





Initial memorandum English and Dutch as a foreign language on Sint Eustatius and Saba

UPDATING CORE OBJECTIVES



**Initial
memorandum
English and Dutch
as a foreign
language
on Sint Eustatius
and Saba**

February 2024

slo



een doordacht curriculum
dat doen we *samen*



2024 SLO, Amersfoort

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Introduction

This initial memorandum provides insight into the relevant and current developments within English and Dutch as a foreign language (DFL) in primary education, lower secondary education and special education. Initial memoranda are an important tool for updating core objectives. They identify developments within educational policy, research, educational practice and society, thus laying a solid foundation for development work.

An initial memorandum is required for the subjects of English and DFL on Sint Eustatius and Saba because the local context, in terms of education and in other respects, differs significantly from the Netherlands. In addition, on Sint Eustatius and Saba Dutch is a foreign language, and the subject of English has a different status: apart from being a school subject, it is also the language of instruction.

Teachers in primary education and lower secondary education, school management, school boards and local education policy staff were involved in drafting this initial memorandum by means of questionnaires and interviews. In addition, an expert meeting was held with teacher trainers, assessment experts, coaches, scientists and teaching methodology experts, and information was gathered during working group meetings (SLO's Dutch Caribbean Curriculum Support Project). Lastly, we made use of research and literature, where possible.

This initial memorandum consists of the following sections:

1. language in society and education on Sint Eustatius and Saba;
2. current situation and position of the subject area;
3. problem analysis;
4. developments in society and the subject areas of English and DFL;
5. curriculum challenges for English and DFL;
6. preconditions.

In some of the sections, the two subject areas are discussed in separate subsections; in the other sections, they are discussed together. Where there are significant differences between the two subject areas, they are covered in separate subsections (sections 2, 3 and 5). Where significant overlap and/or

similarities exist between the two subject areas, they are discussed together (sections 4 and 6).

1. Language in society and education on Sint Eustatius and Saba

According to Statline data (2023) for the year 2021, 51.5% of the population on Sint Eustatius and 57.3% on Saba speak more than one language. Among the different languages spoken, English ranks first: 93.6% on Sint Eustatius and 97.6% on Saba, followed by Dutch (38.2% and 33% respectively) and Spanish (31.5% and 31.8% respectively). English is the language of communication for 81.2% and 83.3% respectively, and Dutch for 3.6% and 4.1% respectively. Statian or Saban English is the first language for the majority of the population on Sint Eustatius and Saba.¹ In addition, on both islands, Spanish is spoken in a substantial number of families, and Cantonese, Haitian and Jamaican Creole, Papiamentu and Dutch are also spoken (and on Saba also German, French and Tagalog, one of the main languages in the Philippines). The most commonly used everyday language is Statian or Saban English (Bakker, 2021). The use of Dutch is limited to formal domains such as education and the workplace (especially in public administration). Since the constitutional change that took effect on 10 October 2010, the share of Dutch in formal institutional contexts has increased.² Under the *Invoeringswet openbare lichamen Bonaire, Sint Eustatius en Saba*, particularly Sections 4c to 4i, Dutch is the language of law, the judiciary, public administration and government, but a language other than Dutch can be used if its use is more efficient and the interests of third parties are not disproportionately harmed as a result. In administrative communications within the government and between the government and private individuals, people mainly use English, including in writing.

Sint Eustatius has four primary schools and Saba one. Section 12(7) of the *WPO BES* stipulates that lessons in primary education are to be taught in English and Dutch. There is one secondary school on Sint Eustatius and one on Saba. The *Besluit Saba Comprehensive school en Gwendoline van Puttenschool BES* stipulates that all lessons in these secondary schools are to be taught in English. On Saba, all lessons in primary and secondary education have been taught in

¹ The official designations are Statian/Saban English Lexifier Creole. These varieties of English developed on the basis of grammar and syntax of languages most probably brought to Saba and Sint Eustatius via West Africa, while English, the language of the colonizer, provided most of the vocabulary.

² Since that date, Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba have been special municipalities and directly part of the Netherlands. This constitutional change is commonly referred to as 10/10/10.

English since 1986. In this respect, secondary education is linked to the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) system.³ From the 2015-2016 school year, based on the results of research (Drenthe et al., 2014; Faraclas et al., 2013), Sint Eustatius switched to English as the language of instruction, and in secondary education to the CXC system. Research by Faraclas et al. (2013) found that the use of Dutch as a language of instruction had a negative effect on pupils' learning achievements in both English and Dutch. Drenthe et al. (2014) concluded that it was best for most pupils on Sint Eustatius to attain a solid foundation in the language closest to their mother tongue: standard English. A good command of standard English would also enable pupils to achieve higher levels in the other subjects. In this context, Dutch was given the status of a compulsory 'strong foreign language'. The English used in school, or in which pupils are required to be proficient at school (teaching materials, verbal instruction, tests and examinations) differs from the first language of most pupils (Statian, Saban or another form of Caribbean English) and can be considered an additional language.⁴ The policy in most schools is for teachers to use standard English as the language of instruction. Teachers view it as important, however, to make pupils aware that Statian and Saban English are respected languages.

³ For more information on this system, see the website: <https://www.cxc.org/>

⁴ In the remainder of this memorandum, we will refer to the English used/required in school as 'standard English'. This is an umbrella term for officially recognized and standardized varieties of English used in education worldwide (Faraclas et al. 2013).

2. Current situation and position of the subject areas

In primary education and lower secondary education, English as a school subject and language of instruction makes an essential contribution to English proficiency. Good language proficiency is vital for participation in a literate, multilingual and pluralist society and for successful participation in school (*qualification*). After all, language is an important means of getting a grip on reality and the world. Through this conceptualizing function, language teaching has essential relationships with the other subject areas in education. By developing knowledge and understanding of language (including Stavian and Saban English) and culture, pupils are supported and challenged to develop into active and critical citizens. Pupils who feel linguistically competent and culturally aware are better equipped to take responsibility in society (*socialization*). Finally, through language, pupils learn to put into words, interpret, record, evaluate and qualify feelings, experiences, opinions and facts (*personal development*). On Sint Eustatius and Saba, Dutch is part of the curriculum in primary and secondary schools as a school subject and has the status of a 'strong foreign language'. Proficiency in DFL also contributes, albeit to a lesser and varying extent, to pupils' qualification, socialization and personal development. After all, Dutch is the administrative language on both islands and also an important subject in school.

Under Section 12 of the *WPO-BES*, the school subjects of English and DFL are taught in primary education on Sint Eustatius and Saba. The *Besluit Saba Comprehensive school en Gwendoline van Puttenschool BES* and part of the *WVO 2020* stipulate this for secondary education.⁵ Under the *Besluit*, teaching in lower secondary education focuses on the CCSLC (Caribbean Certificate of Secondary Level Competence), and in the senior years on the CSEC (Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate), CVQ (Caribbean Vocational Qualification), employment-oriented education and, where applicable, the CAPE (Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination).⁶ The *Besluit* grants both secondary schools scope to give shape to teaching in lower secondary education according to the

⁵ Section 9 (Caribbean Netherlands) of the *Uitvoeringsbesluit WVO 2020* applies only to employment-oriented training and the extracurricular employment-oriented education component.

⁶ CAPE follows on from CSEC and prepares pupils for university education. It comprises at least six CAPE subjects, including in any case English language and literature, Mathematics and Caribbean Studies. Dutch is not a component of CAPE, as it is already concluded in CSEC.

CXC system (in the first three year groups; subsequently, pupils are assigned to either CVQ or CSEC). The school board as the authorized supervisor establishes a coherent educational program for lower secondary education based on CCSLC education. Pupils who pass the CXC examinations (for CSEC only) do not receive a diploma but a certificate for each examination passed. DFL is outside the CXC structure.

2.1 English

2.1.1 Current legal frameworks

Section 3 of the *Besluit kerndoelen WPO BES* describes the core objectives for English in primary education. These are identical to the core objectives for Dutch in the European Netherlands. There are no core objectives for secondary education.⁷ In secondary schools, English is compulsory in CCSLC (and also in CVQ and CSEC). The CCSLC subjects can be concluded by an examination, but this is not compulsory. Some pupils at Saba Comprehensive School (SCS) do this. At Gwendoline van Puttenschool (GvP), lower secondary education is concluded with the CCSLC tests.

2.1.2 Practice in schools

On Sint Eustatius, the number of minutes dedicated to the subject of English ranges from 150 to 300 minutes per week for K1 and K2 and then rises to between 225 and 555 minutes per week, with the number of minutes increasing as pupils progress through the grades. On Saba, the number of minutes dedicated to English is 200 minutes a week in K1 and K2 and then increases to 480 minutes in grade 6/group 8. The hours are not broken down for the different domains in language teaching. From the responses in the development groups, it emerged that from grade 1/group 3 onwards, a lot of time and attention is devoted to reading skills (technical reading in the first grades and reading comprehension starting from the intermediate grades), spelling and grammar. This is followed by oral language skills and vocabulary. The least time is spent on writing skills. In lower secondary education on Sint Eustatius, English is scheduled for 4 hours in form 1 and 3 hours in form 2. On Saba, there are 4 lessons (lasting 45 minutes) per week. Broken down for domains, listening skills, speaking and conversation and reading skills (reading comprehension) are scheduled weekly in the first two forms. Spelling and grammar, writing skills (particularly at sentence level), and vocabulary are part of the daily timetable. According to Bakker (2021a/b), the fact that listening and viewing skills are not part of the CXC examination would partly account for the low attention paid to them in education.

⁷ The *Besluit kerndoelen onderbouw VO BES* is no longer applicable. The core objectives for English and Dutch under the *Uitvoeringsbesluit WVO 2020* do not apply to Sint Eustatius and Saba.

In 2015, SLO developed *Continuous Learning Strands for English* (Hoogeveen et al., 2016a) in collaboration with the primary education on Sint Eustatius. These have since been the starting point in the school subject of English at primary education on Sint Eustatius and in lower secondary education. The reason for developing these learning strands was the transition from Dutch to English as language of instruction, which meant that the curriculum had to be adapted to higher demands on the subject of English. The English learning strands are based on the core objectives for Dutch in the Netherlands, the intermediate objectives for Dutch in Foundation based Education in Curaçao and the educational offer in *Journeys*, the teaching material for English used in primary education until recently. The learning strands describe the educational offer for the various domains of English language teaching in a continuous learning line for each combination of two grades. The learning strands are elaborated in term planners (*periodeplanners*), which are used mainly in primary education. The planners link the core and intermediate objectives and learning strands to the educational offer in teaching materials. Although the learning strands and term planners also cover lower secondary education, the main basis and guideline there is the CCSLC syllabus.⁸ On Saba, English has been the language of instruction in education since 1986. Schools on Saba did not participate in the learning strand program in 2015.

Learning strands and term planners give direction to the implemented curriculum, but do not provide insight into exactly what happens in the classrooms. Often, the teaching materials used guide the design of the educational offer in the classroom. However, there are few analyses of teaching materials available for Sint Eustatius and Saba that give insight into what the educational offer looks like. Also, no empirical research on actual classroom teaching is available. We are therefore mainly reliant on teachers' reports on their actual practice.

The US *Journeys* material was used in primary education on Sint Eustatius up to and including the 2022-2023 school year. K1 and K2 used *Journeys*; in some schools this was supplemented by *Trace the letter books* and *Hooked on Phonics*. The materials are used in grade 1 to 6 (group 3 to 8). Starting from the 2023-2024 school year, three schools on Statia will switch to *Into Reading*, which will be implemented school-wide. This will involve dividing the *Into reading* curriculum for one year of kindergarten (9 modules) over two grades

⁸ The general and specific objectives in the CCSLC syllabus appear to largely correspond to the targets for form 1-2 in the learning strands.

(K1 and K2).⁹ One school will continue to work with the latest version (2017) of *Journeys* for a few years. On Saba, schools made an earlier switch to *Into reading*. There, *High Scope* is used in K1 and K2. *Into Reading* is comprehensive teaching material, covering all areas of language teaching. Teachers report being satisfied with the material, although some perceive it as overloaded. In general, the material is deemed sufficient to achieve the current core and intermediate objectives for English. In addition to *Journeys* and *Into Reading*, supplementary and older materials are used, particularly for grammar and spelling. Additional watching/listening and reading materials are also sometimes used. In secondary education, (the division in) the CCSLC syllabus is used. In this syllabus the educational offer for the various domains is structured in modules. Additional material is also used: *English Alive*, *A comprehensive English course*, *English for all* and, on Saba, *Achieve*. Material is also taken from the internet.

Based on information from the learning strands and term planners working groups, we note that the educational offer is generally characterized by:

- a strong focus on grammar and spelling and less on oral skills (see also Bakker, 2021);
- little attention to the language learning process (use of strategies, attention to different phases in the process of performing language tasks);
- a product-oriented approach: a significant emphasis on correct language and form.

2.1.3 Attained curriculum

There are no sources for primary education that provide a picture of pupil performance at system level, based on legal frameworks and measured in standardized tests.¹⁰ Pupils' progress has so far been gauged using tests based on the teaching material. The regulations on the primary school's advice as to the choice of secondary education and the attainment test at the end of primary education (*Doorstroomtoets*) largely do not apply to Sint Eustatius and Saba. Of the provisions of the *Toetsbesluit PO* only those on tests linked to a Pupil Monitoring System (*Leerling Volgstysteem*, LVS) apply (as set out in the

⁹ *Into reading* for grade K covers material for one year group, because kindergarten education in the US starts at age 5.

¹⁰ The Education Inspectorate does not yet assess educational outcomes, because there are not yet any reliable standards and lower limits for attainment tests. However, the Inspectorate does ascertain what the available results tell the school about pupils' development and the quality of education.

Ontwerpregeling Besluit doorstroomtoetsen PO, Nota van toelichting). At present, no Pupil Monitoring System is used for English. GvP administers the Progress test in English in grade 6/group 8 of primary school and form 1 and 2 of secondary school, a test developed by the British organization Granada Learning Assessment. We do not have the results of this test. The same applies to the CCSLC tests administered by the GvP at the end of lower secondary education.

Drenthe et al. (2014) recommend level B1 (mavo) or B2 (havo) as the exit level for most pupils. Bakker (2021) assessed the English language proficiency and improvement thereof in primary and secondary school pupils on Sint Eustatius and Saba using the Oxford English Placement Test linked to CEFR levels, and found that they have a high level of standard English and meet the requirements of the CSEC examination (see also 3.1.5).¹¹ The Inspectorate (2023) notes that primary school pupils on Saba perform relatively well in English, but that reading comprehension still lags somewhat behind and targeted intensification of educational offer and approach is required in the lower year groups. Respondents' comment that 'higher comprehensive reading skills' are desirable, with a view to the other subjects, is in line with this finding.

2.2 Dutch as a foreign language

The transition to English as language of instruction means that Dutch has gained the status of a strong foreign language in schools, now offered exclusively as a subject. The concept of 'strong foreign language', which is not defined in the law, refers to the way Dutch is offered in education and to the desired intensity and level of proficiency. (Drenthe et al., 2014; Faraclas et al., 2013). At the time of the transition to English as language of instruction, it was indicated that teaching time in primary education should be 3 hours per week and a higher level is expected than usual for a foreign language.

2.2.1 Current legal frameworks

Section 3 of the *Besluit kerndoelen WPO-BES* describes the core objectives for the subject of Dutch in primary education. These are the same core objectives that apply to English and are identical to the core objectives for Dutch in the European Netherlands. There are no core objectives for Dutch in lower secondary education. The subject and its completion are regulated by Section 7 of the *Besluit Saba Comprehensive school en Gwendoline van Puttenschool*. The *Besluit* stipulates that the basic subject Dutch is compulsory in the CCSLC, CVQ and CSEC and relates the attainment levels to the Common European

¹¹ On Sint Eustatius and Saba, this involved pupils in grade 6/group 8 (at one school) and pupils in all forms in secondary education.

Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). For Dutch as a basic subject, in CVQ A2 applies and in CSEC B1. For Dutch as an advanced subject, B1 and B2 apply respectively. The basic subject is concluded by a school examination (administered by the school board) and the advanced subject is concluded by a national examination provided for by ministerial regulation. Most pupils end with the basic subject. The obligation to study Dutch as a basic subject does not apply to pupils in employment-oriented education and CAPE pupils.

The subject of Dutch falls outside the CXC system and the assessment does not count towards a pass or fail for the CXC program. Upon successful completion of the CXC program and obtaining a pass (6 or higher) in advanced Dutch, the pupil will receive a school diploma (*Besluit* Section 24). In principle, this school diploma grants pupils admission to further education on Bonaire or in the European Netherlands. The same does not apply to completion with Dutch as a basic subject. Schools are therefore obliged to offer advanced Dutch and a corresponding Dutch examination to pupils who request it. Advanced Dutch is pitched at a level that ensures pupils have sufficient Dutch language skills to be able to follow a Dutch-language further education course. For advanced Dutch, the examinations the school are permitted to use are specified by ministerial regulation.¹²

2.2.2 Practice in schools

On Sint Eustatius, the four primary education schools differ substantially in terms of time spent on DFL. This ranges from 60 to 150 minutes per week for the lowest grades, increasing to 240 to 300 minutes in grade 2 to 4/group 4 to 6 and 360 to 420 minutes in the upper grades. At the primary school on Saba, teachers report 30 minutes per week in K1 and K2, over 120 minutes in grade 1/group 3 and 180 minutes in the other grades. Time spent on the subject therefore differs significantly between Sint Eustatius and Saba. The secondary school on Sint Eustatius spends 3 to 3.5 full hours per week on DFL and the secondary school on Saba 4.5 full hours.

The schools and grades differ in terms of the breakdown of time by the various domains. In most schools, a relatively large amount of time is spent on oral skills and vocabulary in the junior grades of primary, while in middle and upper primary most time is generally spent on reading skills (reading comprehension). At all schools, least time is spent on writing skills. Although the materials pay relatively little attention to spelling and grammar, teachers report using

¹² These are: a) a certificate of Dutch as foreign language examination; b) a state examination in Dutch as a second language; c) a central examination in Dutch; or d) a state examination in Dutch (*Staatscourant* 33842, July 2021).

supplementary materials for this, often from material developed for the European Netherlands, such as *Taal actief*. Spelling and grammar are not addressed in the CEFR up to level A2 and receive limited attention thereafter. The secondary school on Sint Eustatius spends the most time on reading (30%), then grammar and spelling (20%), then oral language skills (15%), followed by vocabulary (10%) and writing (10%). At the secondary school on Saba, it is reported that all domains are covered weekly. No breakdown in percentages is given.

Since 2016, the *Doorlopende leerlijnen Nederlands als sterke vreemde taal* (Hoogeveen et al., 2016b) have been the guiding principle for DFL education on Sint Eustatius. The reason for the development of these learning strands was the transition from Dutch to English as the language of instruction on Sint Eustatius. The DFL learning strands are based on the CEFR levels for modern foreign languages and run from pre-school up to and including form 5 of secondary school (from level pre-A1 to B2). The learning strands are detailed in term planners, which have been used by the schools since that time. They link the learning strands to the educational offer in the teaching material. The secondary school mostly works with its own term planners. Learning strands and term planners give direction to the implemented curriculum, but do not provide insight into exactly what happens in the classrooms. With regard to practice in schools, we rely on teaching materials used, reports from respondents and the literature (see also 1.2.2). On both islands, primary school teachers work with DFL material developed especially for the Windward Islands. In K1-K2/group 1-2 these are *Speel mee met John en Joonie* (pre-A1 level), in grade 1-2/group 3-4 *Leer mee met Sam & Saar* (pre-A1 to A1 level) and in grade 3 to 6/group 3 to 8 *Nederlands onder de zon*, module 1 (level A1) and 2 (level A1 to A2). The teaching materials for the junior grades of primary education mainly offer materials for oral language teaching, vocabulary and some exercises for technical reading. *Nederlands onder de zon* was developed as teaching material for reading comprehension and vocabulary. Although the material was also developed for lower secondary education (module 3: towards A2), according to respondents in secondary education, it is hardly ever used on either of the islands. On Sint Eustatius parts 1 and 2 of *Zebra+* (material for teaching Dutch as a second language (NT2) from the European Netherlands), *Van A tot zin* (NT2 exercises for difficult words, spelling, pronunciation, word or sentence structure) and *Nieuwsbegrip* are used. On Saba, parts 1, 2 and 3 of *Zebra+*, *Nieuw Nederlands* as a supplement to this, *Klare taal* (basic grammar NT2) and *Dutch Grammar Reference* (interactive website in more languages, for practicing grammar, listening and vocabulary) are used. The additions to the 'basic material' show a strong emphasis on grammar.

Based on information from the working groups and on the basis of Bakker (2021a/b) and D'Haens (2021), we observe that the educational offer is generally characterized by:

- a strong focus on vocabulary, grammar and spelling;
- little attention to oracy
- little attention to the language learning process (use of strategies, attention to different phases in the process of performing language tasks)
- a product-oriented approach: a significant emphasis on correct language and form.

2.2.3 Attained curriculum

There are no sources for DFL in primary education that provide a picture of pupil performance at system level, based on legal frameworks and measured in standardized tests. The regulations on the primary school's advice as to the choice of secondary education and the attainment test at the end of primary education largely do not apply to Sint Eustatius and Saba. Only the statutory provisions on tests linked to a Pupil Monitoring System (LVS) apply (as set out in *Ontwerp-regeling Besluit doorstroomtoetsen PO, Nota van toelichting*). An LVS is not currently used for DFL. Pupils' progress has so far been gauged using teaching materials-based tests. In addition, schools on Sint Eustatius administer Cito's Three-Minute Technical Reading Test (DMT), however there are doubts about its usefulness. Until recently, the *Jongerenevaluatie* (Taalunie) was administered in year 1 of secondary school. It has now been replaced by the DFL Carib Toolkit. According to the results for this assessment in 2021-2022 (grade 6/group 8), the majority of pupils scored A1 for the various skills and a not insignificant proportion below A1. The DFL learning strands assume that all pupils achieve at least A1 by the end of primary school.

3. Problem analysis

The previous section described the current situation with regard to the subject areas of English and DFL in primary education and lower secondary education, based on the intended curriculum (official documents), the implemented curriculum (school practice) and the attained curriculum (outcomes). Further to this, in this section we identify a number of issues based on our observations in working groups, input from the expert meeting, and relevant literature. We address these issues in order of the level at which they come into play: macro (national), meso (school) and micro (classroom) levels of education.

3.1 English

Teachers and school management indicate that, compared to DFL, they do not experience very significant problems with English as a school subject and language of instruction at school. Nevertheless, they point out a number of complicating factors with English.

3.1.1 Wide diversity in student enrollment

As the number of Spanish-speakers in the community has increased, so has the lateral and standard enrollment into education of pupils who do not speak English at home. This poses problems for them in English classes, but also in non-language subjects. For pupils with first-acquired languages other than English, the level of language proficiency in English is not yet determined by default upon entry (Bakker, 2021a/b). The primary school on Saba used to have a special English as an Additional Language (EAL) teacher for these pupils, but this is not the case anymore. Schools on Sint Eustatius neither have special facilities for pupils with another first-acquired language. For the most part, there is no systematic approach to supporting these pupils. Teachers in primary and secondary schools have little training in providing English as a second language to non-native speakers in regular lessons. They also indicate that differentiation is difficult for them. Due to the diversity in intake, the differences in levels between pupils are very large. One school also reports that differentiation materials for special needs pupils are lacking.

3.1.2 Absence of school language policy

Most primary education schools do not have a systematic school language policy plan based on a vision of language in general and language proficiency in

English and DFL, with specifically formulated objectives and activities.¹³ In secondary education, the situation is mixed. In addition, not everyone knows what a school language policy plan entails. When asked, respondents gave the school examination syllabus as an example. Respondents on both islands expressed a desire for the appointment of a language coordinator/language policy project leader. On Sint Eustatius, it is reported that the DFL Carib network, in which schools are required to participate, is not yet delivering a great deal. In many instances, there is no coordination between curricula for English and DFL (e.g. theme, vocabulary, transfer of strategies). According to some this is partly due to the fact that, particularly in secondary education, subject teachers are used for DFL, making coordination difficult. In 2018, the Inspectorate found after a visit to the SCS on Saba that teachers of non-language subjects could improve the quality of their lessons if they devote attention to their linguistic aspects. The evaluation of the second Education Agenda (2021) and the Education Minister's letter on the agenda to the Presidents of the Senate and House of Representatives, report that a shared vision on language policy in schools is lacking, as is cross-curricular language policy.

3.1.3 Standard and local English

Many pupils speak a local variety of English at home. Faraclas et al. (2013) point out that the transition from this local variety to standard English in the first grades requires attention. Respondents report that mastering standard English requires additional effort from many pupils. Yet the educational offer usually assumes standard English as a mother tongue (primary education teaching material is US mother tongue material), rather than standard English as an additional language that needs to be developed through a targeted approach. Both Faraclas et al. (2013) and Bakker (2021a/b) raise this problem. Some respondents say they find the use of Statian/Saban English in teacher instruction problematic, as it does not help pupils to master standard English.

3.1.4 No insight into performance

Drenthe et al. (2014) recommend CEFR levels B1 and B2 for CSEC pupils for English at the end of secondary education. However, there is no insight into whether those levels are actually met. In terms of English proficiency at the end of primary education, no target level has been set so far and there are no standardized tests. Bakker (2021a/b) shows that, in primary and secondary

¹³ We use a broad definition of school language policy: the structural and strategic attempt of a school team to adapt the educational practice to the language learning needs of the students, with a view to the promotion of their general development and the improvement of their educational results (SLO 2019).

education, English language proficiency increases as pupils move up through the year groups and generally meets the basic requirements of the CSEC examination. However, she argues that the bar should be higher than this examination and that this requires teaching material-independent, CEFR-linked assessment. According to Bakker, linking to CEFR is appropriate for Sint Eustatius and Saba because standard English is not the mother tongue of the majority of pupils.

3.1.5 Imbalance between the domains

In the educational practice there is a relatively strong focus on spelling and grammar and thus on correct language use and language form (see 2.1.2). Less attention is paid to the language learning process (the different stages in the performance of language tasks), the use of strategies and oral language skills. These are necessary for the acquisition and processing of knowledge in the context of successful learning and for pupils' personal development, such as to build up social contacts.

3.1.6 Insufficient attention for comprehensive reading skills

Working group members involved in the revision of the learning strands and respondents advocate a stronger focus on comprehensive and critical reading skills, also with a view to the other subjects. Bakker (2021a/b) also points to a lack of critical thinking skill development in English. Although the learning strands and teaching material devote sufficient attention to higher-order reading skills, these skills are still not sufficiently addressed in teaching practice. Higher-order reading skills and cognitive-academic language proficiency (CALP) are also important with a view to teaching the other subjects. There is still little focus on systematic CALP development in educational practice.

3.2 Dutch as a foreign language

Compared to English, more and bigger problems are identified with the school subject DFL. These are detailed below.

3.2.1 Legal frameworks are not aligned

Drenthe et al. (2014) pointed out back in 2014 that the *Besluit kerndoelen WPO BES* is based on two languages with equivalent status, but that the distinction between English as a school subject and language of instruction and Dutch as a strong foreign language should be reflected in the core objectives.¹⁴ Although

¹⁴ Drenthe et al. (2014) and Faraclas et al. (2013) point out that the *WPO-BES* also has not yet been adapted to the situation post-transition: in primary education, the language of instruction can still be either English or Dutch. They recommend formulating the relevant section in a way that takes into account the situation on Sint Eustatius and Saba.

Dutch has the status of strong foreign language, the core objectives for Dutch set in the European Netherlands still apply to DFL in primary education in Saba and Sint Eustatius. These objectives were developed for educational offer in pupils' first language, for a situation where that language is also the language of instruction and the everyday language (L1 context). As Dutch is a foreign language on Sint Eustatius and Saba, the learning strands and monitoring tests for primary education are linked to the CEFR. In terms of core objectives, the school subject of Dutch in primary education is based on a 'mother tongue perspective', while the learning strands and monitoring tests developed are based on a 'foreign language perspective'. This means that there is a lack of consistency between core objectives on the one hand and learning strands and monitoring tests on the other. For secondary education, there are no core objectives and the exit levels are the levels from the CEFR. Respondents noted here that in the alignment of primary education and secondary education, there is friction between the Dutch system in primary education with core objectives and learning strands and the CXC system in secondary education.

3.2.2 Wide diversity in student enrollment

Respondents from the secondary schools on both islands report that the differences in levels in classes are very large. Pupils from primary education enter with very different starting levels. In lower secondary education, pupils for whom A2 will be the exit level and pupils who want to achieve B2 are together in the classroom. This places heavy demands on teachers' differentiation skills: different levels and teaching materials need to be used in the same class. In the past, attempts have been made on Saba to group pupils by language level, but this proved unsuccessful.

3.2.3 Absence of school language policy

See English, section 3.1.3.

3.2.4 Position of Dutch as a foreign language in education

The review of the Second Education Agenda reports that on Sint Eustatius and Saba, unlike Bonaire, Dutch is accepted as a foreign language (Buys, 2021). Meetings with the working groups reveal a different picture for Sint Eustatius. The number of hours of DFL in primary education on Sint Eustatius has remained more or less the same as before the transition. It also appears that not everyone realizes that the choice of Dutch as a foreign language should have consequences for the objectives, the educational offer and the exit levels of the subject DFL (see also 3.2.7). The administration of the DMT (*Drie Minuten Toets*, Three-minute Test) and AVI (*Analyse van Individualiseringsvormen*, Analysis of Individual Reading Styles) tests, for example, is not in line with the teaching of a foreign language at levels A1 and A2 relevant to primary

education. It seems fair to conclude that not everyone on Sint Eustatius is equally aware of the consequences of the transition to English as language of instruction and the new status of Dutch as a school subject, with the choice between basic and advanced subject in the senior years in secondary education. On Saba, Dutch has long had the status of foreign language in education. There, the status and position of the subject are more in line with that of a school subject in a foreign language.

3.2.5 Ambitions are not being achieved

Faraclas et al. (2013), Drenthe et al. (2014) and Bakker (2021a/b) point out that almost everyone on Sint Eustatius attaches great importance to a good command of English and Dutch. Before the transition, both pupils' Dutch and English language skills were much lower compared to peers in the European Netherlands and in English-speaking areas. Dutch as language of instruction had a negative impact on performance in both English and Dutch and in the other subjects. The transition to English as language of instruction and the school subject Dutch as a 'strong foreign language', was expected to improve the level of Dutch (see also Taalunie, 2014). This expectation has so far not been met. In 2018, the Examination Board concluded that results for the subject Dutch in secondary education were disappointing (Inspectorate of Education, 2018). The results of the DFL Carib Toolkit for the 2021-2022 school year (conducted among pupils on Sint Eustatius in grade 6/group 8), provided by GvP, show that many pupils enter secondary education with a level below A1 and are still below A2 level by the end of lower secondary education. For pupils who move from lower secondary education to the CVQ with Dutch as a basic subject, this is not a problem: for these pupils, A2 is the desired exit level at the end of secondary education. For pupils moving on to the CVQ with Dutch as an advanced subject (B1) and for pupils taking the CSEC, who need to reach level B1 or even level B2 (advanced subject for progression to higher professional education courses in the European Netherlands), achieving those exit levels is very difficult due to the performance gap on entry to secondary education. Respondents therefore questioned the feasibility of B1 for CVQ-students and particularly B2 for CSEC-students, which would allow progression to Dutch-language senior secondary vocational (mbo) and higher professional education (hbo). These levels seem too ambitious. Another problem is that pupils who want to move on to English-language further education in the European Netherlands must also achieve level B2 for Dutch (*Staatsblad* 166, 2021, *Nota van toelichting*, p. 28). This is strange, because level B1 is considered more than sufficient for social functioning.

Back in 2017, the Inspectorate signaled that the introduction of English as the language of instruction on Sint Eustatius has led to growing concerns that pupils

do not reach the level required to move on to Dutch-language further education. There is still a desire and expectation among many on Sint Eustatius that *all* pupils leaving secondary school should be sufficiently proficient in Dutch to be able to go on to Dutch-language further education. There are also concerns that it will be difficult to find work later within the Dutch-speaking government on Sint Eustatius and Saba.

On Saba, fewer pupils want to go on to Dutch-language further education than on Sint Eustatius. An increasing number of Saban pupils are moving on to US further education.

3.2.6 Absence of appropriate tests/examinations

There is no CEFR-linked standardized test for DFL proficiency at the end of primary education. For the end of secondary education, the Taalunie's CNaVT examination is used for pupils who take Dutch as an advanced subject. This examination (B1: Maatschappelijk formeel and B2: Educatief Startbekwaam) was developed for adults and covers professional and other situations that are not appropriate for secondary education pupils. Moreover, the test was developed for the European Netherlands, which means the Caribbean context is lacking. The audio texts are spoken by Flemish speakers and, due to the accent, are often difficult to understand for pupils who do not know Flemish.

3.2.7 Discrepancy between objectives/teaching materials and teaching practice

There is a discrepancy between the objectives from the learning strands and teaching materials on the one hand and actual teaching practice on the other. Although the DFL learning strands and the material used in the line of foreign language teaching in primary education pay little attention to spelling and grammar, we note, based on information from respondents and from research (Bakker, 2021a/b; D'Haens, 2021), that in classroom practice, a great deal of attention and time is still paid to spelling and grammar. For example, exercises in phonological distinction in *Sam & Saar* are used as spelling exercises, and written activities intended for grade 2/group 4, when pupils are already literate in English, are offered to pupils in grade 1/group 3. Bakker (2021a/b) also points out that teachers transform the communicative activities from the new teaching materials into the 'drill and kill instruction' familiar to them. Supplementary materials for Dutch as a mother tongue are also used for spelling, such as *Taal actief*. Respondents report that pupils' communication skills leave much to be desired (for example presenting themselves) and that they also struggle with practical skills such as filling in forms in Dutch.

In line with the CEFR, the DFL learning strands and range of teaching materials focus on interrelated communication skills. In classroom practice, however, D'Haens (2021) observes, the different language skills are rarely offered in an integrated form, which is particularly desirable at the higher levels. We conclude that current classroom practice has more characteristics of 'traditional mother tongue instruction' than of 'communicative foreign language instruction'.

3.2.8 Incomplete range of teaching materials

With regard to the range of teaching materials, a number of problems are reported. For instance, there are no teaching materials for primary education that cover all domains and skills in all grades. In the materials for the first four grades there is no teacher's manual from theme 8 of *John & Joonie* onwards. Respondents feel there is also a gap between the course materials in the first four grades and *Nederlands onder de zon* for the last four grades. The latter was developed for the domains of reading comprehension and vocabulary and is not a comprehensive language textbook. Respondents perceive these teaching materials and particularly the accompanying texts as difficult for pupils: texts too long, sentences too long, too many unfamiliar words. For example, one school is using modules for grade 3/group 5 in grade 6/group 8. A proper build-up from receptive to productive skills is also lacking. Wilkens & Elzinga (2023) investigated the quality of teaching material from *Nederlands onder de zon*, with a specific focus on DFL. They also looked at the extent to which these materials meet teachers' needs for the purpose of delivering effective DFL education. They conclude that the teacher's manual lacks information on DFL: attention for the transition from BICS (*Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills*) to CALP (*Cognitive Academic Language Skills*), scaffolding, effective feedback, transition from receptive to productive skills within lesson series/themes, attention to and use of home language, formulation of learning objectives and task-oriented learning situations. The link to the CEFR could also be clearer. In module 1 in particular, more structural focus on differentiation is desirable. With regard to the texts in *Nederlands onder de zon* Wilkens & Elzinga (2023) conclude otherwise than the teacher-respondent and recommend longer sentences with conjunctions. The experts consulted also do not share teachers' views on the complexity of the texts.

In secondary education, NT2 materials from the European Netherlands are used, which often focus on the civic integration examination (*Inburgeringsexamen*). They are insufficiently adapted to Caribbean pupils learning Dutch as a foreign language. The widely used *Zebra+* textbook features little material for writing skills. Respondents and Drenthe (2014) report a need for comprehensive teaching materials for DFL, in a continuous line from primary to secondary education. Some respondents also expressed the need for a CXC syllabus for

DFL. The subject is currently separate from the CXC system and should be integrated into this system.

4. Developments in English and Dutch as a foreign language

In this section, we look at the main developments in the subjects of English and DFL. We distinguish between social developments and developments in the subject areas. When describing these developments, we consider English and DFL together.

4.1 Social developments

4.1.1 Equal opportunities and risk of functional illiteracy

Society is placing increasing demands on people's language skills. To be able to participate in society, you need to be able to adequately express yourself verbally and read and write well. On Sint Eustatius and Saba, the school subject of English plays an important role in promoting equal opportunities and preventing and reducing inequality of opportunity. Pupils' language skills have a major impact on their school and study careers in English-language education. It is also desirable for all pupils to leave secondary school sufficiently functionally literate, so that they can participate fully in a literate, multilingual, pluralist society and continue to develop linguistically throughout their lives. For pupils who plan to move on to Dutch-language further education programs, it is important that pupils and their parents/caretakers are aware of the required entry levels (level B1 for senior secondary vocational education or B2 for higher professional education). Pupils must be given the opportunity to take DFL as an advanced subject for these levels.

4.1.2 Multilingual society

Multilingualism is a given on both islands, and many pupils use another language or language variety at home, either as the sole language of communication or alongside standard English (see also section 1). Almost everyone has to function in different contexts on a daily basis and needs different languages and language varieties (Delarue, 2018). Increasing pupils' linguistic and cultural awareness ensures that they also develop sensitivity and an open mind to linguistic and cultural diversity and identity, as well as acquire knowledge in order to understand and appreciate the world, connect with others and find a social position. A multilingual approach in education can take into account the multilingual society and the role and position of different languages in it. Bakker (2021b, p. 205) notes that this includes appreciation of Stavian/Saban English and that steps have been taken on both islands to raise

awareness of this (such as literary cultural activities and the Saban English dictionary).

4.1.3 Digital literacy

There has been a boom in the digitalization of information and communication in the last 20 years, making international contacts and information more accessible. Digital information technology is becoming increasingly pervasive in our society, at an ever-increasing rate. Digital literacy requires pupils to consciously learn to use digital forms of information acquisition and provision, such as non-linear texts (hypertext) and multimodal texts (a combination of written text, images and/or spoken text). This involves seeking information, critically evaluating and selecting information, being able to distinguish main issues from secondary issues, using information and producing new online and other digital texts (Carretero et al., 2017). Literacy is a prerequisite for using internet skills (Van Deursen & Van Dijk, 2014). This underlines the importance of effective and focused reading skills (also referred to as 'deep reading', see the Council for Culture and the Education Council, 2019) and the ability to write digital and non-digital texts.

4.2 Developments in the subject areas

4.2.1 Curriculum developments

Learning strands, term planners and tests have been developed as part of various projects in recent years. In 2021, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science commissioned SLO to revise the English and DFL learning strands for both islands (Hoogeveen & Snetselaar, 2023a/b). During the revision, the English learning strands were expanded to include objectives up to year 3, as CCSLC covers the first three years of secondary school. As most schools switched to new teaching material for English, the term planners also needed to be revised. The updating of the DFL learning strands, based on among other the CEFR supplement (2018) and the availability of new teaching materials for grades 1 to 4 of primary school, also necessitated a review of the term planners for DFL. The term planners for both languages are currently still being revised. Bureau ICE develops monitoring tests for English and DFL, based on the CEFR for both languages. English is linked to the CEFR based on the fact that Statian or Saban English, which differs from standard English (see also Bakker, 2021a/b) is the first language of many pupils on the islands.

4.2.2 Multilingualism as an opportunity

Multilingual education can do justice to the multilingual situation on the islands. In the current core objectives for English and Dutch in primary education and in the CXC syllabus, there is little emphasis on this multilingualism perspective. The revised DFL learning strands do incorporate multilingual skills, particularly

the sub-scales 'plurilingual comprehension' and 'building on plurilingual repertoire'. These scales may be useful for translation of multilingualism into core objectives for DFL and English. The 'language friendly school' concept, which the Saba Comprehensive School applies to allow scope for pupils' own languages in the school playground, is a good start, but developments in relation to multilingualism in education could go further. Translanguaging is an important concept here: pupils simultaneously and flexibly use their entire language repertoire to achieve learning, even if the teacher does not know the languages. This can include looking something up or explaining something to each other. Functional multilingual learning (FML) goes a step further: it involves targeted and conscious deployment of first-language knowledge and active working methods to encourage learners to use their full language repertoire to become more proficient in the foreign language. This can be done, for example, by getting pupils to work together in groups, where they are encouraged to use their home language in addition to the language of instruction. Increasing language awareness enables pupils to think about aspects of form and connections between languages. Metalinguistic knowledge of language can be applied with contrastive approaches. Pupils compare the differences and similarities between different languages, such as words, parts of words, or sounds (Duarte, 2022; De Count et al., 2019; Veerman et al., 2023; Williams, 2017).

4.2.3 Language across the curriculum

Pupils deal with language in every subject. After all, language is a tool for learning, and education in other subjects provides a meaningful context for improving language skills. It is therefore important for the school subject of English to focus on language as a means of learning (conceptual function of language). This means both a focus on general school language and text genres within the school subject of English and a focus on language and practice opportunities within the non-language subjects. So far, the curricula of the other subject areas have failed to provide sufficiently explicit, subject-specific language goals for this purpose. This provides little to go by when connecting linguistic knowledge, skills and attitudes in these subject and subject areas. In the case of DFL, the conceptual function of language becomes increasingly important as pupils progress through the year groups. To promote alignment with Dutch-language further studies, a focus can be placed on general school language within DFL and non-language subjects can be brought into the DFL lesson, such as by combining a Dutch lesson with a science lesson.

5. Curriculum challenges English and Dutch as a foreign language

The foregoing gives rise to challenges with respect to developing or updating core objectives for English and DFL. For both subject areas, the core objectives should ensure good communicative language skills and relevant knowledge of language and culture. To promote equality of opportunity, *all* pupils should be able to develop their language skills, through a rich language offer with opportunities for knowledge building, space for the different language skills and meaningful language tasks. This will enable them to participate successfully in a multilingual literate society with equal opportunities.

5.1 School level

5.1.1 A widely supported (multilingual) school language policy

It is important for schools on both islands to have a school language policy plan, covering all relevant languages: standard English, Stavian/Saban English, DFL, Spanish and other languages spoken there. When updating the core objectives, it is important to clarify the status of standard English (as a school subject and language of instruction) and of DFL as a school subject and the consequences thereof in terms of objectives, content and didactics. For English, it is important to show how the link to other subject areas can be implemented in practice. Harmonization of the English and DFL curricula also presents a challenge: how and where can thematic alignment be achieved? How can multilingualism objectives and aspects of translanguaging be incorporated into the core objectives? (see also Bakker 2021a/b).

5.2 English

5.2.1 Determination and assessment of CEFR-levels

CEFR target levels need to be determined for English proficiency (including as language of instruction) and a standardized test needs to be introduced at the end of primary education and the CCSLC. According to Bakker (2021a/b), such a standardized test should include not only the content and basic skills of the CXC programs, but also the core objectives for English. In addition, due to the language diversity at the entrance, it is also advisable to establish the language proficiency of pupils with a different first language when they enter education.

5.2.2 More attention for newly arrived immigrants

For pupils for whom English or its local variety is not their first language (see also section 1), particularly newly arrived immigrant pupils, extra facilities for teaching English as a second language are required when they enter education, such as tests to establish their proficiency in their first language (often Spanish) and English.

5.2.3 Addressing the transition to standard English

For many pupils the transition to standard English at school requires extra attention. Bakker (2021a/b) therefore argues for a focus on and appreciation of Stavian and Saban English in the curriculum. Topics of interest include the origins of language varieties, characteristics of Stavian/Saban English and standard English and the similarities and differences between the two. Pupils should also learn in which context which language is best used, bearing in mind things like code switching, translanguaging and goal-oriented and audience-oriented communication.

5.2.4 Improved balance between language domains

It is advisable to describe the core objectives in such a way that the different language domains, but also the functions of language, receive more balanced attention. More attention needs to be paid to domains and skills that are currently under-represented, such as communicative writing skills, and oral language skills. In addition, a stronger focus is needed on language as a means of learning (conceptual function). A challenge also lies in devoting more attention to the relationship between the language domains and to the relationship with the other subject areas in meaningful contexts. Finally, attention needs to be devoted to personal and literary cultural education (expressive function), not only in language but in relation to issues such as citizenship.

5.2.5 Encouraging higher-order reading skills

It is important that reading instruction in the school subject of English encourages pupils to read with deep understanding so that they learn to use information critically. To this end, the core objectives for reading instruction could focus more on purposeful reading, learning to critically compare and process sources for quality, usefulness and reliability (higher-order thinking skills). This applies to both literary and informative texts in all their manifestations, including digital sources, hypertexts and multimodal texts. These texts require an expansion of reading and writing skills in relation to digital literacy, with viewing and listening comprehension also becoming more important. This means that it will be a challenge to design core objectives for reading comprehension that tackle the problems identified, leaving greater

scope for language and knowledge development, both of which are important for reading comprehension. In addition, pupils need to come into contact with a rich and thematic range of texts: both literary (fiction, non-fiction and poetry) and informative texts from the past and present with rich content and good language quality, in various manifestations. It is important that texts are as authentic as possible and drawn from meaningful contexts (such as a blog about uniforms at school, an internet discussion about local politics, a newspaper article about tourism).

5.3 Dutch as a foreign language

5.3.1 Appropriate core objectives

For DFL, despite the transition, the core objectives for Dutch set in the European Netherlands still apply. These objectives do not reflect the status of Dutch on Sint Eustatius and Saba (see 3.2.1). The question is whether it will be possible to update the current set of objectives for Dutch as a school language, language of instruction and everyday language, or whether it would be better to develop a new set of core objectives for DFL which are in line with the position of Dutch as a foreign language. It is highly advisable that in updating the core objectives, consideration is given to the fact that learning strands have already been developed for DFL. This is a different route from that taken in the European Netherlands, where the objectives were first updated, which are now being detailed into learning strands.

5.3.2 Reconsidering ambitions and determination of CEFR-level

The fact that ambitions are not being met raises questions. For example, should multiple (minimum) exit levels be specified for the end of primary education with a view to pupils' entrance into and transfer in secondary education? And second, what should these levels be? For example, should pupils deemed capable of progressing to the Academic stream be at or near level A2 at the end of primary education in order to be able to progress to B1 or B2 in secondary education? A third question is whether different levels should be specified for different skills. It should be noted that establishing multiple exit levels in primary education only makes sense if secondary education builds on pupils' envisaged learning pathways by means of a differentiated approach. Naturally, pupils must also be able to develop during the learning routes in secondary education such that progression to higher levels is an achievable prospect. The challenge in developing/updating the core objectives is to take into account attainable levels for different groups of pupils in relation to their envisaged professional and/or academic careers.

5.3.3 Appropriate tests and examinations

In addition to the DFL monitoring tests that are under development, a standardized attainment test at the end of primary education and a test at the end of the CCSLC period (lower secondary education) are worth considering. The results of the attainment test at the end of primary education can enable a more personalized approach to pupils in secondary education and potentially allow them to be grouped based on CEFR levels. The results of the tests can be used to determine what is still needed to bring pupils to the desired exit level (A2, B1 or B2).

5.3.4 Improved balance between language domains

For the sake of clarity, the DFL learning strands have been divided into the usual domains of language teaching: listening, speaking and conversation skills, reading skills and writing skills. Communication usually involves a combination of reading, listening, speaking and writing. In classroom practice and assessment, the division of core objectives and learning strands into domains often creates a one-sided focus on component skills and technical aspects of language use. Integration of skills and between skills and content are part of the communicative and metacognitive dimension of languages. DFL also poses a challenge in terms of shifting the excessive focus on grammar and spelling in sub-exercises to a focus on oral skills and communicative, practical tasks in meaningful contexts. D'Haens (2021) states that a greater emphasis on authentic language use, based on a communicative purpose, and encouragement of authentic and personal oral language production is desirable.

5.3.5 Alignment of core objectives with objectives in the learning strand

The decision to position Dutch as a *foreign language* on both islands has led to the development of learning strands and teaching materials based on the CEFR, particularly for primary education (see 2.2.2, 3.2.8 and 4.2.1). The objectives from the learning strands and materials therefore need to be reflected in the updated core objectives, to remove the discrepancy between the envisaged and implemented curriculum. However, promoting the alignment of teaching practice with the objectives also requires actions with regard to the development of teaching materials and teacher professionalization (see section 6).

6. Preconditions

To meet the challenges posed by the updating set out in section 5 and the implementation, a number of preconditions would need to be satisfied. We address this briefly, whereby English and DFL are discussed together.

6.1 Legislation and levels

The legal framework set out in *Besluit kerndoelen WPO BES* needs to be adapted to reflect the distinction between the school subjects of English and Dutch as a strong foreign language. The same applies to the section in the *WPO BES* that currently stipulates two languages of instruction for primary education. In addition, different levels of attainment should be established for English and DFL in primary education. For DFL in secondary education, we recommend reconsidering the exit levels stipulated in *Besluit Saba Comprehensive School en Gwendolyn van Puttenschool BES* for DFL as an advanced subject (see 3.2.5). We also argue that the B2 requirement for Dutch as an advanced subject should be dropped as an entry requirement for English-taught further education in the European Netherlands (see 3.2.5).

6.2 Teaching materials for Dutch as a foreign language

As the range of used materials (see 3.2.8) is incomplete, there is a substantial need for new teaching materials for DFL, additional or otherwise. The responses from both schools and experts show a strong preference for comprehensive DFL teaching material, in a continuous line from primary to secondary education, adapted to pupils on Sint Eustatius and Saba and accompanied by a clear teacher manual. This teaching material, like the material that has already been developed, should be based on Dutch as a foreign language, using the CEFR and the learning strands developed. It is also important that themes and topics fit the Caribbean context and that there are sufficient opportunities for differentiation.

6.3 Professional development

Respondents report that some European Dutch teachers do not have a sufficient command of English (in other words not at the required C1 level) to teach subjects such as arithmetic (see also Bakker 2021). Statian and Saban teachers sometimes have an insufficient command of standard English. In view of pupils with other mother tongues, it is recommended to invest in the professional development of class teachers in the area of methodologies for teaching English as a second language (see also Bakker 2021a/b). In addition, it is important

that these pupils have a specialized EAL (English as an additional language) teacher who teaches extra lessons linked to the regular curriculum.

On both islands, Dutch subject teachers are often also used in primary education. The turnover among these teachers is high, which does not promote stability and continuity in the curriculum. Furthermore, both class teachers and subject teachers do not always seem fully equipped to apply an effective communicative foreign language teaching approach. The negative effects of this are particularly felt in early childhood education. For these pupils, the emphasis is mainly on verbal communication.

Respondents from the working groups reported that they need more support on DFL in terms of implementing the developed learning strands and the term planners under development. Experience in the development process shows that teachers find it very difficult to link objectives from the learning strands to their teaching materials. This means that not enough understanding has yet been built up of the relation between objectives in the learning strands and the teaching material that is being used. In addition, further training in DFL didactics linked to the learning strands and term planners is required to realize the goals in practice. Finally, there needs to be a focus on differentiation skills given the large differences in levels.

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Als landelijk expertisecentrum richt SLO zich op de ontwikkeling van het curriculum in het primair, speciaal en voortgezet onderwijs in Nederland. We werken met het onderwijsveld aan de doelen, kaders en instrumenten waarmee scholen hun opdracht vanuit een eigen visie kunnen vervullen.

We brengen praktijk, beleid, maatschappelijke ontwikkelingen en onderzoek samen en stellen onze expertise beschikbaar aan onderwijs en overheid, bijvoorbeeld in de vorm van leerplannen, tools, voorbeeldlesmaterialen, conferenties en rapporten.

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