

Regarding the substance of the report, Interparents thinks that on the whole it is well balanced and thought out, although it is a shame that the authors could not get fully reliable data from the schools. For example, the data on the numbers of SWALS pupils in Table 3 are incorrect and do not always correspond to the numbers circulating within the individual schools.

Interparents welcomes the report's commitment to provide for SWALS and agrees with its finding that "the reduction in Mother Tongue teaching hours and the vertical combination of classes are the biggest concerns" and hopes that this trend will be reversed. Also, Interparents insists on adequate time tabling and provision of suitable rooms.

The qualifications of locally recruited teachers is a thorny issue. Interparents believes the competent inspectors should be actively involved in monitoring Mother Tongue classes and the assisting Mother Tongue teachers and that concrete guidelines must be given to School Directors.

More specifically, Interparents urgently requests:

- Provisions for replacements in case of long term absence of a teacher (for example distance learning)
- Teaching assistants in primary cycle, where needed.
- Allocation of part of the budget to Mother Tongue classes

And finally, we repeat our request for a place in the Working Group.

In addition, Interparents would like to take this occasion to stress the growing concern of parents over the increasing number of issues that have arisen in connection with SWALS in the European Schools affecting both the native speakers and the non-native speakers in the class and varying from school to school. Appropriate solutions should be found including the creation of as many language sections as possible, within the context of the individual schools.

However, it is clear that an increasing number of pupils will, for various reasons, study in a language section which does not correspond to their mother tongue or dominant language or the language spoken at home and hence Interparents would welcome better statistics in order to see how many children are hidden by the existing definition, which for some Parents' Associations needs to be broader.