

Education in Spain

Introduction to the Spanish education system: understand what to expect from it

State education is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport (*Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte*), although the 17 autonomous regions have some responsibility for their own education system (including higher education).

The Law on the Quality of Education (*Ley Orgánica de Calidad de la Educación* - LOCE) covers the main points of the education law in Spain which are as follows:

- school is compulsory and free of charge for all children from age six to age sixteen
- the system includes levels of education adapted to suit students with special needs
- all students receive basic vocational training in secondary education
- religious instruction is available but optional
- Special systems exist for artistic education and language learning.

The law also determines that education authorities must promote the integration of foreign pupils and develop specific programmes in mainstream schools for those that do not have a good grasp of the Spanish language. "Bridge" classes provide facilities for students to study Spanish before joining an ordinary class, however all teaching in mainstream schools is delivered in Spanish.

State and Private Schools

Spain has privately-owned and state schools. Some of the private schools are funded by the state (*concertados*). Fees in these schools are generally lower than in other private schools. State school education is free, although in some autonomous regions books and materials must be paid for. Once a child enters primary school (*primaria*), vouchers (*bonos*) may be available to help pay for books.

Below is a table with English and Spanish translation of the levels and ages of schooling for children.

The School System

Ages 0-3 Guarderia (Nursery)

Ages 3-6 Infantil (Pre-school)

Ages 6-12 Primaria (Primary)

Ages 12-16 Eso (Compulsory)

Ages 16-18 Bachillera (Post Compulsory)