



**REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA**  
**NATIONAL INSPECTORATE OF EDUCATION**



**Analysis of the quality of education provided by schools and kindergartens ,  
inspected during the 2020/2021 academic year**



## **Content**

### **Chapter 1**

- 1. [Characteristics of the inspection during the academic year 2020/2021](#) page 3
- 2. [Summary assessment of the quality of education](#) page 5
- 3. [Detected violations in the inspection of schools and kindergartens](#) page 9
- 4. [Strengths and recommendations for improving the performance of inspectorranite schools and kindergartens](#) page 10

### **Chapter 2**

- [Analysis of the implementation of the Ministry of Education and Science's goals](#) page 13

### **Chapter 3**

- 1. [Impact assessment of the inspection](#) page 28
- 2. [Conclusions and recommendations](#) page 32

### **Applications:**

1. List of inspections of kindergartens and schools during the academic year 2020/2021 with awarded assessment of the quality of education
2. Criteria and indicators for screening applied during the 2020/2021 academic year.
3. Mechanism for informing Regional Education Departments about the results of inspections conducted by the National Inspectorate of Education

## CHAPTER 1



### **Characteristics of the inspection during the academic year 2020/2021**

During the 2020/2021 academic year the National Inspectorate of Education, conducting a comprehensive independent expert assessment of the quality of education, provided by 39 kindergartens and 91 schools, a total of 130 institutions (*Appendix # 1*). The percentage distribution of inspected institutions, by type, is shown in *Figure 1*.



*Fig. 1*

When selecting schools and kindergartens for inspection, the principle of a fair representation of institutions by type, was achieved. An overall number of 64 schools and kindergartens in the Sofia region have been inspected by the territorial selection principle, which completed the already commenced round of the national inspections, for the period of the academic year 2019 / 2020 of all schools and kindergartens of the region.

To determine the degree of implementation of the Ministry of Education and Science's goals, related to the development of vocational and technical education through active implementation of the training in the process of work, a total number of 49 schools, providing vocational education and training (VET), were included in the selection list of educational institutions to be inspected, including those, which provide the dual training system.

To measure the degree of achievement of the goal “Achieving the level of functional literacy”, a total number of 47 schools, that provide vocational education and training, whose students show very low results in state matriculation exams in Bulgarian language and Literature, have been inspected.

To measure and evaluate the effectiveness of the measures applied, so that to ensure a full coverage of all children subject to education, a total number of 6 kindergartens have been inspected, where the number of the children, who come from vulnerable groups, predominate.

To track down the sustainable use of some contemporary management models, a total number of 7 schools, participating in the Democratic School Project (2005-2006) have been inspected.. The Project aims to change the paradigm of the Bulgarian Educational System and to improve the leadership skills of the schools' principals.

A total number of 3 kindergartens and 1 school, who have been awarded unsatisfactory ratings from the previous inspection, have been inspected.

During the national lockdown, due to the COVID- 19 pandemic, the inspectors followed a Hybrid Inspection Model, in which the preparatory and the final stages of the inspection's activities were conducted exclusively online. In the first stage, all educational institutions were marked with a common environment through the kindergarten/school detour. The pedagogical situations have been monitored while visiting the kindergartens in person. Some lessons have been monitored face-to-face visits; others were monitored online. Structured meetings with the representatives of the teachers, the parents, the school students and the kindergarten' / school's management team were carried out mainly online. Some of the meetings with parents and students were held by the inspectors' team through a face-to-face meetings, due to some difficulties in securing the electronic devices, in other cases due to the lack of an Internet access by the participants, involved in the inspection process.

The Applicable Criteria and Indicators (*Appendix # 2*) are complex after a thorough analysis of their application during conducting distance learning online, and have been published at the NIE website <https://nio.government.bg> at the beginning of the academic year 2020/2021.

### **Summary assessment of the quality of education**

**The average assessment of the quality of education, provided by the inspected kindergartens and schools, is a (Good) 3.09** on the four-level rating scale. The "Educational process "review area was rated with a (Good) score of 3.01. The "Institution Management" area gets a higher score of 3.17.

The results of the inspections to various educational institutions, the good ratings prevail – out of the total number of 95 educational institutions, there are 21 out of them, who received a very good

rating, 12 out of them have a satisfactory rating, and 2 of the educational institutions have a low rating. The percentage distribution is shown in *Figure 2*



Teachers and parents were satisfied to a high degree with the overall activities at the kindergartens, including at those, where the physical environment is not sufficiently functional, modern and safe, and information technology resources were not introduced. This is due to the underestimation of the criteria provided for the quality of education and the understanding of the features of a kindergarten only as an institution for raising children. Teachers reported deficiencies identified by and from inspection groups, such as a lack of an appropriate approach to work in multi-age groups, the use of digital resources, the formation of digital skills in children, while working with an interactive whiteboard.

When schools meet the proper level of satisfaction of teachers, parents and students in high values, as in this area "Institution management ", the mark is 0.04 points higher. At the schools participating in the Democratic School Project (2005-2006), the level of satisfaction with the educational process, is lower.

## Kindergartens

The overall assessment of the quality of education provided by the **kindergarten** inspector's office is on average of a (Good) grade-3.09. A higher grade for the inspection area "Educational Process", has been achieved: 3.13, compared to the "Institutional Management " area, where the grade is 3.05, as the difference between the two, is 0.08 points.

In the educational process, pedagogical specialists show good skills in organizing and maintaining positive discipline during the school lessons, they show a professional attitude and an individual approach to the children. They also actively work towards development of their skills to learn. Socialization and parenting activities are strongly considered. At kindergartens, an early assessment of the child's personal development and the risk of learning difficulties, is carried out, and some general support is provided. The teachers ensure in their work transparency and objectivity, when tracking down the children's achievements, constantly looking for to identify various ways to encourage them, so that to achieve better results. Interventions, outreach, inclusion, and prevention of drop-out from the education system of children, attending pre-school classes, are effective themselves, as the kindergarten pedagogical teams manage to perform their duties in a lot better manner when intervening than when taking preventive measures only.

More than often the children work in small groups, when performing independent tasks, but do not have clearly defined roles, rights and responsibilities in these group activities. Children's self-esteem, self-assessment and self-improvement skills are not sufficiently developed. Their inability to present the results of practical activities, to express their own opinions and ideas in order to draw conclusions on certain topics, shows that children are not encouraged to actively participate in the educational process. Teachers' efforts to actively involve children in competitions and contests are insufficient. Concerts were sporadic, performances were mostly at the local level, achievements at the regional, national or international level are very little in number. It is not necessary to plan and rarely organize visits to cultural and public institutions and events for educational purposes. For the development of inter-cultural competence in children, teachers rely mainly on the topics of the educational content. These data show the insufficient commitment of the pedagogical specialists to meet the personal needs of the child in the learning process, to ensure the formation of the necessary competence.

In managing urban planning activities, the principals at the kindergartens, are active and ensure good interaction with the parents and the stakeholders, dealing successfully with its leadership role. Collaborative activities were well developed, both at the kindergarten's level and

among the teacher groups and the non-teaching staff. Upgraded to be a real physical environment, the kindergartens implement policies to develop children's civic and social competence. Creating an enabling a user-friendly physical environment is a prerequisite for preventing violence and bullying.

The operational management ensures the implementation of the main functions of the kindergartens. When managing human resources, directors manage to the highest degree of satisfaction to motivate and retain the non-teaching staff, although high scores have been recorded and supported in the professional development of the teaching staff.

The director's control activities do not ensure the effectiveness of the current processes. There is a lack of transparency in the management of the financial resources. Some kindergartens do not apply the system of subsidiary budget, which provides funding only for the didactic means of teaching and partial improvement of the actual physical environment. Not all available opportunities for providing additional funds have been used. The qualifications of teachers are not always focused on the development of their professional skills and competencies, and on the needs of the children. The activities at the kindergarten are conducted only on the territory of the locality. Some kindergartens still do not have a website. These deficits are due to insufficient directors' skills to effectively manage the available resources.

## **School**

Schools achieve higher results in the "Organization Management" verification area compared to the "Educational process" area, although as opposed to a difference of 0.05 points.

The highest marks for the activities towards reaching out, inclusion and prevention of a drop-out from the education system of school students at the age, suitable for the compulsory school education, which is associated with effective interaction between the participants in the educational process and other stakeholders.

The lack of quality assurance in education is highlighted by the inefficiency of the applied activities towards the development of students' personality, at all types of schools. To be taken into consideration is the lack of skills by the school students to work in a team. Schools offering vocational education use the same types and forms of students' assessment, similar the assessment applied at the schools, where general education is provided.

Resistance cannot be taken into account, when assessing the level of development of all types of schools. This result is caused by the lack of skills of some of the principals to develop tailor-

made documents to be applied locally at the particular school – codes of conduct, rules, strategies, programs, plans, mechanisms for interaction, etc., as well as the fact that the school’s team, at some of the cases, is not involved in the development of these documents. In terms of inspecting the school, the principal is not motivated and does not show activity in achieving the goals of the educational institution, which to lead to creating good conditions for the development of managerial skills and leadership competencies among teachers. Some schools do not have functioning students’ self-government structures. There is a low level of initiative performed at the school councils/parliaments, most often associated with the organization of charity events and school holidays.

Due to unsatisfactory ratings from previous inspections, three kindergartens and one school were subjected to the follow-up inspections. Three of the educational institutions received higher education quality ratings, while implementing 50% of the guidelines and recommendations given by the inspection team. Not completed are 19,5%, and 30.5% are partially completed. At one of the kindergartens, the principal was rejected, the educational environment was changed, which also led to an improvement in the quality of education. In the kindergarten assessment again unsatisfactory, as the results of the current inspection are lower than in the previous one, there is only a partial implementation of the unified inspection team recommendation.

### 3 Established violations in the inspected kindergartens and schools

Violations have been identified that hinder the sustainable development of kindergartens, do not ensure the activities for quality management of education, do not sufficiently guarantee the achievement of the goals of the educational institution and the priorities for the development of preschool and school education. The requirements of Art. 28, para. 1, item 2; Art. 53, para. 3, item 2; Art. 175; Art. 263, para. 1, item 1, item 7, item 8, item 11, item 14 of the Preschool and School Education Act. Art. 15, para. 1 and para. 2; Art. 29, para. 3, item 2; Art. 35, para. 2; Art. 39, para. 1 and para. 2 of Directive №5, issued on 03.06.2016 on preschool education and Art. 7, para. 2 of the Directive on Inclusive Education.

The inspected schools with violations have not developed a development strategy, an action plan with fundings, there is no report on the implementation of the strategy. At several kindergartens and schools the pedagogical council has not adopted measures to improve the quality of education, and no program for prevention of early leaving the education system has been developed. The program system at kindergartens with violations does not take into account the specifics of the kindergarten and the specifics of groups of children. The principle of autonomy at some of the inspected kindergartens and schools has also not been observed. At several educational institutions the Rules of Procedure have not been developed, at others these have not been updated, and the activities listed on them, have not been specified. The content of the children's portfolio has not been determined for several of the kindergartens. The conditions and the order for the cooperation and the interaction between the parents and the kindergarten's team have not been determined. No model has been developed for working with families and children in the transition period of adaptation from the family environment to the kindergarten.

The lack of a code of ethics for the kindergarten/school community affects the development of the institutional culture and the creation of favorable conditions at the kindergarten/school.

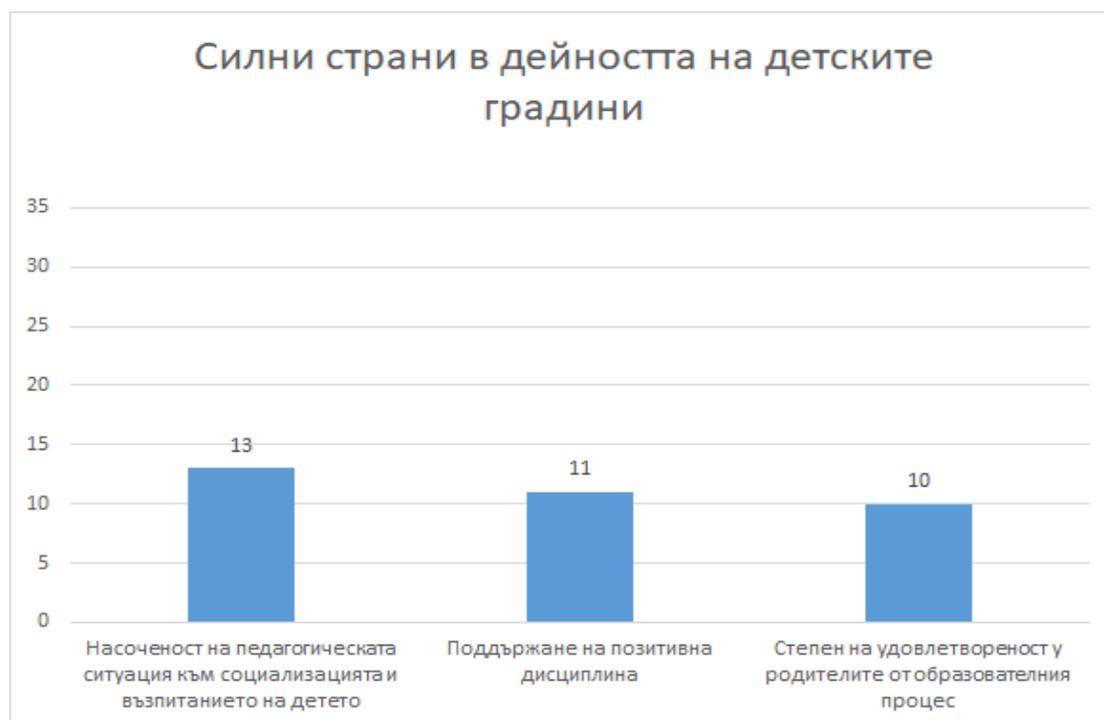
Negatively affect the development of children and school students reflect the identified violations, about the places of organization of preschool education, and the whole day organization of the school- day: two schools do not provide the students with lunch, and the school with the whole- day organization of preschool education is not insured for upbringing, socialization, and training of children within the 12 astronomical hours per day. Disorders related to the provision of general and additional support in accordance with the individual educational needs of each child lead to low efficiency of the interaction for personal development of the children / students, no coordinator of the activities has been appointed.

The regional education departments in the areas where the inspected institutions have committed violations have been notified with reports in order to take appropriate measures.

#### 4. Strengths and recommendations for improving the performance of the inspected kindergartens and schools

The strengths in the activities of kindergartens are presented in *Figure 3*.

In monitoring both pedagogical situations and school lessons, the inspectors have established the maintenance of positive discipline, which is emerging as a common positive side in the work of the kindergartens and the schools. Educational and socializing activities in preschool education are also predominantly strengths in the pedagogical situations.



*Figure 3*

The strengths of the schools are shown in *Figure 4*.

Schools are achieving high results in meeting the national target for reducing dropouts and early school leaving, with teams focusing on preventive measures. To implement the inclusive education policy, schools are doing well in providing overall support for personal development.



*Figure 4*

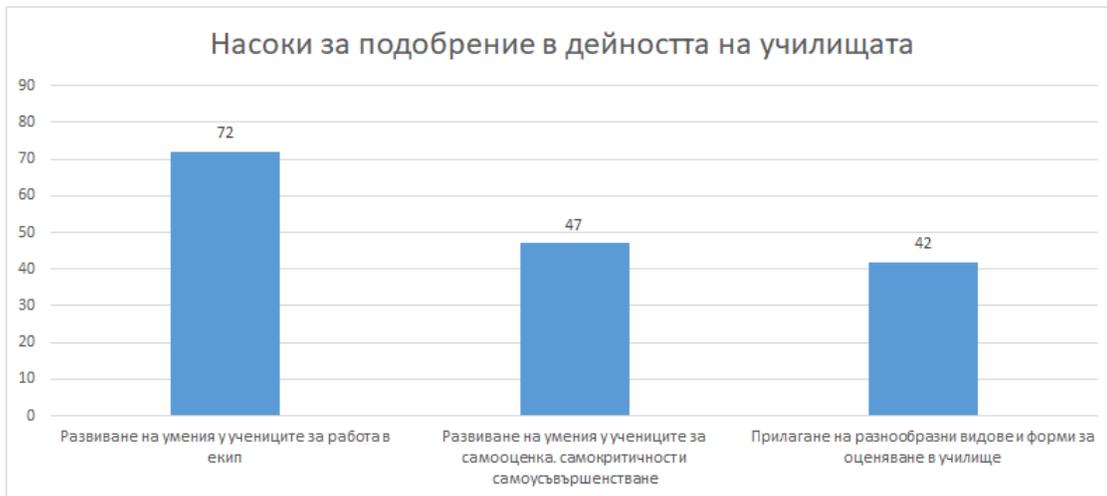
The inspection reports support schools and kindergartens in their efforts to develop and build on strengths assessed as strengths.

Guidelines for improving the activities of kindergartens are presented in *Figure 5*, guidelines for improving schools are presented in *Figure 6*.

Both at kindergartens and schools, the two most common areas for improvement are related to the development of children's / students' skills in teamwork and self-assessment, self-criticism and self-improvement. The director and the teams in the kindergartens do not show initiative to provide additional funds. Teachers do not apply various forms of assessment of students' results.



*Figure 5*



*Figure 6*

Guidelines for improving kindergartens and schools, along with the specific recommended measures, are contained in the inspection reports and are provided to both the directors of the inspected institutions and the heads of the respective Regional Educational Departments, to provide methodological support and to track down the achieved improvements.

## CHAPTER 2



### **Analysis of the implementation of the goals by the Ministry of Education and Science**

The quality of education is a set of characteristics of the educational process that lead to the implementation of the goals and management policies by the Ministry of Education and Science in 2021. The degree of achievement of each goal is measured by the arithmetic mean of the degree of fulfillment of the criteria and indicators for verification, through which the quality of education is assessed.

The components of educational quality that need to be measured and evaluated during the inspection were related to:

- \* the level of knowledge, skills and competencies of students;

\* the degree of development of personal qualities and social competencies;

\* meeting the needs of the society, the parents and the students.

The results of the activity of the kindergartens / schools and the processes that lead to the achievement of the goals are evaluated.

**The degree of implementation of all objectives of the Ministry of Education and Science from Priority 1** “Implementation of a decisive policy aimed at eliminating illiteracy and compulsory education, education in the spirit of patriotism. improving the quality of education, practically oriented to the needs of the labor market, through motivated, trained and supported teachers ”is 74.13% (*Figure 7*).



*Figure 7*

1. The degree of implementation of the objective "Increasing investment in education and guaranteed annual growth of the education budget. Change in the system of delegated budgets from 2018, as funding will not depend only on the number of children and students "is 74%, measured by two criteria and six indicators.

At the schools, the financial resources are managed appropriately and transparently, while at some kindergartens, some gaps have been identified. Information and technological resources are introduced in the overall activity of the schools.

VET schools provide the highest level of additional funds both from national programs, projects and their own revenues. Three of the inspected high schools are working on the Erasmus + Program. At some of the vocational high schools large-scale repairs are being carried out under the Investment Program by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Operational Program "Growing Regions" 2014-2020. Activities are being carried out for the construction of STEM offices, office equipment and re-equipment of classrooms, training laboratories and workshops halls.

There is still not enough activities towards attracting some additional funds at the kindergartens. The goals set in the Development Strategies are partially financed. To a large extent, the financial resources are provided by the respective municipality, but there is no initiative for gathering information, developing, and implementing of projects and national programs. Some kindergartens only implement the "School Fruit" and "School Milk" Schemes. No kindergarten realizes its own revenues under Art. 293, para. 1 of the Law of the Preschool and School Education.

At most of the educational institutions the material base is renewed, modernized, and preserved, funding is provided for modern teaching aids, conditions for equal access to education are created. Partially provided are accessible physical environment, access regime school policy implementation, video surveillance and safe premises for the educational process. At the kindergartens all rooms are safe and well - maintained. In those whose buildings, which are located at a different address from the main building, insufficient measures have been taken to improve the physical environment. Free transportation is provided for traveling school students at vocational high schools. Not all dormitories have created conditions for organizing and conducting self-training, consultations on subjects, individual work and activities of interest.

Most of the criteria and indicators measuring the degree of achievement of the goal are identified in almost the same values, both as strengths and as guidelines for improvement. An interesting phenomenon is observed by the indicator "Additional funds provided for the development of the kindergarten / school". The number of educational institutions in which its level of implementation has been identified as a strength in their activities is comparable to the number of those at which there is a deficit. The provision of additional funds is a strength at 30% of VET schools, as well as

in 29% of democratically governed schools. However, at 56% of kindergartens there are guidelines for providing additional funds, and at schools without VET education, the strengths and guidelines are equivalent and low in frequency (6.5% each).

School students participate in international and national projects and programs to ensure the quality of vocational education and training. Vocational high schools generate their own income, which modernizes the physical environment and provides modern teaching aids. The activity of the schools participating in the Democratic School Project is also good, but at 14% of them, guidelines are given for providing more additional funds, while only at 3.33% of the vocational high schools such guidelines are given.

Similar results are found with regard to transparent budget management - at 11% of the institutions it is a strength, and at 14% of them guidelines are given for improving the management of financial resources. Proper management of the financial resources is predominantly a strength. Improving the physical environment (safety, functionality, and modernization) is presented in most cases as a direction rather than a strength. The other indicators tracking down the implementation of the goal are of a low frequency, manifesting themselves both as a strength and as a direction for improvement.

**2. The degree of implementation of the goal "Motivated, trained and supported teachers by investing in their development and qualification" is 76%, measured by six indicators.**

Teachers demonstrate presentation skills, require the children / the school students to comply with the norms of the Bulgarian Literary Language and the use the necessary terminology. They take into account the pace of work and the activities in the pedagogical situation / lesson with the individual abilities of the children / school students, but not all of them check the fulfillment of the set tasks and the assimilation of the educational content. A small number of teachers apply a differentiated approach when working with children /school students. The reason is that the focus of the qualification of the pedagogical specialists is not focused on the development of their professional skills and competencies for monitoring the progress of children / students. At the kindergartens, the pedagogical specialists participate mainly in qualification forms organized by the municipality or the Regional Department of Education. At the schools, the qualification of

pedagogical specialists is aimed mainly at acquiring skills for working in an electronic environment and with an electronic school diary. The competencies acquired from the qualification activities are not always applied in the direct work of the teachers, and there is a lack of systematics in the exchange of experience and good practices. In the previous and current school year, priority is given to the forms of internal institutional qualification, which are not always effective and there is no systematic reporting on its implementation. Lack of leadership, initiative and teamwork was also reported. Pedagogical specialists organize and conduct joint school initiatives related to calendar holidays, but do not sufficiently share models for successful interaction in the educational process. In most of the inspected educational institutions, mentoring takes place as an informal process. Only one school has a system of criteria for self-assessment, approaches, and actions to motivate pedagogical specialists. Vocational training teachers apply to a greater extent a variety of teaching methods, approaches, techniques, and technologies. At most of the inspected schools, teachers do not use different types and forms of assessment. Most often, at the end of the class lesson, they provide feedback on the work of the class or on the actively participating students. There is an application of traditional ways to establish learning outcomes, but not motivating school students to eliminate the identified gaps.

In the implementation of the goal "Motivated, prepared and supported teachers by investing in their professional development and qualification" the best degree of implementation is the indicator "Teacher demonstrates professional behavior", defined as a strength at 12% of the educational institutions. No guidelines for improvement are given on the same indicator. The application of various types and forms of assessment at the school is not defined as a strength at any of the educational institutions, but at 33% of them, some guidelines for improvement are given. The level of implementation of the indicator "Orientation of the qualification of the pedagogical specialists to the development of their professional skills and competencies, and to the personal progress of the children / school students" is not identified as a strength at any kindergarten or school, and at 8% of the institutions there are given some guidelines on improving the activities related to the qualification of the pedagogical specialists. In some cases, there is a tendency for the selection of trainings by the management of the educational institution on topics that do not meet the needs of pedagogical specialists, or the conduct of qualification forms does not satisfy the teachers themselves. The other indicators to this end - "Teamwork at the kindergarten / school", "Leadership in the school community / kindergarten community" and "Attracting, motivating and retaining

pedagogical specialists at the kindergarten / school" are low in frequency as strengths. and as guidelines for improvement.

These data show that the main priorities in the national policy for teacher qualification, as a guarantee for increasing their authority and social status, and improving their competencies according to their professional profile, personal choice, or strategy for the development of a kindergarten and school, are not sufficiently fulfilled.

**3. The level of implementation of the objective "Implementation of decisive measures for full coverage of all children subject to education and prevention of dropping out of the education system" is 73%, measured by 16 indicators.**

The main reasons for dropping out of the education system are: economic migration, early marriages, lack of funds for education in socially disadvantaged families, employment of students to provide funds in the family. Most of the educational institutions have developed a Program for Prevention of Early School Dropout and a Program for Equal Opportunities and for Inclusion of Students from Vulnerable Groups with the respective plans. Teachers participate in the coverage teams of the Mechanism for Joint Work by the institutions for coverage and inclusion in the educational system of children and students of compulsory preschool and school age, as well as in teams formed in the institutions. Kindergartens and schools cooperate with local institutions, incl. and with the non-governmental sector. Distance learning in an electronic environment reduces the effect of the results achieved in limiting dropouts from the education system. Purposeful efforts are made to ensure positive discipline at pedagogical situations / lessons, but in e-learning students do not always show behavioral commitment - do not turn on microphones and cameras, and some of them join after class starts, and leave before its end. Children / students are worked with for the observance of the jointly agreed rules, for the application of the community codes of ethics, for the formation and development of conflict management skills. School students know the procedures for resolving conflict situations. Activities to counteract bullying and violence are periodically conducted, and students are worked on in class. Prevention of violence and overcoming problematic behavior, career guidance, activities of interest contribute to reducing the influence of risk factors. Pedagogical teams are actively supported by an educational mediator / psychologist / social worker. Most of the institutions have a system of shifts to maintain a safe environment. Teachers help children adapt to the educational environment at the kindergarten. They are

implementing a number of initiatives to support the transition to school. Most schools provide a smooth transition at different stages. Children / school students are stimulated with material and moral rewards. Schools provide scholarships for achieving better educational outcomes, but not for gifted students. At vocational high schools, students predominantly participate in competitions in professions, less often - in general education subjects. The work for socialization and education has higher values of performance at kindergartens. At vocational high schools, the activities are primarily focused on creating a culture at the workplace and compliance with safety rules. Students acquire intercultural competencies most often through topics from the curriculum, activities for learning the language and culture of other peoples and ethnic groups, less often through student exchanges on international projects. Teachers do not always work on building skills in children / school students to protect and maintain a sustainable environment and a healthy lifestyle. Visits to cultural, public institutions and events for educational purposes are insufficiently planned and organized in terms of numbers of those, and the reason is not always the global factor – the COVID-19 pandemic. The application of an individualized approach is reported with higher values of performance at the kindergartens. At the kindergartens, not all pedagogical specialists are familiar with the requirements of the Directive on Inclusive Education. At some of them there is no designated coordinator of activities for to provide support for some personal development. At some kindergartens, misunderstandings are reported, and the risk of learning difficulties is not assessed. Modules for children for whom Bulgarian language is not their mother tongue, or who do not speak Bulgarian well, are organized less often. Teachers do not always use the forms of additional pedagogical interaction to upgrade children's knowledge and skills and to develop their interests and talents. The measures implemented at the schools are mainly aimed at reducing social inequalities (providing transport, providing laptops for online learning, paying for students' internet connections, providing scholarships, buying textbooks, etc.), but not always have an effect. At most of the schools the all-day organization of the school day is organized. Activities for additional training at some school subjects formed under the project "Support for Success" are being implemented and consultations are being held for students with learning difficulties. The inspected institutions work mainly with children / school students with special educational needs, they do not implement targeted activities for those with outstanding gifts. Additional support is provided by specialists from the relevant Regional Centers for Support of the Inclusive Education Process or the Centers for Support of Personal Development, less often at the educational institutions are appointed from the budget speech therapist, psychologist, resource teacher. Parents often reject the

provided option of support. Didactic resources and a working environment according to the child / student support plan, as well as a specialized supportive environment are insufficiently provided. Some pedagogical teams find it difficult to identify measures to compensate for the effect of dropping out, but most institutions offer different forms of training. Not everywhere there is the increased commitment of parents to a regular school attendance by their children. Vocational high schools have experience in validating learning outcomes, but no interest has been reported at the time of the inspection.

The criteria and indicators used to monitor the achievement of the goal are a strong point at a significant number of educational institutions (56% of these), only in isolated cases some of them have been identified as a direction for improvement. The strengths related to the implemented measures on the scope of children and school students, subject to education and prevention of dropping out of the educational system relate to all types of the inspected educational institutions. Maintaining positive discipline is a strength in 29% of them, with a higher frequency at schools (34%) than at kindergartens (28%). In a large number of the kindergartens and schools, the children and the school students demonstrate behavioral commitment and self-discipline in pedagogical situations and lessons. Targeted actions have been established to ensure a positive climate. The results of the actions for overcoming the absences of children and school students for disrespectful reasons are monitored. Good implementation of the target is also observed in terms of the effectiveness of prevention measures (in 22% of all inspected educational institutions, which is predominant at the schools). Other aspects of their activities - the interaction between the participants in the educational process to reduce dropouts, providing general and additional support to children and school students - also show effectiveness in preventing dropouts from the education system.

These strengths are evidence of the effectiveness of integrated policy and the use of various tools to address the problem of coverage and early school leaving of children and pupils at compulsory pre-school and school age. Keeping children and students in the education system is a priority for the kindergarten and school teams, most of which focus on preventive measures.

**4. The level of implementation of the goal "Achieving a level of functional literacy that will provide opportunities for personal and social development and help to achieve smart, inclusive and sustainable economic growth" is 68%, measured by 3 criteria and 10 indicators.**

The effectiveness of the interaction in the learning process and the interaction for the personal development of the children / school students is reported with similar values at all educational institutions.

Teachers do not make enough effort and do not apply appropriate techniques to motivate children / school students to take an active part in the learning process. They do not use the previous experience and knowledge of the children / school students enough to acquire the new knowledge. Teachers do not sufficiently combine teaching methods and approaches to ensure the achievement of expected results and the formation of key competencies. They use problematic topic placement, presentation, video and text material, but do not always manage to attract the attention and interest of the children / school students. Training through instructions, explanations, presentation of facts, definitions and evidence in the form of a face-to-face conversation predominates. The exposition is presented in a way that implies a mechanical reproduction of the new knowledge. Homework is mainly used to consolidate the acquired knowledge. Exercises and tasks graded by difficulty are not applied, with which the children / students can improve their skills for independent action. The realized connections between the educational areas / school subjects are not sufficiently supported by examples of the practical applicability of the knowledge. No high efforts are made to develop skills for analyzing and systematizing information. In the majority of the observed pedagogical situations / school lessons, the children / school students do not freely express their own ideas and opinions and are not given the opportunity to present the results of their work. In the majority of the observed pedagogical situations / lessons of the children / students there is no opportunity for self-assessment after completing a given task, for presenting and accepting a different point of view and for making a decision. Insufficient work is being done to develop skills for effective group communication and to build skills for defending one's own position, for providing open feedback and constructive criticism. The pace of work does not always correspond to group dynamics.

A differentiated approach is applied when working with children / students with SEN, but not with those who do better and those with outstanding gifts. In not a small part of the inspected kindergartens, pedagogical situations have been observed in which an environment for learning through play is not provided, in accordance with the age peculiarities of the children. In the learning process, teachers still do not use ICT properly, they rarely encourage children / students to use ICT for educational purposes.

To evaluate students' results, teachers use oral and written tests, project work and practical tasks, less often they grade a group task. During the inspections, students are rarely evaluated, incl. and in vocational training, formative assessment is even less common. Teachers do not give systematic feedback to students on the results achieved in class. They summarize the overall work of the class. They seek feedback in the form of open-cloze questions. Parents are informed about the schedule for conducting tests and class work. By using electronic class diaries, they receive timely information about the student's achievements. At 10 of the schools, a school external evaluation was conducted in the relation to Art. 6, para. 2, item 2 and para. 3, item 3 of the Directive №11 for evaluation of the learning outcomes of the school students. At three of the schools the Regional Department of Education has conducted a unified measurement of the entry level in Bulgarian Language and Literature with students from 10th and 12th grades and in Mathematics at the 10th grade to determine measures to address gaps in relation to the National External Assessment and the State Matriculation Exams.

Teachers apply transparency in monitoring the progress of the children / school students. At the kindergartens, most often the tracking down process of the acquired competencies with the children in all educational areas, is carried out at the beginning and at the end of school year, on the model of cognitive books. Parents receive information about the results of their children's style of learning and achieved progress, mainly in the reception and transfer of the children and at the parent-teacher meetings. The level of acquisition of competencies is not always analyzed. At only of a few schools, the teachers do work together to identify deficits and take appropriate actions to address them. At only one school there is the student's portfolio used to track down the progress.

School students from vocational high schools actively and fully participate mainly in classes of teaching and production practice, where their achievements are measured by developed tests / worksheets / individual / group tasks, which have the criteria and indicators for forming the assessment. The results of the students from the state exam for acquiring professional qualification are higher in comparison with the state exams in general education subjects.

The social and civic competencies of the children / school students are developed mainly through their inclusion in the celebration of anniversaries and holidays of the city, and the municipality, which is insufficient for the full development of the potential for personal and social development.

At the inspected kindergartens, the children do not participate and do not have achievements in competitions and contests at regional, national or international level. Not all schools have the active

participation of students in competitions and Olympiads. Students participate in competitions mainly in the profession's studies, less often participate in competitions, Olympiads and competitions at regional, national and international levels.

With predominantly identified guidelines for improvement are the indicators that monitor the implementation of this goal. The biggest deficit was found in the activities that develop skills in children and school students for teamwork, which at 101 of the inspected kindergartens and schools, or 78% of them, need improvement. The highest frequency of guidelines for improving the teamwork of students is observed at the schools with VET, and at schools with good management practices. After them, with a difference of about 10%, are the kindergartens, and with the lowest frequency are schools without VET.

Kindergartens and schools do not pay enough attention to the development of teamwork skills, which are part of social skills and are key to ensuring interaction and cooperation in the modern educational environment. The reason for this is the preference by the teachers for traditional and uniform methods and approaches of teaching - at 45 of the kindergartens and schools inspected, there is a deficit in this activity. In some cases, the reason is the lack of a suitable physical environment for a teamwork to be applied. This problem is also observed at the schools that participated in the Democratic School Project.

The same conclusions follow for the development of skills in children and school students for self-esteem, self-criticism, and self-improvement. At 66 of the kindergartens and schools, or 51% of them, it is necessary to update the technologies for creating skills for critical thinking, taking responsibility, decision making, self-assessment, reflection, etc.

Because of these deficits there are the results of the external evaluations, Olympiads, competitions and more. At most of the schools that participated in the Democratic School Project (43% out of them), the results of the external evaluations, Olympiads, competitions, etc. are listed as a strength, and at other educational institutions these are presented as guidelines, with the highest frequency at kindergartens (41% of them). A total of 22% of the kindergartens and schools have been given guidelines for improving these results.

At 23.3% of the schools with VET the students show low level of achievements in the State Matriculation Exams, which is given as a direction for improvement. This is a consequence of

insufficiently effective monitoring of the level of competencies and the progress of the school students, the lack of a variety of forms of assessment, team discussion and identification of measures to improve learning outcomes. The data outlining the level of functional literacy and skills development in the field of entrepreneurship, information technology and active citizenship are more negative than positive. Most schools and kindergartens do not develop important skills for children and students to live in a modern society and to achieve smart, inclusive and sustainable economic growth - digital skills, self-esteem skills, self-criticism and self-improvement, and especially skills for teamwork.

**4. The level of implementation of the goal "More patriotism in school" is 81%, measured by one criterion and one indicator.**

The pedagogical teams at the kindergartens and the schools carry out activities for educating children and students in patriotism, but the COVID-19 pandemic situation has an adverse effect on the implementation of this goal.

National values and traditions are mostly built through their integration in educational areas / school subjects and through activities at the internal, local and municipal levels. Visiting museums, galleries, historical sites, landmarks is not used enough to conduct the educational process. Activities related to youth leadership are occasionally carried out at schools and vocational high schools. In most of the inspected institutions, components with educational impact are included in the training. In smaller municipalities, children and school students are actively involved in celebrating municipal celebrations and holidays related to national and historical events. Some educational institutions publish yearbooks, school newspapers, which are also available in electronic format. Kindergarten / school policy has been developed for the development of social and civic competencies, but the events in the field of sports, health and environmental protection, human rights, tolerance, equality, formation of democratic values are not enough in number. To this end, there is no clearly defined high level of implementation or aspects of improvement in the activities of the educational institutions.

6. The degree of implementation of the goal "Development of vocational education in partnership with business through the active introduction of the dual system - learning by doing. Career guidance of students through stable partnerships with parents, universities and business" is 77%, measured by six indicators.

At all inspected vocational high schools the internship is organized and for a large part of the students (from 70 to 100% out of them) it is conducted in a real working environment. The requirements by the Directive №1 issued on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2015, on the terms and conditions for conducting training through work (dual system of training) were observed. Students are stimulated by employers with financial resources. The partner companies also offer work to students during the summer holidays. In most of the high schools the teaching practice is conducted in well-furnished and modernly equipped classrooms, workshops, laboratories, funded by the Project "Support for the dual form of education". Vocational training teachers use more appropriate and diverse teaching methods, approaches, techniques, and technologies than general education teachers. This is even more true during the distance learning e-learning, where general education teachers do not use the capabilities of e-platforms. At almost all vocational high schools there are very good partnerships with stakeholders - cultural institutes, NGOs, other schools, universities, but mostly with companies that provide career guidance and training and production practices in real jobs situations, as well as and the dual system training. Parents are more likely to respond to invitations to one-on-one conversations and engage in class-level initiatives. Most often they help to improve the environment, organize school celebrations and less often in activities related to the educational process.

As a strength in the activities of the VET schools, is the effective interaction with stakeholders to provide training in real jobs situations, established at more than half of the inspected schools.

The state policy on vocational education and training as a priority leads to expanding the scope of vocational education and training, striving to reduce the share of early school leavers and improving relations with employers to improve the quality of education.

**7. The level of implementation of the objective "Improving skills in the field of entrepreneurship, information technology and active citizenship" is 70%,** measured by six indicators.

The reported skills of the children / school students show a low level of application of learning by making and working on projects, which are the basis for the formation and the improvement of skills in the field of entrepreneurship. The practical tasks are general, tailored to the age, but not to the individual abilities of the students. In the learning process, teachers still do not use ICT properly, they rarely encourage the children / school students to use ICT for educational purposes. The use of digital resources is reduced to a short presentation of a finished educational product. To

an even lesser extent, children / school students are given the opportunity to apply and develop some digital skills. Distance learning does not use the capabilities of electronic platforms to the full. Tasks for teamwork are set mainly in project activities and extremely rarely in school lessons. The work for the formation of an active civil position is represented mainly in the classroom and in extracurricular activities but is not fully developed in the activities of the educational institutions. To this end, there is no clear high level of implementation or aspects of improvement in the activities of the inspected educational institutions.

**8. The degree of fulfillment of the goal “More sports in school for more health and life without aggression. Encouraging physical activity and the systematic practice of physical exercises and sports for a healthy lifestyle, physical and spiritual development and a life without violence” is 74%, measured by four indicators.**

Teachers and other pedagogical specialists work with children /school students to form and develop skills for conflict management and tolerance. Periodically during the school year, some events are held to counteract harassment and violence. We work for the development of skills for protection and maintenance of a sustainable environment, for the development of social and civic competencies, mainly in the activities of interest and in class.

Activities related to healthy lifestyles and ecology, human rights, tolerance, equality, and democratic values are not carried out in all types of inspected institutions. Events in the field of sports, tourism and cultural events are insufficient in number. The recommendations in the inspection reports related to the implementation of the goal, are aimed mainly at securing and modernizing the school yard with appropriate facilities for playing games and practice sports at the kindergartens. At some schools, school students still do not have access to a health office and health care, no free meals are organized, and no access to a library or to designated areas for reading, and recreation areas. Some schools still do lack a gym and sports grounds, and most of them need repairs and some modern equipment. To this end, there is no clear high level of implementation or aspects of improvement in the activities of the educational institutions.

### **Chapter 3**



## **Assessment of the impact of the inspection**

### 1.1. Cooperation with the Regional Education Departments

In implementation of Priority 3. "Cooperation and partnership for higher quality" and the Specific Objective 3.1. "Expanding the partnership with the educational institutions of the pre-school and school education system and the stakeholders" of the Annual Action Plan of the National Inspectorate of Education has developed and is implementing a **Mechanism for informing the regional education departments (RED)** about the results of inspections.

During the school year 2020/2021, kindergartens and schools in 24 administrative-territorial districts were inspected. Pursuant to Art. 274, para. 5, item 3 of the Preschool and School Education Act and Art. 6, para. 3, item 17 of the Regulations on the structure and functions of the National

Inspectorate of Education, the director of the NIE has sent to the heads of the respective Regional Departments of Education the reports from the inspections. Feedback was requested for the provided methodological support for the implementation of the guidelines and recommendations from the inspections of the indicated kindergartens / schools.

#### 1.2. Feedback for methodological support provided by the RED

According to Art. 3 para. 2, item 8 of the Regulations on the Structure and Functions of the Regional Departments of Education the head of the Regional Department of Education organizes methodological support of the directors of the educational institutions in the system of the preschool and school education, on the territory of the respective district. .

Feedback was provided by notification letters to the Director of NIE from the heads of 10 (out of 24) Regional Departments of Education, in whose administrative-territorial area inspections were carried out, as follows: the towns of Blagoevgrad, Dobrich, Kardzhali, Pernik, Pleven, Sliven, Sofia, Sofia region, Stara Zagora, and Shumen. Information on methodological support was not received from the heads of the Regional Departments of Education, as follows: the towns of Burgas, Veliko Tarnovo, Vratsa, Gabrovo, Kyustendil, Lovech, Pazardzhik, Plovdiv, Razgrad, Ruse, Smolyan, Targovishte, Haskovo, Yambol.

Among the directors of the inspected kindergartens and schools, a survey was conducted by the NIE, according to which 18 educational institutions (44% out of them) received methodological support from the Regional Department of Education for the implementation of the guidelines of the inspection. Most of the educational institutions (56% of them) have not yet received one.

According to the data from the two sources of feedback, the following activities have been undertaken for the implementation of methodological support from the Regional Departments of Education:

- the head of the respective RED issued three orders for the implementation of mandatory prescriptions of the directors of the inspected kindergartens and schools with established violations.
- the head of RED-Pernik has informed the mayors of the municipalities in their capacity as employers of the directors of the inspected kindergartens about the results of the inspection and about the established violations.

- a further qualification activity for principals and teachers was organized and conducted as part of the methodological support provided by RED Sofia-region.

- meetings were held among experts from the RED and directors of the inspected kindergartens and schools, in four administrative districts, to identify measures and provide methodological support.

- individual methodological support was provided to directors from five administrative districts.

- Experts from a regional department of education visited classes and gave guidelines for the preparation and conduct of classes in primary and lower secondary school, as well as for improving educational outcomes.

The methodological support will be included in the annual plan of activities by three Regional Departments of Education for the next school year, these will include workshops, trainings, thematic tests and other activities related to the development of students' teamwork skills, to be used by the teachers, various types and forms for the students' assessment and self-assessment, to increase students' motivation to learn, to improve the interaction of the school with the school students and the parents, to conduct classes via distance learning in an electronic environment and the use of electronic resources, both from teachers and students, to promote good practices. The annual plan for the academic year 2021/2022 will include a thematic review of the implementation of the recommendations of the experts by the RED in the implementation of the educational process.

### 1.3. Changes occurred after an inspection took place

An anonymous survey was conducted with all directors of the inspected kindergartens and schools, regarding the quality of the inspection and the changes that have occurred in the activities of the educational institution headed by them, after the inspection took place. Directors are not active in providing any feedback surveys on the effect of inspections. Only 41 surveys were completed (31.54%).

*Figure 8* illustrates the percentage distribution of the level of satisfaction with the received assessment of the quality of education. Satisfied with the received assessment of the quality of the provided education are 29 principals, 12 are not.



*Figure 8*

At 40 educational institutions the received assessment of the quality of education by areas and criteria has been discussed with the teams, only at one it is not done yet. Strengths and guidelines for improving the meetings of the management teams and methodological associations were discussed.

The opinion of the principals on the compliance of the formulated guidelines for improvement with the weaknesses in the activities of the kindergarten / school shows that at 10 educational institutions, the formulated guidelines for improvement correspond to the weaknesses in the educational process and management of the kindergarten / school, these do match, for seven educational institutions those rather do not match.

35 directors have taken concrete actions to implement the guidelines and measures set out in the inspection report, and six have not yet taken any.

The directors have set up an organization to carry out the following activities:

1. The documents published on the website of the educational institutions have been updated.
2. Trainings of the pedagogical specialists are planned.

3. Individual conversations were held with the teachers; control activity was carried out.
4. A plan for the implementation of the guidelines has been prepared, outlining measures for:
  - individual work with each student depending on his / her abilities (work in groups formed on different grounds, role-playing games, presentations, films, discussions, debates, cases).
  - use of interactive and innovative teaching methods to attract and retain students' attention to the learning process for effective learning (cases and situations of the school and the company for practical training, role-playing games to recreate situations in the profession, brainstorming, discussions and debates, project work)
  - support for students coming from united schools and schools with merged classes, to overcome deficits through additional work outside school hours, creation of a student council, student mentor.
5. At some school's binary lessons in the library, excursions, training of the student council for acquiring leadership skills have been conducted.

The pedagogical teams at 17 educational institutions are motivated by the conducted inspections. Individual work with each student has been improved for effective acquisition of knowledge through interactive and innovative teaching methods, for acquiring skills for self-assessment. At 24 educational institutions they still cannot indicate concrete results of the actions taken to implement the recommendations of the inspection.

## **2. Conclusions and recommendations**

### **2.1. Conclusions**

1. The close assessments of the areas for inspection "Educational process" and "Management of the institution" show a balance between conditions, processes, and results in the activities of the kindergartens and schools.
2. Increased investment in education leads to an increase in the quality of education, especially at the vocational high schools, by improving the physical environment by building modern offices, laboratories and workshops halls. The provided financial resource for the introduction of information technology resources in the overall activities of kindergartens and schools contributes to the educational process in the COVID-19 pandemic environment.

Unlike schools, kindergartens do not make sufficient use of Projects and National Programs funding, which would lead to their further development.

3. The principals achieve good results in attracting, motivating, and retaining both the pedagogical specialists and the non-pedagogical staff. The further qualification of the pedagogical specialists is focused mainly on the application of ICT in the educational process, in the conditions of learning in an electronic environment. The qualification activity is not aimed at developing their professional skills and competencies for achieving progress of the children / school students, which is more relevant for the kindergartens.

4. Kindergartens and schools are achieving very good results in tackling the problem of coverage and early school leaving of children and pupils in compulsory pre-school and school age, with a focus on prevention measures. The teams work purposefully to provide a positive environment in educational institutions, to deal with violence and harassment. Social and civic competencies are formed and developed. Schools have good results in the implementation of general and additional support, unlike kindergartens, some of which do not meet the regulatory requirements related to appointing a coordinator of activities to support personal development, conducting modules for children for whom the Bulgarian language is not a mother tongue, or who does not speak Bulgarian well.

5. Appropriate and diverse methods, techniques, teaching technologies, individualized approach are insufficiently used at the kindergartens and the schools. The skills for self-assessment of knowledge and skills, and teamwork are insufficiently developed. Insufficient work is being done to motivate and involve children / school students at kindergartens and VET schools in competitions, contests and Olympiads. The types and forms of assessment of students do not provide effective monitoring of their progress. These processes affect the results of external assessments and the State Matriculation Exams, especially at VET schools. All this leads to lower results in meeting the goal of increasing functional literacy.

6. Active partnership with businesses through the introduction of the dual system of education and the opportunity for most of the school students to conduct their internships in a real work environment leads to the development of vocational education and training.

7. Three out of the four educational institutions that received an unsatisfactory assessment in a previous inspection, have improved their performance. Measures have been taken to overcome the consequences of the violations and the recommendations made.

8. Insufficiently developed skills of some directors to develop strategic and operational documents, lead to lower results in fulfilling the goals of the educational institution.

9. Student self-government is not effective enough.

10. The low activity of the principals in filling in the questionnaires for changes that have occurred after the inspection, shows their insufficient interest in improving the quality of the education they offer as a result of the identified guidelines for improvement.

## **2.2. Recommendations**

### **A. Recommendations reflected in the reports to the teams of the kindergartens / schools for improving the results of their activity:**

1. The teams of the kindergartens to increase their activity in using the opportunities for project and program financing by following the information provided by the Ministry of Education and Science, and the respective Regional Departments of Education.

2. The qualification of the pedagogical specialists at the level of kindergarten / school to be directed to the development of their professional competencies for the realization of the progress of the children / students. The director should monitor the application of the acquired skills in the direct work of the pedagogical specialists, incl. and the appropriate use of ICT for educational purposes.

3. Teachers at kindergartens and schools to use methods, techniques, and technologies of teaching in accordance with the competence approach, individualized approach, various types and forms of assessment to help form competencies in children and school students, and to improve learning outcomes. To actively apply teamwork, to implement activities to improve the skills of self-esteem, self-criticism, and self-improvement, to develop social skills in children and school students.

4. The teams of kindergartens and schools with VET to actively encourage children and students in their participation in Olympiads, competitions, and contests.

5. The teams of the kindergartens to apply effective support for personal development of the children in accordance with the normative requirements.

6. Directors to direct their qualification to the acquisition of skills for developing strategic and operational documents of the educational institution related to the objectives.

7. Principals to create conditions for effective student self-government.

8. To increase the efficiency of the control activity of the director / deputy director for improving the quality of education.

### **B. Recommendations for improving the quality of education in setting national goals and policies**

1. To continue implementing the policy for increasing the investments in education and training, incl. project and program financing, starting with the preparation of the introduction of financing depending on the quality in education (LPSE, art. 284)

2. The qualification of the pedagogical specialists at national, regional, and municipal level to be directed to the development of their professional competencies for achieving real progress of the children / school students. To conduct qualification forms suitable for achieving the goals of pre-school education. To conduct a specialized qualification, with a focus on the management skills of the directors. To monitor the effect of the conducted trainings.

3. Continue applying the policy to reduce the share of early school leavers, focusing on measures to compensate for the negative impact of distance learning in the electronic environment.

4. To continue the policy for development of vocational education by expanding the scope of the dual system of education.

#### Applications:

1. List of inspected kindergartens and schools during the school year 2020/2021 with assessments of the quality of education.

2. Criteria and indicators for inspection applied during the academic year 2020/2021.

3. Mechanism for informing the regional departments of education about the results of the inspections conducted by the National Inspectorate of Education.

