

Spain:Primary Education

The 2006 Organic Act on Education (*LOE*) establishes Primary Education as an educational level structured in three cycles each of them made up by two years, studied from 6 to 12 years old.

The Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport (*MECD*) is responsible for setting the Core Curricula of this level, establishing the common objectives, contents and evaluation criteria for the whole State. The Education Authorities complete these aspects in their concerning management areas.

Along with Lower Compulsory Secondary Education (*ESO*) it constitutes the basic, compulsory and cost-free education of the Spanish Education System. Both levels are aimed at assuring the development of the **basic competences**: those competences to be acquired by pupils by the end of Compulsory Education in order to be able to fulfil themselves, exercise an active citizenship, satisfactorily take part in adult life and develop lifelong learning. On this manner, those studies considered essential are stressed, from a comprehensive approach and oriented to the application of the knowledge acquired.

Within the framework of the proposal made by the European Union, the *MECD* has identified eight basic skills:

- Competence on Linguistic communication
- Mathematical competence
- Competence on knowledge and interaction with the physical world
- Information and digital processing competence
- Social and civic competences
- Competence on Cultural awareness and expression
- Competence on Learning to learn
- Competence on Autonomy and personal initiative

There is not a univocal relationship between the teaching of some areas or subjects and the development of certain competences; each of them contributes to develop the different competences and, at the same time, each basic competence is achieved as a consequence of the work in several areas or subjects.

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Aim and general objectives

The **aim** of Primary Education is to provide every children with an education that enables them to consolidate their personal development and their own well being, to acquire basic cultural abilities concerning oral expression and comprehension, reading, writing and calculus, as well as to develop social skills, work and study habits, artistic sense, creativity and affectivity. On this manner, Primary Education promotes pupils' personal development and the acquisition of basic instrumental learning, which allows, at the same time, the acquisition of more complex types of learning.

The *LOE* and the Royal Decree establishing the core curricula of Primary Education express the **general objectives** of this educational level:

- To know and appreciate the values and rules for coexistence, to learn and act accordingly, to prepare to actively exercise citizenship and to respect human rights and the pluralism of a democratic society.
- To develop individual and team work habits, respect and responsibility in study, as well as attitudes of self-confidence, critical sense, personal initiative, interest and creativity in learning.
- To acquire skills for the prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts, enabling them to autonomously get by in family and domestic life and in the social groups they interact with.
- To know, understand and respect different cultures and differences among people, equal gender rights and opportunities and non-discrimination of disabled people.
- To know and appropriately use the Castilian language, and if any, the co-official language of the corresponding Autonomous Community and to develop reading habits.
- To acquire, in at least a foreign language, the basic communicative competence enabling them to express and understand simple messages and get by in daily situations.
- To develop basic mathematical competences and to begin solving problems which require basic mathematical operations, geometrical knowledge and estimates, as well as be able to apply them to daily situations.
- To know and value the natural, social and cultural environment as well as the possibilities for action and protecting it.
- To begin using Information and Communication Technologies for learning purposes, by developing a critical spirit towards the messages they receive and produce.

- To use different artistic representations and expressions and begin building visual proposals.
- To value hygiene and health, to accept one's body and others', to respect differences and use physical education and sport as a mean for favoring personal and social development.
- To know and value the nearest animals to the human being and adopt behaviours favoring their care.
- To develop pupils' affective skills in every field of their personality and relations with others, as well as an attitude against violence, any kind of prejudice and sexist stereotypes.
- To enhance road safety education and respect attitudes which might contribute to prevent traffic accidents.

The Autonomous Communities, in the exercise of their powers in terms of education, complete the formulation of these general objectives.

Schools providing Primary Education

The schools network is made up by [publicly-funded private schools](#) and private schools.

Public schools providing Pre-Primary and Primary Education are named **Pre-Primary and Primary Schools** and those just providing Primary Education are named **Primary Schools**.

Publicly-funded private schools and private schools usually provide the whole basic education and, in general, also post-compulsory studies. These schools can adopt any name, except if it corresponds to public schools or it can lead to confusion.

In the whole state, there are 13 895 schools providing Primary Education in the school year 2011/12, from which 10 406 have public ownership, 3 060 publicly-funded private schools and 429 private schools. The number of schools varies substantially from one Autonomous Community to another.

Education Policy

The priority aspects of the Spanish Educational Policy regarding Primary Education are developed within the field of territory cooperation between the MECD and the regional Education Authorities, and they focus on:

- The consolidation of basic competences and the improvement of student performance at the end of compulsory education.
- The increase in school autonomy.
- The rationalisation of educational provision, simplifying curricular development in order to ensure sound knowledge of the contents and providing an interdisciplinary vision of them.
- Individualised assessment in the middle of the stage to assess the mastery of skills, capabilities and abilities in relation to the linguistic and mathematical competences.
- Personalised attention to students, taking the most appropriate ordinary and extraordinary measures according to the results of the evaluation.
- The development of reinforcement and support plans to promote academic success.
- The deepening into knowledge for pupils with greater skills and motivation to learn.
- The promotion of foreign language learning.
- The inclusion of information and communication technologies into the teaching-learning processes.

Legislative references

Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de 3 de mayo, de Educación (BOE 4-6-2006).

Real Decreto 1513/2006, de 7 de diciembre, por el que se establecen las enseñanzas mínimas de la Educación Primaria (BOE 8-12-2006).