



Inspectorate of Education
Ministry of Education, Culture and Science

Summary report

The State of Education

2023

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Summary report
**The State
of Education**

Foreword

Care workers in a nursing home can monitor residents' sleep during the night using a tablet. We can increasingly pay for our grocery shopping at a self-scan check-out. And we can order a new smartphone or sports watch from our favourite online retailer - anywhere in the world. What do these innovations have to do with our education system? Developments such as globalization, digitization, technology and flexibilization are changing our world, our society and our labour market. This means that changes are also required from schools and educational programmes. Pupils and students need certainty about the value of their qualifications and about their future. Parents expect their children's education to be more tailored to their specific needs and preferences. Employers expect graduates to have more skills than they may have acquired from their time in education. And in the education sector itself, there are major concerns about the shortage of teachers and school leaders. In our changing society, how well equipped is our education system to meet the challenges of the future? This is the central question in this year's State of Education report.

The Dutch education system is generally performing well

To answer this question, we must start by considering the principal goals of our education system. The first of these is to ensure that young people can find work as employees or entrepreneurs. The second goal is to ensure that young people can play a full role in society as citizens. To enable every young person to participate in the economy and find employment, education must provide the knowledge and skills that employers require. And the final goal of the educational system is to ensure that all pupils and students can flourish and achieve their full potential. We can summarize these goals as follows: allocation, socialization, qualification and selection based on equal opportunities. These are the four core tasks of the Dutch education system in a nutshell. When we look at our education system through the lens of progress in relation to these core tasks, we see that, generally speaking, it is continuing to perform

well. A positive trend is that pupils and students are finding employment more easily after completing their education than in most neighbouring countries. Citizenship education and personal development are also being emphasized increasingly, and schools and the government are working on the improvements and innovations that are required. In addition, particularly in senior secondary vocational education (MBO), more young people are achieving a qualification that is consistent with the level of their previous education. The growing inequality of opportunities in education seems to have been halted, which is good news. And although the differences in opportunities between pupils with equal talents is still considerably larger than it was ten years ago, the first steps have been taken towards rectifying this. This has not happened of its own accord: it has been the result of a shared sense of urgency and concerted efforts. This sense of urgency has led to cooperation between parties in addressing the issue of inequality of opportunities.

Cracks in the system are starting to show

In recent years we have been compiling a "film" of the state of education in the Netherlands. That means looking closely at developments over time, instead of simply taking an annual snapshot. And in this long-term view, a number of hairline cracks have become clearly visible. For example, fewer pupils are performing well in the core subjects Dutch and numeracy, poor literacy is becoming more widespread and we can see big differences in performance outcome between schools. Moreover, some groups of pupils and students are not being given the opportunities they deserve, in education and in the labour market. And different pupil groups are losing touch with each other as the socio-economic segregation in education increases. If nothing is done about these cracks, they will deepen. Meanwhile, the shortage of teachers and school leaders is rapidly worsening in parts of the country. This poses a risk to the quality of education, especially since the

shortage is unevenly distributed: schools with more challenging pupils have a lot more difficulty finding teachers than the rest.

Good initiatives, but lacking clear focus

How are teachers, school leaders and school governors tackling these social issues? They are responding in a range of different ways. Every school and educational programme makes its own choices in this regard. We are seeing a great deal of innovation and sometimes also improvements in education. The number of schools that apply a specific pedagogical-didactic concept has increased significantly in recent years, as has the number of schools with a particular profile, such as technical academies and cultural subject cluster schools. Schools and educational programmes are also increasingly offering tailor-made programmes and customized school diplomas.

This results in an education system that is appealing and innovative. However, it is not always clear why a school or educational programme has opted for a particular profile or a particular form of customization or flexibilization. Does it lead better motivated pupils or pupils who perform better? Are the needs of the labour market being met better? Or are these innovations mainly about strengthening the competitive position of a particular school or programme? Schools and educational programmes evaluate the results and effectiveness of such choices to only a very limited extent. As a result, opportunities to learn lessons about what works and what does not work may be missed, and all too often the knowledge that is acquired is not shared with other schools and programmes. Paradoxically, it seems that the capacity for learning about best practice is actually lower in the education sector than in other sectors such as care, design, technology and horticulture. As a result, not all educational innovation is sustainable and it is unclear whether innovations are actually providing better education for future generations of pupils and students.

Limited insight into the quality of education

The variations between schools and the increase in customization also make it harder to understand differences in outcomes and the quality of education. This makes it more difficult for school leaders, school governors and the government to compare schools and make the appropriate changes. It also means that pupils and parents are often unclear about the consequences of choosing a particular school or educational programme. To summarize, the range of options and choices in our education system is appealing, but it can also lead to fragmentation and make it more difficult to understand the options available and the standards

of quality achieved. Both of these issues seem to stem from a lack of consensus regarding what our education system should actually be providing. This is an issue that needs to be addressed. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) phrases it in this way: insufficient consensus on what needs to be taught can lead to fragmentation in education, and thus to a weaker education system overall.

Is our education system ready for the future?

Future generations of pupils and students deserve to know for certain that their education will meet important basic requirements in all cases, no matter which form of education they opt for. However, the question is whether our education system can continue to provide this certainty. Although education in the Netherlands continues to keep pace overall, we have seen some concerning developments in recent years. Schools and educational programmes are addressing these, but each is choosing its own approach. This does not provide a sufficient guarantee that improvements will be sustainable, nor does it ensure that our education system can meet the challenges of the future.

At the same time, I am convinced this is possible. There are some powerful initiatives taking place, levels of commitment are high and the system offers schools freedom in their choice of approach. The missing ingredient is a clear set of shared basic goals and standards. Such a shared foundation would involve curtailing schools' freedom somewhat, and would focus on providing direction.

Preferably, all parties - from teachers to the government and the Inspectorate - would play a role in monitoring the relevant standards. That way, teachers, school leaders and school governors would be able to evaluate the innovations and improvements that they implement against a common set of standards. Standards can play a useful role when it comes to designing schools' many initiatives and to adapting our education system to our modern world. It may sound like an abstract concept, but actually the role of each stakeholder is very clear.

Managing shared goals and standards

The government may, for example, be required to take the lead and decide what pupils and students will need to learn in the future. What are the common goals and which standards are used to evaluate those goals? Which level of ambitions should we expect of our education system? This could include tackling low levels of literacy and numeracy, preparing pupils for participation in society and ensuring that students can find a place in the labour market. A clear set of standards would also make it easier to accommodate the changing preferences and

requirements that teachers, school leaders and school governors encounter every day.

The debate on the curriculum provides a unique opportunity to define a clear set of standards, but this will involve making choices. For example, all educational sectors may be asked to observe the established reference levels for Dutch and numeracy for every pupil or student, and to ensure that deficiencies are addressed and eliminated where necessary. But the standards should not be confined to easily measurable cognitive skills. Developments in the field of citizenship education and personal development also need to be monitored more effectively.

The government, governing bodies and sectoral councils will also need to develop standards for strategic HR policy in schools. How else can we guarantee the quality of teachers, school leaders and school governors? And who will provide the education of the future, even in times of declining student numbers or teacher shortages? This will require those responsible to adopt a long-term vision and to make it clear how this will be achieved. It is ultimately the government that has the responsibility and resources to intervene in cases where school governors are unable to meet basic requirements. In such situations, it is the government that will need to set conditions or actively take control and have the courage to make the changes that are required. Regional cooperation between governing bodies and the various levels of government will be essential in this regard.

Monitor, evaluate and learn

The task of teachers, school leaders and school governing bodies is to ensure that pupils and students acquire the right knowledge and skills from their education and that this education meets certain minimum standards in all cases. And if you, as a teacher, school leader or school governor, wish to introduce innovations, it needs to be clear in advance how these will contribute to the basic goals of education. Innovations need to be evaluated, and changes need to be made where necessary. Ultimately, this is the only way to ensure accountability with regard to the efforts made by schools - towards pupils, students and parents, professionals and colleagues. This may sound obvious, but it is not yet common practice.

Another key task for schools and governing bodies is to share their knowledge and experiences. We all need to have the courage to share our own successes and failures, and to be unafraid to ask others to share theirs. Learning from each other and conducting proper evaluation helps teachers, school leaders and school governors to focus their efforts on solutions that have already proven themselves effective, rather than having to 'reinvent the wheel' and come up with a continuous stream of new

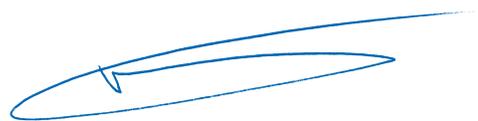
solutions themselves. And of course, this will also lighten the load for everyone. In addition, sectoral councils, academics, teacher training programmes, research groups and knowledge institutes are other parties that are perfectly placed to lead and encourage more sharing of knowledge and experience.

Are our inspection methods ready for the future?

As an Inspectorate, we also have a very specific role to play. For example, we must ensure that we monitor the quality of the education provided to pupils and students adequately. Are we looking at the right things? Do we hold schools and governing bodies accountable when they fail to meet the standards? And what do we do when we see that schools and educational programmes are not evaluating effectively or opting for innovations that have already proven unsuccessful at other schools? In other words, does our oversight provide adequate guarantees for future pupils and students? Standards will need to take on a more important role in our work, too.

Making the right choices for tomorrow

In short, it would be wonderful if current pupils can one day look back on their school days and their school graduation ceremony with fondness. But it is even more important is that pupils can look to their own future with confidence and certainty, because they were given opportunities that were consistent with their potential and because the Dutch education system gave them a solid grounding for their place in society and for their first job. They also need to feel safe in the knowledge that they can return to education again, for a new job or career switch. Maybe even because they want to become a teacher themselves. Or because, by then, the use of tablets in healthcare will have become hopelessly old-fashioned. To the pupils of the future and to all those responsible for providing education today, we say this: if we focus on making the right choices as a sector today, we can look to the future with confidence.



Monique Vogelzang
Inspector General for Education

10 April 2019





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1.1 The state of Dutch education

Favourable job prospects, but not for everyone • In general, and certainly compared with other countries, for Dutch youths the transition from education to work is relatively smooth. This is good. However, there are some major discrepancies between types of schooling in terms of the prospects they offer. In certain cases, a quarter or more of those leaving with a qualification are still not in work after a year. In addition, not everyone is benefiting from the favourable labour market. Particularly unlikely to do so are young people with no school qualifications and those with a background in special secondary education (VSO) and practical education (PRO), with an admission diploma for vocational training or from certain Level 2 programmes in MBO.

Little knowledge of socialization and citizenship • Education does more than prepare young people for the labour market; it prepares them for society in general. Yet nobody really knows how things stand in this respect, which is far from desirable as it is one of the core tasks of education. With school leaders and school governors in the dark, too, they are unable to set priorities or manage this aspect of their remit. What we do know is that Dutch 14-year-olds have less knowledge of citizenship and possess fewer skills in this area than their peers in comparable countries. There are also major differences between student groups. Schools which invest more in citizenship education seem to achieve better results over time.

Faster progress towards qualifications, growth in inequality of opportunities halted • Increasing numbers of pupils and students have obtained qualifications at higher levels in recent years. This is particularly the case in MBO. They have also done this more quickly than previous cohorts of pupils. Another piece of good news is that the rise in inequality of opportunity has been halted. Even though inequality remains too high, halting the rising trend is an important first step in tackling this issue. Schools and educational programmes are increasingly pursuing equality of opportunity. Pupils from migrant backgrounds, in particular, are catching up.

Reference levels in primary education unknown for 2018 • With regard to student performance, last year we reported our concerns about the decrease in the number of high achievers. This fall is clearly visible in long-term trends in international studies of both primary education and secondary education. Unfortunately, good data on the reference levels in primary education will not be available for 2018, because the final tests cannot be compared. This means that an important educational standard cannot be applied.

Lack of consensus over standards in education • All these developments demonstrate that while education is doing well in some areas, work is needed in other areas. It is concerning that we do not know how things are going in a number of important areas of the education system. This makes it difficult for teachers, school leaders, school governors, the government and politicians to formulate policy with respect to these sectors in order to ensure better management. There is also limited consensus regarding which standards are important.

1.1.1 The broad view of education

Education has a number of core tasks

Education has a number of core tasks. In this report we describe four of them:

- Training students to succeed in the labour market(allocation).
- Encouraging involvement in society(socialization).
- Placing pupils and students in an appropriate educational environment, so that they have the best chance to obtain suitable qualifications by following the right type of schooling, curriculum and educational process for them (selection and equal opportunities).
- Imparting knowledge and skills(qualification).
- Various specific classifications of the functions and core tasks of education are in use (see also Onderwijsraad, 2016; Van de Werfhorst, Elffers and Karsten, 2016).

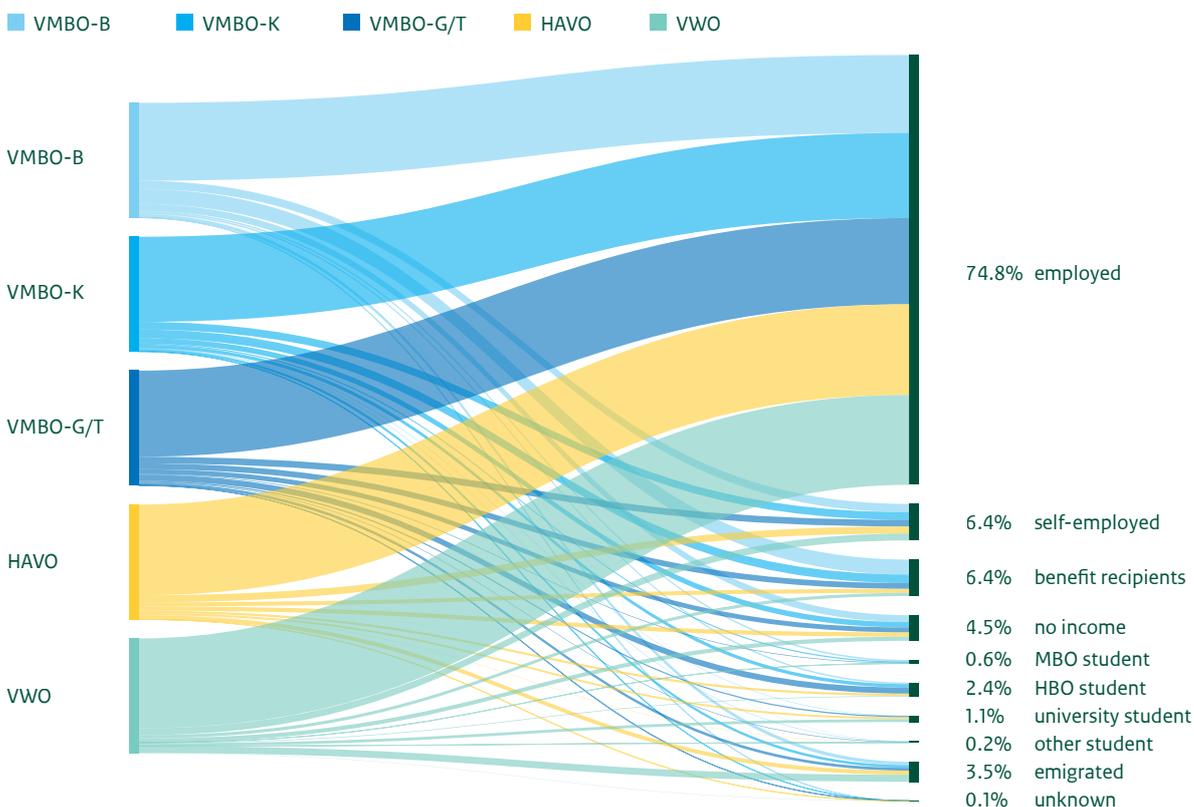
1.1.2 Training for the labour market (allocation)

Low youth unemployment, high starting salaries

Young people with educational qualifications are usually successful in the labour market. The youth unemployment rate in the Netherlands is currently one of the lowest in Europe (CBS, 2018a). There are even shortages of labour in some sectors. The favourable labour market means that, as a rule, young people leaving education find work quickly, are paid well and soon secure a permanent contract (see also Bisschop, Zwetsloot and Van der Werff, 2018; Bles and Meng, 2018). In these respects, the Netherlands is one of Europe's best performing countries.

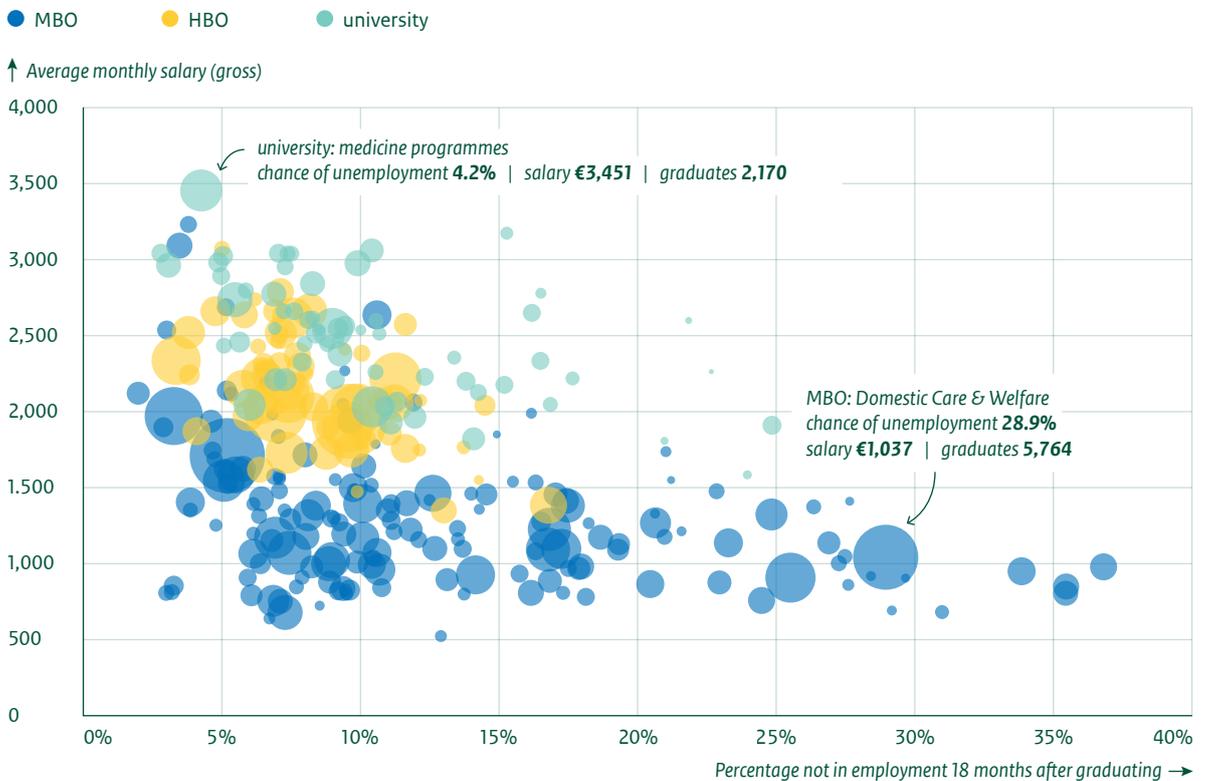
Most young people in work • Of those who left secondary school eleven years ago, about 85 per cent are currently in work (Figure 1.1a). The remainder are either receiving benefits (5 per cent), have no income (4 per cent), have emigrated (4 per cent) or are still in education (2 per cent). Moreover, this picture is much the same regardless of the type of secondary schooling received.

Figure 1.1a Situation of young people leaving secondary education
Careers of school leavers 10.5 years after leaving secondary education with a diploma



Source: calculations based on microdata from Statistics Netherlands

Figure 1.1b Labour market success of study programmes in MBO, HBO and universities
Percentage not in employment and average salary 18 months after graduating



Source: calculations based on microdata from Statistics Netherlands

The only notable exception are those with a background in the basic track of vocational secondary education (VMBO-B), who are more likely to be on benefits (13 per cent, compared with 4 per cent overall).

Big differences between programmes in preparation for labour market

• There are big differences between advanced educational programmes in the extent to which they prepare students for the labour market; it matters quite significantly which subject you have studied, whether in MBO, HBO or university. This is illustrated in Figure 1.1b, which shows the percentage of graduates not in work (x-axis) and the average starting salary (y-axis) per programme. Each circle represents a programme, with its size indicating the number of students taking it. From their wide distribution in this diagram, it is apparent that the chance of having a job one year after graduation varies widely, as do salaries at this point. In the worst cases a quarter of graduates are not in work, while at the other end of the scale there are programme where almost all are working and have relatively high salaries. Also striking is that the nature of the programme is more important than its level when it comes to job opportunities and earnings. Some technical MBO programmes, for example, offer better prospects than

certain degree programmes, university and HBO alike, in terms of starting salary as well as the chances of being in work. This applies particularly to programmes such as MBO Operator C (Level 4) and MBO Process Operator B (Level 3).

Conversely, MBO programmes leading to relatively low initial salaries include Teaching Assistant (Level 4) and Marketing and Communications Officer (Level 4). Many of the programmes with a more limited employment prospects are in the economics sector.

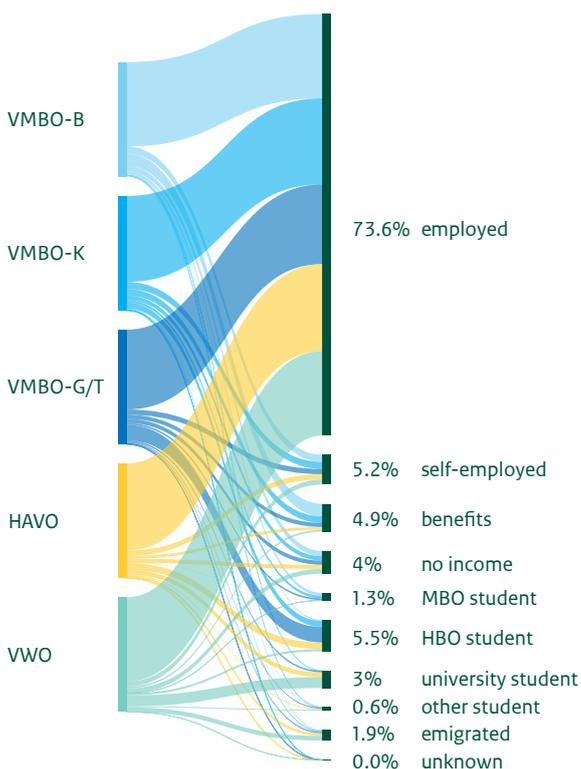
Differences in the labour market positions of students who have completed secondary education

• Despite large differences between educational programmes, graduating university and HBO students generally have better prospects than those who have completed MBO. Within MBO, the prospects of pupils achieving MBO LEVEL 4 are more favourable than those achieving levels 1 and 2. The relatively large differences between young people with an MBO level 2 certificate and young people with no basic qualification are striking (CPB, 2018). Compared to HBO graduates, university graduates have similar employment opportunities and a lower chance of a permanent employment contract, but they do achieve a higher average starting salary.

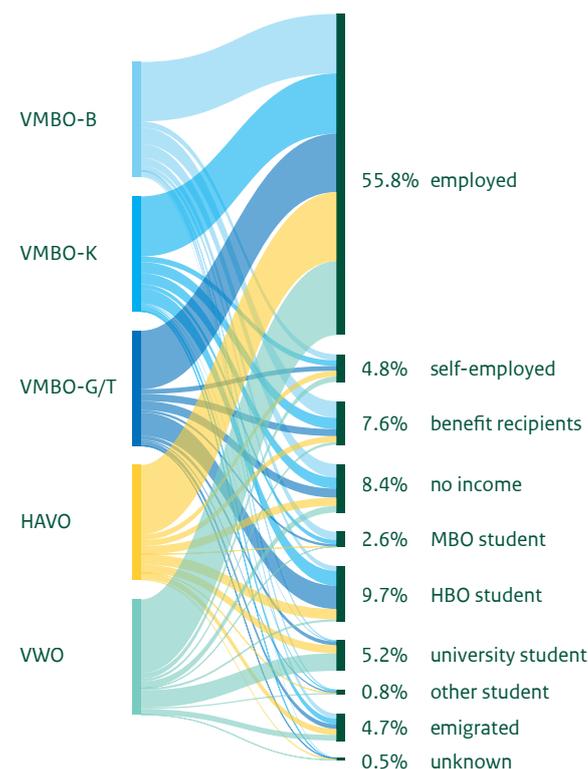
Figure 1.1c Situation of young people after secondary education
Career situations 8.5 years after leaving secondary education with a diploma

■ VMBO-B ■ VMBO-K ■ VMBO-G/T ■ HAVO ■ VWO

Young people from non-migrant background



Young people from migrant background



Unqualified school leavers have a lower chance of finding work

The favourable conditions in the labour market do not extend to students who do not complete their education. Students who do not obtain a diploma upon leaving the education system have less chance of finding a job, regardless of which educational programme they have been following.

Where they do find employment, those with a diploma often earn more than those without a diploma. The extent to which unqualified school leavers have a lower chance of finding employment and receive lower pay than those who have a diploma of secondary education does vary between different educational programmes, however.

Vulnerable student groups have less favourable employment prospects

In addition to those who drop out of education without obtaining their diploma, there are other groups who experience difficulty in the employment market. This includes students leaving special secondary education (VSO), practical education (PRO), MBO level 1 programmes and some MBO level 2 programmes.

These vulnerable groups of young people have less favourable prospects on the labour market than other students (see Section 1.4 for more details).

Graduates from a non-Western migrant background are more likely to be unemployed

Graduates from a non-Western migrant background are less likely to find employment than those from a non-migrant background. This is particularly the case with respect to those leaving MBO. The chance of not finding employment one year after leaving school is 23 percent for graduates from a non-Western migrant background and 14 percent for graduates from a non-migrant background. For HBO and universities, the difference between groups from migrant and non-migrant backgrounds is smaller: 14 percent versus 8 percent for HBO, and 13 percent versus 9 percent for universities.

The less favourable employment prospects of young people from a migrant background is also evident when we look at earlier cohorts of pupils in secondary education. For example, graduates with a non-Western migrant

background are less likely to be in work (8.5 years after finishing secondary school) (Figure 1.1c). They are also more likely to have no income and to be dependent on benefits.

There has been little improvement in this situation in recent years. It is also striking that a larger proportion of young people from a migrant background remain in education.

1.1.3 Encouraging involvement in society (socialization)

Relatively low levels of citizenship skills • Education also has a role to play in the social integration of pupils and students, thereby helping to ensure better societal cohesion. The social attitudes and citizenship skills of secondary school pupils are less well-developed in the Netherlands than in comparable countries (Munnikma et al., 2017), as we reported in 2018. The majority of pupils support democratic views on citizenship, with respect for different points of view being an important value for the majority of them. Knowledge about how society ‘works’ and how democracy ‘works’, however, lags behind neighbouring countries. Pupils’ confidence in their own skills when it comes to active participation in society is also modest. Knowledge of the issues involved in citizenship improved somewhat between 2009 and 2015, with the exception of in preparatory secondary vocational education (VMBO). No trend is evident with respect to citizenship skills and attitudes.

Developing citizenship skills • The Schools Citizenship Panels show that it is indeed possible to monitor citizenship outcomes. These schools monitor the development of pupils’ citizenship skills. The results indicate an improvement in citizenship skills among pupils in group 8 (which were higher in 2018 than four years earlier). However, this trend is less pronounced in relation to civic attitudes.

There is little difference with respect to civic knowledge. Pupils in year 1 of secondary education also scored higher on citizenship skills and attitudes in the most recent measurements than pupils did in 2014. There is little difference in the scores for civic knowledge in this regard (Coopmans and Dijkstra, 2019).

Differences in citizenship skills • There are striking differences between the citizenship skills of different groups of secondary school pupils. Students from a higher socio-economic background and those in HAVO or VWO tend to have better civic knowledge, to consider political participation more important and to have more confidence in their own citizenship skills. The differences between groups of secondary education pupils in relation to civic attitudes are also striking. Higher scores are

achieved by girls and pupils with one or both parents born outside the Netherlands. Pupils from a non-migrant background score better on civic knowledge.

1.1.4 Selection and equality of opportunities

More diplomas at a higher level • The overall level of education of young people in the Netherlands has risen in recent decades. Increasing numbers of young people are obtaining a degree at HBO or university level. Within MBO, we are seeing a similar increase: increasing numbers of students are obtaining an MBO LEVEL 4 diploma, while the numbers obtaining an MBO level 1 or MBO level 2 diploma are falling. In the last decade, the distribution of diplomas of secondary education has been fairly stable; only the proportion of graduates who have completed VMBO-B has fallen. In previous years, there had been a trend towards more recommendations for higher levels of education following primary school, but this was no longer the case in 2018.

Increasing success among students leaving VMBO and VWO • On average, about four in five students and pupils end up in the form of education that best matches the level of their secondary education diploma. There are some differences between groups of students. The pupils who are the most successful in relative terms are those who were advised to attend VWO a few years previously.

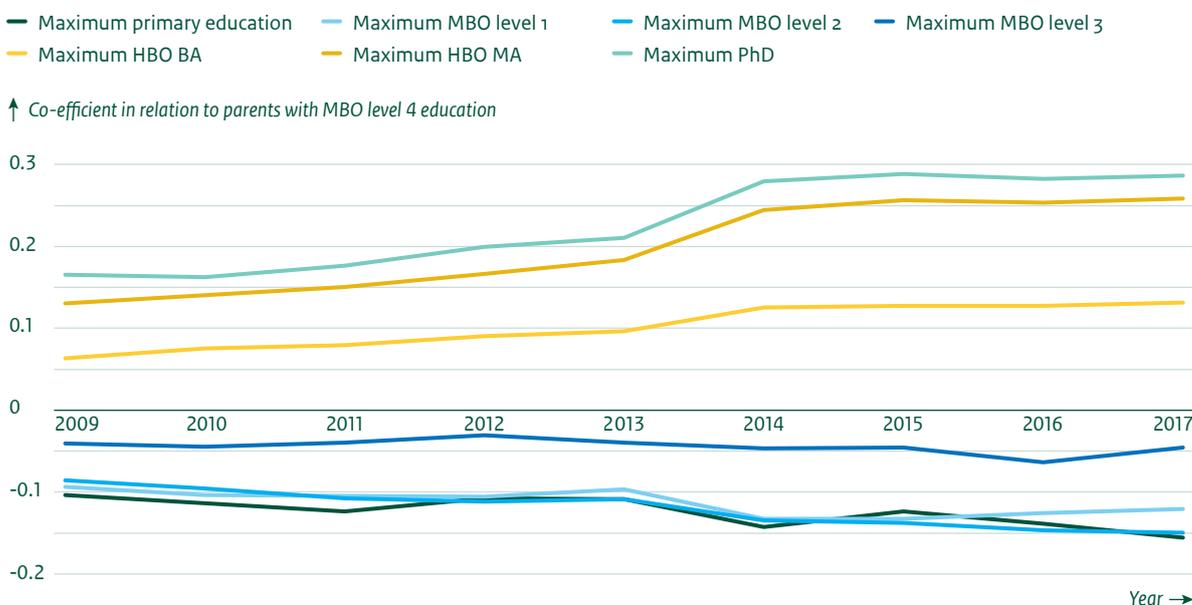
Three-quarters of this group go on to attend university. Students who were advised to attend VMBO a few years previously are also successful in relative terms. They mainly go on to attend MBO, usually at levels 3 and 4. The percentage completing a level 3 and 4 MBO programme has continued to rise over the past three years. The percentage completing a level 1 and 2 MBO programme has fallen from 10 percent to 7 percent. In addition, 11 percent of pupils who were advised to follow a combined/theoretical track of VMBO (VMBO-G/T) go on to attend HAVO.

Varying success of HAVO pupils in subsequent education • For pupils advised to attend HAVO, the subsequent educational path is much less clear than for pupils in VMBO and VWO. Pupils advised to attend HAVO can end up in many different places in the education system over the longer term.

Five and half years after receiving the recommendation, a quarter of these pupils complete HAVO within the prescribed period and go on to enrol in HBO. A similar proportion take more time to complete HAVO and remain in the final years of HAVO at this point. Over a quarter (27 percent) have gone on to an MBO level 3 or level 4 programme, while 14 percent move to the final years of VWO. This indicates that pupils who are advised to attend

Figure 1.1d Equality of opportunities in primary education

Discrepancy between final recommendation and test recommendation, in relation to parent's level of education (2009-2017)



Source: calculations based on microdata from Statistics Netherlands

HAVO constitute a very diverse group with a range of different capabilities and ambitions.

Differences in graduation rates and academic success

In MBO, the percentage of students who obtain a diploma has risen from 79 to 84 percent in recent years. Of MBO students, MBO level 4 students have the highest chance of obtaining a diploma (87 percent). Conversely, the chances of success are, on average, lower in HBO and HAVO. In HBO, 15 percent of students drop out in the first year. Of the students who remain in HBO after the first year, 61 percent go on to obtain their HBO degree within five years.

This percentage seems to have risen slightly in recent years. With regard to HAVO, less than half of all pupils obtain a HAVO diploma (or transfer) within five years. There are major differences between HAVO programmes and HBO programmes. Among university students, 71 percent of students (who re-enrol) go on to obtain their degree within five years.

Rising inequality of opportunities in recommendations following primary education has been halted

Figure 1.1d shows the relationship between the educational level of the parents and the recommendations issued following primary education. The figure shows the extent to which the teacher's recommendation deviated positively or negatively from the recommendation that would be expected on the

basis of the final test (the test recommendation) over the past nine years. The increasing discrepancy in the recommendations issued from 2009 onwards is clearly visible. Pupils whose parents had an HBO or university degree were issued with higher recommendations, while pupils whose parents had no diploma, or an MBO level 1 or MBO level 2 diploma, received lower recommendations over time. On the positive side, these differences have not increased any further in the last three years. Many primary schools have adapted their recommendation practices and now involve several colleagues in this process (Oomens, Scholten and Luyten, 2018). However, the discrepancies remain twice as high as they were nine years ago.

Rising inequality in the first years of secondary education has been halted

In the lower years of secondary education, more pupils are now moving up than are moving down for the first time (see Section 3). This mainly involves pupils whose parents have a lower level of education and pupils from a non-Western first-generation migrant background. Partly as a result of this, the trend towards rising inequality has also stabilized in secondary education. Inequality has stopped increasing because pupils whose parents have a lower level of education are increasingly able to cope (or to move up) compared to the level of the (primary) school recommendations issued. The position of pupils whose parents have a higher level of education has also

improved, but not as much as the position of pupils whose parent have a lower level of education. Here, too, the differences between pupils whose parents have completed a maximum of MBO level 2 education and those whose parents hold a university degree have stabilized. This is a positive development.

Equality of opportunities in upper secondary education

- Among pupils who receive a recommendation for VMBO-G/T, no less than 34 percent of those whose parents had a higher level of education went on to HAVO after 4.5 years, compared to just 12 percent of those whose parents had a lower level of education. Pupils whose parents had a higher level of education are also more likely to move up from HAVO to VWO for the later years (23 versus 8 percent). Of pupils whose parents had a university education and who received a recommendation for VWO, 87 percent had reached the final years of VWO 4.5 years later. For pupils who received the same recommendation but whose parents had a lower level of education, that proportion was only 61 percent.

Equality of opportunities in MBO, HBO and university

- MBO students whose parents have a MBO level 2 diploma or lower are less likely to obtain their diploma than students whose parents have a university degree. However, this difference has also stopped growing. The same applies to HBO programmes. In university education, there is hardly any difference in the drop-out rates of students whose parents have a higher or lower level of education.

Better opportunities for students from a migrant background

- Pupils and students from a migrant background are now at less of a disadvantage in secondary education, MBO and university education than they were previously. For example, fewer students from a migrant background are dropping out, and a higher percentage are obtaining their diploma. More recent cohorts are doing better than older cohorts of pupils and students from a migrant background. This is a positive development.

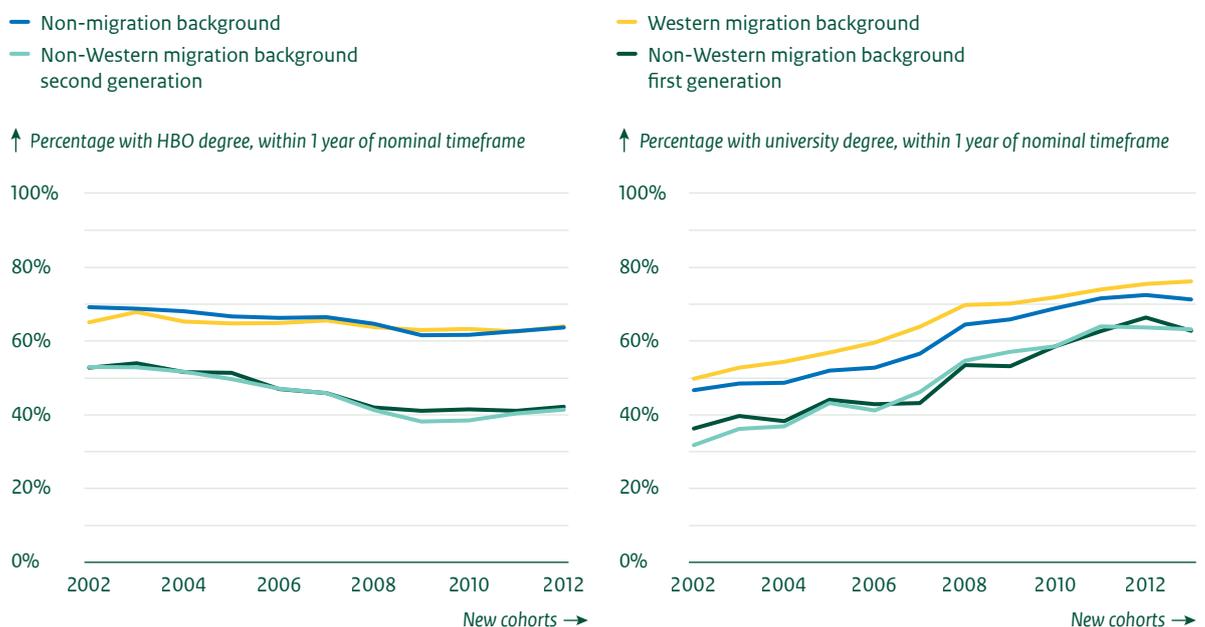
Difference in diplomas obtained in HBO persists

- In HBO, the difference in the numbers of pupils from migrant backgrounds and non-migrant backgrounds who obtain their diploma remains significant (Figure 1.1e). Students from a non-Western migrant background are 20 percentage points less likely to obtain their HBO Bachelor's degree within five years (42 versus 64 percent). This difference has been stable over the past three years, but remains relatively large.

Vulnerable pupils and students

- Another concern relates to pupils and students with a disability or special needs pupils and students. The number not attending school did not fall, and the number not attending school for an extended period (longer than three months) has actually increased in the last four years (OCW, 2019). Furthermore, far from all special needs pupils and students find a suitable place in the education system (also see Section 1.4).

Figure 1.1e Equality of opportunities in higher education
Graduation rate in relation to migration background



1.1.5 Knowledge and skills (qualification)

Performance in primary and secondary education from an international perspective

• Pupils in Dutch primary and secondary education perform relatively well compared to other countries. However, the relative performance of Dutch pupils in international studies has declined steadily over time. This is mainly due to a fall in the percentage of pupils who are performing well (from 50 to 37 percent) and the percentage of high-achieving pupils (from 12 to 4 percent) over the last 20 years (Inspectorate of Education, 2017).

In addition, there has been a sharp increase in the number of low achievers among pupils from the least privileged backgrounds (20 percent lowest socio-economic status) over the last 15 years. Almost half (48 percent) of this group of pupils do not perform well in maths; this number of low achievers is higher than the EU average. In 2000, this figure was only 13 percent in the Netherlands (Ridao-Cano and Bodewig, 2018, p. 89). The rate of low literacy among 14-year-olds in the Netherlands also increased between 2003 and 2015, from 11.5 to 17.9 percent (Feskens, Kuhlemeier and Limpens, 2016).

No insight into Dutch and numeracy attainment levels in primary education in 2018

• The purpose of the reference levels is to ensure that schools and educational programmes know whether every student or pupil in primary and secondary education meets the basic levels or target levels for Dutch and numeracy.

However, because the final exams for primary education cannot be compared, primary schools have no idea of the extent to which they have succeeded in providing pupils with the basic level and/or target level over the past year. Similarly, at the national level we do not know the current level of attainment in Dutch and numeracy for year-eight pupils.

Pass rates vary within types of education

• The secondary education exams also show what pupils know and what they can do. Successful pupils meet exam requirements, and thus also the final attainment levels for secondary education. Pupils who take the exam generally pass it (92 percent). However, pass rates do differ between the types of education, ranging from 88 percent (HAVO) to 98 percent (VMBO-B) of the pupils. In all types of school, pupils whose parents are HBO- or university- educated are more likely to pass than pupils whose parents have no basic qualification.

1.1.6 Reflections

Lack of consensus on standards • In some areas education in the Netherlands is doing well, while in other areas there are risks, and in certain important respects we do not actually know how we are currently doing. This raises the question of whether the standards in our education system provide enough clarity. We have a great deal of information about the extent to which we are meeting the requirements of the labour market and about aspects of selection, but we know little about social skills or cognitive and non-cognitive skills. This makes it difficult for teachers, school leaders and school governors to make the changes that may be required in this regard. There is also a lack of consensus on which standards are relevant. This is not a favourable situation for an effective education system to find itself in (OECD, 2016).

Skills for future-proof education • There is a national and international consensus that in the future the labour market will demand more flexibility from employees when it comes to learning new skills. A good level of skills will also be necessary to cope with the complexity of many of the jobs of the future. In addition, non-cognitive skills are important for future-proof education. These include providing the broadest possible set of skills, such as citizenship skills, motivation, creativity, problem-solving skills, (intercultural) communication skills and '21st century skills'.

Is our education system ready for the future?

• For future generations of pupils and students, clear standards in education are important. The fact that we are already seeing a number of cracks in the system (high and increasing levels of segregation, a steady decline in attainment, teacher shortages, differences between schools) means that these standards are increasingly important. That there are no standards for non-cognitive skills is a cause for concern (partly because these skills are likely to become more important for future generations of students and pupils). The lack of standards raises the question of whether education is sufficiently future-proof.

Consensus on equality of opportunities • In areas where there is consensus, teachers, school leaders and other stakeholders in the education system can achieve a great deal. A good example is promoting equality of opportunities. Although there are too many cases of inequality of opportunity, the rising trend has at least been halted. This is a positive first step. The many activities and initiatives undertaken by teachers, school leaders, school governors and regions to ensure better equality of opportunities seems to have brought this

negative trend to an end. This is a good example of what the education sector can achieve when there is a sense of urgency and a broad consensus that a particular issue requires joint action.

Lessons for supervision • This section also shows that a broader approach to quality is needed. This is something that the Inspectorate strives for in its supervision of the sector, but to some extent we do focus on those aspects that are currently measurable. This is reinforced through the focus on standards in institutional supervision. The Inspectorate will therefore examine how future-proof its own working methods are, in particular with regard to taking a broader approach to quality and the academic performance of pupils and students.



1.2 Variety and innovation

Increasing use of concepts and profiling • Teachers and school leaders often believe that education should have a broad range of goals and objectives. Schools and educational programmes differ in the areas that they choose to emphasize. Some schools emphasize providing a wide-ranging education, others emphasize preparing students for the labour market, while others emphasize socialization, or languages and maths skills. In recent years we have seen an increase in the number of concepts and profiles being offered, as well as new accents. To a large extent, this is about innovating within existing schools and programmes, but it sometimes involves establishing new schools and programmes too. As a result, education in the Netherlands now has many forms and variants in comparison to other countries, with a wide range of options for pupils and students.

More tailored education • We are also seeing more customization and more flexible learning pathways emerging within schools and educational programmes. This sometimes means specific pathways for particular groups of pupils and students, or it can mean offering extra educational packages (additional subjects or a broader curriculum). The aim of these programmes may sometimes be to facilitate educational transitions, such as the transition from VMBO to MBO or the transition from MBO to HBO (the AD programmes). Other tailor-made programmes have been introduced to ensure a more appropriate offering for pupils and students. For example, talented pupils and students may be offered a wider range of subjects and the option of taking exams in more subjects or at a higher level.

An overview of the provided education is lacking and evaluation is limited • At the same time, we are seeing that schools are frequently experimenting with the provision of additional education and/or different educational approaches. A rigorous system of evaluation is often lacking, however. Similarly, we do not know enough about the diversity of goals and the possible trade-offs between different goals. As a result, the contribution of schools to quality in the wider sense is often unclear, even to those who are directly involved.

Learning capacity in the field remains limited • Differing views on quality in education mean that innovation in the education system may not be as efficient as it could be. This means that the sharing of knowledge remains too limited. There is a good deal of support for a broader definition of quality of education. But for many schools, what this may mean for the education that they provide remains unclear. Due to the wide range of goals and approaches, successful innovations are only being shared to a limited extent. This is because these are context-dependent.

Limited access to new opportunities • A second risk that customization and profiling implies is that these opportunities are not available to all pupils and students. In secondary education, for example, HAVO and VWO pupils in larger cities can often access many additional options, but for VMBO pupils this is less common. Additional supply very often involves additional costs, over and above regular forms of education. Concept schools, meanwhile, often attract a specific group of pupils. Indeed, we are seeing that these schools can reinforce urban segregation in primary and secondary education. For subject cluster schools, on the other hand, the picture is less clear: some subject cluster schools reduce segregation, while others reinforce it.

1.2.1 Variety within the Dutch education system

The education provided varies significantly •

Schools in the Netherlands are not only free to decide for themselves how they organize their education, but also what they will teach pupils over and above the core objectives and final attainment objectives for primary and secondary education. Schools make use of this freedom in all kinds of areas. Sometimes they offer additional learning areas and skills, in line with the broader definition of quality. But equally this can involve in-depth specializations, such as technical education, or providing customization for specific groups of pupils and students. There are also schools that focus explicitly on the transition to further education or on our increasingly international and IT-oriented society. We also see differences in teaching for the core subjects (Dutch, numeracy/maths). For example, pupils aged 15 in VMBO-B and advanced vocational track of VMBO (VMBO-K) have an average of 190 minutes lessons in Dutch, but this can vary between 120 and 200 minutes. These variations are even wider when it comes to maths and the natural sciences.

The level of innovation is high compared to other OECD countries •

According to the OECD (2014), the Netherlands is one of the most progressive countries in the world when it comes to educational innovation. This relates to the innovations that are taking place in various fields, such as in the way that education is organized, the teaching methods adopted or the use of technology. More than in other countries, schools adopt new IT applications and there is increasing use of 'learning analytics'. Many experiments and pilots have been approved by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and are already underway. One example is schools that provide education specifically for children aged between 10 and 14.

New curricula are often focused on the future •

The wider range of education that is being offered shows that teachers, school leaders and school governors are thinking about what they want pupils and students to learn for the future. They often focus on the kind of new skills that children and young people will need to acquire in order to stay flexible in a rapidly changing and uncertain world. They are actively working on new curricula and there is a great deal of resilience in the system. For pupils and students, this means increased variety in their education, greater freedom of choice and the chance to see which type of schooling suits them.

Historical trends in educational concepts and profiles •

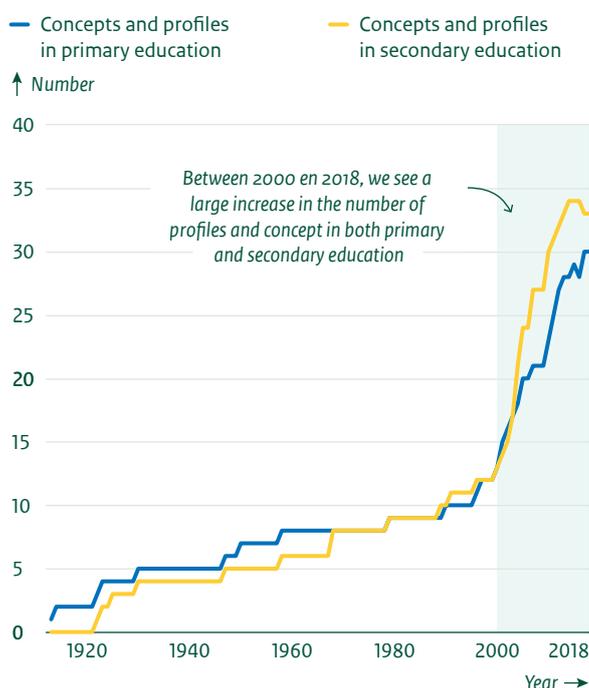
In the past, our education was organized mainly along the traditional denominational lines (public,

Roman Catholic, Protestant Christian and general special education). Since the year 2000, new schools have been set up that distinguish themselves mainly through the specific pedagogical-didactic concept that they apply, such as JenaPlan schools, Dalton schools and Montessori schools. After the Second World War, the first subject cluster schools emerged that consciously opted for a curriculum that offered more. Recent examples of subject cluster schools are technical academies (secondary education, since 2003), cultural subject cluster schools (primary and secondary education, since 2004) and media literacy schools (primary and secondary education, since 2005).

Increase in the number of concepts and profiles •

A growing number of schools and educational programmes are distinguishing themselves by improving and innovating the education that they provide. This includes all kinds of variety, and there is no national overview of all the different forms that are out there. Figure 1.2a shows the most well-known forms of profiling for primary and secondary education. This concerns schools that apply a specific educational concept (such as Montessori schools and Agora schools) and schools that provide additional options (such as technical academies and cultural subject cluster schools). Figure 1.2a shows the number of types of concepts and profiles in primary and secondary education for each year. We can see a

Figure 1.2a School profiles over time
Number of concepts and profiles in primary and secondary education



clear increase in the number of types of concepts and profiles over the last hundred years. It is also clear that the increase in the number of concepts and has been the most pronounced in recent years.

More pupils and students opting for concept schools and subject cluster schools • In addition to the increase in the number of profiles and concepts offered, the number of schools and number of pupils attending these schools are also on the rise. For example, the number of pupils at Steiner schools, international schools, technical academies and categorial gymnasiums has risen sharply.

More secondary schools offering tailored diplomas • In addition to a more diverse offering, the opportunities for tailored education are also increasing. For example, the number of secondary schools offering tailored diplomas is growing. The proportion of schools offering tailored diplomas rose from 21 to 34 percent in VMBO-B and from 12 to 27 percent in VMBO-K. There are fewer schools offering tailored diplomas for VMBO-G/T pupils and for HAVO pupils. This may also be due to the difference in the duration of their educational programmes and the facilities and resources available within the schools. The proportion of pupils who are studying for a tailored diploma remains limited: only 3.7 percent of pupils in the VMBO-B, 2.3 percent of pupils in VMBO-K, 0.1 percent of pupils in the VMBO-G/T and 0.3 percent of HAVO pupils.

More variation within MBO • There is also increasing variation in MBO programmes, such as crossovers between sectors. More customization is also available in order to meet the needs of adult students. This can be achieved, for instance, by offering more options in the duration of an educational programme and enabling those in non-publicly funded education to obtain a single certificate instead of a full diploma. This provides increased flexibility for adult learners. There is also targeted cooperation with the business community.

Growth in the range of educational programmes in higher education • In higher education, publicly funded and non-publicly funded institutions offered a total of over 4,300 full-time, part-time and work-study programmes in the 2017-2018 academic year. At the start of the 2018-2019 academic year, this total increased by over 100 programmes. The growth is mainly concentrated in publicly funded Associate Degree (AD) programmes and in Master's programmes, both within HBO and at universities. In addition, there are ever more alternative routes for pupils, such as the option to choose instruction in English or Dutch, online instruction and studying abroad. There are also pathways that are aimed at specific target groups, such as three-year VWO

programmes in HBO and tailor-made programmes for students who are already in relevant employment.

More variety in teacher training programmes • Within teacher training programmes, we are also seeing various initiatives to combat the growing shortage of teaching personnel. One example is the promotion of new access routes for people from outside education, such as 'career-switch programmes' (ZiB) and part-time programmes (OCW, 2018). In addition to ZiB programmes which have a duration of no more than two years, teacher training programmes also offer special programmes for those who already hold a degree and wish to retrain or undergo a refresher programme. Many part-time teacher training programmes are also experimenting with flexibilization in relation to learning outcomes. These are individually tailored programmes that can provide training to make education more attractive to adults who wish to combine studying with their work or family life.

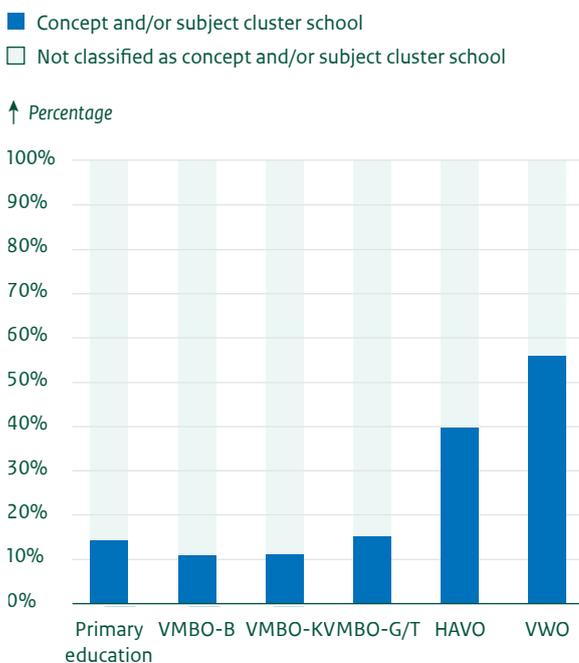
Not all innovation is permanent • Not all forms of innovation in education are retained; some innovations also disappear, such as *Iederwijs* (in 2014), *SlimFit/Innovation* and *impulse schools* (in 2015), *Leonardo schools* (in 2015) and *iPad schools* (in 2018). In some cases, schools may retain a discontinued approach or curriculum, or relaunch under a different name.

1.2.2 Access to educational variety

Secondary education profiles mainly benefit HAVO and VWO pupils in urban areas • The proportion of schools that have adopted a particular concept and/or profile is higher in secondary education than in primary education. In secondary education, we see that schools in HAVO and VWO are more likely to adopt a specific profile (Figure 1.2b). VMBO pupils have less access to subject cluster schools. In addition, subject cluster schools and concept schools are not distributed evenly across the whole country. The majority of primary and secondary schools that offer a particular pedagogical or didactic concept (such as Montessori schools) are located in more urban areas, and the same is true of subject cluster schools. Profiles that many schools have adopted, such as technical academies and bilingual education, are more widely distributed across the country (Figure 1.2c).

School costs often higher due to wider curriculum • The various types of subject cluster schools and concept schools regularly incur additional costs for the schools and/or pupils. For instance, the Science Orientation profile costs €6,000 per year.

Figure 1.2b Profiling in primary and secondary education
Proportion of concept and subject cluster schools in each type of education (2016-2017 and 2017-2018 academic years)



Bilingual education costs on average €400 per pupil per year in addition to the regular costs of schooling. Certain forms of customization are only offered by private schools, which means that the costs incurred by parents are higher still.

Schools offering a profile or concept attract different types of pupils • We regularly see differences between pupils who attend subject cluster schools and concept schools that we know about. For example, we see that pupils from Montessori, Jena Plan and free schools have, on average, parents who are better educated than the national average. Free schools also have fewer pupils from a non-Western migrant background. Meanwhile, Dalton schools, particularly in secondary education, have more pupils from a non-Western migrant background. With respect to subject cluster schools, we see a more variable picture. Top Sport Talent schools have more pupils whose parents have a lower level of education and more pupils from a non-Western migrant background. Bilingual education (TTO) schools tend to have above average numbers of pupils from a non-Western migrant background. At categorial gymnasia, there are above average numbers of pupils whose parents have a higher level of education than other VWO schools and departments.

Schools vary in the extent to which they reinforce segregation in primary and secondary education

Last year, we described how schools of various denominations contribute differently to socio-economic and/or ethnic segregation in urban areas (also see Boterman and De Wolf, 2018). We also see differences in the relative contribution to segregation of subject cluster schools and concept schools. Among the concept schools, we see that Montessori schools and free schools reinforce segregation according to the parents' level of education, while other concepts do not reinforce segregation. Primary education reinforces segregation relatively little, while in secondary education the effect is substantial. With respect to subject cluster schools, this picture is more varied. Bilingual education and technical academies reinforce segregation. Other profiles tend to reduce segregation, such as Science Orientation Netherlands (WON), Havisten Competent or Top Sport Talent schools.

1.2.3 Relationship with quality

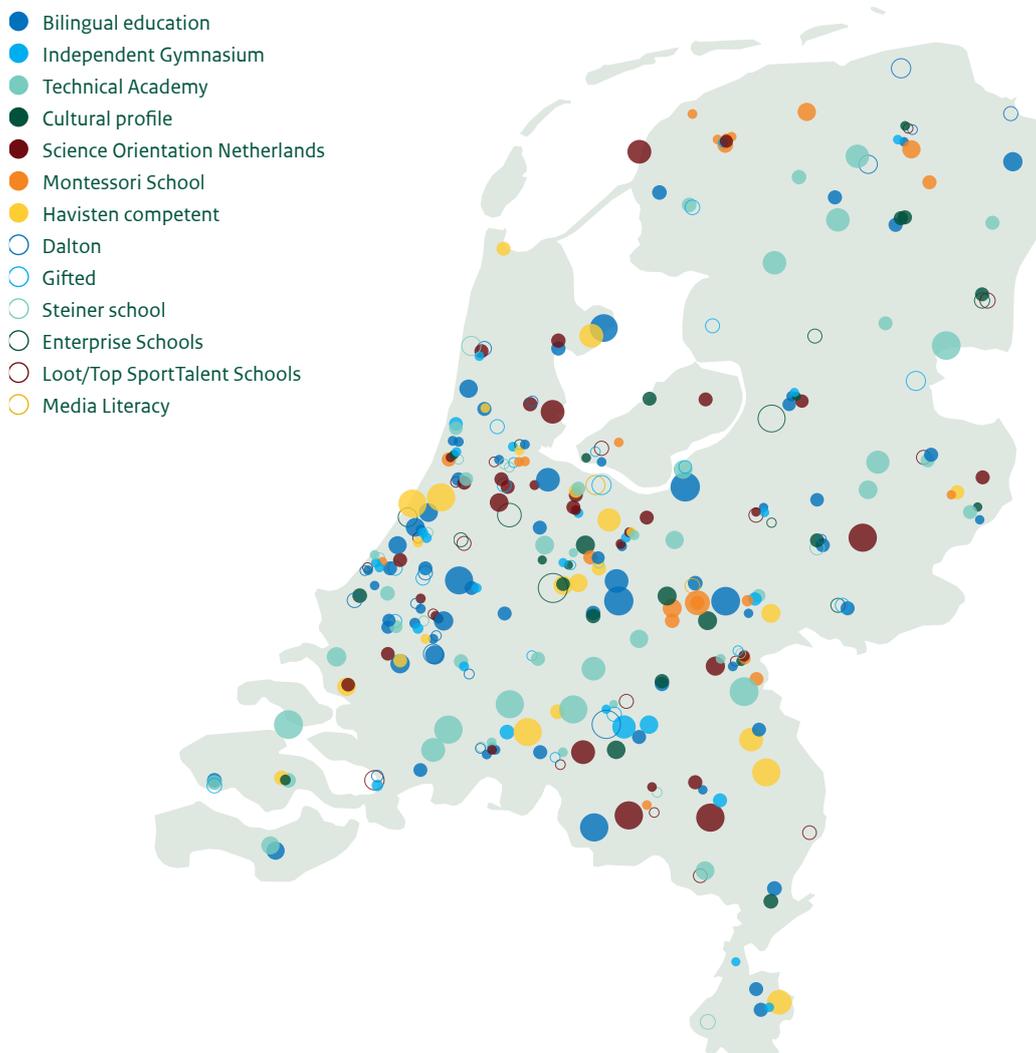
No clear picture regarding quality assessments

There is no strong indication that concept schools and subject cluster schools are less likely to meet minimum quality requirements. In primary education, over the last eight years concept schools were no more likely to be evaluated as 'poor' or 'very poor' than other schools. In secondary education, on the other hand, schools that currently offer a specific educational concept are more likely to have been evaluated as 'poor' or 'very poor' in recent years, especially Montessori schools. For subject cluster schools, we see a mixed picture. No categorial gymnasium has ever been evaluated as 'poor' or 'very poor' (up until 2018). VWO departments that offer bilingual education have also been evaluated as 'poor' or 'very poor' less often than average. Schools for Entrepreneurial Learning in HAVO and VWO, on the other hand, were more likely to be evaluated as 'poor' or 'very poor'.

The specific profile adopted by schools does not seem to explain the differences in their performance

As with all schools, subject cluster schools and concept schools vary greatly in terms of student performance and attainment. One notable statistic is that pupils at categorial gymnasia achieve their diploma within the officially prescribed timeframe less frequently than pupils at other schools. At the same time, we see that pupils at categorial gymnasia achieve significantly higher final exam grades for the national exam in English, but not in maths or Dutch. These differences also apply to pupils in the HAVO departments of Steiner schools.

Figure 1.2c Geographic distribution of profiles
Most common profiles and concepts in secondary education



Extra activities • Many concept schools and subject cluster schools have a charitable status ('foundation') or some other organizational status. They are more likely to offer activities and resources to support teachers and school leaders. This includes extra training for teachers, mutual or external inspections and systems to ensure that pupils' progress remains on track.

Implementation of innovations could be improved • Experimentation in schools and trialling new approaches play an essential role in improving education. Unfortunately, innovation does not always take place in a responsible and effective manner. It is always important to consider carefully whether pupils or students will really benefit from a particular new initiative. Inspectors regularly come across innovations that do not look particularly promising and, in some cases, innovations

that have already been shown to be ineffective. When it comes to innovation, caution and careful reflection are vital.

This means taking small, incremental steps, monitoring initiatives constantly as they are being introduced and evaluating them once they have been fully implemented. Looking specifically at subject cluster schools and concept schools, we see that almost half monitor the progress of pupils or evaluate the effects of their specific profile or concept. However, the quality of this monitoring often leaves something to be desired. Effectiveness based on theory is often taken for granted or evaluations are conducted within a very limited group of teachers or pupils. These evaluations provide some insight, but do not answer the question of whether the innovation actually represents an improvement. In addition, subject

cluster schools and concept schools do not always have a clear picture of their own objectives and whether they are actually achieving the goals identified, such as improved academic motivation or increased self-reliance.

1.2.4 Reflections

Plenty of scope for variety • Compared with other countries, the Dutch education system provides plenty of scope for schools to develop their own specific educational goals (OECD, 2016). There is also a notable ambition to focus on quality of education in a broader sense, and to innovate and improve. Due to schools' high degree of self-autonomy, there is also plenty of scope for experimental approaches in education. This enables schools to respond to new educational demands in the local context and to deliver tailor-made education. This trend has increased further in recent years. This is a major strength of the Dutch education system, which provides a varied range of education and significant freedom of choice.

Variety can lead to fragmentation • The increasing diversity of the education on offer demonstrates a premium that is placed on quality of education in a broad sense and an orientation towards the future. However, it also means that there are multiple interpretations of what constitutes good education. In the absence of frameworks and boundaries, this can lead to fragmentation, which can in turn stand in the way of improvements in education. Indeed, the OECD has already warned of a lack of consensus regarding quality of education (OECD, 2014). This can undermine the system of 'checks and balances'. In 2016, the Education Council pointed out that more effort should be made to ensure that the concept of quality is clearly understood by all, in an appropriate way. The purpose of this is to increase awareness in action (Education Council, 2016).

A shared vision is required • Future-proof education means a shared vision regarding the roles and objectives of education. The complexity that the future will bring requires a long-term vision of how the education system can and should respond. This is why collective reflection is needed. Reflection regarding the goals that we want to achieve together and the education that we want to provide for our children. This dialogue is in already full swing and the field is currently undergoing a transformation (e.g. PlatformOnderwijs2032, 2016; curriculum.nu; Education Council, 2016). The government has a major role and responsibility in guiding this process, in order to ensure that we arrive at a shared vision and make clear choices.

Effectiveness of schools and educational programmes requires more focus

• More action is also required to avoid an overly narrow interpretation of quality of education and to ensure that we innovate responsibly. In its recommendation, the Education Council (2016) set out a number of steps and parameters for achieving this. In addition to mapping out a clear vision and goals, schools should also work more cyclically. The professional development of teachers, school leaders and school governors is central to this. Our own research shows that there are particular issues when it comes to schools evaluating their own goals. There is also a lack of knowledge about what good evaluation is. There are many ways of assessing whether goals have been achieved. This varies from practice-oriented evaluations, which can be implemented relatively easily, to more scientific forms of evaluation.

Knowledge sharing and creating an ecosystem for innovation

• The acquisition and sharing of knowledge between schools and educational programmes has not yet become a matter of routine within the education system. This applies to cooperation between education and science, for example, in the form of information about 'what works' and to research into the effects of educational innovation. The government and science can help teachers, school leaders and school governors to adopt an evidence-based or evidence-informed approach to innovation. According to the OECD (2016), governments can ensure that an 'ecosystem of innovation' is in place. Knowledge sharing and (practice-oriented) research are key elements of this. This involves a high level of commitment from those working in the field. On the positive side, several such initiatives have already emerged in the Netherlands in recent years (Kennisrotonde NRO, the Durven, delen, doen initiatives and Leerlab2020 from the Secondary Education Council, academic workshops and professorships). Yet the gap between science and educational practice remains substantial for most teachers and school leaders.

Broader accountability at the school level

• Broadening accountability frameworks (to include all stakeholders) is an important incentive when it comes to promoting quality of education. This vision is based in part on the design of new methods of supervision. Formulating your own ambitions and working towards these is a key aspect of this. A further challenge is to ensure that schools make quality more transparent across the board. This means adopting a combination of quantitative and qualitative instruments and methods. The Inspectorate wishes to reward quality in the broadest sense. We are also looking at how we can contribute to (responsible) innovation, improvements in education and future-proof education.



Laagjes

Wat moet je doen?

1. Denk aan een vloeistof die zwaarder is dan water (bijv. olie).

2. Denk aan een vloeistof die lichter is dan water (bijv. alcohol).

3. Denk aan een vast lichaam dat zwaarder is dan water (bijv. een steen).

4. Denk aan een vast lichaam dat lichter is dan water (bijv. een stuk hout).

5. Denk aan een vast lichaam dat even zwaar is als water (bijv. een stuk ijzer).

6. Denk aan een vast lichaam dat even licht is als water (bijv. een stuk aluminium).

7. Denk aan een vast lichaam dat even zwaar is als alcohol (bijv. een stuk koper).

8. Denk aan een vast lichaam dat even licht is als alcohol (bijv. een stuk magnesium).

9. Denk aan een vast lichaam dat even zwaar is als alcohol (bijv. een stuk zink).

10. Denk aan een vast lichaam dat even licht is als alcohol (bijv. een stuk koper).

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1.3 Teachers and the shortage of teaching staff

Shortage of teachers poses a risk for education and for society • Good education is the cornerstone of our society. A shortage of teachers undermines not only the quality of education, but also society as a whole. Whenever quality is at issue, it immediately affects the future of our young people. The shortage of teachers is already a significant issue, particularly in primary education. Inspectors regularly hear that the workload at schools that are coping with staff shortages is simply too high and that teachers' and school leaders' job satisfaction is suffering as a result. In a system that is heavily reliant on individuals (teachers, school leaders, school governors), the effect of any shortage of staff is felt immediately in the workplace. It means there is very little time left to focus on improving quality. Affected teams have to focus all their efforts on simply keeping the school or programme running. The Education Council (2018) has also recently pointed out that the shortage of teachers poses a risk to the continuity and quality of education. It may lead to lessons being taught by teachers without the appropriate (level of) qualifications, groups of pupils being merged and rising workloads. The shortage of teachers is set to increase further in the coming years and will increasingly affect special education, secondary education and MBO. The Inspectorate takes into account that the shortage of teachers will eventually affect quality assessments in schools.

Shortage of teachers is unevenly spread • The shortage of teachers affects some areas of the country and some groups of pupils more than others. This means that it also poses a risk to the notion of equal opportunities for every child. Schools in the Randstad conurbation are experiencing the worst shortages, while in some other regions there are no shortages. Schools with more pupils from a non- Western migrant background have more difficulty in filling vacant positions. This applies both nationally and in the Randstad. Teachers are also distributed unevenly across the country. Teachers with a higher level of education tend to teach in schools with more children whose parents have a higher level of education. Similarly, teachers from a migrant background tend to teach in schools with more pupils from a migrant background. The latter tendency is not necessarily negative and can in fact positively influence educational achievement.

Future-proof solutions are needed • The shortage of teachers cannot be resolved by individual teachers, school leaders or school governors alone. However, many of the measures required are dependent on individuals, such as teachers who are willing to work longer hours or to teach merged classes, school leaders who are obliged to take on teaching duties and spend their remaining time recruiting staff for the school, and school governors who are obliged to change their school's recruitment and/or training policies. This is a concern and can sometimes have significant consequences in terms of workload, job satisfaction and stress. Some of the measures required, such as the use of underqualified staff, can have a negative effect on educational achievement. Ensuring that schools are attractive employers is an important factor when it comes to finding sustainable, long-term solutions to the teacher shortage. There are also many simpler steps that employers can take, such as reducing the workload wherever possible, improving career prospects and differentiating remuneration. Creating the right conditions is therefore important for the education sector to continue to be an attractive employer.

1.3.1 Shortage of teachers poses a risk to our education system

Shortage of teachers in primary education, secondary education, special education, special secondary education and MBO

• In the 2017-2018 academic year, primary education began with a significant shortage of teachers. The number of online vacancies in primary education increased by almost 50 percent in the 2017-2018 school year, compared to the previous year (Sapulete, Van de Pol, Vankan, Van Kerkhof and Jellicic, 2018). The number of online vacancies across all sectors was 23 percent higher than in the previous year. The number of vacancies as a percentage of education personnel across the country (vacancy rate) was 7.7 percent nationwide. This percentage does not provide a complete picture of the situation, however, as it only relates to online vacancies. The extent of online recruitment is likely to vary between sectors. The vacancy rate for primary education (5.9 percent in 2017) should therefore be viewed in that light. In secondary education, the vacancy rate for education personnel was 9.9 percent in 2017-2018 (Sapulete et al., 2018). The expected shortage of teachers in secondary education is mainly concentrated in physics, chemistry, mathematics, classical languages, German and computer science (Adriaens, Fontein and De Vos, 2018). In special education and special secondary education, the national vacancy rate in 2017-2018 was 8.6 percent. In addition, in 25 of the 30 special education schools with the specialization 'day care' surveyed, school governors reported problems in attracting sufficiently skilled and qualified teachers (see Section 4). In MBO, the vacancy rate for education personnel was 6.8 percent in 2017-2018 (Sapulete et al., 2018).

• In primary education, there is expected to be a shortage of 4,172 full-time teachers by 2023. That could rise to 10,370 FTE by 2028. In secondary education, the shortage of full-time teachers is expected to be 1,057 by 2023 and 1,641 by 2028. In MBO, the number of new teachers required is expected to rise from 952 teachers in 2023 to 997 teachers in 2028. (CBS/DUO/OCW, 2019a; 2019b; 2019c).

Shortage of teachers can undermine the quality of education The shortage of teachers has an impact on the daily work of schools. School leaders sometimes have to send pupils home because no teacher is available. This is always a last resort, of course, and in most cases, less drastic measures can be taken, such as splitting a class up or hiring a staff member who is underqualified. Sending pupils home has direct consequences not only for the children concerned, but also for parents and their

employers. Splitting up a class and reallocating pupils adds to the workload of the teachers involved. This workload is already perceived as relatively high compared to other sectors (CBS, 2018b; VOION, 2018a). The use of underqualified or inexperienced teachers can affect educational achievement. Pupils learn better from good teachers than from weaker teachers (CPB, 2016). Based on the data from the Inspectorate, it is not yet possible to establish a clear picture of the relationship between the teacher shortage and the quality of education, as assessed in relation to the quality standards. The Inspectorate will look into this matter further over the year to come.

Number of applications to teacher training programmes now rising again, after downward trend

• The number of new registrations in teacher training programmes rose by more than 10.6 percent in the 2018-2019 academic year compared to the previous year. There were 6,999 registrations in total, 673 more than in 2017. This is a positive development. For the full-time and part-time variant of teacher training programmes, the rise is 7.6 and 21.8 percent respectively. However, new applications are still below the 2014 level, when 8,212 students enrolled in a teacher training programme. A likely reason for this fall in applications is the introduction of requirements concerning previous education. The admission requirements are now tighter, especially for MBO graduates, which means that fewer MBO graduates are applying. In addition, HAVO graduates have not yet been able to comply with admission requirements by choosing the right subjects in their final exam package. There has been a slight recovery in numbers of applications since 2016 (Inspectorate of Education, 2018). This recovery has continued into 2017 and 2018.

Admissions to level one and level two teacher training programmes are down

• Admissions to level two teacher training programmes have been declining since 2014. The number of applications for these programmes fell by a further 5.0 percent compared to 2017-2018. However, there are significant differences between programmes. The fall in admissions was larger in subjects where there is already a shortage of teachers, such as German, computer science, physics, chemistry, classical languages, French and mathematics (8.8 percent), than in other subjects (4.0 percent). In 2018, 7,639 trainees embarked on a level two teacher training programme. About a third of trainees participate on a part-time basis. For the level two teacher training programmes, there was a rise in the number of applications of 6.8 percent, following a downward trend in the 2014-2017 period. This applies to both university teacher training programmes (ULOs) and the level one HBO Master's programmes. In 2018, 1,065 trainees were admitted to the ULOs (the one

and two-year programmes), while 606 students entered the level one Master's programme.

Number of admissions to career-switch programme is increasing • Alongside the regular accredited teacher training programmes, the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act (WHW, Article 7a) offers the option of a specific career-switch route into professional teaching (ZiB). The ZiB route consists of a combined training programme for school and teacher training. It is intended for people who hold a higher education degree and who are (or have been) working in a different sector. In 2014, there were 360 grant applications. This number has since increased, particularly in the last year. More than 900 applications were accepted in 2018.

1.3.2 Shortage of teachers is unevenly distributed

The shortage of teachers varies greatly between regions and sectors • It is at its most acute in the Randstad (Figure 1.3a). Schools in highly urbanized areas experience more difficulty in finding teachers and are more likely to search for staff by using job websites. The number of additional teachers required is also the highest in the Randstad: in 2017 the vacancy rate in primary education was 9.5 percent, on average. Outside the Randstad, the vacancy rate was 2.5 percent, on average.

Figure 1.3a Shortage of teachers per region
Vacancy rate as a percentage of teaching staff (2017-2018)

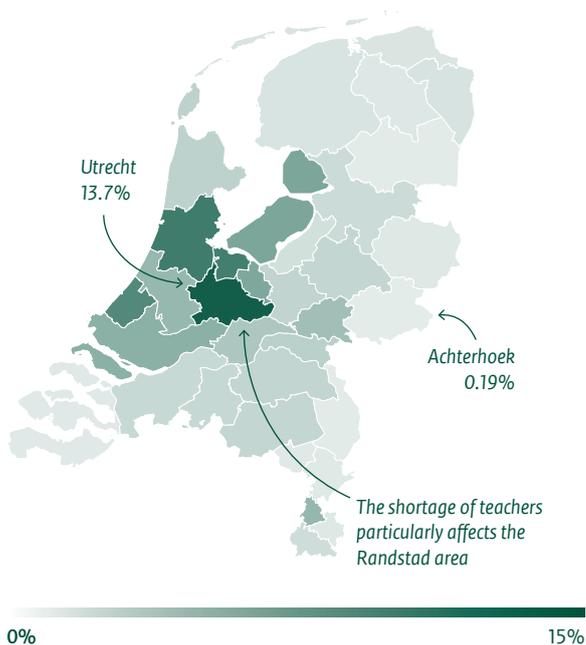
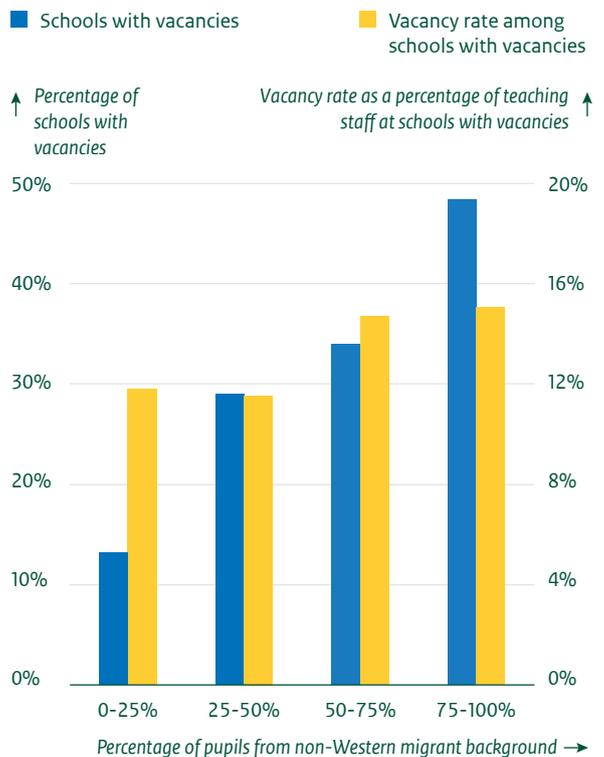


Figure 1.3b Shortage of teachers and school characteristics in primary education
Differences between schools that are looking for teaching staff



In secondary education, the difference between the Randstad and other areas was smaller: 11.8 and 7.1 percent respectively.

Shortage of teachers is more acute in schools with high numbers of children from a migrant background

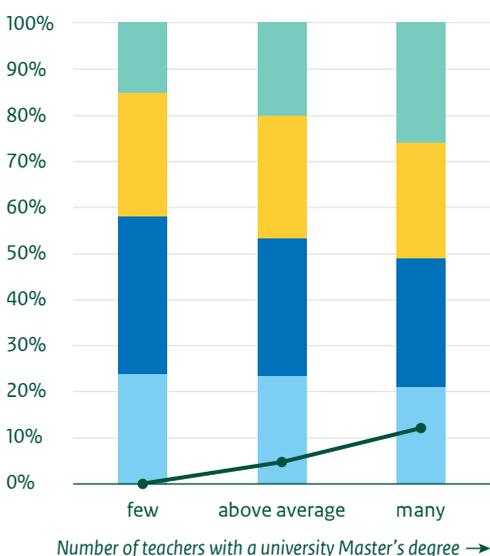
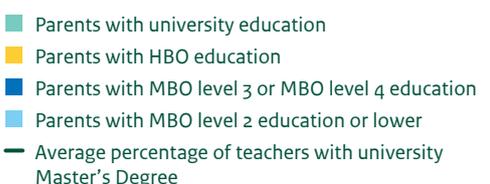
Not every primary school is affected to the same extent by the shortage of teachers. Schools with relatively more students from a non-Western migrant background are more likely to post job vacancies online and subsequently look for new teachers (Figure 1.3b). This applies both at the national level and in urban areas. It does not apply to schools with more pupils whose parents have a low level of education or are on lower incomes. The concentration of the shortage of teachers in particular schools and areas is concerning. It is a potential risk factor with respect to inequalities of opportunity across the Dutch education system.

Better educated teachers more likely to teach pupils with better educated parents

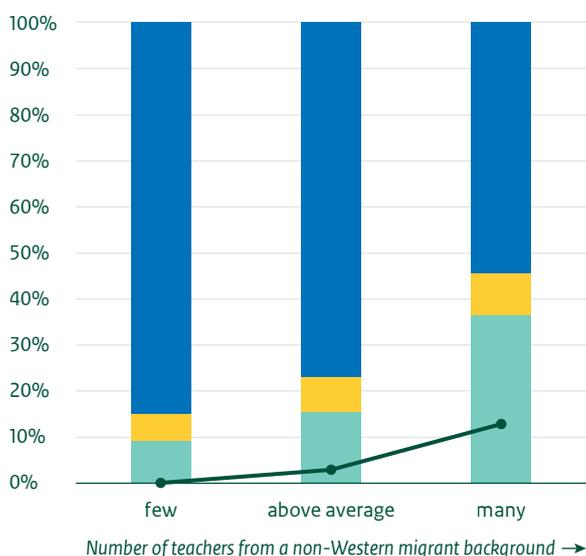
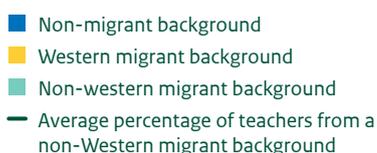
In primary education, teachers with a Master's degree from a university are more likely to teach in schools with a high percentage of pupils with better educated parents (Figure 1.3c). This is especially true in urban areas, and the trend has been increasing in recent years. This also occurs

Figure 1.3c Distribution of teachers between schools

Pupil population at primary schools with higher or lower numbers of teachers with an university Master's degree



Pupil population at primary schools with higher or lower numbers of teachers from a non-Western migrant background



in the various levels of secondary education; schools with a higher percentage of children whose parents are university-educated tend to have a higher percentage of teachers with a university Master's degree. It also applies in schools that offer a mix of programmes as well as to HAVO/VWO schools and categorial VWO schools. New teachers who have themselves completed VWO also tend to teach in primary schools with more children whose parents have a higher level of education. This trend has been further reinforced in recent years.

Teachers are more likely to teach pupils with a similar background to them

Teachers from a non-Western migrant background are more likely to teach in schools with more pupils from a non-Western migrant background. This applies to both primary education (Figure 1.3c) and to the various forms of secondary education, and the trend is strongest in urban areas and among new teachers.

For example, the percentage of children from a non-Western migrant background in schools with the fewest teachers from a non-Western migrant background is 9.3 percent, compared to 36.5 percent in schools with the most teachers from a non-Western

migrant background. New secondary teachers from a non-migrant background are more likely to work in schools without VMBO than teachers from a non-Western migrant background.

This is not necessarily bad for students. International scientific literature shows that students may benefit from teachers with a similar cultural background (Gershenson, Hart, Hyman, Lindsay and Papageorge, 2018; Egalite, Kisida and Winters, 2015). It is also interesting to note that nationally the percentage of teachers from a non-Western migrant background is low, at just 3.7 percent.

1.3.3 The education sector as an attractive employer

Ensuring that schools are attractive employers is the responsibility of multiple parties. In order to attract and retain people to work in teaching, it is important that education is an appealing sector to work in. Aspects such as pay, training opportunities, career prospects, permanent contracts, flexible working hours, scope for innovation and creativity, and workload all play a role in this. It is the role of the government to offer the

right conditions of employment and it is the role of the employer to translate those conditions into an attractive package. This area is the subject of increasing attention and there is an increasing willingness to take action.

Better teachers receive better remuneration • Schools manage to reward teachers whose students perform better - i.e. teachers whose students achieve better exam results also earn more. This effect is small but significant. Students of teacher teams with an average hourly wage that is 10 percent higher achieve an average of 0.013 points higher in the national final exam. In addition, teachers on higher salary scales have a positive effect on students' exam results. When the percentage of teachers in the LD salary scale increases by 10 percent at the expense of the percentage of teachers in the LB salary scale, the final examination results of students increase by approximately 0.01 points. Based on this (student fixed effects) study, we can exclude the possibility that this is due to the characteristics of the students or the school, but we cannot draw any conclusions about the effect of increasing teacher salaries on student performance.

Opportunities for growth do not depend on skills level alone • The starting salaries of teachers are consistent with those in comparable sectors, but later in their career there are increasing pay differences (Van der Werff, Biesenbeek and Heyma, 2017). This is particularly the case for teachers in the Randstad. There, the relative remuneration of teachers is lower because the cost of living is higher. Unlike in other European countries, teachers' progression to a higher level of performance does not depend only the level of skills and competences achieved. It is also linked to the number of staff places available at a particular school (Bogaard, Glaudé, Schenke, Weijers and Snoek, 2018). Furthermore, teachers are not required to take part in professionalization activities and schools are not required to draw up professionalization plans for their teams. In countries where this is a requirement, career progress is also coupled with promotion, salary increases or extra benefits.

Limited experience in implementing strategic HR policy • Linking HR policy to the vision and goals of the educational organization is central to a strategic HR policy. However, within the education sector there is limited experience in working with a strategic HR policy. The HR policy of most educational institutions consists chiefly of personnel management. It is based on administrative procedures. In almost half of all primary schools, the vision for education is not translated into concrete professional standards (Inspectorate of Education, 2013). When it comes to HR policy, a large

number of the educational institutions are guided chiefly by finding short-term solutions to immediate problems. There is a tendency to overlook the longer-term challenges, such as ensuring that the composition of the staff team is balanced (Education Council, 2006). By strengthening the strategic HR policy, school governing bodies can contribute to ensuring that the teaching profession is appealing, attract new teachers and retain those teachers who are already working for them.

High workload and absenteeism in education • Primary and secondary school teachers work an average of 4 hours a week in overtime. That is higher than in other sectors. In the care sector, employees work an average of 2.5 hours of overtime a week, and in public administration the average is 2.4 hours. In the education sector, employees are more likely to report that they work 'a lot and very hard' than employees in other sectors. Opportunities for staff to work at their own pace and to choose their own holiday leave are also more limited than in other sectors. Occupational burnout syndrome is more common in the education sector than in other sectors of the labour market (22.4 percent compared to 16.1 percent) (VOION, 2018b). A higher workload can ultimately lead to more absenteeism. Absenteeism in education is relatively high at 6.6 percent in primary education and 5.3 percent in secondary education. This also varies between schools and regions.

Less absenteeism and staff turnover at schools with children of higher socio-economic status • Absenteeism is lower at primary and secondary schools with a higher percentage of pupils with better educated parents and at primary schools with higher scores on the national final test (CET). In primary education, there is lower staff turnover among teachers in schools with more pupils with better educated parents. The perceived workload does not differ, with the exception of those suffering a burnout in primary education. The incidence of occupational burnout syndrome is higher among teachers in schools with a higher percentage of students from a non-Western migrant background and teachers in schools in less urbanized areas. These differences are relatively small, however, and may also be caused by differences between teams and/or educational leadership. When we look at differences in absenteeism and staff turnover between years within schools, there is no relationship with changes in the student population.

Underqualified teachers have a negative effect on academic performance • Underqualified teachers have a negative effect on exam results. Pupils' final grades decrease by about 0.04 points if the teacher team changes from 0 to 100 percent underqualified teachers.

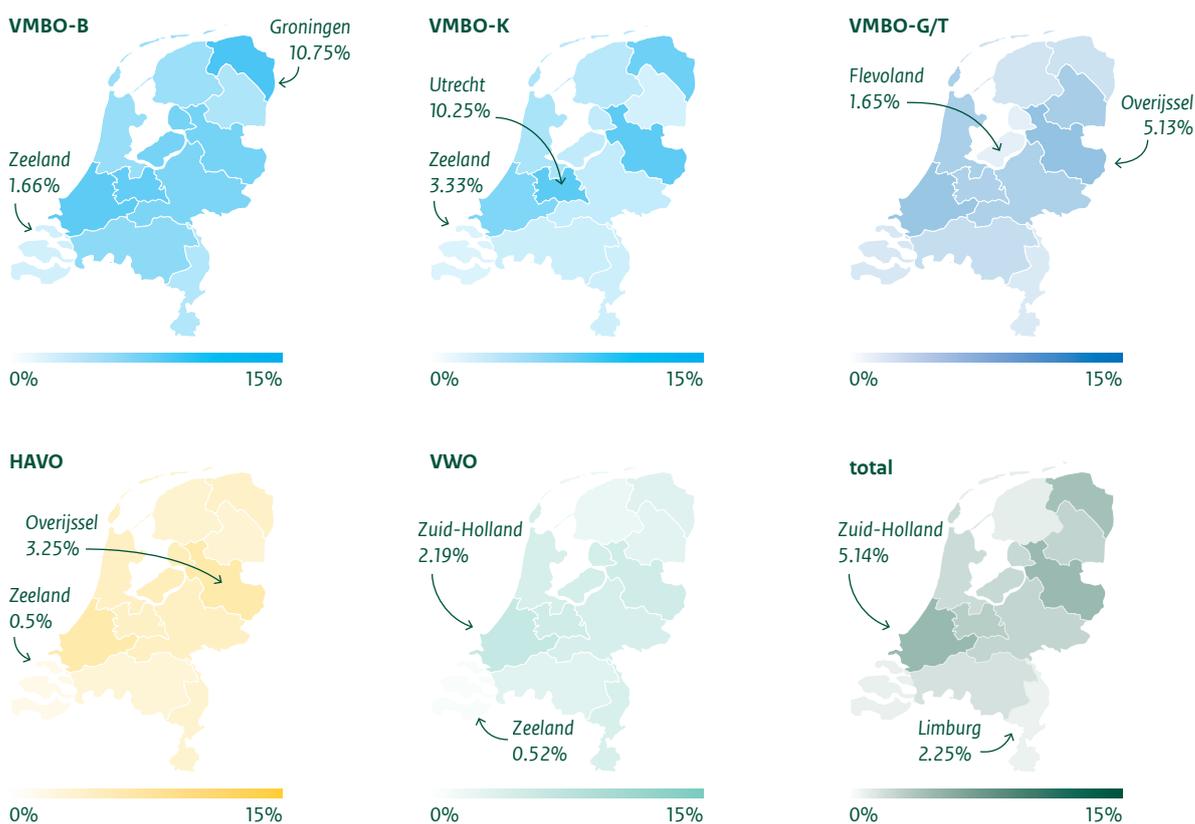
Here, too, both student and school characteristics have been taken into account. This is probably a conservative estimate: pupils also receive lessons from underqualified teachers in the years before the final exam. Every year, around 9,000 students (5.2 percent) in final exam classes are taught in at least one subject by a team of teachers who are all underqualified. In 2017, the percentage of underqualified teachers in primary education was 1.1 percent (DUO, 2018). In secondary education, 4.3 percent of the lessons were given by underqualified teachers. This is a particular issue in VMBO. In addition, 8.5 percent of lessons are taught by teachers who are not (yet) fully qualified to teach the relevant subject (Vloet, Den Uijl and Fontein, 2018). The number of lessons taught by underqualified teachers in VSO is around 92 percent (Fontein, Vloet, Den Uijl, Prüfer, Adriaens and De Vos, 2017).

Distribution of underqualified teachers adversely affects equality of opportunities • The fact that underqualified teachers have a small negative effect on students' exam results is bad news for equality of opportunities.

The number of underqualified teachers in secondary education is also unevenly distributed across different types of schools. More lessons are taught by underqualified teachers in VMBO (Vloet, Den Uijl and Fontein, 2018). There are also regional differences (Figure 1.3d). The percentage of lessons given by underqualified teachers is relatively high in Zuid-Holland, while the reverse is true in Limburg. Lessons are also more likely to be taught by underqualified teachers at schools with more pupils from a non-Western migrant background, while pupils from a higher socio-economic background are more likely to be taught by fully qualified teachers (OECD, 2018).

Level of education of teachers has no clear effect on student performance • Once a teacher has qualified fully, the level of his or her teaching has a clear effect on the academic performance of pupils in secondary education. The percentage of teachers in a teacher team with a Master's degree is not related to the pupils' final exam result. International research also shows that there appears to be no clear relationship between the educational level of teachers and pupils' performance. One exception to this is the small positive effect of

Figure 1.3d Lessons taught by underqualified teachers
Distribution by province (2016)



teacher training programmes in maths or engineering on maths results (Coenen, Cornelisz, Groot, Maassen van den Brink and van Klaveren, 2018).

Professional experience has a positive effect on pupils' performance • Previous research has shown that it is above all teachers' previous professional experience that plays a decisive role in pupils' academic performance (Coenen et al., 2018). This effect is also visible in the Dutch education system. Pupils perform better in their final exams when the percentage of teachers with 6 to 10 years of experience increases and when there are fewer teachers with 0 to 5 years of experience. These results are consistent with the findings of Gerritsen, Plug & Webbink (2017). Other characteristics of the teacher team, such as the percentage of teachers from a migrant background and the percentage of teachers who work more than 0.8 FTE, have no clear association with the final examination grade achieved by pupils.

1.3.4 Reflections

The sense of urgency varies between regions • The shortage of teachers represents a major risk to the education system and to equality of opportunities for pupils, and is expected to rise sharply in the coming years. The sense of urgency among school leaders and school governors in this regard is concentrated mainly in the regions affected. School governing bodies in areas where the shortage is less severe are devoting less attention to this issue. School governing bodies that have already been affected are putting a range of measures in place to tackle the teacher shortage in the short term. However, school governors and school leaders indicate that resolving the shortage in the short term is demanding so much of their time and manpower that it is difficult for them to develop a longer-term approach. It seems that school governors and school leaders who have not yet been affected by this issue are doing little to prepare for any future shortage. For example, there have been no moves towards regional cooperation, nor any moves towards a more strategic HR policy for the future to help address longer-term requirements.

All too often, solutions depend on individual actors • The shortage of teachers cannot be resolved by individual teachers, school leaders or school governors alone. Yet many of the short-term measures that are now being taken depend on individuals, such as teachers who are willing to work longer hours or to teach merged classes, school leaders who are obliged to take on teaching duties and spend their remaining time recruiting staff for the school, and school governors who need to change their school's recruitment and/or training policies. This situation is not sustainable and relies too much on

appealing to the responsibility of the individuals who work in our education system. In areas where there is cooperation between governing bodies from all sectors, teacher training programmes and local government, such as in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, more coherent measures that focus on the longer term are in place. However, establishing effective regional cooperation is no easy task. Central government and local authorities can facilitate such cooperation by bringing parties together and providing them with information, expertise and financial support.

Sustainable solutions for a future-proof education • A sustainable solution to the shortage of teachers will require cooperation between multiple parties, including schools, school governing bodies, teacher training programmes, local authorities and national government. This would enable the burden of responsibility for solving the shortage to be shifted away from individual staff members, so that all parties can work towards solutions for a more sustainable education system. It will require a careful, multi-year evaluation of the measures taken. On the one hand, any risks to the quality of education must be mitigated and on the other hand, the sharing and dissemination of successful, future-proof initiatives must be facilitated.



1.4 Vulnerable pupils and students

Education for vulnerable pupils and students is an extra challenge • Vulnerable pupils and students do not always have an easy time in our education system. They may find themselves unable to achieve their full potential in a system with a high degree of freedom of choice, segregation, challenging learning pathways, selection and an emphasis on cognitive skills.

At the same time, a good education is particularly important for vulnerable pupils and students, and the government has a major responsibility to ensure that they receive this. In some respects, this is already a challenge and this challenge will only grow if our education system comes under further pressure.

Limited training for the labour market • Vulnerable groups of pupils and students still find it difficult to find a place in the labour market. For example, only a quarter of pupils in special secondary education (VSO) find a job that is consistent with their profile within one year. Students with an entry diploma and those who drop out of MBO are also less likely to find employment than other MBO students, even during this period of economic dynamism. It also seems that the labour market is not very accessible to vulnerable pupils and students. While teachers in VSO and VMBO are increasingly preparing these young people for participation in the labour market, too often employers fail to do their bit.

Switchers, drop-outs and 'invisible students' • A small proportion of pupils and students do not attend (publicly funded) education or switch to private education. These are pupils and students who have dropped out of regular education, who are sitting at home, or who have found a place in a combined education or care programme (such as at a care farm) and/or who have switched to non-publicly funded education. In 2018, there were slightly more pupils and students in this situation than in previous years. In many, but not all cases, these pupils and students have found an appropriate place after searching for a longer or shorter period of time. For them, a good teacher or supervisor can make the difference between taking part in education or dropping out.

Inclusive education is not enough on its own • The availability of inclusive education has not yet led to more pupils and students with specific support needs finding a more appropriate place in the education system. In some cases, inter-institutional partnerships continue to look for the best place for certain groups of students. This applies particularly in the case of pupils with more complex problems, who also require youth welfare support. Some partnerships mainly look for such a place in special education (SO) and special primary education (SBO), another area of the regular education system. The options available vary considerably from one region to another. These differences are partly due to differences in the support provided, but we do not know enough about this. It is also often unclear what the best option is for pupils and students. Notably, some schools are reluctant to accept students with complex support needs and a frequently mentioned reason for this is the associated workload. In some of these partnerships, resourceful and experienced professionals succeed in working towards a demonstrably good functioning partnership, which is an example for others to follow.

1.4.1 The state of education for vulnerable pupils and students

Access to the labour market remains too low for vulnerable groups • Pupils and students are prepared as fully as possible to move on to a suitable place when they leave the education system. This may be a place in the labour market (possibly a sheltered workplace) or a place in day care.

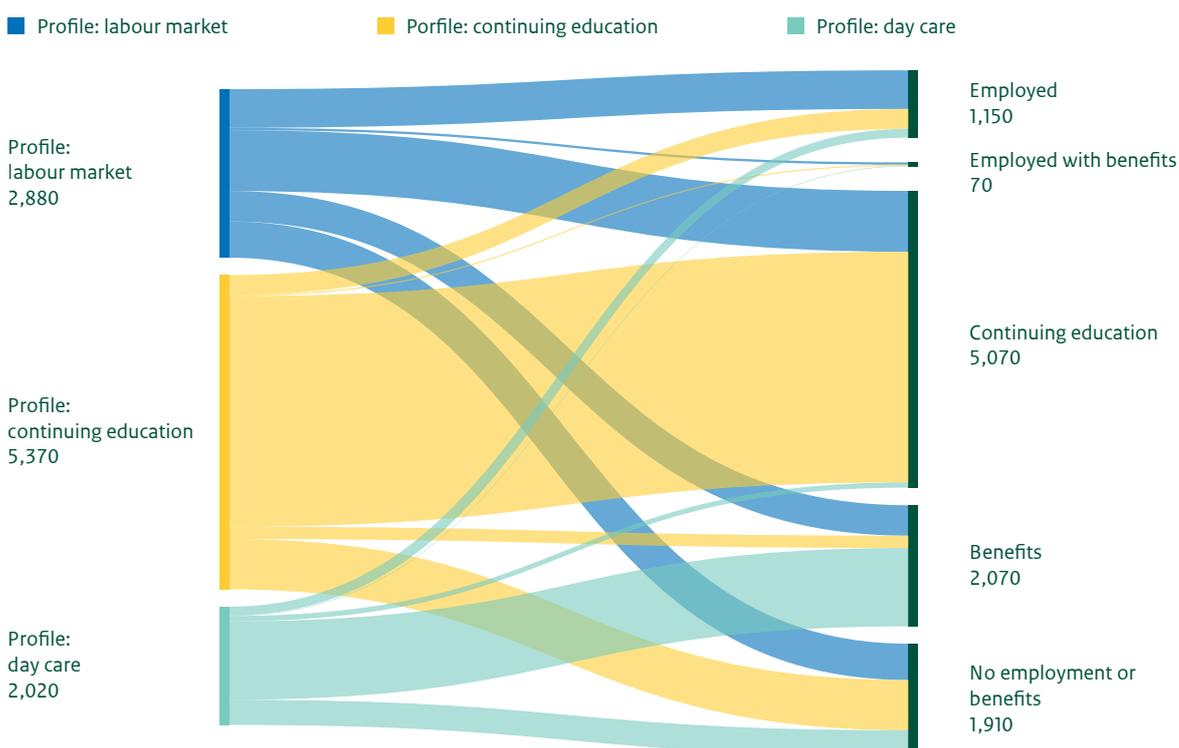
Within VSO, there are specific learning pathways (destination profiles) for both programmes: the labour market destination profile and the day care destination profile. The percentage of young people who actually find a job or a position in day care after completing the VSO training is relatively low (Figure 1.4a).

Limited employment prospects for those leaving VSO • Less than a quarter (24 percent) of young people who leave VSO with the labour market destination profile find a suitable job. Some 40 percent of these young people are unemployed and do not (yet) receive benefits when they leave VSO (Figure 1.4.a). Compared to the previous year, the percentage of young people in work did increase (from 20 to 24 percent). This trend is positive, but the low percentage also indicates that the labour market is not open enough to these young people, many of whom are vulnerable.

Better prospects for transfer within education system • After VSO, one in three young people with a VSO labour market destination profile opted for further education, often moving on to an entrance programme in MBO. This amounts to 3 in 4 young people in the subsequent education destination profile. Nearly 40 percent of the young people who began started an MBO entrance programme after VSO later moved on to an MBO level 2 programme. This is a significant proportion of VSO students. Moving to MBO level 2 is not a feasible goal for every VSO student, however. The transition from an often small-scale VSO school to a large regional education centre (ROC) is therefore not always a smooth one. In addition, an increasing number of pupils register for an entrance programme without having positive advice from their VSO school. These pupils are not always admitted to the entrance programmes, even though there are no entrance requirements.

Employment prospects after entrance programme also limited • For some of these young people, the entrance programme is an opportunity to move towards employment. But here, too, their employment prospects are limited and the likelihood of unemployment is much greater than, for example, students who have completed MBO level 2 (8 percent unemployment, see Bles and Meng, 2018). This is partly because the entrance

Figure 1.4a Subsequent success of pupils leaving special secondary education (VSO)
Position after VSO, by subsequent destination



programmes have no requirements with respect to basic qualifications, which reduces the employment prospects of students in the entrance programme.

After all, employers increasingly look at whether someone has a basic qualification (CPB, 2018). In addition, the practical training and programme of supervision within the entrance programme has not been developed explicitly to provide this. There are some interesting initiatives at ROCs for partnerships between business, education and local government. The aim of these initiatives is to support students through the transition between education, the employment market and work.

VSO day care destination profile pupils sometimes risk falling between two stools • Most pupils exiting VSO with the day care destination profile receive benefit payments after leaving school, sometimes in combination with a form of day care. Schools indicate that, according to local government, some pupils who would previously have gone on to a social work facility are now eligible for a sheltered workplace. However, there are not always enough sheltered workplaces and when there are, they are sometimes too demanding for these young people. These young people run the risk of falling between two stools.

1.4.2 Children who are not in school or who drop out of school

The number of young people not in the education system is rising • This applies to pupils and students who are not enrolled in a school for more than three months (absolute absence) and who fail to attend school without a valid reason (long-term relative absence). The number of young people in this situation has increased since the introduction of inclusive education in 2014. In 2013-2014, there were 3,254 such persons, and in 2017-2018 there were 4,479 of them. The increase over the past year is entirely due to absolute absenteeism. Long-term relative absenteeism did not increase between 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 (OCW, 2019).

More exemptions based on concerns about local schools • The number of exemptions from education has increased sharply in recent years, from 12,952 in 2013-2014 to 15,477 in 2016-2017. This number fell for the first time in 2017-2018, to 15,357 (OCW, 2019). There are three types of exemptions from the requirement to be enrolled at a school: (1) if a child is psychologically or physically unable to take part in education; (2) if parents have concerns about the education provided at all the schools within a reasonable distance of their home address and (3) if a child is enrolled in a school in another country. Only the second category - an exemption based on concerns about local schools - has increased, from 813

students in 2016-2017 to 931 students in 2017-2018 (OCW, 2019).

Small rise in number of students leaving MBO early • After a few years of a falling slightly, this year the national percentage of those leaving MBO early rose slightly again, from 4.8 percent to 5.2 percent. This increase occurred at all levels, with the exception of level 1. This trend was also partly related to the improving labour market. In times of economic growth, such as ten years ago, we saw that more employers were recruiting young people before they had obtained their diploma. In sectors where there is a shortage on the labour market, such as technology and care, this is known as the 'green harvest'. Some programmes have responded to this by, for example, scheduling some of the practical training at the end of the programme.

Limited overview of vulnerable groups of students • We know little about those not in education and those who leave school early. We know that they are not enrolled in publicly funded education, but we do not know how they do spend their time. Some of them are sitting at home, some are working and some will have switched to non-publicly funded institutions. Because these are often vulnerable pupils and students, a better insight into this group of young people would be desirable.

Fewer students receive education in an open treatment setting • The number of young people in an open treatment setting fell sharply between 2010 and 2018. Some of these are following a programme in secondary education or VSO on a temporary basis. Within secondary education, the number fell from 7,560 students in 2010 to 4,114 students in 2018. This is because the duration of treatment is becoming ever shorter. Since the introduction of the new Youth Care Act in 2015, more pupils have also been treated in a home setting. This allows them to remain at their own (regular) school more often.

1.4.3 Inclusive education

All students have the right to good education • Inclusive education means that every child gets an education that matches his or her abilities and qualities. By law, all children have the right to good education, even those who need extra support. The law makes schools responsible for ensuring that this is the case. Schools for regular education, special primary education and special secondary education work together in partnerships, in order to fulfil their duty of care as fully as possible.

Referrals to SO and SBO vary between partnerships

The number of pupils in special education (SO) rose again in the 2017-2018 academic year. SO therefore has the same number of pupils, in relative terms, as when inclusive education was first introduced. There are major differences between partnerships when it comes to the frequency of referrals to SO. For primary education partnerships, the percentage of pupils in secondary education varies between 0.6 and 3.0 percent. In secondary education, the variation is greater, between 1.4 and 7.1 percent. Between 2014 and 2018, we also see differences in the percentage of referrals: the percentage is stable for some partnerships, and rising or falling for others (Figure 1.4b). Compared with the situation before the introduction of inclusive education, regional variation in the number of referrals to SO has increased.

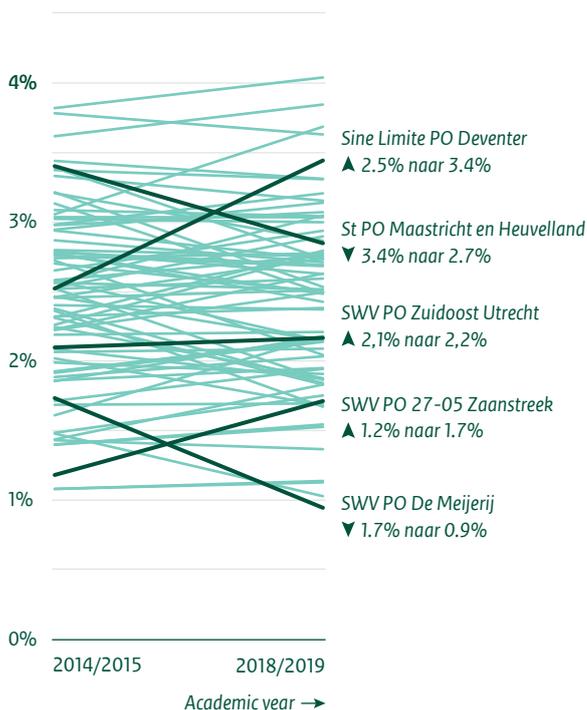
A suitable place for every student? Referrals to SO depend largely on assessments made by individuals in the child's immediate environment, such as the teacher, the parent and the partnership. There are no clear national criteria for referrals to SO. In many cases this is not a problem, certainly when professionals want to make sure that every pupil has a good and appropriate place. However, for some students the system does not

work as it should. This can sometimes include distressing cases. Within mainstream education, there is limited knowledge regarding which students are receiving which form of support. As a result, it is impossible to draw conclusions about whether they are receiving appropriate support. Better registration of pupils' development prospects is required, including a statement of the reason for that support and the form of extra support provided to each pupil.

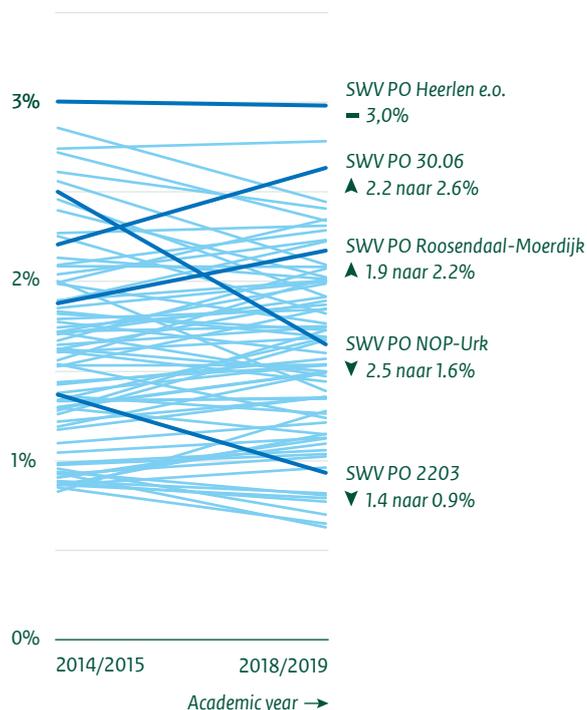
Dividing line between basic and additional support is sometimes unclear Schools within a partnership draw up a support plan regarding which support they provide for pupils in regular education. This relates to both the basic support for all pupils and extra support for certain pupils within mainstream education. The Inspectorate has found that the description in the support plan is not always clear. As a result, it is often unclear which basic and additional support is provided within mainstream education. This becomes an issue for schools when it comes to providing inclusive education, and parents are not always clear about which support their children are entitled to. In addition, we have noted that the content of the support plan does not always correspond to the support that is provided in practice. Sometimes schools do not keep a record of all the support that they provide

Figure 1.4b Differences in placement of pupils in special (primary) education
Percentage of pupils in SBO and SO for each primary education partnership

Special primary education



Special education



or, conversely, they do not always provide the support outlined in the support plan.

Differences in the range of support between and within inter-institutional partnerships • There are significant differences in the definitions and details of basic support between, but also within, partnerships (Heim and Weijers, 2018).

Our inspectors have also noted that schools within the same partnership cannot always offer the same basic support. This is problematic. Pupils within the same partnership are entitled to the same support.

Partnerships seek to limit differences in the support services that they provide through networks of internal supervisors and support staff. These could be reinforced further. Differences in support between schools within a partnership can occur for a range of different reasons. Firstly, the definitions of basic and additional support may be unclear.

In addition, the basic support provided may be too wide-ranging. Schools have a good deal of freedom in the way they provide support. Finally, factors such as high workload and teacher shortages can lead to differences.

Quality assurance and governance in development •

Progress on quality assurance within partnerships has been positive in a number of respects in recent years. For example, partnerships have a better overview of key statistics (number of pupils in each type of education and the number of pupils not in education). In addition, we have seen improvements in relation to certain procedures, such as the referral of pupils for additional support. The partnerships are also increasingly pursuing joint policies thanks to better administrative cooperation. Nevertheless, quality assurance often continues to leave room for experimentation with no clear justification. Not all partnerships have set up a system for monitoring and evaluation. They do not always formulate quality objectives and do not always adhere to the guidelines for providing basic and extra support at schools. Partnerships need to develop their objectives in greater detail and ensure that these are measurable. Finally, governance is an area that requires further attention, in particular with regard to ensuring independent supervision. Partnerships must be able to demonstrate how they function and monitor themselves.

Better accountability is needed with respect to the resources used and the results achieved. Closer cooperation with and between school governing bodies could help to achieve this.

Partnerships in youth welfare support are a

bottleneck • For pupils with complex problems, cooperation between different parties is essential. Professionals in education, childcare and youth welfare support, as well as the pupil and the parents, look at what is required to accommodate the young person's need for support. Local government has responsibilities in the field of (commissioning) youth welfare support services. It provides the link between education and youth welfare support. In practice, this cooperation is not always handled adequately (Van der Grinten, Walraven, Kooij, Bomhof, Smeets and Ledoux, 2018). This is usually because one or more of the following success factors has not yet been realized: a joint vision, clarity regarding roles and responsibilities, shared expertise and professionalization, communication between the parties, knowledge of other parties' capabilities and working methods, insight into the quality provided, connections with existing networks, and practical parameters such as sufficient budget and time (Smeets and Van Veen, 2018).

Learning capacity partnerships in development •

The learning capacity within partnerships is growing, partly through better cooperation between school governors. A number of partnerships succeed in doing so, while some do not. In order to enhance learning capacity, school governors need to work together more closely. Schools could learn more from one another. On the whole, sharing knowledge is still too limited. Since the introduction of inclusive education, numerous knowledge networks have been established by partnerships, especially for internal supervisors, support coordinators and inclusive education supervisors. However, there are far fewer knowledge networks that teachers can take part in.

1.4.4 Vulnerable students together

Vulnerable students sometimes grouped together in particular schools or educational programmes •

In particular schools or educational programmes, a lot of vulnerable students are grouped together. Multiple factors such as poverty, language-learning difficulties and learning and development problems may all coincide at these schools. This applies, for example, to many entrance programmes, certain practical schools, some SO and VSO schools and some locations for newcomer education. We also see a strong concentration of underprivileged pupils in a small number of primary and secondary schools, as well as in certain MBO programmes at various levels. In all these cases, this poses a major challenge for teachers, programmes and school leaders. Often, these are also the schools and programmes where teachers are struggling with a high

workload and where the shortage of teachers is at its most acute.

Further development of entrance programmes is required • The still new entrance programmes require further development as part of the safety net for vulnerable young people and the elderly. The target group for entrance programmes is very diverse. In addition to (sometimes still young) unqualified students from various levels of secondary education, new students also include those from practical education (PRO), VSO, the international bridging class (ISK) and post-initial students, including those entitled to benefits and status holders who are (re)integrating. More and more pupils from PRO and VSO are also joining entrance programmes without a positive recommendation from their previous school. It appears that placement in an entrance programme is, in practice, not entirely free of barriers. Legally permissible candidate students are not always admitted. Teams determine whether candidates can be placed on the basis of a range of criteria and their own experience. In addition, whether an entrance programme is actually the most suitable form of MBO is a question that is rarely considered. Some drop-outs from secondary education and pupils from international bridging classes could be placed at higher MBO levels, on the basis of their abilities.

1.4.5 Reflections

Limited employment prospects • Despite the low rate of youth unemployment in the Netherlands, the labour market is not equally accessible to everyone. There are areas within our education system where providing a good link to the employment market has not yet been achieved: the lower levels of MBO, VSO (labour market destination profile) and PRO are examples of this. This means that these students are particularly vulnerable. Even where their talents can be developed through education, social provisions are being scaled back and employers are not always willing to invest in them as employees. If the labour market experiences a downturn in the future, the employment prospects for this group are likely to deteriorate further. For this reason, it is important to work on future-proofing right away, during the economic good times, by creating better connections between education and the labour market for these groups.

Conditions not always favourable, with large differences • The question of whether our education system succeeds in developing the talents of vulnerable pupils remains unanswered. Sometimes, the conditions for doing so are unfavourable. Due to segregation in our education system, in some places we see a concentration

of pupils with all kinds of problems, such as poverty, language-learning difficulties as well as learning and development problems. This poses a great challenge for the teachers working at those schools. They do not always receive the extra help that is needed to address this challenge properly. Vulnerable pupils who need additional support can be found throughout the system, even where the problems are not concentrated. Although conditions are more favourable in the latter areas, it seems that the need for support is not always being met. We cannot be certain though: we do not know enough about these pupils, their support needs and the extent to which our system succeeds in offering them a suitable place in the education system. However, we do see indications that there are major regional differences.

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