

Inspection of the cooperatives for inclusive education in the Netherlands

Jörgen Svensson, Pim Hydra and Nathalie Maassen¹

University of Twente

Email: j.s.svensson@utwente.nl

Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	2
2	Primary and secondary education and existing support for special needs	4
2.1	Primary and secondary education provided by independent schools.....	4
2.2	Instruments in the hands of the Dutch government.....	5
2.3	Separation and inclusion of children with special needs	6
2.4	Five bottlenecks in the regime of special needs education	7
3	The Inclusive Education Act as a new institutional framework	10
3.1	Mandatory cooperatives	10
3.2	Responsibilities of individual schools	11
3.3	Responsibilities of the cooperatives.....	12
3.4	A new role for the Inspectorate	13
3.5	To summarize	13
4	Research population and method.....	14
4.1	The population of cooperatives and the practice of inspections.....	15
4.2	Aim and method of the qualitative case study	17
4.3	Aim and method of two additional studies.....	19
5	Findings of the single case study.....	21

¹ Jörgen Svensson and Pim Hydra: Department of Public Administration. Nathalie Maassen: Department of Research Methodology Measurement and Data Analysis.

5.1	Phase 1: Preparation for the inspection event.....	21
5.1.1	Preparation by the inspectorate	21
5.1.2	Preparation by the cooperative	24
5.2	Phase 2: The inspection event itself and the inspection report.....	29
5.3	Phase 3. Impact of the inspection event	30
5.4	Main findings of the case study.....	32
6	Results of two additional studies	35
6.1	Results of the review of inspection reports	35
6.2	Results of the survey among managing directors of the cooperative	36
7	Discussion and conclusion.....	42
7.1	Theory on the inspection of educational networks	42
7.2	The specific nature of the cooperatives for inclusive education	44
7.3	The position of the inspectorate	46
7.4	Impacts of the inspections.....	48

1 Introduction

This study concerns the inspection of cooperatives for inclusive education in the Netherlands. In these cooperatives schools are expected to work together, to provide all children in their region with education that fits their individual needs.

The cooperatives for inclusive education have been established in 2014, following the Inclusive Education Act (IEA)ⁱ. This IEA, not only assigned new responsibilities to schools for providing inclusive education to their children. It also defined mandatory regional cooperatives in which formally independent schools now have a collective responsibility for the realization of inclusive education within their region. Moreover, the IEA assigned a new task to the Dutch

Inspectorate of Education, namely to monitor the organization and performance of the new cooperatives and the rightfulness of their expenditures.

The central research question this paper aims to answer focuses on this inspection and reads:

In what way does the Dutch Inspectorate of Education conduct its new task of inspecting the cooperatives for inclusive education, how does this inspection function in practice, and what are the impacts of these inspections?

This question is considered especially relevant, because the inspection of the cooperatives is an example of inspection in a so-called polycentric context (Janssens and Ehren, 2016). Whereas inspections used to focus on performances of single organizations like schools and schoolboards, the inspection of cooperatives is part of an international trend in which the performances of networks of schools are inspected.

In order to answer the research question, the remainder of this contribution is structured as follows.

To start, the next section will inform the reader about the Dutch context in which the Inclusive Education Act has been implemented. It discusses some peculiarities of the Dutch organization of primary and secondary education and then explains the main arguments for introducing this Act. Then, section 3 discusses the key elements of the Act, which introduced an innovative structure of governance.

Next, section 4 presents a brief overview of the research methods used in this study, after which sections 5 and 6 present the results of two separate empirical investigations. Section 5 presents the results a single case study of the inspection of one cooperative, conducted in 2016. Section 6 presents the results of a broader, quantitative investigation, based on desk research of a random sample of inspection reports and a survey among managing directors of the cooperatives, conducted at the beginning of 2017.

In section 8, the findings of these empirical investigations are discussed in relation to the broader context of the Dutch education system and in relation to the theories of network

governance in public services and of the role of the inspection therein. Finally, section 9, summarizes the main conclusions.

2 Primary and secondary education and existing support for special needs

This section is intended to inform the reader about the context in which inclusive education was introduced in the Netherlands. First sections 2.1 and 2.2 provide a brief explanation about the constitutional principle of freedom of education and the main instruments of government involvement in education, applied in the Netherlands. Then, some background is provided on the developments of special needs education that occurred before the Inclusive Education Act was introduced. Finally, section 2.4 presents the main arguments for introducing the new Act.

2.1 Primary and secondary education provided by independent schools

The foundation of the Dutch education system consists of 8 years of primary education (from the age of 4 until the age of 12) and 4, 5 or 6 years of secondary education, depending on the type of program. This design of the Dutch education system resembles education systems found elsewhere in Europe. A remarkable feature of the Dutch education system is, however, that the schools that provide the actual education enjoy so-called freedom of education.

This freedom of education has been laid down in Article 23 of the Dutch constitution in 1848. The article states that schools may be founded without interference of government (freedom of establishment), schools themselves are responsible for organising their teaching (freedom of organisation of teaching) and schools themselves can determine the principles on which they are based (freedom of conviction).

The principles of freedom of establishment and freedom of conviction have resulted in two types of schools in the Netherlands: public schools (non-denominational schools) and private schools (denominational schools). Public schools are open to all children regardless of religion or worldview. Private schools subscribe to a specific belief or ideology. The vast majority of these are private schools is either Catholic or Protestant, but there are also Muslim, Jewish, Hindu and anthroposophical schools. These private schools are allowed to refuse children from other backgrounds. In practice, however, many non-religious children attend private schools. As a result there are considerably more children in private schools (about 70%), than there are

religious youths in Dutch society (fewer than 50%) (Central Bureau of Statistics, www.cbs.nl, 2017).

The constitutional freedom of organization applies to both public and private schools. Both public and private schools may adopt specific teaching ideologies, such as Steiner, Montessori, Dalton, Freinet or Jena Plan.

Based on an amendment to the Dutch Constitution made in 1917, all schools in the Netherlands are entitled to equality in government funding, irrespective of their public or private status and irrespective of the educational choices they make.

Finally, the way public and private schools are governed is similar. Public schools used to be governed by the municipal council or by a governing committee, but nowadays they too are governed by an independent foundation or a commission. As a result, primary and secondary education is primarily provided by non-governmental and formally independent schools in the Netherlands.

2.2 Instruments in the hands of the Dutch government

That schools in the Netherlands are formally independent, does not mean that they have absolute freedom in what they teach nor that each school is totally free in setting its own standards. In order to ascertain that all schools prepare their children properly for life and provide them with valuable education and valuable diploma's, the Dutch government can apply three main instruments in relation to the schools and the education they provide.

Firstly, in the Laws on Primary Education and Secondary Education, so-called core objectives are defined. These core objectives describe the goals schools are expected to work towards with their pupils.

Secondly, The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science sets national standards that apply to both public and private run schools. These national standards do not only prescribe the subjects to be taught and targets to be attained, but also other topics, such as the number of teaching hours per year, the qualifications of teachers, and the involvement of parents in the school's governance.

Finally, the third instrument of government involvement in education, especially in the context of this contribution, is the Dutch Inspectorate of Education, which exists since 1801. This inspectorate has as its traditional task to inspect individual schools. The main topics of this inspection concern (Law on the Supervision of Education):

- quality of education, including the quality of teaching staff,
- compliance with education law,
- school funding and legality of financial management of the funded institutions,
- additional tasks assigned to the inspection on a legal basis.

That government takes responsibility for education and that it can define core objectives and standards and conduct inspections, is widely accepted in the Netherlands. For most people, it is self-evident that schools should work towards basic skills in language, mathematics, and other topics. Also it is hardly disputed that standards are set for national exams and that quality of teaching is monitored.

The ways in which, and the extent to which these instruments are used by government remain a topic of dispute, however. A classic example is the tension that arose when evolution theory was first made an obligatory topic and later an exam topic in secondary education (Janssen and Voogt, 1997; Brattinga 2009). Although the Dutch government pushed through in that particular case, the constitutional freedom of schools is considered a fundamental characteristic of the Dutch education system, which is widely respected and supported in Dutch politics. This respect and support comes especially from the confessional parties, which want to protect 'their' schools from government interference, and liberal parties, too, can be critical about too much government interference in education (Karsten 1999).

2.3 Separation and inclusion of children with special needs

As this contribution concerns the inspection of cooperatives for inclusive education, it is also necessary to provide some background on the development of special needs education in the Netherlands. Basically, this special needs education was, and still is, provided in two distinct ways.

- In an inclusive setting, in regular schools (public or private), in which additional support can be provided to children with limited special needs (e.g. children with limited physical or cognitive impairments, or limited psychiatric and/or behavioral disorders);
- In an exclusive setting, in which children are educated apart from the main stream of education in specialized institutions (e.g. special schools for children with serious visual or auditory impairments).

With regard to these two modes of special needs education, two phases of development can be distinguished in the Netherlands, over the decades prior to the introduction of the Inclusive Education Act.

The first phase of development, which followed a long tradition and which continued till the end of the 1990's, was that of increased exclusion of children with special needs from main stream education in specialized institutions, which were thought to provide better support for these children. A complication with this development was, however, that the number of children educated separately from the educational main stream increased to a volume that became politically untenable (see Smeets 2007 for an overview).

In response to this, new policies focused on curbing this trend of increased exclusion, in line with the concept of inclusive education, in line with the Universal Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1989 and Unesco's Salamanca statement of 1994. The project Together to School Again (TtSA), which started in 1991, had the aim to keep more children in the educational main stream. This project eventually led to the Law on Centers of Expertise of 1998, which stimulated the formation of so-called TtSA-networks between schools and specialized institutions that could provide specialized support to children in regular schools. Finally, a voucher system was introduced, in 2003, to pay for this individualized support in regular schools.

2.4 Five bottlenecks in the regime of special needs education

The regime of special needs education organized in TtSA-networks and paid for by vouchers was eventually replaced by the Inclusive Education Act. The explanatory memorandum of this new Act provides five reasons for its introduction.

The first reason, receiving most attention in the memorandum, was that the number of children who were referred to special education was still increasing. Despite the policy changes of the previous decades, still more children were labeled with disorders and more children were set apart from regular education, thereby reducing their chances on a regular diploma. In addition to that, the voucher system, which enabled students with limited special needs to attend regular education, had become very popular as well. As a result the total number of pupils with an indication of special educational needs had grown strongly, leading to increasing costs for the education system as a whole.

As this increase in the numbers of pupils in special education was unlikely to be caused by a real increase in special needs in the population, the memorandum identified three other explanations: improvements in, and expansion of diagnostics, increased societal expectations, and increased knowledgeability about regulation. With respect to the latter point, the memorandum argued that the existing regime for special needs education had created financial pressures in the direction of special education and voucher pupils. The design of the system of special needs support was argued to give schools and parents few incentives to opt for less costly solutions.

Additionally, four other bottlenecks were identified in the explanatory memorandum accompanying the Inclusive Education Act:

- The existing system of special education gave limited freedom of choice to parents and had created a practice in which many parents could not find a suitable school for their children. This meant that many children with special needs did not attend any formal education for shorter or longer periods (so-called homestay);
- The existing system with TtSA-networks and centers of expertise was bureaucratically complex. In some municipalities up to 14 networks could be active, each with its own procedures for admittance and its own system for determining the extent of special needs support to be provided;
- Support which was provided in the schools was not appropriately aligned with the broader field of (youth)care;

- The quality of education and the competences of teachers were insufficient and additional support was organized outside of the regular classroom too often.

3 The Inclusive Education Act as a new institutional framework

The Inclusive Education Act came into force in August 2014. In essence, this Act replaced the existing institutional framework for special needs education by a new system of governance which was to provide “fitting” education to all children. In essence, this new institutional framework consisted of four components:

- Installation of mandatory cooperatives for inclusive education at a regional level;
- Assignment of additional responsibilities to individual schools;
- Assignment of responsibilities for governance and financing to the new cooperatives;
- Assignment to the Dutch Inspectorate of Education of the responsibility to inspect the fulfilment of these new responsibilities by the individual schools and by the new cooperatives.

In the remainder of this section, each of these four components of the new institutional design for inclusive education will be explained. Following this explanation, section 3.5 provides a more conceptual overview of this new governance structure.

3.1 Mandatory cooperatives

Part and parcel of the freedom of education in the Netherlands has always been that schools were free to seek cooperation with other schools and institutions as they saw fit. This meant that single schools – with perhaps multiple locations – could just focus on themselves or that they could seek cooperation with schools in the direct vicinity. For private schools of a specific (religious) denomination, however, cooperation with schools of the same denomination was also self-evident in Dutch pillarized society (Lijphart, 1968; Karsten, 1999). This freedom to decide who to co-operate with remained when the TtSA networks were introduced. This meant that these TtSA networks were not necessarily bound to specific regions or cities, as schools themselves could have multiple locations and denominative associations were not bound to specific areas.

The Inclusive Education Act cut right across this logic of schools building their own networks. Instead it introduced mandatory regional cooperatives (Dutch: samenwerkingsverbanden), 77 for primary education and 75 secondary education, in which all schools in a region had to participate. These cooperatives were defined as formal organizational entities under private law which the schools in the regions had to establish collectively, mostly in the form of associations or foundations. They were to bundle all expertise and all responsibility for organizing special needs support in each region, except for the special schools for children with severe visual and/or auditory impairments and speech difficulties. Furthermore, the IEA made an explicit distinction between responsibilities at the level of the cooperative and responsibilities at the level of the individual schools.

3.2 Responsibilities of individual schools

The most crucial responsibilities for individual schools under the IEA were the so-called care obligation (Dutch: zorgplicht) and the obligation to formulate and publish a school support profile.

To start with the latter, under the IEA, each school has to produce a public document, which describes the support the school can provide to pupils who require additional support. This support profile has to be based on the expertise available in the school and on agreements within the cooperative in which the school participates. As part of this support profile, the school also needs to determine which additional measures it needs to take to be able to provide that support, e.g. whether additional “professionalization” of staff is needed.

The care obligation expresses that it is the school that is responsible for offering inclusive education. To stop the previous situation in which parents had to find their way in the complex bureaucracy to find a suitable place for their child, the IEA assigned this responsibility to the school of first registration. When parents register their child for a particular school, this school is responsible for making certain that the child will be provided with an appropriate place in a school and for organizing additional support for that child, if needed. This means that the school of first registration will have to determine if the child is in need of additional support and if so how and where this support can best be provided. If the child fits within the school’s own

support profile, the child will be given a place in that school. If the child requires a level of support which is beyond the scope of the school's support profile, the school is responsible for finding an appropriate place in another school in the region, in consultation with the parents.

3.3 Responsibilities of the cooperatives

The cooperatives are responsible for providing a coherent support structure within the region in terms of what the schools can offer individually and in cooperation and for the distribution of the financial means available for maintaining this offer.

With the introduction of the IEA, these financial means per cooperative were subjected to a process of so-called equalization, meaning that funding for special education was changed from the old services based funding regime, to a new regime based on numbers of pupils in a region. This equalization process meant that some regions would receive considerably more and some regions would receive considerably less money for providing inclusive education, than they used to get under the old regime. These financial means were made available to the cooperative, which was also made responsible for annual financial account giving.

Furthermore, the board of the cooperative had to document the arrangements made within the region in a so-called support plan. The support plan - which has to be updated at least once every four years - has to specify in what way children with special needs will be assigned to a fitting place within the cooperative and in what way fitting support will be provided. Furthermore, the support plan describes the way the cooperative fulfils a number of additional responsibilities, such as:

- arrangements (procedure and criteria) made concerning the distribution, expenditure and assignment of means for additional support,
- procedure and criteria for placing pupils in special schools within the cooperative,
- procedure and policy for replacing pupils into regular schools at the end of a period of special placement,
- educational results pursued for children in need of additional support,
- information provided to parents about possibilities for additional support.

Furthermore, cooperatives are expected to cooperate with municipalities in gearing inclusive education support to the broader domain of youth care.

3.4 A new role for the Inspectorate

Finally, the IEA extended the responsibilities of the Dutch Inspectorate of Education in two ways.

Firstly, as the introduction of the IEA created additional responsibilities for individual schools, these additional responsibilities were included in the traditional school inspections.

Secondly and more importantly, however, the IEA assigned to the inspectorate a completely new task, namely of inspecting the cooperatives. Briefly stated, the inspectorate was ordered to monitor that each cooperative executed its newly assigned tasks effectively and that the budgets for inclusive education were spent rightfully. This implies, among other things, that the inspectorate was expected to monitor whether the cooperatives worked ambitiously and effectively towards the goals of the IEA, that their support plans met the criteria of the IEA, that these support plans were actually implemented, and that financial governance was in order.

The new role for the inspectorate has been elaborated in more detail in the so-called inspection framework. This framework is applied by the branch of the inspectorate responsible for overseeing the cooperatives. Its inspections, which are independent from the individual school inspections, focus is on three main questions:

- Do pupils receive the support they are entitled to?
- Is the cooperative governed and organized in an effectual manner?
- Are expenses lawful and expedient?

3.5 To summarize

The Inclusive Education Act can be regarded as an act of institutional redesign of special needs education in the Netherlands. In this design, the cooperatives form a new layer of governance at the regional level.

This choice for governance at a regional level is understandable in view of the task at hand. The education system needs to provide support to children with a wide variety of special

needs. Yet, this variety of needs is so large that it cannot be covered by every single school. So, given this task, and given that children need to be educated in their own region, regional planning and regional cooperation is required.

Moreover, with the creation of the cooperatives and with the new system of funding, the IEA rebalances financial incentives in special needs education. The cooperatives create a new interdependence between the schools in a region in terms of both educational and financial resources. Thus, at first sight, the IEA creates conditions under which the schools have an increased interest in cooperation in special needs education and in providing inclusive education for every child while staying within a fixed regional budget.

A crucial question, however, is in what way and to what extent these cooperatives will really function as intended. Will all schools in these collectives cooperate, will they come to agreements about what is required for the cooperative as a whole and will they indeed succeed creating coherent regional support structures in terms of school support profiles and appropriate staffing?

Following Scharpf (1997), it can be argued that the IEA has created a new institutional setting in which a variety of actors have been assigned new roles. For this study, we now focus on the role that has been assigned to the inspectorate of education and on the research question as it has been formulated in the introduction:

In what way does the Dutch Inspectorate of Education conduct its new task of inspecting the cooperatives for inclusive education, how does this inspection function in practice and what are the effects of this inspection so far?

4 Research population and method

In order to answer the research question, an empirical study was conducted in two phases. The first phase consisted of a single case study. The second investigation consisted of a quantitative study of a larger sample of cooperatives. This section now starts with some essential information about the population of cooperatives and about the practice of inspection, and then continues with presenting the methods of investigation in more detail.

4.1 The population of cooperatives and the practice of inspections

As already indicated above, a total of 152 cooperatives of inclusive education were erected in the Netherlands in 2014: 77 for primary education and 75 for secondary education. Whereas each of these cooperatives has the same task of implementing inclusive education in their regions, there are of course important differences between them, most noticeably in:

- the size of the cooperative,
- the possible application of a sub region or chamber model,
- the financial distribution model applied,
- the financial equalization task that has to be met.

Size of the cooperatives

A first characteristic of importance is the size of the cooperatives. As a result of differences in population density, differences in the scales at which schools are organized, and also the process of drawing more or less natural borders (e.g. around cities), the 152 cooperatives differ considerably in terms of the size of the area they are responsible for, the numbers of cities in that area, the number of school locations involved, the number of school boards responsible and the numbers of pupils. A small cooperative like Weert-Nederweert spans a land area of about 15km across with two municipalities and 27 school locations, which are governed by 7 school boards. It has fewer than 5,000 pupils in total, of which about 2.4% are in special basic education and 2.2% in special education. A large cooperative, on the other hand is Friesland. This cooperative is responsible for a whole province, which is about 15 times larger in geographical surface, with 24 cities, several of them on islands. It includes 453 separate school locations, governed by 58 school boards, and counts over 56,000 pupils in total of which about 3% are in special basic education and 1.5% in special education.

Sub regions, chambers and school-based cooperation

Whereas the concept of region-wide cooperation is central to the Inclusive Education Act, it has been clear from the start that many cooperatives are too large and too complex to expect cooperation on every detail to take place at the level of the cooperative as a whole. For this reason, many cooperatives have organized themselves in so-called sub regions or chambers. In

such cases, the cooperative as a whole remains responsible for achieving the goals of inclusive education and setting regional policy, but the sub regions and chambers can take-up much of the practical coordination at a lower level of aggregation, e.g. the local implementation of the support plan.

Moreover, given the freedom of education, individual schools and individual school boards can also decide to continue existing (TtSA) networks or develop networks to fulfil their school-level responsibilities in inclusive education.

As a result, cooperation in inclusive education, may take the form of a complex governance structure spanning four conceptual levels: the level of the cooperative as a whole, the level of chambers and sub regions, the level of networks of schools and schoolboards, and finally, the level of schools functioning under a single school board.

School and expertise models

A third important characteristic on which cooperatives differ in practice, is the manner in which they pass along the financial means for inclusive education to the schools. Here, a major distinction can be made between two ideal types: the expertise model and the school model.

Under the expertise model, the financial means available for inclusive education are utilized by the cooperative to create and maintain support structures which support the schools.

Under the school model (or the board model), most means for inclusive education are passed along directly to the individual schools (or the school boards), so that they can organize this support themselves, either as individual schools or school boards, or in cooperation with other schools.

The equalization task

Finally the cooperatives differ in the so-called equalization task (Dutch: vereveningsopdracht) which has been set at the start of the IEA. As explained, a major reason for introducing the IEA in 2014, was to put a stop to the rise in referrals to special education, the rise in applications for support vouchers, and the rise in associated costs.

To achieve this, the IEA introduced a new funding regime, in which total spending was frozen at the national level and redistributed according to the share of pupils in each region. Effectively, this meant that some regions were to receive budgets which were actually higher than they used to have, while other regions could expect serious financial reductions. In view of this change in funding, all cooperatives were given a positive or negative equalization task. They had to align their spending to the new funding levels, within a period of 5 years.

As a result, the newly erected cooperatives started under quite different conditions. While some cooperatives could maintain their existing spending levels, most cooperatives were faced with substantial increases or decreases in funding. Of course, this could be expected to create serious tensions within cooperatives, especially where funding was diminished and some schools or sub-regions were found to spend more than their fair share.

4.2 Aim and method of the qualitative case study

Case selection

The case study was a single case study of a single inspection of one specific cooperative, which will be referred to as “the cooperative”. It was designed to get a first impression of the way an inspection of a cooperative was conducted, and of the experiences of the participants with such an inspection.

The cooperative was selected by the original researchers on the basis of convenience as the cooperative was easily accessible to them. A first sketch of this cooperative was made, based on prior contacts with the cooperative, additional information provided in documents and on the website of the cooperative, and initial talks about the case study with some key informants.

The cooperative concerned primary education and was a rather large cooperative in terms of geographical size, the number of pupils, the number of school locations and the number of school boards involved. Given this size, it should not come as a surprise that the cooperative as a whole was quite diverse and complex in the sense that many schools were already involved in local and denominational networks of cooperation, before the IEA was

introduced. Moreover, substantive differences existed between these local networks in terms of the extent of cooperation achieved, the extent of support provided and the level of spending. Furthermore, expenditures for the cooperative as a whole were above the new budgetary norm, which meant the cooperative started with a negative financial equalization task.

Under these conditions, the cooperative had adopted a sub-region structure, with the board of the cooperative consisting of representatives of the school boards from each sub-region. Furthermore, a managing director had been appointed, and the cooperative had established a platform for practical coordination, policy preparation, advice, information exchange and learning. Finally, the cooperative had decided to adopt the school model, which meant that most means for inclusive education which were available to the cooperative were automatically transferred to the schools, so that they could organize support themselves.

The case study, furthermore, focused on a single inspection event for this cooperative, namely that of the second official quality investigation, which was conducted at the beginning of 2016.

Interview method

In order to study this event closely, three phases around the event were distinguished.

Phase 1: the preparation for the inspection event;

Phase 2: the inspection event itself and the main findings in that event;

Phase 3: the impact of the inspection event and its findings on the cooperative.

In order to study phase 1 and 3, semi-structured interviews were conducted with two senior-level staff members of the inspectorate and three senior-level staff respondents from (within) the cooperative, one at the level of the cooperative as a whole, and two at the level of a local network that was part of the cooperative and, as such, was involved in the inspection event.

To study phase 2, the inspection report which resulted from the inspection event was studied, together with the official reaction of the cooperative to that report as well as an internal memo that was spread within the cooperative, directly after the event.

Presentation of the findings of the case study

In the presentation of the findings of each of the three phases in this report, the first author has tried to stay close to the texts of the interviews that were available to him (transcripts and detailed notes) and close to the reports about the outcomes of the inspection event. Because all source material had to be translated from Dutch to English, quoted sections are not literal quotes of what was said, but close to literal translations of phrases found in the material, made by the author.

Furthermore, any references during the interviews to the specific cooperative, the specific sub network, specific cities et cetera were replaced by less explicit references – like “the cooperative”, “the specific network (or TSN)”, “city 1”, “city 2” – to obscure the identities of those involved. For the same reason the exact dates on which some events took place are not reported.

As the interviewees mostly formulated their responses in the present tense, the author has chosen to use present tense for the connecting texts as well; this to enhance readability. Readers should stay aware however that these interviews reflect the state of affairs at the time of the interviews.

4.3 Aim and method of two additional studies

The case study resulted in a deeper understanding of the way an inspection of a cooperative was conducted and of many issues, dilemmas, choices and sensitivities involved. After the study, however, the question remained whether this case of one inspection of one cooperative was typical for this type of inspection or not. To investigate this, two additional studies were added to the initial research design to achieve a more representative picture.

The first of these two studies focused on the question of the representativeness of the inspections findings in this particular case; were the kind of findings reported by the inspectorate similar to the findings of inspections elsewhere?

To find this out, the second author conducted a document study of quality reports for a random sample of 25 cooperatives for primary education. As these quality report were often

found to be rather vague in their wording and true findings about the cooperatives, the second author focused on evaluative statements by the inspectors in these reports, which could be identified as neutral, positive or negative. A first scan of all reports resulted in a list of eight topics on which such evaluative remarks were made in two or more reports:

- Organizational structure,
- Internal oversight
- Internal cooperation
- External cooperation
- Communication between partners
- Communication to stakeholders
- Policy
- Monitoring.

Following this scan, the evaluative, remarks positive and negative, were used to get a quantifiable impression of the way the inspectorate valued the performances of each cooperative on each topic, and to get a quantified impression of the overall performance of each cooperative.

This quantified result was then used to focus on the communication between the inspectorate and the three poorest performers about their results. In which way was poor performance addressed by the inspectorate and in which way did these cooperatives react to the evaluations by the inspectorate.

The second additional study, consisted of an online survey among the managing directors of the cooperatives and focused on their experiences with, and opinions about the inspections. What we wanted to know was how these managing directors evaluated:

- the quality of the inspections,
- the impact of the inspections on their cooperatives.

Furthermore, an additional question was whether such experiences would be related to characteristics of the internal organization of the cooperatives.

The managing directors of all 152 cooperatives for primary as well as secondary education were sent an invitation to participate in this survey, which resulted, after repeated reminders, in a total of 62 full responses, 31 from cooperatives for primary education and 31 from cooperatives from secondary education. The overall response rate is 41%, which given the extent of survey fatigue in the Netherlands is considered reasonable.

5 Findings of the single case study

This section presents the findings of the case study of one specific inspection event in a single cooperative. These findings are ordered in the three phases:

Phase 1: the preparation for the inspection event;

Phase 2: the inspection event itself and the main findings in that event;

Phase 3: the impact of the inspection event and the findings on the cooperative

At the end of this section the main findings are summarized.

5.1 Phase 1: Preparation for the inspection event

To find out how the different parties were preparing for the inspection event, semi-structured interviews were conducted with respondents from the inspectorate of the cooperative.

5.1.1 Preparation by the inspectorate

The way the inspectorate looks forward at the inspection event is explained in two independent interviews with senior representatives of the inspectorate. Three main themes are derived from these interviews:

- The role and the aims of the inspectorate;
- The conceptualization of good performance;
- Respecting local conditions and local choices.

The aims of the inspectorate

The respondents from the inspectorate of education acknowledge that the inspectorate still has to find its role when it comes to inspecting cooperatives. It is argued that empirical research shows that network cooperation is useful but also problematic. A network context implies that several actors can have an influence on and feel responsible for the performance of the network as a whole: individual schools, school boards, the managing directors of the cooperatives, parents, municipalities. The inspectorate sees itself as one of these actors.

Given this positioning of the inspectorate, the main task of the inspectorate is not to check whether the cooperative has a support plan that fulfils all criteria. This is merely a technical exercise. More important, at this stage of early development, is to listen and to bring the different actors together, so that they start cooperating. The inspectorate sees itself as a facilitator of cooperation. Furthermore, it is argued that schools and cooperatives want feedback and that the inspectorate is in a good position to give that.

This perspective on the role of the inspectorate is reflected in how inspections are implemented. Whereas an original plan was to apply 18 indicators in the quality inspection, the inspectorate has decided not to apply these indicators yet. The current aim of the inspectorate is to get a good impression of how the network is doing and to stimulate its development.

“We want to make them think, that is the stimulating force behind it, to make them think about the report. [...] That they can also get positive things from it, for further development of inclusive education within the region.”

This does not mean, however, that the inspection report itself cannot be critical.

“Suppose we say: cooperative you do not have a good picture of the basic support. I hope that they will take action, then. [...] Then, they have to organize that, towards their schools. [...] suppose they have no insight in how many children stay at home. Yes, they have to establish an organization, then.”

Both respondents express the idea that the inspectorate is interested in achieving such a positive impact in an efficient way and not through intense, detailed inspections, for which the inspectorate has insufficient staff.

In order to achieve efficiency and impact, it is important to maintain good relations between the inspectorate and the cooperatives, and not to judge the cooperative on every detail. There is much willingness in the cooperatives and much can be achieved by cooperation.

A further consideration is that the cooperatives are mandatory and that trying to make them function can be a very demanding task. For that reason too, the inspectorate needs to be supportive.

Conceptualization of good performance

For the respondents of the inspectorate, the idea of what constitutes a well-functioning cooperative is closely connected to the idea of good cooperation. They argue that groups in the network have to cooperate and should focus their attention on specific issues - e.g. the number of children who stay at home, because there is no fitting place for them. Working groups can be formed to collect data on such an issue and then address this at a higher level. Furthermore, the respondents argue that the cooperatives should not only focus on long term development, but also act quickly on signals of specific problems, on cases that need attention.

According to one of the respondents, the main indicators of a well-functioning network are:

"[...] that, in any case, there is mutual trust. That there is also willingness to cooperate [...]. It is about the responsibility; they all have to achieve a goal, the obligation to care, for example, not about individual interests. [...] That there is the will to really organize inclusive education for children."

The respondents indicate that the inspectorate focuses on these qualities of network cooperation, because they consider trust and well-focused cooperation as preconditions for realizing the actual goals of inclusive education.

"The goals of the Act, of Inclusive Education, those must be realized."

Given the early stage of development, however, they indicate that goal attainment is not a major concern, yet. First, the cooperatives need to be given time and support to develop.

Respecting local conditions and local choices

Given the cooperative's responsibility for organizing cooperation and for attaining national goals and standards, the inspectorate needs to take into account and respect reasonable choices cooperatives can make in terms of the way they organize themselves and the targets they set along the way.

“If, at some point, they say, but we have very specific targets for this, and they explain this because of the context in which they operate, then we have to follow them in that. [...] Within the cooperative choices can be made, for example for the school model or the expertise model. [...] Yes we take that into account.”

The main idea is that, ultimately, the cooperative is responsible for realizing inclusive education “They have to do it together”. Thus, the method of inspection and the inspection event have to be tailored to any reasonable choices the cooperatives make, and the inspectors have to prepare for this.

“So we get the information about the cooperative, as it is currently functioning [...] We, for example, study the current documents, such as the support plan [...] and then you look, too, how this is actually translated to the departments [...] And what do we retrieve inman there? [...] Do we see clear lines reappearing? [...] Are there subjects that are important to ask about, again? [...] So it is a considerable amount of information you need. [...] And, then, we discuss which will be the focus issues for [the inspection event].”

For the inspector, these focus issues function as leads for discussion and critical questioning during the inspection event, e.g. about the exact reasons specific goals have been set, or about the extent to which choices made on paper are really followed through in the sub networks and the schools. Furthermore, based on the information about the particular organization of the network, the inspector can express expectations about the participants included in such discussions. Although these participants are ultimately selected by the cooperative, the inspectorate has a say in this too.

“It is important that we can really do something, during the round table talks. So we want delegates from all departments at the table.”

In discussions with the delegates from sub-regions and local networks, the inspector may use additional knowledge from individual school inspections to dig deeper and to get a more complete picture of how the cooperative is functioning as a whole.

“Because they are [...] parts of the larger whole. We are also interested in the larger whole.”

5.1.2 Preparation by the cooperative

From the interviews with the respondents from the cooperative, about their preparation for the inspection event, four dominant topics emerged:

- The decentralized nature of the cooperative and the limited extent of actual cooperation;
- Performance indicators versus quality at different levels;
- Attitudes towards the upcoming inspection;
- Actual preparation for the inspection event.

The decentralized nature of the cooperative and the limited cooperation

In order to get a picture of the nature of the cooperation within the cooperative, this topic of cooperation is addressed in each interview. Which leads to some surprising answers.

“[T]he cooperative is a network and they are obliged to carry out a number of tasks, but can we really call this cooperation? [...] Perhaps you need to define the concept of cooperation. [...] I do not see that at all, because the schools do not cooperate [...] [the respondent ponders on the term cooperative] an organization of school boards that has an obligation to provide care [...] an obligation to achieve a number of goals together.”

Furthermore, when asked about the influence of the board of the cooperative on this cooperation, the same respondent argues that this influence is “rather minimal”. The cooperative only concerns one obligation for the schools: “to set their basic [support] profile”. The reason for this limited influence is the “strongly decentralized” nature of the cooperative. Responsibility for creating a comprehensive network of inclusive education is intentionally left to the sub regions.

“Such a sub region works on a smaller scale and can exert a stronger influence on the schools.”

This idea is confirmed by the other respondents who express their resistance to the idea that inclusive education should be organized at the level of the cooperative as a whole.

“We are more of the opinion that it is from the work floor [...], that we want to motivate the schools much more, and create ownership for the schools themselves, to get their basic support in order. That is our ideal, that we do not determine top down.”

As these respondents argue, the concept of inclusive education has to be widened to give more possibilities to deal with the individual needs of the child and to allow:

“[...] schools to work from their own identity”. This requires the schools [at the level of a sub region] to reach out. Then you are talking about networks. Then you are talking about

professional learning collectives, on every level, not only at the level of directors, but also between internal coaches, teachers even. I think this is a requirement, to achieve something like that. So the barriers between the schools have to go [...]. Then you look over the walls [between the schools] and with it you take responsibility for each other and for each other's children."

The respondents from the local sub network, consisting of a limited number of schools, talk long and enthusiastically about the progress they have made. How they have been developing new insights, new concepts and new approaches in supporting children.

"We have [...] a whole support structure. [...] we work with education coaches and special education specialists who provide intensive support in and around the schools"

"And we notice that this lands at the work floor, too. [...] Schools are and get motivated because they know: we support you when a child has to be referred or is referred. That is what we are busy with. And no blame culture. And every time we approach the schools: are you really doing the right things? Are you doing it right this way? Can I also see it fine-tuned to the possibilities of the child? And what can we offer from the support point to realize that? No lecturing."

Performance indicators versus content at different levels

This ideal of cooperation at the level of a local network is in stark contrast to how these respondents expect the inspectorate to function.

"They are really not going to look at quality. They just will look at the number of children you have registered. How many children did you refer? And, that is your financial situation. [...] It is only always getting to hear: you are not doing it right, because you have referred to many children."

In the view of this, another respondent argues that cooperatives as a whole are more about:

"[...] indicators [...] finances, [...] general governance [than about] content [...]. Yes, the lower [the closer to the schools], the more substantive. We focus much more on the basics [...] that is where we want to be supported and motivated [...]. The cooperative only looks at: you are spending so much. You are not on course. Period."

"[...] and then you see that the board of the cooperative and of our own sub region really think from a financial perspective. So, from the top. This has to happen, evidently, carry it out."

As one respondent explains, the limited cooperation is a direct result of the conditions present at the start of the cooperative, with differences in local practices and associated spending:

"We started together [...]. Yes, as one large cooperative. [...] And then we concluded that every sub region [...] was emphasizing different aspects [...]. And then finances started to prevail [...]. And, in [city 1] they said, we are not going to pay from our means for [city 2] [...]. And, we do not want to have anything to do with [city 1], and we do not want to have anything to do with [city 3] [...]. And, this was what we intended. That we were one. We

would work together, solidarity. [respondent expresses frustration] Solidarity was gone, immediately.”

Attitudes towards the upcoming inspection

When it comes to the idea of inspections at the level of the cooperative all respondents acknowledge that inspection at a supra school level is desirable. There are, indeed, several tasks at the level of the cooperative which require inspection:

“[...] the declaration of admissibility [of a child to special education, JSS][...]. It absolutely needs to be inspected whether the cooperative keeps to the agreements that have been made about this [...].”

“If you talk about inspection, then I also think that – eventually – they have to move towards [...] inspection of the cooperatives, and not of the individual schools [...] For me, the value of inspection of a cooperative and not of an individual school, is that you measure the quality of the responsibility that you have towards the children that live in a town or a neighborhood.”

There is, however, criticism about the way inspections are conducted. One respondent argues that teachers and parents should not be involved in inspection at the network level. As cooperatives are bodies concerned with governance and coordination at a higher level, the respondent questions whether this has really been given much thought. This involvement of parents, pupils and teachers in inspections is common practice at the school level, and this is now copied, in analogy, to the inspection of the cooperatives. However,

“[...] the distance between parent and school is of course practically zero [while...]. In a manner of speaking, the distance between parent and cooperative is infinite.”

Furthermore, the same respondent is critical about interference between the inspection at the level of individual schools and the inspection at the level of the cooperative. The respondent argues it is:

“bizarre [...] that the inspection has included in its framework for schools a part that directly addresses the support for children, [...while] at the same time that same inspection asks the cooperatives how they monitor that basic support.”

Other respondents at the local level have similar issues with the inspection of the cooperative as they have with the cooperative itself. They expect little attention for what they are doing in

practice and what they are actually accomplishing. Moreover, they doubt whether they will be able to get the inspectorate at their side in this:

“You understand, this is our strength. But [...] can we take the inspection with us [...]. That is what we have to fight for. To get that included. And we stand very isolated [...] in our developments. Within our sub region and within the cooperative as a whole the supervision framework is only focused on targets concerning finances. [...] No quality impulses. Do you get these quality impulses from the inspection? Difficult [...].”

But there are still glimmers of hope:

“We see, now, that this role of the inspection is changing, that they are moving with us a little. [...But...] there are frameworks provided by the law. [...] How can you change this legal framework? Then, you have to turn to the [The Dutch House of Commons]. You hope that, eventually, you are allowed to become more autonomous, in that sense [...].”

Preparation for the inspection event

In preparing for the inspection event, the respondents reflect on the people and organizations that will take part in the talks with the inspectorate and on what they have to show for in terms of improved cooperation. There is some worry that the cooperative has not progressed enough and that this will be noticed by the inspectorate.

“[...] actually I should be [expression of anger] about the fact that this name [name of network 1] is still used. Because it has been agreed that [network 1] and [network 2] would join forces. [...] that they would grow towards each other [...]. But they are not there yet.”

In order to address such issues a meeting has been organized by the cooperative, which will take place the following morning, just two weeks before the actual inspection event.

“Tomorrow, we have a meeting of the [...] sub regions, how they have organized their sub region. That is what we are going to discuss tomorrow. We have worked on that independently. [...] So, tomorrow we will see how the regions [...] have designed their support structures. [...] So, then the [...] sub regions will present what is their support structure and how special education and special basic education are involved, what inclusive education is, and how we are organized. We are really interested in that.”

“Yes, I do not know how they work in [the other cities]. So I am interested in how they are doing. Because they are of course cities that are very different from [the respondent’s city].”

But there is doubt whether this last-minute meeting will be enough:

“I fear that we will have [separate] tables [at the inspection event], and on these [number of] tables [the same number of] different approaches.”

5.2 Phase 2: The inspection event itself and the inspection report

The inspection event itself takes two days. On the first day the inspectorate has so-called round table talks with parents, teachers, internal coaches and school directors. On the second day, eight days later, the inspectorate talks with the board of the cooperative, the management, members of the assignment committee and the internal overseer of the cooperative.

The inspectors inform the cooperative of their preliminary findings, at the end of that second day. These preliminary findings are summarized in a brief internal memo, and express a positive overall impression; Compared to the previous inspection, the board of the cooperative seems more in control. Much work has been done on improving monitoring. There is solid progress in terms of quality of the support plan. The sub regions show more insight in inclusive education. The issue of equalization is being resolved. Solidarity is gaining meaning.

In the context of these positive findings, the inspectors also express some concerns that deserve attention, but these seem to be less severe. Examples are concerns about the coordination of special education with the sub regions, about keeping the website up-to-date, about improving communication with the parents, and about some shortcomings in formal procedures and competences. Furthermore, the inspectors stress the need to maintain a clear focus on children's support needs.

This positive tone is reflected in the official 'Report of Findings of Quality Research' that the inspection finalizes several months later, after the cooperative has had the opportunity to formally react to the concept report.

In this report, the inspectorate observes that the cooperative has delegated many of the responsibilities for achieving the goals of inclusive education to the sub regions and that the financial means to achieve this have been distributed over the schools through the application of the school model.

It argues that given this decentralized structure, it is not easy for the cooperative to get a grip on the developments, and that for the inspection, too, it is hard to establish whether the sub regions will indeed reach their targets, and that "time will tell".

Despite these reservations and despite the fact that the report does not provide much further detail on the state of implementation of inclusive education at the level of the sub regions, the inspectorate reaches a positive conclusion. It concludes that the sub regions carry out the tasks they have been assigned and that the cooperative has done all to achieve the realization of inclusive education for its pupils.

5.3 Phase 3. Impact of the inspection event

What is the impact of the inspection? In order to find this out, follow-up interviews were conducted half a year later, with respondents from the cooperative and from the inspection.

Impressions of impact at the cooperative

In the interviews within the cooperative, a distinction is made between the impact of the inspection on policy and the impact at the level of the sub regions and the schools. The overall impression is that at both levels the impact is very limited.

At the policy level, the most noticeable impact of the inspection is that a discussion has been set in motion about monitoring within the cooperative:

“Yes, we have established that the monitor we have is not really strong and [the managing director has] organized two long discussions with the board.”

In addition, the inspection has initiated a discussion about the nature of the cooperative and its authority.

“[...] where does the cooperative begin and where does it end. [...] what will the cooperative do [...]. Better insight in the role on the cooperative. [...], what will the cooperative do with them? What exactly is overriding authority?”

At the level of the sub regions, local networks, and schools, real impact seems to be absent, not only because the inspection did not address them, but also because more basic struggles about local cooperation and finances have not yet been solved.

“Not so much yet. [...] and [that] probably has to with that we are split up in [...] parts. [...] and that all [...] of us feel that they may have another task when it is about equalization of finances [Dutch: vereveningen] and that kind of matters. [...] and then, in [our city] we talk about [different sub networks]. That makes it hard to see what is going on [...] because [the inspectors] mainly focus, of course, on the cooperative as a whole.”

“[...] if I look at what we are doing primarily, then it is about bringing [the subnetworks] together [...] all these matters are blocking a development of quality at the moment [...]. We are really very good in first thinking about form and only then about content [...].”

Moreover, this absence of impact is argued to be a result of the fact that the cooperative has very limited powers over the regions and the schools. Formally, a cooperative has four “levers” available, to try to influence the functioning of local networks and schools:

1. A cooperative can monitor quality of basic support and fulfilment of formal obligations and legal criteria (are essential documents present, how do the schools perform);
2. A cooperative can demand underpinning of declarations of admissibility, which are required for referral of children to special education;
3. A cooperative can supervise the support profiles that individual schools have to update every four years;
4. A cooperative may use its financial leverage to promote and steer local activities in a desired direction.

However, that these levers exist does not mean that they are used in practice. As a respondent explains, this cooperative distributes almost all funding directly to the schools themselves, which leaves the cooperative with little financial leverage. Moreover, given internal relationships and interdependence and given school autonomy, the other three levers are not used either, yet.

“[E]verybody is hesitant about starting to use those levers [...] how, then, will [the managing director] pull these levers? [...] and that is a difficult issue, because you actually have [...] schoolboards [...] which have much freedom, much autonomy in the Netherlands.”

The conclusion for now is that:

“Well yes, you can have an influence on a cooperative, on the quality of education, but very marginally.”

So, the cooperative has limited powers and has to try to balance its responsibility for improving inclusive education with its need to maintain legitimacy and to keep the cooperative together.

Whether this will succeed remains to be seen. As the respondents indicate various scenarios are possible. Maybe, a large cooperative like this one will be split up in the future. Maybe, the sub regions will be given more formal discretion. Maybe, the cooperative will increase its leverage over the schools over time and demand more transparency.

The inspectorate on impact

When asked about the impact of the inspection, the respondent from the inspectorate is positive about the improvements the cooperative has made in response to an earlier inspection visit.

“[T]he transfer of information to the parents, and also to the schools. Yes, that is an improvement [...] that came to the fore in the talks [...] we sit around the table and talk with the parents and talk with the schools. [...] that information is actually coming closer. They are not satisfied, yet [...] but they are getting a better grip on the situation, now.”

Also, with respect to improvements in the quality of cooperation within the cooperative, the respondent seems mildly positive.

“[the sub networks] are still separate. [...] but they have agreed to cooperate more.”

Based on experiences with other cooperatives and given the problems involved, there are also reservations, however:

“These processes are very complex [...]. It depends of course on the maneuvering room the cooperative will get. [...] It would be most beautiful if more connections developed [...]. But some cooperatives are simply far too large in size. [...] We have to see where it goes.”

When the interviewer asks if these struggles are related to the nature of these cooperatives - defined by the ministry and no collective past - the respondent agrees:

“Yes, that is actually a really annoying situation, which I can understand in some cases [...]. That you actually enter a situation in which you have to cooperate, but you have nothing.”

5.4 Main findings of the case study

The case of the single inspection of one cooperative provides several insights in the way an inspection is conducted and in its impact.

A first insight is that the different interviewees in this case study all acknowledge that the goals of inclusive education go beyond the responsibilities of individual schools and that they all agree that inspection at the level of the cooperative is desirable. Furthermore, and quite remarkable in view of initial doubts expressed, there is also agreement about the basic form inspections should take. The inspectorate should not focus too much on technical details and strict goal attainment, at this early phase of the development of inclusive education. Instead it should assume a more supportive role in bringing actors together. So, fundamentally, two very basic requirements for a smooth inspection seem to be fulfilled.

A closer look at the case, however, reveals that all respondents have serious reservations about whether the network inspections will lead to a well-functioning practice of inclusive education. The first concern relates to the suggestion that is conveyed by the word cooperative; the suggestion of cooperation². The legislator seems to have chosen this word to express the ideal of cooperation at the level of the cooperative as a whole. In reality, however, this ideal has not been realized, and the remarks made by those involved cast doubt on whether such cooperation can be realized in the foreseeable future. The following bottlenecks can be identified that block cooperation at the level of this cooperative:

- The schools have not chosen each other, but have been forced into the cooperative by the legislator. This means that trust can be low, e.g. between schools of different religious denominations.
- The size of the cooperative, in terms of the area that is covered and the number of schools that are involved, does not really fit to the logic of local cooperation in this field (i.e. the cooperative as a whole seems too large for effective local cooperation);
- The individual schools and the cities in which they are located seem to have conflicting interests, especially because financial equalization requires cost cutting.

² The same holds for the original Dutch name “samenwerkingsverband”. The part “samenwerking” means cooperation, while the part “verband” is closely related to the English word “binding”.

Furthermore, clear tensions exist between the new governance structure of the cooperatives and the existing local networks, which have to do the actual work. These local networks, which used to take the lead in organizing special education, are now hardly recognized as relevant players in the formal inspections. They are denied a role in policy making and have been demoted to implementers of policy and sources of policy information. In the inspection event itself they hardly play a role. Their major task is to supply people for the round table discussions in the hope that some specifics about what they are doing will be reflected in the inspection report.

A further complication is that the cooperative, as a foundation, is formally erected and governed by the school boards themselves, and that this seriously limits the powers and authority of the managing director. As has been explained, the cooperative has chosen to divide the means for inclusive education over the schools automatically, which means that the managing director has no financial leverage. Furthermore, given his dependence on the schoolboards, he can only make limited use of the formal powers he has been given under the Inclusive Education Act.

As a result, the positive attitudes towards the need for inspections at the network level and the intentions to let these inspections have impact, meet with a lot of practical frustration. At the level of the managing director, there is frustration about the fact that the cooperative is inspected on matters it can hardly influence. At the inspectorate there is frustration about this too and about the fact that they are not able to dig deeper. At the level of local support networks, there is frustration and fear. Frustration about the lack of attention for what they are trying to achieve and are actually accomplishing in terms of offering inclusive education to their children. Fear of reduced funding for their work and of inclusive education becoming a paper tiger that demands more and more paper work. As a result, the inspection of the cooperative does hardly support this most concrete and arguably most meaningful level of inclusive education.

6 Results of two additional studies

6.1 Results of the review of inspection reports

The single case study informed us about the careful manner in which the inspection evaluated the cooperatives and the way the inspection, in its quality report, combined critical findings with a rather positive, supportive overall conclusion. The review of the random selection of 25 quality reports supported the impression that this kind of approach to quality reporting was indeed representative for the manner of reporting at that specific moment in the development of the cooperatives.

In fact, given the standard inspection framework, many quality reports were rather similar in terms of the critical issues addressed and in compliments and support given by the inspection (Table 2). With a few exceptions the inspectors were (mildly) positive about development in internal cooperation and communication, but more critical on the topics of internal oversight, external communication, policy and monitoring. As a result most quality reports resulted in a (mildly) positive overall picture of the cooperative, with often quite similar topics for development and improvement. In line with fears expressed in the single case study, the inspectorate's quality reports implicitly and explicitly advised the cooperatives to increase their bureaucratic control and to extend their monitoring.

Furthermore, it was found that even the three cooperatives which performed poorest were dealt with in a lenient way. They too received carefully worded, supportive conclusions, in which the inspectors expressed that some of the topics deserved attention and at the same time showed appreciation for the circumstances they had to operate, for progress made, for having set improvements in motion or for simply expressing positive intentions.

In their formal reactions to these findings by the inspection, the cooperatives in the sample were found to be similarly balanced and positive. The inspectors were typically thanked for and complimented on their work. The cooperatives tended to agree with the findings and acknowledged their shortcomings, and typically stated that the cooperative was already addressing these shortcomings, or would do so in the near future; e.g. "the cooperative still needs to implement a monitoring system".

Table 2 Results of a scan of evaluative remarks in quality reports for 25 cooperatives

Cooperative	Organisation		Cooperation		Communication		Policy		Overall
	Structure	Oversight	Internal	External	Partners	Stakeholders	Quality	Monitoring	
1	-	-	+/-	+/-	+/-	-	-	--	-
2	+/-	-	+/-	+/-	+/-	-	-	--	-
3	+/-	-	+/-	+	+	+/-	-	--	+/-
4	++	-	+	+/-	+	-	+/-	+	+/-
5	+/-	-	+	+/-	+	+/-	+/-	+	+/-
6	+	-	+	+	+	+	++	+/-	+
7	+	+/-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
8	+/-	-	+	+/-	+	+	--	--	+/-
9	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	++
10	+/-	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	+/-
11	+/-	-	+/-	+/-	+	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-
12	++	-	++	++	+	-	+/-	+/-	+
13	+	+	+/-	-	+	+	+	+/-	+
14	+	-	+/-	++	+	++	+	+/-	+
15	+	-	++	+/-	+	++	+/-	+/-	+
16	+	+/-	+	+/-	++	++	--	+/-	+
17	+	+/-	+	+	+	-	+/-	-	+/-
18	+	+/-	+	++	+	+	-	+/-	+
19	+	+	+	+	+	-	+/-	+/-	+
20	+	-	++	++	+	++	+	+/-	++
21	--	+	-	+	+/-	-	-	--	-
22	+	-	+	+	+	+	--	-	+/-
23	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-	+/-
24	+/-	+/-	+	+	+	-	-	--	+/-
25	-	-	+/-	+	+/-	-	-	-	+/-

6.2 Results of the survey among managing directors of the cooperative

The survey among the managing directors of the cooperatives provided insight in the variety of opinions about the inspections and about their impacts, and insight into which characteristics of the cooperatives explained variety in these opinions.

Opinions about the inspections and their impacts

Table 3 gives an overview of responses to 10 Likert style items included in the survey conducted among managing directors, about the desirability of these inspections, the quality of the inspections and about their impact.

As can be read from the table, the vast majority of the managing directors support the idea that these inspections are a good thing, with only 2 out of 62 respondents (totally) disagreeing. With regard to the quality of current inspections, the majority of opinions is positive too. Most managing directors are of the opinion that the inspectorate has a good overview of the cooperative and that the inspections have sufficient depth. With respect to the inspection process, there seems to be a bit more criticism, in the sense that a substantial numbers of managing directors seem (somewhat) dissatisfied with the extent to which the inspections are tailored to the cooperatives and to the extent to which the inspections are effective and efficient. Opinions differ, however, about the suggestion that inspections are too detailed at the moment and should be limited to main issues.

Additionally Table 4 provides an overview of opinions about which topics receive too much or too little attention during inspections. As the table shows, there is substantial variation in opinion per topic, which may be both a result of the variety between the inspections themselves as well as of a variety in personal preferences and personal circumstance of the respondents. All in all the figure gives the impression that in general, the inspections strike a good balance in the amount of attention given to each subject. Only for two topics opinions are more one-sided. In their answers the managing directors are leaning towards the opinion that there is too much attention for the achievement of quantitative targets and too little attention for local knowledge and expertise. Furthermore, it is remarkable that a considerable percentage of respondents is of the opinion that the internal structure of the cooperative is given too little attention, but that an even greater percentage is of the opinion that this structure gets too much attention.

As for the impact of the inspections, the majority of the managing directors is positive (Table 3). They clearly agree with the suggestion that the inspections help to improve the cooperatives and that the reports provide concrete leads for improvement. When it comes to

improving governance and to improving inclusive education for pupils, the answers are more reserved.

When asked about the nature of the impact of the inspections on their cooperatives in the form of an open question, most managing directors give positive answers.

They regard the inspectorate as an “interlocutor”, a “sparring partner” or a “critical friend” (especially the latter term is used several times). In this role, the inspectorate does not have a specific impact on the cooperatives, but a more general effect of “supporting” and “inspiring” the cooperative. The inspectors provide an external view on the cooperative, “shake things up” and “keep you on your toes”. They help the directors and their partners in critical reflection on what they are doing, they can give advice and can be a partner in finding solutions when dealing with complex cases.

Noteworthy in this respect is that several directors express that they find the inspectors at their side in their struggles to improve the cooperatives. The inspections “create awareness” and create support for improvements. This can be helpful in achieving coordination between sub regions, and in “bringing the schoolboards to agreements”. One respondent explicitly regards the inspections as “a means to exert pressure on the school boards, to bring them to cooperation”.

A minority of about 15 percent of the directors, however, is less positive about the inspections and about what they contribute to the cooperative. In answer to an open question, they argue that the inspections cost time and add little to the cooperatives, that the inspections have not been open enough or not inspiring and that their inspectors have focused too much on specific targets (e.g. an inspector who seemed obsessed about a single pupil staying at home). Partly these negative experiences are blamed on systemic flaws and on the inspection method used. Examples are a remark about incongruence between the inspection frameworks for the schools and for the cooperatives, and remarks about too much attention being paid to negative incidents and to quantitative indicators. Partly the negative experiences are blamed on the individual inspectors involved. A director who experienced a change in inspectors concludes that it really depends on the individual inspector.

Table 3 Opinions of managing directors of cooperatives on desirability, quality and impact of the inspections (n=62).

	Totally agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Totally disagree
Desirability					
It is good that cooperatives are inspected	45.2	46.8	4.8	0	3.2
Quality					
The inspection has a good overview of the cooperative	16.1	50.0	21.0	11.3	1.6
The inspection of the cooperative has sufficient depth	14.5	54.8	21.0	9.7	0
The inspection should be limited to the main issues	9.7	29.0	37.1	24.2	0
The inspections are well tailored to the individual cooperative	6.5	32.3	30.6	21.0	9.7
The inspections are effective and efficient	11.3	31.4	33.9	21.0	2.4
Impact					
The inspection has a positive impact on the cooperative	14.5	50.0	30.6	3,2	1.6
The Inspection reports provide leads for improvement	17.7	58.1	14.5	8.1	1.6
The inspection helps to improve inclusive education for pupils	6.5	29.0	46.8	14.5	3.2
The inspection helps to improve governance	3.2	38.7	43.5	9.7	4.8

Table 4 Opinions of managing directors of cooperatives about whether the inspectorate pays too much or too little attention to certain topics (N=62)

Topics	Too little attention	Neutral	Too much attention
a. Compliance with the law	5%	82%	13%
b. Achieving quantitative targets	2%	77%	21%
c. Quality of monitoring	11%	76%	13%
d. Parents' satisfaction	11%	73%	16%
e. Local knowledge and expertise*	24%	73%	3%
f. Quality of individual support	15%	69%	16%
g. The cooperatives internal structure	21%	44%	35%
h. The goals the cooperative has set for itself	13%	77%	10%
i. Quality of internal oversight	18%	66%	16%
j. Efficiency of expenditures	21%	69%	10%
k. Legality of expenditures	16%	77%	6%

* Dutch: in de uitvoering

Are differences in opinion explained by differences in internal structure?

The case study, existing literature, and some of the answers to the survey pointed at the importance of recognizing differences between the cooperatives in terms of their internal structure. In order to find out whether such differences affected the quality and impact of the inspections, an additional analysis was performed.

Based on the items on quality and impact, as presented in Table 3, two separate measures for quality and impact were computed. Subsequently, a bivariate correlation analysis was performed to establish to what extent the opinions quality and impact were effected by five organizational characteristics of the cooperatives, namely:

- the educational stage of the cooperative, as it is known that cooperatives in primary education differ substantially (e.g. in nature and in the size of the individual schools involved);
- the application of the expertise model, i.e. the question whether the cooperative is responsible for maintaining support structures or whether organizing support is left to the schools and schoolboards;
- the application of as chamber of sub region model (as an alternative to operating as one single undivided cooperative);
- the extent of decentralization within the cooperative with respect to a number of tasks, such as the alignment of inclusive education with local, municipal policy;
- The opinion of the managing director of the cooperative on the quality of internal cooperation within the cooperative.

Table 5 presents an overview of the variables included in the analysis, while Table 6 presents the results of the correlation analysis.

As can be read from Table 6, several significant correlations are found. First of all there are significant correlations between the organizational characteristics of the cooperatives themselves. A first finding is that cooperatives for secondary education are decentralized to a lesser extent than cooperatives for primary education. Furthermore, Table 6 shows that the

application of the expertise model, the application of chamber model and the extent of decentralization are correlated, in the sense that chambers that apply the expert model are less likely to be divided in chambers and decentralized to a lesser extent. Furthermore, the table shows that, in the opinion of the managing directors, there is better cooperation within such cooperatives.

Opinions on the quality of inspections and their impact are indeed related to some of these characteristics of the cooperatives. However, these correlations are not strong. Managing directors of cooperatives which apply the expert model and/or experience better internal cooperation are somewhat more positive about the quality of inspections. Managing directors of cooperatives for secondary education are more positive about the impact of the inspections. Finally, the opinions about quality and impact of inspection show a substantial significant correlation.

Table 5 overview of variables and distributions included in the analysis (N=62)

	N	percent		
Educational stage				
Primary education	31	50		
Secondary education	31	50		
Expertise model				
Yes, dominant model	11	17.7		
Yes, in part	22	35.5		
No	29	46.8		
Chamber or sub region model				
Yes	14	22.6		
No	48	77.4		
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Stand. Dev.
Extent of decentralization	.00	1.00	.34	.32
Quality of cooperation (opinion: 0 – 10)	3.8	10.0	7.3	1.4
Quality of inspection (opinion 0 – 10)	.6	10.0	6.1	2.1
Impact of inspection (opinion 0 – 10)	.6	10.0	6.3	1.8

Table 6 Correlations between internal organization of the cooperative and opinions about quality and impact of inspections (N=62)

	Stage	Expert	Chamb	Decent	Coop	Qual	Impact
Educational stage (1=second.)	-	.09	-.23	-.38 **	.14	.22	.34 **
Expertise model	.09	-	-.36 **	-.50 **	.40 **	.25 *	-.01
Chamber or region model	-.23	-.36 **	-	.32 *	-.10	-.01	.15
Extent of decentralization	-.38 **	-.50 **	.32 *	-	-.16	-.10	.07
Quality of internal cooperation	.14	.40 **	-.10	-.16	-	.31 *	.02
Quality of inspection	.22	.25 *	-.01	-.10	.31 *	-	.71 **
Impact of inspection	.34 **	-.01	.15	.07	.02	.71 **	-

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

7 Discussion and conclusion

What does this study tell us about the nature of these inspections of networks in the Netherlands and about their impacts? An answer to this question requires giving attention to the following topics.

- The particular nature and the object of these inspections in the Netherlands, i.e. the nature of the cooperatives;
- The particular nature of the inspectorate's task vis-à-vis these cooperatives;
- The multidimensional nature of inspection impacts at various levels and the tensions between these impacts.

Before these topics are discussed, however, this section continues with a brief overview of some theoretical notions on the inspection of educational networks.

7.1 Theory on the inspection of educational networks

In essence the idea of network inspection refers to the concept of interorganizational networks in education. The basic ideas are:

- Education is often organized in separate institutions (schools or collections of schools), which are governed by independent schoolboards;

- There is a trend of these independent institutions working together in interorganizational networks in order to achieve individual and collective goals which are more difficult, or even impossible to achieve for the single institutions themselves;
- Under some conditions these networks and their performances deserve inspection;
- When this is the case, such inspections are essentially different from inspections of individual, schools belonging under single, mono-centric, hierarchies.

This latter assumption of essential differences between traditional school inspections and inspections of educational network refers to the idea that schools and networks are very different organizational structures, which inspections need to recognize in order to be effective (Janssens and Ehren 2016).

Schools are relatively stable hierarchical structures in which accountability, power and authority ultimately rest at the top of the organization, which can be addressed by an inspectorate, and which can take command in improving performance, e.g. by setting targets, setting rules, issuing commands and increasing supervision, or by empowering their subordinates. Networks do not have such a clear locus of accountability, power and authority. Instead accountability is distributed over the independent partners. This implies that for an inspectorate there is neither a single authority to address nor a single authority that can coordinate action when this is required. Instead, networks set and realize collective goals by cooperation based on trust, reputation and norms of reciprocity (Castells 1996; Powell 2003; Provan and Kenis 2008). New partners can be included in a network based on their potential contributions (implicit and explicit), while existing partners that do not fulfil expectations can expect consequences in the form of social criticism, reduced support from the network and even expulsion.

Provan and Kenis (2008) add to this that networks can develop different modes of governance and that, in particular, network partners may set-up a so-called network administrative organization (NOA's). An NOA is basically a "separate administrative entity [...] set up specifically to govern the network and its activities [which] plays a key role in coordinating and sustaining the network" (Provan and Kenis, 2008, p 236). Such an NAO is not a

network partner, but an organization external to the actual network. It may be erected by the network partners themselves in order to improve internal governance, but it can also play a role in producing external legitimacy, e.g. vis-a-vis clients and governments. Moreover, NAO may also be government run. Based on the work of Goldsmith and Eggers (2004), among others, Provan and Kenis argue that the latter form occurs especially at the local level “when the network first forms, to stimulate its growth through targeted funding and/or network facilitation and to ensure that network goals are met”.

Although the concept of network organization enjoys popularity, Provan and Kenis and others before them – e.g. Warren, 1967; DiMaggio and Powell 1983 – warn about tensions that are known to occur in their governance. These tensions specifically concern:

- Administrative efficiency in the short run versus inclusiveness and long-term effectiveness;
- The need for internal and external legitimacy;
- The need for flexibility versus the need for stability.

NOA's can help solve and overcome such tensions, but are argued to be more successful when there are a moderate number of network participants, when there is moderate to widely shared trust, when goal consensus is moderately high and when there is a high need for network level competencies (Provan and Kenis, proposition 5).

7.2 The specific nature of the cooperatives for inclusive education

When considering the case of the inspection of the cooperatives for inclusive education from this literature, there are of course many parallels, with the concept of NAO-managed networks.

Indeed, the Dutch cooperatives are certainly no formal hierarchies as they consist of institutions (schools, institutes) which are essentially (constitutionally!) independent, and indeed these institutions are confronted with tasks which require collaborative effort, based to some agree on complementary strengths (e.g. different competences in providing educational support). Moreover, we can talk of mutual interests and mutual benefits which can be achieved when the schools succeed in keeping the numbers of special needs students and the associated costs below the targets set by the new IEA.

And, indeed, as these independent institutions lack formal hierarchy between them and have erected formal cooperatives with their own personnel to perform specific tasks in relation to network management, they most clearly match the concept of NAO-managed governance networks.

However, the cooperatives for inclusive education are of a very specific nature.

First of all, the structure of the cooperatives and their goals have been determined via a clearly hierarchical mode of governance: central legislation. The cooperatives themselves can therefore hardly express the flexibility that is most typical for network forms of governance/coordination. I.e. to adapt their structures by including and excluding partners, based on considerations of common interests, complementary strengths, reputation, past performance, and, indeed, pre-existing trust.

Secondly, as we have seen in the case study, trust between the schools as network partners can be very low and virtually non-existent, and can even be explicit distrust. The latter is evident in the case study where there are concerns of some partners and some approaches becoming too dominant, or too expensive. Moreover, when it comes to funding, the unpopularity of the expertise model is telling in this respect, as it is may be seen as an expression of low trust in collective problem solving and network-level solidarity.

Thirdly, the sizes of some of the cooperatives are substantial – not only in terms of the number of participants, but also in terms of their geographical dispersion – at least on the scale of the Netherlands. Some cooperative may be many times larger than just an individual city, which seems to be a natural level for meaningful network cooperation in education, and which is also the level at which people meet each other to address most practical issues concerning the support for individual children. Moreover, the idea that the size of some cooperatives is impractical is supported by the observation that several cooperatives have virtually split themselves up by adopting decentralized sub-region structures.

Finally, whereas it is argued that it is important for networks to set their collective goals, in order to achieve internal legitimacy and long-term effectiveness, cooperatives in the Netherlands have been set-up as a result of external coercion and are basically designed to

produce external legitimacy, with respect to specific criteria and specific goals set by the Dutch government. Although, the general idea of inclusive education may be widely appreciated, the more specific goals and specific targets meet with opposition. It is clear that schools are having a hard time in handling the desired transition, and there are tensions about local initiatives being affected and about increasing bureaucracy.

7.3 The position of the inspectorate

In this context, the inspectorate's position is ambivalent. First and foremost, the word inspectorate relays ideas of technical and bureaucratic oversight, control and hierarchy. Inspections and audits are expressions of institutionalized distrust (Power, 1997; Sztopka, 1998). This means that an inspectorate will be expected to focus on aspects of performance and conformity to rules. If performance is under par or rules are being breached, it should be the task of the inspection to discover and report this, and press for improvement and correction and, when applicable, sanctions.

However, as Ehren et al. (2016) explain, school inspections have changed dramatically over the last decades. With a stronger emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness, school inspections have started to stress more and more the roles and responsibilities of those inspected, especially in the Netherlands. As a result, the traditional supervisory task is replaced by a new approach to supervision: supervision 2020. Under this approach showing responsibility, effective role-taking and leadership are becoming more prominent criteria, which the inspectorate has monitor and to promote (Inspectorate of education et al., n.d.).

Furthermore, in the current context of the inspection of the cooperatives for inclusive education, the idea of an inspectorate being an enforcer of external norms seems difficult to maintain vis-à-vis the young cooperatives and their management, as it is clear that:

- the new cooperatives are just started implementing inclusive education, and that full performance and full compliance cannot be expected yet,
- the formal powers of the managing directors to bring their independent schools to effective and norm conforming behavior are limited,
- the conditions for good network performance are clearly not ideal.

Thus, certainly in this context, the inspectorate is relaxing its classical inspection task. Both the inspectorate as well as most of the managing directors of the cooperative sketch the role of the inspectorate as that of a critical friend. A friend who stands side by side with the managing directors to stimulate development and to provide support. The inspectorate avoids checks that could turn out badly, and it avoids negative and maybe even damaging conclusions, which could put cooperatives in a negative light. The inspectorate seems first and foremost involved in improving their functioning and in protecting their legitimacy.

That the inspectorate takes this position, is understandable, when we consider that these new cooperatives are at the core of the Dutch government's design of inclusive education. Protecting their legitimacy is not only in the interest of the individual cooperatives, it is also in the interest of the Dutch government.

As a result, however, the inspectorate is walking on eggshells. On the one hand it has to inspect, which is its *raison d'être*. On the other it has to promote and stimulate, and to safeguard the legitimacy of the new governance structure. So, the inspectorate and the cooperatives stand side by side, for the moment. Even though their formal roles are very different and they are very different institutions, the positions of both actors can be regarded as state-anchored (Crawford, 2006). They both have a similar role in helping the Dutch state in getting a grip on special education.

Furthermore, feelings of understanding and even friendship between the inspectors and the managing directors of the cooperatives are likely to be the result of similarity in the nature of their work. Both focus on abstract, system-level policy goals and on system-level performance. Both operate quite detached from the schools and classes who deal with the practical work of providing inclusive education to their children. Therefore, they are likely to have similar views on the matter. To stay "in control", they are both dealing with abstract concepts of formal goal setting, conformity to norms, performance management, monitoring systems and account giving.

7.4 Impacts of the inspections

Understanding this positioning of the inspectorate vis-à-vis the cooperatives is crucial for understanding its impacts on various levels at which the implementation of inclusive education is taking place: at the level of the realization of formal goals and formal requirements by the cooperatives, at the level of inclusive education as a system of governance of special education, and at the level of the schools and the classrooms where pupils have to receive actual education and support.

At the first level, which is in a sense the most obvious level to consider, the inspections are helping to ensure that the explicit goals of the IEA are met. The case study, the scan of the quality reports and the answers to the survey all show that the inspectorate has sufficient oversight to identify shortcomings and to address them. Moreover, it is clear, the quality reports are accepted by the cooperatives as useful leads for improvement. Furthermore, there is some evidence of progress in the implementation of inclusive education and the realization of its goals (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, 2017). However, as this study shows, the impact of the inspectorate at this first level is also seriously hampered by the circumstances. In order to maintain its supportive role as a critical friend, the inspection deliberately refrains from performing checks which are considered too intrusive at the moment, and it is deliberately avoiding harsh words and harsh actions. Moreover, the managing directors of the cooperatives, too, feel hampered in implementing improvements. Their position vis-à-vis the schoolboards is relatively weak and they do not even use the formal powers they have been given under the IEA. Thus, under the current institutional conditions with very powerful school boards, the impact of inspections and the speed of implementation is limited by what this process of double nudging allows. As we have seen in this study and can learn from other studies (e.g. Jepma and Beekhoven 2015; Ministry of Education, Culture and Science 2017), slow improvement can be witnessed, but the practice of inclusive education is still far removed from the standards set in the IEA.

The second level of impact concerns the institutional level. As explained above, the IEA not only sets specific targets, it above all consists of an institutional redesign of the governance structure in the field of special education, in which schools in a region accept collective

responsibility for providing inclusive education to all children and cooperate effectively towards that goal in regional networks. Here too, we see an impact of the inspections.

Although it is impossible to establish the precise impact of the inspections at this institutional level, it is clear that the inspections support to the institutionalization of this new structure. The inspectorate not only inspects if the cooperatives are doing what the new act demands, it especially stresses social norms of collective responsibility. The round table talks and the way reports are formulated give those involved few other options than to agree to findings, to state commitment to the goal of inclusive education and to promise improvement. Furthermore, these reports reaffirm the position of the formal cooperatives and their managing directors and create conditions for legitimate, rational action. As the inspection is showing that there is still much to be done to achieve the common goal, all actors involved are reminded of their new roles and responsibilities. Here, the concept of governmentality springs to mind (Lemke 2002, Sending and Neumann 2006).

Finally, the third level of impact is the level of the actual implementation of inclusive education by teachers and support staff in schools and classrooms. As a consequence of a lack of time and other resources, this level of impact has received little attention in this study, but it is arguably the most important. How will the inspections affect work at that level? Given the input we received during this study, given research done by others, and given recent reports of unrest in the field of education in the Dutch media, the impression is not that positive (DUO, 2017; General association of school leader, 2017).

During the work for this study, we met people who worked close to the schools who worried about their work. This worry did not only concern changes in financing and the continuation of their jobs, it especially concerned how inclusive education was changing what they do. Many people have been working in developing local networks and local policies in cooperation with their schools, for years and even decades. They now find they have lost their former status and are expected to become bureaucrats in service of the regional cooperatives. From that position, they see the new inspections in which they are not given a proper place anymore, and the quality reports that virtually ignore what they do. Moreover, they are, worried about inclusive education becoming a paper tiger, which they will have to feed with

support plans, declarations of admissibility, written accounts and data. Although the inspectorate currently has a laid back approach to this and inspections are becoming less frequent as a result of a new risk based approach, the fact that the inspections at the network level exist, is likely to be enough motivation for at least some cooperatives, to create this paper tiger they fear for.

If that would happen, it would be very unfortunate. A recent study shows that many teachers have a high to extremely high workload and that inclusive education is a main cause (DUO 2017). Not only did the introduction of inclusive education lead to additional work in the classroom itself, it also led to much additional work in making support plans, regular reporting and account giving. That this increased workload deserves reconsideration is clear. At the time of writing this report, primary education in the Netherlands is experiencing its first strikes in years, with teachers protesting for higher wages and against administrative workload in particular.

References

- Brattinga, M. (2009). Evolution at school (Evolutie op school). Maarn, NVOX, 34(1), 12.
- Castells, Manuel (1996). *The network society*. Oxford, Blackwell.
- Crawford, A. (2006). Networked governance and the post-regulatory state? Steering, rowing and anchoring the provision of policing and security. *Theoretical criminology*, 10(4), 449-479.
- DUO (2017). Report research inclusive education – September 2017 (Rapportage Onderzoek Passend onderwijs). Utrecht, DUO Onderwijsonderzoek & Advies.
- Ehren, M. C., Honingh, M. E., Hooge, E. H., & O’Hara, J. (2016). Changing school board governance in primary education through school inspections. *Educational management administration & leadership*, 44(2), 205-223.
- Inspectorate of education and standing international conference of inspectorates (n.d.). *Inclusive education into practice: an international comparative analysis on inclusive education*. Ministry of education, culture and science, The Hague, The Netherlands.

- General Association of School Leaders (2017). Increased workload due to inclusive education. (Werkdruk leerkrachten door Passend onderwijs toegenomen). Utrecht, General Association of School Leaders (2017).
- Janssens, F. J., & Ehren, M. C. (2016). Toward a model of school inspections in a polycentric system. *Evaluation and program planning*, 56, 88-98.
- Janssen, F., & Voogt, P. (1997). Evolution theory in secondary education (*Evolutietheorie in het voortgezet onderwijs*). Vakgroep Didactiek van de Biologie, Universiteit Utrecht.
- Jepma, IJ and S. Beekhoven (2015). Direction and design of inclusive education in cooperatives: Study A (Richting en inrichting van Passend Onderwijs in samenwerkingsverbanden: deelonderzoek A). *Regioplan*, Utrecht.
- Karsten, S. (1999). Neoliberal education reform in the Netherlands. *Comparative education*, 35(3), 303-317.
- Lemke, T. (2002). Foucault, governmentality, and critique. *Rethinking marxism*, 14(3), 49-64.
- Lijphart, A. (1968) *The Politics of Accommodation. Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (2017). Eleventh progress report inclusive education (*Elfde voortgangsrapportage passend onderwijs*). The Hague.
- Powell, W. (2003). Neither market nor hierarchy. *The sociology of organizations: classic, contemporary, and critical readings*, 315, 104-117.
- Power, M. (1997). *The audit society: Rituals of verification*. OUP Oxford.
- Provan, K. G., & Kenis, P. (2008). Modes of network governance: Structure, management, and effectiveness. *Journal of public administration research and theory*, 18(2), 229-252.
- Sending, O. J., & Neumann, I. B. (2006). Governance to governmentality: Analyzing NGOs, states, and power. *International studies quarterly*, 50(3), 651-672.
- Velthooven, B. van (2008). In: Problematic behavior in secondary education requires system thinkers. (Probleemgedrag in het voortgezet onderwijs vraagt om systeemdenkers). In: Oppositional and rebellious behavior in secondary education (*Oppositieel en opstandig gedrag in het voortgezet onderwijs*) (16), pp. 19-30. Antwerpen-Apeldoorn, Garant.

Smeets, E. (2007). Special or separate. An investigation into the size of special education in the Netherlands and other European countries. *Speciaal of apart. Onderzoek naar de omvang van het speciaal onderwijs in Nederland en andere Europese landen*. Nijmegen: ITS.

Sztompka, P. (1998). Trust, distrust and two paradoxes of democracy. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 1(1), 19-32.

Warren, R. L. (1967). The interorganizational field as a focus for investigation. *Administrative science quarterly*, 396-419.

ⁱ Wet Passend Onderwijs, literally meaning Fitting Education Act. The translation Inclusive Education Act was adopted for this contribution after consultation with native English speakers in the field.