5.1. Guidelines and Syllabuses.

The basic considerations and the aims outlined in chapters 3 and 4 have a direct influence upon the curriculum and teaching approaches of the European Schools.

These documents must meet the real needs of the schools.

For them to receive wide support, they must recognise certain constraints :

- ◇ The curriculum must reflect a unity of purpose, and it must be presented in a clear and precise way, appealing to all language sections equally,
- ◇ Taking account of child development and of the progressive stages of learning, the curriculum must avoid discontinuity and must ensure a coherent educational philosophy from the nursery school, through primary and through secondary,
- ◇ The curriculum must likewise take into account the specific needs of children with learning or behavioural difficulties, disabled children and those who are particularly gifted,
- ◇ it must be alive to the physical capacity and biological rhythms of the children and teachers,

- ◇ The Curriculum must present concrete examples as an inspiration for the teachers, within the limits of what is possible,
- ◇ The Curriculum and related documents must be available in all languages.

The introduction of new syllabuses must always be accompanied by in-service training for the staff. This must be planned in the light of educational developments in the member states, with which the schools should maintain close contact.

The application of the syllabus depends largely on the individual teacher. To obtain a general consensus on the basic principles (concepts, skills and knowledge), staff within each school should prepare the application of a new syllabus by detailed discussions. This is true for all subjects but is particularly important in Environmental Studies, European Hours and Second Language teaching where local conditions have a considerable influence upon the outcome.

#### 5.2. The Weekly and Daily Timetable.

At the outset, the timetable of the European Schools was basically a national timetable to which had been added the teaching of a foreign language and the European Hours. The resulting number of periods is a heavy workload for children and for teachers.

Moreover, teaching periods which are themselves too long are prejudicial to learning, they reduce efficiency and drain the will to work.

There is a close relation between the number of periods and the quality of teaching. A class teacher's teaching load, the meeting of children's individual needs, consultations with colleagues and with parents, the carrying out of non-teaching duties, all must be kept within reasonable limits.

It follows that the time has come for a revision of the existing timetables. The best solution would be reached by :

- ◇ a closer correlation of the weekly timetable and the children's ages,
- ◇ a revision of the number of periods attributed to each subject,

- ◇ the introduction of more flexible teaching approaches, such as inter-disciplinary work, for example.

Improved teaching can replace an over-loaded timetable. Moreover, creative activities as well as sport and games should be adequately provided for to ensure the global development of the children.

In the school day and week, it is essential, particularly in the youngest classes, to split the timetable as little as possible by second language teaching or religion lessons. Continuity in the class teacher's time with his class must be respected, particularly at the beginning of each day.

### 5.3. Different Teaching Approaches.

Teaching which aims at encouraging enquiry, creativity, physical and sensorial development, communication and sociability must have many different forms. Class teaching must alternate with more open discussion or with group work. Whatever the approach adopted, however, the teacher's role remains vital.

The development of a child's full potential can be achieved :

- ◇ by the choice of flexible approaches : inter-disciplinary education, project work ... ,
  - ◇ by the use of individualised approaches ... ,
  - ◇ by giving greater importance to the child's interests,
  - ◇ allowing the child to set the place and sequence of certain work during the week and to use his own initiative,
  - ◇ by offering him certain choices, optional tasks, free time ... ,
  - ◇ by creating and equipping areas in the classroom to encourage experimentation, creativity or quiet activities,

- ◇ by seeking an harmonious balance between learning, creating, movement (games and sport) and quiet activities,
- ◇ by exploiting fully the resources which lie outside the classroom and the school.

The teacher's art consists in following each child's progress closely, encouraging him when he is confronted by failure and supporting him in his efforts. The programming of his work takes full account of the children's curiosity and spontaneity.

Learning has progressed beyond the traditional pattern of listening and looking. Touching, using all the senses and the whole body are also important.

The importance of skills training must not be overlooked. Imagination and a careful choice of material will eliminate monotony from the children's learning. Healthy competition also has its place for children enjoy and are stimulated by comparing results. The teacher must make sure that all children benefit from this.

For the teacher, observing his pupils' progress is both a way of assessing how far general aims are being achieved and an on-going exercise in self-evaluation.

#### 5.4. Second Language Teaching.

The early acquisition of a foreign language normally taught by a native-speaker, initially by means of play activities and later by more elaborate methods, gives all our pupils a remarkable skill. To this authentic vehicle of communication must be added the contact made with the culture of other countries and enjoyed through songs, folk stories, literature, festivals and national customs.

Although our schools have already built up a wealth of experience and a valuable variety of approaches in this field, it is necessary to give some thought to certain aspects of this teaching if it is to evolve :



- ◊ the optimum moment for the introduction of second language teaching (perhaps delaying it until later in 1st year or 2nd year,
- ◊ the reinforcing of second language teaching by using real-life learning situations (linking up with creative activities, with project work, with European Hours and with Environmental Studies.)
- ◊ the encouragement of team teaching and of mutual help between pupils.
- ◊ particular care with the mixed composition of and numbers in large second language groups, especially if the language taught corresponds to that spoken in the host country.

The qualification for 2nd language must be taken into account. Very few teachers arrive in the European Schools in possession of any experience in this field. While they can, undoubtedly, call upon their colleagues for advice, they must acquire their experience for themselves.

The adoption of three measures is therefore imperative :

- ◊ the organisation of an initial training for new teachers before they take up their duties, by sitting in on second language classes in a European School,
- ◊ the provision of practical guidance for new teachers by experienced colleagues for an initial period, with a time allowance for this in their timetable,
- ◊ the organisation of a longer and more intensive period of in-service training during the teacher's period of secondment.

#### 5.5. The European Hours.

The European Hours offer the pupils of 3rd, 4th and 5th years the possibility to go beyond the limits of their own class and their own section and to meet children and teachers of other sections socially and culturally.

The spirit of the European Hours is already defined in the Protocol of the European Schools, a copy of which is placed in the foundation stone of each European School :

"Playing the same games, learning the same lessons, boys and girls of different speech and citizenship will come to know, to respect and to live in harmony with one another".

The European Hours offer a unique opportunity

- ◇ for verbal and non-verbal communication between pupils of different language sections,
- ◇ for providing musical and creative activities such as drawing and painting, craft work of all sorts, singing and music-making, dancing, sport, drama and the organisation of various festivals,
- ◇ for exploring the cultural and general interest facilities offered in the neighbourhood and in the host country.

In addition to underlining these well-established aims and work approaches, we feel that we have to make the following remarks :

- ◇ It is important to remove the European Hours from their relative isolation by associating them with other disciplines or with project work. This integration can be brought about within the framework of activities organised in Environmental Studies or as part of various celebrations or exhibitions.
- ◇ The teachers must be prepared to plan the European Hours together, to undertake certain parts of the work together and to share some activities. The outcome of such work should be presented to a wider public by means of shows, exhibitions or a school newspaper.
- ◇ The liaison with second language (as a support in real situations) has already been mentioned above.
- ◇ Whenever possible, the children should be able to exercise some degree of choice among the activities available, following their own interests and wherever the teachers can offer corresponding skills or talents.  
To further this, local teachers with particular skills could be brought in.

The European Hours should arouse the enthusiasm of the teachers and the pupils to the extent that they are considered a high point of the school week.

To this end, they require careful preparation, both in content and approach.

### 5.6. Help for Children with Special Needs.

Certain children need a degree of individual help which, in normal circumstances, cannot be provided in the mainstream class.

The introduction of Remedial Teaching has been one of the most important innovations in the European schools in recent years.

Thanks to Remedial Teaching, which is usually limited in duration, children with learning or behaviour problems receive individual help from a teacher who has received additional training in this sphere.

For Remedial Teaching to be most beneficial it is necessary :

- ◊ to observe the children and to provide support already at nursery level,
- ◊ to guarantee the continuity of the work undertaken through into the secondary school,
- ◊ to keep budgetary resources in line with real needs.

In the same spirit, the integration of disabled children into the schools is one of the great challenges facing the schools in our time.

Each particular case has to be considered, of course, in the light of what can be offered by any one of the European School in terms of trained staff and of infra-structure. In the bigger cities, better solutions can sometimes be found in national or local establishments. Frequently, however, the European Schools remain the sole option available because of the mother tongue of the children concerned.

### 5.7. The Size of Classes.

All the educational principles discussed in previous pages can only be put into operation if the size of classes is in keeping with the teaching approaches adopted.

Different activities and ages demand differing class sizes. Criteria should be varied to suit the situation and the need : working with small groups at nursery level, the first year in primary, vertically grouped classes, second language teaching, experimental work in Environmental Studies, the multi-cultural groups in European Hours and so on ...

The principle, which is already applied when classes are split, must be further tuned to limit the number of pupils to match the educational requirements.

## 6 . B U I L D I N G S A N D E Q U I P M E N T

### 6.1. Lay Out of the School Site and of the Buildings

Contemporary teaching approaches call for new thinking in the planning and equipping of buildings, of class rooms, of sporting facilities and of surrounding play areas. It is important that the school be seen, not only as a place of study, but as an environment and a community, creating real life experiences for the children. This idea must be reflected in the appearance of the school.

As the provision of buildings, the local environment and national directives all have to be considered, we can only give here a general view of what is required.

Each school must, therefore, achieve acceptable standard in the provision of classrooms and of specialist rooms. These include :

- ◇ spacious areas for physical education and sport (gym hall for the nursery school, gym halls and sports fields for the primary school) with equipment suitable for each age group.
- ◇ multi-purpose halls for drama, music and movement, exhibitions, various projects and activities. Entrance halls and corridors can sometimes be adapted for this purpose.
- ◇ specialist rooms adaptable to a variety of activities (scientific experiments, art and craft) in Environmental Studies or European Hours.
- ◇ study and meeting rooms, with both formal and informal lay out, for staff use (meetings, interviews with parents, staff library ...)

Besides the provision of essential teaching rooms, the following components of the school's infrastructure should be given adequate attention :

- ◇ Because our schools usually function in the afternoons, a well organised canteen service should be provided for the children. Especially for the younger pupils, it is important that they eat in a calm and educational atmosphere.

- ◇ The sanitary installations should be modern and sufficient in number. There should be direct access to the lavatories from the playgrounds.
- ◇ Sanitary installations, ramps, corridors and lifts should all be designed with disabled persons in mind.
- ◇ Each school should have an infirmary where victims of accidents or sudden illness can be given first aid.

The surroundings of the schools must be included in the global educational planning. The yard, for example, should give the children enough possibilities for movement and play. (sand pit, play and climbing equipment, adventure corners, benches) and should also be suitable for use during P.E. lessons (sports fields).

In bad weather, the children should also have the possibility of playing and running about in the fresh air, and parts of the school playground should be covered. School gardens and nature study pools enrich the school environment. Conveniently close to the classroom, children can observe and study nature at first hand, in their environmental studies syllabus.

#### 6.2. Requirements for the equipping and lay out of class rooms.

Class and work rooms in the school should be equipped and laid out so that teaching takes place in the best possible conditions :

- ◇ Neighbouring rooms should have connecting doors to develop team-work between classes. Neighbouring classes could also share group rooms together.
- ◇ All rooms should be well insulated from noise (from outside or from neighbouring rooms) and from extremes in temperature. Rooms should be well ventilated.
- ◇ Windows should be equipped with sunblinds and blackout curtains.
- ◇ Beside the usual blackboard, a classroom should have space on the wall for film or slide projection.
- ◇ Classrooms should have wet areas with big sinks and hot and cold water. Sinks should have wide bore waste pipes. The flooring in this area should be water resistant.
- ◇ There should be an adequate number of electrical points.

- ◇ In classes, specialist rooms, halls and corridor, there should be ample facilities for exhibiting and for storing children's work, including pin boards, glass show cases and shelving.

### 6.3. Resources for Nursery and Primary Classes.

The equipping of our school with audio-visual aids and teaching materials must answer the needs of the curriculum and of the teaching approaches adopted.

The following should be provided :

- ◇ rooms where teaching aids be kept which are not in daily use and which are too costly to provide for each class :

- large maps and wall charts.
- slides, educational films, transparencies, video cassettes,
- models and measuring instruments for environmental studies and for mathematics,
- equipment for experiments (preferably in transportable boxes),
- musical instruments (if there is no music room), records and cassettes,
- slide and film projectors, overhead projectors, tape recorders and cassette players,
- tools for craftwork (if there is no specialist room),
- additional material for special needs teaching,
- computer software ...

- ◇ a central library (including a work room) with :

- reference books and special interest books,
- children's fiction for each language section,
- books for special needs teaching.

If space permits, the teacher's library, the pupils' library and the central stock of teaching aids should be housed together in a Resources Centre, allowing for a maximum use of all resources.

◇ Basic classroom equipment to include :

- attractive and stimulating teaching equipment for class teaching , group work, individual work and free choice activities,
- instruments and equipment for observing, measuring, experimenting and constructing,
- a reading corner for individual reference work or for silent reading,
- maps and wall charts,
- audio-visual aids in frequent use as well as basic computer equipment with printer.
- props (costumes, masks ...) for plays, acting, dancing and dressing up and materials for Art and Craft (easels, paints, clay, plasticine ...)
- simple instruments for music making and movement in the class.
- facilities for keeping animals in class and for growing plants.

Classrooms which are encumbered with furniture because of too large a number of pupils, do not meet the needs of the children and are inadequate to the teaching approaches proposed.

Different work areas need to be provided (for experimenting, craftwork, games ...) which give the children easy access to the appropriate equipment and materials.

The same principles are valid for the nursery classes.

There, also, a variety of materials, adapted to the children's age should encourage :

- ◇ a desire to find out by playing (construction, games, games demanding logic, concentration, observation, experimentation, various board games ...)
- ◇ the child's creative spontaneity and curiosity (plastic items of all sorts, puppet theatre, clothes and disguises for dressing up and role play ...)

Group rooms should be big enough to allow each child to move about freely, to meet with others for group activities or to get away by oneself in a quiet corner.

#### 6.4. The Inventory and the Management of Resources.

To ensure maximum use of equipment available, it is essential that each member of staff and particularly newly arrived teachers be informed of what is available.

For this purpose :

- ◇ up-to-date lists must be distributed to staff,
- ◇ equipment must be readily available and organised with simplicity,
- ◇ responsibility for resources management should be entrusted to a teacher or an assistant. In this area, parents' help can be considered if necessary.



7 .	T H E	S E P A R A T E	I D E N T I T Y	O F
	E A C H	S C H O O L .		

7.1. The individuality of each school.

The European Schools were conceived on the basis of harmonisation. Local conditions differ, however, from school to school, whether it be the size of the establishment, the number of language sections, the particular local environment, the social milieu of the parents and the cultural climate. More than previously, these characteristics have to be taken into account for the following :

- ◇ the application of the syllabus : a local scheme for environmental studies, for example,
- ◇ the drawing up of the timetable,
- ◇ the teaching of second language, taking into account the advantages enjoyed by the language of the host country, where appropriate,
- ◇ the introduction of the language of the host country when it is not already taught as second language, Dutch, Italian,
- ◇ the organisation of European Hours, of environmental studies and of sporting fixtures,
- ◇ contact with national and local authorities, the use of local specialists and educational advisors,
- ◇ the drawing up of the school calendar : school festivals, open days, exhibitions, school visits and trips, out of school activities (ski classes, forest classes ...),
- ◇ school participation in local events : traditions, festivals, exhibitions, international gatherings,
- ◇ school sponsorship of social projects and twinning with local schools.

Here also, those who share responsibility for the school - the management, staff and parents - must form a community. The combined efforts of all will permit each school to develop its own identity.

It goes beyond that, however. It is important to create a group which identifies closely with the institution, with ITS school, and which finds in this team commitment a strength and a spirit capable of surmounting difficulties when they arise.

## 7.2. Cooperation between Management, Staff and Parents.

Management, the delegation of responsibilities, the flow of information and decision-making must operate so that aims and objectives can be achieved. Our schools will make continued progress if

- ◇ all members of the school community are informed and consulted about new initiatives and about decisions to be taken.
- ◇ members are able to participate actively in decision making, drawing on their professional experience.
- ◇ decisions are made by as large a team of people as possible.
- ◇ there is a clearly defined delegation of responsibilities : section coordination, inter-section coordination, promotion from the nursery to the primary and from primary to secondary ...
- ◇ teachers are encouraged to go beyond the limits of their own class and section to work together and to exchange ideas and experience.
- ◇ the sharing out and spending of budgetary resources take place after full consultation with the staff.
- ◇ the parents are full partners in the enterprise.

In the light of this, the positioning of classes in the school complex is not without its importance. The flow of information between members of staff and opportunities for cooperation are improved by proximity. The grouping of classes by age or by language section can be considered.

In each school the following consultative groups exist :

- ◇ the staff group of each language section,
- ◇ work groups for Euromaths, Environmental studies, Second Language, European Hours, Promotion from Nursery to Primary and from Primary to Secondary ...,
- ◇ the general staff meeting which considers problems of organisation and educational questions,

- ◇ the School Council (Conseil d'Education) where the delegates of all sections of the school community meet and discuss.
- ◇ ad hoc committees for the organisation of various school events : festivals, exhibitions, school trips ...

As the need arises, these consultative bodies are convened by the Headteacher, in keeping with the rules laid down. Requests for meetings may be made by the staff and by the parents.

Many problems may be solved by informed discussions and by an exchange of ideas based upon practical experience. For this to happen, however, people need time and possibilities must be created for this within their timetables.

Central to all these bodies is the key figure of the Deputy Headteacher for the Nursery and Primary schools. In the area of consultation, he is, at one and the same time, the driving force, the moderator and the coordinator.  
(see chapter 3.6).

## 8 . C O N C L U S I O N

### 8.1. Turning proposals into reality.

When the present situation is looked at closely, a gap is seen to exist between the proposals put forward and the reality in certain schools.

The Board of Governors, the senior decision-making body in our Institution, must therefore be made aware that

- ◇ it is at nursery and primary level that foundations are laid and the direction set for the future development of a child,
- ◇ for this reason, a number of measures concerning staffing, infra-structure and resources need to be adopted as part of an overall strategy,
- ◇ the teacher must be able to carryt out his key-role to the full. This calls for appropriate working conditions on the one hand : timetable, remuneration, sharing of responsibilities, freedom from non-essential tasks and adequate in-service training on the other.

To meet these requirements, a political will must be found to provide necessary budgetary resources, following a long-term plan.

In this respect, the primary inspectors play an important role as mediators and advisors. They are the link between the practical realities in the schools and the national delegations in the Administrative and Financial Committee and in the Board of Governors.

### 8.2. The role of the co-ordination group in the Reform Committee.

Because of the considerable number of objectives to be achieved, the need for a co-ordination group in the Reform Committee continues to make itself felt.

The working brief of such a small group, consisting of parents, teachers, headteachers and inspectors, would be :

- ◇ to coordinate and render more efficient the tasks of the various work groups,
- ◇ to preserve a unity of vision in guidelines and syllabuses,
- ◇ to support initiatives emanating from the schools, the staff or the parents and to formulate proposals designed to further the development of our schools,
- ◇ to establish and maintain relations with external specialists,
- ◇ to coordinate staff in-service training.

### 8.3. Moving on, up the school.

The European Schools offer their pupils the rare possibility of pursuing their schooling on the one campus, from the nursery through to the Baccalaureat.

This explains the importance which is attached to the pupils' transfer from one cycle to the next. As the nursery and primary cycles come under one and the same headteacher, the passage of a child from nursery into 1st year primary usually presents no major difficulty.

To guarantee the same ease of transfer between the 5th year primary and the secondary school calls for close cooperation between the teachers of both cycles in the following areas :

- ◇ curriculum, educational aims and objectives, demands made upon children, ways of assessing progress,
- ◇ school books and teaching methods,
- ◇ class organisation, special needs and support teaching.

The creation of joint curriculum committees would also ease the transfer of pupils from one cycle to another.

Joint in-service training courses are also called for : nursery and infant primary classes together for instance, and 5th year primary with lower secondary.

Art. 33.5 of the Staff Regulations mentions explicitly the possibility for primary staff to "teach a certain number of periods of their timetable in the lower secondary classes in those subjects which they are qualified to teach."  
It should be considered, with the secondary school authorities, whether

- ◇ this option should not be more fully exploited,
- ◇ conversely, teachers from the secondary school might be permitted to teach in primary classes,
- ◇ ways of integrating the transition classes should be explored.

In this context, it is important to underline that special needs support such as Remedial Teaching and the integration of disabled children must not come to an end at the end of the primary cycle.

The educational efforts made in the primary school must be guaranteed continuity and further development in the secondary. This is equally true of the care provided for the children by the school doctor, the educational psychologist and by visiting speech therapists (logopèdes) and other specialists.

#### **8.4. The European Schools Institution seen as a whole :**

It is clear that the ideas developed in this document concern the European Schools in their entirety : internal organisation, staff management, consultation processes, the channelling of information, co-operation, curriculum aims and development, teaching methods, and, above all, the identity of the Institution and its vision.

9 .	APPENDIX	:	LIST	OF	ADOPTED
	REFORM		COMMITTEE		DOCUMENTS .

Title	Date of adoption by the Board of Governors	Refernce Number
Nursery School Reform.	Dec. 83.	1412 - D - 83
Reform Plan	Dec. 74.	/
German 1st language	May 78.	78 - D - 35
English 1st language	May 74.	74 - D - 16
Danish 1st language	May 82.	82 - D - 66
Greek 1st language	Dec. 80.	81 - D - 67
Italian 1st language	Dec. 80.	81 - D - 37
Dutch 1st language	Dec. 79.	80 - D - 36
Portugese 1st language	Apr. 87.	87 - D - 46
German 2nd language 1st year	Dec. 79.	80 - D - 188
2nd year	May 81.	81 - D - 47
3rd, 4th, 5th years	Dec. 75.	/
English 2nd language	May 75.	75 - D - 136
	May 76.	76 - D - 96
Mathematics	May 77.	77 - D - 106
	Dec. 75.	/
European Hours	May 80.	80 - D - 208
Environmental Studies	May 80.	80 - D - 16
Introduction of Computers :		
- Outline document. . . . .		84 - D - 41
- Introduction of Computers . . . . .		85 - D - 157
- Doc. 2 Funding 1st phase . . . . .		86 - D - 136
- Doc. 3 Coordinators . . . . .		2912 - D - 86
- Doc. 4 Phase 2 . . . . .		3012 - D - 8
- Doc. 5 Phase 3 (Final Phase) . . . . .		88 - D - 266
- Doc. 6 Funding Phase 3 . . . . .		88 - D - 256
- Doc. 7 Conclusion of the project . . . . .		/
- Report on Phase 1 . . . . .		88 - D - 281
- Report on Phase 2 . . . . .		89 - D - 152
- Report on Phase 3 . . . . .		1990

Music	Dec. 83.	1312 - D - 83
Physical Education	Dec. 83.	1412 - D - 83
Ethics	May 78.	78 - D - 66
Reinforcement of Internal Structures	April 87.	87 - D - 114

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Remarks : this list includes the documents published since 1974.

To keep the list up to date, please refer to the  
Digest of Decisions of the Board of Governors.