Strong Performers and
Successful Reformers in Education

Guidance from PISA for the Canary Islands, Spain

OECD

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GUIDANCE FROM PISA FOR THE CANARY ISLANDS, SPAIN

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Foreword

The OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a triennial survey of the knowledge and skills of 15-year-olds. It has been designed to allow valid comparisons across countries and cultures.

The results of PISA should not be taken out of context as the sole marker of educational progress. To achieve a stellar education system, one which generates high quality education and results for all students, a country or region must get not just one thing right, but many. PISA results can however be a useful tool or marker. They can point to specific problems a country or region needs to address, and to possible solutions and best practice. Often, PISA results make already known trends more widely-known to the public.

In the most recent PISA study of 2009, Spain opted to increase the number of students participating in the assessment, so that there would be a representative sample of students from many Spanish regions: the Canary Islands, the two cities of Ceuta and Melilla (combined), and 13 other regions.[1] Consequently, PISA results for the Canary Islands can be compared to those of most other regions in Spain, Spain as a whole, and other participating countries.

The results for the Canary Islands were seen as disappointing within that region. This led the government of the Islands to ask the OECD to evaluate the school system in the light of PISA outcomes, in order to diagnose the problems and suggest practical solutions and improvement routes.

Education is indispensable in modern society. Given the rising skill demands in modern labour markets, basic proficiency levels have become a minimum requirement for successful entry into the labour market and participation in lifelong learning. In a globalised economy, education is a crucial element of prosperous social and economic development. Even a relatively small skills improvement can have a large impact on the future wellbeing of society. For example, if Spain were to improve PISA performance so that all students achieve at least the basic proficiency level,[2] statistics suggest that the average annual growth rate could increase by 0.69% (OECD, 2010a).

As international research consistently shows, young people with higher qualifications enjoy many benefits, such as higher salaries, better working conditions, higher participation in adult education and training, and less likelihood of becoming or remaining unemployed (OECD 2006; OECD 2010b). Society, in turn, profits from these personal benefits in the form of higher tax revenues, lower incidence of economic dependency and enhanced capacity for innovation (OECD, 2006; Levin, 2009; Belfield and Levin, 2007). Yet, as the benefits of educational investments take some time to show up, the value and importance of education is often underestimated. This seems to be the case in the Canary Islands, which twenty years ago was a traditional rural society in which job-finding did not depend on formal qualifications. The region's labour market consisted mainly of jobs in construction, agriculture and tourism that did not require high educational attainment levels. However, the economic crisis and developments in the global economy and society have increased the importance of formal educational qualifications. Improving students' cognitive skills, and providing higher-quality education that meets the changing demands of the regional labour market, have become priorities for the Canary Islands.

The challenge now is to find ways of improving student performance from the low levels revealed in PISA. Improvement is most likely to be achieved if everyone in the Canary Islands society shares a conviction that education matters. The success of the Finnish education system, which performs so well in international comparisons, has much to do with the huge significance attached to education – not just for its economic value, but also for its social and cultural value and contribution to a functioning democracy (OECD, 2005). A successful education system is one which ensures high participation and equal opportunities, and respects the needs and interests of all students.

This report is first of its kind and is published as part of the OECD's *Strong Performers and Successful Reformers in Education* series. It sheds light on PISA results and suggests pragmatic solutions to the challenges PISA revealed for the Canary Islands. The review team hopes that this report proves useful to the government and stakeholders of the Canary Islands in raising school standards and developing their school system. PISA is a means to an end – good education for all children. While PISA results can and often do drive changes in education policy, such changes should be made on the basis of all evidence available in the country or region, with full collaboration of all stakeholders and in the best interests of all students. This report should be considered as a contribution to ongoing discussions on the PISA results within the Canary Islands.

Preparations for the review began in April 2011 and the review team carried out the site visits to the Islands in June 2011. Financing for the review was provided by the Canary Islands government. During the site visits the OECD team held discussions with a wide range of stakeholders in the Canary Islands to try to pinpoint the reasons for the PISA outcomes, and identify the best way ahead. Sadly the fieldwork schedule could not accommodate visits to all the islands, but stakeholders from some of those islands joined meetings with the team.

The counterparts met by the team included the President and Education Minister of the Canary Islands and many senior officials in the regional Education Ministry; students, teachers and Principals of primary, secondary, upper secondary and all-age schools; representatives of parents' associations, Schools Councils, teachers, employers, trade unions, municipalities and the media; students, professors, Deans and Vice-Deans of universities offering teacher training; and senior School Inspectors, Commissioners and Provincial Directors of Education.

Representatives of education and civil society were already aware of many of the issues behind the PISA data. Although there have been genuine efforts to reform and upgrade the education system in the Canary Islands, it seems that their rationale has not been fully discussed or explained to stakeholders, who feel excluded from the dialogue. And though all the parts of the education system function, they do not seem to be synchronised or working together towards a joint end. It is also true that a number of issues arise from the overall Spanish education system: the Canary Islands education authorities can only make changes in these areas by working with the central government.

The OECD team asked the following questions, which stakeholders in the Canary Islands may also wish to discuss as part of the process of taking the recommendations forward.

- What are the main questions raised by the PISA data?
- Which of these issues are already known to the country/province? Which are new, or unexpected in the light of known country data?
- Where PISA results suggest a problem, is the solution clear? Or is there a need for further evaluation or research before the problem can be tackled?
- Which issues are already being addressed by new programmes? Have these programmes been evaluated to make sure that they are producing the desired results?
- Is education funding being used to best effect now? How could likely future funding best be deployed and prioritised to achieve measurable improvements?
- Of the issues that have been identified, can any of them be addressed simply and quickly, at local or national levels? Which are medium term and longer term?

This report has sought to identify features of the education system in the Canary Islands which might be addressed by the Provincial Education Administration, on its own or working with central government education authorities. The OECD team believes that some of the recommendations made to address issues raised by PISA 2009 could be taken forward in the short or medium term. Others, such as curriculum change, could take longer. In some cases, where fieldwork time only permitted the team to make a broad initial assessment, further analysis and evaluation of local conditions and existing programmes may well be helpful.

Members of the review team and authors of the report were: Caroline Macready (United Kingdom), Rapporteur, formerly Deputy Director in England's Department for Education and Skills; Mihaylo Milovanovitch (OECD Secretariat), Review Team Leader; Eluned Schweitzer (United States), Educator and Consultant in international education; Séamus McGuinness (Ireland), Educational Consultant and former Senior Lecturer, School of Education, Trinity College, Dublin; and Simone Bloem (OECD Secretariat) – with advice from Simon Schwartzman (Brazil), former President of the Brazilian Statistical and Geographical Institute, Ian Whitman (Head of Programme for Co-operation with Non Member Economies, OECD Secretariat), and under the overall co-ordination of Andreas Schleicher (Deputy-Director for Education, OECD Secretariat). The production of this publication was carried out by Elisabeth Villoutreix and Elizabeth Del Bourgo, with editorial advice from Anne-Lise Prigent, and the layout was done by Peter Vogelpoel. Overall administrative support was provided by Deborah Fernandez and Celia Braga-Schich from the OECD Secretariat. The team wishes to thank the Canary Islands authorities and the local co-ordinator, Mario Gonzáles Ramón, for all the support and fast responsiveness in providing information, data and logistical support during the preparation of this report.

Notes

1. For Spain, the data for all of the participating regions, including Canary Islands, adhered to the PISA sampling standards and international comparability was internationally adjudicated.
2. Defined here as obtaining a score of 400 on the PISA tests (one standard deviation below the OECD average).

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The Canary Islands and their School System

This chapter describes the regional context of the Canary Islands, provides an overview of the education system, and lists aspects of education policy which the review team was requested to look at more closely.

ABOUT THE CANARY ISLANDS

The Canary Islands are an archipelago located out in the Atlantic, to the far south of Spain and just 67 miles from the coast of Morocco. Ever since the voyages of Columbus, the Islands have been a stopping-off point connecting Europe with Latin America, then North America, and more recently West Africa.

The Islands are a Spanish *autonomous community* and an *outermost region* of the European Union, consisting of seven major islands – (from largest to smallest in population terms) *Tenerife*, *Gran Canaria*, *Fuerteventura*, *Lanzarote*, *La Palma*, *La Gomera* and *El Hierro* – one minor island and several smaller uninhabited islets. The total population in 2007 was nearly 2 025 951, of which 815 379 lived in Gran Canaria and 865 070 in Tenerife. The Islands are divided into two provinces based in Las Palmas and Santa Cruz de Tenerife, and there is some history of rivalry between them. The status of capital city is shared by Las Palmas de Gran Canaria and Santa Cruz de Tenerife.

The Islands have a sub-tropical climate, with long hot days in summer and cooler days in winter. The archipelago's beaches, climate and important natural attractions – including four of Spain's national parks – make it a major tourist destination, with 10-12 million visitors per year, concentrated in Tenerife, Gran Canaria, Fuerteventura and Lanzarote. Services, including tourism, contributed 83% of the region's GDP in 2010, followed by construction 9%, industry 4%, energy 3% and agriculture 1%, though agriculture is more important than energy in terms of numbers employed (ISTAC, 2011). The government of the Canary Islands understands that the region needs to diversify its economic and employment base, and is seeking to develop new industries such as environmentally-friendly energy production.

The Canary Islands are one of Spain's less affluent regions. In 2008, the per capita income was 88% of the national average (Instituto de Evaluación, 2010a). On this measure it is by no means the poorest region – Galicia, Murcia, Andalucía, Castilla-La Mancha and Extremadura all rank lower – and its income growth between 2000 and 2008 broadly matched the national average. However since 2004, unemployment on the Islands has been higher than the Spanish average. In 2008 it was 17%, compared to 11% for Spain, and by 2010 it was 29%, the highest of all Spanish regions. Unemployment of young people aged 15-24 is even higher. In 2008, it was 32% compared to the Spanish average of 25%, and by 2010 it had risen to 52% – more than half of all young people – compared with 42% for Spain, 21% for all EU countries. Only Murcia, Ceuta and Melilla have higher youth unemployment (EUROSTAT, 2011).

Students in the Canary Islands tend to come from less advantaged family backgrounds than typical for Spain. In comparison to other regions in Spain, students in the Canary Islands participating in PISA 2009 reported one of the lowest levels of parents' educational and occupational status. Less than 5% of parents of Canary Islands students belong to the highest-status occupational group, and less than one-quarter of parents completed tertiary education. The mean socio-economic status of students in the Canary Islands was the lowest among all participating Spanish regions, 39% of Canary Islands students coming from a low socio-economic background[1] compared with 29% in Spain, 15% across the OECD.

THE CANARY ISLANDS SCHOOL SYSTEM

Education in the Canary Islands is governed by Spanish law, specifically the Organic Law of Education of May 2006 (LOE), which came into force throughout Spain in the school year 2007/08. Responsibility for education resides with the Ministry for Education, Universities and Sustainability *(Consejería de Educación, Universidades y Sostenibilidad)* of the Autonomous Government.

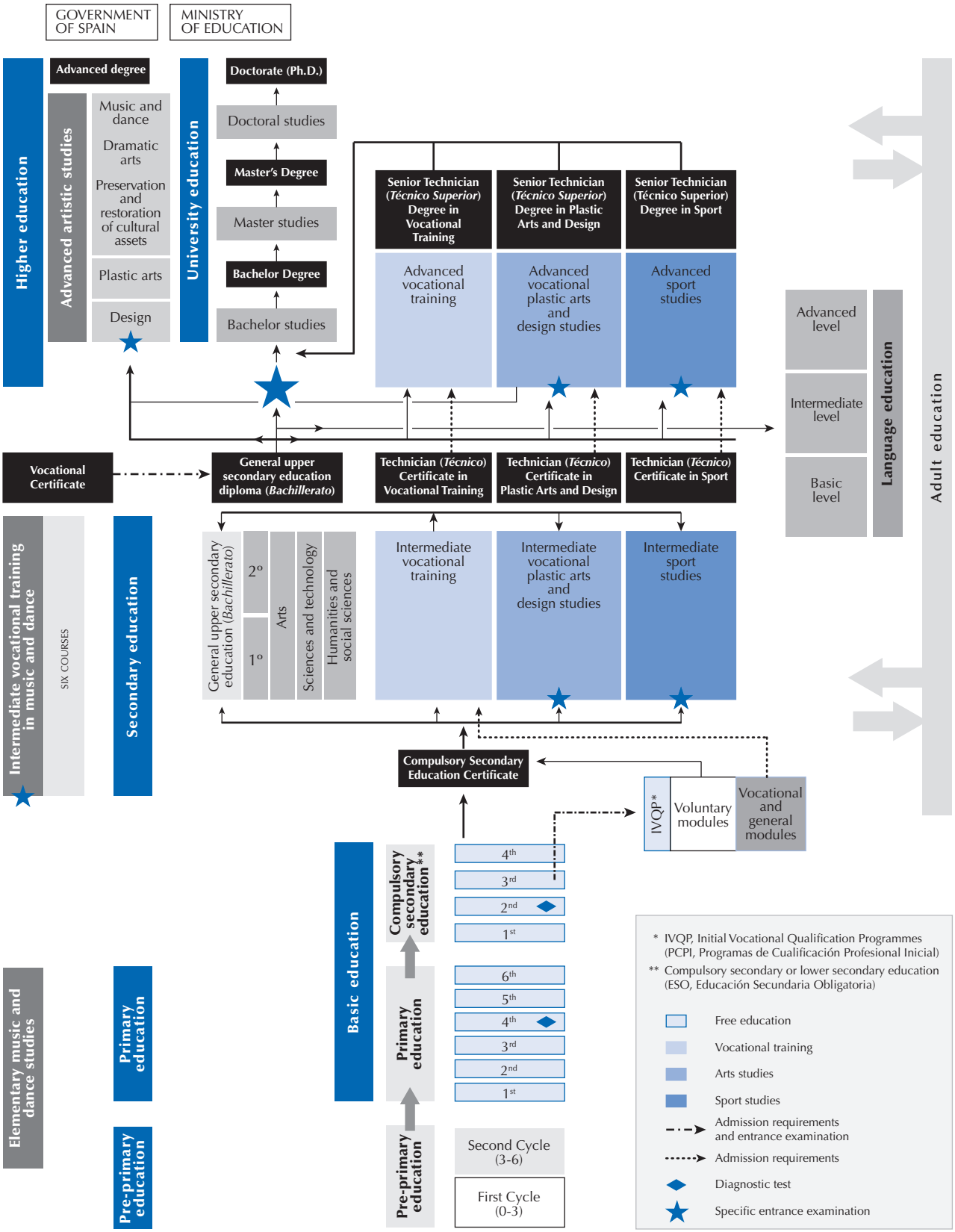
The **stages**, or phases, of school education in Spain are:

- **Infant** or pre-primary (0-6 years, non-compulsory).
- **Primary** (6-12 years).
- **Compulsory secondary** (12-16 years), known as ESO, at the end of which students hope to obtain their ESO graduation certificate. Those who do not, have the option of going on to vocational programmes to gain a professional certificate which may – depending on the path followed and length of study – equate to an ESO graduation certificate.
- **Upper secondary** (16-18 years), known as *Bachillerato* because at this age many young people are studying for the final school exam called the *Bachillerato*, comparable to the French Baccalaureate. This gives students the basic qualification for university entry, though they must also take the university entry exam, the *Pruebas de Acceso a la Universidad (PAU)*, popularly called the *Selectividad*. However some choose to pursue vocational education and training or advanced art and design studies instead: these also offer a route to university.

The age ranges just given assume that students do not have to repeat school years. All stages of compulsory education are free if undertaken at a public school, except upper secondary for which fees are charged.

▪ Figure 1.1 ▪

The Spanish Education System



There are three **types of schools** in the Canary Islands:

- Public schools, fully state-maintained (around 75% of pupils).[2]
- Private but state-subsidised schools (around 20% of pupils).
- Private schools with no state subsidy, i.e. fully private (around 5% of pupils).

Private state-subsidised schools in the Canary Islands are fewer and take a lower percentage of pupils than in the rest of Spain.

Table 1.1 shows the numbers of public and private (both types) schools on each island: the proportion of private schools ranges from nil in the two smallest islands to 20% in Tenerife.

Table 1.1 Public and private schools in the Canary Islands

	Tenerife	Gran Canaria	La Palma	Lanzarote	Fuerte-ventura	La Gomera	El Hierro	TOTAL
Public schools	385	392	94	68	63	22	15	1 039 (84%)
Private schools	99 (20%)	88 (18%)	2 (2%)	6 (8%)	1 (2%)	0	0	196 (of which 100 subsidised, 96 fully private)
TOTAL	**484**	**480**	**96**	**74**	**64**	**22**	**15**	**1 235**

Source: Consejería de Educación, Universidades y Sostenibilidad 2011.

Most pupils identified as having **Special Educational Needs** are taught alongside their peers in mainstream schools and ordinary classes: those whose needs are too severe for this go to Schools for Preferential Attention, Special Needs Classes or Special Needs Schools.

In the Canary Islands, school attended depends strongly on **area of residence**. 80% of students in PISA were in schools where the principal reported that admittance to his/her school is always based on the place of residence. This is around 15 percentage points above the Spanish average (66%). Canary Islands statistics tell a similar story. Of 2011/12 **admissions**, 72% were from within the zone, 12% from its border area, and 4% from further afield; for 12% there was no information.[3] Pupils from low-income families have priority in admission to public and private subsidised schools; many will also receive free transport to school and free lunches.

Spanish national law mandates 65% of the **curriculum**, leaving regions to decide on 35% (the proportions are 55% and 45% in the two most autonomous regions, the Basque country and Cataluña). In the first two years of secondary education when pupils are in principle aged 12-14, the curriculum in the Canary Islands consists almost entirely of compulsory subjects – Spanish language and literature, maths, science, geography and history, English, a second foreign language, technology, religion and physical education. Art is compulsory in the first year, optional in the second. Music, computing and citizenship are not taught in the first year, and are compulsory in the second. In the third year of ESO when students are in principle aged 14-15, science is replaced by compulsory biology and geology, physics and chemistry. Technology, art and music are available as optional subjects. A new subject, classical literature, is offered as an option; and computing and citizenship are not offered anymore. In the fourth and last year of ESO (students aged 15-16 in principle), all science subjects and the second foreign language cease to be compulsory and become optional. All third year optional subjects remain as options except classical culture, which is not offered. Latin appears and computing re-appears among the options. Spanish language and literature, maths, geography and history, English, religion and physical education remain compulsory and a new compulsory subject, ethics, appears.

Assessment is done each term by teachers, who also set and mark the test papers used at the end of each year to judge whether students are ready to move up to the next year, and the tests used at the end of compulsory secondary schooling to judge whether students have reached the standard required to merit a certificate of graduation from ESO. At the teacher's and school's discretion, this ESO graduation certificate may be granted even if a student has failed in one, two or three subjects. According to Spanish Ministry of Education statistics, in the school year 2007/08, 70% of Canary Islands students left secondary school with an ESO graduation certificate. Of those who graduated with certificates, 68% passed in all subjects, 17% failed one subject, 13% failed two subjects and 2% failed three subjects.

A Spanish national sample assessment is undertaken in the 4th year of primary and the 2nd year of ESO. A regionally-developed assessment involves all pupils in the same school years. In future it is intended to move the regional assessment to the 4th and final year of ESO. Internationally, as well as having taken part in PISA 2009, the Canary Islands region is entering a representative sample of pupils in TIMMS 2011 and PIRLS 2011.

Results from the regional secondary assessment, the national secondary assessment, TIMMS and PIRLS were not available at the time of preparation of this report. However, the national assessment of pupils' basic skills and knowledge application, done in the fourth year of primary school when pupils are typically 10 years old, produced results for the Canary Islands similar to those of PISA

for the 15-year-olds. Of 19 Spanish regions, the Canary Islands came 16th in average score for language, above only the Balearic Islands, Ceuta and Melilla; and 17th in average score for maths, above only Ceuta and Melilla. In science and in social/citizenship skills, out of 18 regions (the Basque country could not be compared to others because of translation problems), the Canary Islands came 14th, ahead of the same regions as for language plus Valencia. And as in PISA, overall results can be explained by the relatively high numbers of students failing to reach Level 2, coupled with very few reaching Level 5.

Spanish regions need not all operate the same **school day**, so long as students in compulsory education stay at school for 30 hours a week. The Canary Islands school day is from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. After lunch, the rest of the afternoon can be used for supplementary or complementary activities, for example to provide extra support for students who are struggling or falling behind.

Teachers are career civil servants who have passed a civil service exam and have been selected and appointed to posts through a selection process governed by detailed national regulations. (The only exception is for Catholic Religion teachers in secondary schools.) For public schools, all appointments are made by the Canary Islands Ministry of Education. Vacancies or long-term absences are covered by supply teachers, who are also civil servants. Teachers work a 37.5-hour week of which primary and nursery teachers must spend 28 hours, secondary teachers 24 hours, in school. Pupil-teacher ratios average 11 in public schools and a little over 15 in private schools (Instituto de Evaluación, 2010b, p. 37).

In addition to their teachers, every child in a Canary Islands school has a **tutor** whose job is to co-ordinate their overall education. One period a week is set aside for tutoring. The tutor – usually another teacher – helps the class teacher(s) to evaluate and improve the pupil's learning and progress; co-ordinate with the school counselling department when the pupil needs special educational support; and decide whether the pupil is ready to move up to the next grade at the end of the year.

This last decision is very important. **Repetition** of years is quite common in the Spanish system, and is particularly high in the Canary Islands. Spanish national statistics confirm that by the age of 14, fewer than six in ten Canary Islands students are in age-appropriate classes (Instituto de Evaluación, 2010b, p. 77).

In commissioning the OECD team to undertake this evaluation, **the Canary Islands education authorities asked the team to look particularly closely at the following aspects** of the school system, to take a view on whether they need improving and to offer practical suggestions.

- Grade repetition
- School action to improve performance
- Regional strategies to improve performance
- Support for struggling students
- Teaching and learning practice
- Teacher training
- Attitudes to failure and expectations of success
- Accountability for results (teachers and principals)
- Rewards for good performance (teachers and principals)
- School managers' leadership skills
- The school day
- Extra-curricular and complementary activities
- Family involvement
- Educational inspection

Notes

1. Defined as students with a value smaller than -1 on the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status.
2. "Sistema estatal de indicadores de la educacion", cited in *Evaluación general de diagnóstico 2009*, Grafico 2.6b, which gives this breakdown for students in Year 4 of primary school (9-10 year olds), assumed to be representative of all ages.
3. Canary Islands education authorities' reply to review team questions.

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2

How Canary Islands Students Performed in PISA

This chapter analyses the performance of Canary Islands students in PISA and draws national and international comparisons, including scores and rankings; distribution of students at proficiency levels; differences in performance between boys and girls, public and private schools, and between immigrant and native students, as well as the impact of socio-economic background on performance. The chapter concludes by listing the main findings of PISA for the Canary Islands.

The OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a comprehensive and rigorous international measurement and comparison of secondary school students' skills, competences, attitudes and learning strategies. Representative samples of 15-year-old students in OECD member and partner countries take tests in three subjects, reading literacy, mathematical literacy and science. In each PISA round one of these subjects is examined more intensively than the other two; in 2009, reading literacy was the main subject.

This chapter will describe how PISA 2009 results for the Canary Islands compared to those of 14 other Spanish regions, Spain as a whole, and 64 other participating countries.

SCORES AND RANKINGS

PISA performance scales are constructed so that for each of the three subjects, the mean score among OECD countries is around 500, with about two-thirds of students scoring between 400 and 600 score points. In the main domain tested, reading, Spain achieved a mean score of 481, which was significantly below the OECD average of 493. It ranked between 24th and 28th among the OECD's 34 member countries. Compared to other countries in membership of both the OECD and the EU, Spain was above Austria; similar to Italy, Slovenia, Greece, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic (though the first three of these had higher scores, in Italy's case 5 points higher); significantly below OECD average performers Sweden, Germany, Ireland, France, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Hungary and Portugal; and very significantly below above-average performers such as Finland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Estonia and Poland.

Table 2.1 shows mean scores in reading, mathematics and science for the Spanish regions. Table 2.2 shows each country's mean score in reading and its highest and lowest possible rank: because figures are derived from samples, it is not possible to determine a precise rank with confidence.

Students in the Canary Islands achieved a mean reading score of 448, 45 points below the OECD average and 33 points below Spain's score. As 39 points equates to a year of schooling, the average Canary Islands 15-year-old is more than a year behind counterparts in the average-performing countries and nearly a year behind the average Spanish student. Only Ceuta and Melilla's students had a lower reading score, 412, putting them nearly a year behind Canary Islands students. Internationally, the Canary Islands reading score is similar to that of Chile, which ranked 33rd of 34 OECD members, though above EU members Bulgaria and Romania.

In **mathematics**, the OECD average was 496. Spain's score was again significantly below this, at 483 statistically similar to the scores of Hungary (490), Ireland and Portugal (487) and Italy, which scored the same. In mathematics Canary Islands students scored 435 points, which is 61 points lower than the OECD average and 48 points below the Spanish average performance. Therefore the average Canary Islands 15-year-old is a year and a half of schooling behind counterparts in average-performing OECD and EU countries such as France, the Slovak Republic, Austria, Poland, Sweden, the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom, more than a year behind the average Spanish student. Within Spain, only Ceuta and Melilla's students had a lower score (417). Internationally, the Canary Islands mathematics score is between those of Serbia (442) and Azerbaijan (431); but above the scores of Bulgaria, Romania and Chile.

In **science**, the OECD average was 501. Spain's score was significantly below this at 488, but statistically similar to the scores of Austria (494), Portugal (493), the Slovak Republic (490), Italy (489) and Luxembourg (484). Canary Islands students scored 452 points in science, which is 49 points (more than a year of schooling) behind the OECD average and 36 points (nearly a year of schooling) behind the average Spanish student. Within Spain, only Ceuta and Melilla's students scored lower (416). Internationally, the Canary Islands science score is between those of Turkey (454) and Chile (447); but above the scores of Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania.

Table 2.1 Mean score in reading, mathematics and science, by region in Spain

	Reading		Mathematics		Science	
	Mean score	Standard Error	Mean score	Standard Error	Mean score	Standard Error
Andalusia	461	(5.5)	462	(5.2)	469	(5.3)
Aragon	495	(4.1)	506	(5.2)	505	(4.3)
Asturias	490	(4.8)	494	(4.6)	502	(4.9)
Balearic Islands	457	(5.6)	464	(4.5)	461	(5.7)
Basque Country	494	(2.9)	510	(2.8)	495	(2.5)
Canary Islands	448	(4.3)	435	(4.1)	452	(4.1)
Cantabria	488	(4.1)	495	(5.0)	500	(4.7)
Castile and Leon	503	(4.9)	514	(5.3)	516	(4.9)
Catalonia	498	(5.2)	496	(6.0)	497	(5.9)
Ceuta and Melilla	412	(2.5)	417	(2.4)	416	(2.6)
Galicia	486	(4.4)	489	(4.3)	506	(4.9)
La Rioja	498	(2.4)	504	(2.7)	509	(2.6)
Madrid	503	(4.4)	496	(4.4)	508	(4.2)
Murcia	480	(5.1)	478	(5.6)	484	(5.3)
Navarre	497	(3.1)	511	(3.6)	509	(3.2)
Spain average	**481**	**(2.0)**	**483**	**(2.1)**	**488**	**(2.1)**
OECD average	**493**	**(0.5)**	**496**	**(0.5)**	**501**	**(0.5)**

Source: OECD, *PISA 2009 Database*.

Table 2.2 Mean score and rank range of the countries/economies in reading

Statistically significantly above the OECD average

Not statistically significantly different from the OECD average

Statistically significantly below the OECD average

	Reading scale					
			Range of rank			
			OECD countries		All countries/economies	
	Mean Score	Standard Error	Upper rank	Lower rank	Upper rank	Lower rank
Shanghai-China	556	(2.4)			1	1
Korea	539	(3.5)	1	2	2	4
Finland	536	(2.3)	1	2	2	4
Hong Kong-China	533	(2.1)			3	4
Singapore	526	(1.1)			5	6
Canada	524	(1.5)	3	4	5	7
New Zealand	521	(2.4)	3	5	6	9
Japan	520	(3.5)	3	6	5	9
Australia	515	(2.3)	5	7	8	10
Netherlands	508	(5.1)	5	13	8	16
Belgium	506	(2.3)	7	10	10	14
Norway	503	(2.6)	7	14	10	18
Estonia	501	(2.6)	8	17	11	21
Switzerland	501	(2.4)	8	17	11	21
Poland	500	(2.6)	8	17	11	22
Iceland	500	(1.4)	9	16	12	19
United States	500	(3.7)	8	20	11	25
Liechtenstein	499	(2.8)			11	23
Sweden	497	(2.9)	10	21	13	26
Germany	497	(2.7)	11	21	14	26
Ireland	496	(3.0)	12	22	15	27
France	496	(3.4)	11	22	14	27
Chinese Taipei	495	(2.6)			17	27
Denmark	495	(2.1)	15	22	18	26
United Kingdom	494	(2.3)	15	22	19	27
Hungary	494	(3.2)	13	22	16	27
Portugal	489	(3.1)	18	24	23	31
Macao-China	487	(0.9)			27	30
Italy	486	(1.6)	22	24	27	31
Latvia	484	(3.0)			27	34
Slovenia	483	(1.0)	23	26	30	33
Greece	483	(4.3)	22	29	27	37
Spain	481	(2.0)	24	28	30	35
Czech Republic	478	(2.9)	24	29	31	37
Slovak Republic	477	(2.5)	25	29	32	37
Croatia	476	(2.9)			33	39
Israel	474	(3.6)	26	31	33	40
Luxembourg	472	(1.3)	29	31	36	39
Austria	470	(2.9)	29	32	36	41
Lithuania	468	(2.4)			38	41
Turkey	464	(3.5)	31	32	39	43
Dubai (UAE)	459	(1.1)			41	43
Russian Federation	459	(3.3)			41	43
Chile	449	(3.1)	33	33	44	44
Serbia	442	(2.4)			45	46
Bulgaria	429	(6.7)			45	50
Uruguay	426	(2.6)			46	50
Mexico	425	(2.0)	34	34	46	49
Romania	424	(4.1)			46	50
Thailand	421	(2.6)			47	51
Trinidad and Tobago	416	(1.2)			50	52
Colombia	413	(3.7)			50	55
Brazil	412	(2.7)			51	54
Montenegro	408	(1.7)			53	56
Jordan	405	(3.3)			53	58
Tunisia	404	(2.9)			54	58
Indonesia	402	(3.7)			54	58
Argentina	398	(4.6)			55	59
Kazakhstan	390	(3.1)			58	60
Albania	385	(4.0)			59	60
Qatar	372	(0.8)			61	63
Panama	371	(6.5)			61	64
Peru	370	(4.0)			61	64
Azerbaijan	362	(3.3)			63	64
Kyrgyzstan	314	(3.2)			65	65

Source: OECD, *PISA 2009 Database*.

Taking **all three subjects together**, the Canary Islands students' results were the second-worst of the 15 Spanish regions participating in PISA, though considerably better than those of the worst, Ceuta and Melilla. Castile and Leon, Spain's strongest overall performer, scored above the OECD average in all three domains, as did Aragon, La Rioja, Madrid and Navarre.

PROFICIENCY LEVELS

Proficiency levels for each subject are defined for the purpose of describing the competences and skills of students performing at each level. Student scores in science and mathematics were grouped into seven proficiency levels, with Level 6 representing the highest scores and Below Level 1 the lowest scores. For reading, there is one extra proficiency level: Level 1 is split into Level 1a (higher) and Level 1b (lower), so that the lowest of all is Below Level 1b. High-performing school systems achieve good results in PISA for students at both ends of the performance distribution, supporting the lowest performers to reach at least the baseline level, and helping very good students to secure excellent results in all subjects.

In each subject, Level 2 is the baseline level. In reading, for example, Level 2 questions may require students to locate one or more pieces of information, which may need to be inferred and to meet several conditions; or to recognise the main idea in a text, construing meaning when the information is not prominent. Typical reflective tasks at this level require students to compare the text and outside knowledge, or make connections between them.

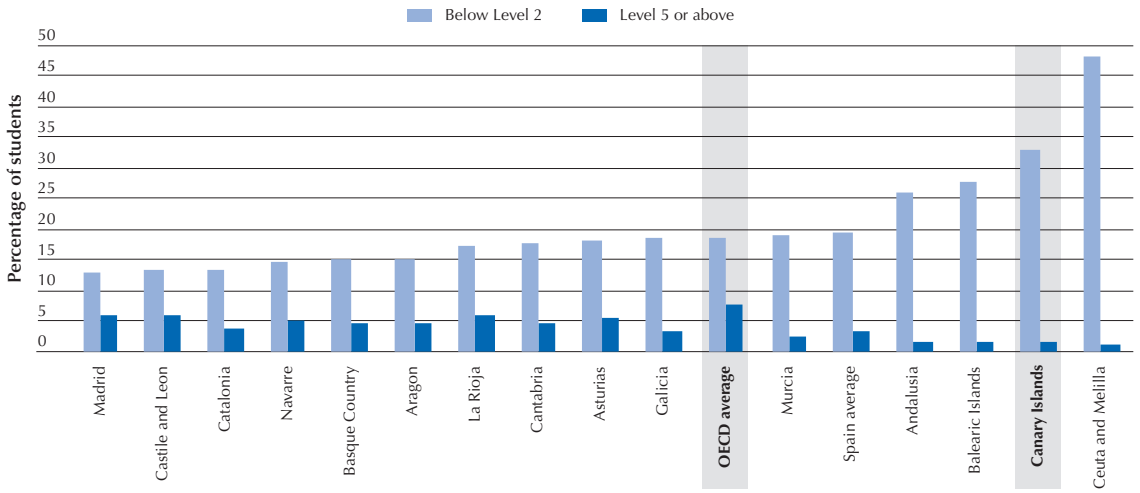
The low mean scores of Canary Islands students in all three subjects are primarily due to the high proportion of students not achieving Level 2, the baseline proficiency level. As shown in Figure 2.1, in the Canary Islands, 33% of students performed below Level 2 in **reading**, compared with 20% in Spain, 19% across the OECD and 13% in Madrid and Castile and Leon. Within Spain, only Ceuta and Melilla had more students below Level 2 (48%).

Of the one-third of students below Level 2 in the Canary Islands, two-thirds performed at Level 1a, which is only just below, suggesting that quite a small general improvement in reading performance could boost numbers of students reaching Level 2 significantly. However, in the Canary Islands – as in Andalusia, the Balearic Islands and, unsurprisingly, Ceuta and Melilla – appreciable numbers of students performed at the very lowest proficiency level, "Below Level 1b".

The proportion of Canary Islands students performing below Level 2 in **science** was 32%. In **mathematics** it was even higher, at 43%.

▪ Figure 2.1 ▪

Percentage of students at reading proficiency levels below Level 2, and Level 5 or above



Source: OECD, *PISA 2009 Database.*

Nor can the Canary Islands find much joy in their students' performance at the high end of the PISA performance scale. In **reading**, the proportion of top performing students (at Levels 5 or 6) in the Canary Islands was less than 2%. This was lower than in Spain (3%) and considerably lower than in the OECD as a whole (8%). The Canary Islands, the Balearic Islands and Andalusia had the lowest percentages across Spain's regions, only Ceuta and Melilla (1%) being lower.

In **mathematics**, the Canary Islands had the lowest share of Level 5 and 6 students of any Spanish region, at 1%; by contrast, 14-15% of students in Castile and Leon, Rioja and Aragon reached these levels. In science, the share of top performing students is only 2%

in the Canary Islands; other regions such as Aragon, Asturias, Cantabria, Castile and Leon, Galicia, La Rioja, Madrid and Navarre reach shares above 5%. And only about 10% of the Canary Islands' top-performing readers were also top performers in the other two subjects – a small proportion compared with other participating Spanish regions.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BOYS AND GIRLS

In all participating countries and regions, girls outperformed boys in **reading**. This is also true in the Canary Islands where in PISA 2009 girls outperformed boys by 25 points. However, this gender gap in girls' favour was smaller than the averages for Spain (29 points) or the OECD as a whole (39 points). A much higher proportion of boys (39%) than girls (27%) failed to reach the baseline Level 2.

By contrast, in most countries, boys outperformed girls in **mathematics**. The OECD average gender gap was 12 points in boys' favour. The Canary Islands had a bigger gender gap of 17 points, but this is not untypical of Spain, where the average gender gap was 19 points. Only in Madrid was there no significant difference between boys and girls in mathematics.

In **science,** there was no significant gender gap across the OECD, but there was in Spain, where boys outperformed girls by 7 points on average. In the Canary Islands, boys outperformed girls by 15 points. The only regions with bigger gender gaps were Murcia (24 points) and Andalusia (16 points). Many Spanish regions had no significant gender gap in science.

This is an indication that Canary Islands secondary schooling might be less effective for girls than for boys. In PISA 2009, girls in the Canary Islands performed on average 52 score points below the average reading score of girls in the OECD area, while the score point difference between boys in the Canary Islands and boys in the OECD area was only 38 score points. Boys also outperformed girls by a bigger margin than the OECD average in mathematics and particularly in science. Here the score point difference for gender specific averages between the Canary Islands and the OECD area was 57 score points for girls and 42 score points for boys.

IMPACT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND ON PERFORMANCE

Students' socio-economic background is summarised in the *PISA index of social, economic and cultural status*. This index is calculated by taking into consideration the parents' education and occupations and an array of household possessions. The index is standardised to have a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one across countries in the OECD area. A minus score on the index shows a socio-economically disadvantaged background, a plus score shows the opposite.

The average socio-economic status of students in the Canary Islands is low. Mean socio-economic status of PISA 2009 participants was -0.62, the lowest of all participating regions in Spain. Two out of five students in the Canary Islands came from a low socio-economic background. When PISA results were statistically adjusted to compensate for differences in socio-economic status, the mean reading score of Canary Islands students rose from 448 to 467 points; but this is still significantly below average performance in Spain and across the OECD.

The PISA 2009 report looked at the relationship between socio-economic background and performance in each participating country and region. The relationship is expressed in terms of the number of points' improvement in student reading scores associated with one unit on the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status. The lower the number of points, the less inequity there is between social groups in that country or region. On this measure, the Canary Islands system, while by no means achieving full equity, is more equitable than many others.

Across OECD countries, students from more socio-economically advantaged backgrounds (among the top one seventh) outperform students from average backgrounds in reading by 38 points, or about one year's worth of education. In the Canary Islands, on average, one unit on the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status was associated with a reading score improvement of 27 points. This figure was lower than in several other Spanish regions (national average 29 points), such as La Rioja, Ceuta and Melilla and Asturias, but similar to the Balearic Islands, Catalonia and Murcia. Some 9% of the performance variation between Canary Islands students could be attributed to their socio-economic background. In Spain and across the OECD, differences in socio-economic background explained 14% of the variation in scores.

Variations in performance occur both between schools and within schools. If students are admitted to them on the basis of particular characteristics, for example whether they have high ability or parents able to pay substantial fees, a high proportion of the variation is likely to occur between schools. If admission arrangements are broadly the same for all schools, a high proportion of the variation is likely to occur within schools – as students attending the same school display different abilities or effort, or are exposed to different teaching quality or learning opportunities. In the Canary Islands, **variation within schools was observed to be bigger than variation between schools,** with 79% of variation attributable to the former, 21% to the latter. In the Canary Islands, therefore, the amount of variation explained by differences between schools is similar to Spain as a whole (22%) but much less than across the OECD as a whole (39%). Overall, the total variance in student performance in the Canary Islands is slightly below that observed on average across OECD countries, while Spain as a whole recorded 12% less variation in students' reading performance than the OECD average.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

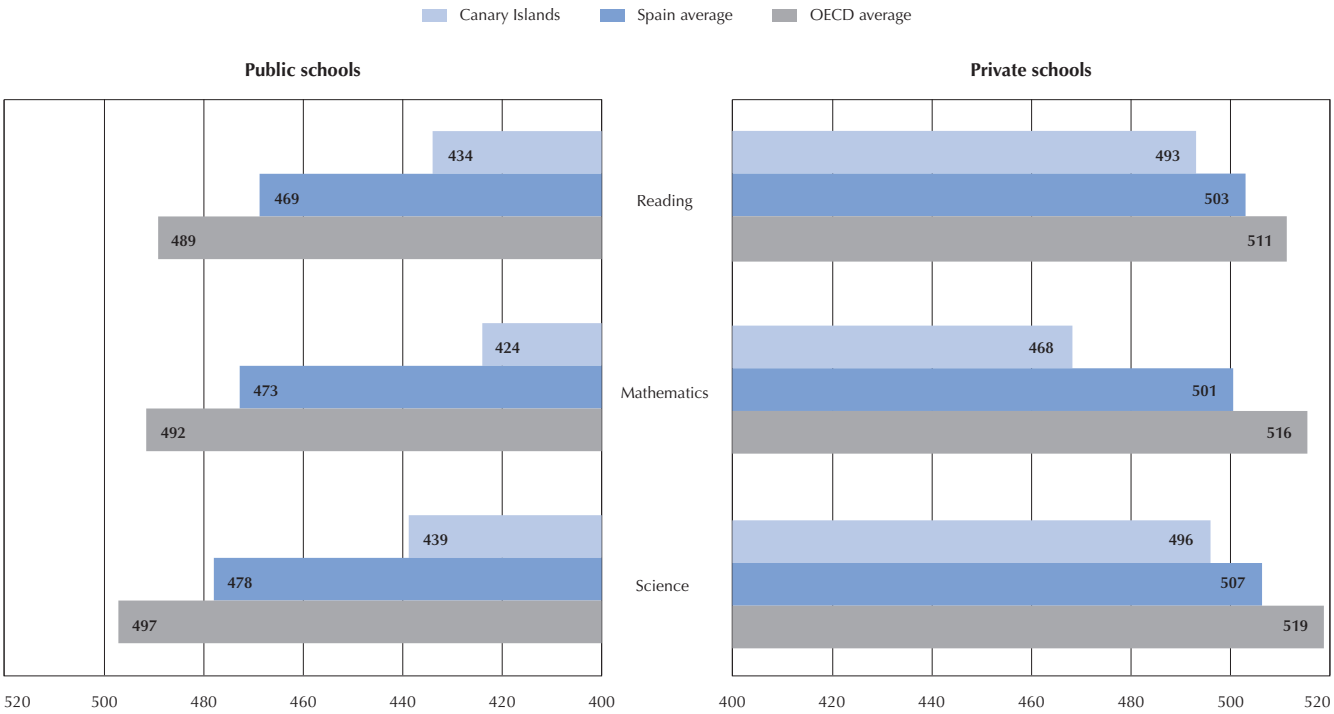
PISA sampled both private and public schools. The database for the Canary Islands consists of 250 students in 9 private schools and 1 046 students in 36 public schools, representative for some 16 000 15-year-old students. However, the PISA 2009 sample contained no fully private schools, so the following description of private and public schools relates to private state-subsidised schools.

On average, private schools outperformed public schools by 59 points in reading, 44 points in mathematics and 57 points in science, as shown in Figure 2.2 which also shows averages for Spain and the OECD. Though Canary Islands private schools are below the averages for Spanish private schools in all subjects, they are closer to the Spain figure than the public schools figure in all subjects, and in reading and science the differences between Islands private schools and Spanish private schools are relatively small. It seems that in the Canary Islands, private schools are better than public schools in ensuring achievement levels comparable with those in other Spanish regions. For private schools as for public schools, the weakest subject was mathematics, where there were large gaps between the Canary Islands score, the Spanish average score and the OECD average score.

However, in general, students who attend private schools are from more advantaged socio-economic backgrounds. After adjusting for the socio-economic characteristics of students and schools according to standard PISA conventions, public schools in the Canary Islands perform better than private schools. We see a similar pattern for most regions in Spain and many OECD countries.

▪ Figure 2.2 ▪

Mean performance of public and private schools



Source: OECD, *PISA 2009 Database*.

PERFORMANCE OF IMMIGRANT STUDENTS AND SPECIAL PROGRAMMES

Of the Canary Islands students in the PISA sample, 12% had an **immigrant background** (10% are first-generation students). This figure was similar to the OECD and Spanish averages of about 10%. Almost all immigrant students spoke Spanish at home. Less than 1% of these students spoke Galician and Catalan and less than 3% spoke another language at home.

Canary Islands statistical sources show that about 50% of the students with foreign nationality on the Islands come from Spanish speaking countries in South America, around one-third from countries within the European Union, and 12% from the African continent (ISTAC, 2009).

PISA 2009 found no statistically significant performance difference between native and immigrant students. Integration of immigrant students in schools seemed to be relatively high. 20% of students were in schools where the share of students with immigrant background was higher than 25%. Only the Balearic Islands and Madrid have higher shares.

Probably due to the low share of immigrant students whose first language was not Spanish, PISA found that special programmes for students with an immigrant background were relatively uncommon. Only a small minority of students were in schools that provided special programmes and measures, such as instruction in the mother tongue and reduced class size. PISA also found that, apart from reduced class sizes which benefited 12% of the private school students, only few of these programmes extended to private schools. Sixty-seven percent of the students whose first language was not Spanish were in public schools, attending regular classes and receiving additional periods of instruction aimed at developing skills in Spanish (e.g. reading literacy, grammar, vocabulary, communication).

SUMMARY OF PISA FINDINGS IN THIS CHAPTER

This chapter has set out key general PISA findings illustrating the quality and equity of school education in the Canary Islands. Further findings will be presented in later chapters where relevant. These chapters will also contain recommendations for improvement. The key points for readers to carry forward from this chapter are that, by Spanish national and by international standards:

- The average PISA performance of Canary Islands 15-year-olds in reading, mathematics and science is low – the second-lowest of all Spanish regions.
- Mathematics performance is particularly low.
- Numbers failing to reach even the baseline Level 2 are very high, particularly in mathematics and boys' reading. The proportion of students reaching highest performance levels is very low.
- Canary Islands secondary schooling seems less effective for girls than for boys in mathematics and science. In reading, girls are not as far ahead of boys than in most OECD countries.
- The average socio-economic status of students in the Canary Islands is the lowest of all Spanish regions in PISA. However, even when PISA results are statistically adjusted to take account of socio-economic status differences, students' reading performance remains significantly below Spanish and OECD averages.
- On the positive side, socio-economic differences between students make less difference to their results in the Canary Islands than across the OECD, and there is much less performance variation between schools than within schools.
- Private schools outperform public schools, but differences in results can be attributed to socio-economic differences in pupil populations. Private schools are closer than public schools to the performance levels of their counterparts in Spain as a whole, but maths results are problematic in both private and public schools.
- Commendably, immigrant students perform as well as native students.

Reference

ISTAC (Instituto Canario de Estadística) 2009, *Alumnado extranjero según titularidad de los centros y enseñanzas*, last accessed 14 September 2011, *www2.gobiernodecanarias.org/istac/jaxi-web/menu.do?path=/03031/E41001A/P0001&file=pcaxis&type=pcaxis*.

3

Education System Management and Resources

This chapter reviews governance and financing of the education system of the Canary Islands. It analyses levels of investment and distribution of resources, trends in spending and teacher wages. It concludes with recommendations for improvement regarding system management, the allocation of resources and the creation of performance incentives for stakeholders in the system.

SYSTEM MANAGEMENT

Governance arrangements

Spain is a highly decentralised country with three tiers of government (central, regional and local). The Canary Islands are one of 17 regional governments (Autonomous Communities – ACs). For almost 30 years they have had their own legislature and executive and the autonomy to develop their own policies in education and many other areas. However, Spain's central government has retained the power to establish basic education legislation: legislative decisions at regional level must be in line with the basic laws.[1] Changes in the basic legislative framework – said to be frequent in the case of education laws – inevitably cause a chain reaction of adjustments in laws and regulations at lower levels. This has a considerable impact on the organisation of schools,[2] on daily life in classrooms and most of all on the motivation of school professionals.

The Education Ministry (Consejería de Educacíon, Universidades y Sostenibilidad)

A detailed evaluation of governance arrangements for education is beyond the scope of this report. However, some governance related factors which appear to be hindering the effectiveness of education in schools are worth mentioning.

- The management of the education system is highly centralised. The Education Ministry in the Canary Islands – like in other regions in Spain – holds many functions which in other systems are devolved to municipalities or schools. The team will remark on instances of this throughout this report, and will recommend greater devolution, generally to schools and principals. There are also a few instances of functions reserved to municipalities which would be better fulfilled if devolved to schools, control of student absenteeism being a good example.
- When schools, principals or universities providing teacher training are given some responsibility, it is often strictly limited by overly detailed regulations and decrees. The increases in autonomy recommended for schools and principals should be accompanied by a reduction in regulations which dictate or constrain decisions at school level. Whenever possible, regulations and decrees should be replaced by guidance.
- As mentioned in Chapter 6, the team understands that school principals carry a huge burden of administration and paperwork, which leaves them little time for leading and managing learning in their schools. The team suggests that the regional Education Ministry instigates a review of education-related paperwork and reporting requirements, with a view to reducing and streamlining them to allow school principals to concentrate on their job: to organise teachers and teaching to meet educational objectives.
- Proposals for action, change or new programmes often seem to pass through many layers of officialdom and committees before being finally approved. Such processes are expensive, take a long time and can delay desirable developments, or even block reform. Consultation with all interest groups is most important, but sometimes "total consultation equals total immobility". The team recommends that the regional Education Ministry reviews all decision-making processes affecting schools, streamlines them so as to eliminate unnecessary layers, and distinguishes clearly between consultation phases – in which all concerned have full opportunities to express their views – and decision phases, in which those responsible for particular decisions take them, bearing in mind the results of consultation and other evidence.
- At present, some stakeholders (particularly parents, but also heads and staff of educational institutions) feel that their views are not being listened to. This may be because they were not consulted in the first place, but may have more to do with not being told what the final decision was, what the grounds for it were, and if the decision was not the one they advocated, why not. The review team suggests the Education Ministry to follow up consultation it undertakes with a report on the results of consultation, i.e. showing how many people responded or participated in consultation groups, who they were, what they said, what the government decided, for what reasons, and if they decided against a proposal with a lot of public support, why they did so.
- Some stakeholders expressed doubts about the coherence and consistency of the regional government's education policy. They suggested that in the last eight years there have been various examples of major policy proposals published but not implemented, and of projects and programmes eliminated or reduced, for unexplained reasons. The OECD team accepts that there may well have been sound reasons for this, but suggests that the Education Ministry improves external communication by explaining more fully and publicly its education policies and the reasons underlying its education decisions. When explaining decisions it will be particularly helpful to be explicit about their consequences for different stakeholders, and how any adverse consequences will be mitigated. Box 3.1 shows how another OECD country, Chile, has made a change in school quality by pursuing consistent, coherent education policies with buy-in from all stakeholders.
- The OECD team noticed that in the Canary Islands it is rare for educational programmes or new developments to be properly evaluated, to see whether they are working and achieving their aims. Full evaluation is essential if the Canary Islands government is to base its decisions on evidence and avoid investing in ineffective programmes. The team received a list of many initiatives put in place since 2007/08 in order to improve school results and help struggling or vulnerable groups, none of which have been evaluated. Even if these programmes were in the right areas (which the team assumes), they also need to be the right programmes to solve the particular problems they are designed to address. Similarly, where results are poor it is not sufficient to invest additional resources; it must be clear what improvements the additional resources will achieve. Programme designers should

spell out in advance what programmes are intended to achieve: there should then be rigorous evaluation of whether they do so. It is important too that the results of evaluations are shared with stakeholders, whether or not they reflect well on existing policies and programmes, so that everyone in the system has the evidence needed for future decisions.

Box 3.1 Continuity and consistency of education policy in Chile

A striking feature of education policy in Chile over the last thirteen years is its continuity and consistency. This is considered to be one of the main factors contributing to Chile's impressive improvement in student performance.

Average reading performance in PISA increased by 40 score points from 2000 to 2009. Although Chile's average performance still lies below the OECD average, this improvement has lifted Chile's performance above that of Argentina, Bulgaria, Mexico, Romania and Thailand, all countries with similar or higher performance in 2000. Improvements are particularly strong for low achieving students. Their performance has increased by 51 score points and the percentage of students with a reading performance below proficiency Level 2 has declined by 17.6 percentage points.

In the past decade the government adopted a prudent, pragmatic and gradual process of change without setting out to restructure the inherited school system (which, like the Spanish system, includes public, private subsidised and fully private schools). It concentrated instead on promoting two central canons of policy – quality and equity in education – within the existing framework of schooling. From the start it was recognised that education was central to a strategy to consolidate democratic governance and to promote and support economic and social development. From the outset, the Ministry worked with external assistance and in 1994, a high-powered technical committee presented a draft blueprint for moving education forward. This fed into the National Commission on the Modernisation of Education in 1995. By skilful political action, a strong consensus was nurtured, even among the political opposition, to support the emerging strategic policy on education.

With a core team of reform architects who enjoyed unusual continuity in office during more than a decade, the Minister of Education placed education at the centre of the agenda and, together with the reform team and his successors in office, developed a narrative about education that, for the first time in Chile, recognised it as strategic to the country's future and as a matter calling for sustained and considerable State efforts to support improvement.

As a result, there has been considerable consensus in Chile over the last 13 years, and this consensus has allowed fundamental continuity in education strategy, allowing reforms to mature and deepen and allowing the architects of these reforms to learn from experience. Even among groups that differ ideologically and in political views, there is a core of education issues on which there is consensus, and education is clearly an issue of public debate.

Sources: OECD (2004), *Reviews of National Policies for Education: Chile*, OECD Publishing; OECD (2009), *PISA 2009 Results: Learning Trends: Changes in Student Performance since 2000*, Volume V, OECD Publishing.

SYSTEM RESOURCES

This section considers the levels of education spending in the Canary Islands; how the Islands' education spending compares to that of other countries and regions; how spending has changed in recent years; the pattern of spending on schools in the Islands; and how much is invested in teacher salaries.

Funding arrangements

Decentralisation has rendered the spending power of Spanish Autonomous Communities (ACs) considerable. In 2003 AC spending accounted for 42% of Spanish public expenditure (excluding spending on pensions), as compared to 41% for the central government and 17% for local governments (OECD, 2007).

The revenues of all Autonomous Communities except the Basque Country and Navarra are generated by the so-called "common regime" financial system. This system gives access to a mixture of taxes, tax-sharing arrangements and unconditional transfers with a strong equalisation component. Unconditional transfers account for most of the funds received by the ACs (OECD, 2007), and in general they may spend them as they see fit; but occasionally the central government passes laws which mandate spending in areas such as education, elder care, housing, etc., in order to guarantee social rights stipulated by Constitutional law. This is often done by establishing requirements in these areas. The costs of meeting the requirements mostly fall on regional budgets.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for budget formation and disbursement, and has authority to allocate non-wage expenditure and provide additional payments to teachers beyond the national salary scale. Additional payments can constitute a significant share of teachers' income.

Investment and distribution of resources

The visit of the OECD team to the Canary Islands was carried out in economically difficult times, felt by both decision-makers and the general public alike. The unprecedented recession which hit Spain in 2008 led to a dramatic rise in unemployment and to the introduction of drastic measures for lowering the budget deficit from 11.1% of GDP in 2009 to a set target of 3% of GDP by 2013. These measures involve tax increases, an average 5% cut in public sector wages in 2010 and large cutbacks in public investment. This is reflected also in the central government budget for 2011 which foresees a 7.9% reduction in spending. The level of public wages and most pensions was frozen in nominal terms in 2011, and in the government sector nine out of ten jobs falling vacant will be cut. Spending cuts have also been announced for 2012 and 2013.

The Spanish economy resumed slow expansion in the first half of 2010, but due to the continuing fiscal consolidation and partially due to high private indebtedness, growth is expected to remain limited and unemployment high (OECD, 2010). This will make the labour market even more competitive, and will, without doubt, further increase the value of good education and skills. It will be a challenge to address these developments in a climate of budget austerity, and of limited public investment.

Levels of spending on education

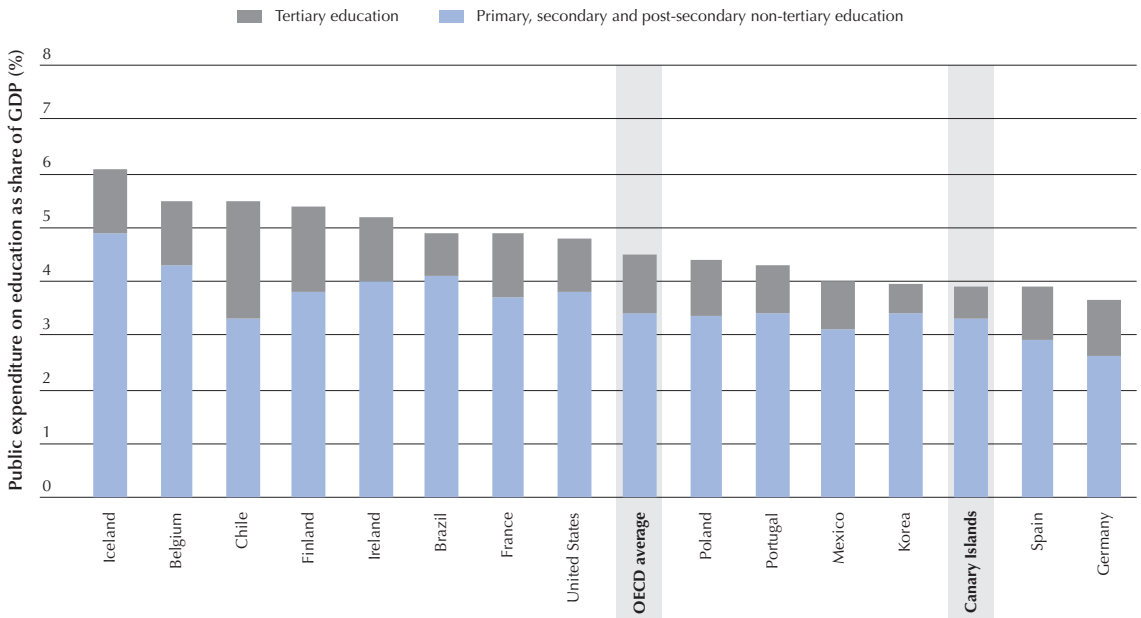
Levels of investment in education are an important indicator of the relative significance governments attach to education and to its sub-sectors.

Figure 3.1 shows that in 2008 (the year of reference used in *Education at a Glance 2011: OECD Indicators*) Spain as a whole spent less public resources on education than the average OECD country: 2.9% of GDP on school education and 1% of GDP on tertiary education, whereas the average for the OECD area was 3.4% and 1.1% respectively. Finland, Europe's top performer, spent 3.8% and 1.6% respectively. However, Spain's total for all levels is actually 4.2%, once spending on institutions other than schools and universities is added in.

The Canary Islands spends close to the OECD average[3] of its GDP on pre-university education (3.3%), but less on tertiary education (0.6%). The country in Figure 3.1 whose level of GDP per capita is nearest to that of the Canary Islands is Korea, which scores even higher than Finland in PISA. Korea's figures for education spending on universities and schools are quite similar to those of the Canary Islands – 0.6% of GDP spent on tertiary education, 3.4% on schools education.

▪ Figure 3.1 ▪

Public expenditure on educational institutions as share of GDP, by level: Canary Islands and selected countries



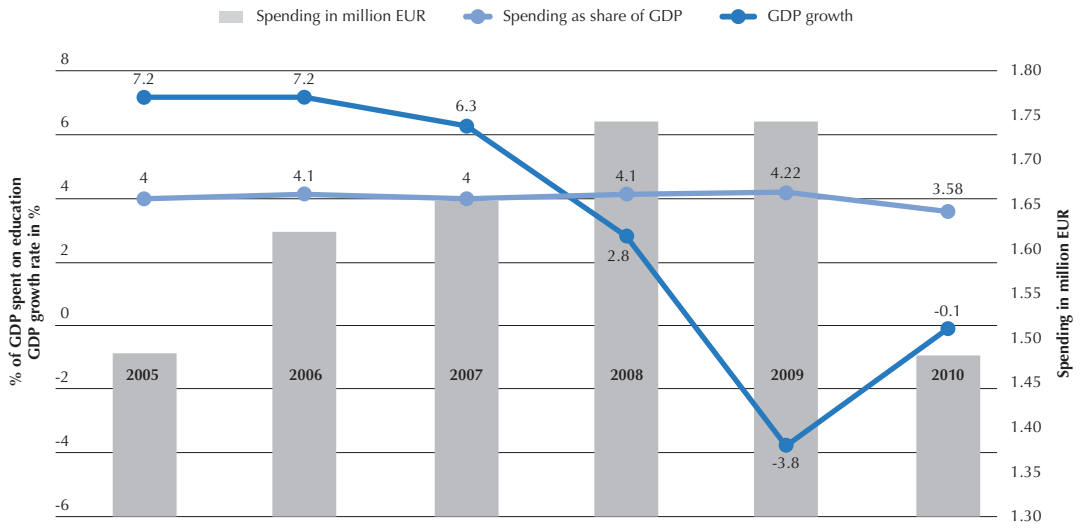
Source: OECD, 2011.

Trends in spending

The Canary Islands sustained the level of investment in education in both absolute and relative terms throughout the first years of recession (Figure 3.2a), despite the slump in economic growth between 2008 and 2009. Public expenditure adjusted to the economic realities only in 2010 when the education budget shrank by 15% compared to previous year due to austerity measures taking effect, a very low economic output and decline in revenues.

▪ Figure 3.2a ▪

Trends in public expenditure on educational institutions, share of GDP 2005-10: Canary Islands

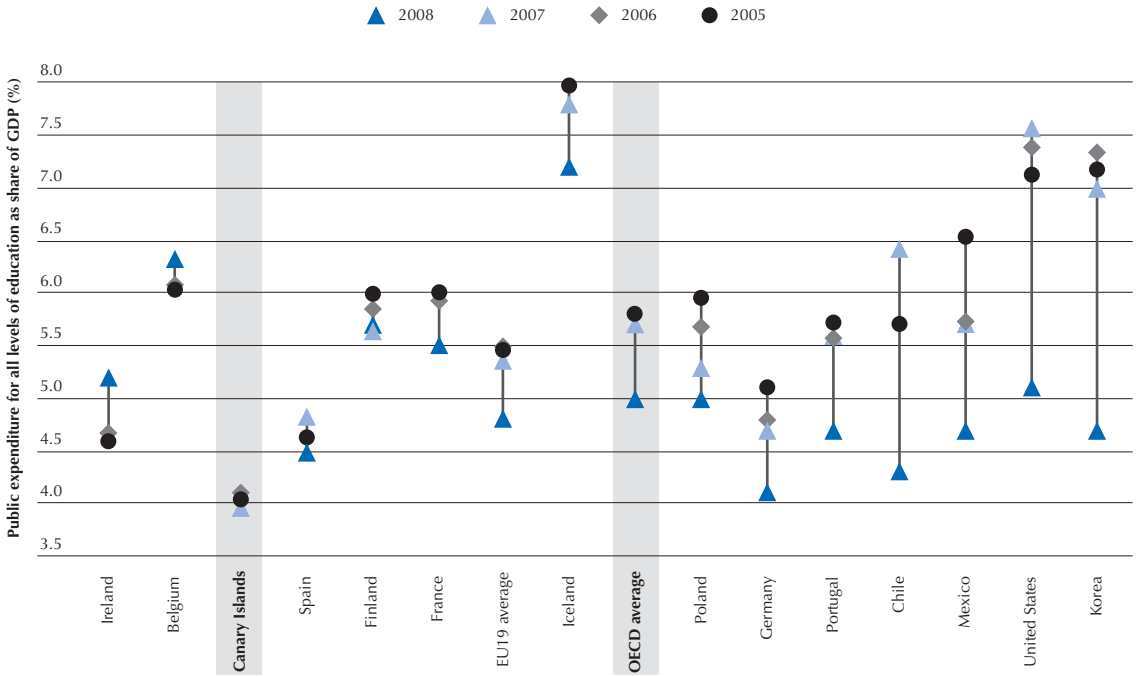


Source: Consejeria 2011.

Figure 3.2b shows trends in public expenditure on education between 2005 and 2008 for the Canary Islands, Spain and selected OECD countries.

▪ Figure 3.2b ▪

Trends in public expenditure on educational institutions as a share of GDP 2005-08: Canary Islands and selected OECD countries



Source: OECD, 2011.

Until recently, "stability" best describes the pattern of education spending in the Canary Islands. Over the 4-year period until 2008 (the year of reference for the 2011 edition of *Education at a Glance*), public investment in educational institutions in the Canary Islands as a share of GDP dropped only a little between 2005 and 2006, went up a little between 2006 and 2007, and back down again between 2007 and 2008, but ended the period not far from the 2005 starting-point. By contrast, spending in the OECD area was marked by considerable fluctuations. Typical OECD and EU countries went down slightly in 2007 and dropped very sharply in 2008, to end the period well below 2005 levels. There were particularly dramatic falls in Korea, the United States and Chile. Only Ireland registered a big rise over the period and only Spain, Finland and Belgium (the other country on the chart to increase its level in 2008) approached the Islands' level of stability.

The fact that the Canary Islands managed to maintain a consistent level of education spending until 2010 is commendable, but it is for the most part a positive side effect of the delayed impact of recession. In 2010 the share of national wealth invested in education was only slightly lower than in previous years (3.8%), but as Figure 3.2a clearly shows, a shrinking economy considerably reduced the value of this share in absolute terms (EUR 1.48 million vs. EUR 1.74 million in 2009).

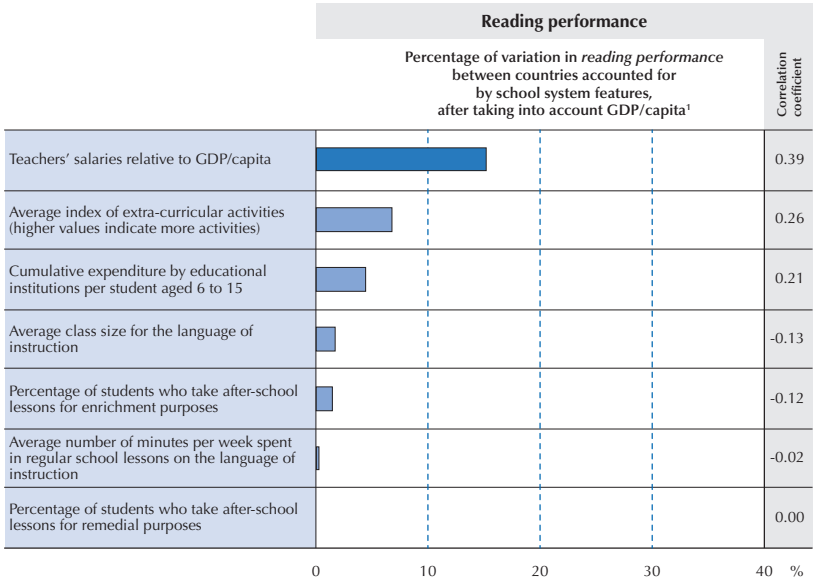
It is beyond the scope of this report to present an itemised analysis of education expenditure. The comparatively low levels of capital investment in education,[4] the fixed salary scales and a recent cut in salary levels are likely to mean that further downsizing or freezing of education budgets will take place through cuts in non-wage related costs. Short to medium term policy planning should therefore carefully take into consideration which areas are and will be affected by the budget adjustments, analyse the possible impact of these adjustments on reform priorities, and ensure transparent communication on these issues with stakeholders.

Patterns of spending on education

Investment alone does not lead to better results. Levels of spending are less important than the way money is spent. As research and PISA results have shown, there is only a weak relationship between educational resources and student performance. It is the *quality* of human resources in the system that, more than anything else, explains variations in quality between and within schools. PISA shows, as illustrated in Figure 3.3, that the only type of (stand-alone) resource significantly correlated with student performance is the level of teacher salaries relative to national income.

▪ Figure 3.3 ▪

How school systems' resources are related to educational outcomes



Note: Correlations that are statistically significant at the 5% level ($p < 0.05$) are marked in a darker tone.
1. The percentage is obtained by squaring the correlation coefficient and then multiplying it by 100.
Source: OECD, *PISA 2009 Database*.

Table 3.1 sets out a breakdown of Canary Islands education costs for 2010. (The OECD team was told that the budget is being reduced by 4.7% in 2011, but was not told exactly where reductions will be made.) Of the total education budget of EUR 1 622 088 thousand, 81.7% is spent on schools, 15.3% on higher education and 2.7% on running the Education Ministry. Within the schools budget, 90.5% goes on the costs of providing regular classroom education, including specialised education. The Canary Islands authorities have been making considerable efforts to provide education outside regular classes to meet particular needs (remedial and out-of-school education, special needs education, distance learning, adult education), but these areas account for just 2.4% of total education expenditure.

Table 3.1 Spending per level of education, Canary Islands (2010)

	Annual expenditure (EUR 000)	Share of total (%)	Per student spending (EUR)
TEACHING ACTIVITIES			
Pre-school and primary education	571 961	36.4	3 057
Secondary (lower and upper) and professional education	590 124	37.5	5 079
Specialised education	38 200	2.4	754
Special needs education	10 790	0.7	7 112
Distant learning	213	0.0	
Adult education	2 856	0.2	97
Remedial education	21 669	1.4	
Out-of-school education	3 770	0.2	
Higher education	240 494	15.3	5 533
COMPLEMENTARY ACTIVITIES			
Education Ministry costs	45 800	2.7	
Other (meals, transport etc)	80 214	4.5	
Scholarships and financial support			
pre-university level	6 181	0.4	97
university level	9 816	0.6	3 175
Total	**1 622 088**		

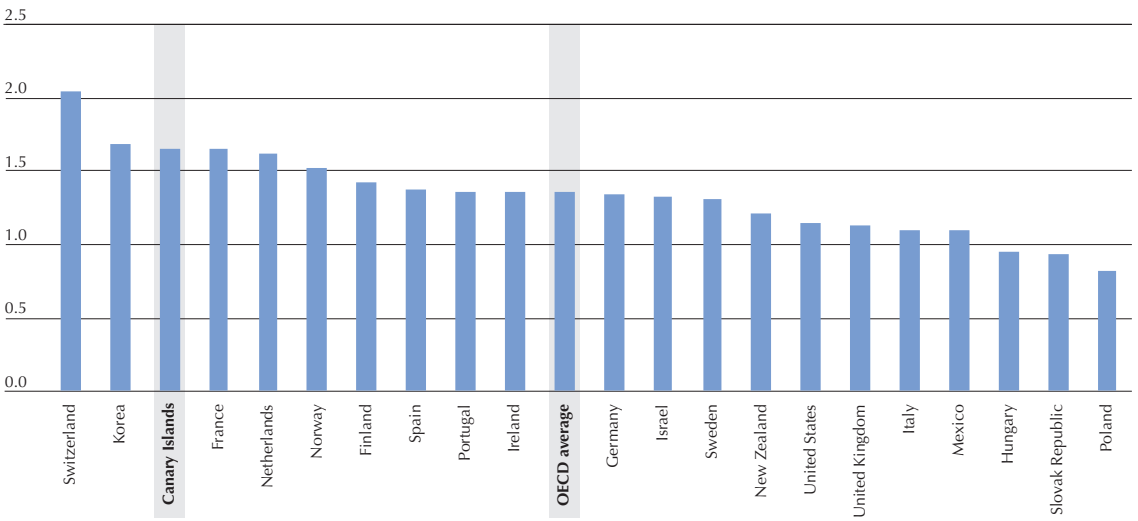
Source: Canary Islands Education Ministry, 2010.

Table 3.1 also shows that in 2010, secondary and pre-primary/primary education received similar levels of funding. However, according to the Education Ministry there were fewer students in secondary than in pre-primary and primary education (116 185 to 187 108). Translated into expenditure per student for the sake of comparison, the cost of secondary education appears 1.7 times higher than the cost of primary and pre-primary education taken together.

This difference is bigger than in most OECD countries, as shown in Figure 3.4. In Spain and on average across the OECD area, the cost of secondary education is 1.4 times that of primary education. In most countries with levels of GDP per capita similar to the Canary Islands, such as Italy, New Zealand and Israel, the difference is less than 1.4, ranging from 1.1 to 1.3. It is fair to record that Korea and the Netherlands, with similar ratios to the Canary Islands, performed particularly well in PISA, but New Zealand, with a ratio of 1.2, performed well too.

▪ Figure 3.4 ▪

Expenditure per student in secondary education relative to primary/pre-primary: Canary Islands, Spain and OECD countries



Source: OECD and Consejeria 2011.

Another way of looking at relative spending on primary/pre-primary and secondary education is to look at the share of GDP per capita spent on each. In 2007 the Canary Islands spent 15.4% of GDP per capita on primary and pre-primary education per student, 25.7% of GDP per capita on secondary education per student. The OECD average figures were 19% and 24% respectively. On this basis the Islands invested less than might be expected in each primary student, and a bit more than might be expected in each secondary student. Spain spent more than might be expected on both, but particularly on secondary students, with figures of 20.1% and 28% respectively.

Annual expenditure per student, per level and relative to GDP per capita: Canary Islands, Spain and selected OECD countries (2007)

Table 3.2 *In equivalent USD converted using PPPs for GDP, by level of education, based on full-time equivalents. Year of reference 2007, except where otherwise indicated.*

	GDP per capita	Pre-primary and primary education	Relative to GDP per capita		Secondary education	Relative to GDP per capita	Ratio to primary
		(1)	(2)		(3)	(4)	
Poland[2]	16 312	4 361	26.7	Switzerland[2]	13 982	33.4	2.0
Hungary[2]	18 763	4 480	23.9	Korea	7 860	29.6	1.7
Italy[2]	31 016	7 287	23.5	**Canary Islands[2, 3]**	**7 353**	**25.7**	**1.7**
United Kingdom	34 957	7 910	22.6	France	9 532	29.3	1.6
Portugal[2]	22 638	5 008	22.1	Netherlands	10 248	25.9	1.6
United States	46 434	9 812	21.1	Norway	11 997	22.4	1.5
Spain	**31 469**	**6 336**	**20.1**	Finland	7 829	22.2	1.4
Sweden	36 785	7 002	19.0	Spain	8 730	28.0	1.4
OECD average	**32 962**	**6 094**	**19.0**	Portugal[2]	6 833	30.2	1.4
New Zealand	27 020	4 930	18.2	Ireland	9 375	21.1	1.4
France	32 495	5 786	17.8	**OECD average**	**8 267**	**24.0**	**1.4**
Korea	26 574	4 673	17.6	Germany	7 841	22.6	1.3
Slovak Republic	20 270	3 459	17.1	Israel	5 741	21.7	1.3
Germany	34 683	5 833	16.8	Sweden	9 143	24.9	1.3
Israel	26 444	4 346	16.4	New Zealand	5 933	22.0	1.2
Switzerland[2]	41 800	6 859	16.4	United States	11 301	24.3	1.2
Netherlands	39 594	6 341	16.0	United Kingdom	8 892	25.4	1.1
Finland	35 322	5 512	15.6	Italy[2]	8 004	25.8	1.1
Ireland	44 381	6 901	15.5	Mexico	2 236	15.8	1.1
Canary Islands[2, 3]	28 588	4 426	15.5	Hungary[2]	4 225	22.5	0.9
Norway	53 672	7 904	14.7	Slovak Republic	3 219	15.9	0.9
Mexico	14 128	2 045	14.5	Poland[2]	3 590	22.0	0.8

1. Year of reference 2008.
2. Public institutions only (for Italy except in tertiary education).
3. Year of reference 2010.
4 Data for all tertiary education.
Source: OECD, 2010 and Consejeria, 2011.

It is worth trying to analyse what makes secondary education in the Canary Islands so much costlier per student than primary education, especially bearing in mind the higher failure rates in secondary education – though these high failure rates may themselves be increasing the costs of secondary education by keeping students repeating years in the system unnecessarily. Table 3.3 gives a breakdown of the total annual expenditure attributed to primary/pre-primary and secondary education respectively under "teaching activities" in the first two rows of Table 3.1.

Table 3.3 Breakdown of Canary Islands spending on teaching activities, by phase (EUR 000)

TEACHING ACTIVITIES	Total spending on staff	*Of which, teaching staff*	*Of which, non-teaching staff*	Maintenance and services (*Servicios*)	Transfers, current[1]	Transfers, capital[2]	Capital investments	TOTAL
Primary + pre-primary	453 210	444 976	8 234	9 595	81 106	1 453	26 598	571 961
Secondary	480 947	445 583	35 364	34 508	57 779	647	16 243	590 124

1. "Transfers, current" are subsidy payments to private subsidised schools and to students directly.
2. "Transfers, capital" are generally to municipal authorities.
Source: Consejeria 2011.

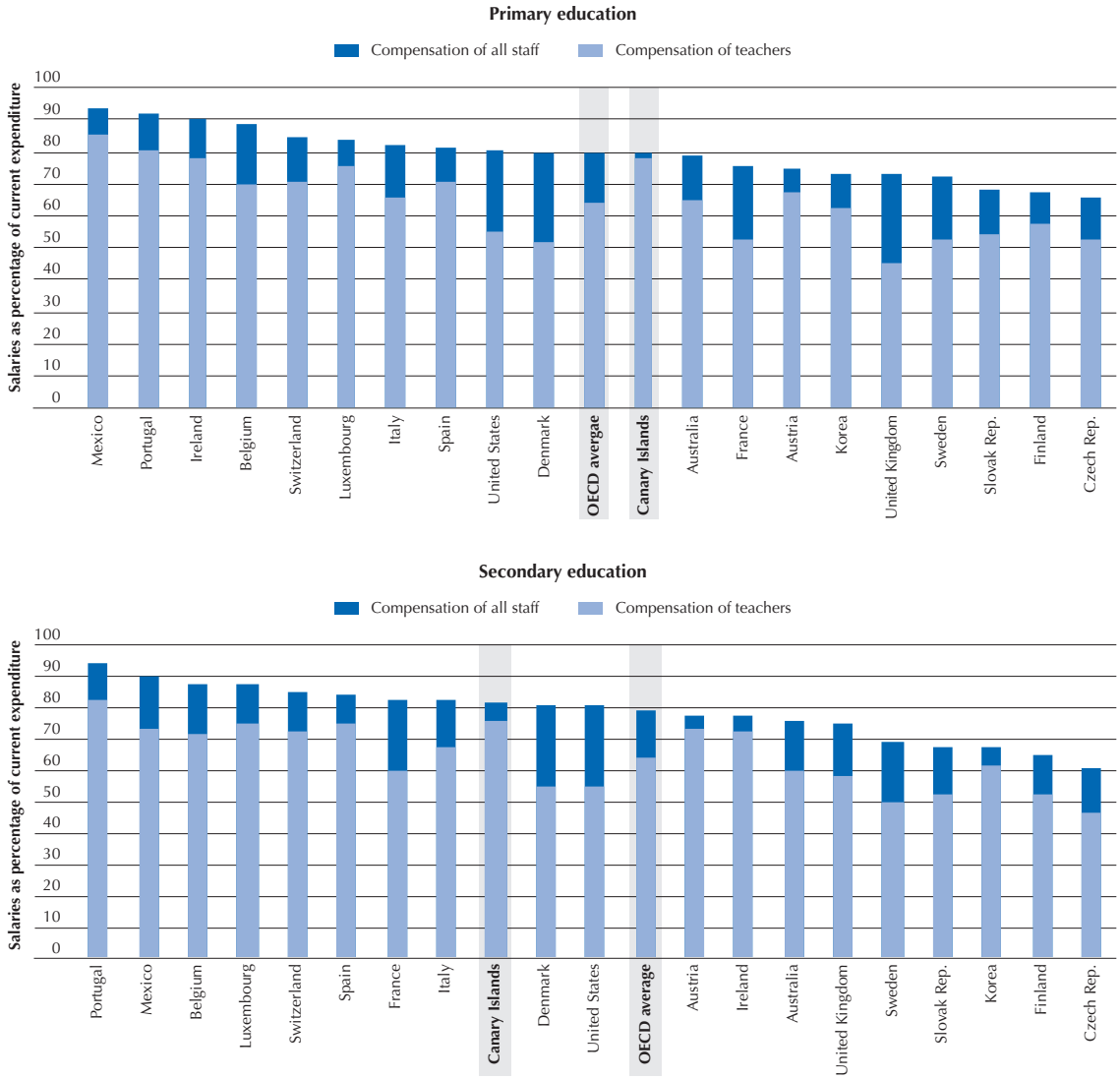
More is spent on primary than on secondary transfer payments and capital investments, as would be expected from the greater student numbers. Conversely, in secondary education considerably more is spent on non-teaching staff and on maintenance and services; though these items represent a relatively small share of the overall teaching activities budget, they account for most of the difference in cost between primary and secondary education.

Teacher salaries

In 2010 the cost of compensation of teaching and non-teaching staff combined, taken as share of current expenditure, was very much in line with the OECD average (Figure 3.5). Wages in the education system of the Canary Islands accounted for 79.4% of current expenditure in primary (OECD: 80%),[5] and 81.6% of current expenditure in secondary education (OECD: 78.8%).[6] The picture changes if one considers only the teacher wages. As a share of current education expenditure the compensation of teaching staff was above the OECD average in both primary (78%) and secondary (75.6%) education (OECD averages: 63.9% and 63.8% respectively).[7] The Canary Islands has relatively low expenditure on the non-teaching wage bill, but the highest share of total wage expenditure on teachers of all countries in Figure 3.5 in primary, and the fourth highest after Austria, Ireland and Korea for teacher salaries in secondary education.

▪ Figure 3.5 ▪

Salaries as a share of current expenditure in primary and secondary education



Source: OECD, 2010, and Consejería de Educación, Universidades y Sostenibilidad 2011.

Table 3.4 and Figure 3.6 look at teachers' starting pay in the Canary Islands, other Spanish regions and EU and OECD countries.

Table 3.4 shows the level of starting salaries and salaries at the top of the scale in *absolute* terms for the Canary Islands, the Spanish Autonomous Communities, and the average for the OECD and the EU19. In the Canary Islands starting salaries are EUR 31 544 for primary teachers and EUR 35 519 for secondary teachers. Only in the Basque country are starting salaries higher. These salaries are above average starting salaries in the EU19 (EUR PPP 25 750 and EUR PPP 28 240) and in the OECD (EUR PPP 26 039 and EUR PPP 28 474).

Table 3.4 Total annual teacher salaries at the beginning and end of the teaching career, including all bonuses, except where noted (2010)

	Primary education		Secondary education	
	Starting salary	Salary at top of scale	Starting salary	Salary at top of scale
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Andalusia	27 401	38 106	30 738	42 370
Aragon	24 788	36 954	29 853	41 153
Asturias	26 957	37 159	30 284	41 244
Balearic Islands[1]	29 647	41 629	32 773	44 402
Canary Islands[1]	**31 544**	**37 868**	**35 519**	**41 097**
Cantabria	29 891	40 232	33 276	44 754
Castilla-León	27 638	37 753	30 974	41 359
Castilla La Mancha	29 496	40 053	32 800	43 628
Catalonia	27 355	40 201	30 837	44 626
Extremadura	27 920	37 979	31 225	41 970
Galicia	27 083	37 684	30 388	41 867
La Rioja	28 660	39 095	32 216	43 789
Madrid	27 358	37 294	30 662	41 515
Murcia	28 015	38 577	31 471	41 714
Navarre	29 366	37 282	33 746	42 926
Basque Country	32 182	39 982	36 997	45 888
Valencia	27 786	39 061	31 143	43 402
Regional average for Spain	***28 417***	***38 645***	***32 053***	***42 806***
Net salary Spain, before bonus	***11 508***	***11 508***	***13 314***	***13 314***
OECD average[2]	**26 039**	**44 219**	**28 474**	**47 388**
EU19 average[2]	**25 750**	**42 256**	**28 240**	**46 643**

1. Average for postings on main and remote islands.
2. Data for 2008 from *Education at a Glance 2010*, in equivalent Euros converted using PPP.
Source: Consejería de Educación, Universidades y Sostenibilidad, 2011; OECD, 2010

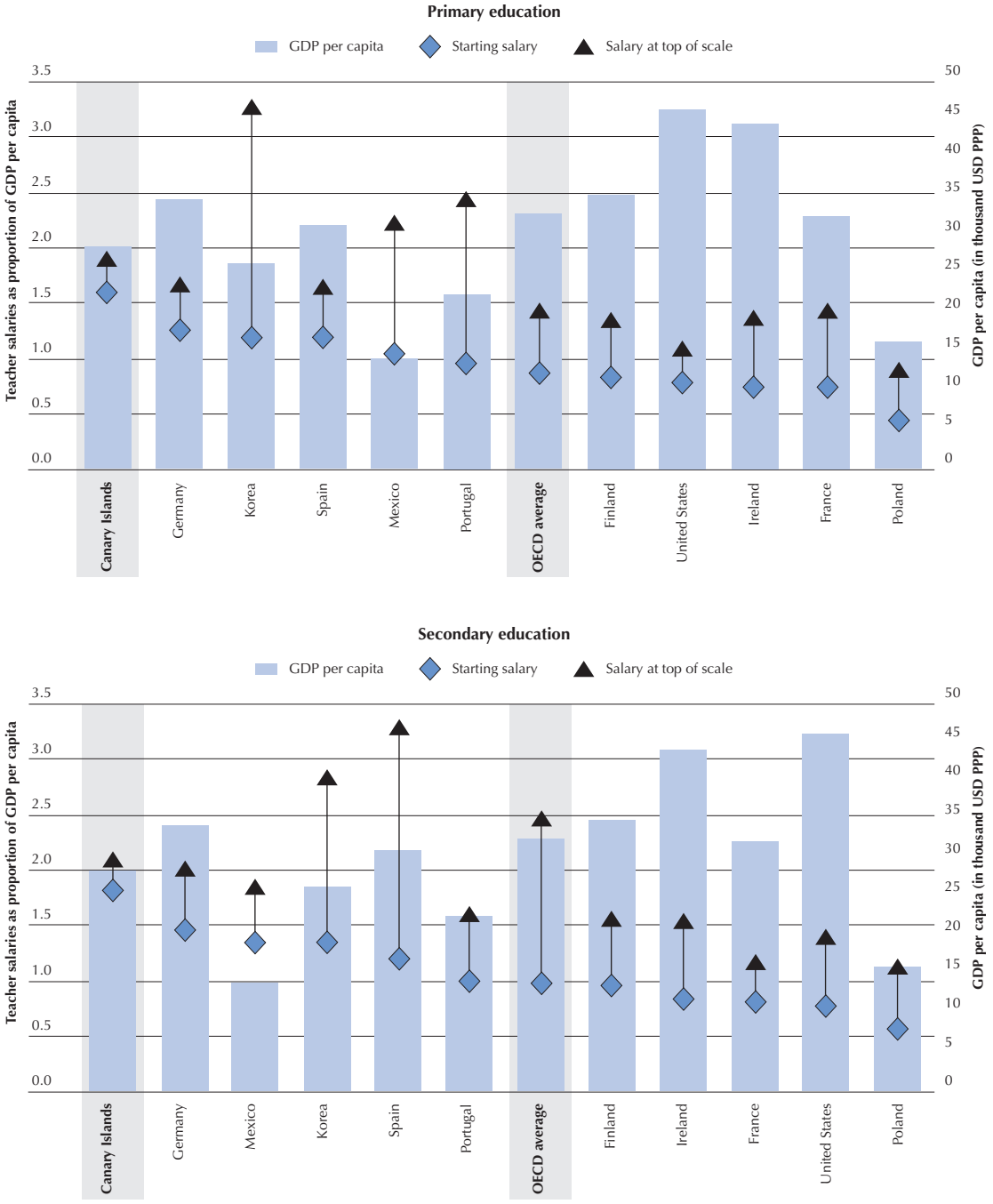
Surprisingly, for top-of-the-scale salaries the picture is reversed: in the Canary Islands, secondary teachers have the lowest top-of-the-scale salary of all regions, only 15.7% higher than at the beginning of the career. The salary progression in primary education is somewhat steeper, with a 20% difference between starting and top-of-the-scale salary level. However, this is the lowest progression of all Spanish regions, and way below the average for Spain. It is interesting to note the differences shown in Table 3.4 between the Canary Islands and Spain as a whole. Primary teachers and secondary teachers in the Canary Islands start with salary levels well above the average for Spain, and above the average wage level in the EU19 and the OECD area. Yet at the end of their careers they earn less than their peers in Spain on average, and less than the teachers in the OECD and EU19 area on average.

Figure 3.6 gives an idea of teacher salary levels in *relative* terms, by comparing the levels of wages in the Canary Islands and selected OECD countries in relation to the respective GDP per capita, for both starting salaries and salaries at the top of the scale.

Figure 3.6 clearly shows that in relative terms the starting salaries of Canary Islands teachers are very high by international standards – considerably higher than in countries with similar or lower level of per capita GDP, such as Korea, Italy, Israel and New Zealand (only Korea is shown on this Figure). The Figure also confirms that pay scales in the Islands are unusually flat. Indeed, the Islands have both the highest starting salaries and the flattest career progression of any country shown. Salaries at the top of the scale are still very high by international standards, in relation to GDP per capita. The same holds true when Spanish regions are compared. The Canary Islands have the third highest starting salary in relative terms in primary and secondary education of all regions, and the fifth and sixth highest end-of-career salary in primary and secondary education respectively.

▪ Figure 3.6 ▪

Teacher salaries relative to GDP per capita and pay-scale career progression: Canary Islands and selected OECD countries



Source: OECD, 2010, and Consejería de Educación, Universidades y Sostenibilidad, 2011.

It would seem that the government of the Canary Islands is investing a lot of money in teachers' pay. With over 99% of total spending, recurrent expenditure for education in the Islands is unusually high, and a high proportion of the wage-related part of it is devoted to rewarding the teaching workforce. This may or may not have something to do with the strength of the Islands' teaching unions and the numbers of teachers working in the regional Education Ministry. While PISA research suggests a correlation between PISA outcomes and levels of teacher income (see Figure 3.3); that correlation does not hold in the Canary Islands. As PISA outcomes are unsatisfactory, it is doubtful whether government and stakeholders are getting value for the investment. However, instead of asking whether the current level of teachers' pay is appropriate, it would be better to focus on possible reasons for the

unsatisfactory outcomes. Motivation, career structure, lack of effective appraisal systems, leadership and professional development could be among the reasons, and Chapter 5 discusses this in greater detail.

The evidence presented in this chapter indicates that, despite a lower GDP per capita and a lower than OECD average share of GDP invested in education, teachers' salaries are much higher than in other European and OECD countries – in relative as well as in absolute terms. Teaching in the Canary Islands has the benefit of civil service terms and conditions, and civil service pay scales determine teachers' basic salary, which in 2011[8] is EUR 13 314 per year for secondary and EUR 11 508 per year for primary education. The difference in salary levels across regions comes from additional payments (bonuses), decided upon by regions themselves and paid on top of the basic salary. This is a usual practice in numerous countries. In the Canary Islands these payments include "posting bonus" (paid in all regions except Navarre, but rates vary), "specific bonus general compensation" (paid in all regions), and "other regional bonuses" (paid for a range of different purposes, in eight regions and in the Ministry of Education). Bonuses account for 45% of the starting salary in primary, and 64% of the starting salary in secondary education, and for 69% of the top-of-the-scale salary in primary, and 67% of the top-of-the-scale salary in secondary education. Canary Islands teachers receive service increments every three and/or six years.

Teaching in the Canary Islands is a very attractive career in pay terms, especially to potential new entrants to the profession. According to data from the Ministry of Education, in 2010/2011 there were 756 graduates from the teacher training colleges, whereas the number of vacancies in the schools was around 60. However, the bonus payments are being granted automatically and are not linked to any other requirements but years in the profession. Combined with extraordinarily flat salary scales and other factors discussed later in this report, the current reward and bonus system takes away incentives for professional development, and lacks financial opportunity for rewarding quality and professional engagement.

In present conditions, bearing in mind the level of demoralisation among teachers and empirical evidence for the positive impact of high teacher salaries on student performance, the OECD team does not suggest that initial or later salary levels for those already in the profession should be decreased. Instead, if the authorities decide to focus on payments and bonuses, the issues of unusually flat salary scales and poor financial incentives for improvement or progression during a teaching career should be considered first.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Canary Islands Education Ministry should **devolve more functions** to schools. Except where regulations and decrees are explicitly required by Spanish national law, these should be replaced by guidance.
- The Ministry should instigate a review of education-related **paperwork and reporting requirements**, with a view to minimising them; and also review and streamline all decision-making processes affecting schools. Consultation is important, but should be clearly distinguished from decision by the responsible person or level.
- To ensure that all those with an interest in particular decisions know that their views have been heard, the Education Ministry should follow up every **consultation** it undertakes with a report on the outcomes, showing how many people responded or participated in consultation groups, who they were, what they said, what the government decided and why (including reasons for rejecting ideas with a lot of public support).
- The Education Ministry would benefit from **explaining education policies and their rationale** more fully. When proposing reforms it is helpful to be explicit about consequences for different stakeholders, and how any adverse consequences will be mitigated.
- A culture of **evaluation** should be developed in the Islands. Programme designers should spell out in advance what programmes are intended to achieve. There should then be rigorous evaluation of whether they do so. Whatever the results of evaluation, they should be shared with stakeholders.
- The Canary Islands Education Ministry should seek to establish the reasons for the Islands' relatively high gap between **costs per student** in secondary education and costs per student in primary education, and satisfy itself that the balance between them is right. The Ministry should consider the potential for stripping out **unnecessary costs** (such as the costs of repetition) from education budgets, particularly at secondary level, and also consider whether there is a case for reallocating investment between education levels.
- As by international standards the Islands commit a very high proportion of the education budget to **teachers' pay**, and starting pay levels are unusually generous, the authorities are recommended to review the conditionality of teachers' pay structure and bonus payments, to consider making some of them conditional on performance and/or professional development and to build in more professional incentives for all teachers – see Chapter 5.

Notes

1. A report by the OECD from 2007 on Regions and Central Governments records the discontent of some ACs about the fact that basic laws passed by the central government are sometimes too detailed and limiting of the ability of ACs to develop substantial aspects of policy areas for which they are responsible (OECD, 2007). This was confirmed to the OECD team on several occasions during the site visits.
2. For example, Spain's basic law regulates the maximum length of time principals of secondary schools may be appointed for. The permissible maximum duration has been changed several times over recent years, each change resetting the count of individuals' years in post to zero.
3. The OECD was informed that the share of direct investment in education from the Spanish national budget is below 1%. This allows for comparing regional expenditure with that of other countries.
4. 0.3% of total expenditure in primary education; 0.1% of total expenditure in secondary education
5. OECD, 2010.
6. OECD, 2010.
7. OECD, 2010.
8. According to information from the Canary Islands Education Ministry.

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4

Students and Learning

This chapter reviews some of the factors which have an influence on unsatisfactory learning outcomes in the Canary Islands. It discusses student motivation, family support and the effectiveness of learning in regular and out-of-school lessons, and important issues such as grade repetition, curriculum, assessment, gender differences and early childhood education. The chapter concludes by listing the review team's recommendations on students and learning.

Many variables affect the way children learn and are prepared for life and for the workforce. As well as their own abilities and capacities, competences and skills, these variables include the social and economic situation of their countries and families and the nature of the labour market into which they will emerge as adults, as well as the characteristics of the education system and its ability to meet the demands arising from the country or regional context.

In the case of the Canary Islands, the education results demonstrated by PISA are notably less good than results for Spain as a whole and the rest of the OECD, even after taking into account the less advantaged socio-economic circumstances of students on the Islands. The PISA results and local unemployment levels, taken together, suggest that young people in the Canary Islands are emerging from education poorly prepared for life and work in a fast-moving global economy and in the tough economic conditions Spain is currently facing. The challenging question needing to be answered, before any solutions can be offered, is "why were the results not better?" The answer is complicated both by the intricate weave of centralised and decentralised functions in the education system in Spain and by the particular circumstances of the Canary Islands – a group of offshore islands some distance from the mother country with less access to job markets and resources in mainland Europe.

STAKEHOLDER VIEWS ON STUDENTS AND LEARNING

Almost all counterparts the OECD team met during site visits had an explanation to offer for Canary Islands students' relatively low PISA results. The explanations related to students, families and learning included:

- Limited interest in learning, linked to parents' limited education, low aspirations, lack of support or social disadvantage.
- Low motivation to learn, because young people – who until recently could easily find well-paid jobs in construction or tourism without going to the trouble of acquiring qualifications – did not see education as relevant or necessary. Manifestations of low motivation include student absenteeism.
- The largely academic curriculum in compulsory secondary education, which has too little emphasis on basic skills and the application of knowledge; no significant emphasis on problem-solving, critical thinking and learning to learn; and contains little to engage the less academic students who want more work-related options.
- High numbers of children who have special educational needs or struggle to master the curriculum.
- Inadequate mechanisms for identifying, early on, which students are struggling, falling behind or not progressing.
- The absence of any effective system for helping students who fall behind to catch up within the year. The usual response is to make them repeat a year.
- The high repetition rate, which meant that many 15-year-old students in PISA 2009 were still being taught the syllabus appropriate to 13- or 14-year-olds.
- Lack of clarity on the standards students should reach by the end of each year. These are only broadly defined in the national curriculum. Whether students are deemed to have achieved them depends on un-standardised, un-moderated assessment by the class teacher. Generous assessors can fail to spot or act on learning gaps; tough ones may make students repeat years unnecessarily.
- The pattern and shape of the school day.

STUDENT INTEREST, MOTIVATION AND BEHAVIOUR

Several stakeholders told the team that students lacked **interest in education and the motivation to pursue it** to the end of compulsory education and beyond. However, the team rarely heard this from the schools visited, either from staff or students. The students the team met showed no lack of motivation or ambition. And if students still believe that they can walk into well-paid jobs without obtaining qualifications, they have not looked at the Canary Islands' recent youth unemployment statistics – the unemployment rate among 16 to 24 year olds has been over 30% since 2008, and reached 42% in 2010 (EUROSTAT, 2011). Indeed the Canary Islands School Board told the team that dropout has reduced and graduation rates have improved lately, as more young people realise the unemployment risks.

No doubt, there are some de-motivated, disinclined to learn students in the Canary Islands. And no doubt some of them express their frustration by behaving badly in the classroom, disrupting the learning of classmates, or truanting or dropping out. There was evidence of this in 2009 when PISA assessment took place, though this aspect too may have improved since.

The PISA 2009 report noted that an important feature of schools is whether they create a climate conducive to teaching and learning. Better results are achieved where students work in a climate characterised by expectations of high performance, good teacher-student relations and good relations among students. The learning atmosphere in schools is also influenced by student and teacher behaviour.

The PISA report includes an index of **student-related factors affecting school climate.** This is derived from school principals' reports on the extent to which the learning of students is hindered by the following factors in their schools: *i)* student absenteeism, *ii)* disruption of classes by students, *iii)* students skipping classes, *iv)* students lacking respect for teachers, *v)* student use of alcohol or illegal drugs and *vi)* students intimidating or bullying other students. The Canary Islands had the second-lowest index in Spain,

only Ceuta and Melilla scoring worse. PISA estimated that student related factors affecting school climate explained 9% of the Canary Islands' variation in student performance, well above the OECD average (6%), more than in all other Spanish regions (the second-highest, Ceuta and Melilla, was below the OECD average).

Almost half of the students in the PISA sample were in schools where the principal reported that student absenteeism occurs at least to some extent, 17% in schools where it was said to occur a lot. A similarly high share of students in schools with a lot of student absenteeism was reported by principals only in Andalusia (14%), Murcia (18%) and Ceuta and Melilla (22%). Additionally, around 40% of students were in schools where students skipping classes occurred at least to some extent, almost 10% in schools where this happened a lot.

Disruption of classes by students was reported to be more common in schools on the Canary Islands than in other Spanish regions. Around one-quarter of students were in schools where the principal reported that students disrupted classes at least to some extent. Students skipping classes is also common in schools: about one third of students were in schools where the principal reported that students skip classes to some extent and 10% of students were in schools where this was said to happen a lot. Principals on the Canary Islands also reported lack of respect for teachers by students in their schools. Around 40% of students were in schools where this is reported as true at least to some extent. And Canary Islands principals reported that 18% of students were in schools where intimidating or bullying of students by other students happened to some extent: only Ceuta and Melilla, with 35%, reported a higher figure. On the plus side, only 7% of Canary Islands students were in schools where the principal reported that students used alcohol or illegal drugs to some extent.

The PISA evidence given above all comes from principals' reports. These depend on principals' subjective judgements and their expectations, both of which may vary from one country or region to another. It should also be noted that many countries with considerably higher reading scores than the Canary Islands had worse figures on the index of student-related factors affecting school climate. These countries included Finland (-0.43) and Canada (-0.41), the second- and third-highest performers in the OECD.

Even if it is the case that many secondary students in the Canary Islands are de-motivated and uninterested in learning, it is important to recognise that this may not necessarily be the students' fault. The question to ask is "Why? What caused them to become de-motivated and uninterested?" It appears from the fieldwork visits that there are a number of potentially discouraging and de-motivating factors in the Canary Islands' school system – discussed in the rest of this chapter and in the next two chapters. If these factors for discouragement and de-motivation are taken out of the system, students should become more interested in and committed to learning and more respectful of their teachers.

Though bullying is sometimes associated with bullies' boredom with lessons and/or consciousness of academic failure, it needs to be addressed as a separate problem. Despite the PISA evidence, stakeholders interviewed by the OECD team did not think that there was a high rate of bullying in Canary Islands schools. This view is supported by information from the Ministry of Education suggesting a rate of bullying and intimidation of about 3%.[1] It is not clear whether the bullying targets minority group students – many of these are clustered in specific schools where their minority status might not be such an issue. Other OECD countries' experience suggests that peer to peer teamwork, and well-explained well-enforced zero tolerance school policies for tackling bullying between pupils, can be useful in reducing its extent.

Persistent bad behaviour may need to be addressed as a specific problem too. International experience offers a number of useful models. For example, a recent report by Ofsted (England's school inspectors) suggested supporting children who show challenging behaviour in the early years of primary school through a "nurture group" approach (Ofsted, 2011) (see box 4.1). Pre-compulsory schooling and its importance are discussed later in this chapter.

Box 4.1 **Nurture groups**

Nurture groups are small, structured teaching groups for pupils showing signs of behavioural, social or emotional difficulties, particularly those who are experiencing disruption or distress outside school. They are based on the theory that everyone needs to feel secure and to be able to form relationships in the early years in order to mature appropriately. The groups are made up of 8-12 students with a teacher and teaching assistant and aim to give pupils the skills and strategies they need to enable them to remain in mainstream education. The best groups have been very successful: they have significantly modified pupils' behaviour, improved their social, emotional and behavioural skills, given parents and carers practical support and confidence, accelerated academic progress or restarted it when it had stalled, enabled pupils to rejoin mainstream classes and improved attendance.

Source: The Nurture Group Network website, *www.nurturegroups.org/pages/what-are-nurture-groups.html.*

THE ROLE OF PARENTS AND FAMILIES

It was suggested to the team that students' limited interest in learning was linked to their parents' limited education, low aspirations, social disadvantage, and failure to engage with the school.

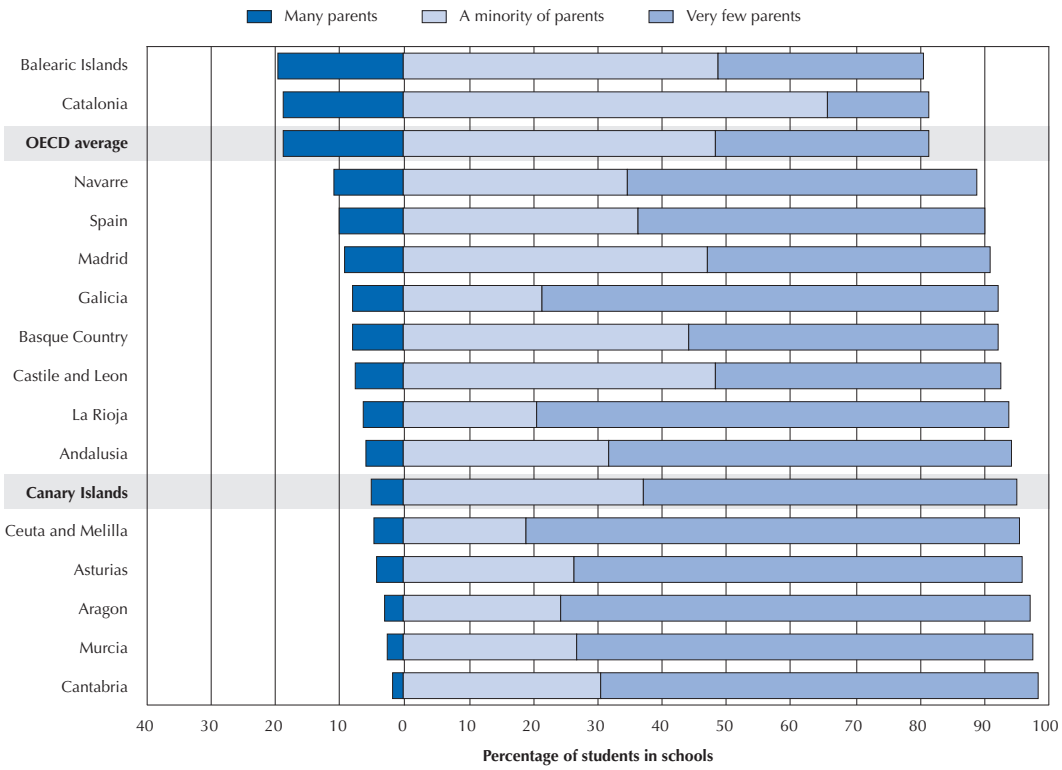
As already mentioned, the level of social disadvantage is relatively high in the Canary Islands and the typical level of parental education and occupational status relatively low. Findings from PISA and other research studies consistently show that better-educated parents tend to be more engaged in their children's schooling than parents with low educational levels. Furthermore, students with well-educated parents are more likely to have grown up in an environment where education is valued. These students will have had greater chances to develop learning motivation and to acquire a culture of personal effort (Kaula, 2009; Kohn, 1969; OECD, 2010).

PISA evidence indicates that parental interest and pressure are definitely beneficial for educational performance. Specifically, students perform better when parents, teachers and schools have high expectations for them. An indicator of parents' engagement in their child's schooling is the pressure they put on their child's school to set and achieve high academic standards for its students. PISA asked school principals to report on this.

In the Canary Islands, only 5% of students are in schools where the principal reported many parents putting pressure on the school to achieve high academic standards. 58% of students are in schools where only very few parents do so. In Spain as a whole, the figures are better: 10% and 54%. Across the OECD area, on average, almost 20% of students are in schools where the principal reported pressure from many parents; only one-third of students are in schools where few parents apply pressure.

▪ Figure 4.1 ▪

Pressure from parents on schools to achieve high academic standards



Source: OECD, *PISA 2009 Database*.

The OECD team identified several reasons why levels of parental engagement with schools may be lower in the Canary Islands than elsewhere. The first has to do with school attitudes to parents. Schools are unlikely to achieve serious parental involvement unless they are willing to reach out to parents, welcome them in, answer their questions and concerns, share evidence on the student's attainment in a way that parents can understand, and treat them as equal partners in the joint enterprise of helping their children learn. The team formed the view that in many Canary Islands public schools, parents are not yet seen as equal partners. Parents and schools often lack a common basis for discussions of students' attainment levels, because standardised tests, which assess students in a way that allows comparison with national or regional norms, are rarely used: according to school principals' reports in PISA 2009, only 27% of Canary Islands students are

assessed using standardised tests, slightly below the Spanish average and a long way below the OECD average of 76%. On vital matters like whether their child will be made to repeat a year, parents are notified of the teacher's decision rather than being invited to discuss what should be done, and they have no right of appeal; they may complain, but the team was told that if they do, it makes no difference. And unlike in many countries, Canary Islands parents have very little right to choose the school their child attends.

Secondly, parents may be discouraged from engaging with schools by consciousness of their own low education levels and disinterest in reading. Literacy rates have only improved over the last 30 years from very low levels, and the team was told that Canary society lacks a culture of reading. This works against good results in literacy and comprehension, though, as PISA shows, Spain is not the only country where children tend not to read for pleasure. A third reason (which is not limited to the Islands alone) why parents may engage less is that often in the Islands they are not the main carers; from the team's discussions with schools it seems that this role often seems to fall to grandparents or others.

During the visit of the OECD team, all Canary Islands stakeholders agreed on the importance of doing more to stimulate parental involvement in the academic life of schools. The need to find better ways of engaging families in order to motivate students to learn was highlighted by the Education Ministry in its requests for information from the OECD team. All the usual mechanisms for parental involvement, certainly at primary level, seem to be in place already, including active and committed Parents (*madres y padres*) Associations, parent teacher conference time and special projects involving parents. However it appears that many parents do not take advantage of these. This is not overly surprising at secondary level, or in urban areas. All around the world secondary schools find it more difficult to engage parents than primary schools.

The Canary Islands authorities are running a special programme, the Family Training Canary Plan, designed to encourage family participation in the life of schools and the education of their children through on-site training activities, seminars and joint work among teachers and families; but because this has not been evaluated, it is not clear whether, and how well, it is working. Several schools the team visited had made serious efforts to engage parents and had had a good response. One school, in a poor rural community, had realised that parents in that community were unlikely to take the initiative in contacting or dropping in to the school, but were happy to accept invitations to parents' evenings, assist with school events and sign (to show that they had seen and understood) regular reports on their child's progress sent home in notebooks. One primary school visited had developed parental cookbooks and special projects that engaged families in days of celebration.

It could also be worthwhile for schools to engage with non-parental family members and caregivers. Maternal support programmes in the Canary Islands have been evaluated and shown positive benefits (Rodrigo, et al., 2006). Grandparents might also benefit from programmes for parents on early childhood development and the importance of stimulus and reading to young children. One new project has been put in place by the Education Ministry but it is not clear what effect this has had, or if it should be expanded. Another approach worth considering, suggested by staff at several schools visited, is to make schools centres for the social welfare services now provided at municipality level. This would enable a quicker response time where children were at risk and families needed services, and give those families an incentive to come into the school. There are precedents in other countries, for example England, where school-based Children's Centres also offer all-day childcare for pre-school children or those not yet doing a full school day, plus family access to health and other services.

Designing and implementing a programme for enhanced parental engagement with schools will, of course, require the fullest consultation and discussion with all stakeholders.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS OR STRUGGLING TO MASTER THE CURRICULUM

The Canary Islands has a system for diagnosing pupils with special educational needs, of which the authorities are proud. If a teacher thinks that a student may have special needs, s/he fills in a form requesting a psycho-pedagogical evaluation by a multi-disciplinary team. This is a process designed to confirm the nature of the student's special educational need, their skills and competences and the resources required to help them, and to offer them educational and vocational guidance. For public schools there are 44 of these care teams, of which 8 are for specific conditions (2 for motor disability, 2 for visually impaired, 2 for hearing impaired and two for pervasive developmental disorders). Private schools use their own specialist staff for the educational diagnosis. Young newly-trained primary teachers who cannot find teaching jobs may do extra training to work on these teams. The same teams diagnose and provide guidance for highly gifted children and late entrants to the education system. Most diagnoses are carried out when children are aged between 3 and 8. Reports should be updated every two years.

The OECD team has no reason to doubt that the teams do a good job, once called in. But fieldwork discussions raised doubts over whether all class teachers have the skills and training to know when to call them. Of particular concern is the secondary school level, where initial teacher training did not until 2010/11 include psychology or pedagogy and teachers may well assume that any special needs will have been detected at primary school. Another issue is whether mainstream secondary schools can find enough teacher time to give special needs children the extra attention they need. One school visited said that this was a problem, and that it was not unusual for planned one-to-one sessions to be cancelled if cover had to be provided for unexpected teacher absences.

The Canary Islands has a network of centres offering different methods of special needs schooling, ranging from "ordinary schools with preferential care" for pupils with hearing or motor impairment, through "self-contained special education classes" which are dedicated special educational needs units in mainstream schools, to "special education schools" for students whose needs require a significantly adjusted curriculum. The team was not able to judge in a short visit whether this provision, plus the special programmes developed since 2007/08 to diagnose and meet particular forms of need, caters fully and effectively for all special needs children on the Islands: no local evaluation has been done.

PISA offers no evidence on numbers or achievement levels of students with special educational needs in each country, one of the reasons being that special needs covers a wide spectrum and different countries have different definitions. There appear to be significant numbers of special needs children in some Canary Islands public schools. However, the team noted some incentives in the system to give students this classification. One is that the school "earns" extra teachers. At one school visited, the team heard that a typical allocation was 1.2 teachers per class, but a nearby school with high numbers of special needs children was allocated 1.7 teachers per class. Another school pointed out that schools with high needs levels can request assistance under special programmes. The same school indicated that it is common practice to help weaker students gain their graduation certificates by identifying them as having special needs and then applying "adapted" (lower) assessment criteria – though this is not noted on the certificates.

A number of special "reinforcement programmes" have been introduced since 2007/08 to help children who are "struggling" to master the national curriculum for their age group. At secondary level these include: the reinforcement programme to help any primary and secondary students struggling in reading, writing or mathematics; other reinforcement programmes to promote the acquisition and development of basic skills and enable students to obtain their secondary graduation certificates; a support programme for non-Spanish-speaking students; and a "coexistence improvement programme" for students who need re-integration into secondary schools after a period of exclusion for bad behaviour or are at risk of drop-out. The Canary Islands authorities are very concerned about "struggling" students, a category that may be assumed to overlap with those who would be below Level 2 if assessed at age 15 in PISA.

The reinforcement programmes too have not yet been evaluated. Given the scale and importance of these programmes, the OECD team suggests that they should be evaluated or researched as soon as possible, to establish whether they are well-targeted, whether all the "strugglers" who need reinforcement programmes are being identified and provided for, and whether the programmes are measurably improving participants' attainment.

Meanwhile, PISA provides the main evidence on the effectiveness of reinforcement programmes in general. The message from that PISA evidence – presented in the next section – is that additional out-of school reinforcement programmes are unlikely to be useful. Nor would it be useful to extend the already considerable time allocated to regular language and maths lessons in the Canary Islands. The best and most effective way to improve results would be to improve the *quality* of regular lessons. Though the PISA evidence against reinforcement programmes is not specific to the Canary Islands, it makes sense in the Canary Islands context, where current reinforcement programmes for struggling secondary-age pupils involve keeping them in school (while their peers have afternoons free) to receive more of the same teaching, from the same teachers, that they have already had once or – if years have been repeated – twice. If that teaching did not achieve the desired results the first time, why should it succeed the second or third time?

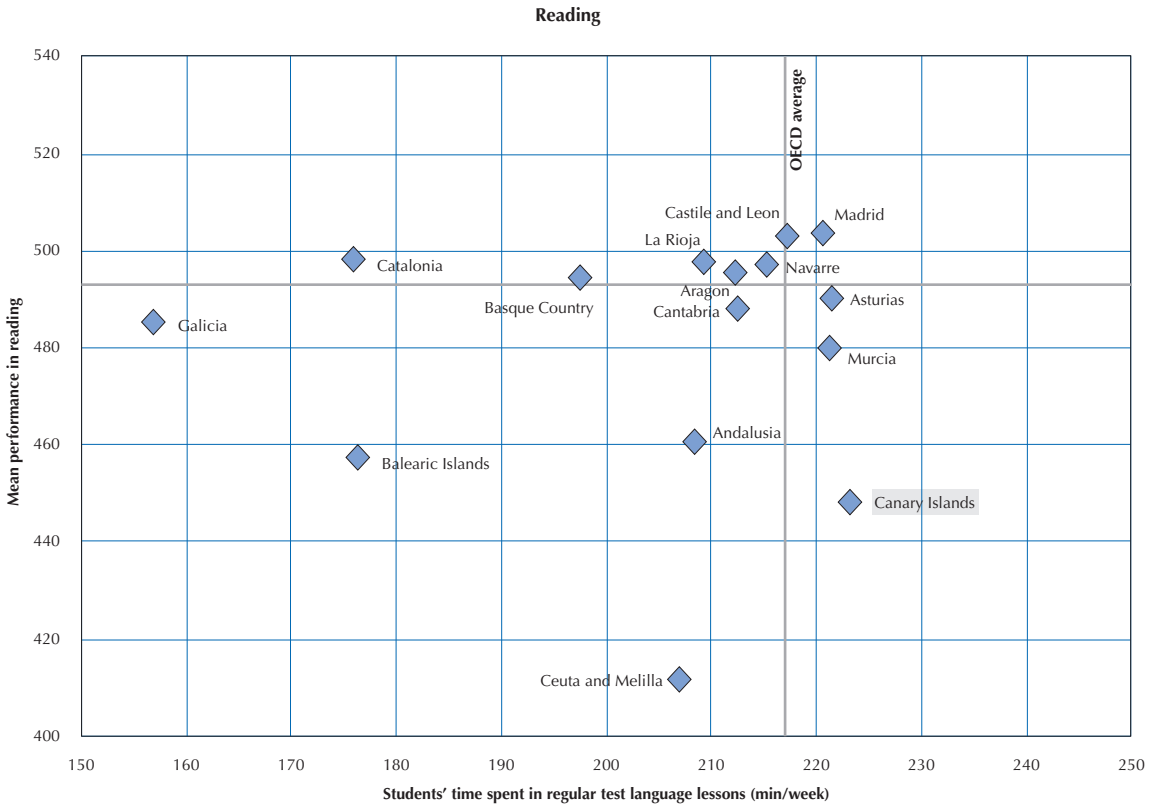
To have a chance of success, reinforcement programmes need to offer something new and different, designed specifically to help these students overcome their personal barriers to learning. Examples of personalised "catch-up" programmes are available from other OECD countries. However, these programmes depend crucially on class teachers being able, willing and trained to assess precisely which aspects of the subject the student has mastered and which they are struggling with, so that their reinforcement lessons can be focused on the specific areas where they need help. In England, this is called "formative assessment" or "assessment for learning"; all class teachers in public schools are trained to do it and are expected to do it for all students in the course of regular lessons. For teachers in the Canary Islands, such training does not yet exist and would need to be developed. Needless to say, assessment for learning is more straightforward and more likely to be done equitably if all teachers are basing their judgements on standardised assessment criteria and if subject syllabuses specify these assessment criteria.

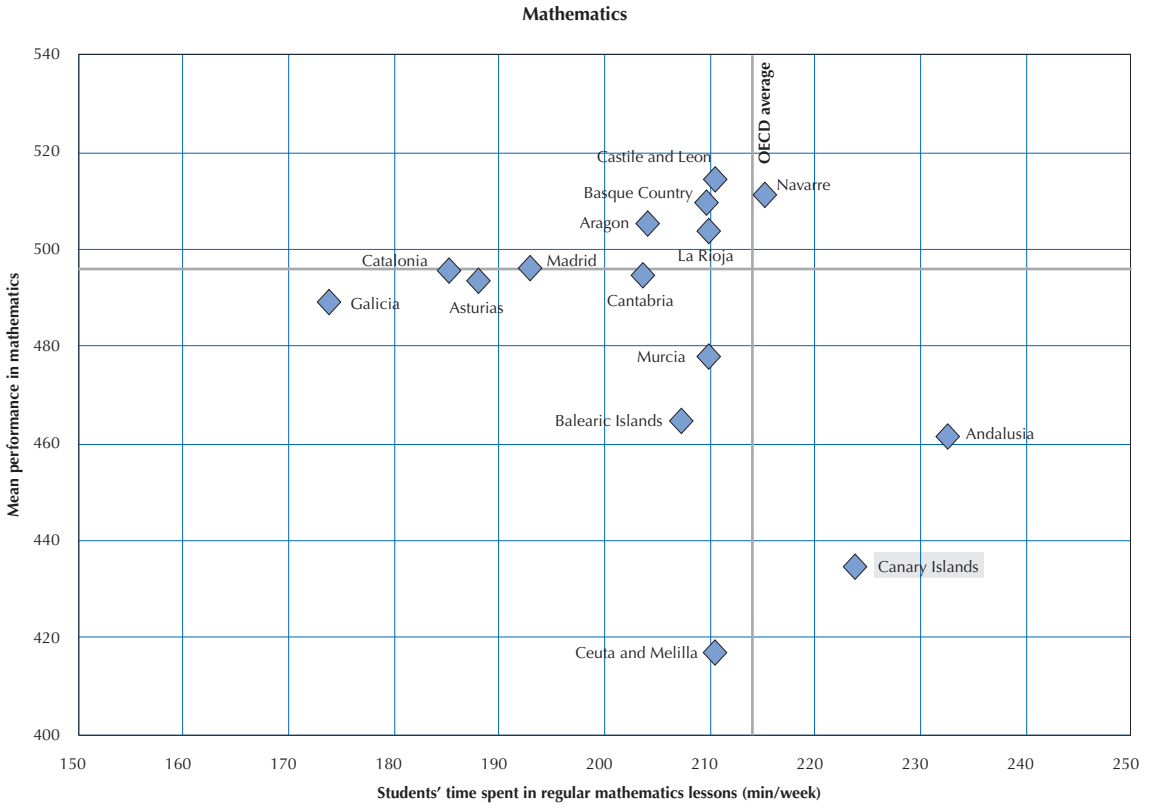
EFFECTIVENESS OF LEARNING IN REGULAR AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL LESSONS

PISA looked first at how long students spend in **regular reading and mathematics lessons** in schools. Students spend longer in regular Spanish lessons in the Canary Islands (223 minutes a week) than elsewhere in Spain. They also spend longer in regular mathematics lessons (224 minutes a week) than is spent anywhere else in Spain except Andalusia. Both these figures are above OECD and (unsurprisingly) Spanish averages. By contrast, students spend only 200 minutes on **science**, slightly below the OECD average (202 minutes) and well below the Spanish average. However, as shown in the figures below, more time spent in regular lessons does not necessarily lead to better performance. Galicia, the Balearic Islands and Catalonia, all of them with lower-than-the-national-average number of instruction hours but a better performance than the Canary Islands, prove that it is the *quality*, not the quantity, of lessons that matters. Results for the Canary Islands clearly show that regular lessons in language and maths are taking longer but achieving less, than elsewhere in Spain. This suggests a compelling need to improve the quality of teaching in regular lessons.

▪ Figure 4.2 ▪

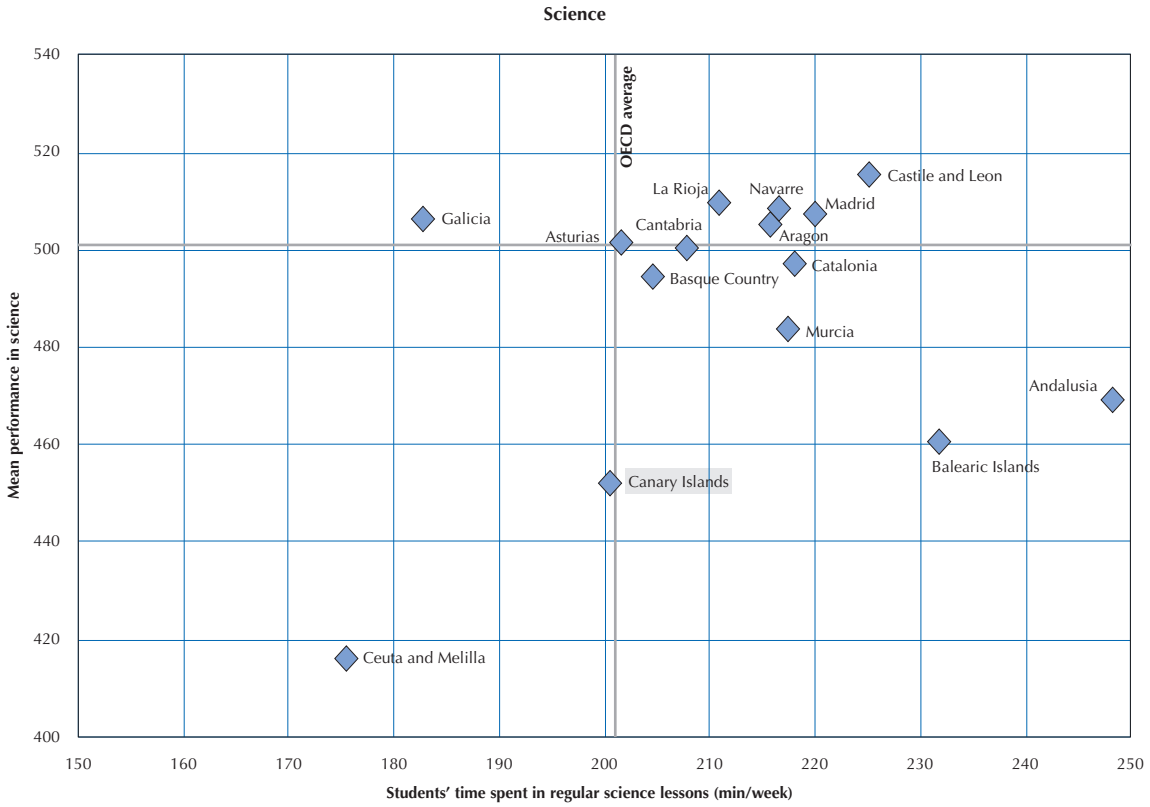
Time spent in regular lessons and performance, by subject





• Figure 4.2 *(continued)* •

Time spent in regular lessons and performance, by subject



Source: OECD, *PISA 2009 Database.*

As well as spending relatively more time in regular lessons, students in the Canary Islands are more likely than most countries and regions to attend **additional out-of-school lessons**. Almost one-third of students attend out-of-school lessons in Spanish and around one-quarter attend out-of-school lessons in mathematics. More than 50% of students attend extra lessons in science.

PISA distinguishes between remedial and enrichment lessons. Remedial lessons are any additional lessons designed to help students with learning difficulties ("reinforcement"), whereas enrichment lessons are designed to extend the abilities of more capable students. **Enrichment lessons** in mathematics, science and reading are important features of the Spanish educational system. On average, around 15% of students in the Canary Islands attend enrichment lessons in Spanish. Around one-quarter attend enrichment lessons in mathematics, and 14% attend enrichment lessons in science. As for **remedial lessons –** a form of lesson equivalent to Spain's reinforcement lessons, but far less established across the wider OECD area – 16% of Canary Islands students attend these in Spanish, more than one-quarter of students attend them in mathematics, 12% attend them in science. Why is participation in remedial lessons so high? And what does this high participation rate tell one about the quality of regular lessons?

A recent OECD report (2010) *Quality Time for Students: Learning In and Out of School,* based on results from PISA 2006, finds out that 15-year-old students in countries that perform well in PISA spend *less* time on average in after-school lessons and individual study, and more time in regular school lessons, than students in countries that are poor performers in PISA. This is particularly true when the time students spend in regular school lessons is counted as a share of total time spent on learning. For example, in high performing countries such as Australia, Finland, Japan and New Zealand, over 70% of students' science learning happens in regular school lessons. In all of these four countries except New Zealand, the total number of hours of science learning is lower than the OECD average. This, again, clearly implies that the quality of regular school lessons has a bigger impact on student performance than the number of learning hours,

Given these findings, simply adding hours to the school day or encouraging students to spend more time in after-school lessons or individual study seems unlikely to help improve low performance. Instead, the Canary Islands should explore ways to improve the quality of regular school lessons. The OECD team's recommendations on this will be found in the next chapter, on teachers and teaching.

REPETITION

Grade repetition is rife in the Canary Islands, according to PISA evidence. 45% of students in the PISA 2009 sample said they had repeated at least one grade, a percentage higher than the average in Spain (36%) and among the highest in the OECD. In reading, Canary Islands students who said they had repeated one grade achieved a mean score of 413 points; those who said they had repeated more than one grade achieved a mean score of 360 points. Both these scores are below the baseline Level 2. In contrast, those who had not repeated achieved a mean score of 492, the OECD average.

PISA 2009 results show that grade repetition has social as well as individual costs. In general, students who had repeated a grade came from a lower socio-economic background. However, comparing students and schools with similar socio-economic background, the average performance disadvantage of students who repeated a grade is still more than 80 points across Spain, 79 points in the Canary Islands. Moreover, poor performance is not only associated with a student who repeats a grade but with all students at his or her school. In other words, the higher the proportion of students who repeat a grade in a school, the lower the performance of those who did not repeat even after accounting for socio-economic background of students and the school. This negative impact for students who did not repeat is even stronger in the Canary Islands than in any other region of Spain. While the lower scores of students who have repeated years may be partly explained by the fact that they have, by 15, been taught less of the secondary syllabus, this cannot explain the impact of repetition on classmates who have not repeated years. The explanation must lie in another factor that depresses the performance of repeaters and non-repeaters alike, such as poor quality teaching or poor use of classroom time.

The government of the Canary Islands has suggested that the PISA sample overstates the region's repetition rate. However, a Eurydice document (European Commission, 2011) confirms that "In Belgium, Spain, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Portugal […] the number of pupils who have fallen behind at the end of primary education is very high, which means that a considerable percentage of pupils must repeat a year at least once during their primary schooling." The Canary Islands' own statistics, supplied to the OECD team, show that by the final year of compulsory secondary education, in 2007/08 (the last full academic year before PISA 2009 assessment), only 50% of pupils were in the class appropriate to their age: though the figure improved to 52% in 2008/09 and is estimated to have improved again to 53% in 2009/10. If any discrepancies remain to be explained, the OECD team thinks they may have arisen from school principals underreporting repetition. Staff may be confused about how to report it: on school visits, the OECD team sometimes had difficulty in establishing the school's repetition rate because different people offered different statistics. Or perhaps some students misunderstood the question they were asked in PISA, and said that they had repeated a year when they had only repeated in one or more subjects – but, as there is no reason why Canary Islands students should have misunderstood more than other Spanish-speaking students, comparisons remain valid.

The official Spanish statistics (Instituto de Evaluación, 2010) for academic year 2007/08 in Figure 4.3 show the percentages of Canary Islands students repeating each relevant year of compulsory education. (Spanish law prohibits repetition in years 1, 3 and 5 of primary school, so these years are not relevant.) Repetition rates in secondary education range from 21% in year 1 to 11% in year 4. In every relevant year, repetition was required of a much higher percentage of boys than girls: nearly one boy in four had to repeat the first year of secondary school. Though these figures cannot be compared directly with PISA figures for the percentage repeating at least once during their 10 years of compulsory education, the OECD team concludes that if PISA did overstate the Canary Islands' repetition rate, it did not overstate it by much.

All the stakeholder groups interviewed – except for the employers and teaching unions, with whom this was not discussed – regard the current incidence of repetition in the Canary Islands as far too high. The review team agrees.

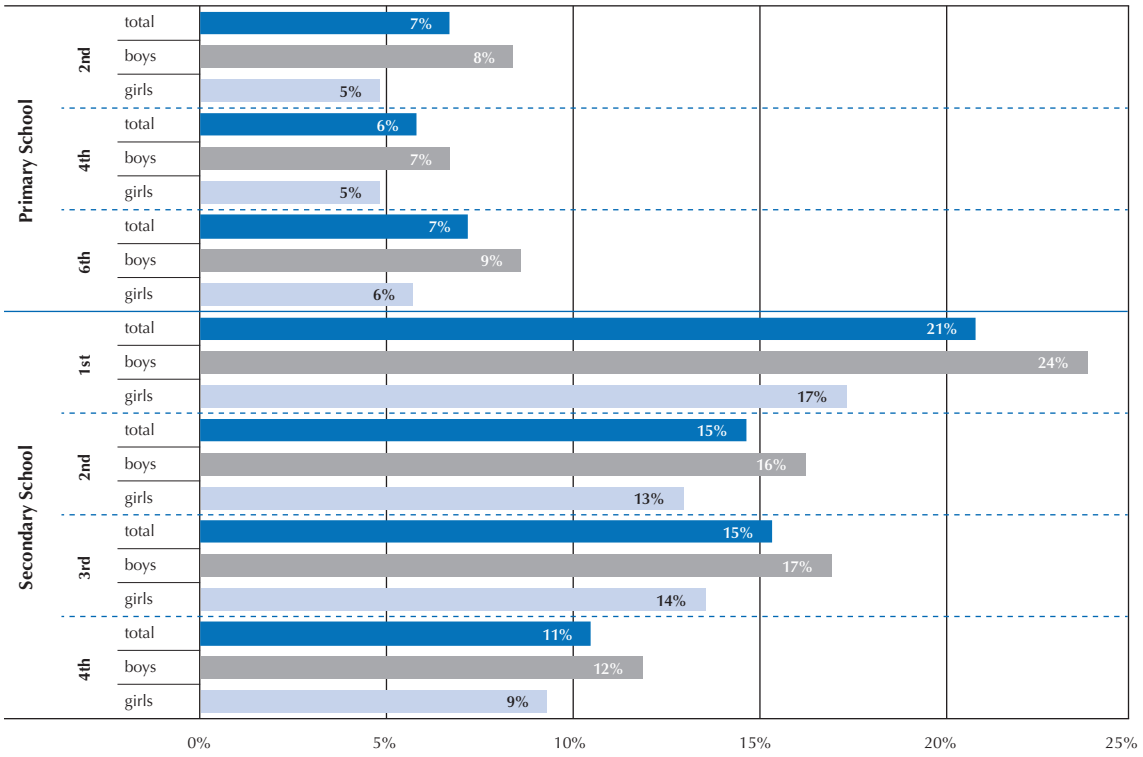
Repetition is not unique to Spain, and two OECD countries, the Netherlands and Belgium, achieved significantly above average PISA reading scores despite repetition rates of over 25%. But in general, as stated in the Executive Summary of Volume IV of the PISA 2009 report, "In countries, and in schools within countries, where more students repeat grades, overall results tend to be worse." The five top-performing OECD countries had repetition rates of 0% (Korea), 3% (Finland), 8% (Canada), 5% (New Zealand) and 0% (Japan).

The OECD team takes the view that in the Canary Islands context, the effects of using repetition as a standard form of remedial education are almost all bad. First, as high-performing PISA countries and good teachers around the world know, children will not learn well and master the curriculum unless they believe they can. It is very important to reinforce a child's positive self-images of their learning capabilities, rather than sanction them for failure. The main effect of making them repeat a year will be to convince them that they cannot learn, and it is no use trying. During school visits the team saw a number of graduation ceremonies. Every Canary Islands class has one at the end of the year, for the children who will be moving up to the next year. The children who are left out, and unable to move on up with their peers, must be left feeling totally demoralised and complete failures.

Secondly, as the PISA evidence demonstrates, repetition is rarely effective as a means of improving the student's work. On the contrary, it tends to depress performance. There are exceptional circumstances in which repetition may be justified – for example,

▪ Figure 4.3 ▪

Rates of repetition in compulsory education in the Canary Islands, 2007/08



Source: Sistema Estatal de Indicadores de la Educación: Edición 2010, Table 3.R 4.2.

for a student who missed classes for much of the year through sickness, a student so upset by a family event such as parents' divorce that they could not focus on learning, a non-Spanish-speaking immigrant who needs an extra year to embed the Spanish language or a child with moderate or severe learning difficulties who takes considerably longer to learn. However, the vast majority of students who did not acquire the necessary knowledge in their first year in a class will not acquire it if they spend a second year receiving the same teaching, but now surrounded by younger children, with lower self-esteem and far less confident in their learning abilities.

Thirdly, students who repeat years are more likely to drop out altogether before graduating from compulsory education (Fernández Enguita, et al., 2010). Though graduation rates in the Canary Islands are said to have improved since unemployment started to climb, in 2007/08, the latest year for which we have statistics, over 30% of the cohort left compulsory schooling without a graduation certificate. Official Spanish statistics[2] show that of young people aged 18-24 in 2008, 34% had left compulsory schooling prematurely. Drop-out is more common for boys than for girls, with 44% of boys leaving school before graduation. The Canary Islands authorities are very concerned about the dropout rate, and specifically asked the OECD team to make recommendations which can help to reduce it.

Fourthly, a high repetition rate generates a great deal of added cost and waste in the school system, draining from the education budget money that could yield far better quality improvement value if spent in other ways. The OECD team calculates that the funding required for a cohort of 100 students to pass through the 10 years of compulsory education exactly according to the pattern illustrated in Figure 3.3 is nearly 11% above the cost of compulsory education for those 100 students with no repetition – enough to buy a whole year's schooling for another 100 students. Most of this extra cost arises from repetition in secondary education, where rates are higher and repetition can be required in any year, not just in alternate years.

Fifthly, repetition is the wrong solution to under-achievement because it is reactive, not proactive. It is applied when end-year targets have already been missed.

In higher-performing countries and systems, schools and teachers take proactive steps to ensure that no student misses their targets if this can be avoided. Teachers monitor each student's progress continuously throughout the year. If the student hits learning difficulties or blocks, appropriate personalised help is promptly delivered. Two examples of this alternative approach, from two of the highest-performing PISA 2009 participants, are given in Boxes 4.2 and 4.3.

Box 4.2 **Ontario**

Recognising that struggling students at risk of dropping out or repeating grades can be identified, Ontario created the "Student Success Initiative" in high schools. Rather than sending out a team from the ministry, they gave the districts money to hire a "Student Success Leader" to co-ordinate efforts in their district. The ministry also gave money for the district leaders to meet and share strategies. Again each high school was given support to hire a provincially funded Student Success teacher and was required to create a Student Success team to track early indicators of academic struggles and design appropriate interventions. The outcomes of this work have changed Ontario's system profoundly and within a few years the high school graduation rate increased from 68% to 79%.

Box 4.3 **Finland**

With a different institutional setup, Finland's special teachers fulfil a similar role of early diagnosis and support, working closely with the class teachers to identify students in need of extra help and to work individually or in small groups with struggling students to provide the extra help and support they need to keep up with their classmates. It is not left solely to the discretion of the regular class teacher to identify a problem and alert the special teacher, every comprehensive school has a "pupils' multi-professional care group" that meets at least twice a month for two hours and which consists of the principal, the special education teacher, the school nurse, the school psychologist, a social worker, and the teachers whose students are being discussed. The parents of any child being discussed are contacted prior to the meeting and are sometimes asked to be present.

Source: OECD (2011), *Strong Performers and Successful Reformers: Lessons from PISA for the United States*, Chapter 5, "Finland: Slow and Steady Reform for Consistently High Results".

The OECD team recommends that work should begin as soon as possible on changing the Canary Islands' system from one in which repetition is regarded as both normal, and the standard response to student under-achievement, to one in which repetition is regarded as both rare, and a non-standard response to exceptional student difficulties or circumstances. This will require a major culture change from many teachers and schools. The team received the impression from discussions with a range of stakeholders that significant numbers of teachers in public schools regard the current levels of student failure as normal and inevitable. (This is less true in private schools where the staff have to answer to fee-paying parents.) Some are said to believe that failing appreciable numbers of students is the mark of a good teacher because it shows that they have high standards. Teachers holding such views are unlikely to improve results. In most better-performing PISA countries, teachers understand that a failing student is one whose problems have not yet been solved; and they bring all their professional expertise to bear to solve the problems and get the student back on track. Teachers in the Canary Islands should be encouraged to take similar personal responsibility for ensuring every student's success: a student's failure is their failure too. If they do not feel they have the skills to help the student that is not a reason to give up trying – it is a reason to acquire those skills as soon as possible, from colleagues or from in-service training.

A number of educational practices and processes will need reform to give teachers the tools and the skills to be proactive managers of students' learning, taking active steps to help them avoid failure. A variety of assessment methods will need to be deployed by the teachers and appropriate training, at both pre-service and in-service levels, provided in the use and interpretation of assessment data, in particular in the case of formative assessments, so that the learning difficulties students encounter can be identified and solutions devised. The rewards system should be reviewed to find ways of rewarding teachers who do all this well, and – as discussed in the next chapter – schools' and teachers' accountability for results should be strengthened. It would also be helpful to bring together concerned stakeholders, including parents, to agree and define the very limited circumstances in which it will remain appropriate for a school to require a student to repeat a grade – for example, if they fail an end-year standardised test in Spanish or mathematics by a large margin – and who, besides the teacher, should be involved in the decision. The OECD team sees arguments for making repetition subject to parental consent, or giving parents and secondary students a right of appeal to an independent authority.

CURRICULUM

The Canary Islands lower secondary curriculum, briefly described in Chapter 1, is shown as a weekly schedule in Table 4.1. It contains compulsory and – from the 2nd year onwards – increasing numbers of optional subjects, to fill the 30 hours a week that students are required to spend at school.

On the basis of discussions with stakeholders and team members' own international experience, the OECD team sees a number of issues with the curriculum as currently delivered in the Islands. The first issue is that the curriculum is strongly academic, offering little to students whose main interest is in learning relevant to professions or occupations they might enter, or students who are turned off by theoretical academic studies but would be engaged by more practical, vocational studies.

Secondly, the curriculum does not look like one designed to offer students logical routes towards progressively deeper study of subjects that interest them, except in compulsory subjects and the sciences. Computing, for example, seems to be a compulsory subject with no time allocated to it in the 2nd year, to disappear in the 3rd year and to return as an option in the 4th. Classical culture is an option only in the 3rd year, and if you want to study it you have to drop out of studying the arts for that year; though as in the 2nd year the arts are shown as an optional subject with no time allocated, it is not clear that you will have been able to study them in the 2nd year either. Similarly, if in the 3rd year you want to study music – as many young people do – you have to give up studying technology for that year, which is unfortunate as technology is the nearest to a practical subject on the curriculum. Citizenship education is taught only in the 2nd year, ethics only in the 4th, for no obvious reason. A sceptical observer might conclude that the curriculum was designed as much to assure subject teachers of a steady workflow, as to meet students' needs and interests.

Thirdly, the curriculum – backed, presumably, by regional regulations – looks very directive and inflexible, laying down not only which subjects must be taught (as would be expected of any national curriculum), but also specifying which other subjects they can be combined with, and for how many periods a week each must be taught. In a number of other systems, decisions on possible subject combinations and time to be spent on each subject are for local decision, usually by schools themselves. While schools may not find it operationally feasible to offer all students their desired subject combinations, at least they are not prevented by regulations from trying.

Table 4.1 Curriculum for secondary compulsory education (ESO) – Weekly schedule

SUBJECTS	1st ESO	2nd ESO	3rd ESO	4th ESO
Physical Education	2	2	2	2
Geography & History	3	3	3	3
Spanish Language & Literature	4	4	4	4
English	4	4	4	4
Mathematics	4	4	4	4
Tutoring	1	1	1	1
Religion	1	1	2	1
Second Foreign Language	3	2	2	3[3]
Science	3	3		
Biology & Geology			2	3[3]
Physics & Chemistry			2	3[3]
Technology	2	2	2[1]	3[3]
Arts	3		2[2]	3[3]
Music		3	2[1]	3[3]
Classical Culture			2[2]	
Latin				3[3]
Computing				3[3]
Citizenship Education		1		
Ethics				2

Compulsory subjects

Optional subjects

3rd ESO [1] **Choose 1 subject from these 2**
[2] **Choose 1 subject from these 2**

4th ESO [3] **Students study 3 of these subjects: first they choose one of the following options and then choose one more subject among the rest:**
Option A: Biology + Physics & Chemistry
Option B: Technology + Physics & Chemistry
Option C: Arts + Music
Option D: Second Foreign Language + Latin

Source: Canary Islands Education Ministry, 2010.

Fourthly, many stakeholders, including some regional government officials, told the OECD team that the curriculum as delivered in Canary Islands schools gives students inadequate basic skills; though Spanish law says that the curriculum in each region should cover these. The OECD team is not entirely clear on what stakeholders meant by basic skills, but the team takes basic skills to mean the skills that students will need to prosper in later life and work. In the team's view, students need to be equipped with two types of basic skill: first, functional literacy in language, mathematics and ICT; secondly, the ability to apply knowledge, solve problems, think critically and keep learning throughout life. The team shares the view of stakeholders that the Canary Islands curriculum delivers the first type of basic skill to too few students, and makes no serious attempt to deliver the second – with the results seen in PISA. This is partly because – unlike national curricula in a number of other countries – the Spanish national curriculum contains little by way of specific statements on what students should have learnt and be able to do by the end of each year of compulsory schooling.

Governments of Spanish regions such as the Canary Islands have the legal right to define 35% of the curriculum themselves; only 65% is laid down at national level. This gives the Canary Islands the freedom to re-design the existing curriculum. The OECD team recommends that they do so, in consultation with all stakeholders including secondary students and their parents. Priorities in redesigning the curriculum should be to accommodate more professional and work-related subject options and give more compulsory subject time to the development of basic skills of both types. A wide range of international examples, presented in Boxes 4.4 to 4.7, could be worth studying.

Box 4.4 **The new national curriculum in Northern Ireland**

There is a new Northern Ireland curriculum for students aged 14-16 (the Canary Islands equivalent would be the 3rd and 4th year of ESO). For these years, the subjects required by law to be taught have been significantly reduced, to learning for life and work, physical education, religious education and developing skills and capabilities. The aim is to provide greater choice and flexibility for pupils and allow them access to a wider range of academic and vocational courses provided under the revised curriculum's "entitlement framework", which should be fully in place by 2013. From 2013, schools will be required to provide pupils aged 14-16 with access to at least 24 different subject courses. At least one-third of the courses must be academic and at least one-third applied (vocational/ professional/technical). The remaining one-third of courses is at the discretion of each school. Individual pupils will decide on the number and mix of courses they follow.

Box 4.5 **England's Diplomas**

England's new Diplomas offer an interesting example of re-arranging secondary studies to appeal to students who risk disengagement and dropout if taught only academic subjects (which is more often true of boys, though holds good for some girls too), and young people who want to be sure their studies are relevant to the professions or occupations they intend to enter. The Diploma is a qualification for 14- to 19-year-olds that combines practical, hands-on experience with academic learning. It was introduced to increase the qualification choices available to young people and to help them to develop the knowledge and skills employers and universities demand. All Diplomas were developed in partnership with employers. All Diploma courses include work experience with an employer, and the study of maths, language and ICT until students have reached defined standards of functional proficiency. Young people can continue to study these and indeed any other subjects to higher levels, because the Diploma is a flexible "umbrella" qualification that can be gained by accruing other qualifications, such as GCSEs and A-levels, within their Diploma programme.

Diplomas in ten subject areas were introduced in selected schools and colleges from September 2009. These subject areas are: business administration and finance; construction and the built environment; creative and media; engineering; environmental and land-based studies; hair and beauty studies; hospitality; information technology; manufacturing and product design; and society, health and development. A further four Diplomas – in travel and tourism, public services, retail business, and sport and active leisure – began in September 2010. There are three levels of Diploma, each taking two years to complete: the Foundation Diploma, a qualification for 16-year-olds equivalent to five lower-grade GCSEs; the Higher Diploma, a qualification for 16-year-olds equivalent to five high-grade GCSEs; and the Advanced Diploma, a qualification for those aged 18+, equivalent to 3.5 A-levels, which can lead either to university or to a career.

Note: This example is relevant to the Canary Islands for the way subject and skills studies are organised in a work-related context. It is not suggested that Diplomas be adopted as a qualification.

Box 4.6 **Basic skills teaching in England**

Some of the success of Anglophone countries in the PISA test is undoubtedly related to teaching styles. For example, in England, the curriculum is structured so that each child can work at their own level within their own age group. According to research by the English Department for Education, teachers in England were more likely than other countries in PISA to:

- ask the students to explain the meaning of a text and give students enough time to think about their answers;
- encourage students to express opinions about a text;
- ask difficult questions that challenge students to get a better understanding of a text;
- show students how the information in texts builds on what they already know.

Box 4.7 **Hong Kong's move away from a content-based curriculum**

A number of countries that have achieved some success in PISA, including Scotland, Singapore, Scandinavian countries and Hong Kong, are moving away from a content-based curriculum to one which emphasises learning to learn. According to a *Times Educational Supplement* report,* "Kenneth Chen, Hong Kong under-secretary for education, said much of the success was due to a curriculum introduced over the past decade which emphasized "21st-century skills" such as learning how to learn. "Obviously, you need content and subject knowledge," he told The TES. "But more importantly, we feel that kids need to have that attitude that they need to learn continuously". Mr. Chen highlighted "liberal studies" – one of four core subjects in Hong Kong's senior secondary curriculum – which is designed to teach pupils how to learn and think critically and creatively. The pattern, in Singapore, Scandinavia, Hong Kong, Scotland and countless other countries, is to move away from an emphasis on facts and knowledge and entwine knowledge, skills and the development of personal qualities."

*William Short, *Times Educational Supplement*, 28 January 2011.

ASSESSMENT

In PISA 2009, school principals were asked to report the types and frequency of assessments used: standardised tests, teacher-developed tests, teachers' judgmental ratings, student portfolios, or student assignments. Seventy-six percent of students across OECD countries are enrolled in schools whose principals reported that they use **standardised tests** for 15-year-old students. Standardised tests enable teachers and school principals to assess their students in a way that allows for comparison with national or regional norms; PISA shows that these tests, while not necessarily producing higher performance, are associated with lower performance differences between schools with students of different social backgrounds. However, standardised testing is relatively uncommon in Spain where less than one-third of students are in schools with standardised tests. In the Canary Islands the proportion of students assessed on basis of standardised tests is slightly below the Spanish average, at 27%.

According to PISA, **teacher-developed tests** are the most common assessment practice in the Canary Islands, where 92% of students (compared to Spain 88%, OECD 62%) are in schools where teacher-developed tests are held at least once a month. **Teachers' judgmental ratings** are also well-established assessment practice in Spain, and the Canary Islands are no exception. However, the fact that 8% of students (compared to Spain 3%, OECD 6%) are in schools without any assessment in the form of teachers' judgmental ratings suggests that this assessment practice is not universal in the Islands. Assessment of student performance on the basis of **student assignments, projects and/or homework** is also well established on the Canary Islands, and in Spain as a whole. 94% of students in the Canary Islands are in schools where students are assessed on basis of student assignments, projects and/or homework at least once a month; this is 8% above the Spanish average and 23% above the OECD average. However, PISA also indicates that 2% of students are in schools where this form of assessment is never used.

It is very important for a region such as the Canary Islands, which has had disappointing PISA results, to be able to take improvement action and be sure that it is working. To be sure that it is working, the government needs to be able to rely on the regional assessment system to produce regular, reliable reports on changes over time. The regional authorities, school inspectors, schools and teachers all need to know from the assessment system which schools are achieving good and improving results for their pupils, and which schools still need help to do so. The OECD team suggests that it is very difficult to achieve either of these purposes with the Islands' current assessment system. To monitor changes over time and to compare the performance of different

schools and pupils fairly and equitably, a country or region needs either national/regional examinations or standardised tests or both. Many European countries have national examinations at the end of compulsory education; Spain does not.

The national and Islands-wide diagnostic tests recently introduced are standardised, but they only test samples of pupils in selected years. The results take time to come through, be digested and influence policy. Also, because these tests cannot by law be used to compare the performance of schools, they cannot presently be released to enable schools to judge how well they and their pupils are doing. The legal constraint is unfortunate. It was imposed, the team understands, because principals and teachers wish to avoid any risk of "league tables" being published, allowing outsiders who do not realise how difficult their job is to make unfavourable comparisons. But it also prevents schools and teachers knowing how their school's performance compares to that of other schools. All good education professionals want to know this. Principals and teachers must also be uncomfortable that regional authorities and inspectors know things – possibly, unfavourable things – about their performance which they do not know themselves (one possibility would be Value-added modelling of schools, see Chapter 6).

When England introduced national curriculum tests for all 11-year-old pupils and fed back every school's results to all primary schools and teachers, the effect was instructive. Before that, schools with many pupils from socio-economically disadvantaged families had always believed that their results were as good as could be expected from those pupils. When they saw that other local schools with very similar pupil populations were achieving better results, they knew they could achieve better results too; and they did. Across the country, results rose every year, for a number of years. The consensus of educational opinion in England is that professional pride and determination made much more difference than any public pressure. Giving results to the schools would enable them to respond better to student needs, even if they were not published.

Teacher-assessed tests and teachers' judgements have a vital part to play in formative assessment and in the monitoring of pupil progress during the school year. However, these assessment methods are not really adequate to support high-stakes decisions on whether standards have been achieved by the end of each year of compulsory education. The 4th year of ESO is particularly important because a graduation certificate is or is not issued at that point, but for as long as any significant element of repetition remains in the system, every year end (except the 1st, 3rd and 5th of primary) is potentially high-stakes for pupils. Schools visited by the OECD team confirmed that in the current system, teachers may believe that they are applying the same standards as other teachers, and are applying them fairly and equally to all pupils, but there are no checks or external moderation to ensure this, and the assessment criteria stated in the national curriculum are far too broad to ensure consistent interpretation by all teachers. One school principal said that he only knew how well his school was doing, relative to others, by comparing results in the *Bachillerato* and university entry tests, for which every school's results are published. When the team asked at another school whether all teachers shared a common understanding of education quality standards, it was not reassuring to be told "yes, the Constitution tells us what education should be and should deliver". The absence of a clear, transparent, common basis for judgements on whether end-year standards have been met, contributes to suspicions among students and their parents that repetition decisions may be unfounded or unfair.

The OECD team recommends that standardised tests should be adopted in the Islands in all public and publicly-subsidised private schools, at least for year-end use in core subjects such as Spanish and mathematics. If a bank of alternative tests is developed rather than a single national test, and the test bank administrators allocate tests on a randomised basis to schools as they request them, the risks of "teaching to the test" will be much reduced. Introducing standardised tests towards the year end may not lead directly to a rise in school standards – this could happen, but PISA evidence on this is inconclusive. However, as the PISA 2009 report points out, it can have a range of other benefits. In the Canary Islands, these include providing an additional, more objective and sustainable basis for judgements on the adequacy of student performance and whether students should be made to repeat years; on whether individual teachers are achieving good results; and on whether teachers should receive bonuses for good performance. Standardised tests would also facilitate improved accountability to parents, and enable the regional government to judge whether school improvement policies are working and education quality improving. Such tests can also be useful mid-year, to help teachers assess whether pupils are making satisfactory progress before it is too late to put things right within the year.

It is recognised that standardised tests cannot come into use immediately, but there is no reason why work towards this should not start very soon, with active involvement of schools. A first step will be to evaluate the tests already in use in some schools to see if they could serve for all: if not, tests suitable for the Islands' conditions and curriculum will need to be developed. Teachers will need to be trained on how to use and mark the tests, and how to interpret and act on the results. Some external moderation of teachers' marking will be needed, particularly in the early days, to ensure consistency – inspectors could undertake this to inform and drive future school improvement.

Box 4.8 shows how one OECD country, Mexico, has overhauled its assessment system.

The team suggests also that testing at the end of 4th ESO – on which graduation decisions, future employment for those who leave school at that stage and progression to upper secondary education depend – is particularly important and merits special treatment.

Box 4.8 The ENLACE assessment system in Mexico

In 2006 the Mexican Ministry of Education implemented the first round of the annual National Assessment of the Academic Achievement in Schools (*Evaluación Nacional del Logro Académico en Centros Escolares*, ENLACE). ENLACE was designed to serve as a benchmark to inform improvements in teaching and learning processes at the school and classroom level for primary and secondary students. Mathematics and Spanish have been tested each year, a third subject varying each year, i.e. science, civics and ethics, history and geography. The test is applied to primary students in years three to six and secondary students in years one to three and assesses all students in the relevant grade (census assessment).

The General Directorate for Policy Evaluation (*Dirección General de Evaluación de Políticas*, DGEP) processes test results and produces materials for users to interpret the results that are presented via school information packets and via the Internet (*www.dgep.sep.gob.mx*). Through this website, students, families and any interested person can obtain information, using a special identification number of the student's answer sheet. The results can also be seen in aggregated form, by school, by state or at the national level. Media coverage of the results is widespread.

The information that schools are supposed to receive through state educational authorities includes the proportion of students at each achievement level by grade and content subject, compared with the results of the students and schools of the same type. This is useful for identifying possible teaching improvement opportunities and for allowing groups to compare their results against those of other schools with similar socio-economic conditions and infrastructure. Thus, teachers, school principals, and students and their families can assess progress and the difficulties encountered in learning, including identifying parts of the curriculum that have not been appropriately addressed. Teachers are expected to analyse students' results and identify strengths and weaknesses in the subject areas tested.

Some Mexican States have developed their own materials that are distributed to supervisory staff (*Supervisores* or *Jefes de Sector*), and offer some form of support and professional development courses to schools identified as underperforming based on collective ENLACE results and needs assessments. Additionally, unified individual dossiers for students aim to accompany each student throughout this or her entire school life. Information on the results of assessments must be included in order to determine progress in learning. This dossier could also be used for at-risk students and for efforts to reduce drop-out rates.

Source: OECD (2011), *Establishing a Framework for Evaluation and Teacher Incentives: Considerations for Mexico*, OECD Publishing.

In many national systems there are external examinations at the end of compulsory education. PISA results show that countries that use standards-based external exams tend to perform higher, even after accounting for national income: students in these school systems perform, on average across OECD countries, 16 points higher than students in school systems that do not use these exams. Standards-based exam passes also have greater value as a labour market qualification than graduation certificates based on non-standardised teacher assessment.

Spain does not have an external exam at 16+, only the *Bachillerato* at 18+. However, if standardised tests at the end of 4th ESO are administered as "unseen" tests taken by all pupils on the same day, and externally marked, they could constitute a Canary Islands school-leaving exam, and gain currency as such among employers in the Canary Islands and beyond. Exams need not be just pass or fail – they can be graded or have merit categories, overall or by subject, to distinguish between those students who passed easily and less easily, those who just failed and failed by some margin – providing extra information useful for future employers or educators.

THE SCHOOL DAY

The regional government asked for the OECD team's opinion on whether the length and shape of the school day was as conducive to learning as it could be. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the Canary Islands school day is from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. – after lunch, the rest of the afternoon can be used for supplementary or complementary activities. The team did not have time during field-work to do a full study of this, and could not find any local research. Therefore the team can only offer comments based on international research and best practice.

Research done in and since the 1970s (Stallings, 1980) focused on increasing the length of the school day in order to maximise time on task, which was seen as crucial to learning outcomes. However it became clear that, although this was important in countries where learning times were very short, overall it is how time is used in the classroom, rather than the exact amount of time, that makes the difference to learning outcomes. The PISA evidence cited earlier, on the relationship between time spent in regular lessons and performance, shows that this is still true.

Most countries, except those which run double or treble shifts because of lack of space, run a school day from approximately 8:00 a.m. to the early afternoon, some with a one and some with a two hour break for lunch. It is not at all common to have a school day that runs straight through from 7:30 a.m. or 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. without a lunch break, as the Canary Islands does – particularly as it seems that early morning sessions are not school time, but rather extended day care. The team suspects that this long stretch without a break is very tiring both for teachers and students, particularly younger students. All students must find it quite difficult to keep up their concentration and energy levels throughout that time. Ending the day at 2:00 p.m. must also pose childcare difficulties for working parents, and be particularly unhelpful for students from disadvantaged families with fewer learning resources in the home. The rationale for choosing the current school day is not clear to the OECD team. A number of stakeholders criticised it.

The OECD team recommends that research be commissioned on how the timing of the school day impacts on the learning of primary and secondary age students respectively. Distinguishing between them is important because scientific evidence suggests that the teenage body clock lags several hours behind that of younger children and adults. A number of studies suggest that, while young children tend to sleep naturally between 9:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m., the equivalent period in adolescence is between midnight and 9:00 a.m., meaning that many are barely awake when school normally begins. (A state secondary school in England achieved big results improvements in all core subjects in the national exams taken by its 16-year old pupils, in just one year, simply by changing the start of the school day from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.) (*The Times*, 2011a). It could be helpful to try out some alternative models on an experimental basis, so that pro and cons can be compared – in private schools if experimentation is unacceptable to public schools – and to draw on experience from other Spanish regions that have adopted different patterns. The research should include surveys of students, parents and school staff on what they like and dislike about the current school day, and should be published. Such research will enable decisions on changing the Canary Islands school day to be based on evidence, both of what works and of stakeholders' views. Whether or not the shape or length of the day changes, the team also recommends investigating ways of boosting school performance by using the available classroom time more effectively.

SUMMER HOLIDAYS AND SUMMER SCHOOLS

It might also be worth researching the impact on learning of current holiday patterns, if changes are not totally ruled out by Spanish national law. Spain has very long summer holidays, related no doubt to the extremes of temperature in many regions; the Canary Islands are never too hot for learning. In England, where summer holidays for public schools are only six weeks, research (Sodha and Margo, 2008) has found that students forget much of what they have learnt during the summer holidays. As one newspaper (*The Times*, 2011b) put it, "research has found that brains, like limbs, go slack with lack of exercise. The long school holiday, once essential to liberate young hands for the harvest, is now blamed for a summer learning loss, for the swift onset of teenage boredom and for sharp downturns in productivity as millions of mothers take time off to look after their families". Some local authority areas have already changed from three-term to five- or six-term years, in which total holiday time remains the same but is differently distributed.

If, or while, the summer holiday in the Islands remains unchanged, another idea worth considering is to offer extra tuition in summer schools (sometimes called summer camps). These could both replace some reinforcement lessons after school and be a real alternative to repetition for students with ground to make up. In other countries, summer schools or camps have also worked well for highly gifted children. The International Gateway for Gifted Youth runs schools for these children both in summer and in winter, in England and Singapore.

Summer schools for children needing to catch up with classmates need not be run on school premises. Because they offer an opportunity to try a new approach with children for whom traditional teaching has not worked, it would be better not to run them in students' usual schools. If possible, some outdoor learning should be included: the Canary Islands offer wonderful natural facilities for teaching geography, biology and almost any other subject. Teachers need not all be drawn from the Islands, though Canarian teachers could volunteer if they wished; summer schools could provide opportunities for young, newly-trained teachers without posts to practice their skills and use their training. Spanish-speaking teachers from other countries or Spain's hotter regions might well be keen to spend some of their summer holidays in the Canary Islands, and could bring with them techniques and methodologies that have worked elsewhere. The Canary Islands government would of course need to finance the operation of the summer schools and payments to their teachers, including bonuses if student attainment is improved; this should be checked by standardised tests applied at the start and end. Students' main incentive to attend would be the prospect of avoiding an extra year or extra classes after school if they improved; but well-organised summer schools, with friends and outdoor activities, can also be great fun.

GENDER DIFFERENCES

The regional authorities did not specifically ask for the OECD team's views on gender differences in achievement, but the PISA findings already mentioned in Chapter 2 suggest that there are issues here. To recap, in the Canary Islands, as in many other parts of the world, it is clear that boys are doing less well in school than girls overall. Low reading performance in the Canary Islands, as in

most educational systems, is more common among male students than females. Thirty-nine percent of boys performed below the baseline Level 2 in reading, compared to 27% of girls. And, as in most countries, although boys do better than girls in mathematics they are also dropping out of education earlier and smaller numbers are applying to university. But it is also true that in some important respects, girls in the Canary Islands outperform boys less than elsewhere. In overall reading scores, girls beat boys by a smaller margin than the OECD average; and in mathematics and particularly science, boys outperform girls by a larger margin than the OECD average.

Gender differences are complex, arising both from inherited and societal factors. Unfortunately, the poor performance of boys at school and through higher education is now a global phenomenon. It is important that Canary Islands society is aware of the changing demands now being made on boys and men. Changes in the workplace, with an increased focus on service industries means that the male workforce is required to have both technical and communication skills. To quote one expert: "We continually worry about boys' grades or whether they can get into a good university, but what's really at stake is the moral and social development of boys: we're raising and teaching boys to live and work in a changed world where they'll no longer work the land, they'll work the phones."[3]

The curriculum reform that the team recommends in this chapter could be particularly important for boys, seeking careers in a Canary Islands job market where the current economic crisis has reduced the demand for unskilled or relatively low skilled labour. It may be argued that the government of the Islands should be responding by providing more and better professional or vocational training opportunities post-16. This is likely to be part of the answer, but is beyond the scope of the present PISA review to recommend. However, the OECD team believes that it is important to equip young people during compulsory secondary education with the basic skills (widely defined), including the skill of learning to learn, that they will need for all possible futures. This will be particularly important for young people not proceeding to higher education: on present patterns more of them will be boys than girls. And to maximise the chances of their learning the skills and subject aspects that will help them gain training opportunities and commend themselves to employers with jobs to offer, it will be helpful to build more links between employers and schools, as in the example of England's Diplomas given in the section on the curriculum.

PRE-COMPULSORY/EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

This report of a PISA review naturally focuses on compulsory education. However, student learning during compulsory education can be significantly influenced both by what has come before, and what is expected to follow. The OECD team has some observations about pre-compulsory and post-compulsory education which are worth including in this chapter.

There is now international consensus on the value of early childhood interventions in preparing children for school and life. It is in the early years that nutrition and stimulus play key roles in building the basis for learning. However, few countries offer comprehensive early childhood services, and it is often a struggle to avoid these degenerating into child care arrangements. In the Canary Islands, early childhood provision is widely available, but the quality of the programmes and the degree of parental engagement and participation seems to vary from place to place. Children from 3 to 6 years are guaranteed a free school place in state primary schools across the region. They are always attended by early childhood teachers and, in case of special needs, by other professionals. On the other hand, the educational care of children aged 0 to 3 years is provided in early childhood schools. These schools are either private or state, in which case they depend on the municipalities or the Canary Islands government. The Education Ministry is responsible for authorising the opening of an early childhood school, after checking that an establishment meets standards for buildings and staffing.

The OECD team did not have time to investigate the early childhood system fully, although it did see some early-year classrooms that appeared to be functioning well with supportive teachers. The adequacy data received from the Ministry of Education suggested that 92% of children aged 8 in the academic year 2009/10 were well prepared and functioning at a high level, so that most children entering school are adequately prepared for learning at the beginning of their school experience. There must be concerns about the other 7-8% of children; it is unclear whether these are the same children who have difficulties in later life.

It is very important that these early childhood programmes are evaluated and that budget cuts do not fall on those that are operating satisfactorily, particularly where they are helping children identified as being at risk. Targeted programmes for at risk children, and the monitoring of those children throughout school, have been shown to be effective ways of reducing the risk of dropout and failure. The number of at risk children may now be increasing, as more families fall into high-risk categories because of adverse economic circumstances.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Stimulating more **parent and family engagement** in the life of schools and the education of children is very important. Existing schemes should be evaluated to see what works. Schools need to reach out to parents, welcome them in, answer their questions and concerns, share evidence on student attainment in a way that parents can understand, and treat them as equal partners in the joint enterprise of helping their children learn. Engagement with and programmes for grandparents and other caregivers should also be considered.
- The existing specialist teams may well be effective in diagnosing **pupils with special educational needs**, but teachers need to be trained to know when to call them in. Teachers, particularly secondary teachers, also need training to identify **students struggling to master the national curriculum** and give them the appropriate help.
- **Reinforcement programmes for struggling students** are widely available but have never been evaluated. They should be, as soon as possible, to establish whether they are well-targeted, whether all the "strugglers" are being identified and provided for, and whether the programmes are measurably improving participants' attainment. PISA evidence suggests that out-of school reinforcement programmes in the same style as regular lessons are unlikely to be useful, given how much time is already allocated to regular language and maths lessons; and that the best way to improve strugglers' results is to improve the quality of regular lessons.
- **Repetition** (making students repeat school years) is counter-productive. It erodes students' belief in their learning abilities; tends to depress performance, both of the student concerned and their classmates; is a major cause of drop-out; increases cost and waste in the school system; and addresses under-performance too late to do anything about it. The repetition rate should be reduced to as near zero as possible. Instead, schools and teachers should be encouraged and trained to monitor student progress continuously throughout the year and deliver appropriate personalised help, in good time, to students who hit learning difficulties. Stakeholders, including parents, should be brought together to agree and define the very limited circumstances in which it will remain appropriate for a school to require a student to repeat a grade, and who – besides the teacher – should be involved in the decision. The OECD team sees arguments for making repetition subject to parental consent, or giving parents and secondary students a right of appeal to an independent authority.
- The **secondary curriculum** requires reform: it is too academic and inflexible and not designed to offer students logical study pathways or equip them with key and basic skills. Priorities in redesigning the curriculum should be to accommodate more professional and work-related subject options, make it less content-based and give more time to skills development.
- **Assessment** methods need considerable improvement. Ideally, every teacher should use standardised assessment criteria.
- Research, including surveys of students, parents and school staff, should be commissioned on how the current shape and length of **the school day**, and the long summer holidays, impact on student learning at various ages. Ways of boosting school performance by using the available classroom time more effectively should also be investigated.
- **Summer schools** with international input should be considered for struggling students, whether or not holiday patterns change.
- **Early childhood programmes** are important and should be maintained despite budget pressures, if they are helping vulnerable children. Current programmes should be evaluated to see if they are preparing children well for school.

Notes

1. Ministry of Education, document received by OECD team from the Commissioner for School Harmony.
2. Sistema estatal de indicadores de la educacion, cited in Evaluación general de diagnóstico 2009, Grafico 2.6b, which gives this breakdown for students in Year 4 of primary school (9-10 year olds), assumed to be representative of all ages.
3. Dr Adam Cox, The National Boys Education Conference, Australia, 2008.

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5

Teachers and Teaching

This chapter will present the main points arising from the OECD team's discussions with key personnel in the education sector on teacher recruitment, preparation and working conditions; a detailed analysis of teacher education and training programmes, both initial and in-service; and the team's findings and recommendations.

INTRODUCTION

The central contribution of teachers and teaching to the promotion of a high quality education system has been confirmed in a wide range of international research. Indeed, it has been demonstrated that, of all the in-school variables that can add value to the achievements of the students, the quality of teaching is the most significant. This is made clear in the OECD PISA 2009 Report (OECD, 2010), which states "The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers and principals, since student learning is ultimately the product of what goes on in classrooms." It is also recognised in OECD report *Teachers Matter* (OECD, 2005, p. 26), where it is stated that: "Of those variables which are potentially open to policy influence, factors involving teachers and teaching are the most important influences on student learning." (Rivikin, et al., 2005, p. 419) state that: "High quality instruction throughout primary school could substantially offset disadvantages associated with low economic background." It follows that significant improvements in the quality of education are unlikely to be achieved in the absence of high quality teacher education programmes and a working environment that provides appropriate supports, challenges and rewards.

Many of the issues highlighted in the rest of this chapter, and many of our findings and recommendations are likely to apply also to teachers in other regions of Spain. A recent OECD report, *Building a High-Quality Teaching Profession – Lessons from around the world* (OECD, 2011a), brings together evidence from PISA, *Education at a Glance 2011: OECD Indicators* (OECD, 2011b) and OECD's 2008 Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) in which Spain participated (OECD, 2009). This report identified the conditions in which high-quality teaching is most likely to flourish, and the countries where those conditions exist to the fullest extent. Only rarely was Spain among those countries. For example:

- Of 23 TALIS countries, Spain had the third highest percentage of teachers who got no mentoring or induction. The percentage of teachers who got no induction was more than twice the TALIS average. The percentage who got no mentoring was more than 2.5 times the TALIS average.
- Spain supported a relatively low percentage of its teachers to undertake professional development (in-service training). The percentage of teachers whose full training costs were met was some 10 percentage points below the TALIS average; only 30% were allowed to take in-service training during scheduled teaching hours, compared to a TALIS average of over 50%; and only 5% received a salary supplement for training, compared to 12% across all TALIS countries. Given this lack of support, it was very creditable that the number of training days undertaken by teachers in Spain paying some or all of their own costs was marginally higher than the TALIS average number of days.
- At 45%, the percentage of Spanish teachers who had had no appraisal in the last 18 months was more than three times the TALIS average, the second highest after Italy; and appraisal was relatively unlikely to impact on Spanish teachers' careers.
- Where appraisal of Spanish teachers was undertaken, student results were considered **slightly** more important and helping students with Special Educational Needs **considerably** more important than the TALIS average; on the other hand, introducing innovative practices and undertaking professional development were considerably less important.
- Spanish teachers were less likely than teachers in the average TALIS country to be dismissed or have their pay reduced because of persistent underperformance. They were also less likely than teachers in the average TALIS country to receive financial or other rewards if they were more innovative or improved the quality of their teaching.
- Compared to Europe's highest-performing PISA countries, the grounds on which Spanish teachers could receive additional payments were relatively few, and largely unrelated to performance or taking on extra duties. Both Finland and the Netherlands reward outstanding teaching performance, successful completion of professional development activities, teaching more classes or hours than required by the full-time contract, special tasks such as career guidance or counselling, leading extra-curricular activities and teaching students with special educational needs. In Spain none of these things are rewarded – except completion of professional development activities, which in some regions (not the Canary Islands) is a condition for receiving six-yearly service increments.
- The only indicator on which Spain ranked highly was on making teaching an attractive profession in pay terms. Comparing salaries of teachers with 15 years of experience to earnings for all full-time workers aged 25 to 64 with tertiary education, Spanish teachers earned 26% more. Teachers in all the other 18 OECD countries for which data was available earned less, ranging from 3% less in Germany to 50% less in the Czech Republic (OECD average: 21% less) (OECD, 2011b, Table D3.1).

TEACHERS' TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Teachers in the Canary Islands are part of the Spanish Civil Service and so are covered by civil service terms and conditions of employment. As civil servants, they are contracted to work a 37.5 hour week and have jobs for life. There is no early retirement scheme for civil servants, though individuals may apply for early retirement if health problems render them unable to continue working.

A teacher's working week is organised as follows. Primary teachers teach for 25 hours a week and have to be present in school for a total of 28 hours. The rest of their working time, which can be spent out of school, is allocated for activities such as class preparation, examining students' homework and marking assessments. Secondary teachers teach for 18 hours a week and have to be present in school for a total of 24 hours, with the remainder spent as for their primary counterparts.

Some teachers are also tutors. Tutors spend at least one hour a week with each student tutored, so have a reduced load of other teaching. During tutoring sessions, students' progress and other issues related to their schooling are discussed. Tutor groups consist of 25 students at primary level and 30 students at secondary. Tutors are designated by the school principal to monitor students' learning progress, serve as advisors to other teachers in the school, and report their observations to the principal. Tutors also play a vital role in communications with parents; two hours per week are reserved for discussions with students' families. To date, teachers at secondary level who serve as tutors have received very little pedagogical training for this role; though the team understands that a new training model is in preparation.

Teacher recruitment

Teachers are appointed to schools by officials in the Canary Islands Ministry of Education, who select them from lists of those successful in competitions, which must be open to teachers from anywhere in Spain. The rules governing both the competitions and the selection of teachers for appointment to particular vacancies are laid down nationally. All candidates must have passed the general civil service exam. The rules require candidates for permanent teaching appointments to be considered for vacancies according to a points system, also laid down nationally. The points system is heavily weighted in favour of teachers with greater seniority, much to the dissatisfaction of younger and newly qualified teachers who find it difficult to gain employment, and the principals of public schools who have no input into the selection process for staff in their schools. Supply teachers in the Canary Islands are recruited and appointed on a similar basis.

Once in a permanent appointment, teachers can apply for a change of school if they wish. In this situation too, the points system weighted towards seniority applies; in public schools, a more junior teacher already in the post will have to vacate it if a more senior colleague wants it, regardless of the preferences of the school's principal. Consequently, the more senior and experienced, but possibly less up to date members of the profession can be found in the more desirable/sought after schools, with a preponderance of younger and less experienced teachers in the less desirable schools and more remote rural and smaller island areas. This can in turn lead to an imbalance in the age profile of teachers in public schools. Established schools in popular locations, such as the bigger cities, tend to have few, if any, young teachers who would bring with them new ideas and modern teaching methodologies to share with the more experienced staff, while young and inexperienced teachers in other schools have fewer more experienced role models to induct them into the profession. Once in public schools, the more senior teachers also get first choice of the classes they will teach.

However, the 2011 OECD report on high-quality teaching pointed out that "credentials and years of experience […] have been shown to be weak indicators of teacher effectiveness" (OECD, 2011a). The report also observed that good pay and other policies to encourage talented people to enter teaching "are unlikely to pay off if high-quality candidates find it hard to gain teaching posts. The best candidates, who are likely to have good job prospects outside teaching, may not be willing to wait in a lengthy queue or endure a succession of short-term teaching assignments in difficult schools. Well structured and resourced selection processes and programmes of induction that ensure that the best candidates get the available jobs are therefore critical. Reducing the weight given to seniority in ranking applicants for teaching vacancies can also help reduce the risk that new teachers will be disproportionately assigned to difficult schools."

The teaching career

Discussions with various groups of administrators, teacher unions, parents, employers and teachers indicated to the OECD team that teachers do not enjoy a particularly high status in the Islands. The team was informed that, thanks to major improvements achieved over the past thirty years, this scenario is slowly changing. The omens for the future seem positive, if the opportunities now presenting themselves are grasped.

From visits to schools and discussions with the staff, the team learned a great deal about the conditions under which schools in the Canary Islands operate and the challenges their teachers meet in their daily work. While the limited number of schools the team was able to visit in the time available may not be representative of all schools in the system, those schools seemed bright, spacious, welcoming and reasonably well resourced. The teachers the team met were open, cheerful and frank in their evaluations of their working conditions; they appeared to be deriving satisfaction and fulfilment from their work, and were committed to their students' welfare. The team found that many of the conditions conducive to providing a rich and supportive learning environment were present in the schools visited. On the whole, school infrastructure in the Canary Islands compares favourably with that found in many similarly developed countries.

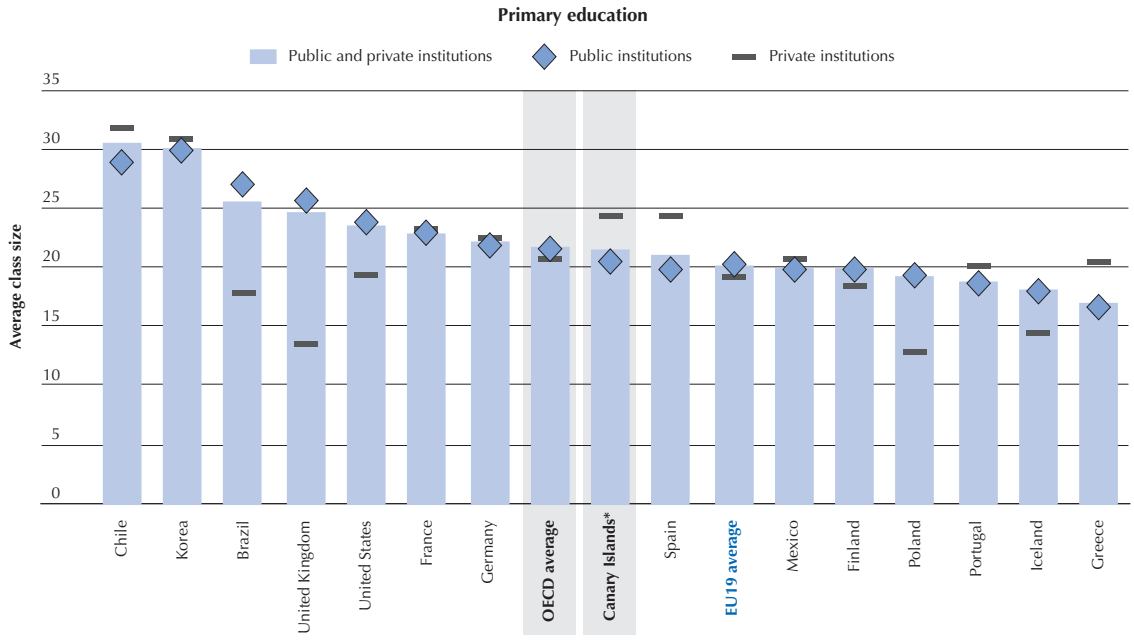
Teachers in the Canary Islands also mentioned, however, that they face a number of problems. A number of school staff spoke of the lack of support among a significant number of parents for the schools and for their children's educational welfare. This lack of engagement on the part of some parents remains, despite initiatives such as early school openings; provision of breakfast for needy students and after-school tuition for pupils experiencing difficulties; and open days, family days and courses for parents. Other problems mentioned included student absenteeism, high failure rates, and the numbers repeating classes. School staff also complained of teacher absenteeism and a failure to provide timely substitutions, which added to the workload of the colleagues then required to cover their classes.

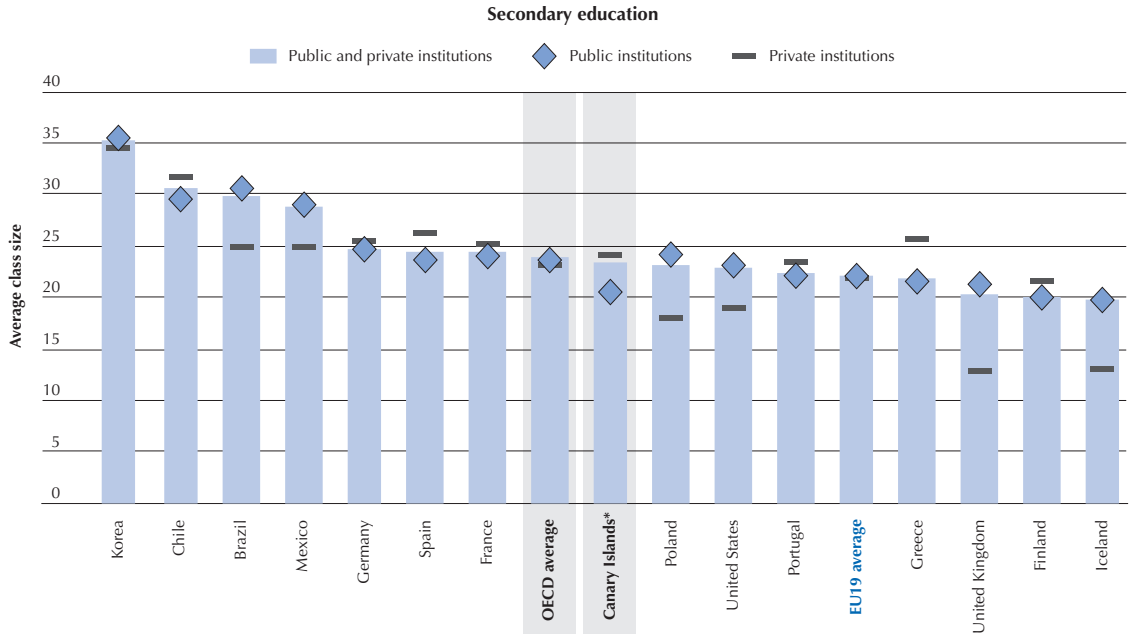
More centrally related to the classroom performance of teachers are the challenges they encounter in dealing with diversity in the classroom. Teachers appear ill-equipped to cater for the span of student abilities and student motivation to be found in the typical Canary Islands classroom. They complain that many students do not appreciate the value of education as a foundation for life after school: as one put it, "Students do not have a culture based on personal effort." Teachers usually respond by making high numbers repeat the year, which – as Chapter 4 has shown – reduces students' motivation further and rarely resolves their performance issues.

PISA evidence suggests that at least some poor student performance may be teacher-related. PISA created an *index of teacher-related factors* affecting the school climate and influencing student learning, based on school principals' reports on the extent to which – in their view – learning in their schools was hindered by *i)* teachers' low expectations of students, *ii)* poor student-teacher relations, *iii)* absenteeism among teachers, *iv)* staff resistance to change, *v)* teachers not meeting individual students' needs,

▪ Figure 5.1 ▪

Average class size, by type of institution and level of education (2009)





*Year of reference 2009/10.

Source: OECD, 2011 and Consejeria, 2011.

vi) teachers being too strict with students and *vii)* students not being encouraged to achieve their full potential. Positive values on the index reflect principals' perceptions that these teacher-related behaviours hinder learning to a lesser extent than the OECD average; negative values reflect perceptions that these behaviours hinder learning to a greater extent than the OECD average. The results for regions in Spain are very interesting. Spain as a whole scores 0.10 on this index, better than the OECD average of -0.09. A number of regions have positive scores, the highest being Asturias with 0.25; Andalusia, Castile and Leon and Catalonia with 0.22; the Basque Country with 0.17; and Murcia with 0.14. Several regions are on or very near the OECD average, including Ceuta and Melilla, Galicia, Navarre and Cantabria. The Canary Islands' score is not only negative, but also the lowest of any Spanish region in PISA, at -0.31.

PISA also has an *index of teacher-student relations,* based on the answers students gave to five questions. One of them is whether they agree that "If I need extra help, I will receive it from my teachers". Only 68% of Spanish students agreed, compared to 79% across the OECD: among EU countries, only Austria (67%) and Greece (63%) had lower percentages. In the Canary Islands, 73% of students agreed; this is above the average for Spain but still below the OECD average. These results give reason to assume that in the Islands as in Spain as a whole, insufficient attention is given to responding to students needing extra help, both in classrooms and in teacher training.

Some teachers suggested to the OECD team that they could give students more help and individual attention if class sizes were smaller and pupil-teacher ratios lower. Figure 5.1 compares primary and secondary class sizes in the Canary Islands 2009/10[1] with those in a selection of OECD countries in 2009 (figures from *Education at a Glance 2011*), the latest year available. These figures show that classes in the Islands are higher than average for EU19 countries, but lower than average across the OECD.

Table 5.1 compares the student-teacher ratios in secondary education of the Spanish regions participating in PISA. The table shows that the Canary Islands' ratio of 10.9 is higher than some, lower than others. However, the four regions with the highest reading scores in PISA (Castile and Leon, Madrid, La Rioja and Catalonia – see Table 2.1 in Chapter 2) all have significantly higher student-teacher ratios than the Canary Islands.

Similarly, the PISA 2009 database shows that none of the 10 countries with the highest reading scores in PISA had lower student-teacher ratios than the Canary Islands. Finland, shown in Figure 5.1 as having lower average secondary class sizes than the Canary Islands, had a student-teacher ratio of 11.2. The rest of the top 10 had ratios ranging from Shanghai-China's 14.1 to Korea's 17.2. PISA research on how system resources are related to student outcomes confirms this observation and shows that average class size for the language of instruction explains only a marginal part of the performance variation between countries. It is more cost-effective to invest in teacher quality than in class size reductions (OECD, 2010).

To sum up, the statistical evidence suggests neither that the size of classes faces Canary Islands teachers with unusual challenges, nor that the Islands would find it worthwhile to invest in lowering student-teacher ratios.

Table 5.1 Student-teacher ratios in Spanish regions

	Student/teacher ratio	
	Ratio	Standard Error
Galicia	10.2	(0.27)
Navarre	10.4	(0.19)
Balearic Islands	10.4	(0.62)
Asturias	10.4	(0.31)
Cantabria	10.6	(0.31)
Basque Country	10.8	(0.22)
Canary Islands	10.9	(0.59)
Ceuta and Melilla	11.4	(0.03)
Murcia	11.4	(0.51)
Castile and Leon	11.5	(0.47)
Aragon	11.9	(0.31)
Andalusia	12.2	(0.25)
La Rioja	12.7	(0.03)
Madrid	13.1	(0.43)
Catalonia	13.5	(0.95)

Source: OECD PISA 2009 database.

Teacher pay and rewards

Teachers in many systems are experiencing increased pressure and workloads and are expected to do more with less, due to difficult economic circumstances and in some cases reductions in salary. Teachers in the Canary Islands are in a similar position. While such conditions may be unavoidable, they can profoundly affect the morale of the profession and the commitment of teachers. In the Islands – though this was not apparent in the teachers interviewed – the team heard that the teaching cadre as a whole is demoralised, both by the challenges of teaching and by the 5% reduction in salaries last year, followed by a pay freeze this year. (The reduction and freeze applied to all civil servants, as part of the Spanish government's response to the economic crisis.) One estimate the team heard was that 80% of teachers were demoralised and disaffected. Teachers feel unappreciated – by the Canary Islands authorities, by the general public and by parents. They have some reason to feel this way: the OECD team was informed that many parents and members of the public incline to the view that teachers in the Canary Islands have generous working conditions and pay, but are not achieving very good results for the students and should be more willing than many are to undertake in-service training.

Different views were expressed about teachers' salaries, with some groups contending that teachers were adequately compensated and others taking the opposite view. The President of the Canary Islands government told the OECD team that teachers in the Islands are well-paid by Spanish standards: as Chapter 3 shows, this is certainly true of starting salaries. Moreover, Spanish standards are generous by comparison with OECD standards generally. However it is clear that there is no career structure through which teachers can progress through the various stages of their career as they acquire new skills, whether in teaching or in management and leadership. Salary increases are "automatic", and there are no rewards for achieving good or improved results. Opportunities for promotion are quite limited; the rewards for those who do progress are very modest and do not compensate for the additional work and responsibilities involved.

This was also cited as one reason for the low take-up of in-service courses. In the Canary Islands, participation in in-service training is entirely voluntary. There is no incentive or reward for undertaking it, except for young teachers who earn extra points which may help them to be selected for a permanent appointment – unless they are competing with a more senior teacher, in which case experience trumps training. Some other regions of Spain make the payment of 6-yearly increments conditional on having undertaken in-service training.

OECD team views

The terms and conditions of service for Canary Islands teachers pose serious issues which, if not addressed, will continue to limit the contribution teachers can make to raising the Islands' low results. Most of these are linked to the civil service terms and conditions under which teachers operate. Many can only be dealt with through national level discussions; a few can be addressed using discretion available at the regional level. Key issues include the teacher recruitment and deployment system; the lack of a proper career structure for teachers; current pay structures, which offer little encouragement to teachers to improve their pupils' performance, or their own; and deficiencies in teacher training, particularly in-service training.

Teachers appear happy with their civil service status, but most other stakeholders told the team that it leads to a number of problems. This is not so much because they are civil servants, as because of the particular terms civil servants have in Spain, underpinned by national law which is difficult to change. For example, teachers have tenure (jobs for life as civil servants). A senior Inspector suggested that the OECD team's report should "underline 14 times" the major problems this causes throughout the system. It makes it virtually impossible to dismiss teachers or arrange their early retirement, whatever they do and however ineffective they may be. It inhibits school organisation or reorganisation – the context of the Inspector's suggestion was a request from a high-performing, popular post-secondary school to add a class, which could not be granted because it would then attract students away from other, unpopular local schools and leave their tenured teachers without posts. It obliges the regional government officials to appoint the most experienced candidates to posts, ahead of younger, better-trained teachers, leaving many young, better-trained teachers unable to find jobs or use their training, which is a waste of training costs and talent. It entitles any teacher to refuse to take refresher or in-service training: the team's interlocutors agreed that there might well be teachers in the public school system who had had none in the 20 or 30 years since they finished initial teacher training. And because civil servants are prohibited from taking up any work of a private nature, teachers of vocational subjects are not able to return to industry, even temporarily, to refresh their skills and subject knowledge.

Difficult as change may be, it seems to the OECD team essential that the Canary Islands government develops proposals for change, for discussion with Spain's national government. The role and responsibilities of a teacher are so different from the role and responsibilities of the average government official, that it seems seriously inappropriate to insist that their terms and conditions must be identical. Teachers need to have their own special status – as public servants rather than civil servants – and to have terms and conditions that help, rather than hinder, the achievement of educational objectives. This offers Canary Islands teachers the best chance of regaining public respect. Where it is not feasible to introduce particular changes for teachers already in the profession, it would at least be desirable to introduce them for new entrants.

The **teacher recruitment and deployment** system is a clear example of civil service arrangements producing sub-optimal results. Currently, the suitability of teaching applicants is judged by whether they pass the civil service exam: but passing this exam is no guarantee of possessing all the talents and skills a good teacher needs.

But what is a good guarantee? A recent consultation document from the English Department for Education reviewed the lessons from international experience, as follows.[2] First, the world's best-performing systems draw their teachers from the highest-achieving third of graduates. Some of the most successful countries, like Finland and South Korea, draw from the top ten per cent. In recruiting teachers, the approach of these countries is generally to set a very high standard for entry to training and to train only the number of teachers they will need, rather than training more than they need and giving schools greater choice of qualified applicants. Secondly, while there is no single, simple set of teacher characteristics that will be effective in all circumstances, there are identifiable talents which can reliably be used to select teachers. For example, it is a constant finding that effective teachers are intellectually capable and able to think, communicate and plan systematically. Studies show that teachers with good subject knowledge are more effective. And certain personal characteristics have been found to be shared by effective teachers: sustained commitment, resilience, perseverance and motivation, as well as high overall levels of literacy and numeracy, strong interpersonal and communication skills, a willingness to learn and a motivation to teach. In the best education systems, tests of these characteristics and qualities underpin rigorous pre-entry selection of candidates for teacher training. Those who do not have the subject knowledge or interpersonal skills, who have unrealistic expectations or lack commitment to teaching can be discouraged before they start. In Finland, for example, there is a multi-stage process of teacher selection: *1)* a national screening process involving a 300-question multiple choice assessment which tests literacy, numeracy and problem-solving; *2)* university-based tests that evaluate candidates' ability to process information, think critically and synthesise data; *3)* university-based interviews which assess candidates' motivation to teach, motivation to learn, communication skills and emotional intelligence.

The OECD team heard that in the Canary Islands, teacher trainees have not in the past come from the highest ability tranche. Quality has risen recently, though it is not clear that teaching has yet been made sufficiently attractive as a profession to be able to limit recruitment to the highest-achieving third of graduates. It would be desirable to raise the minimum ability requirement as soon as possible, and to test teacher training applicants for a range of other personal characteristics important for good teachers, along the lines of Finland's system.

It is also important to find ways of reforming current arrangements for selecting and appointing teachers to particular schools. It may be right for regional officials to prepare lists of those qualified for appointment and formally to make the appointments, but the school principal (advised by the School Council) should be allowed to select from the lists the best person to fill the vacancy, because the school principal knows the needs of the school best. If this cannot be achieved immediately, as an interim measure principals should at least be given the right to either accept or refuse candidates proposed by the regional authority, and assign them to specific classes according to the needs of the school. More is said about this in Chapter 6.

The OECD team suggests that more should be done to give teachers a better **career structure**. In Chapter 6 the creation, particularly in secondary schools, of a number of promotional posts aimed at supporting the principal in the management and leadership of the school is recommended. These posts would give the teachers who fill them development experience which would boost their credentials for becoming principals in due course. This would need to be tied to improvements in incentives for becoming principals.

It is also recommended that an early retirement scheme be introduced, to enable teachers to leave the profession on honourable terms before the normal retirement age if they cease to be fully effective, for medical or any other reasons. In the interests of students – which should be paramount – those who cannot any longer make the necessary contribution should have the opportunity of making way gracefully for those who can. This reform is likely to require negotiations with the national government.

Teachers' **pay structures** were discussed in Chapter 3, which noted that teachers' salaries in the Canary Islands are much higher than in other European and OECD countries in both relative and absolute terms. However pay scales are unusually flat, particularly for primary teachers, and financial incentives for improvement or progression during a teaching career relatively poor.

The OECD team does not suggest reducing salary levels. To address the lack of improvement and incentives, it is recommended that instead the Islands authorities provide incentives to reward outstanding performance (standardised tests would help to establish the evidence base for this) and engagement in professional development.

The Canary Islands government appears to have the discretion to do all or most of the above by adjusting current bonus payments and attaching different conditions to them. The government should use this discretion creatively to encourage and reward teachers who demonstrate results that benefit their students.

The team also notes that there are issues in the Canary Islands with providing teachers for the smaller and remoter islands and for schools outside urban areas, despite the extra allowances already paid for the former. Australia provides incentive packages to

attract teachers to rural areas. South Australia, for example, provides teaching scholarships of AUD 10 000 (~EUR 7 500) a year for two years to students from rural locations offered permanent employment in a rural school. In Queensland the rural area incentive scheme offers such benefits as cash, extended leave and induction programmes for new teachers who commit to teach in rural areas. New South Wales has piloted a retention benefit programme to attract and retain teachers in difficult-to-staff positions and schools. Starting in 2002, teachers who complete their initial two/three years' service in a hard-to-staff area are paid an annual retention bonus of AUD 5 000 (~EUR 3 750) for up to five years. New South Wales also offers rent subsidies of up to 90% in certain rural areas (Ladd, 2007). It would seem from this research that to persuade staff to stay in remote or disadvantaged areas, incentives need to be long term and built into the overall salary structure, rather than be limited to temporary bonuses. Many countries are faced with this issue and it is difficult to provide incentive packages that fit all needs. Such packages are however a public marker of the value placed on teaching in the non-desirable areas, and send a clear message to the education stakeholders and the general public on the importance of equity in the system.

The ProComp programme in the city of Denver, Colorado, adjusts teachers' pay for all the purposes discussed above – see Box 5.1.

Box 5.1 The ProComp programme in Denver, Colorado

The city of Denver, Colorado had two goals for its ProComp programme:* to increase student achievement; and to attract and retain high quality teachers. The programme was designed in partnership with teacher organisations, in this case between the Denver Classroom Teachers Association and Denver Public Schools. It rewards teachers for their professional accomplishments while linking pay to student achievement.

ProComp has four components that allow teachers to build earnings through nine elements:

- ***Knowledge and Skills –*** Teachers earn compensation for acquiring and demonstrating knowledge and skills by completing annual professional development units and earning additional graduate degrees and national certificates. They may be reimbursed up to USD 1 000 (~EUR 730) annually, USD 4 000 (~EUR 2 920) in their lifetime for tuition and repayment of student loans.
- ***Professional Evaluation –*** Teachers will be recognised for their classroom skill by receiving salary increases every three years for satisfactory evaluations.
- ***Student Growth –*** Teachers will be rewarded for the academic growth of their students. They can earn compensation for meeting annual objectives, for exceeding growth goals and for working in a school judged distinguished based on academic gains and other factors.
- ***Market Incentives*** – Bonuses can assist the district and schools in meeting specific needs. Teachers in hard to serve schools – those faced with academic challenges – can earn annual bonuses. Bonuses will be available to those filling hard to staff positions – assignments which historically have shortages of qualified applicants.

*See *http://denverprocomp.dpsk12.org.*

Source: Denver Public Schools website-Procomp programme overview.

The OECD team finds it hard to understand why teachers are permitted to spend less than their full weekly working hours (37.5 hours) either working in school or on call for school purposes. Education Ministry senior officials were unable to defend this practice, which must make it very difficult for school principals and senior managers to arrange staff meetings, in-service training, and opportunities for learning from peers. It is recommended that this concession be reviewed.

During fieldwork, the OECD team was told by regional government officials that some of the adjustments suggested in this and other chapters could be difficult or impossible to achieve while the terms and conditions of Canary Islands teachers remain identical to those of Spanish civil servants generally. It is therefore recommended that the regional government reviews all of teachers' terms and conditions; considers whether they all remain appropriate for the specific job teachers do and the achievement of education system objectives; and, if not, takes steps to change them. It is recognised that the regional government could not make such changes on its own authority; the national government will need to be involved and its consent obtained.

TEACHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The term "continuum of teacher education" describes those formal and informal educational and developmental activities in which teachers engage as lifelong learners during their teaching career. It encompasses initial teacher education, induction, early and continuing professional development and late career support, with each stage merging seamlessly into the next and interconnecting in a dynamic way with each of the others (Ireland: The Teaching Council).

Initial teacher training

Initial training is provided in two public universities in the Canary Islands, the University of La Laguna and the University of Las Palmas, where degree programmes for nursery, primary and secondary teachers and in social education are provided. The OECD team had discussions with the rectors, deans, lecturers and students in both institutions.

Rectors and deans noted that the teaching profession does not command high status among the general public. This has had some impact on the quality of candidates attracted to teaching. In the past, entrants to initial teacher education programmes have come from the average to low range of achievement, although more recently the demand for places has increased, with a consequent increase in the academic quality of the candidates.

Candidates for nursery and primary teaching enter university on completion of, or shortly after, upper secondary education and follow a four-year degree programme (which was until recently a three-year programme). Applicants for secondary teaching enter their programme having already completed a five-year degree, and take a one-year Master's programme designed to prepare them for teaching at secondary level. Until very recently, secondary teachers received minimal preparation, typically on courses lasting just two months. The team understands that the new Master's programme started only in 2010/11; therefore, all of the teachers in post in secondary schools visited had this minimal preparation. The OECD team was told that many current teachers do not see the value of the new Master's programme; they see their role as simply to transmit the content of the subjects on the curriculum. This legacy may explain the fact that only 140 of the 160 places available on the University of Las Palmas's current Master's course were taken up. The OECD team was also told that the teaching style of many secondary teachers is still to stand at the front of the class and deliver knowledge content to students, rarely checking whether students understand the meaning of what they are being taught or how to apply it. Indeed the team was told that some old-style teachers only require students to memorise what has been delivered, to earn a pass in their tests. This teaching style is not conducive to good results in PISA, or good education more widely.

Dropout rates on the training programme for primary teachers average around 15%: they are somewhat lower for the nursery programme. Main reasons cited for dropout are social problems, inability to meet the costs of tuition and failure. Dropout rates on the Master's programme for secondary teachers amount to 5%: the most common cause of dropout is the student's realisation that he or she does not have a vocation for teaching.

Structure of the programmes

The programmes have been adapted to meet the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) requirements. The distribution of credits is shown in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Distribution of credits in initial teacher training programmes

Distribution of Credits: Primary					
Basic Training	**Basic**	**Optional**	**Work Experience**	**Project**	**Total**
60	100	30	44	6	240
Distribution of Credits: Secondary					
Theory/Fundamentals of education		**Curriculum/Pedagogy**		**Teaching Practice**	
24		24		12	

Source: Canary Islands Education Ministry, University of La Laguna.

At primary level, modules in Basic Training include the theoretical foundations (psychology, sociology), curriculum studies and didactics. Optional modules include special education support needs, the design and practical application of work units in languages (French and English) and music.

The secondary programme, which extends over one academic year, is distributed across four areas – educational theory (24 credits), nine specialities including didactics plus general teaching skills or pedagogies (24 credits), and external teaching practice (12 credits).

Teaching practice during initial teacher training

According to the information received from universities, teaching practice in schools (the practicum) takes place in the second term of the secondary programme and in the third and fourth years of the primary programme. Students coming to the end of their primary programmes at La Laguna told the OECD team that they would like to have had some teaching practice in the first two years of their courses as well; they suggested that there is little value in spending 2-3 years mastering teaching theory if, when you finally encounter real students, you realise that you are not cut out for teaching. And all students interviewed felt that the time allowed for teaching practice (18% of course credits for primary, 20% for secondary) was insufficient.

Interviews with personnel from the two universities disclosed some differences in the selection of schools for teaching practice. The University of Las Palmas indicated that the schools generally volunteered to take students on teaching practice. Teacher tutors in the schools provide support for the trainees and allocate 60% of the marks for this component of the course, with the university tutor allocating the remaining 40%. In the event, the tutors collaborate throughout all stages of the process. It also emerged that school tutors volunteer for this task, rather than being selected on the basis of their special skills as teachers, and that they receive no formal training for the duties undertaken. In the University of La Laguna, however, the team was informed that the Ministry recently released a resolution outlining a set of criteria which schools should meet in order to be licensed for teaching practice. Innovativeness would appear to be among the most important. The intention seems to be that teaching practice will in the future be carried out only in the good or even very good schools, even though these may not be representative of the majority of the schools in the system. At the moment there are 80 licensed schools.

Both universities agreed that insufficient time is allocated to teaching practice, particularly at secondary level where there is a culture – already mentioned – that teaching skills are less important than transmitting the content of the curriculum. Thus the teaching of basic linguistic and mathematical literacy, application of knowledge, problem-solving and analysis are neglected.

Comments from a number of stakeholders suggest that primary teachers are more skilled in didactics and in coping with diversity than their secondary counterparts. It is acknowledged, however, that the challenges to be addressed at the upper age group are different and include a more demanding curriculum, which can lead to a gradual disillusionment with school among a significant section of the student population, and more challenging behaviour patterns. Newly qualified teachers are experiencing these challenges for the first time, while many of their more experienced colleagues have not had the benefit of adequate preparation for entry into the profession or targeted in-service programmes to support them in their work. Feedback from some of the students on the programmes indicated a wish to have the teaching methodologies relevant to their own teaching in the schools modelled by the lecturers on their programmes. Students on secondary level programmes mentioned that their study programmes give too much weight to curriculum and subject knowledge while neglecting necessary pedagogical training.

Teaching for diversity, teaching for all

A recurring theme in discussions with administrators, teachers, university personnel, parents and teacher unions has been the challenges which teachers experience in coping with different learning abilities. It appears that teachers have been trained to teach to the norm or to higher levels of ability rather than adjust to different learning styles within a classroom. Teachers claim that they do not have the requisite skills to address these challenges, while teacher trainees claim that insufficient emphasis is given to teaching practice in initial education programmes. It emerged from discussion that only a minority of staff involved in teacher education programmes have training in pedagogy or previous training or experience as schoolteachers. Furthermore, the team was informed on a visit to the University of La Laguna that staff from 58 departments are involved in teaching the secondary teacher programme, including the relevant subject pedagogies, even though the majority are said to have had no training in didactics. The team was also led to believe that the Education Faculty did not have its own establishment of staff specifically dedicated to the provision of programmes in teacher education.

Other issues

University faculties claim to have little contact with schools for the purpose of providing continuing professional learning programmes for established teachers or for conducting research. They cite heavy workload commitments as the main reason for this. In recognition of the limits of initial teacher preparation programmes, mentoring programmes for new graduates in their first year in post have been established in many developed countries. These are aimed at assisting the graduates in making the transition from university and part-time teaching practice to full-time teaching. No such assistance is available in the Canaries. In the absence of support systems such as mentoring, a robust probation system is necessary so as to ensure that the seal of admission to the profession is merited. The probation arrangements currently in place in the Canary Islands are far from robust: the team learnt that probation is conducted on a sampling basis only, presumably because of time pressures on the inspectors who have responsibility for this.

OECD team views

The initial teacher training programmes at nursery and primary levels are well established. The secondary programme is of more recent origin. Both programmes have been designed to conform to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).

However, the currency of the ECTS is training time and credits awarded; it does not ensure equivalent outcomes. Team members talked to a small number of student teachers who had completed, or nearly completed, their nursery and primary courses. Some felt quite strongly that the course had not equipped them with the practical teaching and class control skills they needed to cope with the challenges they met in classrooms during their teaching practice – although the primary course includes pedagogy and psychology these were taught as theory rather than as practice. Another point students made is that they should receive more teaching practice in schools throughout their courses.

The OECD team notes that student teachers on the nursery and primary programmes seem to have a fairly heavy schedule; and bearing in mind the age of most entrants, it is important that some provision is made for their personal and social development.

The post-graduate programme for secondary teachers started in 2010/11. While it is a major improvement on the previous programme, providing a high quality programme in just one year (effectively from September to June) is a challenge. It cannot help that the education faculties do not have staff specifically dedicated to programmes at this level, or that the staff working on the programme are often specialists in particular subjects, rather than in pedagogy. The students' degree courses should have given them enough knowledge of their subjects not to need much more during their teaching course – though as the Spanish system requires secondary teachers to teach across very broad subject areas (for example a biologist may also have to teach physics and chemistry), perhaps this cannot be assumed. The OECD team suggests that it might be useful for faculties to recruit, as part-time lecturers, practising teachers identified for their excellence both as subject and pedagogical experts, to supplement any gaps which may arise in the syllabus and also contribute to the teaching of subject specific methodologies. This would help to address the frequently voiced criticism of many teacher education programmes that the pedagogical skills required at school level are not modelled throughout the programme.

In secondary as in other programmes, the time allocated to teaching practice is deemed inadequate. The policy of entering into contractual arrangements with schools which is being developed in the University of La Laguna is to be commended and should be extended. It is crucially important to choose suitable schools for the practicum, and to offer teaching practice opportunities throughout the course, not just in the later stages.

The OECD team also suggests that all initial teacher training programmes should include elements addressing the major issues of concern in the system, including promoting literacy and numeracy across the curriculum; strategies to tackle failure and absenteeism and minimise dropout; mixed-ability teaching; addressing the needs of diverse student bodies and wide ability ranges effectively within the same classroom; and dealing with bad behaviour and low-level disruption. The team recommends that the Education Ministry sets out a revised prospectus for initial teacher training incorporating all these aspects, first in a policy document and then, following consultation, in a new decree.

The team recognises that all the additions the team has recommended to the secondary teacher training programme may be difficult to accommodate within the programme's current one-year length (in effect, two terms, each lasting four months). The team suggests that the Government considers, in consultation with the universities, whether this course needs to be lengthened or made more intensive or both.

Newly qualified teachers also require good induction programmes to support them through the first year of full-time teaching, and a formal process of probation needs to be introduced. Tried and tested models can be found in many systems (see for example the General Teaching Council for Scotland). Finally, staff in the education faculties of the universities should develop closer involvement with schools, so that they can collaborate on the provision of credit-bearing in-service training programmes and on research into educational policy and practice.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Even the best-developed and most effective initial teacher education programmes would not claim to prepare their graduates for a lifelong career in the classroom. At best, initial programmes provide newly qualified teachers with the knowledge and skills they will need for the first five years of their teaching career. Thereafter, all teachers need to update their skills at regular intervals as they progress through the various career stages, and experience new challenges which the designers of their initial training programme neither prepared them for, nor indeed predicted.

In-service programmes are mainly provided by the Teacher Training Centres. More recently, the provision of e-learning courses has resulted in an increase in the number of teachers engaged in in-service activities. However, take-up of the programmes appears to be poor – much poorer, the OECD team understands, than in other systems. In-service training is neither compulsory nor actively promoted, except in a few schools (the OECD team visited one that reserved Monday afternoon for staff meetings and in-service training). Neither are there any real incentives for teachers to engage in it, except for younger teachers seeking first jobs, as already mentioned, and in the case of some projects promoted by the regional authority. The language promotion project (CLIL) is one example. Teachers involved in this project must undertake specially-designed in-service programmes; the teachers the team met

who had attended these programmes rated them highly. While the teachers participating were given some financial assistance, they had had to pay some training costs themselves, and had been willing to do so.

The Inspectorate provide support and advice to school management and teachers, and may advise that in-service training should be undertaken in connection with the school's education project, or by particular teachers. However, the Education Faculties in the universities have minimal contact with schools and no involvement in in-service provision.

While teachers' weekly schedule includes a number of hours in which they are not obliged to teach classes or even be at school – hours which in theory present opportunities for in-service training and in-school professional collaboration – it seems that most teachers are reluctant to engage in in-service training during those hours, taking the view that they will only do it if released from some teaching commitments. E-training has the advantage that it can be undertaken by teachers at home, but two disadvantages: first, that practical teaching skills involving interaction with and management of students cannot be mastered on line and secondly, that there is no peer support or opportunity to learn from peers' experience.

OECD team views

In the OECD team's view, the lack of obligatory and free-of-charge in-service training provision in the Canary Islands, and the reluctance of teachers who need it most to undertake it, are extremely serious problems. Unless they are remedied, it will be almost impossible to tackle the many issues the system needs to address if the goal of providing a high quality education for all is to be achieved. Finding the remedies is the joint responsibility of the regional government and the teaching profession. The government needs to ensure that high quality programmes are made available and that teachers are given every encouragement to participate, within their working but non-classroom hours. In-service training should take priority over all other purposes to which those hours are currently put, not least because teachers will be far more effective at planning lessons, marking homework and doing assessments once they have been trained. Where policies are introduced which require updating of teachers' skills, participation in specially-designed courses should be mandatory. In other situations, teachers should feel an obligation as professionals to engage in learning as a means of honing and perfecting the art and craft of teaching.

Participating in professional learning activities need not disrupt schools' regular functioning. Valuable learning opportunities can be embedded in the on-going life of the school. Small-scale innovations designed to address school issues can usefully link school improvement and teacher development. One model for this, proposed by Hargreaves and Hopkins (1994) among others, involves school stakeholders in conducting a whole-school review, identifying strengths and weaknesses and agreeing priorities for change which can then be planned and implemented through a series of small-scale action research projects leading to incremental improvements. This model has the incidental benefits of encouraging teachers to become involved in school issues beyond the narrow confines of their own classrooms, and facilitating the development of a collaborative culture. A whole-school approach may be a particularly effective way of addressing issues like absenteeism, repetition, failure and dropout, because everyone in the school will have taken part in designing the solutions and will feel ownership of the process. Whole-school reviews also encourage a culture of in-school evaluation. Schools engaged in these reviews could be supported by personnel from the Teaching Centres or from the university education faculties.

Forging a partnership between institutions at different levels of the education system is difficult in any country. Mandates and expectations for staff and the institutions themselves are different. However in order to make university-based teacher preparation relevant, and to encourage teaching staff to be more engaged in a teaching and learning process as part of their professional identity, most countries now consider this partnership to be crucial. Since the 1990s, many countries have instituted "Professional Development Schools" in which university faculty either teach or mentor at school level.

The models vary in how the interaction takes place. In some, education students undergoing a placement are tutored at the school by both school and university faculty. In others, university classes are held on school premises where space allows. In all cases the effort is to link schools and school staff better with research and learning. Continuing research documents the benefits of this approach. Apart from the technical benefit to trainees and the schools, university staff have the chance to interact more fully with schools and school staff benefit from their perceived increase in status (Jeffery and Polleck, 2010). One example is given in Box 5.2.

The team recommends that for in-service training, as for initial teacher training, the reform process be launched by the Education Ministry issuing a policy document and proposals for making available a much wider range of in-service training to many more teachers than take it up now – bearing in mind that it is practical classroom skills that most need reinforcing, and that these skills cannot easily be taught or assessed on-line. The proposals should offer individual teachers clear guidance on the training they need to acquire in-service, which will vary according to what initial training they had, when they had it, what they have learnt since and which age-group they will be teaching. SYNTAX Teachers who have completed the full range of training suggested in the guidance should be eligible for a special title or status, as well as for a higher point on the pay scale under the revised pay arrangements recommended above. And bearing in mind the TALIS finding recorded above that in Spain, teachers often have to pay for some or all of their in-service training themselves, the Canary Islands Education Ministry should also encourage training take-up by meeting the full costs of approved training.

Box 5.2 **Arlington School System, the State of Virginia, United States**

The Arlington Public Schools System has Professional Development School (PDS) arrangements with George Mason and Marymount Universities and a series of elementary schools. The underlying goals of the arrangements are: *1)* To provide university students with the best possible pre-service experience in order to ensure high quality new teacher candidates; *2)* To provide Arlington Public Schools teachers with the knowledge and support needed to work most effectively with pre-service teacher candidates; *3)* To create a partnership between the individual school and university in order to give the schools access to university resources including educational research projects.

University interns spend a semester or a year in schools and act as substitute teachers for a number of days, receiving standard pay for substitutes as a contribution to their tuition fees. Each university provides a faculty member who is responsible for the PDS programme at each school, and for supervising and evaluating the interns.[1] This form of university-school partnership also takes place in other countries and there are useful guidelines on how to make the best of this approach.[2]

Source: Arlington Public Schools, *www.arlington.k12.va.us/page/1259*, and Teitel, Lee (2003), *The Professional Development Schools Handbook: Starting, Sustaining, and Assessing Partnerships That Improve Student Learning*, Corwin Press.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The regional government should review all of **teachers' current terms and conditions**; consider whether they all remain appropriate for the specific job teachers do and the achievement of education system objectives; and, if not, take steps to change them. It is recognised that the regional government could not make such changes on its own authority; the national government will need to be involved and its consent obtained.
- The **teacher recruitment** system should be reformed, so as to recruit more trainees from among the highest-achieving graduates and to filter applicants for personal characteristics important for teaching success as in Finland. **Deployment** arrangements should be changed so as to give school principals more say in appointments and teacher assignments within the school.
- To create a better **career structure**, promotional posts aimed at supporting the principal in the management and leadership of the school should be created.
- **Pay and rewards** structures should be revised. Suggested changes include different, more flexible scales; engaging new entrants on the basis of qualifications and contracts rather than tenure; enabling teachers to earn a higher maximum than at present if they achieve good student outcomes or undertake specified extra duties; and making service increments conditional on undertaking in-service training.
- An **early retirement** scheme should be introduced, to allow teachers who cease to be fully effective an honourable exit from the profession.
- Better **financial incentives** should be available to teachers for improving their pupils' performance, or their own, or for taking up hard-to fill posts.
- Teachers should be expected to spend their full **weekly working hours** (37.5 hours) in school, or on call for school purposes including staff meetings and in-service training.
- **Initial teacher training** programmes should address major issues of concern, such as improving literacy and numeracy, tackling failure, absenteeism and dropout, teaching mixed abilities, addressing the needs of diverse students and dealing with bad behaviour. The government should draw up a revised prospectus for initial training including these aspects, and should consider whether the secondary programme needs to be lengthened, after consultation with the relevant universities.
- Improvements are recommended in the timing, length and quality of **the teaching practice component** in initial teacher training.
- In their first year in post, newly-trained teachers should have formal **induction** programmes and be on properly-supervised **probation.**
- All teachers should be expected to update their skills at regular intervals through **in-service training**. Unless action is taken to remedy the current lack of in-service training provision and non-participation by older teachers who most need it, school standards will remain low. The government should ensure that high quality programmes are made available and that teachers participate, within their working but non-classroom hours, and should meet the full costs of approved in-service training.
- Closer working relationships should be developed between the teacher training faculties in **universities and the school system**, including for in-service teacher training and education research. Teacher training should be done by full-time dedicated staff, qualified in pedagogy.

Notes

1. Figures from the Ministry of Education of Canary Islands.
2. UK Department for Education, *Training Our Next Generation of Outstanding Teachers – An Improvement Strategy for Discussion*, London, June 2011.

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6

Schools, Principals and Inspectors

This chapter will consider Canary Islands schools from three perspectives in which PISA findings are relevant: schools and their communities, school accountability and school autonomy. It will consider school governance and the role, responsibilities, skills, training, recruitment, accountability and autonomy of school principals and School Councils. It will also consider the similarities and differences between public and private schools in the Canary Islands.

SCHOOLS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES

Public and private subsidised schools in the Canary Islands have strong roots in their local communities. Eighty per cent of students in the PISA 2009 sample were in schools where the principal reported that admission to the school was always based on the area of residence – more than in any other Spanish region except Catalonia and Ceuta and Melilla and well above the Spanish average of 66% and OECD average of 43%. And 43% of students were in schools where the principal reported that preference is always given to family members of current or former students (Spain 32%, OECD 16%).

Basing admittance mainly on proximity can have positive effects: it can help schools build good relationships with the community and local parents; teachers may know the students and their families better; and this admissions basis can secure equal opportunities and a good social and ability mix, provided there is a good social and ability mix in the local area. On the other hand, if all or most families in an area come from one end of the socio-economic spectrum, social differences can be reinforced. PISA and other research has shown that children from disadvantaged backgrounds often do better academically if schooled with others from more advantaged families; if all the students in a school come from less well-off families because that is the nature of the locality (true of at least one school the team visited), average student performance is likely to be lower, other things being equal. This may be because, in such communities, both parents and teachers tend to have lower expectations.

Another negative effect of basing school admittance primarily on residence area is that parents have little or no choice of school, and so may feel less positive towards the school their children attend. Before visiting the Canary Islands the OECD team asked the regional authorities "If parents do not want their child to go to their local school, or wish to take the child away from it, what can they do?" In response, the team was given statistics for school applications in 2011/12. These showed that only 4% of parents applied from outside their designated area, another 12% from its fringes, 72% from within the area and 12% not known. This did not wholly answer the original question, and raised new ones, such as "Is the percentage applying from outside the area so low (4%) because parents really do not want to send their child to any other school or because they know that an out-of-area application is unlikely to be accepted? Were some of the 4% applying from outside the area doing so because they intended to move into it, or were they all dissatisfied with their local options?" and "Were the 12% of parents applying from the fringes of the area exercising choice, or was the school applied to actually their nearest?" PISA does record, however, that 61% of the Canary Islands students in the 2009 sample were in schools where it was likely or very likely that a parent's request to move their child to another school would be granted (Spain 59%, OECD 69%).

PISA also asked about the degree of competition schools faced from others in their locality. The Canary Islands had the lowest percentage in Spain of students in schools competing with two or more other schools in same area, and the third highest percentage in Spain of schools competing with no other schools. This lack of competition is presumably related primarily to the residence area basis of school admissions, secondly to the Islands' geography and thirdly to the low number of private schools, concentrated in the bigger urban areas.

PISA shows that greater local competition does not necessarily, on its own, produce better performance. Nor does allowing parents more choice in where their child is schooled. However, any or all of these things put schools under pressure to achieve better results if they wish to keep their numbers up – pressure which often pays off in higher student attainment. In the Canary Islands, such external pressures are either absent or relatively low. Schools which face few competitive pressures to improve their performance may nonetheless feel impelled to achieve by the pressure for high standards from parents of existing students – but, as recorded in the previous chapter, Canary Islands schools also face very little of that pressure either, compared to schools in other jurisdictions. In the absence of either competitive or parental pressure, international experience suggests that high standards will only be achieved and maintained if schools not only have well-trained teaching forces whose every member is committed to continuous improvement, but also have strong accountability systems and effective school leaders with the autonomy to take the decisions and implement the action needed.

SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY

High-performing education systems have in recent years focussed less and less on controlling inputs, more and more on delivering outcomes. A focus on outcomes requires the establishment of clear standards of quality and attainment for educational institutions, and holding institutions accountable for delivering them. Over the past decade, accountability systems based on student performance have become increasingly common across OECD countries. Results are often widely reported and used in public debate to inform parents about school choice and to prompt improvements in schools. There is international debate about the effects of testing on the teaching process, the need to avoid education becoming driven by test results and the effects of this on schools and students. However the Canary Islands system does not appear either to maximise the use of existing data to improve teaching and learning or to have in place basic assessment approaches that would help this to happen.

PISA reported on schools' accountability to parents of existing students, the test of accountability being how parents are informed of their child's results. According to PISA, 51% of the Canary Islands students in the 2009 sample were in schools which provided

information to parents on their child's performance relative to other students in the same school, which is higher than the Spanish average (38%) and a little higher than the OECD average (47%). However, it is much more useful to inform parents about their child's performance relative to national or regional benchmarks, because regional and national benchmarking allows for performance comparisons independent of the average performance of the school. Only 17% of Canary Islands students were in schools which did this, slightly below the Spanish average of 19% and way below the OECD average of 47%. More useful than information relative to other students in the same school, but less useful than information relative to national or regional benchmarks, is information relative to students in other schools. Only 12% of Canary Islands students were in schools which did this, slightly above the Spanish average of 11% but only half the OECD average of 24%. Therefore, the accountability to parents of schools in the Canary Islands appears weak by international standards. The low average performance levels PISA revealed make it even more important to inform parents fully, against regional or national norms, about student performance relative to national and regional benchmarks. Parents who are only told how their child is doing compared to his or her classmates could be unnecessarily concerned if the child is at a high-performing school, lulled into a false sense of security if the child's school is low-performing. Of course, to establish regional norms, or indeed to make reliable comparisons between results in different schools, it is necessary first to develop standardised tests which measure achievement against clear and agreed curriculum standards, as recommended in Chapter 4.

PISA also asked principals whether students' achievement data is made publicly available, to inform stakeholders of the comparative performance of schools. On the Canary Islands 16% of students are in schools where achievement data is posted publicly: these may of course tend to be the higher-performing, often private, schools. This figure is the second highest in Spain (average 8%) after Navarre, but well below the average across OECD countries (38%). And while such data will be interesting to Canary Islands stakeholders where it is provided, the lack of standardised assessment must raise doubts about how reliable comparisons between schools can be.

PISA also established that around 20% of Canary Islands students are in schools where achievement data are used to evaluate the principal's performance. This figure is again high for Spain (average 17%), though the Balearic Islands, Catalonia, Ceuta and Melilla and Galicia are all higher, but well below the average across OECD countries (38%). 40% of students are in schools where achievement data are used to evaluate the teachers' performance, compared to 45% on average in the OECD area, and although the Canary Islands figure is higher than Spain's it is lower than the figures in the Balearic Islands, Cantabria, Castile and Leon, Madrid and Murcia. The OECD team considers that the degree of accountability in these areas in the Canary Islands figures, though quite good for Spain, falls somewhat below average OECD standards and cannot compensate for the lack of accountability in other areas. Looking at results separately for private and public schools, the team noted that accountability procedures are more common in private schools.

It is striking that 93% of students in the Canary Islands are in schools whose achievement data are tracked over time by an administrative authority. The average for OECD countries is 66%, for Spain 65%. No other Spanish region reported such a high figure, and in Galicia, just 35% of students are in such schools. The OECD team does not know exactly what use is made of this data at regional level. The team understands that data is shared with inspectors, who use it to judge schools' relative performance; but schools are not routinely shown how their results compare with those of other schools. And the team is concerned that those who do use this data to judge relative performance and/or whether schools are improving may be drawing unsafe conclusions, given that the tests on which achievement data are based are not standardised between schools or over time. Principals the team met agreed that there could be no assurance that teachers in different schools, each devising their own tests for their own students with no external input, were all setting the same standards. One secondary school principal told the team that his only reliable guide to how his school performed relative to others, was the results achieved in national examinations taken at age 18, the *Bachillerato* and the *Selectividad*.

Students' achievement data can also be used to monitor teacher practices, and almost two-thirds of students across OECD countries attend schools whose principals reported doing this. In Spain about half the students are in schools where teachers are monitored by tests or assessments of student achievement. In the Canary Islands the figure is only one-third, far below OECD and Spanish averages – 54% in private schools and 24% in public schools. Many schools across OECD countries also use qualitative assessments, such as teacher peer reviews, assessments for school principals or senior staff, or observations by inspectors or others external to the school. All these ways of monitoring teacher practices are far less established in the Canary Islands, and principal or senior staff observations of lessons are virtually absent: just 2% of students are in schools where this happens, compared to 13% in Spain and 69% across the OECD. It seems therefore that, by international standards, there is an extremely low level of monitoring of teachers' practice in the Canary Islands. In the light of the region's PISA results this is very worrying. Teachers clearly need help to improve their teaching, yet seem to have little regular access to knowledgeable fellow-professionals who have seen them teach and could advise them.

SCHOOL AUTONOMY

Accountability is closely linked to autonomy, because it is not useful or fair to hold individuals to account for outcomes they cannot influence. Since the early 1980s, many countries have sought to raise the performance of their schools by introducing reforms giving their schools greater autonomy to make decisions on their own operations and the education they provide. PISA measures school autonomy using two specially-constructed indices: the *index of school responsibility for resource allocation*, and the *index of school responsibility for curriculum and assessment*. The latter index is particularly important: the PISA evidence is clear that in countries where schools have greater autonomy over what is taught and how students are assessed, students tend to perform better.

As PISA 2009 results show, Spain's educational system is characterised by low school autonomy in terms of teacher salaries, dismissal and promotion. 95% of Spanish students are in schools where those decisions are made by regional or national education authorities. In the Canary Islands, three-quarters or more of students are in schools where the regional authority decides about teachers' salaries, dismissal and promotion. Overall, Spain has a mean *index of school responsibility for resource allocation* of -0.47, compared to an OECD average of -0.06. School autonomy in the Canary Islands, at -0.57, is low even relative to other Spanish regions – only principals in Ceuta and Melilla reported a lower degree of school autonomy.

The *index of school responsibility for curriculum and assessment* includes establishing student assessment policies, choosing textbooks, determining course content and deciding which courses are offered. Spain's figure on this index (-0.48) is well below the OECD average (-0.03). Again the Canary Islands' figure (-0.55) is below Spain's. The figures of other Spanish regions are instructive here. From the strictness with which Spain's national authorities lay down the exact proportion of the national curriculum which may be varied by regional authorities (35% in all autonomous regions except the Basque Country and Catalonia, which have their own languages and are allowed to vary up to 45%), one might have expected to see similar figures all round Spain for the amount of curriculum autonomy delegated by regional authorities to schools. In fact, regional figures vary from -0.76 in Murcia to -0.05 in the Basque Country. The next highest regional figure is -0.10 for the Balearic Islands. If it is legally possible to confer this level of curricular autonomy on schools in the Balearic Islands, the OECD team assumes that it is also possible in the Canary Islands; though principals and teachers in the Canary Islands may not yet have the preparation and training to make best use of such autonomy.

In the course of their visit the team met the School Principals' Board and many school principals. Lack of autonomy was their main complaint. As examples of lack of autonomy over resource allocation, principals said that they pay the bills for services provided but could not make complaints about poor services; they cannot sign for procurements; and all decisions made in the schools have to be approved at Regional level. Principals would also welcome a greater degree of autonomy with regard to the carrying out of minor repairs and decoration to buildings, arguing that this could be done more quickly and effectively if managed at local level. And despite being educational leaders responsible for the quality of education being provided in their schools, they have no role in the selection of teachers for the school, or indeed for the assignment of duties for the staff. This means that they are unable to make decisions on how best to organise teachers and teaching to meet educational objectives – a key role for school principals in most OECD countries.

Not only principals, but also other stakeholders, raised with the team this issue of the limited autonomy afforded to schools. The Canary Islands school system appears to be regulated by central and regional authorities to an unusual degree. This dampens the commitment and initiative of those who work in schools and limits what they can achieve. Over-regulation can foster a culture of dependence on the centre, and be used as an excuse for not addressing issues, even if those issues can best be resolved by people at school level. It can also convey the impression, intended or not, of a lack of trust in school staff.

The clearest case of over-regulation seems to be the current process for selecting teachers for posts in individual schools. School principals have no role in the selection, and this can have profound implications for the exercise of effective leadership and for planning school development initiatives at individual school level. If schools had the freedom to select their own teachers, within the general guidelines set down by the Government, they would almost certainly achieve a closer match between appointees and school needs.

Another process handled by the level above the level best able to handle it, is the control of student absenteeism. The responsibility for this rests at municipal level, whereas direct intervention at school level is more likely to result in more positive outcomes. The team observed encouraging examples of the improvement schools could achieve when they took this responsibility upon themselves, even in compliance with existing regulations. For example, one school used electronic messaging systems to inform parents of absent students immediately after the end of the first class session, and sent monthly reports to the municipal authorities.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP: THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

The quality of the leadership provided by school principals can have a profound impact on school performance (Leithwood, et al., 2004; Fullan, 1991 and 2009; Shelton, 2011). Shelton states that in a climate of heightened accountability and limited resources, effective leadership is critical to improving teaching and learning. She adds: "Research confirms that, among school-related influences

on student learning, principal leadership is second in importance only to classroom teaching. Nearly 60% of a school's influence on student achievement is attributable to principal and teacher effectiveness: principals account for as much as a quarter and teachers over a third of a school's total impact on achievement."

Recruiting, training and supporting effective principals is one of the most effective ways of ensuring that schools will provide high quality education. Effective principals are the keepers of the school's vision and the shapers and custodians of the school culture. They attract, develop and retain talented teachers and motivate them to do their best work. They are skilled in processing student data to improve achievement. They mobilise parents and the community in support of the school.

The challenges facing principals in public schools in the Canary Islands are formidable. These include leading staff who for a number of reasons may be de-motivated and demoralised; mobilising the school community around a shared vision for the school; marshalling scarce resources to support change; addressing the key issues of absenteeism, repetition, failure and dropout; improving academic performance; and encouraging teachers to engage in professional learning activities in support of school improvement initiatives.

Applicants for principalship are required to have a minimum of two years teaching experience. Applicants for principal vacancies must take an examination and prepare and defend a "school project", setting out what they intend to achieve at the school and how they will do this. The recruitment and selection process are laid down in a Government order of December 2009, which also governs training requirements for those who become principals. They must complete an initial training programme covering all aspects of running a school. Apart from two face-to-face sessions, one at the beginning and a second at the end of the programme, the training is conducted on-line. Upon assuming the position of principal, further on-the-job training is provided.

Principals are appointed for an initial period of four years. This can be extended for a second four-year term following a favourable evaluation by an Inspector. The maximum period a principal can serve is twelve years: though as Spain has had a series of education laws, each one changing the limit laid down in the previous law and restarting the clock, the team understands that relatively few principals who wish to stay in post have yet hit the limit. (One principal the team met had led his school for over forty years.) Newly-appointed principals serve a one-year probation period.

Outgoing principals return to the classroom upon completion of their term of duty, and the team understands that many are glad to do so. The burdens of being a principal are heavy and the extra remuneration principals receive is very modest, providing little incentive to seek the role. Inspectors confirmed that schools often have difficulty filling principal positions. The role of the principal is very demanding and time consuming. It involves a heavy administrative workload, leaving principals little or no time to teach or give instructional leadership – which may be one reason why they so rarely observe teachers' practice in classrooms.

The School Principals Board and other principals the team met during their visit were generally satisfied with their training, and with the mutual support they get from one another. They emphasised, however, many reasons why their job is difficult and thankless, and their effectiveness and influence is constrained. Chief among their complaints is the lack of autonomy given to schools – see the examples given above. All decisions made in the schools have to be approved at Regional level.

The biggest complaint of public school principals is that they cannot influence the allocation of teachers to their schools or indeed the assignment of duties to the staff. This means that neither staff nor principal are necessarily committed to working together, and there may be little match between teachers' skill sets and the needs of the classes they teach – which in turn has profound implications for the exercise of effective leadership and for planning school development initiatives at individual school level. This situation arises from teachers' rights as civil servants (though these may have been generously interpreted in agreements negotiated regionally), which effectively enable teachers with seniority to pick their posts. The OECD team was told that often principals do not know who their teachers will be until just before the start of a school year.

There is just one way in which public school principals can choose their staff – by engaging teachers of their choice on "service commissions". Service commissions involve bringing in, for a limited period, as if on secondment, a teacher who has a full-time permanent post elsewhere. One primary school the team visited had two staff on service commissions, recruited for specific purposes. The principal told the team that such arrangements are under constant attack by the unions who see them as bypassing the usual civil service post allocation procedures, and can only be set up if the principal has the support of their inspector, who agrees that these particular staff are needed to fulfil the school project. This principal told the OECD team that the best thing our report could do for him would be to trigger change in current staffing rules so as to enable principals to choose the teachers in their schools.

Principals would also welcome a greater degree of autonomy than they have now for allocating and re-allocating resources within their school budgets (at present they are constrained by immensely detailed regional regulations and reporting requirements); managing school services; carrying out minor repairs and decoration to buildings; and managing absenteeism. They argue, with some justice, that all these things would be handled more quickly and effectively at school level.

SCHOOL COUNCILS

As Spanish law requires, in the Canary Islands every school has a School Council; there are also School Councils at municipal and regional levels. At school level, the School Council is made up of the school principal and representatives of the main stakeholders: teaching and non-teaching staff, parents, pupils and the school's local community. The School Council has an important role in ensuring that the school responds to the needs of its clients by providing an education of the highest quality possible, and that the rules and regulations prescribed by the Government are observed. Councils approve school plans and budgets, review academic performance and extra-curricular activities and take part in the selection of principals.

The OECD team was informed, however, that School Councils in the Canary Islands have limited authority, and can make suggestions, but do not take any decisions. Therefore, though similar in composition to School Governing Bodies in England and Wales or South Africa, School Boards of Management in the Republic of Ireland, School Boards in Denmark or School Governing Councils in South Australia, they lack these bodies' executive and decision-making powers over important matters such as the school budget, school policies, school curriculum and school standards. There are bodies called Schools Councils in other European countries – England and Wales, Sweden, Germany and the Conseils de la Vie Lycéenne in France – but these are intended primarily to give students some influence and involvement in school governance. Austria's School Committees, Councils for Schools Affairs and School Forums come somewhere in between; they can take decisions, but over a limited range of issues.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

The regional government asked the OECD team to include in its report a comparative assessment of the quality of education in private and public schools. The team brings together here all the points worth noting about private schools: some information has already been mentioned in previous chapters.

There are two types of private schools in the Canary Islands – 100 private but state-subsidised schools with around 20% of pupils, and 96 fully private schools with no state subsidy and around 5% of pupils (evidently, the fully private schools are much smaller on average than the private subsidised schools). Private schools are fewer, and take a lower percentage of pupils, in the Canary Islands than in Spain as a whole; one-third of pupils are in private schools across Spain and some regions have up to 50% of students in these schools. The proportion of private schools on each island ranges from nil in the two smallest islands to 20% in Tenerife. PISA sampled both private and public schools. The OECD team visited a small number of private subsidised schools but no fully private schools.

As already mentioned in Chapter 2, private schools (of both types) outperformed public schools by 59 points in reading, 44 points in mathematics and 57 points in science. Though Canary Islands private schools are below the averages for Spanish private schools in all subjects, they are closer to the Spain figure than the public schools figure in all subjects, and in reading and science the differences between Islands private schools and Spanish private schools are relatively small.

Part of private schools' performance advantage over public schools is unquestionably due to the fact that private school students are generally from more advantaged socio-economic backgrounds. If scores are adjusted for socio-economic differences, private schools' performance advantage over public schools disappears. However, in an education system like Spain's, containing three types of schools, differentiated by whether parents of students can afford to pay nothing, or a modest amount, or a lot to send them there, the students in each type of school are already largely pre-sorted into socio-economic groups. It is not possible to conclude from PISA evidence, for example, that private subsidised schools and public schools would achieve identical results if they had socio-economically identical pupils. This theory can never be tested because fee-charging and free schools can never have socio-economically identical pupils – unless some other agency pays all fees on poorer parents' behalf. It should be remembered that, despite the existence of a number of private schools in the Canary Islands, the PISA data for the Islands demonstrates a greater differential within schools than between schools, indicating that learning is less affected than in many other OECD countries by the social status of the school itself.

Public schools and private subsidised schools have many similarities. Teachers for both have the same qualifications and initial training. They must operate the same admissions rules, giving general priority to students from the surrounding area and particular priority to low-income families (though it is not clear how these families would manage to pay private school fees unless subsidised by the school, which the team understands does sometimes happen but is most likely for post-compulsory students whose fees are higher). The regional curriculum has to be followed in both types of school. The region makes financial allocations to cover teaching and curriculum costs on the same basis to private subsidised and public schools. And both school types are covered by the same detailed and constraining financial regulations, which private school administrators complained about as vociferously as their public school counterparts.

A number of differences – other than students' socio-economic status – were noted between private and public schools in the Canary Islands. The following differences seem likely to help private schools to perform better than public schools.

- In private schools principals can select their own staff and assign them to the classes and duties for which they are best suited – teachers are not allocated by the regional authority and allowed to pick their classes according to civil service seniority rules.

Private school principals can also recruit their own specialist staff to work with struggling or special needs students, rather than relying on area teams.

- Because private schools select their own staff, they can insist that those staff take in-service training. Consequently, the teachers the team met in private schools seemed to have taken more, and more recent, in-service training than their public school counterparts.
- In general, the school climate seems to be more conducive to learning in private than in public schools. In PISA, private school principals were only half as likely as their public school counterparts to report teachers' low expectations of students, student absenteeism, students skipping classes and staff resistant to change. Lack of respect for teachers at least to some extent was reported in the schools attended by around half of public school students, but by only 9% of students in private schools. There were reports of students not being encouraged to achieve their full potential at least to some extent in the schools attended by 45% of public school students and no private school students; this was said to happen a lot in schools attended by 8% of public school students but in no private schools. And principals of private schools did not report any teacher absenteeism; teacher absenteeism was reported in the schools attended by around 16% of public school students.
- Private schools tend to have far lower repetition rates: in PISA, 17% of students in private schools reported having been made to repeat a year during secondary schooling, compared to 47% of students in public schools. One principal explained to the team that fee-paying parents would not accept their children being made to repeat as often as is typical in public schools.
- Engagement with parents seems to be better developed in private schools. This is partly, no doubt, because private schools appreciate the importance of keeping fee-paying customers satisfied.
- Accountability to parents and students seems to be better developed in private schools. Private schools are more likely than public schools to post students' achievement data publicly (by 24% to 13%) and to use it to evaluate teachers' performance (52% to 36%) and monitor teacher practices (56% to 24%).

The following differences, however, may be thought to give public schools an advantage over private schools, and help the public schools to achieve better results, particularly for less advantaged students.

- Private subsidised schools are in fact only partly subsidised. They are funded for teaching and curriculum costs, not for a range of other costs relating to the school premises, school facilities, school administration, and entering pupils in national and regional diagnostic tests and external exams. One private school the team visited said that just 49% of the school's running costs were met by the public subsidy; the remainder has to come from fees or fund-raising. (The OECD team is unable to judge whether this percentage is typical.)
- In particular, private schools are not generally eligible for special programmes – such as those which fund reinforcement classes for struggling students in the afternoons, and support for various special needs.
- Intimidating or bullying of students was reported in PISA as happening in schools attended by slightly more students in private schools than public schools (22% to 16%), as was drug use by students (9% to 6%).
- Public schools also reported more tracking of achievement data over time (in schools attended by 95% of students, compared to 83% – though as mentioned before, the team is doubtful whether non-standardised data is fit for this purpose) and using achievement data in decisions about instructional resource allocation to the school (49% to 40% – though when public schools say they do this, they may have in mind the use of achievement data to decide which students should be put onto special programmes, which are closed to private schools.)

THE ROLE OF THE INSPECTORATE

In the Canary Islands School Inspectors constitute an important bridge between the regional Education Ministry, which employs them, and the school system. They are the only real source of educational expert advice and support to school principals. The OECD team was not able to study the role of the Inspectors in depth, but formed the view that most work well with, and are valued by school principals, particularly where the relationship is supportive and the Inspector usually backs the principal's requests for staffing or other changes. There is scope for Inspectors to play an even wider role in school improvement and external accountability.

OECD TEAM VIEWS

Many of the conditions required to provide high quality education are already in place in the Canary Islands. School buildings are (by and large) as good as or better than in many OECD countries. Class sizes are manageable and student-teacher ratios not high by international standards, and there are no serious teacher shortages – indeed, more teachers are emerging from initial training than can find jobs. The regional government has the autonomy to tailor a significant proportion (35%) of the national curriculum to regional needs, and could (in the sense that there is no legal impediment) devolve to schools as much curriculum autonomy as schools and teachers enjoy in most high-performing PISA countries. Minority students and students from less well-off family backgrounds suffer less relative educational disadvantage than in many countries.

What, then, is missing? What more needs to be put in place? Change and reform are clearly needed if the quality of education revealed by PISA is to be ratcheted up. Earlier chapters have considered what needs to change in relation to students and learning, teachers and teaching. The changes the team believes are needed in relation to schools and principals are set out below.

School accountability

The region's policies governing school location and school admission seem suitable for the Islands' conditions and its geography, and seem to be achieving a reasonable degree of equity between socio-economic groups. However, as they generate so little competition to stimulate higher standards, this deficit needs to be compensated for by strengthening other pressures for improvement and achievement.

As the PISA 2009 report explained, schools' performance is strongly influenced by the ways in which they are held accountable for their results and what forms of autonomy they are allowed to have. Accountability depends both on the information that is made available about performance and the use made of that information, whether by administrative authorities, schools or the parents. Thus the issues of autonomy, evaluation, governance and choice interact in providing a framework in which schools are – or are not – given the incentives and the capacity to improve.

As noted earlier in this chapter, the accountability to parents of schools in the Canary Islands is weak by international standards. Though the team knows that over half of schools provide parents with some information on results, PISA evidence leaves open the possibility that a large minority of schools provide none. Only a small minority provide what the PISA reports says is the best sort of information, showing how each student's performance compares to national or regional benchmarks; and even that information is suspect if it is not based on standardised tests taken across the region, which it very rarely is.

The previous chapter recommended that the Regional Education Ministry develops a bank of standardised tests, which will be suitable for application at the end of each year of compulsory education, in core subjects. All schools receiving the tests would be required to ensure pupils took them, and to return results or marked papers to the Ministry. The Ministry can use its impressive data-processing capacity to produce reports showing each school how its results compare to those of other schools on the same island and across the Canary Islands; the information should be broken down by school year and school type. Schools would also be required to share the full reports with parents.

In the interim before region-wide standardised tests are available for every year group and key subject, it will be helpful for parents to receive whatever locally-generated information on achievement each school has available, e.g. from tests developed by teachers (indicating that these are results of non-standardised tests). It could of course be helpful to continue to offer parent-teacher assessment results alongside standardised test results in the longer term, so that teachers can let parents know if their child's test performance was above or below their general classwork standard.

In addition to these achievement reports, the team recommends that parents should be given information, soon after the end of each school year, on the number and proportion of students in the school, in each year and in each teacher's class who were made to repeat that year. As with achievement data, the team suggests that the regional Ministry collects the data from schools and returns it to them in a standard format, to be passed on to parents.

Both types of report will help the work of schools inspectors, and will have the great advantage of ensuring that schools and inspectors have the same information base, which is not the case now. It is uncomfortable for school principals and teachers when inspectors and regional authorities have sole access to information and are using it to make judgements about them.

The achievement and repetition reports the team has recommended may generate some excitement among parents, particularly those not used to receiving any data, or those who realise for the first time that by regional or Island standards, the school their child attends is not doing particularly well. However, that is all to the good. As PISA has shown, parents putting pressure on schools to achieve higher academic standards can be a powerful force for improvement.

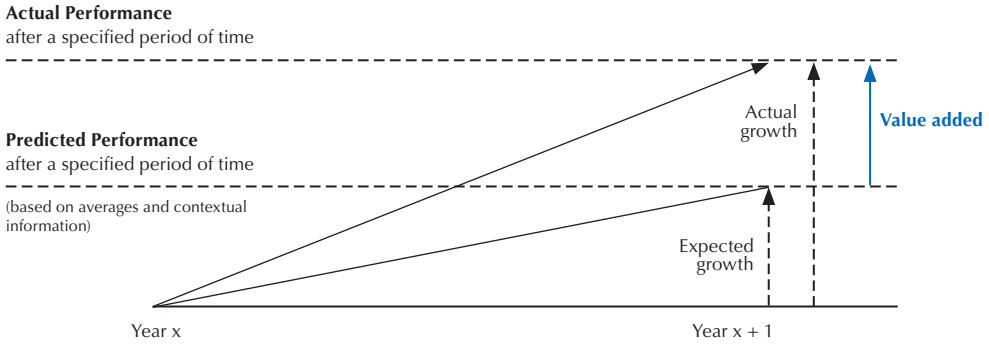
Alternatively, if schools are concerned about these reports being used to construct "league tables", the regional authority may wish to make the information available to the principal, teachers and the School Council members electronically through a password-protected system.[1]

One reason why teachers and principals may be sensitive about inter-school comparisons is that they feel readers of these comparisons take insufficient account of differences between schools' pupil populations. Some schools have more pupils with special needs, or more pupils from poorer families, than others. These concerns can be met by giving details of the pupil characteristics in different schools, or grouping schools into "families" of similar schools for comparison purposes, or – probably the best and fairest approach – adjusting results for differences in pupil characteristics generally associated with differences in pupil progress or outcomes. This last approach is called value-added modelling: Box 6.1 illustrates how it works.

Box 6.1 **Assessing the value-added of schools: enhancing fairness and equity**

Value-added modelling (VAM) is a method to make more accurate and fairer assessments of schools' contributions to student learning outcomes and growth, as benchmarks can be tailored in consideration of individual school characteristics. It is used by education authorities in several OECD countries (Norway, Poland, Slovenia, the United Kingdom and the United States) to strengthen school accountability and improvement efforts.

The basic unit of accountability used in VAM is the individual school. Value-added scores can be calculated for individual students, subject, areas, grade levels, schools and other jurisdictional entities (e.g. municipalities). VAM scores are inherently relative to other schools' performance. Specifically, the score for an individual school is an estimate of the difference between the individual school's contribution to the learning of its students and the average contributions of a given group of other schools participating in VAM to the learning of their respective students. The use of data from another grouping of schools, for example, would yield different value-added scores.



Source: OECD (2011)

Within an accountability framework, assessments of school performance usually result in actions and consequences for teachers. Similarly, assessments should also provide school staff with information on what works and how to improve, as well as the opportunities to do so.

The initial phases of establishing an accountability framework that includes VAM should identify priorities and opportunities for school improvement efforts. Positive incentives that reinforce and enhance the performance of schools, staff and teachers, could be combined with further evaluations, assistance and resources for underperforming schools.

The development of value-added methods requires careful design and planning to address effectively the challenges involved as all empirically-based indicators of school performance are subject to variability and bias. The design of robust value-added methods needs thus to address various statistical, methodological and implementation issues.

Sources:

OECD (2011), *Establishing a Framework for Evaluation and Teacher Incentives: Considerations for Mexico*, OECD Publishing.

Goldschmidt, P., et al. (2005), "Policymakers' Guide to Growth Models for School Accountability: How do Accountability Models Differ?", paper commissioned by the Councils of Chief State School Officers, Washington, DC.

Martínez-Arias, R., J.L. Gaviria and M. Castro (2009), "Concepto y evolución de los modelos de valor añadido en educación", in *Revista de Educación*, Vol. 348, pp. 15-34.

The team recommends that the Canary Islands Education Ministry tests out these approaches and adopts the most suitable. All require information on pupil characteristics to be collected by the body producing the achievement data. The OECD team is not sure whether the regional Education Ministry collects information on the characteristics of individual pupils. If not, they could start to do so, for example via an annual "school census", such as the one done in England.[2] Annual censuses are time-consuming for schools to complete once a year, but save time later by reducing the need for *ad hoc* information requests.

The team also recommends that, as soon as reliable data based on standardised tests become available, it should become universal practice for School Councils to use this data and repetition data to monitor and evaluate performance. As a final thought on accountability, the OECD team noted the low priority given in the Canary Islands to evaluating what has worked and what has not, and

reporting on it to stakeholders. This is true both at the level of government programmes – none of the special programmes introduced across the Islands since 2007/08 appears to have been evaluated – and at individual school level. The team recommends that every school should conduct a whole-school review and evaluation (already suggested in the previous chapter as a useful way of conducting in-service training as teachers go about their normal business) at regular intervals. This would help to promote a culture of enquiry and reflection on the performance of the school among the staff and the wider school community, and set the scene for devising development projects aimed at addressing weaknesses and introducing improvements.

School autonomy

The OECD team believes that in the Canary Islands, there is too little autonomy at the level of the school and that this is depressing school performance. Research on school improvement clearly indicates that the best outcomes are achieved when all levels of the education system agree education strategy but education professionals (principals and teachers) take responsibility for the quality of education being provided in their schools. The central – or, in the Canary Islands' case, regional – authority's role is to create the agenda and the conditions for improvement and change; the schools' role is to plan and implement improvement and change, building in appropriate evaluation and accountability arrangements. It is a particular weakness of the system that opportunities for introducing meaningful change in schools are constrained by lack of delegated authority, staffing constraints, financial constraints, or by the fact that the change was not envisaged in the school project. As the discussion earlier in this chapter makes clear, the big areas where the team believes more autonomy is needed are: teacher incentives; resource allocation; and the delivery of the curriculum.

The team recommends that the regional authority should devolve to school principals responsibility for the selection of teachers for posts in their schools. Principals would be required to make their selections in association with the School Council, from among those deemed qualified for appointment by the regional authority. If necessary for legal reasons, appointments could be formally made or ratified by the regional authority. Principals should also be given the authority to assign teachers to particular classes and duties as they deem appropriate, and to ask the regional Education Ministry to re-assign elsewhere teachers who both under-perform and refuse to undertake re-training the principal regards as necessary. They should be entitled to select teachers for promotion to the new middle management roles the team recommends introducing (see next section).

The team recommends also that school principals are given greater autonomy over resource allocation, in the areas they mentioned to the OECD team – allocating and re-allocating resources within their school budgets, provided they do not overspend their total budgets or divert to other purposes money given to the school specifically for special programmes or projects; managing school services; carrying out minor repairs and decoration to buildings; and managing absenteeism.

The team recommends too that school principals, in association with the School Council, be given autonomy to make some curriculum-related decisions, such as decisions on which textbooks and teaching materials to use (in practice, the School Council and the principal would develop policy and general guidelines governing the selection of textbooks and teaching materials for implementation by the teaching staff); decisions on adjustments to the standard weekly curriculum to meet the needs of students in the school or allow them to study the options of their choice; and decisions on which special programmes should be offered to help struggling students. New types of training should be developed and made available to principals, on initial appointment and in-service, to help them make effective use of this autonomy to improve results – as recommended below.

The role of the school principal

In the Canary Islands, many key decisions relating to the management of the school are made not by the principal, but by others. The OECD team sees this as a significant cause of under-performance. For example, neither the principal nor the School Council can decide on the selection of teachers or their assignment to classes. In this scenario, especially where there is high staff turnover (the team visited one school where half the staff will change in the next academic year), it can be very difficult to make realistic plans. Principals also complain about their huge administrative burden, which frustrates any efforts to provide instructional leadership, and their lack of autonomy to make financial and resource decisions. The demands and stresses of the role, combined with the lack of pay incentives to take it up, are discouraging many teachers from putting themselves forward for the role.

A further problem is the time limit for serving as a principal, and particularly the initial term of four years, which the OECD team considers far too short. It takes at least seven years for newly-appointed principals to shape the school in directions which will lead to sustained development and improvement – one year to get to know the school, the staff and the community and become familiar with the prevailing school culture; two years to plan, negotiate and introduce improvement initiatives; a further three years to bed down the initiatives; and another year to evaluate the impact of what has been done and decide on possible changes. The team appreciates that applicants for principalship are required to plan a school project, which they expect to implement on appointment, and that successful principals can be re-appointed for a further four-year term. However, the team doubts the wisdom of any new principal committing to a project without first getting to know their school and consulting those likely to have a key role in implementing it.

A number of changes in the role of the public school principal are recommended. The current limit of 4 years, which can be renewed for a further 4 years, should be reviewed with a view to extending the initial contract for a longer period. Secondly, principals should be given greater autonomy in staffing, financial and educational matters as recommended in the previous section. Thirdly, the pay differential between senior teachers and principals should be increased, to the extent necessary to make the role attractive to good candidates.

Fourthly, steps should be taken to ensure all principals are supported by effective middle management structures in their schools. To achieve this the team suggests that the functions of departmental heads at secondary level be expanded to include management responsibility for teachers in their departments, organising the curriculum, monitoring the academic progress and pastoral needs of the students, and preparing progress reports. Similar structures should be developed for primary schools. The team believes that an effective middle management system will help to distribute the burden of administration and leadership in the school, free up the principal to devote more time to visiting classrooms and engaging in instructional leadership, enable aspiring principals to gain relevant experience and provide a career path for teachers.

Fifthly, though the Canary Islands government is to be commended for the detailed training provided for newly appointed principals, which does reflect some appreciation of the burdens of this office, the team recommends that the current training programme be supplemented, with additional modules focussing on how to improve education quality, including by monitoring and developing teacher practice, and allocating resources to ensure that all students at risk of failure are given the necessary help.

The role of the School Council

The team suggests that School Councils in the Canary Islands could make a greater contribution to school development and improvement, and could provide more useful support to school principals, if they could be given more executive responsibility, on the model of School Governing Bodies in England, School Boards of Management in Ireland or School Boards in Denmark. In these systems, the school principal and staff remain responsible for implementing the aims, objectives and programmes of the school on a day-to day basis, but the School Governing Bodies/Boards of Management decide the overall management and accountability structures and policies under which the school operates. In PISA, these three countries all performed rather better than Spain. By way of example, Box 6.2 describes the role of Danish School Boards.

Box 6.2 **School Boards in Denmark**

Danish legislation requires a School Board to be set up at every school. In general, the voting members are: 5 or 7 elected parent representatives, one of whom chairs the Board; 2 representatives of teachers and other staff elected by and from among the staff of the school; and 2 elected pupil representatives. The non-voting members are the school principal and his/her deputy, one of whom is Board Secretary; and a member of the municipal council, if it wishes to be represented. Parent representatives are elected for 4 years, other members for 1 year. School staff cannot be parent representatives. Parent and pupil representatives may be repaid for expenses incurred, but receive no other compensation.

The School Board is responsible for supervising the activities of the school and laying down policies for these activities, including the organisation of teaching; the number of lessons taught to each year group; the length of the school day; optional subjects to be offered; the special education to be provided; the distribution of pupils in classes; arrangements for school-home co-operation; the information parents should receive about pupil outcomes; the distribution of the work between teachers; arrangements for pupil care during school hours, school camps and work experience; and extra-curricular activities. The School Board is also responsible for approving the school budget within the financial framework laid down for the school; approving teaching materials and draw up school rules; Boards are also the *de facto* decision-makers on school curricula, innovation and development work beyond what is already planned, and headteacher and teacher appointments – though formally these are decided by the municipal council on the Board's recommendation.

Every Board must prepare an annual report and convene a joint meeting with all parents of children at the school, at least once a year, to discuss it.

Source: Danish Ministry of Education.

The OECD team suggests that the schools and students in the Canary Islands would benefit if School Councils could be granted greater autonomy and responsibility and be designated as the main decision-making body for the management of schools and for the quality of education being provided in them. This would be a considerable extension of the present role of School Councils, and involve giving them responsibility for reviewing and approving school plans and projects, for overseeing the selection of teachers (from among the applicants the regional government regards as qualified for the role), for evaluating performance, for putting in-school evaluation procedures in place, and generally for assuming ultimate responsibility for the quality of education the school provides. These tasks require a sound knowledge of the educational system and the rules and regulations under which it is expected to function, as well as a good working familiarity with the requirements of corporate governance, so members of the Councils would need appropriate training.

The team understands, however, that the role and remit of School Councils is laid down in Spanish national law and, like anything in national law, could be very difficult to change. Therefore, the team recommends that the Canary Islands government reviews the role of the Councils; seeks ways of giving them greater legal responsibilities in the areas mentioned; and meanwhile takes steps to ensure that they are routinely consulted on issues and developments in these areas and that their views are taken seriously by decision-makers. The review the team recommends should, among other things, consider whether school principals should continue to chair Schools Councils, or whether it would be better for a parent or other representative of the wider school community to chair, as international best practice suggests.

Private schools

There is every reason for the Canary Islands government to wish to keep some private schools in the system. Private subsidised schools appear to be performing well compared to public schools, and – being only partly subsidised – provide education at lower unit cost. Some stakeholders suggest that they achieve their performance advantage by devious means, such as engineering admissions to achieve an advantaged intake. However, the requirement to pay fees (even relatively small fees) inevitably filters out the poorer families.

In the OECD team's view, having more advantaged pupil populations is only one reason for the relative success of private subsidised schools in PISA. Other reasons are that, as PISA has shown, they tend to do a number of things better than public schools, including engaging with parents and having higher expectations of students; and that their principals are free to select their own staff, assign them to classes and require them to take in-service training. The team is recommending that public schools be given the same freedoms, in the interests of achieving a good standard of education for all students.

The role of the Inspectorate

The team suggests that in future the Inspectorate should play a greater role in offering schools practical support and in relation to external accountability, while giving less priority to reporting back on schools to the regional Education Ministry. In particular, the team suggests that Inspectors should share with principals the supervision of teachers new to the profession during their probation periods, and confirm the final decision on whether they have passed probation. Inspectors should also share with principals, and train principals in, the assessment of individual teachers' classroom performance. Every teacher should be assessed and told the results of that assessment at specified intervals; teachers causing concern should be assessed in between times by Inspectors at the principal's request. Inspectors would then be in a position to give a second opinion on proposals by the principal to reward outstanding teaching (if, as recommended in Chapter 5, such rewards are introduced) and to require teachers to take refresher training. Inspectors should also have the explicit role of reviewing school results annually with the principal and discussing possible action to improve them the following year: continuous improvement should be an aspiration for all schools, whatever their results. Also recommended is a more explicit role for the Inspectorate as external evaluators of the school as a whole, including the effectiveness of management, leadership and links with parents, and the quality of the buildings and resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS IN THIS CHAPTER

- To foster **accountability to parents**, the Canary Islands Education Ministry should develop a bank of standardised tests in core subjects for schools to use at the end of each year of compulsory education. Test results should be fed back to the Ministry, which should produce reports showing each school how its results compare to those of other schools on the same island and across the Canary Islands. Schools would be required to share the full reports with parents.
- Parents should receive similar reports on repetition rates, compared to other schools.
- The Education Ministry should test out ways of linking up performance data with data on pupil characteristics, so that performance and repetition reports can be read with awareness of each school's context.
- Every school should conduct a **whole-school review and evaluation** at regular intervals.
- **School principals**, in association with their School Council, should have the **autonomy** to select teachers for posts in their schools, to assign teachers to particular classes and duties, to request re-assignment of teachers who under-perform and refuse to undertake re-training, and to select teachers for promotion to middle management roles.

- School principals should also be allowed greater autonomy to re-allocate resources within their school budgets, manage school services, carry out minor repairs and decoration to buildings and manage absenteeism.
- School principals, in association with the School Council and teaching staff, should be allowed to decide on textbooks and teaching materials, curriculum adjustments and special programmes for struggling students.
- The current standard pre-set legal **limit to the time principals can remain in one school** should be reconsidered.
- The **pay differential between senior teachers and principals** should be increased, to the extent necessary to make the role of principal attractive to good candidates.
- Principals should be able to create and maximise the use of **middle management** structures in their schools, to support them and allow them more time for instructional leadership.
- The current **training programme for principals** should be supplemented by additional modules: on improving education quality, monitoring and developing teacher practice, and allocating resources so as to minimise the risk of student failure.
- The Canary Islands government should review the role and functioning of **School Councils,** seek ways of giving them more executive authority, and until that is possible, should ensure that the Councils are routinely consulted on school management and quality issues.
- The **Inspectorate** should play a greater role in offering schools practical support and in relation to external accountability, while giving less priority to reporting back on schools to the regional Education Ministry. In particular, Inspectors should share with principals the supervision of new teachers on probation; confirm decisions on whether they have passed probation; train and assist principals in the assessment of individual teachers' classroom performance; and give a second opinion on proposals by the principal to reward outstanding teaching and require teachers to take refresher training. Inspectors should also review school results annually with the principal; advise on how to improve them; and act as external evaluators of the school as a whole, including the effectiveness of management, leadership and links with parents and the quality of the buildings and resources.

Notes

1. Such as England's RAISE online system.
2. Its official name is PLASC, and it starts in January each year.

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7

Findings, Recommendations and the Way Forward

This chapter provides a summary of main findings and recommendations made in each chapter of this report and suggests next steps. It concludes with a summary table of the review team's recommendations, indicating for each recommendation its importance, timeframe of implementation, whether responsibility lies at regional or national level and links to other recommendations.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 1 sets the scene for the review by describing the Canary Islands and their school system. Key points noted include:

- The Islands have an exceptionally favourable and even climate but are somewhat isolated from the rest of Spain and other countries.
- Adult unemployment is high and youth unemployment even higher: 52% of young people aged 15-24 were unemployed in 2010.
- Students in the Islands are less socio-economically advantaged, and their parents are less highly educated, than typical for Spain.
- The Islands' schooling system is tightly regulated by Spanish national law, though the Islands' regional government has some autonomy in some areas of education.
- There are three types of school in the Canary Islands: public or fully state-maintained schools with around 75% of pupils; private but state-subsidised schools with just under 20% of pupils; and private schools with no state subsidy and around 5% of pupils.
- Teachers are career civil servants who have passed a civil service exam and been selected and appointed to posts through a selection process governed by detailed national regulations.
- The Canary Islands education authorities have concerns about a number of aspects of their school system, which they asked the OECD team to consider particularly closely in this review.

Chapter 2 sets out key general PISA findings on the quality and equity of school education in the Canary Islands. It notes that, by international standards and often by national standards too:

- The average performance of Canary Islands 15-year-olds in reading, mathematics and science is low: the second-lowest of the Spanish regions in PISA.
- Mathematics performance is particularly low.
- Numbers failing to reach even the baseline Level 2 are very high, particularly in mathematics and boys' reading, while few reach the highest performance levels.
- Canary Islands secondary schooling seems less effective for girls than for boys in mathematics and science.
- Even when PISA results are statistically adjusted to take account of the relatively low average socio-economic status of Canary Islands students, their reading performance remains significantly below Spanish and OECD averages.
- Socio-economic differences between students make less difference to results in the Canary Islands than across the OECD and there is much less performance variation between schools than within schools – signs that the Islands' school system is more equitable than many.
- Private schools outperform public schools, getting nearer than public schools to the performance levels of their counterparts in Spain as a whole, though maths results are problematic in both private and public schools. Private schools do, however, have more advantaged pupil populations.
- Commendably, immigrant students perform as well as native students.

Chapter 3 discusses how the system is managed and analyses education spending. The Chapter finds that:

- Management of the Islands' education system is heavily centralised.
- Where schools and others are given some responsibility, it is often strictly limited by detailed central regulations and decrees.
- School principals carry a huge burden of administration and paperwork, which leaves them little time for leading and managing learning in their schools.
- Proposals for change often pass through many layers of committees etc before being finally approved. This means reform is expensive, takes a long time, and can easily be blocked.
- Some stakeholders feel that their views are not being listened to, and/or doubted the coherence and consistency of the regional government's education policy.
- Education programmes and developments are rarely evaluated, to see whether they are working and achieving their aims. Full evaluation is essential if the Canary Islands government is to base its decisions on evidence, and avoid wasting money on ineffective programmes.
- Canary Islands education spending is lower, in relation to GDP, than international averages. However, until recently it has remained fairly stable, which is commendable in a period when many other countries were reducing their spending.
- By international standards, there is a big difference in education spending per student between secondary education and primary education; and the proportion of spending devoted to primary education is relatively low.

- A very large proportion of wage-related education spending goes on teacher salaries. These – particularly starting salaries – are very high in the Islands, whether compared with other Spanish regions, other countries or GDP per capita. However pay scales are unusually flat, with limited opportunities for pay or career progression.

Recommendations in Chapter 3

- The Canary Islands Education Ministry should **devolve more functions** to schools. Except where regulations and decrees are explicitly required by Spanish national law, these should be replaced by guidance.
- The Ministry should instigate a review of education-related **paperwork and reporting requirements**, with a view to minimising them; and also review and streamline all decision-making processes affecting schools. Consultation is important, but should be clearly distinguished from decision by the responsible person or level.
- To ensure that all those with an interest in particular decisions know that their views have been heard, the Education Ministry should follow up every **consultation** it undertakes with a report on the outcomes, showing how many people responded or participated in consultation groups, who they were, what they said, what the government decided and why (including reasons for rejecting ideas with a lot of public support).
- The Education Ministry would benefit from **explaining education policies** and their rationale more fully and publicly. When proposing reforms it is helpful to be explicit about consequences for different stakeholders, and how any adverse consequences will be mitigated.
- A culture of **evaluation** must be developed in the Islands. Programme designers should spell out in advance what programmes are intended to achieve. There should then be rigorous evaluation of whether they do so. Whatever the results of evaluation, they should be shared with stakeholders.
- The Education Ministry should seek to establish the reasons for the Islands' relatively high **gap between secondary and primary costs per student**, and satisfy itself that the balance between secondary and primary investment is right. The Ministry should also consider the potential for stripping out **unnecessary costs** (such as the costs of repetition) from education budgets, particularly at secondary level.
- Further downsizing or freezing of education budgets is likely to go at the expense of non-wage related investment. The authorities should consider which areas are and will be affected by the budget adjustments, analyse the possible impact of adjustments, in particular the impact on reform capacity and implementation, and ensure transparent communication on these issues with stakeholders.
- As by international standards the Islands provide high levels of **teachers' pay**, and starting pay levels are unusually generous, the authorities are recommended to review teachers' pay structures and build in more improvement incentives for all teachers – see Chapter 5.

Chapter 4 on Students and Learning considers possible explanations for the Islands' disappointing PISA results that relate to students, their motivation, their family support and how effectively they are learning and understanding what is taught. Recognising that many secondary students lack or lose interest in and motivation to pursue learning to the end of compulsory education and beyond, the chapter considers reasons why this might be. Contributory factors include:

- Low levels of parental engagement with schools, which may be linked to schools' attitudes to parents.
- Struggling students are not being efficiently identified and given timely, effective help.
- The relatively long hours Canary Islands students spend in regular Spanish and mathematics lessons, compared to others in Spain, are not producing better performance; this raises questions over the quality of teaching.
- There is no evidence that reinforcement lessons outside school hours are in fact helping struggling students to improve.
- Making large numbers of students repeat years is doing those students, and the region's results, more harm than good. Repetition also wastes limited resources.
- The secondary curriculum in the Islands is excessively rigid and academic. It is not very student-friendly and gives insufficient weight to basic skills.
- The assessment methods in use, particularly the lack of standardised tests, make it difficult for teachers to judge student performance fairly and consistently and defend adverse judgements to students and parents. Similarly, schools, inspectors, and the regional authority cannot reliably compare the performance of different schools or tell whether results are improving over time.
- The Canary Islands school day, which consists only of a long uninterrupted morning, is unusual and seems likely to pose problems for students, teachers and parents.
- The long summer break – less necessary in the Canary Islands than in other Spanish regions with hotter summers – seems likely to lead to learning loss.

- Pre-compulsory education is widely available in the Islands, and (if of good quality) can be particularly helpful to students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Recommendations in Chapter 4

- Stimulate more **parent and family engagement** in the life of schools and the education of children, evaluating existing schemes to see what works. Schools need to reach out to parents, welcome them in, answer their questions and concerns, share evidence on student attainment in a way that parents can understand, and treat them as equal partners in the joint enterprise of helping their children learn. Engagement with and programmes for grandparents and other caregivers should also be considered.
- Train teachers, particularly secondary teachers, in diagnosing pupils with **special educational needs,** identifying **students struggling to master the national curriculum** and giving them the appropriate help.
- **Reinforcement programmes for struggling students** should be evaluated as soon as possible, to establish whether they are well-targeted, whether all the "strugglers" are being identified and provided for, and whether the programmes are measurably improving participants' attainment. PISA evidence suggests that out-of school reinforcement programmes are unlikely to be useful, given how much time is already allocated to regular language and maths lessons; and that the best way to improve strugglers' results is to improve the quality of regular lessons.
- **Repetition** (making students repeat school years) is counter-productive. The repetition rate should be reduced to as near zero as possible. Instead, schools and teachers should be encouraged and trained to monitor student progress continuously throughout the year and deliver appropriate personalised help, in good time, to students who hit learning difficulties. Stakeholders, including parents, should be brought together to agree on the very limited circumstances in which it will remain appropriate for a school to require a student to repeat a grade, and who – besides the teacher – should be involved in the decision. It is suggested that either repetition should be subject to parental consent, or parents and secondary students should have a right of appeal to an independent authority.
- The **secondary curriculum** requires reform: it is too academic and inflexible and not designed to offer students logical study pathways or equip them with key and basic skills. Priorities in redesigning the curriculum should be to accommodate more professional and work-related subject options, make it less content-based and give more time to skills development.
- **Assessment** methods need considerable improvement. Ideally, every teacher should use standardised assessment criteria.
- Research, including surveys of students, parents and school staff, should be commissioned on how the current shape and length of **the school day,** and the long summer holidays, impact on student learning at primary and secondary age respectively. Ways of boosting school performance by using the available classroom time more effectively should also be investigated.
- **Summer schools** with international input should be considered for struggling students, whether or not holiday patterns change.
- **Early childhood programmes** are important and should be maintained despite budget pressures, if they are helping vulnerable children. Current programmes should be evaluated to see if they are doing so.

Chapter 5 on Teachers and Teaching notes that, of all the in-school variables that can add value to the achievements of the students, the quality of teaching is the most significant. It considers teacher recruitment and terms and conditions, including career structure and pay and rewards; and teacher education and training programmes, both initial and in-service. Chapter 5 finds that:

- Though by OECD standards teachers in Spain are very well paid compared to other college graduates, many other characteristics associated with high-quality teaching are not found in the Spanish system. By OECD standards, Spanish teachers have little mentoring, induction or appraisal; little in-service training; little financial support or reward for in-service training; and few incentives to innovate, improve the quality of their teaching or take on extra duties.
- Many Canary Islands teachers are demoralised and many find their work conditions challenging, complaining of students unwilling to work and parents unwilling to support schools. However PISA evidence suggests that at least some poor student performance may be teacher-related.
- The current (national) teacher recruitment system, based on passing the civil service exam, neither ensures that teachers are drawn from the highest-achieving graduates nor that they possess the other qualities a good teacher needs.
- The system for appointing teachers to public schools is not matching teachers with needs. Allocation of teachers to posts is done by regional Ministry officials, according to national rules excessively based on seniority. School principals have no input. Younger and newly-trained teachers fail to find jobs, except in the most difficult schools and remote areas. In the Canary Islands this flawed system extends to supply teachers.
- Though teachers in the Canary Islands have a working week of 37.5 hours, the severe limits to the uses public schools can make of these hours are hindering good school management and teacher professional development.
- Teachers in the Islands have no real career structure, or rewards for achieving good or improved results or undertaking in-service training, or mechanisms for underperformers to leave the profession.

- Initial teacher training is well-established for primary teachers, but for secondary teachers has only just been extended from two months to one year. It is not clear that either programme equips teachers with all the practical skills they need to meet the Islands' current education challenges, or with enough high-quality, well-supervised teaching practice in schools.
- The lack of in-service training provision in the Canary Islands, and the reluctance to undertake it on the part of teachers who most need it, are extremely serious problems.
- Other elements missing from the Islands' system are induction arrangements for new teachers and involvement of university education faculties with school staff.

Recommendations in Chapter 5

- The regional government should review all of **teachers' current terms and conditions**; consider whether they all remain appropriate for the specific job teachers do and the achievement of education system objectives; and, if not, take steps to change them. It is recognised that the regional government could not make such changes on its own authority; the national government will need to be involved and its consent obtained.
- The **teacher recruitment** system should be reformed, so as to recruit more trainees from among the highest-achieving graduates and to filter applicants for personal characteristics important for teaching success as in Finland. **Deployment** arrangements should be changed so as to give school principals more say in appointments and teacher assignments within the school.
- To create more of a **career structure**, promotional posts aimed at supporting the principal in the management and leadership of the school should be created.
- **Pay and rewards** structures should be revised. Suggested changes include different scales and engaging new entrants on the basis of contracts rather than tenure; enabling teachers to earn a higher maximum than at present if they achieve good student outcomes or undertake specified extra duties; and making service increments conditional on undertaking in-service training suggested by school principals or inspectors.
- An **early retirement** scheme should be introduced, to allow teachers who cease to be fully effective an honourable exit from the profession.
- Better **financial incentives** should be available to teachers for improving their pupils' performance, or their own, or for taking up hard-to fill or particularly challenging posts.
- Teachers should be expected to spend their full **weekly working hours** in school or on call for school purposes, including in-service training.
- **Initial teacher training** programmes should address major issues of concern, such as improving literacy and numeracy, tackling failure, absenteeism and drop out, teaching mixed abilities, addressing the needs of diverse students and dealing with bad behaviour. The government should draw up a revised prospectus for initial training including these aspects, and should consider whether the secondary programme needs to be lengthened, after consultation with the relevant universities and other stakeholders.
- Improvements are recommended in the timing, length and quality of **the teaching practice component** in initial teacher training.
- In their first year in post, newly-trained teachers should have formal **induction** programmes and be on properly-supervised **probation.**
- All teachers should be expected to update their skills at regular intervals through **in-service training**. Unless action is taken to remedy the current lack of in-service training provision and non-participation by older teachers who most need it, school standards will remain low. The government should ensure that high quality programmes are made available and that teachers participate, within their working but non-classroom hours; and should meet the full costs of teachers undertaking in-service training.
- Closer working relationships should be developed between the teacher training faculties in **universities and the school system**, including for in-service teacher training and education research. Teacher training should be done by full-time dedicated staff, qualified in pedagogy.

Chapter 6 on Schools, Principals and Inspectors considers Canary Islands schools and their communities; school accountability and autonomy; school governance and the role, responsibilities, skills, training, recruitment, accountability and autonomy of school principals; the role of School Councils; and the similarities and differences between public and private schools. Chapter 6 finds that:

- Because school admission is based primarily on area of residence, public schools in the Islands face little local competition; parents have little choice in where their child is schooled; and there is little external pressure on schools to achieve better results.
- Accountability to parents appears weak by international standards, not least because without national exams or standardised tests, parents lack reliable comparative information on how well their child's school is performing.
- The regional education Ministry keeps and tracks achievement data for all state-funded schools, as do inspectors, but they too lack reliable comparative information on which to base judgements about relative performance.
- Schools in the Canary Islands have too little autonomy to make operational, financial and curricular decisions. This is depressing school performance.
- Public school principals in the Islands face formidable challenges, yet have very limited scope to innovate or make changes in order to improve results. Almost any change they might wish to make can be ruled out by lack of delegated authority, staffing constraints, financial constraints, or because the change was not envisaged in their school project. They cannot even select and deploy their own school staff.
- The burdens of being a principal are heavy but the extra pay very modest, providing little incentive to seek the role and making principal positions hard to fill. A heavy administrative workload leaves principals little time for instructional leadership; they rarely observe teachers' practice in classrooms. Training for principals is quite good.
- In line with Spanish law every school has a School Council representing stakeholders, but the Councils in the Canary Islands do not have decision-making authority.
- Private subsidised schools have some advantages over public schools: they tend to have more socially advantaged intakes, and private school principals are free to select their own staff, assign them to classes and require them to take in-service training. Their disadvantages are that the public subsidy covers only part of their costs, and their students tend not to be eligible for special programmes.
- In PISA, private schools achieved generally better results and private schools' climate seemed more conducive to learning. They reported higher expectations of students, greater respect for teachers, far lower repetition rates, lower absenteeism, more accountability to parents and more engagement with them; but somewhat higher rates of bullying and drug use.

Recommendations in Chapter 6

- To foster **accountability to parents**, the Canary Islands Education Ministry should develop a bank of standardised tests in key subjects for schools to use at the end of each year of compulsory education. Test results should be fed back to the Ministry, which should produce reports showing each school how its results compare to those of other schools on the same island and across the Canary Islands. Schools would be required to share the full reports with parents.
- Parents should also receive reports on repetition rates, compared to other schools.
- The Education Ministry should test out ways of marrying up performance data with data on pupil characteristics, so that performance and repetition reports can be read with awareness of each school's context.
- Every school should conduct a **whole-school review and evaluation** at regular intervals.
- **School principals**, in association with their School Council, should have the autonomy to select teachers for posts in their schools, to assign teachers to particular classes and duties, to require teachers to leave the school if they both under-perform and refuse to undertake re-training, and to select teachers for promotion to middle management roles.
- School principals should also be allowed greater autonomy to re-allocate resources within their school budgets, manage school services, carry out minor repairs and decoration to buildings and manage absenteeism.
- School principals, in association with the School Council, should be allowed to decide on textbooks and teaching materials, curriculum adjustments and special programmes for struggling students.
- The current standard pre-set legal **limit to the time principals can remain in one school** should be reconsidered.
- The **pay differential between senior teachers and principals** should be increased, to the extent necessary to make the role of principal attractive to good candidates.
- The current **training programme for principals** should be supplemented by additional modules: on improving education quality, monitoring and developing teacher practice, and allocating resources so as to minimise the risk of student failure.
- Principals should be able to create **middle management** structures in their schools, to support them and allow them more time for instructional leadership.

- The Canary Islands government should review the role and functioning of **School Councils,** seek ways of giving them more executive authority, and until that is possible, should ensure that the Councils are routinely consulted on school management and quality issues
- The **Inspectorate** should play a greater role in offering schools practical support and in relation to external accountability, while giving less priority to reporting back on schools to the regional Education Ministry. In particular, Inspectors should share with principals the supervision of new teachers on probation; confirm decisions on whether they have passed probation; train and assist principals in the assessment of individual teachers' classroom performance; and give a second opinion on proposals by the principal to reward outstanding teaching and require teachers to take refresher training. Inspectors should also review school results annually with the principal; advise on how to improve them; and act as external evaluators of the school as a whole, including the effectiveness of management, leadership and links with parents and the quality of the buildings and resources.

The way forward

Our findings and recommendations provide the Canary Islands authorities with a sizeable and challenging agenda for change. It may be helpful to offer some advice on how best to go about it.

As recorded in the OECD's publication *Building a High-Quality Teaching Profession – Lessons from around the world* (OECD 2011), Directors General of Education Ministries in OECD countries met in September 2008 to discuss why some educational reforms succeed and others fail. They considered how to engage parents, teachers, and politicians to support reforms, and what changes the minds of stakeholders who initially resist reforms or their implementation. The following key pointers to success emerged.

- Policy makers need to build consensus on the aims of education reform and actively engage stakeholders, especially teachers, in formulating and implementing policy responses. Teachers need to be active agents, not just in the implementation of reforms, but also in their design.
- Reform must be underpinned by solid research and analysis.
- Outcomes are improved if all political players and stakeholders share realistic expectations about the pace and nature of reform.
- Reforms need to be backed by sustainable financing and investment in change management skills.
- The focus needs to be on building self-adjusting systems which include feedback to and from all levels, incentives to react to feedback, and tools to strengthen capacities to deliver better outcomes.

Many people the OECD team met in the Canary Islands suggested that what is needed is an "education pact", incorporating aims and objectives which all stakeholders agree upon. A number of stakeholders felt that such a pact would guard against other, unwanted changes being thrust upon them by new legislation.

The team believes that an education pact is an excellent idea, and that the discussion and compromise between stakeholders necessary to achieve an agreement could be the most valuable part of the process. However, the team understands that in the recent past, an education pact was drafted and no agreement was reached. Rather than resurrecting the previous draft education pact prepared under the previous government, the OECD team suggests that the newly-elected regional government prepares and launches a discussion with all stakeholders on a "programme of action" to discuss and implement recommendations in this report. It is important that this is done within an overall education policy framework, but it is also important to reach agreement on a set of practical, achievable, sequenced actions that can transform quality and boost results, with a clear timetable and a defined budget. It is unrealistic to expect any pact to offer comprehensive insurance against future change; but the best defence against being overtaken by events is to agree and implement as quickly as possible an action plan based on evidence and supported by all stakeholders.

The team's recommendations have been designed to offer effective solutions to the problems identified, but other equally effective ways of resolving those problems may emerge from stakeholder discussions. The regional government should also propose arrangements for a working group or groups – perhaps several sector groups and one umbrella group with overall responsibility involving key representatives of the other groups – in which discussions would take place, research be commissioned, wider consultations be organised, results of research and consultations be considered and conclusions on action be reached. It will be important to ensure that no single group can veto proposals important to others or hold up progress, so the arrangements need to include procedures for resolving disagreements and allowing dissenters to state their position and move on. Effective management and progress-chasing by the regional Education Ministry will be important to success.

Below is a summary table of the team's recommendations, indicating for each recommendation:

- its importance, i.e. potential contribution to improving overall results, education quality and the student experience, on a scale of 1*-3 (1* being the most important);
- whether the team thinks it is implementable in the short (S), medium (M) or long (L) term;
- whether it seems likely to need agreement with the national government (N) or can be agreed within the Canary Islands (CI); and
- other recommendations linked to it (R followed by the number of the other recommendation).

The team has not specifically stated which stakeholders are primarily concerned with each recommendation. All will be of interest to parents, students, teachers, principals and the regional authority.

Table 7.1 Recommendations: Programme of Action

CHAPTER AND RECOMMENDATION		Importance	Timescale	National/CI	Linked with
CHAPTER 3 – SYSTEM MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCES					
R 3.1	The CI Education Ministry should devolve more functions to schools and seek to replace regulations and decrees by guidance.	1/2	S/M	CI	R 6.5, 6.6, 6.7
R 3.2	The Ministry should review and minimise education-related paperwork and reporting requirements, review and streamline decision-making processes affecting schools.	2	S/M	CI	
R 3.3	The Ministry should follow up every consultation it undertakes with a report on the outcomes, the respondents, points they made and what the government decided and why.	2	S/M	CI	
R 3.4	The Ministry should explain more fully and publicly its education policies and their rationale. When proposing reforms it should explain consequences for different stakeholders.	2	S/M	CI	
R 3.5	A culture of evaluation should be developed. This involves spelling out in advance what programmes are intended to achieve; evaluating rigorously whether they do so; and sharing the results of evaluation with stakeholders.	½	S/M	CI	
R 3.6	The CI Education Ministry should seek to establish the reasons for the Islands' relatively high gap between secondary and primary spending per student; satisfy itself that the balance between them is right; and consider the potential for stripping out unnecessary costs from education budgets, particularly at secondary level.	1	S/M	CI	R 4.4
R 3.7	By international standards the Islands commit a very high proportion of wage-related cost to teachers' pay, and pay levels are unusually generous. The CI authorities should review teachers' pay structures, reconsider salary scales and build in more improvement incentives for all teachers.	1	S/M	CI/N	R 5.4
CHAPTER 4 – STUDENTS AND LEARNING					
R 4.1	Stimulate more parent and family engagement.	2	S	CI	
R 4.2	Train teachers, particularly secondary teachers, in diagnosing pupils with special educational needs and identifying and helping students struggling to master the national curriculum.	1	M	CI	R 4.3, 4.4, 5.8, 5.11
R 4.3	Reinforcement programmes for struggling students should be evaluated as soon as possible, to establish whether they are well-targeted, whether all strugglers are being identified and provided for, and whether the programmes are measurably improving participants' attainment.	½	S	CI	
R 4.4	The repetition rate should be reduced to as near zero as possible. Instead, schools and teachers should be encouraged and trained to monitor student progress continuously throughout the year and deliver appropriate personalised help, in good time, to students who hit learning difficulties. The very limited circumstances in which repetition may remain appropriate should be agreed with stakeholders, including parents. Either repetition should be subject to parental consent, or parents and secondary students should have a right of appeal to an independent authority.	1*	S/M	CI	R 4.2, 4.3, 4.6, 4.8
R 4.5	The secondary curriculum should be re-designed to accommodate more work-related subjects, make it less content-based and give more time to skills development.	2	M/L	CI/N	
R 4.6	Assessment methods should be improved. Every teacher should use standardised assessment criteria.	1	M	CI	R 6.1
R 4.7	Research and surveys should be commissioned into how the current school day and long summer holidays impact on student learning at primary and secondary age respectively. Ways of boosting performance by using available classroom time more effectively should be investigated.	½	S/M	CI	
R 4.8	Summer schools with international input should be considered for struggling students and evaluated to ensure appropriate results and targeting.	2	S/M	CI	
R 4.9	Early childhood programmes should be maintained despite budget pressures if evaluation shows they help vulnerable children.	2	S	CI	
CHAPTER 5 – TEACHERS AND TEACHING		**1**	**S/M**	**CI**	
R 5.1	The regional government should review all of teachers' current terms and conditions; consider whether they all remain appropriate for the specific job teachers do and the achievement of education system objectives; and, if not, take steps to change them. As the regional government could not make such changes on its own authority, the national government will need to be involved and its consent obtained.	1*	M/L	N	R 3.7, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5, 5.11
R 5.2	The teacher recruitment system should be reformed, so as to recruit more trainees from among the highest-achieving graduates, and to filter applicants for personal characteristics important for teaching success as in Finland. Deployment arrangements should be changed so as to give school principals more say in appointments and teacher assignments within the school.	1*	M/L	N	R 6.5
R 5.3	Promotional posts aimed at supporting the principal in the management and leadership of the school should be created to give teachers more of a career structure.	2	S/M	CI?	R 6.5

Table 7.1 *(continued)* **Recommendations: Programme of Action**

CHAPTER AND RECOMMENDATION		Importance	Timescale	National/CI	Linked with
R 5.4	Pay and reward structures should be revised. Suggested changes include different scales; engaging new entrants on the basis of contracts rather than tenure; enabling teachers to earn a higher maximum than at present if they achieve good student outcomes or undertake specified extra duties; and making service increments conditional on undertaking in-service training.	1*	S/M	CI/N	R 3.7
R 5.5	An early retirement scheme should be introduced to allow teachers who cease to be fully effective an honourable exit from the profession.	3	M/L	N	
R 5.6	Better financial incentives should be available to teachers for improving their pupils' performance, or their own, or for taking up hard-to fill or particularly challenging posts.	1	M	N?	R 4.2, 4.3, 4.5, 4.6
R 5.7	Teachers should be expected to spend their full weekly working hours in school, or on call for school purposes or training.	1	S/M	CI	R 5.11
R 5.8	Initial teacher training programmes should address major issues of concern, such as improving literacy and numeracy, tackling failure, absenteeism and drop out, teaching mixed abilities, addressing the needs of diverse students and dealing with bad behaviour. The government should draw up a revised prospectus for initial training including these aspects, and should consider whether the secondary programme needs to be lengthened, after consultation with the relevant universities and other stakeholders.	1*	M	CI	R 5.9
R 5.9	Improvements are recommended in the timing, length and quality of the teaching practice component in initial teacher training.	1	M	CI	R 5.8
R 5.10	In their first year in post, newly-trained teachers should have formal induction programmes and be on properly-supervised probation.	1/2	S	CI	
R 5.11	All teachers should be expected to update their skills at regular intervals through in-service training. The government should ensure that high quality programmes are made available and that teachers participate, within their working but non-classroom hours; and should meet the full costs.	1*	S/M	CI	R 5.4, 5.7
R 5.12	Closer working relationships should be developed between teacher training faculties in universities and the school system, for in-service teacher training and education research. Teacher training should be done by full-time dedicated staff, qualified in pedagogy.	2/3	S/M	CI	
CHAPTER 6 – SCHOOLS, PRINCIPALS AND INSPECTORS					
R 6.1	To foster accountability to parents, the CI Education Ministry should develop a bank of standardised tests in key subjects for schools to use at the end of each year of compulsory education. The Ministry should produce reports showing each school how its results compare to those of others. Schools should share the full reports with parents.	1	M	CI	R 4.6
R 6.2	Parents should also receive reports on repetition rates, compared to other schools.	1/2	S	CI	R 4.4
R 6.3	The Education Ministry should test out ways of combining performance data with data on pupil characteristics, so that performance and repetition reports can be read with awareness of each school's context.	3	M	CI	R 6.1, R 6.2
R 6.4	Every school should conduct a whole-school review and evaluation at regular intervals.	2	S	CI	R 4.6, 5.11
R 6.5	School principals, in association with their School Council, should have autonomy to select teachers for posts in their schools, assign teachers to particular classes and duties, require teachers to leave the school if they under-perform and refuse to undertake re-training, and select teachers to promote to middle management roles.	1*	M	N	R 5.2, R 5.3
R 6.6	School principals should have greater autonomy to re-allocate resources within their school budgets, manage school services, carry out minor repairs, etc., to buildings and manage absenteeism.	2	S/M	CI	
R 6.7	School principals, in association with the School Council, should be allowed to decide on textbooks and teaching materials, curriculum adjustments and special programmes for struggling students.	1/2	S/M	CI	
R 6.8	There should cease to be pre-set legal time limits for school principals' appointments.	2/3	M/L	N	
R 6.9	The pay differential between senior teachers and principals should be increased, to the extent necessary to make the role of principal attractive to good candidates.	1*	S/M	CI?	
R 6.10	Modules should be added to the current training programme for principals, on improving education quality, monitoring and developing teacher practice, and allocating resources so as to minimise the risk of student failure.	1/2	S/M	CI	
R 6.11	Principals should be able to create middle management structures in their schools, to support them and allow them more time for instructional leadership.	2	S/M	CI?	R 5.3
R 6.12	The Canary Islands government should review the role and functioning of School Councils, seek ways of giving them more executive authority, and until that is possible, should ensure that the Councils are routinely consulted on school management and quality.	1/2	S/M	CI	
R 6.13	The Inspectorate's role of offering schools practical support should be strengthened. Inspectors should play a role in supervising teachers new to the profession, confirming decisions on whether they have passed probation, assessing teachers' classroom performance, confirming principals' proposals to reward outstanding teaching and to act on underperformance, reviewing school results annually with principals, and discussing possible action to improve results the following year.	1/2	S/M	CI	R 3.7, 5.10

Reference

OECD (2011), *Building a High-Quality Teaching Profession: Lessons from Around the World*, OECD Publishing.

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Guidance from PISA for the Canary Islands, Spain

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