

Koulujen erilaiset käytännöt maahanmuuttotaustaisten oppilaiden koulupolulla - KIEPPI-toimenpideohjelman loppuraportti

Abstract

Differences in school practices regarding the school paths of pupils with a migrant background – Final report on the KIEPPI action plan

The Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) has drawn up the final report on the Ministry of Education and Culture's *action plan for strengthening the basic skills and language of instruction of pupils with a migrant background (KIEPPI)*. Carried out between 2021 and 2026, the action plan included evaluations, research and development projects, the results of which are used in the final report to provide an overview of the learning of pupils with a migrant background, the effectiveness of learning support and areas for development in primary and lower secondary education.

The final report covers the school path of pupils with a migrant background comprehensively, from instruction preparing for primary and lower secondary education to applying for upper secondary education and training. It includes a summary of all the information published during the action plan, examples of good practices from project activities and development recommendations aimed at supporting decision-making on education policy, education providers and pedagogical planning at the local level. Furthermore, the report describes how the information produced during the action plan has been utilised in the preparation of legislation during the government term of Prime Minister Petteri Orpo's Government (2023–2027).

The learning and educational progress of pupils with a migrant background are supported especially by a sense of belonging to the school community, effective integration practices and language-aware teaching. In practice, however, there are significant differences between education providers and schools in how groups receiving instruction preparing for primary and lower secondary education are taken into account in the everyday operation of schools, for example. A lack of common guidelines and responsibilities makes it difficult to integrate pupils receiving instruction preparing for primary and lower secondary education into regular primary and lower secondary education, for example. Key factors that contribute to successful pupil inclusion, integration and transitions during the school path include the school's operating culture, management and staff collaboration.

Schools face very different circumstances when it comes to teaching pupils with a migrant background. Some schools have had such pupils for a long time, while others have only had them for a short while. The competence of teachers in teaching such pupils varies, and not all teachers have the opportunity to take part in continuing education. However, continuing education is needed, especially in language-aware teaching, learning support and the identification of learning difficulties and trauma-related challenges.

Identifying and addressing the learning support needs of pupils with a migrant background is often made challenging by factors such as their still-developing language skills and history of trauma. There are not

always enough resources available to meet learning support needs. For example, more resources are needed for language support.

The following recommended measures have been drawn up on the basis of the final report:

The importance of the school community for the learning of pupils with a migrant background

- Schools should regularly review and assess how their operating methods and practices support the participation and learning of all pupils. Open discussion among staff helps to establish consistent operating methods, while the school's management is responsible for formulating common guidelines and ensuring that the conditions for their implementation are in place.
- Schools should strengthen the commitment of pupils with a migrant background to the school community. It is particularly important to foster school engagement, community cohesion and a sense of belonging and to address unauthorised absences.
- In schools, teachers should encourage pupils to use their own mother tongue in appropriate contexts in order to promote learning. The Finnish National Agency for Education should raise awareness among education providers and principals of the importance of pupils' own mother tongues and the funding available for supporting their use.
- Language awareness that promotes learning should be firmly established as part of the operating culture of schools and the teaching of all pupils. This requires commitment on the part of the entire school community and management. Education providers should ensure that language-aware teaching is taken into account in local curricula, school-specific annual plans and pedagogical development. Through pedagogical leadership, principals can support the development of language-aware teaching within schools and their wider working communities and provide staff with opportunities for continuing education. Teachers should develop and use language-aware teaching methods as part of their own teaching to promote the learning of all pupils.
- Schools should work to strengthen the commitment of guardians of pupils with a migrant background to school activities. It is important to provide guardians with clear information about their responsibilities. Education providers should have clear procedures in place for welcoming families with a migrant background and for cooperation between home and school.

School operating culture and leadership as a source of support during transitions

- Education providers should ensure that procedures relating to the transfer of information during transitions from one level of education to the next have been defined. Schools should assign responsibility for this to specific individuals.
- Education providers should ensure that integration into primary and lower secondary education is carried out in accordance with regulations and that common school-wide procedures have been established for this purpose. Education providers should allocate resources to co-teaching and its development so that pupils with a migrant background can be better supported as they integrate into primary and lower secondary education. There should be clear guidelines for cooperation between teachers providing instruction preparing for primary and lower secondary education and subject teachers to ensure successful co-teaching and joint lesson planning, for example.
- Pupils in group-based instruction preparing for primary and lower secondary education should be integrated into the school community. To ensure that all pupils are treated equally, it is important to make it clear that responsibility for their learning, participation and wellbeing lies with the whole school community. The operating methods, facility arrangements and rules of procedure of schools should be planned in such a way that they support integration and facilitate the daily interaction of pupils.

Strengthening teachers' competence in teaching multilingual pupils

- There is a need for publishers of teaching materials to produce more resources aimed at pupils with a migrant background, e.g. for use in instruction preparing for primary and lower secondary education. There is a particular need for materials in Swedish. It is important for all learning materials to take language awareness into account more effectively.
- Teacher training should place greater emphasis on the teaching of pupils with a migrant background. It is essential to include in the training more information on topics such as the practices of instruction preparing for primary and lower secondary education and language-aware teaching methods. Teaching practice should be increased in schools with pupils with a migrant background.
- Teachers should be provided with continuing education with a focus on learning support, especially remedial teaching in the language of instruction and how to identify and address pupils' individual language needs. Education providers should ensure that the necessary conditions are in place for teachers to participate in continuing education. The Ministry of Education and Culture should develop new national solutions and ensure that the necessary resources are allocated to them so that the continuing education and up-to-date competence of teachers can be systematically guaranteed.