



Czech School
Inspectorate

**Interim Report
on the Integration and
Education of Ukrainian
Children and Pupils**
Summary

2021/2022

Interim Report on the Integration and Education of Ukrainian Children and Pupils

Summary

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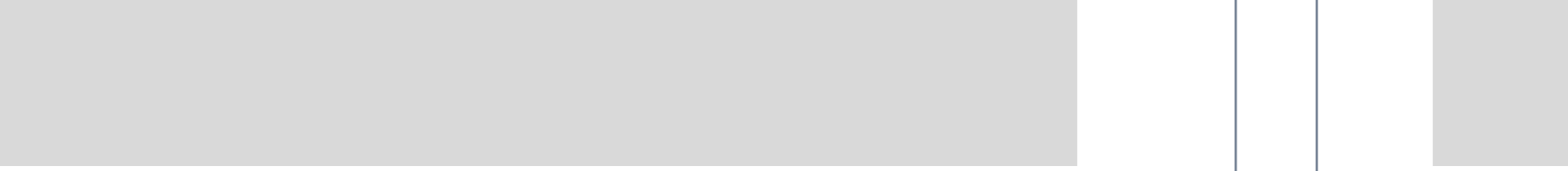
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Introduction

1 INTRODUCTION

Regardless of its causes, migration is one of the most important social issues of our time. For the continent of Europe, the importance of this issue has been highlighted in the last decade in the context of two refugee crises linked to the sudden arrival of high numbers of migrants from North Africa, the Near East and the Middle East in 2015 and 2016, as well as many war refugees from Ukraine as a result of the military aggression of the Russian Federation in 2022. The first of these crises was relatively insignificant in terms of its impact on the Czech Republic, but the second significantly affected many areas of the Czech population's life. Education forms a very important and specific context of assistance and support for Ukrainian children and pupils who will be staying in the Czech Republic for some time.

Naturally, the Czech School Inspectorate has also responded to the urgent need to pay great attention to the important issues regarding the education of child refugees from Ukraine. Taking into account the development of migration events resulting from Russia's war aggression in Ukraine and the context of related activities carried out in the area of education, youth and sports, the Czech School Inspectorate has adjusted the priorities of its work until the end of the 2021/2022 school year and has given significant methodological attention, support and staff capacity to selected schools (especially basic schools) with the aim of helping them on the spot to cope with the challenging situation related to the entry of Ukrainian children and pupils in the Czech education system, their integration, and the sustainable education of mixed groups of Czech and Ukrainian children and pupils.

In order to prepare this methodological support, the Czech School Inspectorate worked with the competent departments of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, the National Pedagogical Institute of the Czech Republic and relevant non-profit organisations. The focus of this support is mainly on the teaching of Czech as a second language, on working with children and pupils with a different mother tongue, on the adaptation of children and pupils, on psychosocial support for children and pupils and, of course, also for teachers, and on the individualisation and differentiation of education both towards Ukrainian children and pupils and towards all other children and pupils who are educated together in schools.

Therefore, from April 2022, the Czech School Inspectorate started to carry out methodologically oriented visits to schools with a higher number of Ukrainian children and pupils and, based on a comprehensive assessment of the situation in a particular school, including discussions with the school management and teachers, started to help schools on the spot to address the issues that are relevant for the school at that moment. Within these activities, no assessments or inspections are carried out in the schools concerned, in which a significant number of Ukrainian children and pupils are present and which are the recipients of methodological support from the Czech School Inspectorate, but all activities are exclusively aimed at supporting the school to manage the current situation successfully, for the benefit of all children and pupils.

At the same time, the Czech School Inspectorate identifies, analyses and makes available to relevant parties at the level of educational management from different levels information, findings, conclusions and recommendations for subsequent measures and interventions in the education system.

In May 2022, the Czech School Inspectorate published an interim report presenting the experiences, approaches and procedures of schools seeking to integrate and educate a higher number of Ukrainian children and pupils, commenting on the challenges schools face in these issues and offering important information and suggestions for further supportive interventions by institutions entering the management of the education system and the school support system.

The content of this interim report is based on the findings of the Czech School Inspectorate's visits carried out as part of the provision of methodological support from the beginning of April 2022 to mid-May 2022 in those nursery schools and basic schools where at least 10 Ukrainian children or pupils were enrolled¹, as well as some other schools which, although educating fewer than 10 children or pupils, reported greater difficulties on the part of the school in coping with the new situation (Table 1).

TABLE 1 | Number of basic schools and nursery schools included in the thematic report

Type of school	Basic school	Nursery school
Number of schools	626	52

¹ The source of data on the number of enrolled Ukrainian children and pupils is statistics from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

The number of basic schools visited by the Czech School Inspectorate during this period as part of methodological support and information gathering corresponds to almost 70% of all basic schools with at least 10 Ukrainian pupils being educated in mid-May.²

The Czech School Inspectorate's survey was carried out mainly through interviews with relevant parties at school level, such as members of the school management, the adaptation coordinator and, of course, teachers, other specialists and the pupils themselves, as well as through classroom observations.

² At the beginning of May, almost 16,000 Ukrainian pupils were enrolled in the basic schools visited, which is more than 60% of the Ukrainian pupils currently being educated in Czech schools, and more than 500 Ukrainian children were enrolled in the nursery schools visited, i.e. almost 15% of all Ukrainian children enrolled in Czech nursery schools in the period in question.



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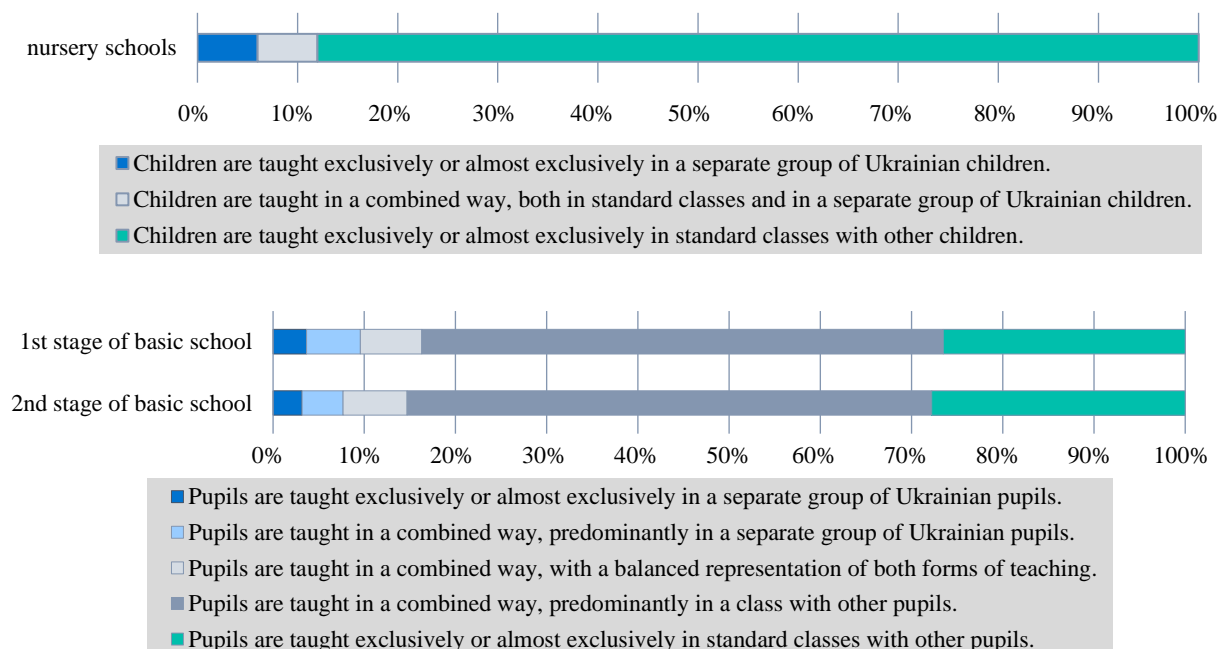
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Summary of main findings

2 SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

- As of mid-May 2022, there were 3,800 Ukrainian children enrolled in Czech nursery schools and more than 26,000 Ukrainian pupils in Czech basic schools who came to the Czech Republic as a result of the war in Ukraine. Compared to the total number of child refugees in pre-school and school age groups who were granted a residence permit in the Czech Republic due to the war in Ukraine, this number is significantly lower. In areas with a high concentration of Ukrainian refugees and simultaneously a high level of utilisation of the existing capacities, capacity problems in admitting Ukrainian children and pupils in nursery schools and basic schools can be expected.
- In almost half of the basic schools visited, internal capacity problems related to the arrival of Ukrainian pupils were perceived. With regard to the situation of individual schools, the problems were mainly related to space and staffing. In nursery schools, capacity problems (mainly classroom capacity problems) were found in one fifth of the schools visited.
- Almost all of the nursery schools and basic schools visited had taken at least some appropriate measures to coordinate the admission and adaptation of newly enrolled Ukrainian children and pupils, whether it was formulating related policies and procedures, establishing the role of adaptation process coordinator or using a Ukrainian-speaking person or a mentor from among classmates to support Ukrainian children and pupils in adapting to the new environment.
- A positive finding is the fact that only a small proportion of the nursery schools (6%) and basic schools (10%) visited educate Ukrainian children and pupils exclusively or mainly separately from other children and pupils, i.e. in separately formed groups. Another 7% of the nursery schools and basic schools provide education to Ukrainian children and pupils in a combined way, with a balance between teaching in a separate group of Ukrainian children and pupils and teaching in a classroom with other children and pupils. In the nursery schools and basic schools visited, the teaching of Ukrainian children and pupils is predominantly carried out in mixed classes with other pupils. Separate groups of Ukrainian children and pupils, although forming a supplement to parallel education in heterogeneous classes, are then typically used for intensive teaching of Czech as a second language or for tutoring of new subject matter in order to compensate for differences.

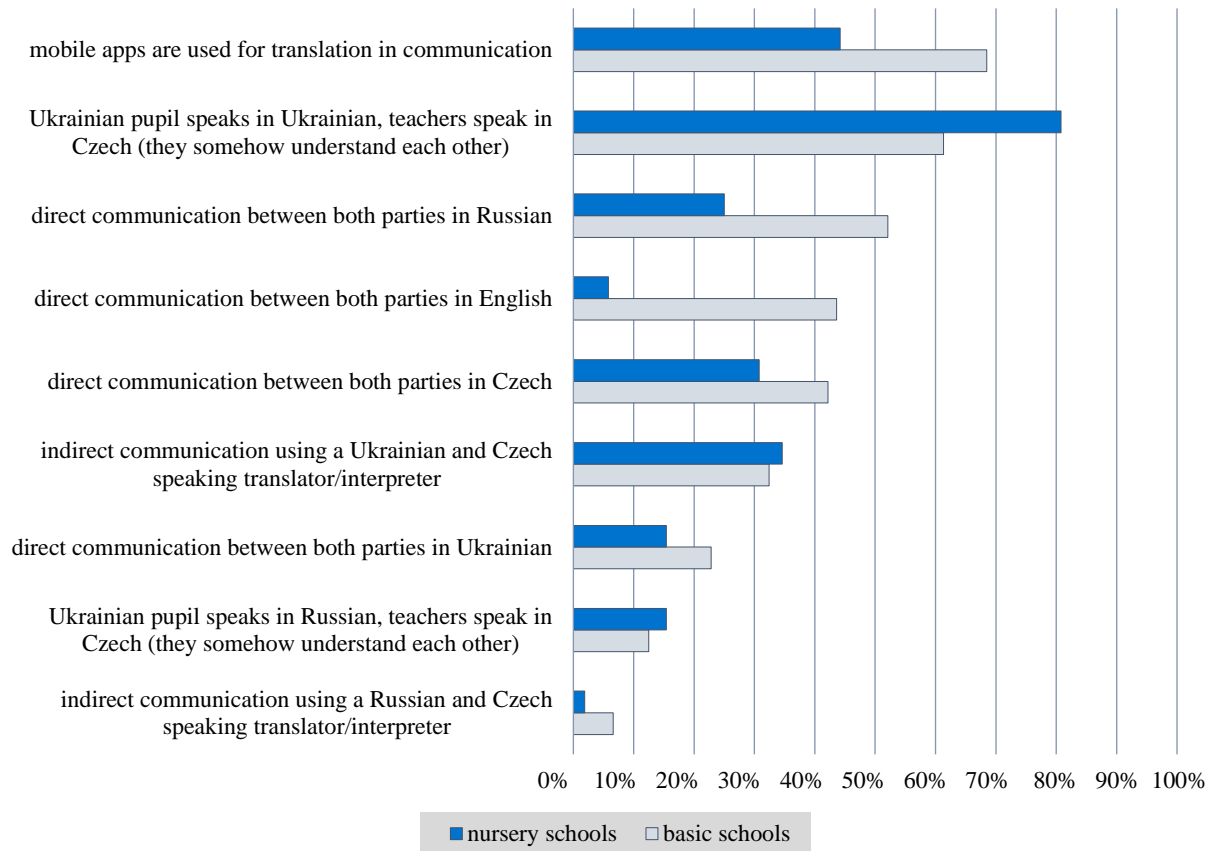
CHART 1 | Proportion of schools using a specific organisation form in teaching Ukrainian children and pupils (%)



- Different ways of communication are used between Ukrainian children or pupils and their teachers in heterogeneous classes and other situations. In the nursery schools and basic schools visited, the most common method of communication is between the child or pupil and the Czech teacher in their mother tongue, “somehow understanding each other”; very often mobile apps are also used for translation. However, even within a single school, there are naturally multiple ways of communication used between children or pupils and teachers. In more than half of the basic schools, for example, there was direct communication between a Ukrainian pupil and a teacher in Russian, and in less than half of the basic schools in English or Czech.

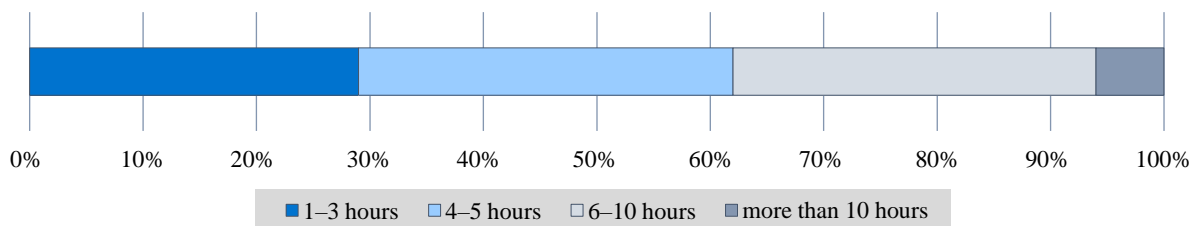
The use of a translator/interpreter was found in approximately one third of the nursery schools and basic schools visited.

CHART 2 | Proportion of schools using a specific form of communication between children or pupils and teachers (%)



- Less than one fifth of the basic schools have created “adaptation groups” for newly enrolled Ukrainian pupils, which are attended by pupils before they are integrated into standard education and which typically focus on learning the basics of the Czech language and on socialisation activities.
- Teaching of Czech as a second language was not provided in 7% of the basic schools visited, mainly for staffing (or financial) reasons. There were significant differences among schools in the extent of education in Czech as a second language provided so far. Other situations where Ukrainian children and pupils come into contact with the Czech language (e.g. adaptation groups, communication with other pupils during regular lessons, extracurricular activities) are also important for the development of their skills to communicate in Czech.

CHART 3 | Proportion of basic schools by number of hours of teaching Czech as a second language to Ukrainian pupils per week (%; excluding basic schools not providing teaching of Czech as a second language to Ukrainian pupils)

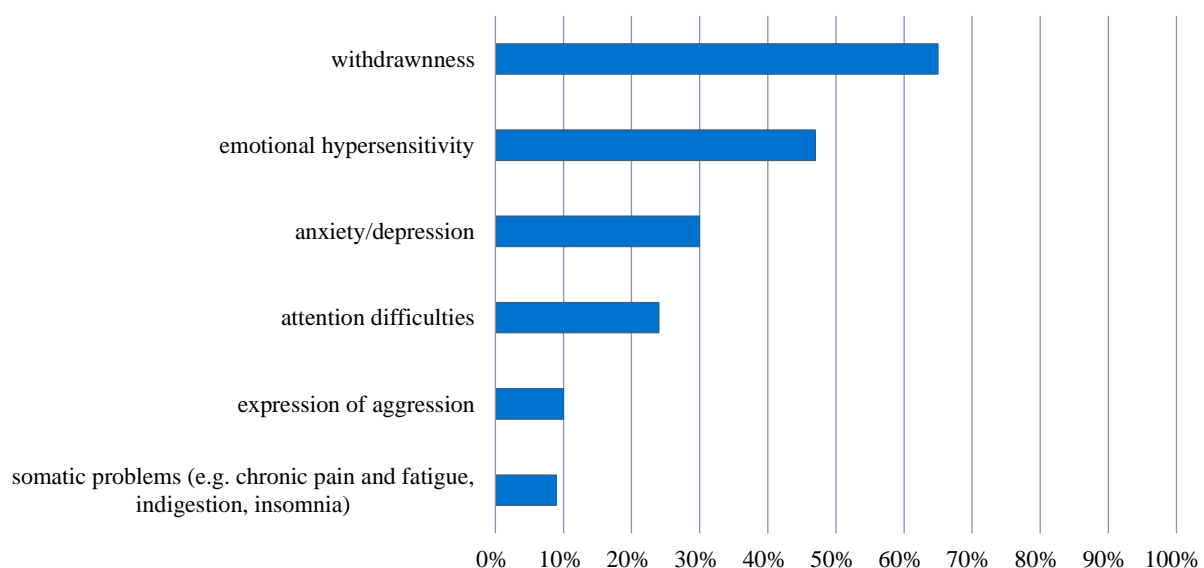


- In more than half of the basic schools visited, some of the Ukrainian pupils also participated in distance education provided by their home school in Ukraine. According to the estimates of the school management or the coordinator appointed by the school management, this represents approximately 14% of the Ukrainian pupils currently being educated in Czech basic schools. In a quarter of the schools concerned, these pupils

were receiving distance education from Ukraine every day in addition to their education in the Czech school, and in half of them more than once a week; the additional burden on Ukrainian pupils was therefore high and in some schools resulted in pupils being withdrawn from the Czech school. In addition, many schools are not properly informed about the participation of newly enrolled Ukrainian pupils in distance education provided from Ukraine.

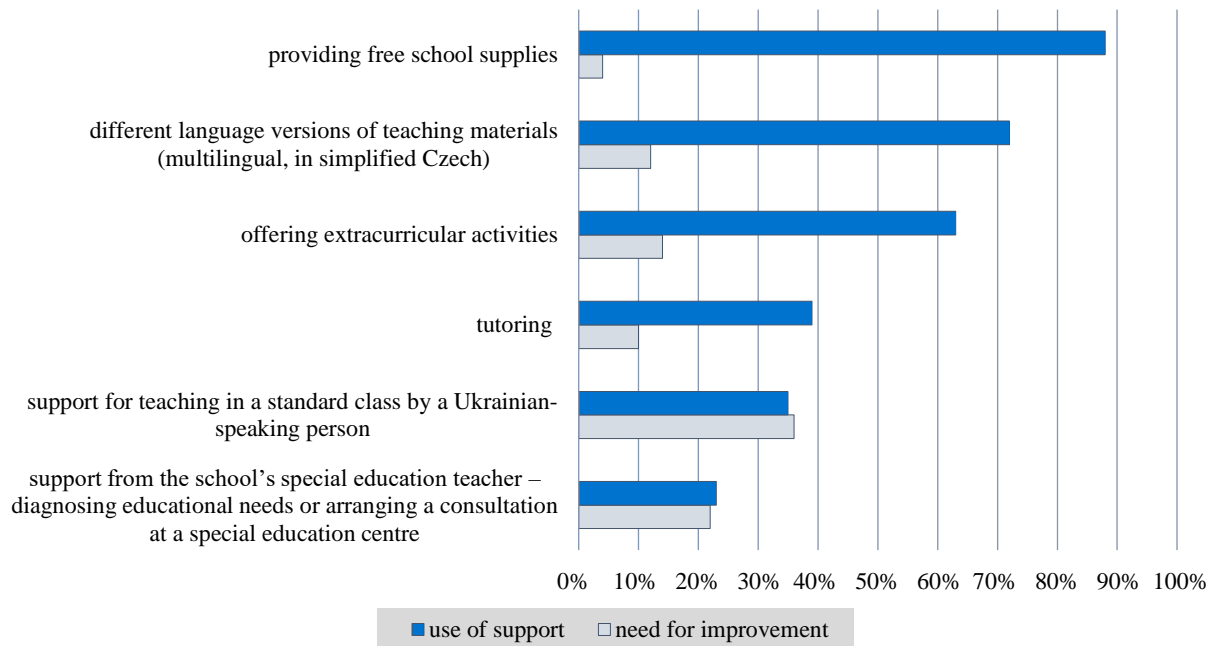
- In order to facilitate the arrival of Ukrainian children and pupils at the new school and their subsequent adaptation, almost two thirds of basic schools and half of nursery schools appointed a coordinator and less than half of nursery schools and basic schools used a Ukrainian-speaking person different from the coordinator, typically a person related to one of the Ukrainian pupils in the school or a Ukrainian-speaking school staff member. Both positions were created simultaneously in one third of basic schools and less than one quarter of nursery schools, while less than one quarter of basic schools and one third of nursery schools had neither position.
- Less attention was paid by a significant proportion of schools to measures to facilitate the orientation of Ukrainian children and pupils in the Czech school environment and in the school building itself and integration in the class after their arrival at the school (e.g. a summary of basic information for newly arrived pupils and their parents, bilingual signs, get-together activities).
- Given the assumption that newly arrived children and pupils will need psychological support, the mental health of newly arrived Ukrainian children and pupils was purposefully monitored in more than two thirds of the nursery schools and basic schools visited. Of the schools that purposefully monitored the mental health of newly arrived Ukrainian children and pupils, mental health problems of these children and pupils were found in less than half of the nursery schools and two thirds of the basic schools. To a greater extent, these were mainly related to withdrawnness and emotional sensitivity. However, mental health problems affected a minority of Ukrainian children and pupils in the schools visited, causing almost no significant disruption of the teachers' normal teaching.

CHART 4 | Prevalence of sub-types of mental health problems – proportion of total number of basic schools purposefully monitoring mental health problems of Ukrainian pupils (%)



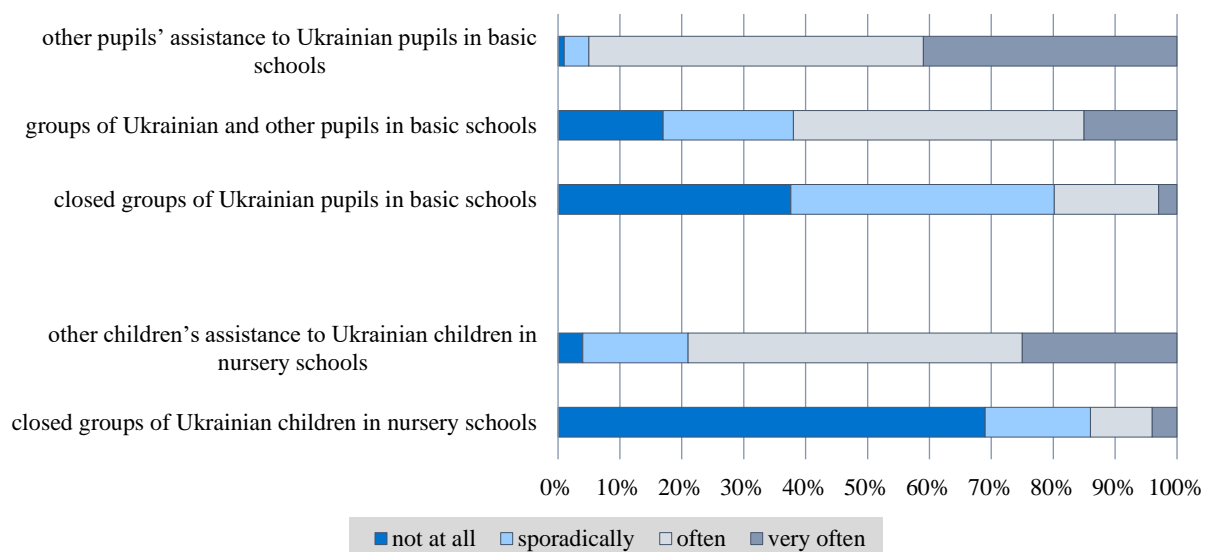
- The necessary psychological support by a school or external psychologist or more intensive cooperation with a pedagogical-psychological counselling centre cannot be provided for Ukrainian pupils – for staffing or financial reasons – to a sufficient extent in almost one third of the basic schools visited. Almost 60% of the basic schools visited do not even have suitable relaxation facilities, which are also important for supporting the adaptation process and mental health.
- In the basic schools visited, additional support for Ukrainian pupils in teaching and learning is mainly provided by supplying teaching aids (almost 90% of schools) and different language versions of teaching materials (about 70% of schools) and by offering extracurricular activities (almost two thirds of schools). On the other hand, schools most often fail in ensuring sufficient support for the teaching of Ukrainian pupils by a Ukrainian-speaking person (assistant) directly in regular classes (more than a third of schools) or the necessary diagnostics of the pupils' special educational needs (less than a quarter of schools).

CHART 5 | Proportion of basic schools using a specific form of support for Ukrainian pupils or perceiving existing needs for improving its provision (%)



- In most of the basic schools visited, existing resources have so far been used to ensure that Ukrainian pupils receive free school supplies, lunches and extracurricular activities if necessary, or that these are funded from other sources to the extent necessary beyond a basic contribution from the family. However, sponsorship or collections play an important role in this respect, which cannot be considered a long-term stable solution.
- In most cases, relations between Ukrainian pupils and their peers are good in the schools visited; pupils form mostly mixed groups, closed groups are significantly less frequent, and conflicts between pupils are rare. On the contrary, assistance to Ukrainian children and pupils from other children and pupils in the school is frequent. The attitudes of the legal representatives of other pupils in the schools visited still mostly show expressions of support or direct offers of help, but there are also concerns about maintaining the quality of education for all pupils in the school.

CHART 6 | Proportion of schools by frequency of forming a specific type of group of Ukrainian and other children and pupils or assistance provided to Ukrainian children and pupils by other children and pupils in the school (%)



- In order to support and facilitate the integration of newly arrived Ukrainian children and pupils, both the basic schools and nursery schools visited work with a wide range of partners. These entities support the schools, among other things, in obtaining financial and material assistance, in providing translations or volunteer help or in engaging pupils in various leisure activities. In methodology, collaboration with the National Pedagogical Institute of the Czech Republic is quite frequent.
- In a number of schools, there were more pronounced concerns about the negative impact of this exceptional situation on teachers' well-being and motivation, also pointing out that teachers had been through a very challenging and long period of distance learning and other complications related to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the current events almost immediately followed this period. The approach of the managements of the schools visited regarding support for teachers varied, and in a significant proportion of the schools the measures taken to support teachers' motivation and well-being were limited or absent altogether. Most of the schools took a similar approach to supporting the development of teachers' competences in areas related to the teaching of Ukrainian children and pupils: in a number of schools the school management continuously sought to develop teachers' knowledge and skills in issues related to the education of children and pupils with a different mother tongue, but in some schools there was no systematic support for teacher training in these issues.
- In a number of statements, concerns were expressed about the uncertainty associated with the education of Ukrainian children and pupils fleeing the war and related to various areas – uncertainty about the number of Ukrainian children and pupils in the school, uncertainty about funding for newly formed needs, the relationship between the Czech and Ukrainian curriculums in the education of Ukrainian pupils, the possibility of using a teaching assistant for the education of Ukrainian children and pupils, etc. In this context, the question arises of the need for methodological clarification of relevant topics at the level of the education system.
- The area of more systematic support for joint leisure activities, especially of a physical nature, which, in addition to supporting both the physical and mental health of all children and pupils, also helps to erase language and personality barriers on the one hand and to naturally integrate Ukrainian children and pupils into mixed groups of children and pupils on the other hand, has also emerged as an important challenge for the coming period.



3

Recommendations

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for schools

- Continue to use the system of coordinating the admission and adaptation of Ukrainian children and pupils, following an evaluation of the functioning of such a school system at the end of the 2021/2022 school year (e.g. identifying new measures based on other schools' experience) and considering the possible risks of the development of the situation in Ukraine.
- Continue to maintain the strategy of integrating Ukrainian children and pupils in both standard and mixed classes, respecting their special educational needs and language readiness for such a step (e.g. using diagnostics of children and pupils, formulating education plans).
- Educate Ukrainian children and pupils in separate or adaptation groups only in justified cases (e.g. intensive teaching of Czech as a second language, tutoring, socialisation activities) and only for the time necessary.
- Systematically support Ukrainian children and pupils in the development of their skills to communicate in Czech, in addition to intensive teaching of Czech as a second language, use other opportunities for Ukrainian children and pupils to come into contact with the Czech language (e.g. participation in extracurricular activities, communication with Czech classmates).
- Set up a targeted system for monitoring the mental health problems of newly arrived Ukrainian children and pupils, create adequately equipped places for pupils to relax if possible, and strive to ensure that accessible care is provided by professionals.
- Actively use the opportunities associated with the arrival of Ukrainian children and pupils and with education in a multilingual environment (e.g. development of language competences of other pupils in direct communication in languages other than Czech).
- Continue to cooperate with partners in the education and socialisation of Ukrainian children and pupils or seek new partners.
- Monitor the educational outcomes and other aspects of the education of newly arrived Ukrainian children and pupils (e.g. participation in distance learning in Ukraine) and also pay attention to the impact of the integration of Ukrainian children and pupils into standard classrooms on the quality of teaching and the educational outcomes of other pupils.
- Monitor the relations between newly arrived Ukrainian children and pupils and all the other children and pupils in the school, as well as the attitudes of all legal representatives, and actively prevent potential conflicts; consistently explain to the legal representatives of newly arrived Ukrainian children and pupils the functioning and differences of the Czech education system, while assuring the legal representatives of all other children and pupils that the school is doing everything it can to ensure that the quality and effectiveness of the education of all children and pupils is not compromised by the consequences of migration events.
- Take an active approach to supporting teachers in their well-being and mental hygiene, as well as developing competences for working with pupils with a different mother tongue.
- Actively think about and offer leisure activities for mixed groups of Ukrainian and other children and pupils, with an emphasis on the implementation of physical activities that are essential for both physical and mental health on the one hand and for the blurring of language and personal barriers on the other hand, which will significantly contribute to more successful integration.

Recommendations for statutory authorities

- Cooperate with the established nursery schools and basic schools on the placement system for Ukrainian children and pupils so that the capacities of the established schools are used in a fair way, ensuring coordination of the number of children and pupils in each school.
- Support the established nursery schools and basic schools in addressing capacity problems related to the arrival of new Ukrainian children and pupils.
- Support the established nursery schools and basic schools in using tools to support the adaptation and learning of newly arrived Ukrainian children and pupils (e.g. activities of adaptation groups, teaching Czech as a second language, intensive teaching in separate groups, support for teaching pupils with a different mother tongue by an assistant or specialist, diagnostics).

- In addition to support in funding, actively use other possibilities of the statutory authority to support the established nursery schools and basic schools (e.g. use of capacities in project management, cooperation with other established entities and partners of the statutory authority).
- Support the established nursery schools and basic schools in the thought-out offer of leisure activities, especially of a physical nature, thereby significantly helping to develop both the physical health and mental well-being of mixed groups of all children and pupils.

Recommendations to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports

- Considering school capacities, regularly update the analysis of the development of the number of Ukrainian children and pupils of pre-school and school age in the country. Where necessary, work with statutory authorities to address capacity issues in the placement of Ukrainian children and pupils in nursery schools and basic schools, taking into account the housing and employment opportunities in the respective areas, thereby supporting the maintenance of the positive trend of education of Ukrainian children and pupils in heterogeneous groups. Take into account the related need to take records of Ukrainian children and pupils leaving one school and entering another so that it is clear where the children and pupils concerned are in their education throughout the integration process.
- Where such an approach is needed, methodically and normatively regulate the conditions and basic rules for the education of newly enrolled Ukrainian children and pupils for the 2022/2023 school year, including setting a deadline for the enrolment of pupils for education for the period from 1 September 2022, thereby helping to reduce uncertainty for schools related to the education of newly arrived Ukrainian children and pupils.
- Systematically clarify the links between the participation of newly enrolled Ukrainian children and pupils in education in the Czech Republic and Ukraine and discuss with the Ukrainian authorities the possibility of abolishing or significantly reducing the requirements for the participation of Ukrainian children and pupils educated in schools in the Czech Republic in parallel distance education provided by their home school in Ukraine.
- Set up a system of financial support for schools to cover the costs arising in connection with the education of newly enrolled Ukrainian children and pupils (e.g. activities of adaptation groups, teaching Czech as a second language, support for teaching pupils with a different mother tongue by an assistant or specialist, diagnostics), while respecting the administrative simplicity of such a system. The financial support system should also reflect issues such as school supplies, lunches for children and pupils, opportunities for participation in both school and extracurricular activities, etc.
- Identify pedagogical workers among adult Ukrainian refugees residing in the Czech Republic and enable them to operatively enter the education system under acceptable conditions in various positions (teacher, teaching assistant, educator, leisure activities specialist, etc.).
- Think about and provide systematic support for the implementation of leisure activities for mixed groups of Ukrainian and other children and pupils, both for the summer holiday months (e.g. activities similar to summer camps during the Covid-19 pandemic), if possible given their proximity in time, and for staying at school during the school year, with the understanding that an essential part of these activities should be physical activities and the development of children and pupils' physical skills, which are crucial for the healthy physical and mental development of children and pupils and have significantly positive socialisation effects and the potential to significantly contribute to successful integration.
- In cooperation with the National Pedagogical Institute of the Czech Republic and other partners, continue to pay attention to the issue of teaching pupils with a different mother tongue, regarding both the creation of practically usable teaching aids and the development of teachers' competences.
- Think about and prepare other appropriate methodological documents for schools which will show, for example, appropriate measures to facilitate the orientation of Ukrainian children and pupils both in the Czech school environment and in the school buildings themselves and integration in the class after their arrival at the school.
- Think about and develop systemic support for the well-being of teachers and other pedagogical and non-pedagogical staff.
- Continue to monitor and evaluate the impact of the education of Ukrainian children and pupils on the Czech education system and take adequate measures based on the findings.



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