

This profile is part of the EU Study on Supporting School Innovation Across Europe. It presents one of the 24 schools in the study, giving an overview of the changes and experiences in that school. Find the rest of the materials from the study at:

www.schooleducationgateway.eu/innovation

Promoting children's continuous development through the integration of the school and day care centre, and the application of the TASC model in the Warande school



About our school

- ◆ **Location:** Lelystad, Flevoland
- ◆ **Established:** 2010
- ◆ **Status:** Public school that provides ECEC and primary education for students (0 - 13 years old)
- ◆ **Number of pupils:** 250 (in 2016)
- ◆ **Website:** <http://www.kindcentrumwarande.nl/>
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Why did we innovate?

In the past, the Dutch School Inspectorate notified the Warande school about their students' low results. The school staff, however, were very much hesitant towards the test-driven-accountability-approach established by the Inspectorate. Therefore, the school team decided to re-define and interpret test-driven accountability in their own way. Instead of emphasising the learning results per se, they wanted to focus on the process of learning itself – starting from children's needs and guiding them in their own development.

To be able to focus on children's continuous development, the school also felt the need to integrate the child day care, kindergarten, elementary education and after school care. These issues ignited the need for organisational and pedagogical changes. Overall, the school has been innovative during recent years, and latest innovative approaches represent a continuity of this process and reflect the school's innovative culture.



What were our innovations?

According to the interviewed policy makers from the City Council of Lelystad, the Warande school is open to the implementation of “21st century skills” in education. It is characterised by a large degree of ‘self-government’ by teachers. Innovative culture at the Warande school is based on bottom-up involvement and making teachers the owners of the innovative processes.

Since 2013, the school has a new school leader who has started a process of reconsidering the school’s mission and vision together with the staff. Key elements of this new mission and vision are using standardised tests in formative ways, a continuous development of children from 0 to 13 years old, and making students’ learning results visible on a data wall in the classroom. Groups of the school staff were formed who were in charge of investigating, defining and trying out innovations that were found necessary to realise the mission and the vision. It has become a standard practice that the school staff members belong to innovation groups that are in charge of designing various innovations. They gather regularly to discuss a progress of the current actions, and agree on the future ones. They are not compensated for this with extra money other than their regular salary.

As a part of the innovation process, the school team has redefined and interpreted test-driven accountability in its own – formative - way: rather than emphasising the learning results per se, they started focusing on the process of learning, starting from children’s needs and guiding them in their own development. Teachers also tried to make students the owners of their learning process. The school uses a standard curriculum for language and math with teaching materials and accompanying test. Standardised tests issued by the Dutch Institute of Test Construction (Cito) are still used. However, these tests are primarily used as a tool to learn more about students’ learning processes, and not as an end in itself.

The school has defined various topics, such as children’s continuous development, and key learning goals. These goals have been made visible to all students on data walls in the classrooms. All teachers and pedagogical assistants have been made responsible for the development and implementation of these concepts according to the TASC (Thinking Actively in a Social Context) model. Although originally this model has been used in special lessons where children with exceptional academic achievements are engaged in problem solving, the Warande teachers found the TASC model helpful for their own teaching. The teachers and pedagogical assistants formed working groups and each group took responsibility for implementing innovative approaches according to the TASC model. The school leader and adjunct leader also attended the meetings of the groups. The school staff, including the school leader, also organised ‘flash-visits’ to classrooms where the staff could learn from each other and make further improvements. These visits were made according to a certain structure and observation form. The stages of the TASC model in which the various innovation groups are at specific moment are published in the teachers’ room.

The school has also become a part of child centre where child care and education are integrated. Integration means, for instance, that the work of both teachers and pedagogical assistants is based on the same pedagogical ideas, and that they consult each other when a child has a problem. In this sense, the Warande school is innovative, as most schools and day care centres in the Netherlands are separate institutions where teachers and pedagogical assistants do not communicate daily. Teachers and pedagogical assistants from the Warande school are actively involved in developing a common view of both education and day care. This helps to focus on continuous development of children from 0 to 13 years old.



What have we achieved?

Pupils

According to the Dutch School Inspectorate, the student results have improved, and are satisfactory now.

The school staff noticed that students have started feeling more responsible for their learning process.

According to the school leader, children seem to be more task-oriented now.

Teachers

According to the school leader and teachers, the reconsideration of the mission and vision of the school generated a lot of inspiration, commitment and a sense of community.

One of the outcomes of the innovation process is a culture in which teachers agree about common principles, monitor each other in implementing these principles and are open-minded towards improving existing agreements.

School as a whole

According to the school leader, the atmosphere in the school has become calmer, as students are more task-oriented now.

The school community have become more focused on the process of attaining goals, and this observation has been already documented in the official school documents.

The interviewed policymakers from the city council characterise the Warande school as “open to the rest of society” and “open to innovation”.



The process of change: what helped us succeed?

School level

The innovations at the school level were initiated by the school leader and carried out by the rest of the school staff. Some innovations were initiated by a teacher, who had done a course on clarification of learning goals. Among other issues, he focused on how children become owners of their learning process, and how success criteria can be formulated in cooperation with students. This teacher was also willing to become a leader of an innovation group at school. Another staff member of the school board was specialised in the integration of education and day care. She also has given her advice in integrating the school and the day care.

The integration of day care and education, was initiated by the boards of the education foundation and by the day care foundation. The board of both the school and the day care centre supplied a budget for this integration. The school leader hired external CPD services for the integration of education and day care, for a budget of about 20,000 euro. In other CPD opportunities, teachers were taught how to make student results visible on a data wall in the classroom (for a 11,000 EUR budget).

Community level

KPC, the Catholic Pedagogical Study Centre, a CPD-organisation with expertise on the integration of schools and day-care provided experience of other day care centres that had also been integrated with schools.

Circles of expertise organised by the school board (of 21 primary schools) also helped. For instance, the circle concentrating on special education needs was very helpful. In this circle, the special education needs advisors of each school meet regularly to learn from each other.



The process of change: what limited us?

School level

Teachers have experienced the lack of time and work pressure. They have also felt that the consensus-building between teachers is not self-evident. The conflicting schedules of teachers and pedagogical assistants also have hindered the application of innovative approaches.

According to the teaching staff, mandatory regulations at system level also represent barriers. Teachers strongly stand for their freedom to decide on the pedagogies applied in the school while regulations on pedagogies can easily become too bureaucratic.



Sustainability of change

The school applies the TASC model that comprises of eight key stages: gather/organise; identify; generate; decide; implement; evaluate; communicate; learn from experience. This model also encompasses experimentation. Once innovations become a part of the schools' strategic approach, they are monitored by flash visits. The observer assesses whether the way in which the teacher works complies with the agreements in the documents.

The school leader and the focus group of teachers monitor the innovations, which helps to enhance the sustainability of the innovation process. The school management attends the innovation groups of teachers and pedagogical assistants, and the goals for innovation are formulated in teacher group meetings. On the white board in the teachers' room, the groups show in which stage of the TASC model the innovation process currently stands.

To spread innovation, the school opens its doors for those willing to learn. The school is planning to participate in a conference for schools that are integrated with day care centres, and share their experience there.



What did we learn in the process? Key messages

Most innovations applied in the school are bottom-up developments fuelled by existing knowledge and experience of this and other schools.

Rather than prescribing an innovation from above, policymakers should support schools, school leaders and teachers to develop innovations themselves bottom-up.

Teachers need a lot of time to establish a culture of incremental improvement and to learn from each other.

Further reading

- **A full report** 'Supporting School Innovation across Europe' explores the conditions in the school education system that can enable or constrain positive change in schools.
- **12 case studies** explore the national approaches and individual school innovations. They include the perspectives of key national education experts and stakeholders who were interviewed and took part in workshops.
- **24 individual profiles** give a quick view of the changes and experiences in each school.

Available here:

www.schooleducationgateway.eu/innovation

- The school profiles also feature as part of the [European Toolkit for Schools](#), alongside a range of materials and many other inspiring examples of practice from European countries.

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