PEER LEARNING VISIT REPORT
22-23 OCTOBER 2012

SPAIN

SEVILLE, ANDALUCIA

http://keyconet.eun.org
1 **ORGANIZERS**

KeyCoNet’s associate member, the Regional Ministry of Education of Andalusia, organized and hosted the peer learning visit in cooperation with the network’s other Spanish associate member, UNED (National Distance Education University of Madrid), and the network’s coordinator, European Schoolnet.

2 **ORGANIZATIONS VISITED**

Regional Ministry of Education of Andalusia

Primary school CEIP Félix Rodríguez de la Fuente

Secondary school IES José María Infantes

3 **LANGUAGE**

A mixture of Spanish and English was used by the presenters and hosts of the school visits. When Spanish was spoken, translation into English was provided both during the institutional and school presentations, as well as at the on-site visits to the 2 schools.

4 **PARTICIPANTS**

A total of 21 participants, including KeyCoNet partners, took part in the peer learning visit:

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Country</th>
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<td>Bernhard Racz</td>
<td>European Network of Innovative Schools</td>
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AUTHORS OF PLV REPORT

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Spain’s education policy fully supports the key competence approach through national regulations establishing a competence-based curriculum and assessment system, as well as the national ComBas project (Programa de consolidación de las competencias básicas como elemento esencial del currículo – programme for the consolidation of key competences as an essential element of the curriculum), allowing regions such as Andalusia to develop a tailor-made version suited to the context and needs of the schools in their region. This explicit focus on the implementation of key competences through schools’ participation in Andalusia’s PICBA programme (Programa de Integración de las Competencias Básicas en Andalucía - Programme for the integration of key competences in Andalusia), together with the effective school leadership, management, training, teacher collaboration and supportive parents and communities we witnessed on our visit, demonstrates Andalusia’s commitment to fostering a whole school approach to key competence development. The features of the key competence approach in the schools we visited and heard about included a strong focus on theme-based project work involving cross-curricular learning and collaborative work among students of various ages and teachers of different subjects. Technology-enhanced learning also played an important role in the development of students’ key competences, as did a clear focus on student-centred learning. Although rewarding, these new ways of teaching and learning were considered by some teachers as challenging, as teachers and students need time to become accustomed to this way of working.
1. INTRODUCTION

The following report describes and analyzes the Peer Learning Visit (PLV) to Seville, Spain, on 22-23 October 2012, organized within the framework of the KeyCoNet project – European Policy Network on the Implementation of Key Competences in School Education (2012-2014).

This first section of the report presents the background to the Peer Learning Visit. The next section offers an overview of the presentations given at the Regional Ministry of Education of Andalusia on 22 October, which provided a contextual background to the work being done in Spain and more particularly in Andalusia regarding key competence development at school level, and also provided insights from the experience of two schools working in this area. The third section describes and analyzes the key competence work developed by another two schools, visited by participants on 23 October. In conclusion, some final reflections are presented.

1.1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

KeyCoNet is the European Policy Network on Key Competences in School Education, funded under the European Commission’s Lifelong Learning Programme. It is focused on analyzing initiatives on the implementation of key competences in primary and secondary school education across Europe. On the basis of the evidence collected during the project’s lifetime through various outputs, recommendations for policy and practice will be formulated in 2014, regarding the enablers and obstacles to a holistic implementation of KCD. Although this project uses the 2006 European Framework as a reference point, the 18 partners coming from 10 countries are aware that key competences can be expressed and understood in different ways, according to each national context, and therefore an open and inclusive approach has been adopted.

Within the framework of the KeyCoNet project, this first peer learning visit took place in Seville, Spain, where an interesting KCD reform was identified and made known to the network at its kick-off meeting in February 2012, by one of KeyCoNet’s partner’s, the European Institute for Education and Social Policy (EIESP). Having consequently read a recent article about implementing key competences in the curriculum in basic education in Spain in the European Journal of Education¹, the network decided to follow this up by liaising with relevant contacts at UNED and the Andalusian Ministry of Education to organize a peer learning visit. During

this visit the participants had the opportunity to become acquainted with Spanish, and more particularly Andalusian practices in KCD, as well as the main tools and instruments used for this purpose.

Spain’s education policy fully supports the key competence approach through the 2006 Education Law (Ley Orgánica de Educación) which establishes a common core national curriculum for compulsory education including eight ‘basic competences’, describing how each area or subject should contribute to their development. Likewise, following the shift in national curricula from subject knowledge to a competence-based approach, Spain’s assessment system has adopted an explicit emphasis on competences. The last national standardised tests took place in 2008-2009 for primary, and 2009-2010 for lower secondary compulsory education, and assessed linguistic communication, mathematical competence, knowledge and interaction with the physical world, and social and civic competences. Spain has also put in place specific strategies for students’ development of mother tongue (reading), foreign languages, science, digital competence and a sense of initiative and entrepreneurship.

1.2. OBJECTIVES

The peer learning visit aimed to foster exchange of experiences, good practices and knowledge in the field of KCD. Its first objective was to enable KeyCoNet participants to gain a theoretical understanding of the Spanish and Andalusian policies and programmes in the field of key competence development in school education, and secondly to concretely view this in practice in two schools which have implemented this approach, to enhance understanding of the facilitators and challenges faced by this experience.

2. INSTITUTIONAL AND SCHOOL PRESENTATIONS

2.1. INSTITUTIONAL PRESENTATIONS

The regional Minister of Education of Andalusia, Mar Moreno, presented the region and the characteristics of the education system. Andalusia is a big territory,
with a history of economic and educational undergrowth, which has needed to make great efforts in these areas during recent generations. Andalusia has done significant work related to assessment and was one of the first autonomous communities of Spain to participate in PISA.

**Context**

- 6 491 schools (4482 are public)
- 1 846 586 students (1 454 982 belong to public schools)
- 120 000 teachers (98 158 in public schools)

**KCD in Andalusia**

The European Union Council of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (‘ET 2020’) outlined four strategic objectives that should be accomplished by 2020. One of them is “to ensure the acquisition of key competences by everyone, while developing the excellence and attractiveness at all levels of education and training that will allow Europe to retain a strong global role”. To achieve this objective education and training systems must adapt both to the needs of the information society and to the need to raise levels of employment and improve its quality. Promoting basic skills to be provided through lifelong learning is an indispensable means of enhancing employability and adaptability.

In Spain, although there is a national law (currently in the process of being amended), in what concerns education and health there is a model of autonomy compared to a federal state. In the educational curricula of Andalusia, key competences have become a reference for assessment following their integration in primary and secondary education curricula. Key competences are also used in external diagnostic assessment in Andalusia. Andalusia has its own regional programme called PICBA (see section 2.2), devoted to the teaching and learning of key competences, involving over 4000 teachers in 82 schools.
The interest and efforts made by the Educational Administration and all sectors involved in the development of key competences in education underlines the importance they attach to key competences. This importance has also been widely recognized by several international organizations. In Andalusia the need to maximize the initiatives addressing key competences development as an essential element of the school curriculum has been set as a strategic objective.

Thus, the Educational Administration of Andalusia has been developing various policies and initiatives to make the real integration of key competences in teaching practice easier for schools and educational services. The following actions have been implemented:

- Legal framework relating to curricular integration of key competences:
  
  a) Linguistic communication – the use of language as an instrument of oral and written communication, both in Spanish language and in foreign language;
  
  b) Mathematical thinking and reasoning – the skill to use numbers and basic operations; the ability to apply mathematical thinking into everyday situations and the world of work;
  
  c) Knowledge and interaction with physical and biological world – the skill contributing to the preservation and improvement of the environment;
  
  d) Digital competence and information processing – the ability to search, collect, process and to communicate the information and turn it into knowledge, including the use of ICT as an essential element to get informed and to communicate;

- Plans and programmes that contribute to key competences development, promoting entrepreneurial culture, ICT, reading, multilingualism, environmental education and educational outcomes;

- Organization and functioning of educational networks;

- Teacher training and mentoring;

- Evaluation of educational action.
2.2. PICBA - PROGRAMA DE INTEGRACIÓN DE LAS COMPETENCIAS BÁSICAS EN ANDALUCÍA (PROGRAMME FOR THE INTEGRATION OF KEY COMPETENCES IN ANDALUSIA)

The largest Spanish regional programme in this area is PICBA² (Programa de Integración de las Competencias Básicas en Andalucía - Programme for the integration of key competences in Andalusia), which ran from March 2011 until June 2012. The PICBA programme is the regional sub-project of Spain’s national project, ComBas³: Programa de consolidación de las competencias básicas como elemento esencial del currículo – programme for the consolidation of key competences as an essential element of the curriculum, from which it derives. The PICBA programme aimed to develop pilot training actions for teachers to assist them in the integration of key competences into the curriculum, and involved 82 public Andalusian primary and secondary schools.

It included two levels of complexity: The initial (A1) and the advanced (A2) modalities, and adopted a blended methodology: training sessions in Granada and Seville, as well as online work on the “Colabora” Platform. The didactic resources were created by University experts and teams of teacher trainers from the Ministry of Education. Each theoretical module is accompanied by practical training activities.

³ http://www.mecd.gob.es/cniie/investigacion-innovacion/competencias-basicas/proyecto-combas.html
The programme works at three different levels:

Regional: face-to-face meeting with schools coordinators, inspectors and local training coordinators in Granada and Seville.

Provincial: coordination between Inspectors and training advisors.

Local: meetings with teachers and local training coordinators.

It has implemented 6 initial training modules:

Module 1: Key competences: a new teacher’s profile for the 21st century.
Authors: José Moya and Alejandro Tiana.

Module 2: Integration of competences into the educational curriculum.
Authors: José Moya Otero, Florencio Luengo and Elena Martín.

Module 3: Key competences: an educational commitment for participation in society.
Authors: Rafael Feito, José Moya and Dolores Limón.

Module 4: Key competences in practice: models and teaching methods.
Authors: José Moya and Florencio Luengo.

Module 5: Key competences assessment.
Authors: José Moya Otero and Florencio Luengo.

Module 6: Organizational and professional development to achieve the most favourable conditions for achieving basic competences.

And 5 advanced training modules:

Module 7: Key competences: basic culture for everyone.
Authors: Amador Guiro and Jesus Domingo.

Module 8: Taking advantage of the curriculum to learn key compet-
Key competences.
Author: José Moya Otero.

Module 9: Key competences and attention to diversity.
Authors: Jesus Domingo and Juan de Dios Fernandez.

Module 10: Methodological keys to teach key competences: practice, cooperation, participation and dialogue.
Authors: José Moya Otero, Pere Pujolàs, Cristina Petreñas, Laura Ruiz.

Module 11: Key competences assessment: Diagnostic and school evaluation.
Authors: José Moya Otero and Enrique Roca.

The programme’s team includes the participation of the main structures of the Educativa Administration: Legislation, Teacher training, Inspection, Family Participation, Diversity Orientation, Evaluation and Assessment; ensuring a holistic approach taking into account the various dimensions of the education system. The work teams are composed by: Management and Coordination Commission, Base Team and Permanent Commission. The PICBA programme has as a principle an open and flexible approach, so as to ensure the integration of key competences according to the context and reality of each individual school.

The main results of the PICBA evaluation were positive, underlining high teacher satisfaction illustrated by their willingness to continue with the programme; a reported change in teachers’ practices: didactic programmes formulated on the basis of competences, task-driven work, interdepartmental relationships, assessment formulated on the basis of competences, family involvement; and a multiplier effect: collaboration with other schools, creation of networks and team work.

The presenters made a thorough description of a very interesting implementation programme, aimed at the development of key competences in the curriculum through teacher training modules. Furthermore, the ensuing discussion allowed the participants to comment and further clarify any remaining questions.
2.3. THE EXPERIENCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL IES ÍTACA

Carmen Lazaro, the head teacher of the secondary school IES Ítaca, which implemented a key competence approach within the framework of the PICBA programme, described how the following elements were needed to make the change possible:

- Breaking the traditional timetable
- Taking part in international programmes
- Creativity, autonomy – creative activities (music, theatre etc.)
- Pedagogical criteria based on cooperative work of students and teachers
- Student-centred learning
- Project based work: cross curricular learning; several subjects working on the same issue; curricular content
- Research based learning: teacher guides and assesses the work produced by students
- Teacher training on practical activities
- Resources: laptops and Internet; classroom libraries; no textbooks
- Use of ICT – Google Applications
  - making cooperative work easier
  - useful for teachers and students
  - accessible from everywhere and at any time
  - editing and viewing with different permissions
- School organization: the number of curricular departments have decreased and include:
  - methodology and assessment department
  - innovation and teacher training department
  - international projects department
  - out of school activities department
Teachers have 6 hours per week to develop the above aspects, contributing to the school’s key competence approach.

For further information:
http://prezi.com/qld3eapv5nuh/ies-itaca-implementing-key-competencies/

2.4. THE EXPERIENCE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL CEIP MIGUEL DE CERVANTES

Manuel Jesús Clavijo, a teacher at the primary school CEIP Miguel de Cervantes described the Teaching Unit – The cultivation of strawberries, which he engaged in with pupils to foster a key competence approach.

The school Miguel de Cervantes is located in Lucena del Puerto, in the province of Huelva, which is known for its cultivation of strawberries. In this area, the cultivation of strawberries began in the 1960s, and revolutionized the agriculture, the economy and the society of Lucena. The soil conditions, the climate and the availability of good quality water favour strawberry-growing in the area. This process has been accompanied by a high technical level, distribution infrastructure and commercial dynamics. The strawberry, due to its botanical characteristics, is a small and resistant plant, and easy to use within the school environment. Hence, the main focus of the teaching unit presented is strawberry-growing, due to the high involvement of the local families in this activity, young people's proximity with the subject, as well as the wide possibilities to address/consider this theme within the school curriculum.

This teaching unit, dedicated to the cultivation of strawberries, is composed by fifteen tasks in the different subjects. Each task consists of various activities, specifying the context, the resources, the teaching models and the spaces used.
The elements of the teaching unit are set out in a table according to:

- Area (Mathematics, Foreign Language – English, Arts...);
- Objectives (indicators);
- Objective of each phase;
- Curriculum content;
- Assessment criteria;
- Key competences.

The assessment is expressed through the following elements:

- Indicators – for instance, in the English subject: “Understanding the global meaning and identifying specific information in various oral text outputs in different situations of communication”;
- Instruments – question/answer; problem-solving; production; observation;
- Qualification criteria – four levels, from level 1 (the lowest) to level 4 (the highest).

The results of the teaching unit are presented to the school community through students’ work.

For further information:

http://prezi.com/lfmgzm6mabi3/presentacion-udi-guia-didactica-del-cultivo-de-la-fresa/
3. SCHOOL VISITS

In compliance with the established agenda, the network team visited the CEIP Félix Rodríguez de la Fuente and IES José María Infantes, two schools representative of the best practices on implementing key competences in primary and secondary schools in Andalusia.

3.1. VISIT TO CEIP FÉLIX RODRÍGUEZ DE LA FUENTE, LOS PALACIOS Y VILLAFRANCA, SEVILLE, SPAIN

Introduction

The visit to the CEIP Félix Rodríguez de la Fuente (CEIP is an acronym for “Colegio de Educación Infantil y Primaria” – Kindergarten and Primary Education College) occurred on the morning of 23 October. As soon as we got close to the main gates we noticed a certain bustle in the courtyard, with a large crowd of students, teachers and parents waiting to welcome us. Once we entered the school’s courtyard we were received by a group of teachers and students of various ages, very organized and gracious (Photo 1). After the welcome given by the school’s head teacher the pupils sang and choreographed the European anthem. After this first performance, the pupils, including the little ones from kindergarten, sang the school anthem which was inspired by the life of the school patron, Félix de la Fuente. De la Fuente was a great naturalist and animals’ friend, born in Burgos, in the North of Spain.

Photo 1 - welcoming of KeyCoNet network members at CEIP Félix de la Fuente

The visit then continued with the formal school presentation made by pedagogical Coordinator Viki Gallego. After a small break we had a detailed visit to various classrooms, starting with the 6th grade, the older students, ending the visit in the pre-school classrooms.
Leadership & Management

CEIP Félix de la Fuente has 230 students from 3 to 12 years old and 14 teachers (10 women and 4 men), of which 1 is the Director, 1 is the pedagogical coordinator, 1 is the music teacher and 1 is the English language teacher. Students begin to learn English at the age of 3.

Project-based learning

This primary school organizes its learning around “Integrated Teaching Units” based on global learning projects that extend over a period of time. Each class, corresponding to a year of schooling, selects a subtopic from the overall theme and develops activities across all curriculum areas. During our visit, the overall theme of the learning project was the countries of the European Union (see photo 2 below), and each class had selected one country as their focus for detailed study including the national symbols, the native language, principal traditions, history, distinctive gastronomy, culture and arts etc.
Learning & Teaching

Teachers collaborate with other teachers in order to reach the school’s overall project’s main goals and because each project involves all curriculum areas. We observed a significant interconnection between competences being taught and learnt, ranging from written to oral and artistic expression. Students are involved in tasks involving group work as well as individual work. The vast majority of students’ work is displayed on the school and classroom walls as posters (see photos 2 and 3), organized according to topics of the project.

Assessment

The assessment of learning is continuous and shared with parents through panels posted on the walls of the school corridors, explaining the learning activities, objectives and results (see photo 4). However, during our visit it was not possible to deepen our understanding of the assessment instruments used.
Professional Development

Teachers at CEIP are in the habit of jointly reflecting together, allowing them to make informed decisions about the teacher training they require in order to meet their personal professional development objectives. The school recognizes that its path to educational success relies to a large extent on its participation in the regional PICBA programme, within the framework of the national project ComBas.

The network met with CEIP’s educational coordinator, who plays an important role in improving the school’s efficiency and effectiveness by analyzing the school’s starting point, the local economic, cultural and educational context, community involvement, work schedules, teaching activities, giving attention to diversity, assessment processes, and teacher training and mentoring.

1 http://www.mecd.gob.es/cniie/investigacion-innovacion/competencias-basicas/proyecto-combas.html
Extend Opportunities for Learning

Pupils were given learning activities involving group work as well as individual work, as can be seen by the way the tables in the classroom are differently organized in photos 5 and 6. Pupils also had access to different equipment, such as individual laptops distributed to students of 5th and 6th grade through the programme “Escuela TIC 2.0”, multimedia projectors and interactive whiteboards, diverse musical instruments and materials for writing, artistic expression and representation of information.

Resources

The school has adequate facilities for its needs, featuring appropriate sized classrooms for the number of students per class. The classrooms have a mixture of traditional blackboards and current multimedia projectors and interactive whiteboards (Photo 6). There is a small auditorium with a stage for performing arts. The spaces are cozy, without luxuries both in equipment and in terms of decor.

Photo 5 - working in groups in a classroom

1 http://www.mecd.gob.es/cniie/investigacion-innovacion/competencias-basicas/proyecto-combas.html
Impact on Pupil Outcomes

Pupils show a good sense of discipline and responsibility in their behavior and work, being uninhibited and relaxed both in the classroom and outside. Pupils are proud of their learning and the work they produce. It is clear that such a diversified project-based curriculum facilitates students’ development of several competences. For example, studying national songs of the countries of the European Union allowed students to develop their musical and language skills as well as their research skills and ability to organize and produce information. Through this exercise students are also able to increase their awareness of cultural differences, and better understand the values of equality, diversity and tolerance.

Despite the availability and friendliness of our hosts, it was not possible during this short visit to determine the quality and strength of the competences being developed, nor to which depth pupils are able to go in carrying out their tasks. While participants to the peer learning visit appreciated the variety of competences developed through such project activities with no need for segmentation by discipline, they nevertheless wondered whether treating so many competences simultaneously it was possible, and if so how, for students to learn to master cer-
tain competences in more depth. For example through learning national hymns it was evident that students were learning vocabulary as well as practicing their oral language skills, but it was not immediately obvious how through such project work other aspects of language learning such as grammar could be effectively tackled.

In an interview with CEIP Félix de la Fuente’s head teacher, he explained how the most positive outcome from the school’s whole involvement in a key competence approach was pupils’ improved engagement. The head teacher attributed this reinforced pupil engagement to the new and motivating ways of teaching and learning required by a key competence approach (including basing work around themed projects and increased group work). He underlined the challenges faced in introducing this new approach, including encouraging and supporting the entire team of teaching staff (including 14 teachers from all year groups, teaching pupils from 3 to 11 years old) to work together on one common project. Moreover, the transition from working mainly with text books, to working on theme based projects involving a lot of interaction and group work between pupils has also been challenging. The experience has nevertheless been very rewarding, and the head teacher emphasized that an important part of the project’s success has been the support gained from parents and families, with whom the school has kept in close contact, ensuring they are informed about the new key competence approach and the learning implications for their children.

3.2. VISIT TO IES JOSÉ MARÍA INFANTES, UTRERA, SEVILLE, SPAIN

Introduction

The visit to IES José María Infantes (IES stands for “Instituto de Educación Secundaria” - Secondary School Institute) located in Utrera, Seville, occurred late morning and early afternoon of 23 October.

After a very informal reception held by some students and teachers in the school hall (Photo 7), we were formally received at the main auditorium by the school management. After the welcome message, a teacher, Manuel Maqueda Jimenez, presented the educational project of the Institute.
Leadership & Management

The Institute is headed by a Director, assisted by one administrative officer, 2 education monitors and 2 school janitors. The school is attended by 534 learners organized into 21 groups. The teaching staff consists of 46 teachers and 3 English language assistants.

The Museum School

This school is modeled on the original concept of a ‘museum school’, where the arts, especially painting and sculpture, are the guiding stimuli for various learning activities. The school’s ultimate goal is to develop the following competences in students: cultural and artistic competence, linguistic competence in communication, social and civic competence, competence in learning how to learn, knowledge and interaction with the physical and natural world, autonomy and personal initiative, digital processing of information, and mathematical reasoning for the production and interpretation of information.
The school has a multidisciplinary workshop room (Photo 8) where students do their research on the particular artwork they are studying and that they will consequently reproduce by applying the same techniques used in the original work. Here they are given the opportunity to combine the use of modern technological equipment, including computers, multimedia projectors, and audiovisual devices for the production of videos, with more traditional resources. While studying how to create replicas of masterpieces is of course valuable to students’ learning and competence building, participants to the peer learning visit questioned the main focus being on reproducing existing art, rather than encouraging students to be inspired by such works and use their creativity to produce their own artworks.

The classrooms are dedicated to different artists or artworks from distinct artistic and aesthetic movements, and on their walls the replicas produced by the students themselves are displayed to visitors of the museum school. The visits to various exhibition spaces in and outside of classrooms occur simultaneously while ‘normal’ lessons are taking place. As well as engaging in artistic competences, students also develop their linguistic and communication skills, as well as the ability to present convincingly and confidently, by acting as tour guides to all visitors to the school. Students are equipped with a portable sound amplifier system to facilitate visitors’ hearing, giving the students a sense of professionalism and an authentic ‘on the job’ experience, and explain the main aspects of the artwork, its history and the techniques used by the original artists in Spanish, French or English, as required by the audience. In this way, students are given the opportunity to take responsibility and pride in their work from the outset, from the planning and research stage, through the different stages of creative development (through individual and group work), right through until the artwork’s final realization and presentation to the wider community. This process allows students to develop valuable transversal competences, and to give real concrete meaning to the work they are doing, having always in mind a clear vision of what their work will lead to and how their achievements will be valorized.
Teaching & Learning

Students are organized into study groups according to their competences and age. Each group is responsible for investigating different artists or artistic movements, including artistic techniques. In the research process pupils develop the above mentioned learning skills required by the educational project. The educational activities, organized according to the study projects of each group, allow students to learn by doing various techniques and using different materials. This includes the ability to communicate in foreign languages such as English or French when giving a guided tour (see Photo 9), where appropriate. The school operates simultaneously as a regular school and a museum.

Students come into contact with different materials, equipment and techniques suitable for them, combining in a natural way technological equipment such as computers and multimedia projectors with more traditional resources. They also exercise different forms of communication, including audiovisual production (videos), used to promote the institution.

Assessment

Assessment was not specifically addressed by any of the teachers or students presenting to the KeyCoNet group, and was not a focus of the visit. Had there been more time for interaction with teachers and with students, we might better have understood the evaluation process used by the school to foster this educational model, and what tools and processes are used to ensure students develop critical and creative competences.

Photo 9 - students presenting a set of sculptural pieces created by them and their peers
IES José María Infantes teacher’s participation in professional development is determined each year by internal and external school evaluation results. It was clear from our visit that there is a very good collaborative working environment between all teachers and pupils, evidenced by the fact that all staff and learners have to share and negotiate their knowledge, expertise, space and time due to regular lessons and guided tours taking place simultaneously in the same classrooms (Photo 10). Students and teachers coexist carrying out their regular curriculum tasks while others lead the guided tour, presenting the artworks represented on the same premises. In this sense professional development includes the sharing of knowledge, time, and teaching techniques. These multi-purpose classrooms, used as lesson as well as exhibition spaces encourage a sense of team work and joint responsibility among students and school staff.

*Photo 10 - presenting a painting during a guided tour while a regular lesson takes place*
Extended Opportunities for Learning

The learning environment for pupils in this school is very diverse and rich, as it includes, in addition to traditional lessons, participation in development activities, and diverse artistic competences at different stages of their education. IES José María Infantes has courses in sculpture, painting (Photo 11) and gardening, and also supports pupils with special educational needs.

Students have the opportunity to practice many techniques of painting and sculpture, using typical materials of different periods of the cultural history of humanity and use current technology tools, including computers and digital audiovisual means.

Photo 11 - presenting a painting installed in the school hall
The exercise of being involved in the guided tours (Photo 12) is beneficial to pupils as it brings meaning to the artwork they have created. Individually and in groups, students work together through the different creative stages of development until the last phase where they have the chance to present their work publicly. An interview with one of the school’s English teachers revealed that there is such great enthusiasm from students to get involved in the guided tours that they have had to create a waiting list. This enthusiasm was confirmed by a student who when interviewed informed us that she practiced explaining the school artworks in her own time outside of school with friends, and at home with her parents and grandparents. Moreover, interestingly many shy students or less able learners volunteer to participate in the guided tours, and as a result teachers have observed how their confidence in terms of language skills as well as body language has significantly improved. Students gain a sense of self esteem and purpose, as they value and take pride in their contribution to the school’s success and reputation. The teacher stressed the importance of recognition as a motivating factor for students’ learning. Moreover, in the small group interview with students, we were informed that students have the chance to explain the artworks to visiting fellow students and teachers from neighbouring schools, highlighting the community dimension of the project.
The English teacher also spoke of the importance of cross-curricular learning in the school’s museum project, as all subject teachers and students of all ages have to discuss and work together, to ensure the right mix of knowledge and expertise from the relevant persons are correctly used. Just as the head teacher of the CEIP Felix Rodríguez de la Fuente primary school noted, the secondary school teacher at IES also expressed the challenge of working together in a different way, when using a key competence approach; namely, involving a large focus on collaborative work and student-centred learning, which can be quite disruptive to start with until teachers and students get used to working in this way.

Resources

School facilities are very good and seem appropriate to the educational model that has been developed. On the one hand there are the classrooms that are simultaneously exhibition rooms and lesson rooms, and on the other, every remaining school space, also used to display art, including the corridors. In the school’s central block, there is a large workshop space used as a laboratory where students can investigate and take part in practical activities, while being monitored by educational assistants. The auditorium (Photo 13) is large enough and suitable to present the initiatives the school carries out to the community of Utrera.

Photo 13 - IES presentation by the head teacher in the main auditorium
Impact on Pupils’ Learning and Outcomes

Pupils show great self confidence in their work and are proud of the school. During our visit we observed a healthy conviviality between groups of students from different classes and age groups working together as guides to their school, which illustrated the maturity of students and an established and dynamic school culture. By participating in the different stages of the creative process, including the public presentation of artworks, students develop valuable transversal competences.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Spain’s education policy fully supports the key competence approach through national regulations establishing a competence-based curriculum and assessment system, as well as the national ComBAs project, allowing regions such as Andalusia to develop a tailor-made version suited to the context and needs of the schools in their region. This explicit focus on the implementation of key competences through schools’ participation in Andalusia’s PICBA programme, together with effective school leadership, management and training, teacher collaboration and supportive parents and communities, demonstrates Andalusia’s commitment to fostering a whole school approach to key competence development. The features of the key competence approach in the schools we visited and heard about included a strong focus on theme-based project work involving cross-curricular learning and collaborative work among students of various ages and teachers of different subjects. Technology-enhanced learning also played an important role in the development of students’ key competences, as did a clear focus on student-centred learning. These new ways of teaching and learning were considered by some teachers as challenging at first, as teachers and students need time to become accustomed to this way of working.

The openness and willingness of our Spanish hosts to provide us with a fruitful opportunity for observation and learning should be noted. Although a lot of rich information was provided by various professionals from the Andalusian Regional Ministry of Education and representatives from the local schools, KeyCoNet partners felt that there was not enough time and space in the programme for dialogue between the host school staff and visitors. Such a dialogue would have enabled the clarification of some aspects which were less evident in the formal presentations given on the first day or during the school visits on the following day. This lesson
learned has been noted by the network’s coordinator and will be taken on board for KeyCoNet’s next peer learning visit in Dublin in March 2013. Overall, the 2012 peer learning visit to Seville gave participants a useful insight into KCD in Spain, and allowed for parallels and differences to be noted between this model and those implemented in participants’ own countries. As a result of this peer learning visit it is recommended that through KeyCoNet’s forthcoming case studies, the network should analyze teachers’ experiences in being directly involved in an educational paradigm shift, in order to get a clearer and more concrete picture of the enablers and obstacles they face.
5. REFERENCES / USEFUL URLS

ComBas project:


KeyCoNet:
http://keyconet.eun.org/

PICBA programme:
http://competenciasbasicascordoba.webnode.es/news/andaqlucia-desarrollo-paralelo-a-combas/

Regional Ministry of Education of Andalusia:
http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/educacion
http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/educacion/educacion/nav/contenido.jsp?pag=/Contenidos/GabinetePrensa/Notas_de_prensa/2012/Octubre/nota_prensa_221012_KeyCoNet&vismenu=0,0,1,1,1,0,0,0

Spanish background documents sent prior to the peer learning visit:
https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ro513hcd8vqh2vc/zyAiO1uvDR?m

Teachers’ presentations:
http://prezi.com/qld3eapv5nuh/ies-itaca-implementing-key-competencies/
http://prezi.com/lfmgzm6mab3/presentacion-udi-guia-didactica-del-cultivo-de-la-fresa/


Video interviews:
http://keyconet.eun.org/videos