

Section 1: School Profile Characteristics

The following table shows the school profile characteristics of each case study school that participated in the study.

	School Type	Ethos	Demographics	Student enrolment	Number of teachers	Interviews
<b>School 1</b>	Post-primary all girls	Catholic	Urban	Girls 583	39 teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal</li> <li>• Deputy Principal</li> <li>• 2 Teachers (with SEN and EAL role)</li> <li>• 1 Teacher (Career &amp; Guidance Counsellor)</li> <li>• 4 Students with migration background</li> <li>• 3 Parents</li> </ul>
<b>School 2</b>	Post-primary co-educational	Catholic	Urban	Girls 265 Boys 314	50 teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal</li> <li>• Deputy Principal</li> <li>• 2 classroom Teachers</li> <li>• 4 Parents</li> <li>• 5 Students</li> </ul>
<b>School 3</b>	Post-primary co-educational	Interdenominational	Urban	Girls 272 Boys 623	59 teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal</li> <li>• Deputy Principal</li> <li>• Teacher with middle management responsibility</li> <li>• Teacher with migration background</li> <li>• 4 Parents</li> <li>• 5 Students</li> </ul>
<b>School 4</b>	Post-primary co-educational	Interdenominational	Urban	Girls 411 Boys 428	71 teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal &amp; Deputy Principal</li> <li>• 2 Teachers</li> <li>• 3 Parents</li> <li>• 2 Students</li> </ul>
<b>School 5</b>	Post-primary co-educational	Catholic	Rural	Girls Boys	71 teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal &amp; Deputy Principal</li> <li>• 2 Teachers</li> <li>• 4 Parents</li> <li>• 2 Students</li> </ul>

## Section 2: Diversity in school population and Cultural Responsivity

School leaders, teachers and parents acknowledge the increased diversity of students.

*In 2007 as we would have had an intercultural day down in the Gym in the Abbey that's what brought home to bear Oh my God, even in quite a small school there was a massive diversity within the student population (Dsch3SL1).*

*I would say maybe in the last five years, definitely, noticing an increase in the number of students from Asia with Asian backgrounds, right, where before that, it would have been students with backgrounds from Eastern Europe (Dsch1SL1).*

*I think, actually, maybe around the time of the boom and the Celtic Tiger years things changed a lot... So perhaps in the last 10 to 15 years there's been a wider and diverse spread (Dsch1T3).*

*In Ireland, during the Celtic Tiger, we had a lot of people who came to Ireland to work and a lot of them brought their families with them... we also have international students here who come to us as well. And we have exchange students (Dsch2SL1).*

*And because I'm the guidance counsellor, I would go to the primary schools at this time of the year, actually, and talk to the primary schools about the students that are coming to [our school]. And try and do that transition between, say, a sixth class student and a first year, new incoming first year... very quickly, we found that there were students from loads of different nationalities, loads of different cultures, and they might have, again, grown up in Ireland, and, or they might have just come nearly to Ireland (Dsch1T1).*

*when I was a student in here, it would have been one or two students from a different country in the year. Now, it's norm there be more, a lot more (Dsch1T2).*

A Deputy principal also stated that she started noticing the changes in the students' name lists, initially there were one or two names that were different from routine Irish names but later

*As well as those from Eastern Europe, children from India, Pakistan, and, the Middle East, certainly in the last sort of three to five years it's become increasingly and sort of the change in the diversity of the students in the class, [students from] Asian background as well (Dsch1SL2).*

However, in the case of another school, the school leaders mentioned that the major shift came when a Direct Provision Centre opened in the area. The school now receives migrant students throughout the year *'sometimes they come in the middle of the year and sometimes leave in the middle of the year... There is no stability or continuity for the students themselves (DschSL2).*

According to the Deputy principal of that school, in their school, diversity is mainly based on nationalities as there are nearly up to 23 different nationalities represented in the school altogether.

In on student's words:

*I think my school is pretty diverse when it comes to students. We often get like exchange students from other cultures, there's a German exchange at the moment, for example in our year there are always people from different cultures in our school (Dsch2S3).*

While talking about characteristics of diversity, school leaders also emphasised inclusion and mentioned that the only difference that they see is in students' attitude towards learning.

One of the Deputy principals acknowledged that as school leaders they also need to open up and become increasingly cognizant of festivals, norms and traditions of different faiths in their school community as well as of the children coming from non-faith based homes.

*You have to open to the reality that Ireland is changing. And that we have over 160 - 170 different nationalities, ethnic and racial groups, we're a multi faith society now so we are increasingly secularized (Dsch2SL2).*

### **Attending School**

In general, parents and students are satisfied with the school environment, feel valued and students who were interviewed enjoy going to school.

*They [children] are happy to go and I think that the school have a nice feeling of community and there is a sense of ownership (Dsch2P1).*

*they love to go to school, they love their teachers. If we say that, we will tell your teacher that you are not doing this thing, they will do it for the sake of their teacher so I think they love the environment of their school (Dsch4P1).*

*Everybody treats everyone else with kindness (Dsch2S3).*

*I am sure my son enjoys going to school. He has friends and he knows that this is important time in his life (Dsch2P3).*

*I like coming to the school mainly because of my friends, maybe not because of the studying (Dsch2S1).*

*Everyone is respected no one is put down because they speak a different language (Dsch3S1).*

*I think our school is still pretty good when it comes to diversity and helping inclusion and wanting people to feel included (Dsch4S2).*

*the school body is very helpful in every single way and accommodating, figuring out the problems, individual problems and trying to sort them out or what way they can help. And even to the extent that they sometimes have to drop the kids home themselves. So they are cooperative, and they are welcomed over there, and because there are so many nationalities, kids from so many other background go over there so they are more kind of open and more advanced in a way (Dsch4P3).*

### **Value of mother tongue/ home languages**

Though migrant students and their parents (for their children) are keen to acquire fluency in the English language, there is no restriction in the school for them to speak their mother tongue in their free time. Within this, teachers and other students generally show an interest in the migrant students' mother tongue.

*No, I hardly speak any languages other than English in school (Dsch3S5).*

*I'm happy to speak English in school (Dsch1S1).*

*I only speak English in school (Dsch3S4).*

*I've had lots of Spanish exchange students. And whenever I was at lockers before COVID, like that. I heard them speak Spanish and I guess it was perfectly fine with them [school management and*

*teachers]. And sometimes some of the Middle Eastern students speak Arabic and I don't think they would treat me differently if I'd speak Russian (Dsch3S2).*

*Sometimes my teacher asks me how to say different words in Polish and he's like, Oh wow, that's a long word that's hard to say! Last year, I had a presentation about my country and I also taught them how to speak a bit of Polish (Dsch2S1).*

*Many kids are probably curious, what is this, what did you say, because it's (language) very novel (Dsch2S4).*

*I've had like sometimes my friends will be like, how can you say something to me in Finnish. I mean if you're harmless we just like to have a bit of fun (Dsch2S2).*

*Yes, quite often my friends say to me that it is a major advantage to know such a language [Croatian] because not all of the people speak that language in the world (Dsch3S1).*

*I think whenever I had a presentation in one of the subjects and I was talking Croatian, they [teacher and fellow students] said it is amazing to be able to know something like that (Dsch3S1).*

*A friend of mine and I, we usually speak in Afrikaans. Some people think we are speaking about them but we're not. Sometimes people say we're speaking a foreign language, most people know it is quite similar to Dutch (Dsch3S5).*

*Russian is my native language but I've not really been speaking that that much recently, the past few years... But I wouldn't really use it to carry on a conversation in school if there're any Russian people in my school, I guess, it'd be kind of fun to speak that (Dsch3S2).*

Students also shared that they do not speak their native language in their classes because they do not have other students who speak the same language in their class. However, in schools no language is discouraged.

*I don't because there's one students speaking German, one students speaking Russian me speaking Arabic so we don't have another one to talk in the same language (Dsch2S5).*

*I only speak Telugu at home and with my family, then English in school as there are no other students who can speak Telugu (Dsch1S1).*

*We have Spanish exchange students who constantly speak Spanish between themselves and only speak English when teacher asks a question (Dsch2S4).*

*I talk to my Polish friend who knows how to explain things to me that I don't understand in class in Polish which is easier for me, because I'm more fluent in Polish than I am in English. That's because that's my first language (Dsh2S1).*

### **Teachers' interest in students' mother tongue and culture**

Sometimes teachers are interested in migrant students' cultural affiliations and encourage them to talk about their religion, country or showcase their talents.

*My resource class teacher, he told me to do a presentation and show him about my culture and all (Dsch3S4).*

*most of my teachers are actually very interested. I had a teacher he once asked me to make a presentation for him, it was more than that, he firstly asked about culture and then he wanted me to explain a little bit as well. So most of them [teachers] are quite interested (Dsch4S2).*

*At the school concert, as a part of the talent show, I did my dance Bhangra, a Punjabi cultural dance, and everyone was like clapping for me, I think it was the only performance everyone liked last year and this year (Dsch3S4).*

*During religion lesson in Junior Cert. we used to discuss different cultures and religions and I could talk about Croatian (Dsch3S1)*

*For geography where we're studying, like, different types of weathers, climates or something like that. I could talk about it knowing what exactly it was like. Or, like for religion (Dsch1S2).*

*My teacher, she said to me, it's great that you know your home language as well as English because the more languages you know, the easier it is to pick you up [a new language] (Dsch2S4).*

*when we were filling out our CVs, that was one thing that my guidance counsellor said. She said it's an advantage to know more than one language, we had our principal said a couple of times as well, he encourages people to learn more languages (Dsch4S2).*

*I think the teachers do as best as they can and they do a better job than the students. Honestly, I think, for example, when I joined all the teachers were very friendly with me and they're interested in my background and the students weren't as friendly (Dsch2S4).*

*Spanish teacher is obviously very interested in different cultures. That's the only class I've really been asked about it but in other languages or other subjects, not really, no. (Dsch2S2).*

### **Celebration of diverse cultures**

Cultural Days appears to be a common feature in all school calendars.

*We also hold a cultural day, an intercultural day here through our TY. In TY there's a module about multicultural education, also to CSPE, and then we hold our cultural day. Before we had about 28 different nationalities... the pre COVID days, when you could hold your multicultural day in the hall, and all of the students would wear their national costume, and they would hold, bring in food from their country. And then all of the other classes the students would go in at timetabled times during the course of the day, and you know talk to students about the culture and the food and the music (Dsch1SL1).*

*[Before the pandemic, on the cultural day] there was clothing, there was food, there were pastimes, there were the flags, there were a couple of talks by the students in their smaller workshop room areas, and it was a really positive day. But we'll probably do another one (Dsch3SL1).*

*We have international languages day at the end of September every year. The tradition two years ago, would it be mainly European languages, but we're now beginning to see little things like for example Arabic brought in, some of the indigenous languages of West Africa, a few years ago, are brought into that loop as well (Dsch2SL2).*

At the schools, cultural diversity is also acknowledged, supported and celebrated.

*we have a diversity club in the school as well... any projects that students have let's say in geography on their home country that will be displayed in the classroom as well (Dsch2T1).*

Indeed, one of the teachers stated that they celebrate languages week and culture week. Additionally, they have language boards where teachers of international languages make themed displays on monthly basis. *'Though the entire ethos [of the school] is built on Christian values... it's nondenominational so the religion teachers will teach about a diverse range of religions. So, it kind of includes everyone'* (Dsch2T1).

A Deputy principal also related the celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising when students in the school read parts of the Proclamation of Independence for Ireland in fifteen different languages (English, Irish, Arabic, Swahili, Portuguese, Spanish, French, German, Hindi, Urdu, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Ukrainian and three main Nigerian languages). *It was absolutely incredible. And it was all under the guise of the proclamation of Irish independence, the Irish nation, the Irish flag, but beautifully, representing the new Ireland, and then that's a standout moment of inclusivity* (Dsch2SL2).

*We have an intercultural day not this year but, every year we have a day where every culture in the school [students] showcase their culture, they share their dress, traditions and food. Every year I have this experience except this year with pandemic* (Dsch1S1).

*I can remember, we do yearly, before COVID obviously, we'll do a Food Fair festival where you'd have all different cuisines and cultures and then you would go to each table and there you know explain a bit about the food and about the culture* (Dsch4S2).

*if you walk through our school to be sure there's some poster like, from different cultures* (Dsch1S2).

A migrant parent also stated the following:

*The Irish people have changed. They have become more accommodating. [At school] They have defined different days for the different cultures to celebrate their things. For example, for Hindus, they have the Diwali day and for Muslims they have the Eid day, so they are becoming more accommodating as compared to past years because there were not so many immigrants. At that time, we are talking about 20 years ago* (Dsch4P1).

### **Influence of the dominant Irish culture**

Migrant students generally admired the Irish culture for being simple where they can easily adjust but some shared that they feel attached to their native culture.

*The truth is I've been here since I was three years old so mostly Irish culture [I feel attached to]. I can understand that too* (Dsch2S3).

*I kind of feel double, both [Irish and Pakistani] at the same time it's kind of hard sometimes but they're different. They're very different cultures and different parts of me are in different cultures* (Dsch4S2).

*I'm gonna say Poland probably does because most of my family lives there, and whenever it's summer I go there my family, my grandma, my dad, my grandparents and It's fun. I'm really attached. Now it's just my childhood memories from the country* (Dsch2S1).

*I still feel very attached to my home culture* (Dsch2S4).

*The thing is that we are trying to give the knowledge of what we know as a Muslim, but the culture here is, as we know that it's not a Muslim country. So they have their own values... that is a challenge for*

*us, and the Muslim parents ... as a Muslim parent, we have to teach them what are our values, and sometimes it becomes difficult especially for girls (Dsh4P3).*

However, *teachers at school they encourage students, if they want to continue a practice that is their religious value, they encourage them (Dsch4P1).*

Some migrant parents also expressed their attachment to their home cultures as follows:

*He will not lose his culture and heritage here in Ireland, he has the support of family and friends. The most important thing is our religion Islam there is no other feature in Syrian culture more important. He can learn positive things from Irish culture (Dsch3P2).*

*I am with my children so I don't think they will forget their culture. Our culture is totally different (Dsch3P3).*

### **Discrimination**

Some students and parents reported that a few students show discriminatory attitude towards migration background and refugee students. Nonetheless, it is a small group of students and they only intend to show off.

*It is not nasty or on purpose but it's done to show off. They do it to be popular, everyone should be friends with (Dsch3S5).*

*I would say there might be a few people who would say that [speak negatively], but I don't really speak to those types of people (Dsch3S2).*

*It's not really that many (awkward sides of school) I guess it's dealing with the bad apples of the school. Generally people who don't like the concept of learning, dealing with those type of people. It's not fun, that's bad to deal with those people anyway (Dsch3S2).*

*Not the teachers, some of the students say a lot of derogatory terms, I don't feel okay with what they're saying but I don't wanna cause a scene in class so keep it to myself. Some students speak about people of colour. It's not myself but I have a friend who goes through the same thing (Dsch3S5).*

*we would have students who are, we have a Chinese teacher in our school they would be mocking her accent or you'd have students who like mocking Indian or Pakistani students, or even Arabs. A lot of them, like if someone spoke Arabic in front of them and be like, oh, you know there are terrorists or something like that, but it's very small minority like over my four years, it'd be two or three incidents (Dsch4S2).*

A parent also complained about her daughter and her friend being ignored in the class by the teachers and whenever they speak, other students always make faces *'they feel like racially targeted because they are black (Dsch3P4).*

Where some students are unfriendly, some teachers are reported to be indifferent.

*I every day check up after she comes back from school how her day has been but she says teachers are not interested to know more about her or what her interests are or what are her hobbies or anything like that. So I don't think maybe much value's put into her, knowing the skills that she possesses (Dsch3P4).*

Moreover, the same parent shared her apprehension that some students have negative perceptions of the African students. They believe *'if a child is from Africa she is dumb; she is not smart enough; you see, that is why some kids become withdrawn'* (Dsch3P4).

Some teachers and school leaders also admitted that migrant students are not very well integrated into the school despite their efforts to be an inclusive school.

*This was an area where we felt with the majority of students coming from migrant backgrounds over the last two years its quite visible that they are quite isolated that they are not actually integrated into the main school community and they keep to themselves and they pall around with each other rather than mixing with the main body of the students* (Dsch3SL2).

One other teacher maintained that some students naturally get along well and adjust to the school environment readily while others take longer so is the case with migrant students, however, *'there is separation, for it is visible sometimes there're different groups going around'* (Dsch3T1).

A teacher who teaches religion also stated:

*I'm coming from the religion teacher background side of it so I would say religion would play a big difference, and their culture. The Irish culture mixing with the other cultures, they sometimes, they might clash a little especially as teenagers* (Dsch1T2).

### Section 3: Curriculum, teaching and cultural diversity

The school leaders and teachers appreciated a few changes that are made in the curriculum, especially in Junior Certificate, to make it inclusive and culturally responsive.

*You know, the new Junior cert curriculum is trying to be more diverse, generally, and is trying to celebrate the individual, and how the individuals can use their skills and abilities and their strengths and their value system to help them in their learning* (Dsch1T1).

*If you look at Junior Cycle CSPE, SPHE, you do have exemptions in the teaching, for example, relationships sexuality education to be cognizant of cultural differences, religious beliefs of students from ethnic and racial backgrounds* (Dsch2SL2).

Several amendments are made, for example, in the history curriculum. The new curriculum does not just have Irish history but also the history of countries such as the United States.

*You also have colonialism and de-colonialisation of European powers, you have the impact on the indigenous populations, you also then have a 20th century internationalism as well. So, they are beginning to look at that* (Dsch2SL2).

*Although there is work to be done but the department [of Education] in fairness to them, they are beginning to look at that'* (Dsch2SL2).

A teacher also suggested some concrete changes that can be made in the history curriculum.

*to include history of other countries, we would focus a lot on Europe and America, or maybe go into Asia, go into Chinese history, go into general history of Japan, India, all of those areas; Russia we focus a lot on Europe and America* (Dsch1T2).

A principal also pointed out that the change in the religious education curriculum is introduced in response to diversity with regards to faiths represented in the Irish society and schools *'the religion that*



*is taught in the classroom at religion time is religions of the world. It's not the Catholic religion' any more (Dsch2SL1).*

*I think there is a change there is a shift there could be more ... we would be a Catholic based school. And now, you'd see, we do celebrate the Christian holidays, for we in class now talk and teach about the other religious beliefs and the other celebrations and festivals that they'd have, so it is changing (Dsch1T2).*

*Religion curriculum has been adapted over the years that is now religious education so is the religious instruction and definitely experiences and norms. Religious norms for those particular religions would be included in the curriculum but on the whole, I have to say I don't feel that the curriculum addresses the diverse culture of these students (Dsch3SL2).*

Teachers and school leaders also expressed mixed feelings regarding the incorporation of cultural responsiveness in some subject curricula.

*Maybe home economics and history (Dsch1T3).*

*But maths curriculum I don't know if that can be adapted for every different background. We teach them all the same (Dsch3T1).*

*I don't know, how would they be able to change the curriculum and bring in it the different cultures. I have no idea (Dsch3T2).*

*I think in some subjects. I think in the wellness subjects and in subjects like our SPHE and our CSPE. Yeah, I think our PE curriculum, as well, certainly would. I think that it depends on the teacher to use the key skills within the Junior Cycle (Dsch1SL1).*

One of the teachers also mentioned that in Business Studies lessons there is some scope to discuss how various business philosophies can work in different countries.

*We can bring up samples from different countries, we can see that, for example, oligarchies are still working in different countries. It's not working, for example, in other countries (Dsch3T2).*

According to a teacher, the curriculum for the Junior Cycle, as compared to the Senior Cycle curriculum, has a lot of scope to incorporate prior knowledge, experiences and performance style of the diverse student population. Instead of teaching, the curriculum presents *statements of learning* that give a wider spectrum to teachers to differentiate and be inclusive at the same time. In her opinion

*[teaching] it's all about bringing in, making everybody in the classroom feel accepted, so that it's an inclusive environment where no opinions are dismissed (Dsch2T1).*

However, even at the Senior Cycle, a teacher stressed that a lot depends on teacher's creativity *'it's just how to teach it. That's what needs to be amended a little bit at senior level, I think (Dsch2T1).*

In the words of a principal, managing diversity in teaching and assessment

*Very difficult for the teachers, I think the willingness is there ...but I think it is a much wider issue than this school but the strategies that teachers use are teaching and learning strategies that should bear fruit for the students. But I think there should be an intense period of EAL for students who don't have it and are going to go to school and struggle. It should be done prior to attending the school (Dsch3SL1).*

A Deputy principal also referred to some texts that are about a particular background.

*The Department of Education did a lot of queries from some students from ethnic minority backgrounds, and since the Black Lives Matter movement kicked in last summer, in relation to some of the literature that's taught in Junior Cycle Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry and Kill a Mockingbird, that there are minority student groups in some schools who really would prefer these books are removed from the curriculum because they find them insensitive because of the whole race, nation, skin colour, and I think the Department is negotiating (Dsch2SL2).*

*However, It's an era in terms of, you know, to be respectful of all children, their needs, their wants, while at the same time, stating well, this is a very important piece of literature that all children, irrespective of race, religion, no religion, identity can learn from (Dsch2SL2).*

A parent also mentioned that some of the course books that students have *'they are racial, they put racial words in that.'* She referred to an N-word and explained that whenever such words are read aloud or spoken in the class *'everybody looks back in class at them and it makes them feel awkward'*(Dsch3P4).

One of the principals pointed out that the acceptance for cultural diversity will gradually embed in the teaching practice as there was a time when teachers believed

*literacy and numeracy just belonging to English and Maths I mean whereas this should be part of every subject that we should be finding a niche within every subject in the ideal world (Dsch3SL1).*

Some teachers agreed that concrete changes are required to be made in the curriculum to respond to the needs of the changing Irish society.

*And when school is such a huge part of a young person life today, then cultural diversity needs to be more apparent and more embedded in our curriculum than just kind of an indicator which a teacher if they're interested in can take it. You know, that makes sense (Dsch1T1).*

### **Learning support**

The school leaders, migrant parents and students appreciated the staff for being supportive and welcoming. The teachers helped the migrant students to get settled in the school's environment.

*We have very skilled teachers who will be able to help them (Dsch2SL1).*

*I think there are some really great teachers in the school (Dsch2S3).*

*The support, he's getting from teachers are quite helpful if he has something to ask. So I think we get some good support. We are very happy with the school (Dsh2P2).*

*if you're somebody who has like language difficulty, teachers would sit with you during class and they would help and explain stuff to you. So we have teachers always available, they say, email me if you need any help and they're always up there in their classes if we require assistance (Dsch4 S2).*

A parent whose children are second generation migrants stated that it is very difficult for them to teach Irish to their children.

*if we talk about the language, [the teachers say] this is you don't have to worry about the language because all the language related thing is going to be covered in school and during their time in classroom ... most of the time like 90% they do it in their class so they [teachers] don't leave it for the parents (Dsch4P3).*

Learning and language supports are available for the students depending on resource allocations.

*If I ask anyone they will actually help, and if I didn't ask then I do it myself (Dsch2S5).*

*Most teachers are really helpful and willing to help all the time, so it's very good (Dsch2S1).*

*I think it's a very good school in my opinion, they do care about the students, they make sure that you always have help if you need and they're very good at that kind of support. I think it's just nice environment, overall (Dsch2S2).*

*all the teachers are really helpful. There's an after school study, we can go in and teachers teach and monitor and help you do your homework (Dsch2S4).*

*There is after school study if you wish to attend to, there's a nice weekend study so in terms of support, there's a plethora of things you can do (Dsch2S3).*

*Some resources classes for Maths and English that's a class that teachers are sometimes asking me to come and attend and everything (Dsch1S1).*

*The teachers help us for anything that we don't understand (Dsch1S2).*

A teacher also mentioned that at school they have a *buddy system* so the students who have a language barrier they *'might be paired with somebody who doesn't, or who would be academically strong in that environment so they're encouraged to help. And there's a lot of what we call a peer assessment so they correct each other's work. It's more so, making the students facilitators of their own learning, rather than it being teacher led (Dsch2T1).*

Moreover, *'from a teacher's perspective, we have to make sure that when we are teaching content that might not be too accessible for a student, who doesn't understand fully what I'm saying, I have to make sure that I'm spending some extra time one on one with that student, or that I am amending my worksheets or the tasks that I give that student, so that they're a little bit easier and a little bit more accessible so that I don't affect their confidence in any way' (Dsch2T1).*

*I get help like resource class (Dsch3S3).*

Low proficiency in the language of instruction consistently emerged as an obstacle in migrant students' progress in learning. A teacher mentioned how he has dealt with the situation.

*But I would use google translate and explain what the question asks them (Dsch3T1).*

A student however, did not appreciate the way support is provided in the resource class.

*The supports are available, but luckily, I don't need them. It is made very obvious like there is a resource room and stuff, and there'll be like two or three teachers available over there to help if you have any difficulties and see someone who is like recognized to have needed help (Dsch4S1).*

### **English as an Additional Language**

Despite, students with English as an additional language (EAL) study English at the primary school, too, sometimes they cannot perform well in the post-primary.

*Sometimes when there are new words. It is nice but sometimes I don't know those words, I never had heard them before. And sometimes it's hard to understand some of the words (Dsch1S1).*

*the language barrier becomes difficult again, in subjects like maths that has extra mathematical language, geography that has more or less language terms and so on. Suddenly the English language*

*is stunting their ability to produce the grades that they'd be well able to produce and if they're speaking in their first or second language (Dsh1T1).*

*I find their access to the English curriculum would be very difficult. They'd be excellent orally, they'd be excellent in speaking, when it comes to writing English language this is very difficult, they would struggle, and some of these students are extremely bright but this side of things just letting them down (Dsch1T2).*

Several steps are taken to facilitate English language learning.

*These students are exempt from Irish. So there are four classes a week. So they have four times per 60 minutes, that they can get an extra support (Dsch3T2).*

*Every teacher knows me and helps me in my subject because when I came to Ireland I didn't have any English. When I came to school my English improved. Then my English teacher gives me extra time that helps me (Dsch3S3).*

There are also some other measures taken to facilitate the language learning process of the migration background students such as 'any key words that are being taught in a lesson that they're displayed around the room' and 'when I'm giving homework for example that I write that on the board so that students have time to take that down or you know they're not relying on speech'(Dsch2T1). These are small steps taken to support their language acquisition.

*We'd probably have a chat with their parents and the students see if they'd be comfortable getting extra support because it's really up to them at the end of the day... we would help with key words and different subjects, like question words. Question words, key words for each subject that will come up an awful lot that they will hear again and again. We work with spellings, punctuation, and all those things (Dsch1T2).*

*Some students who aren't fluent in English, might have access to an English dictionary for their exams (Dsch2T1).*

*When I came here the first time, there was a teacher, who would stay with me all the time, like go with me in every subject class, but now I don't have any because I think now I can speak English quite well (Dsh2S5).*

Additionally, teachers and students often referred to Irish exemption for migration background students so that they can focus more on English and other subjects. The other supports that teachers shared included *no down-marking due to grammar and spelling errors (Dsch2T1), the provision of bilingual dictionaries and the provision of library books in students' home languages (Dsch1T3).*

### **Assessments**

Neither parents nor students spoke negatively about teaching and assessment however, some parents asked for more information about their children's progress in studies.

*I think I haven't heard much of them, talking to me. What I've seen from the report is the last quarter report. I think they said truth on everything when they said she could do better with more effort. So I think their assessment is correct (Dsch1P2).*

*The assessment is fair and he gets correct marks for his ability. All teachers work very hard with students and they give them correct points. I think my son needs more support in English (Dsch3P2).*

*Besides the comments that they put on the report other than that there is nothing. I know absolutely nothing. I would like to have more information from the school (Dsch3P4).*

*I'm a bit disappointed with that because what I was expecting ... the teacher would put the progress every week and at every step (Dsch1P3).*

Some teachers maintained that no broad generalization should be made about the achievement of the migration background students.

*I think they're driven, you know, they really have a sense of engagement, and I suppose they're encouraged to participate and to be included and, in fact, these a lot of students would do very well and excel in areas (Dsch1T3).*

#### **Intercultural teaching resource materials**

Some teaching materials are also available to meet the learning needs of a diverse student population.

*I think the CSPE (Civic, Social and Political Education) curriculum. I remember years ago when I was teaching as an associate on a support service when it started with the CSPE back in the 90s. At that point, there was a lot of material being produced by the curriculum development unit and sometime wrote on curriculum around cultural diversity and multiculturalism in schools. It's been delivered to schools through the CSPE curriculum (Dsch1SL2).*

Another Deputy principal also talked about the availability of the learning support material to manage the learning of multicultural classes.

*There is a lot of documentation I think from 2006, the first form of documentation for the diverse, inclusive Ireland. It was a really good documentation that came out ... was kind of the second last year a Celtic Tiger Ireland so there was lots of money poured into the department (Dsch2SL2).*

However, a school leader also asserted:

*The methods our teachers use, they might not specifically be directed towards those students but they would certainly make sure that they can access the actual learning methodologies and the assessment practices that are here in schools (Dsch3SL2).*

## **Section 4: Parents' inclusion in school**

### **Parents' Association**

School leaders stated that the Parents' Association is very active in their schools.

*According to the Irish constitution, parents are the primary educators of their children. So therefore, we have a loan of their children from morning till evening but, you know, they are their educators (Dsch2SL1).*

A principal shared that in the Parents' Association of her school

*Some of those parents are from non-ethnic, and non-Irish background, which is great to see (Dsch1P1).*

A migrant parent also stated:

*I actually go into the parent association. They always offer it to everybody but it's the first time ...I asked at the beginning of the year I thought if I could be involved in more stuff (Dsch1P3).*

Another principal stated, *'It's really important that parents are involved in school life (Dsch3SL1) though engaging them in the Parents Association is quite challenging especially due to the pandemic. We haven't had a quorum in a year and a half now (Dsch3SL1).*

Migrant parents sometimes face a language barrier, for instance:

*one of them who actually came and joined the Parents' Association at the beginning of this year but struggled with the language and then didn't return for the next one (Dsch3SL2).*

A Deputy principal admitted that while schooling is all about the partnership between school and parents, *the language barrier is huge [in the case of the migrant parents]. We would meet the parents of these particular students at the beginning of every single year and most of them have to bring an interpreter with them because they don't understand the language and to be honest, it is an obstacle throughout the year a reason for probably avoiding having those parents involved in different things (Dsch3SL2).*

A migrant parent also stated:

*I do not participate in school activities mainly due to lack of time (I work in the afternoons) and I also do not feel well in such situations (Dsch2P3).*

A principal mentioned that while parents' involvement is essential in their children's learning, the migrant parents sometimes face challenges including *'working long hours' shifts*, *'high cost of living'*, *'paying their visa fees year after year'*, very expensive rentals in the outlying areas which hinder their involvement in their children's school (Dsch2SL1).

### **Opportunities to participate**

School leaders, teachers and students shared that due to the Covid-19 pandemic there have been very limited activities in schools where parents could be invited. They mentioned some pre-Covid events organised by the schools as well as the Parents' Association. The events included *Open Nights, Graduations, Cheese, Wine and Music Nights (Dsch1T3), Christmas Fairs, Winter Fairs, Musicals, Careers Day and Parent Teacher Meetings.*

*a spring clean day is fantastic, so they [school management and teachers] would invite all of the parents to come down on Saturday, and to work on sort of different paint jobs in the school, gardening jobs, tidying, and they'd also help out in school musicals and various different things (Dsch1SL1).*

*And we have had wonderful events run by the parents' association where parents would come for fashion shows, to all sorts of things and career fairs as well. We've had the parents involved as well (Dsch1T1).*

*there're like the open nights or choir performance. For me last year, Aladdin the musical (Dsch1S3).*

*like the school would have an information evening for the parents of the incoming first years. So we would have gone to that, and then you have parent teacher meetings there (Dsch1P3).*

*Yeah my graduation (Dsch2S5).*

*There was actually the Junior Cert event, the Junior Cert award ceremony (Dsch2S3).*

*There haven't been any events where parents have been important in the event like they've been orchestrating or anything. But yeah, they've been invited to several (Dsch4S2).*

*We do have a kind of an open evening for the parents. So, this will happen when they're [students] in sixth class are invited to come in to the school, and we get some information about the subjects, rules of the school, code to behaviour, information on lots of variety of different areas of interest (Dsch1T3).*

A few parents also stated

*I did help out with the Christmas fair as a volunteer, then I did that show, they have a school musical that I helped in the background as well (Dsch2P1).*

*I talked to the principal myself, on Pakistan's Independence Day that I want to do a speech because there are so many cultures in the school so everybody should know what Pakistan is. So, I did a speech in the school. I carried a flag of Pakistan and then I did a brief speech of about 10 minutes less than 10 minutes (Dsch4P2).*

According to a parent, who was also part of the Parents Association,

*I think most of them [events] for the parents' association, have a lot of work to do with fundraising, and school invites us to a couple of meetings in terms of anti-bullying or internet use that kind of stuff as well (Dsch1P1).*

Parents are also encouraged to take initiatives to be a part of school life

*when we have international celebrations, some parents would let us know. What would be a good idea they would maybe organize this with the teacher... Parents who wanted to speak to the students about their culture or their country, and all of that, that has been interesting so we're open to that all the time (Dsch2SL1).*

*for parents as well, you know, they want us to formally educate their children to the very highest level, they're very willing to support us in anything that we do. If you know, organize our school fair, they're very involved in fundraising, and they're involved in supervising study and all of those (Dsch2SL1).*

Nonetheless, Parent Teacher meetings invariably are organised in every school.

*but just my mom was [invited] like one or two times. Parent teacher meetings (Dsch1S2).*

*Parent teacher meetings (Dsch1S1).*

*Apart from parent teacher meeting, not really (Dsch3S1).*

*Yes, the parent teacher meetings, those were the ones that they're invited to, mainly, I guess, that's like the thing they really care about because they want to know how good I'm doing in school if I'm failing or anything. And they participate in it. The event was the induction programme now for the school. I don't know if there are any other events that would have happened in the school where parents could come (Dsch3S2).*

### **Support for homework**

Most of the parents with migration background acknowledge that they cannot help their children with their homework because they are not familiar with the curriculum. Some parents do not have enough time due to their work or studies.

*I do support her with homework... It's at time difficult to juggle between the two, my studies and having to help her as you know the standard of the school where I went was quite different (Dsch3P4).*

*No, I don't help them with their homework but I don't involve them in chores and tell them to focus on their studies only (Dsch3P3).*

*we kind of have taken the approach that we're gonna let her do it herself, initially, and if she has an issue or a problem and it would come to us and we will give her assistance. We help with the projects (Dsch1P1).*

*I never did because the reason is we don't really understand the curriculum, because we studied different curricula, for us it is totally different (Dsch2P2).*

*Because now she gets at a level. I don't have this much (Dsch2P4).*

A parent shared

*I started my study here just because I want to get to know what is the education system like, you know, the higher level third level education system, in Ireland, so I can guide my kids according to that. In chemistry, in physics, and in maths. I am supporting them (Dsch4P2).*

### **Information shared with Parents**

Parents were generally satisfied with the amount of information they received from the school however, one of the parents suggested that he would be in a better position to monitor his son's progress if the frequency of reports from the school increases.

*Things are good at school but if every two months or three months school gives us a report about his behaviour, if he is facing any problem at school, the subjects he is good at and the subjects he is struggling with (Dsch3P2).*

*I think with the advent of COVID, and there's a lot more communication from the school, and a lot of good information (Dsch1P1).*

## **Section 5: Skills and Competencies for School Leaders and Teachers for multicultural schools**

The school leaders and teachers pointed out the need for better communication skills to manage a diverse student population. A principal stated that the skills and competencies needed are as follows:

*It would be obviously listening and would be understanding and communication. And then also the ability to strategically plan out, to see going forward what changes are required and to manage that change that will be needed within the deployment of staff, and the allocation of students to classes and special education support etc. (Dsch1SL1).*

*And I suppose, if you are somebody who is totally taken up with the administrative part of a school, and you are not open to the other softer skills. I think it's [managing multicultural environment] difficult than for those kinds of leaders (Dsch2SL1).*

In another principal's words:

*'Listening, would be the key skill, listening to their stories, listening to the difficulties they face, the challenges they face, and listen to find a mechanism, listen to some of the positivity that they've experienced as well'. He further emphasised, 'I mean, we have to educate ourselves as to the diversity*



*of the students... You sometimes don't find the time to sit down and chat with the students and teachers to tell us about that' (Dsch3SL1).*

*I think stronger communication skills, with the students, obviously, like leadership skills as well, and maybe putting that onus on students, to step into their own leadership capacity in the classroom. I think IT skills as well maybe in terms of bringing technology into the classroom and making that more culturally diverse as well (Dsch2T1).*

School leaders of a school also admitted their inability to effectively deal with the ever-increasing cultural diversity in their school though they are aware of its demands. Being school leaders, they believe, they must be better equipped and need the training to be able to do so. The principal mentioned that he once attended a course on leadership in a culturally diverse school and feels to revisit that programme. The Deputy principal referred to a conference that she went to recently that was mainly about religion and ethics but cultural diversity was also taken into account under the framework of religion and ethics. The principal stressed listening as the key skill for the school leaders and stressed the need for flexibility in school rules, policies and procedures to accommodate the students from diverse backgrounds *'as opposed to the policy just been disregarded'* (Dsch3SL1).

A principal shared that there are opportunities for generic training in school leadership but if there is any training programme for managing a multicultural school

*I am not aware, I haven't been offered any. That's not to say it's not there, because it could have been in an email somewhere that I didn't flag if it wasn't read and I didn't respond to it because it wasn't as I said in that quadrant of a priority or urgent or something that needed to be attended to in that firefighting mode. So possibly, it's there. But having said that, even if it is there, it needs to be. We need to be more aware of it [diversity] and needs. I suppose because it will be in the back of my mind somewhere I would have heard it on the periphery (Dsch1SL1).*

Some school leaders also stated that most of their students come from primary schools in Ireland so they get assimilated by the time they reach the post-primary schools. The number of students who attend primary school from elsewhere is very low and therefore they do not allocate training hours for teacher training around.

*Culture, and multiculturalism or inclusion or diversity hasn't been prioritized in our situation. I was very honest about that, and from my understanding for a lot of schools and my colleagues it would not be an area that would have received priority with regards to CPD and the formal staff training around it. Maybe in a school where there was more, I should say, more students [with migration background] or it was a higher percentage, maybe issues were emerging, and there might have been a response by school management then, to bring in training (Dsch1SL1).*

Teachers, in response to the requisite skills and competencies to teach the culturally diverse students population, explained

*So I'm always trying to, I'm always reading about it, I'm always trying to learn from other people, and learn from the individual students, obviously. So in that way, yes, I am equipped and I'm practicing, and it's a work in progress but in terms of official training, no (Dsch1T1).*

*Probably based on experience actually as you get older and I think experienced you kind of get to learn a lot throughout the years, and you learn how even though every child is so different and so unique, but you do get to promote, the whole idea of inclusion and being ready (Dsch1T3).*

*I see kids as kids who come here to learn (Dsch3T1).*

Furthermore, teachers' friendliness encourages students to share their norms and cultural practices with them.

*I'm just open, and I like to chat with them. And when they feel that teacher will listen to me, if they will open more, and they will start telling them stories on traditions (Dsch3T2).*

A teacher also asserted the need for self-reflection

*if there was a situation where I felt like a student wasn't learning in my classroom and I needed to self-reflect, I would go further with it (Dsch2T1).*

An EAL teacher also explained that she is equipped to take the challenge of teaching multicultural classrooms. However, issues remain.

*I would love to be able to teach English as a second language. Like I have students coming to me who have English as an additional language. I would love to be able to teach them as if I would teach French or Spanish. I find it very hard to get into that mind frame. I teach English as someone for whom English is the first language (Dsch1T2).*

Though most of the teachers shared that they did not have the opportunity to attend any training related to teaching multicultural classes one of them shared

*I've never received any training. However, as it happens, on Saturday, I'm going to the guidance counsellor's conference and the wonderful thing about that conference is they're going to have training in how to counsel students from a culturally diverse background. Yeah, and that's what it's certainly something that does come up in my work in recent years. So it's actually perfect timing (Dsch1T1).*

In another teacher's words

*In my college degree, it was always mentioned, it wasn't separated. It was just mentioned in every aspect of the course there as a constant reminder that you will have students from many different ethnic migrant backgrounds, and in every level of our teaching, it was mentioned, so there was a constant awareness of that (Dsch2T1).*

## Section 6: The role of community leaders in dealing with cultural differences

In different schools, the school leaders had a different perspective on how essential the role of the community leaders can be in students' integration into the schools.

In a school with a large population of Syrian refugees, the school management team felt an imminent need for strong collaboration between the schools and the community leaders. The Deputy principal of that school acknowledged the volunteering services of the community leaders outside the school for the migrant families but in the case of schools, she emphasised

*There needs to be a conversation between community leaders and school leaders in how best to support the students but those conversations are not actually happening also in terms coming from the top the Department of Justice and where they are placing these people, they are basically just placing them, landing them and leaving them (Dsch3SL2).*

In their words, the school leaders believe that placing the migrant students in the school is an end in itself and they engage with the schools as far as financial support is sought by the schools, as soon as the schools manage their uniform, iPad and books, they are left on their own.

*We have some students, they need a school, ... there is sort of an induction for us to meet the students, and the agencies step away and the Department of Justice. We're involved in a number of students that attend this school and as soon as I was able to say that, I have student support form, I look after a uniform and contribute to an iPad it was my feeling that was the end of their involvement with that student. They had served their purpose, the student had a place in the school, the school is now responsible, and so be it. So there was no follow up (Dsch3SL1).*

*'They are using google translate on the Ipad to try and talk to people and communicate. They get frustrated, they become withdrawn and isolated and as result, some of them have stopped coming to school' (Dsch3SL2).*

The principal of that school reiterated that the community leaders

*should be checking back to see how things are going. They should be following up with extra English for those students that don't have it. They should be checking back with the families and arrange some sort of post-graduation or posterior schooling things (Dsch3SL1).*

And ensure that all the students who are placed in the schools are able to achieve and integrate well into the society.

The school leaders of another school pointed out that in schools with a large population of students belonging to one particular community, the role of community leader can be very important.

*We wouldn't have it as much in this school, but certainly... in schools, where we would have friends who are leaders in very diverse school settings, the community leaders in particular linked with faith groups are really important (Dsch2SL2).*

In such cases, the school leaders would have to keep a balance between *'the values of a modern secular Ireland'* and the demands of *'more traditional folk cultures and societies'*. *..It's actually true that negotiating and very much respectful engagement with the religious minority communities in those particular areas, they have found solutions' (Dsch2SL2).*

While a principal voiced her scepticism about the significance of community leaders in dealing with cultural differences.

*[In some parts of Dublin] school principals would have conversations with prominent community leaders, because there tend to be a very clear community of a particular ethnic origin that would have even their own community centre and their own community area that they would call to. I sometimes wondered about that. Is that inclusion, or is that setting up a separate community, rather than the community dispersing itself into the existing structures that are already there ... I am certainly open to it but it is not something that I have encountered in the 12 years of my service as a principal (Dsch1SL1).*

## Section 7: Effects of having culturally diverse student population

In all case-study schools, the entire school community spoke positively about diversity and considered it a learning opportunity. The diversity in schools, *'it opens their minds, it opens their world'* (Dsch1T2). The benefits of having students from diverse cultural backgrounds reverberated every interview and they outweighed the challenges.

*...diversity is enriching, diversity, gets us away from being very insular in our thoughts and our experiences (Dsch2SL1).*

*I think any student is just like another student, and they all benefit from each other in their own way, no matter where they come from or no matter what cultural differences, and I think once everyone has respect for each other, and they promote respect I suppose, and, they can educate each other (Dsch1T3).*

*Certainly, yes, our school environment is richer as a result (Dsch1T1).*

*Students become more respectful, they become more accepting, they become I suppose not just a person from Ireland but a person from the world (Dsh1T2).*

One of the parents also shared that their decision to decide on a school for their children was guided by this very factor that the school will be ‘*a representative of our Irish society... we felt cultural diversity was kind of an important factor for our decision making*’ (Dsch1P3).

*I think that's really beneficial for kids to discuss each other's culture, and having appreciation for ours and theirs also. I think the language, I give example, my daughter is in school with a couple of children from Asian origins, and I just happened to pick up a little bit of the language and that's great (Dsh1P1).*

*They have a lot to teach us too in terms of their own culture, it raises awareness but it also enhances respect and it ensure that every day is a learning day in a school and even students get to see there a wider world out there rather than just their own community. There actually are opportunities for them in the other countries and that those countries become favourable destinations for them (Dsch3SL2).*

*what I liked in school is respect because it's an international city, with lots of nationalities. So I like that. It's also an opportunity for kids to see a lot of nationalities, to respect other people. I liked this aspect (Dsch3P1).*

*there is a lot to learn from many different people in the school, it's a big school a lot of different languages, a lot of different experiences, different subjects to learn from (Dsch3S1).*

*First thing, my son will get more knowledge about people and their culture also he will learn another language such as English (Dsch3P2).*

*The benefit is that it allows students to gain an appreciation of where everybody's coming from, and just normalize the fact that we're different states and we do things differently (Dsch3SL1).*

One of the students suggested that the students who know different languages are a useful resource and can help the new entrants from the same ethnic group and low English proficiency settle in the life of the school.

*school is quite diverse, we have people from different cultures, different places so maybe one or two people knowing a different language could make a difference they could make that person to welcome or they could give the person more knowledge using their language if they don't understand English (Dsch3S5).*

A teacher shared that students coming from different education systems can compare *their experiences in their native schools with the schools in Ireland and decide how well placed they are* (Dsch3T2).

Migrant students can become teaching resource themselves.

*Students often with different cultural backgrounds or from different nationalities, they can contribute a lot to a class discussion. I might say something about the word of one text, a student from a different nationality might be familiar with that and they believe they'll be able to give us a different opinion or different contexts (Dsch2T1).*

*In geography, obviously, we look at countries around the world, and we might have a student from a particular country that we're studying, and they might be able to offer a lot more insights than I would know from being at a ground level in these countries or have an experience of living in these countries (Dsch2T1).*

*From a religion teacher point of view, I am using it [religious diversity] to help my students learn from one another. I think, it's really important that they learn about other cultures, and they learn about other religious backgrounds, and they're getting to hear about these different beliefs from their peers (Dsch1T2).*

*this year we have students taking Japanese language, so it's lovely for students to experience other language and even for a student who maybe Japanese and within that classroom situation is just fantastic because they're able to share with everyone else, it's a real sense of pride I think (Dsch1T3).*

Some school leaders appreciated the migrant children for

*They are in many ways, quite often, the most respectful, most mannerly really the most engaged group of kids, they're absolutely fabulous (Dsch2SL2).*

*The children who come to us from culturally diverse backgrounds are always considered very nice students, very good students, very well behaved students and the kind of role models for an awful lot of students in our school (Dsch2SL1).*

The school stakeholders not just talked about the benefits but also referred to the challenges that diversity brings with it. One of the teachers shared, sometimes native students do not accept them and believe that the migrant or refugee students are getting benefits that they do not deserve. And then a low level of English proficiency further aggravates the situation. *'They [native students] might not include them as much as they might have included someone else. You would see groups of kids together from similar countries who can actually communicate (Dsch3T1).*

All teachers, school leaders, parents and migrant students, spoken to, regarded English language proficiency as one of the main challenges. Just because of weak language skills, students are unable to achieve their potential.

*I know kids who are very good at maths but they don't do as well as they would if had they better English (Dsch3T1).*

According to a teacher, ensuring learning and educational success for every student is the main challenge.

*you have the challenges, differentiation and making sure that you are accommodating the students, to the best of your ability... that you have provided them with the best education possible (Dsch2T1).*

One of the Deputy principals shared that migrant students with better language proficiency do well academically, *'we have other students who, I think three in the last two years, who have just zero English and coming into a school of our size they find it extremely daunting and would suffer mental health problems as a result anxiety and become school refusals. The percentage of such students would be very low maybe 1 in 10 (Dsch3SL2).*

One principal mentioned, *'The only two areas of challenge we all see be the language and religion. These are the two areas that normally speaking cause the issues'* (Dsch1SL1), but organising a proper system whom to approach in case of need has helped them overcome this generally.

This language barrier further hinders communication between school and parents. In a principal's words

*'the parents don't have the capacity to liaise with other parents in the school and we also don't have the language skills to liaise back with them'* (Dsch3SL1).

The school also does not have interpreters so, when parents come to school seeking support or with a complaint, the school leaders have to rely on students that sometimes complicates things.

Sometimes migrant parents' expectations can become a source of stress for their children therefore, limited communication between school and family can further aggravate the situation.

*We have mentioned it before student with Asian background, their time is changing, and their Irish time is changing. The students will be born here the expectations that parents place on them can be so high sometimes that the students feel very overwhelmed and stressed by it. A lot of communication has to be done between the school and parent around the actual stress of the children'* (Dsch1SL2).

Some school leaders complained that they do not have enough resources to meet the learning needs of the diverse groups of students. *'We are imaginative on how we use our own resources, but there's nothing coming on ours, does some with SEN allocation that comes in with us and the EAL is superimposed on that now'* (Dsch3SL1).

A principal added that the school has to be mindful constantly if all cohorts of students can access the curriculum and people in the school. *'[migrant] students are just like students from Ireland, and go through development phases, go through changes, and can become isolated very quickly, because they would have a smaller circle of friends potentially, to begin with. And so that's the challenge to keep them very much on our radar, to keep trying to find ways to get them the resources they need.'*

However, one principal maintained,

*I don't see any challenges, everybody is a child in my eyes, you know, I don't see, differences'* (Dsch2SL1).

## Section 8: Suggestions for improved cultural responsiveness in schools

School leaders, teachers and parents provided some suggestions as to how to support a culturally responsive environment in schools. One of the principals shared her concern that they do not want to be disrespectful to migrant parents and students by not correctly pronouncing their names, therefore, they will appreciate it if the schools are provided with:

*a phonetic list may be for the pronunciation of some of the students' names because that's a challenge'* (Dsch1SL1).

Another parent also suggested:

*At the start of the year with the incoming first years, the form teacher or the year head or somebody takes time to talk to each child about how their name is pronounced, and maybe write it down phonetically, for the teachers, and then the teachers are aware that this is something that's important'* (Dsch1P3).

A principal admitted that the information about schools in Ireland generally goes out in English and not every parent speaks or understands English.

*Information going out to parents and the idea of having may be in different languages so when parents are accessing that for example, website, the information that we get to parents is all in English may be some kind of support to have that information available to parents in their own native language would be of great assistance. A multilingual brochure, explaining the main key points of the schools would be really good (Dsch2SL1).*

A teacher also pointed out:

*And I suppose the one thing I would like to see more of is teachers from different backgrounds in Ireland. We have an awful lot of students but when they're looking at teachers and role models to look up to. They will see an awful lot of Irish teachers (Dsch1T2).*

In order to promote the social well-being of new students especially from the migrant background a student it was suggested that:

*Once a month they [school leaders] should call the new students, make them sit in a room so that they can talk to each other (Dsch3S4).*

Another student proposed that:

*When someone does not know much English if he gets the [question] paper translated for he can better understand the questions. That happened to me in my first year my mathematics teacher during the Christmas exam she translated the question paper and I got good marks (Dsch3S3).*

A few students complained that some students ‘say things that are harsh, unpleasant that you don't like and they think it's not such a big deal. They think its funny (Dsch3S5).

To avoid such a situation in the school a student suggested

*I would say to the principal that we should try to fix the problem not punish the students but tell them what they are doing is wrong or have a conversation with them telling them what is allowed to be said and what is not (Dsch3S5).*

One of the Deputy principals feels the need to educate the native students of the ‘cultural norms and diversity of those students who are now joining us’. The migrant students may be asked to give presentations to native students ‘on the day in the life of their particular culture ... to create I suppose an awareness, respect but an actual integration that is visible and becomes the daily norm here’(Dsch3SL2).

*I believe that students should be more open to new kids who joined because if I hadn't known anyone in the school I think it would have been a little bit longer for me to get accustomed (Dsch2S4).*

One of the teachers also voiced a similar point.

*The main thing really is, there is more understanding needed from the local students as to where they [migrant students] are coming from and what they've been through. Whatever the reasons, situation will help in the school (Dsch3T1).*

*I think it's the biggest problem here for the secondary schools is the teachers who are engaged. It [school] has students coming from different countries. Some teachers are speaking [English] with Irish accent. I think they should speak professional English (Dsch2P4).*

*I had a presentation about my background, where I had my childhood. That will be good as maybe people will be more understanding this way, like how you were brought up, and where you were from (Dsch2S1).*

The Deputy principal referred to some literary texts that are part of post-primary curriculum ‘*if some students believe that sometimes some of the material that's covered in the Irish curriculum, it isn't applicable to them or they're worried about as in terms of issues of race. I think that is something that perhaps all the parties in education need to really sit down and discuss*’ (Dsch2SL2).

**Ends**