



SUMMARY REPORT 2020

# eTwinning Schools: towards a shared leadership approach

*Quantitative and qualitative analysis  
of the eTwinning School practices*



Erasmus+



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[www.etwinning.net](http://www.etwinning.net)

European Schoolnet  
(EUN Partnership AISBL)  
Rue de Trèves 61  
1040 Brussels - Belgium  
[www.europeanschoolnet.org](http://www.europeanschoolnet.org) - [info@eun.org](mailto:info@eun.org)

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**Author:** Alexandra Hanna Licht, Irene Pateraki, Santi Scimeca

**Design:** Jessica Massini

**Language coordination:** Danosh Nasrollahi

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## KEY FINDINGS

### **1. eTwinning Schools have a commitment to shared leadership**

The notion and the practice of Shared leadership is the one which seems to be more established: this confirms that eTwinning Schools are, at least structurally, ready to adopt more flexible decision-making and leadership structures.

### **2. eTwinning Schools display a strong commitment to collaboration, sharing and teamwork**

Collaboration among teachers and among students is strong and effective but more development and further practice is needed in establishing collaboration between students and teachers, especially outside eTwinning projects.

### **3. eTwinning Schools are models for other schools but networking could be improved**

Serving as a Learning hub, eTwinning schools generally engage in mentoring of other schools and can serve as source of inspiration of eTwinning practice in their region or state, but at the same time teachers feel that their school is not entirely ready to be involved in school-to-school networks and collaboration.

### **4. eTwinning Schools are inclusive and innovative learning organisations**

eTwinning Schools are innovative and inclusive learning organisations and establish a culture of inquiry, innovation and exploration, in which students' learning is placed at the center and diversity is valued.

### **5. eTwinning Schools need a more proactive role towards the local community**

Synergies between the school and the local community, including parents, local associations, local authority, would deserve a stronger establishment and a consolidated school development plan, thus formalising the schools' role within the local context.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. eTwinning Schools should find ways to systematically involve the whole school community and give each actor (teachers, pupils, Principals, parents) responsibilities and opportunities which can be leveraged via eTwinning activities.
2. The eTwinning School Label should be considered a milestone of a journey and, ideally, the eTwinning School Mission should be integrated as part of each school's mission.
3. eTwinning Schools need consistent and constant guidance and professional development activities to keep them motivated on one side, and to monitor their progression, on the other. This can be achieved by providing dedicated courses, webinars, materials and opportunities, and at the same time by enhancing the community feeling already present.
4. eTwinning Schools need recognition of their work by the European, national and regional authorities, as mainstreaming eTwinning practices cannot rely solely on the individual school's practice but should be promoted and implemented at a systemic level.



# INTRODUCTION

This is the summary of the full Monitoring Report which this year investigates the eTwinning Schools. These are schools awarded with the eTwinning School Label: they are recognised for their eTwinning activities, involvement, commitment, and dedication not only of individual eTwinners, but of the whole-school, where teams of teachers and school leaders work together. These schools form a special group within the eTwinning community, consisting, at the time of the administering the survey, of 2,236 institutions<sup>1</sup>, selected for their level of activities, their awareness of Internet Safety issues and their potential as being ambassadors, models for other schools, promoters and leaders.

Within the eTwinning community, eTwinning Schools are particularly committed to the importance and values of eTwinning, the most important of which remains the involvement in European collaboration and exchanges activities. eTwinning, with its cross-border aspect, is part of the European initiatives in education, based on the claim that EU wide cooperation supports the development of quality education.

eTwinning Schools embed such values in their school's policies, practice and professional development with the support of school management.

eTwinning Schools commit to engage in the development of activities summarised in the [eTwinning School Mission](#), which is composed of five main areas:

## 1. eTwinning Schools have a commitment to shared leadership

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- 1 eTwinning Schools are selected once a year and their Label has a duration of two years. The number of eTwinning Schools are:  
for the years 2018/2019: 1217  
for the years 2019/2020: 1019  
Totalling 2,236 at the time of administering the survey, for the years 2020/2021: 2141, totalling 3,160. at the time of writing this report

2. eTwinning Schools display a strong commitment to collaboration, sharing and teamwork
3. Students in eTwinning Schools are agents of change
4. eTwinning Schools are models for other schools
5. eTwinning Schools are inclusive and innovative learning organisations

This publication **explores how eTwinning Schools operate in a two-fold approach**, by examining their practices through analysis of quantitative data and qualitative investigation:

- Chapter 1 presents the results of a survey administrated to the eTwinning Schools in autumn 2019, examining practices in the five areas mentioned above.
- Chapter 2 presents a brief summary of case studies of six different eTwinning Schools which the Central Support Service (CSS) guided, supported and interacted for 18 months, with professional development opportunities, peer learning discussions, work on an interdisciplinary eTwinning project and dedicated group-work on a common eTwinning Group.

The aim of this Report is to:

1. Provide eTwinning Schools a compass to orientate by in their development plan, thus identifying strengths and weaknesses.
2. Allow stakeholders (Central Support Service, National Support Services and Partner Support Agencies) to identify the areas eTwinning Schools generally need to further develop to achieve the commitments expressed in the eTwinning School Mission.
3. Identify the elements which should be adjusted and implemented at systemic level – mainly from educational authorities – to fully leverage on eTwinning Schools' potential.



# 1. SURVEYING ETWINNING SCHOOLS

This chapter presents the findings of the first edition of the eTwinning Schools survey<sup>2</sup>, launched in Autumn 2019. The survey included 19 closed questions and took on average 10-15 minutes to complete. The survey consisted of two sections<sup>3</sup>:

- a. Demographics - aimed to collect background information about participants and their schools.
- b. eTwinning Schools practices - aimed at collecting information about each school's practice in the eTwinning School Mission areas. Some of the questions were based on existing survey models.

From a methodological point of view, it should be noted that:

- Respondents to all editions of this survey are anonymous. However, they were requested to indicate their School name and the respondent's role in the School.
- A verification process took place in order to ensure that only responses from eTwinning Schools were considered in the data set.

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2 The survey can be consulted, for information, at [this address](#).

After removing duplicates and non-eligible answers the final data set consisted of 1,261 answers, which is 56% of the total number of eTwinning Schools present when the survey was administered (2,236). It must be noticed that the sample is not randomised (respondents filled in the survey on a voluntary basis after a public call), and therefore cannot be assumed it is representative of the entire eTwinning Schools population. However, the large number of answers most likely gives an indicative view of the practices in all eTwinning Schools. The Full Monitoring Report gives account of the methodology and details of the analysis of the survey

3 Throughout the Report we refer to the various sections of the survey (B.1, B.2 etc. as a reference).

- Respondents were requested to reply to the survey after a consultation with their colleagues and/or School leadership teams so that the collected answers represent as much as possible the practices in the school and not the individual eTwinning teacher's views.
- The number of answers vary significantly among the different countries, meaning that they may not represent the eTwinning Schools population at country level.
- The sample is not randomised (respondents filled in the survey on a voluntary basis after a public call), and therefore cannot be assumed it is representative of the entire eTwinning Schools population. However, the large number of answers most likely gives an indicative view of the practices in all eTwinning Schools.
- The survey, in English, was launched in October 2019 and was online for seven weeks.

## 1.1. Audience

The role of respondents confirms the typical distribution in eTwinning, with the majority (77%) being teachers, 11% school principals and 7% deputy or assistant principals. Schools' levels are also consistent with the overall eTwinning population: primary education and lower secondary education are around a third of respondents, while 24% come from upper secondary educational institutions and 13% come from Early Childhood Education and Care.

Looking at the percentage of teachers within the schools who are engaged in eTwinning activities (projects, professional development, promotional events etc.), the survey confirms that many eTwinning Schools involve more than just the pioneers: the vast majority of respondents (40%) indicated that up to one third of the teaching staff are engaged in eTwinning activities and another 10% engage even more teachers. The other half of the respondents are still in a development phase where eTwinners are very few within the school (less than 10% of the teaching staff).

Also, eTwinning Schools seem to be very dedicated to eTwinning: 40% of respondents indicate that teachers in their school are engaged in eTwinning activities between three to five hours weekly and some go even further, with 38% of respondents claiming between five to ten hours weekly.

## 1.2. Inside schools' practices

The survey investigated on the schools' practice in five areas corresponding to the five areas of the eTwinning School Mission. Respondents were given various statements representing specific school practices and were asked to position themselves – as a school - on a scale between 1 and 5 (the higher the number, the most established and refined the practice in the school).

### Shared leadership 1. eTwinning Schools have a commitment to shared leadership

*In eTwinning Schools leadership is a shared process, both for the responsibility of organisation and the decision making process. The school principal and teacher leaders understand the possibilities offered by eTwinning both at a pedagogical and professional level and actively support all staff to become involved in eTwinning activities.*

The main research question here was: how much is the shared leadership approach practiced in eTwinning Schools? Four indicators were analysed, each constituting a pillar of shared leadership practice.

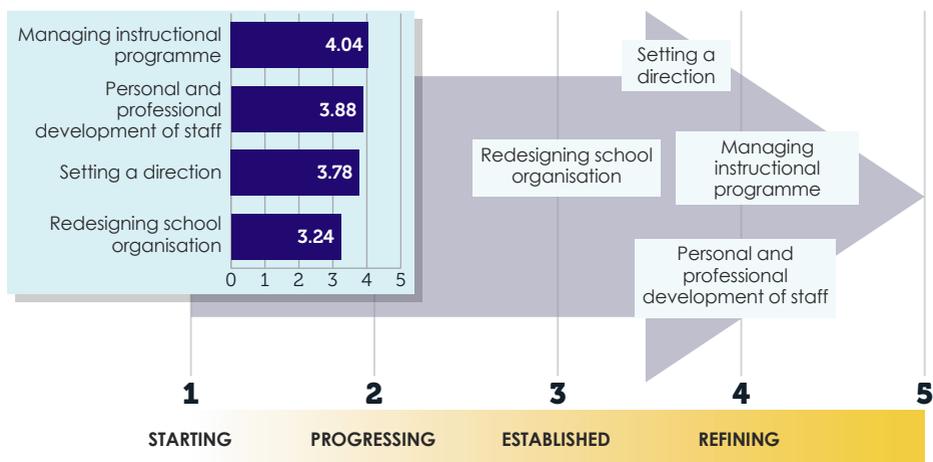


Figure 1: Shared Leadership practice

The graph above shows that, on average, eTwinning Schools feel quite strong in teachers' professionalism and cooperation as a way of generating positive change in school (managing instructional programme). At the same time, eTwinning Schools feel not as strong in personal and professional development of staff and in "setting a direction" by providing concrete opportunities and encouraging teachers to contribute and design curricula, innovative teaching methods and active contribution to the

school strategy. The area that still needs improvement is the opportunity to learn from another and dedicate time for professional development and collaboration to improve school practices (redesigning school organisation). It can be inferred that changing the school's organisation takes time, needs a strong support from formal leadership and engagement of staff and has to be compliant with the school regulation – including national and local norms - in form of dedicated time which is not part of teaching hours.

## 2. eTwinning Schools display a strong commitment to collaboration, sharing and teamwork

*The teachers in the school work together as a team to plan their eTwinning and other pedagogical activities and share their experiences and practices with their colleagues, both inside and outside their school. They collaborate on providing an eTwinning action plan and use it to drive innovation and change in their school and beyond.*

Teachers reflected on how much the area of Collaboration was established in eTwinning Schools. European collaboration is the most important element in eTwinning and this area includes aspects of students' collaboration, teacher's collaboration and collaboration between students and teachers. Collaborative teaching and learning are the basis of each eTwinning project, that encourages European collaboration and work in multinational teams of students, built upon teachers' joint activities, exchange of ideas and practices. In eTwinning Schools, collaborative teaching and learning is expected to be mainstreamed: from the individual teacher and classroom to the engagement of the whole school, where teachers and students from different classes work together and are involved in peer learning.

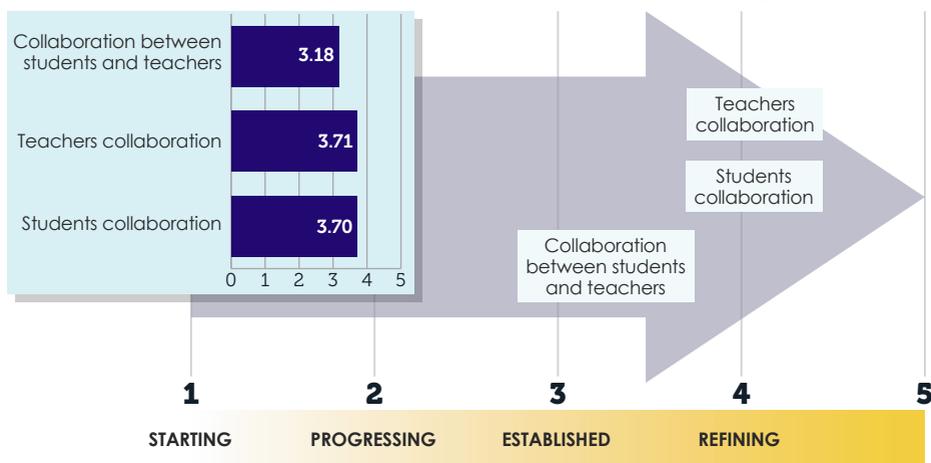


Figure 2: Collaborative Teaching and Learning

We can see that teachers' collaboration and students' collaboration are well-established practices among schools who replied to the survey. However, collaboration between students and teachers is a less common practice compared to the other ones. We can infer that collaboration between teachers and students might be more challenging as it requires the re-thinking of the teacher's role and tasks and prescribes a shift towards a more personalised form of learning, where students have more autonomy and choice.

### 3. Students in eTwinning Schools are agents of change

*Students have a role to play in the development of the eTwinning School. They promote eTwinning to teachers (both already engaged or who are not yet involved) and parents, acting both as drivers and as a sounding board for all innovations taking place in pedagogy and use of technology.*

Student Agency is defined as the capacity of students to set a goal, reflect and act responsibly to effect change in their own lives. How much is Student Agency nurtured in eTwinning Schools?

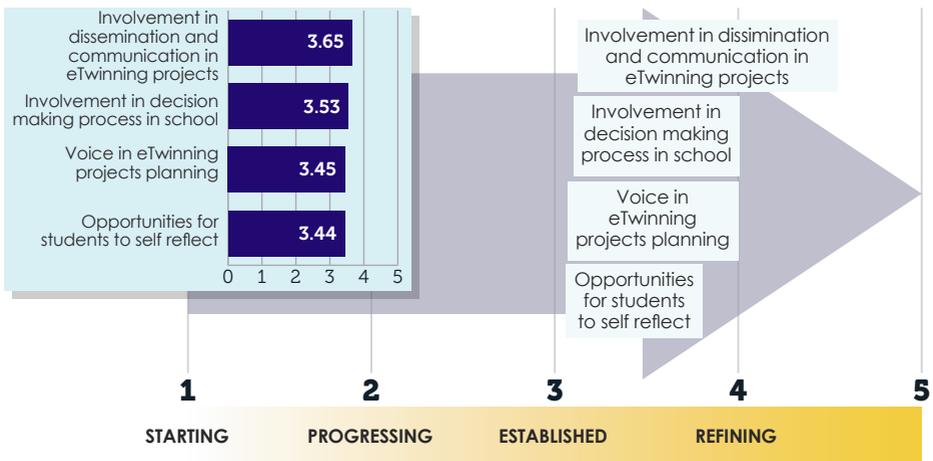


Figure 3: Student Agency

We notice that all statements position similarly on the scale between “established” and “refined”. On the one hand it confirms that students do have a rather affirmed role in their schools, on the other, that this practice is relatively novel.

The area which seems to be more practiced by schools is the one related to the involvement of students in the dissemination and communication of eTwinning projects: students are seen as main actors but mostly when the project has been

established rather than at planning or decision-making phase regarding the project content and activities.

#### 4. eTwinning Schools are models for other schools

*The eTwinning School is committed to playing the role of ambassador to other schools in their area/region by actively promoting eTwinning and disseminating their achievements through as many means as possible: open days, information briefings, and mentoring schemes. They are proactive in creating professional development opportunities open to other schools in their area.*

Schools' peer-learning and exchange of good practices and 'know-how' is a key element in mainstreaming and disseminating innovative pedagogical approaches. School mentoring can take place in two main forms:

- Engaging with community's stakeholders such as parents, local associations, NGOs and professionals. This type of mentoring enriches the pupils and staff while at the same time provides concrete opportunities for the school population to enrich the community.
- Engaging with other schools to exchange knowledge and practice online and onsite through joint activities, peer learning, shadowing and training provided by one school to another.

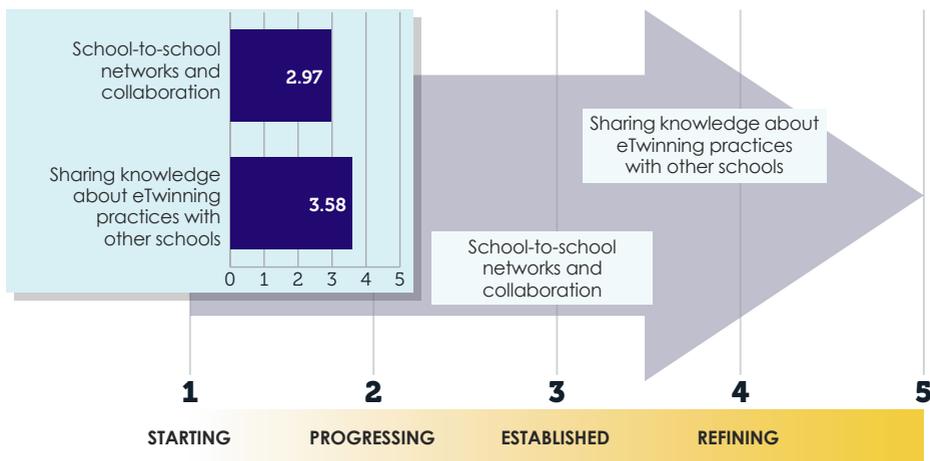


Figure 4: Mentoring and Modelling for other eTwinning Schools

This is an area where schools are still developing their practice. This can be observed in the responses provided to statement regarding "school-to-school networks and collaboration" which indicates how the school, as an institution, is ready to provide

solutions and support other schools in terms of expertise and facilities, and/or helping other school to become eTwinning Schools.

## 5. eTwinning Schools are inclusive and innovative learning organisations

*eTwinning Schools are committed to inclusivity at every level and actively seek ways to create an inclusive environment for students of every ability and culture, their parents and the wider community. Teachers in eTwinning Schools commit to developing the whole school as a learning organisation. They use eTwinning to support and deliver their curriculum using innovative pedagogical models which include, among a variety of approaches, collaborative learning, student-centred education, flexible approaches to learning times and learning spaces*

"A school as learning organisation has the capacity to change and adapt routinely to new environments and circumstances as its members, individually and together, learn their way to realising their vision"<sup>4</sup>. While inclusivity is to be examined at the school and system level, being 'inclusive' as a system does not mean solely taking a universal approach to all learners. But rather taking an individualised approach where targeted support is provided to learners with additional needs, including those at particular risk<sup>5</sup>. Such support and additional actions are to be taken at a school level, by teachers and educational staff.

How much do eTwinning Schools feel they are inclusive learning organisations?

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4 Kools, M. and L. Stoll (2016), "What Makes a School a Learning Organisation?", OECD Education Working Papers, No. 137, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/5jlwm62b3bvh-en>.

5 European Commission (2018c), "European ideas for better learning: Produced by the ET 2020 Working Group Schools The governance of school education systems", European Commission publishing 2018. [https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/downloads/Governance/2018-wgs1-governance-school\\_en.pdf](https://www.schooleducationgateway.eu/downloads/Governance/2018-wgs1-governance-school_en.pdf) accessed on 10 September 2020.



Figure 5: Schools as inclusive and innovative learning organisations

Inclusion of pupils with special educational needs and recognising the cultural diversity of pupils are an established practice. Nevertheless, it must be noticed that, although parents and community stakeholders are quite involved and engaged in eTwinning Schools, their inclusion is not yet as developed as for the other indicators. This activity seems to be limited to dissemination, where parents are involved only at final project stages, with students presenting the project's result.



## 2. CASE STUDIES: ETWINNING SCHOOLS IN REAL LIFE

The second part of this Report is dedicated to a qualitative investigation, consisting of case studies. Following an open call of interest, six eTwinning Schools were selected, on the basis of their level of advancement and compliancy with the eTwinning School Mission, to take part in the monitoring and development activity. Due to the nature of this Summary Report it is not possible to fully reflect the richness of the case studies in such a short presentation.

The results of the case studies have many elements in common, but they also present some specific activities that each eTwinning School has organised, all fully described in the full Report. A common feature among all the schools analysed is that **eTwinning Schools are learning organisations which consider the eTwinning School Label as milestone of a development journey** to improve their learning practices and work towards a whole-school approach, where all members of the school community participate on equal terms.

### Details of the schools involved

NAME	COUNTRY	TYPE AND LEVEL	NUMBER OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS
Lycée des métiers Louis Blériot	France	Vocational	64 teachers, 430 students
Experimental School of the University of Thessaloniki	Greece	Secondary - Upper Secondary	34 teachers, 450 students
Direzione Didattica Ottavo Circolo, Piacenza	Italy	Cluster: 2 Primary Schools and 5 pre-primary	117 teachers, 658 students

NAME	COUNTRY	TYPE AND LEVEL	NUMBER OF TEACHERS AND STUDENTS
Scoala Gimnaziala nr.17, Botosani	Romania	Primary and secondary	43 teachers, 720 students
Col·legi Sant Josep, Navàs	Spain	Nursery to Primary	17 teachers, 250 students
Dr. İlhami Tankut Anadolu Lisesi	Turkey	Upper Secondary	50 teachers, 700 students

## 2.1. Common elements: eTwinning School Mission and beyond

The following paragraphs group and briefly summarises some of the common and most prominent features of the schools investigated in each of the eTwinning School Mission's area and beyond

### SHARED LEADERSHIP

What is the role of the school leadership and how does it affect the management of the school?



The formal management plays a central role. As soon as the principal was convinced about the benefits that eTwinning could offer to the school, she started supporting - and sometimes strongly encouraging - the implementation of eTwinning projects at school.



The principal stimulates, supports and encourages the teams of teachers to work in cooperation and innovation.



The school principal encourages and supports the staff who wants to implement international projects like eTwinning and Erasmus+ and try new pedagogical methods.



eTwinning permeates all classes. The principal and the two deputy headteachers have created a climate of trust where all teachers work in different teams, take up roles and responsibilities and have regular meetings to discuss activities that are happening at school.

## COLLABORATION, SHARING AND TEAMWORK

How developed and transversal is the collaboration among teachers, school leaders and students?



Periodical staff meetings are organised at school where everyone has the opportunity to comment on the practices of colleagues, discuss about different issues of the school, voice their concerns and take decisions.



Collaboration between pre-primary and primary schools is something unique thanks to the older students who act as mentors for the younger ones.



Collaboration is the main priority for the school. Teachers are collaborating with each other and they realise that skills they learn through participating in eTwinning can also be useful in their subjects and in the development of their level of competences such as digital, cultural awareness and expression.



Co-working is a possible solution as, since September 2019, working in collaboration is part of the curriculum in the vocational schools in France. This co-working approach is already a reality for eTwinning projects at school, as the English teacher works together with the biotechnology teacher on an eTwinning project that is part of the biotechnology class.

## STUDENTS' AGENCY

What is the role of students in the school?



Students play an important role, as they concretely help teachers to use different tools and become the best promoters of eTwinning. One of their clubs is dedicated to eTwinning: in a fixed day and time every week, students can join the club to finish their activities they didn't manage to complete during the class such as recordings, videos, presentations etc.



There are teams of teachers and students that work together and share ideas. A School Student Council was established with the title " Digital Democratic Participation Platform". The school offers their students all the opportunities to practice democracy by being part of the decision-making process.



Students have the opportunity to present their work to the other peers, and this gives them a visible role which they would not be able to achieve otherwise.



The students of Grade 5 and 6 are agents by being members of the "Consell Municipal d'infants", the local community formed by teachers, parents and students from all the schools in town.



Students prepared and ran a series of online courses (8 lessons) in Moodle about the use of ICT, GDPR and e-safety with the aim to combat the digital exclusion of adults by training their parents.

## MODELS FOR OTHER SCHOOLS

How ready is the school to be a model for other schools?



The **school serves as a model for other schools** as it organises informal and formal trainings under the auspices of the School Inspectorate.

## INCLUSIVE AND INNOVATIVE LEARNING ORGANISATION

How much are the schools committed to innovative practices and inclusivity for students of every ability and culture?



Different teaching methods such as co-animation – two teachers working together in the class - are encouraged, and the curriculum mixes professional studies with academic subjects. In the school, all students and their parents sign a chart of good manners for the use of ICT infrastructure.



Inclusion, as conceived in the eTwinning School Mission, is developed and deployed vertically (teachers to students, older students to young students) and horizontally (via teams composed of difference actors).

Other elements which are common to some of the schools, beyond the Mission.

## ETWINNING WITHIN THE SCHOOL

How much is eTwinning present in the school's communication, promotion and mission?



eTwinning is visible in the school: a flag stands out in the principal's office; the eTwinning School plaque and Mission is prominently displayed at the school's entrance and panels with eTwinning activities are present in every floor of the school. Such areas are called "eTwinning Corners".



The School Mission, drawn many years ago as a petition of principles, found a concrete application with the eTwinning School Mission.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Which opportunities are offered to teachers to further develop?



eTwinning offers a range of online and onsite professional development opportunities that help teachers make progress and develop their competences. In their school one third of the registered teachers participate in such activities and their next step will be to involve the rest of the staff.



Learning-by-doing training sessions are organised at school based on eTwinning projects. The teachers share the tools they used, the steps in implementing the projects and what teachers learnt from this process.

## INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

How important and present is the European and international dimension in the schools' activities?



eTwinning has brought innovation and European collaboration to the school, which changed its way of working, giving special emphasis on project-based learning and active collaboration in and outside of the school.



eTwinning is a window to the culture of Europe. The school vision has a strong international dimension and the education policies of different European countries are taken as reference. Teachers and students fully exploit this opportunity by interacting with foreign partners.



The school has undertaken European mobility through Leonardo and Erasmus+ KA1 and KA2 and participated in eTwinning projects for more than 10 years. A training period abroad (Cyprus, England, Germany) is offered to 10 volunteer students from the three final year baccalauréat classes every year.



The school is active in many European initiatives apart eTwinning: Erasmus+ mobilities, e-Safety label, JA Europe, CRISS H2020, SELFIE, Scientix. All permanent teachers in the Experimental School are engaged in an eTwinning project – alone or within various teams- giving opportunities to students for international collaboration.



All pre-primary and primary classes collaborated this year in a European eTwinning project with another eTwinning School in Spain following a whole-school approach and aiming at adding European dimension across the school activities.



The school invites and hosts teachers from other countries and holds eTwinning classes where students are involved and benefit more through the international exchanges, apart from their participation in European eTwinning projects.



## 3. CONCLUSIONS

The eTwinning School Label is relatively new. It was conceived to play a role for the further outreach of eTwinning across schools in Europe and their development towards a whole-school approach, grounded on the experience and lessons learnt through the implementation of international projects. The pillars of the concept, as exemplified in the Mission, reward and award schools where a Shared Leadership approach is adopted, collaboration takes place at all levels, new pedagogies are implemented, students play an active role and Inclusion is considered an asset.

The analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data from the survey and the case studies confirm the assumption that **eTwinning Schools have and exploit a combination of factors** including:

- The presence of committed teachers and principals.
- The strong integration of the school within the local community.
- The availability to go beyond traditional methods and pedagogies.
- A strong predisposition to the usage of ICT in education.
- A firm commitment to include students with special needs and diverse background.
- A tendency to consider students as partners in learning rather than recipients of teaching practices.
- A strong participation in different professional development activities.

For the sake of readability, this chapter is structured by following the areas of the eTwinning School Mission as follows.

### 1. eTwinning Schools have a commitment to shared leadership

According to the results of the survey, among the various areas which are part of the Mission, **the notion and the practice of Shared leadership is the one which seems to be more established**: this confirms that **eTwinning Schools are, at least structurally, ready**

**to adopt more flexible decision-making and leadership structures.** They have done the most important and preliminary step, which is to challenge and overcome a more traditional, top-down approach where decisions are taken by the Principal and all the staff must follow.

This highlights the importance of support from formal leadership for a successful whole-school approach that uses eTwinning as a vehicle of change and innovation. Shared leadership is certainly a complex process, where certain practices that work in one school might not fit in another. In this sense, **eTwinning Schools can serve as examples for other schools** on how to engage the school staff and community in shaping the school vision and work collaboratively towards the change and development that is needed in the school

Although in a few cases schools still maintain some elements of the traditional top-down approach where “the principle decides”, much more often the approach relies on collaboration between school staff and the school management, with eTwinners in the front-line. In some cases, like in the Greek school or the Turkish school examined in the case studies, this approach was already embedded in the school's vision, but it could only be fully deployed when other conditions were met and the awarding of the eTwinning School Label was one of them.

## **2. eTwinning Schools display a strong commitment to collaboration, sharing and teamwork**

eTwinning Schools are obviously engaged in collaborative activities: **collaboration among teachers and among students is strong and effective** and both the responses to the survey and the case studies show that this is among the most advanced practice areas. From the survey we learn that eTwinning Schools have overall well established the practice of collaborative teaching and learning among teachers and among students. Typical examples come from the practice of the Italian and the Romanian schools investigated- with a continuous exchange among teachers via various bodies and the strong involvement and support of the Principal. These findings are not surprising, as the Shared leadership approach goes hand in hand with open dialogue between teachers and encouragement of collaboration between teachers, in which the school promotes collaboration among teachers, creating and supporting continuous learning opportunities for all staff. Comparatively, and this is again confirmed by both the survey and the case studies, **more development and further practice is needed in establishing collaboration between students and teachers, especially outside eTwinning projects.**

## **3. Students in eTwinning Schools are agents of change**

Collaboration and especially student-teacher collaboration is closely linked to **Student agency**. The responses to the survey and especially one of the case studies show that **eTwinning Schools' students count and are encouraged to make their voice**

**heard.** This is true when planning, running, promoting and communicating eTwinning projects. This is also visible, although to a lesser extent, in schools' policies and decision-making processes. The presence of Students Councils, like in the case of the Turkish school, represents a typical example of practicing democracy by nurturing students' engagement and sense of responsibility. This increases students' motivation and helps reduce dropping-out and early school leaving, as in the case of the French Lycée Blériot. However, Student Agency ranks below the other components of the Mission, which gives room for improvement. While being an essential element for projects' development, **students still need to develop a more central role when it comes to learning practices, which are still mainly led by teachers.**

#### 4. eTwinning Schools are models for other schools

Serving as a **Learning hub**, eTwinning Schools engage in **mentoring of other schools** and can serve as source of inspiration of eTwinning practice in their region or state. Embedding systems for collecting and exchanging knowledge and learning among schools and within the school, where learning and knowledge exchange extends with and from the external environment and community. According to the survey, respondents feel that **their school is not entirely ready to be involved in school-to-school networks and collaboration** (for instance by providing facilities, expertise, support and solutions to other schools). It is not a surprising result: before being ready to help and support other institutions, eTwinning Schools probably need to establish and reinforce their own foundations. Among the six eTwinning Schools, the Romanian one has initiated professional development activities for teachers and head teachers in the area but the training is organised mainly by the experienced eTwinning of the school, having the support of the management team. It is a first step to slowly involve more members and create the learning environment where teachers of the region can benefit and join eTwinning.

#### 5. eTwinning Schools are inclusive and innovative learning organisations

eTwinning **Schools as innovative and inclusive learning organisations** establish a culture of inquiry, innovation and exploration, in which students' learning is placed at the center. **Diversity is valued** and students, with their community, are encouraged to engage in shaping and contributing to the school's success. Also encompassing the other mission areas, we learn that this area of the eTwinning School Mission is a well-established practice. This is confirmed both in the results of the survey and the case studies. The involvement of all students is seen as one of the most important – and highest ranking – areas among the ones investigated in this Report. Examples like the French and the Italian cases studies, where inclusion is part of the school's vision and practice, confirm this result. **Synergies between the school and the local community, including parents, local associations, local authority, would deserve a stronger establishment** and a consolidated school development plan, thus formalising the schools' role within the local context. This would also address parents concerns that eTwinning projects are 'distractions,' like in the case of the Greek school or the Romanian school.



## 4. RECOMMENDATIONS:

The results of the survey and the case studies suggest that eTwinning Schools have a potential whose deployment can be influenced at school level, with the support of the school management, and at systemic level, with the input of educational authorities. In particular:

### 1. At school Level

Active eTwinners are an essential asset for the schools and act as mentors. They involve other colleagues, liaise with the formal school management, promote shared leadership practices among formal and non-formal leaders and try hard to make sure that their experience is shared at school and beyond. However, schools sometimes rely on these actors solely, with little shared-ownership among school staff. The risk is that if such active eTwinners leave, the progress made in the implementation of the eTwinning School Mission would be lost. To avoid this **eTwinning Schools should find ways to systematically involve the whole school community** and give each actor (teachers, pupils, Principals, parents) responsibilities and opportunities which can be leveraged via eTwinning activities.

The development and monitoring activity with the six eTwinning Schools shows that **once teachers receive recognition and appraisal for their work, notably from the school management, they feel more motivated to go one-step further**, to work even harder. In addition, the twelve eTwinning teachers in the monitoring activity transmitted this motivation and enthusiasm to their colleagues at school and altogether they worked to improve their school towards the statements of the eTwinning School Mission. This means that peer-motivation, if grounded on solid recognition, can also have a domino effect of the school environment.

eTwinning Schools have the potential to serve as Learning Organisations. Where the shared leadership approach is used to mainstream innovation and adapt to changes in the school - with the support of formal leaders and the engagement of teachers -

the **development of a shared vision for the school that reflects the eTwinning School Mission can help schools to further obtain their goals and adapt to new challenges.**

Whilst the eTwinning School Label is relatively new, the idea of a whole-school approach towards innovation is well established in both research and practice. In this sense, **the Label can serve as a tool, helping schools to follow a step-by-step process to achieve their school's development goals.** In this report we learn that the eTwinning School Mission areas, and school innovation in general, are not stand alone practices but should be addressed through a whole-school strategy, facilitating the engagement of an ongoing dialogue between school leaders, teachers, students, parents and community.

In this sense turning the eTwinning School Mission statements into attainable, concrete, measurable indicators relevant to the specific schools, is still a 'work in progress'. This is not surprising though: **the Label should be considered a milestone of a developmental journey.** Ideally, **the eTwinning School Mission should be integrated as part of each school's mission** and eTwinning activities, supported and promoted by formal leadership, can help school staff to better understand how to improve and further develop their schools' strategies.

## **2. At systemic Level**

**eTwinning Schools, seen as institutions and not as a collection of dedicated and committed teachers, still struggle to mentor other schools.** The practice area 'school—to-school networking and collaboration' is perceived as 'work in progress' rather than an established practice, and this is confirmed in all case studies. The organisation of online and especially onsite promotional and professional development activities is a good practice to engage other teachers, parents and the local community, but this cannot happen in teachers' spare time (the 'lack of time' is one of the main obstacles mentioned by teachers). **eTwinning Schools need to receive more recognition and support at all levels** - national or regional education level with specific regulations and opportunities - to fully engage in sound mentoring schemes, for instance by allowing teachers to dedicate more time in specific support activities and offering concrete opportunities to engage in peer-learning within and outside the school.

The activities and workshops developed by the Central Support Service for the six schools helped them understand better the different statements of the eTwinning School Mission and the actions needed to improve their practices. Relevant resources facilitated their planning and guidance kept them motivated. This seems to confirm that **eTwinning Schools, and schools in general, do need consistent and constant guidance and professional development activities** to keep them motivated on one side, and to monitor their progression, on the other. **Such guidance however cannot rely solely on eTwinning (via the Central Support Service, National Support Service, the**

**Partner Support Agencies, the platform itself); it should become part of the common practice of national educational policies.**

If eTwinning Schools need guidance and constant support - with an action plan including concrete, achievable goals and time to reflect and evaluate their work - **at the same time, they need recognition of their work by the European, national and regional authorities**, as mainstreaming eTwinning practices cannot rely solely on the individual school's practice but should be recognised and promoted at structural level.

In this respect, the platform and the eTwinning European and national support services should **continue providing guidance and offering professional development opportunities** for eTwinning Schools via dedicated courses, webinars, materials and opportunities, and at the same time enhance the community feeling already present. The networking taking place in the specific eTwinning Schools Group should aim at facilitating peer-learning and at stimulating sharing of practice in all the areas of the Mission, and in particular in the ones which this Report identified as more in need. Moreover, eTwinning European and national support services should continue promoting the recognition and diffusion of eTwinning at system level, by sharing the results of their monitoring activities with national stakeholders including Ministries of Education and Erasmus+ National Agencies.

The eTwinning School Label should not be seen as a mere 'certificate of quality' but rather as a formalisation of the potential of the awarded Schools. Their assets and energy only need to be unleashed with a wise use of encouragement, recognition, flexibility; all key elements of shared-leadership approach. In this way, the **eTwinning Schools can act as a guiding north star for the other schools in their area and contribute to making eTwinning a common practice for all.**

# ABOUT ETWINNING

eTwinning is a vibrant community that has involved, in its almost 16 years of existence, more than 800,000 teachers working in more than 200,000 schools. More than 93,000<sup>6</sup> projects have been run, involving many students from all educational levels across the continent.

eTwinning – the Community for schools in Europe and neighbouring partner countries – is an action for schools funded by the European Commission under the Erasmus+ programme. It involves teachers from 36 European countries and 8 neighbouring countries.

eTwinning is a digital platform available in 31 languages. Browsing visitors can access a range of public information about how to become involved in eTwinning; explaining the benefits the action offers and providing information for collaborative project work. Registered teachers have access to a restricted area called eTwinning Live, which is the individual teacher's interface with the community: it enables users to find partners, interact, collaborate in projects and participate in professional development activities organised at European national, non-European national and European central levels. Finally, when teachers work together in a project, they have access to a private collaborative space, which is unique to each project, called TwinSpace. eTwinning offers a high level of support for its users. In each of participating countries (currently 44) a National Support Service (NSS) or a Partner Support Agency (PSA) promotes the action, provides advice and guidance for end users and organises a range of activities and professional development opportunities at national level. At European level, eTwinning is coordinated by the Central Support Service (CSS) which is managed by European Schoolnet (a consortium of 34 Ministries of Education), on behalf of the European Commission. The CSS liaises with the NSS and is responsible for the development of the platform, as well as offering a range of professional development opportunities and other activities such as an annual European Conference and a Prize Event which awards teachers and students for their involvement in outstanding projects.

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<sup>6</sup> Cumulative data as of July 2020





eTwinning

[www.etwinning.net](http://www.etwinning.net)



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