



**EUROPEAN AGENCY**  
for Special Needs and Inclusive Education



**RAISING THE ACHIEVEMENT**  
OF ALL LEARNERS IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

# **RAISING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL LEARNERS IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

## **Country Report: Spain**



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# SPAIN COUNTRY REPORT

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Report completed by: Marta Sandoval, Violeta Miguel Pérez (RB) and M<sup>a</sup> José Ruiz Peñalver.

Special care will be taken to answer the questions in this form with reference to Spain's 'national' character. Spain is organised into 17 'Autonomous Communities', which creates significant disparity of policies and plans and 'autonomous' action. This can cause differences in the process of implementing the policies of 'Raising Achievement for all'.

Undoubtedly, this diversity policy has a very positive side to promote various lines of action and thus comparisons that could help Autonomous Communities improve themselves. At the same time, it is also an important limitation that can affect, for example, equal opportunities between territories.

## **1. What reference is made to raising achievement in national policies? How is raising achievement defined?**

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Organic Law 8/2013 of 9 December for the Improvement of Educational Quality (LOMCE) references the European objectives and goals set to reduce drop-out rates and improve educational outcomes in accordance with international standards (Programme for International Student Assessment, PISA).

There is no legal document that clearly and concisely defines 'academic achievement'. However, it can be inferred in the regulatory development of the law that the meaning is to avoid early drop-out and/or obtain a Compulsory Secondary Education certificate. This would allow access to the baccalaureate (to enter university), Middle Grade Vocational Training or the labour market.

Generally, in Compulsory Secondary Education learners may repeat a maximum of twice but always in different courses (in exceptional cases, the fourth year may be repeated a second time if it has not been repeated in previous years). Specific measures (listed below) are set in Madrid for learners with special educational needs (SEN). They are allowed to repeat another year (a total of three years), but they must also pass the evaluation test, as stated in section 3 (Order 2398/2016 of 22 July, of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of the Community of Madrid):

*(1) In order to attend to learners with special educational needs, schools may, when necessary, appropriate procedures to make significant adjustments to the curriculum element of the IEP (Individual Education Plans). All cases require a psycho-pedagogical student assessment, carried out by the Counselling Department or the equivalent in private schools.*

*(3) Continuous assessment and promotion of these learners will take as a reference the elements set out in their Individual Education Plans. In any case, learners with meaningful curricular adjustments must pass the final exams in order to obtain the corresponding title (Act 2398/2016 of 22 July, Art. 10).*



A recent informative guide for families of learners with SEN, created by the organisation 'Full Inclusion' in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, notes: 'Most students with intellectual disabilities do not get the certificate that does not exceed objectives'. On many occasions education authorities establish vocational training offers tailored to their educational needs. These programmes may include vocational modules of a basic professional degree.

Some communities have raised specific measures. For example, in Madrid, together with the measures outlined above, the following are established (Art. 7, Decree 48/2015 of 14 May):

- Individual Education Plans;
- the integration of subjects in wider areas;
- flexible grouping;
- support in mainstream groups;
- splitting groups;
- the supply of specific materials.

There is also the Improvement Programme: Learning and Performance (PMAR), which uses a specific methodology to organise content, practical activities and different subjects for two years (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years of Compulsory Secondary Education, CSE). This allows learners to attend 4<sup>th</sup> CSE in the ordinary way and obtain the Compulsory Secondary Education certificate. To access this, learners must 'have learning difficulties not attributable to lack of work'. Therefore, many learners cannot access these programmes because the cause of not achieving certain targets is not at all their lack of work.

## **2. What national policies specifically target raising achievement?**

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[\*European and Spanish Educational Objectives Report: Education and Training 2020 Strategy\*](#), a 2013 Spanish report, articulates measures around different lines of work including:

- second chance programmes;
- counselling programmes and monitoring of learners;
- responsibility centres for drop-out prevention, aimed at 'reducing the number of Compulsory Secondary Education learners at risk of exclusion in an inclusive context'.

Within the proactive measures to prevent drop-out in the Andalusian community, a sponsorship programme has been launched by a teacher. The programme provides increased individual attention and emotional support to disaffected learners and learners with high emotional deprivation. The programme mainly runs outside school time.

Educational authorities have agreed a plan to reduce drop-out that includes preventive measures, intervention and compensation, in accordance with the commitment made at



the Education Conference on 30 September 2013 in the 2013 European and Spanish Educational Objectives Report. It has created a unique tracking record of learners leaving early in their training and has enhanced digital literacy as a means of access to non-contact training modalities that can help make personal, social and working life.

### **3. What information/data are collected at national level on attainment and achievement?**

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Schools are expected to participate in internal and external evaluations. Internal evaluations are carried out by school staff with support from regional education authorities. External evaluations, the responsibility of education bodies in each of the regional governments, should consider learners' socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, as well as the school's environment and resources. A development plan is prepared for each school, based on evaluation results. Internal and external evaluations should be complementary to provide a broader perspective of evaluation and assessment and focus on improving learner outcomes.

No formal national teacher appraisal system exists in Spain. Each Autonomous Community is responsible for appraisal and improvement of its teachers, but PISA 2012 findings suggest that teachers in Spain have few opportunities to receive appraisal (in line with previous findings from TALIS 2008). According to school principals' reports, only 10% of learners are in schools where the principal or senior staff observe lessons (compared to the OECD average of 69%), and only 15% of learners are in schools where classes are observed by inspectors or other people external to the school (compared to the OECD average of 27%).

Act 65/2015 of 21 January describes skills, content and evaluation criteria of primary education, compulsory secondary education and higher education. It establishes that key competencies must be closely linked to the objectives defined for primary education, secondary education and baccalaureate.

It also mentions that the commitment to a methodology based on key competencies and learning outcomes entails major changes in the teaching-learning process and changes in organisation and school culture. It requires close collaboration between teachers in curriculum development and the transmission of information on learners' learning, as well as changes in work practices and teaching methods.

According to the LOMCE (Royal Decree 126/2014 of 28 February and Royal Decree 1105/2014 of 26 December), there are two assessment tests in primary education (3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade). Some regions also have others.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> grade primary education test evaluates linguistic competence (comprehension and writing) and mathematical competence (calculation and problem solving). The 6<sup>th</sup> grade test assesses linguistic competence, mathematical competence and competence in science and technology. It should be noted that there are no evaluations of decisive aspects such as emotional well-being or civic, social or digital skills, etc.



#### **4. What information/data on attainment and achievement (including the wider areas outlined above) are collected at school level?**

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In Spain, there is no agreement on school internal evaluation. In fact, few administrations carry out evaluation processes over an extended period of time. Some Autonomous Communities have attempted to do so, but without much success at social impact level. For example, Cantabria evaluates material and personal conditions, functioning of the different bodies of the centre and data on co-existence.

Evaluations are usually carried out by inspectors through internal processes which are never made available to the general public. Some years ago, some Autonomous Communities began evaluation processes in schools based on the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence.

Nowadays, educational authorities mention data collection on the development of basic competences, which provides information on the performance of learners only in linguistic and mathematical competences. Some Autonomous Communities also collect data on scientific or technological competence. In this respect, it is also worth noting that Andalusia has the Andalusian Agency for Educative Evaluation (AGAEVE) which is dedicated to school evaluation. AGAEVE recently published the Resolution of 22 June 2016, which establishes the approved indicators for self-evaluation of teacher training centres, which are described below:

**Table 1. Approved Indicators for Self-Evaluation of Teacher Training Centres**

<b>Measurement Area</b>	<b>Evaluation Indicators</b>
Organisation and functioning	Satisfaction with the counsel provided to carry out the training needs diagnosis of the teaching staff in the school, built on the self-evaluation process.
Organisation and functioning	Satisfaction with the counsel provided for the creation and development of the training plan for the teaching staff in the school.
Organisation and functioning	Satisfaction of the school with the stimulus, given by the reference consulting, to methodological improvement.
Organisation and functioning	Satisfaction of the school with the encouragement of educational research on the part of the reference training consulting.
Organisation and functioning	Satisfaction of the teaching staff with the training activity carried out.

#### **5. What information/data are used for school evaluation and quality assurance at national/local level?**

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See question 4



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## **6. Are there any specific initiatives in place to support/enable teachers and/or school leaders to raise the attainment and achievement of all learners?**

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Some Autonomous Communities have launched different ways to support school improvement projects. For example, Cantabria (Order ECD/7/2016 of 20 January) aims to promote a shared professional reflection. This brings about changes in school cultures, aimed at achieving a comprehensive vision of education, a higher level of equity and educative quality and an improvement in the processes and results in the framework of an inclusive educative model. The two action areas for the development of these projects are:

1. The treatment of the curricular competences:
  - School linguistic plans and inclusion of foreign languages in the curriculum
  - Plans for basic competence in science, technology and mathematics
  - Integrating ICT in the curriculum
  - Approaching other curriculum competences
2. Active and participative methodologies.

Schools can propose a project which must be approved by the faculty and informed by the school board. The participation of the teaching staff in the project must be explicitly reflected and should represent at least 30% of the teaching staff.

Recently, some Autonomous Communities (Andalusia) have also supported the conversion of schools into Learning Communities. Their defining feature is a school open to every member of the community, in which the agreed and active participation of families, associations and volunteers is considered and integrated, both in school management procedures and in learners' development.

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## **7. What other policies may influence levels of attainment and achievement for all learners?**

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One of the pillars of the LOMCE is based on the reinforcement of the external evaluation system of learners in both primary and secondary education. Nevertheless, it is difficult to think about promoting school success without demanding a change in 'school grammar' or modifying the passing-on style and the strong academic focus. This focus is still dominant in schools and will be accentuated with the LOMCE, in the light of the 'results'. It can make it difficult for teaching staff to focus on effectively supporting their learners and on issues related to the civic and/or social competences.

As Hargreaves (1998) points out, the concern to 'cover the subject' makes it difficult to move towards pedagogies which favour more innovative and appropriate teaching styles to meet the needs of a variety of learners. It also makes it difficult to have more personalised relationships which allow teachers to provide support to more learners. It is necessary to weaken the teacher's limited concept of what academic achievement and



success mean. It is too focused on disciplinary and intellectual aspects (even though it refers to competences and not contents) and so it seems unable to value other aspects of personal development (social, emotional) and widen the concept of intellectual work (reflection, problem solving skills, inductive reasoning, etc.). That limited concept of success and achievement by itself generates high failure rates.

Although actions taken in educational politics in Spain may favour equity (rigorous research is still needed to support it), others, such as grade repetition, can hold it up. This has already become evident in a lot of research. Even in the research carried out by the [OECD \(2012\)](#)<sup>1</sup> on equity and quality in education, it was clear that grade repetition is not effective to improve results as it may contribute to early drop-out.

In every administration there are opportunities for schools to ask for support to undertake innovation processes in the schools. However, the conditions necessary to undertake such plans are not modified, such as:

- opportunities for shared reflection of the teaching staff;
- teaching staff stability;
- improvement of moments and times for co-ordination;
- leadership;
- improvement in communication channels;
- participation of the educative community/teaching staff in decision making.

Particular emphasis should be placed on basic conditions from the legal framework, which are the prelude to any innovation.

In Spain, there are therefore no clear guidelines of what is expected in educational inclusion. The Ministry of Education must disseminate methodological guidance to obtain inclusion, changing the functions of support teachers, improving teacher collaboration, suggesting other assessments, avoiding focus on evaluation only results and ensuring that teachers in state schools remain in their centres for at least five years.

Finally, inclusive practices require significant changes to be made to the content, delivery and organisation of mainstream programmes. It is a whole school endeavour to accommodate the learning needs of all learners. To some extent, in Spain the discourse on inclusion has simply moved in response to individuals by specific measures that often make school trajectories more degraded.

## **8. Please provide a short commentary/critical reflection on the main policy challenges**

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<sup>1</sup> OECD, 2012. *Equity and quality in education. Supporting disadvantaged students and schools.*



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## **ANNEX 1. EXAMPLE OF PRACTICE TO RAISE LEARNER ACHIEVEMENT**

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Example submitted by: CEBIP San Pío X

Contact person: Loreto Rodriguez Pareja

### **1. Location of school/learning community and short description of context**

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San Pío X school is in Majadahonda, a small city in the north west of the Community of Madrid.

The population in Majadahonda has increased rapidly in recent years, reaching 70,359 inhabitants in 2015.

Majadahonda is an important city with many services, including a huge public hospital called Puerta de Hierro. Many different enterprises are located here.

### **2. Summary information on school/learning community**

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San Pío X is a public bilingual school (including kindergarten and primary education). It has four classrooms for special education.

There are 380 learners in the school.

Since 1990, when the Spanish government published the Education Law (LOGSE), all learners with SEN have been educated in public schools.

Learners with SEN are included in mainstream classrooms with the rest of the children. They receive help in some sessions from the pedagogy therapist teacher and the speech therapist teacher.

During the 2016/2017 school year, there were 17 learners with SEN in the school. They included learners with language disorders (SLI), hyperactivity (ADHD) and mild learning disorders.

At San Pío School there are also four specific special education classrooms with 25 learners that follow an inclusive education programme called 'combined education'. These learners include those with special needs related to different disabilities, such as Down's syndrome, intellectual development disorders and other developmental disorders. These learners receive individualised attention from different professionals, such as speech therapists, pedagogy therapists and physiotherapists.





### **3. Summary of key feature/strengths of current practice**

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The combined education programme was included in the school for the first time in 2004/2005. This was a great step towards including all learners in the school (inclusive education).

The best advantages of this programme in the school are:

- Including all learners in the same school makes them share spaces, so there is permanent contact between the kindergarten and primary learners and those in special education.
- The programme is supported by the entire educational community.

Depending on the special needs of the learners, they are incorporated in mainstream classrooms in different subjects, such as physical education, religion, arts and crafts and music. They participate in all the extra-curricular and complementary activities of the school.

Every learner from the special education classrooms belongs to a mainstream group, according to their age. They always go to the different subjects with a specialised teacher (speech therapist, pedagogy therapist or physiotherapist).

Combined Education goals (inclusive education):

- Improve social skills in standardised environments
- Provide opportunities and relationships with equals
- Observe and take appropriate role models for their age
- Recognise and control behaviour by being respectful to others
- Participate in group activities, accepting the rules.

Seeing how well integrated the learners with special needs are in the school and how well the other learners treat them, lots of families want to apply for a place in this inclusive system. It is not possible to meet all the vacancy demands and so it would be interesting to establish this project in other schools. As such, some schools and universities have shown interest and the teachers and administration at San Pío X have given training courses to try to expand this wonderful project.

In 2009, the Ministry of Education granted an award to the Inclusive Education Project.

### **4. Data/information available**

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To assess the learners with SEN, evaluation sessions are conducted every three months. All the professionals that are in charge of the learners are present in these sessions.

The main goals of the sessions are to collect all the difficulties that the learners experience and find ways to solve them in the future. Assessment sessions also evaluate the degree of satisfaction of the teachers that are involved in the learning process of the learners (see section 8 for some of the teachers' guidelines for assessment).



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## **5. Focus of example/work to raise achievement**

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Art, PE and music classes are inclusive lessons where the learners with SEN share time and knowledge with the other learners. These lessons, and the moments that the playground and lunch time provide, give learners opportunities to continue to share experiences. Learners play together and benefit from each other. They have fun, learn how to share, reinforce their self-esteem, learn from each other's differences and help one another in a natural way.

Learners with SEN are also included in all extra-curricular activities that the school offers. For example, the school organises a 'Big Brothers and Sisters Group' activity, where the older learners join together in a group with the younger ones to make an art project. These activities take place at Christmas, Hallowe'en, Saint Patrick's Day or for any other cultural celebration.

The school organises a performance at the end of the school year, in which all the learners dance and sing for their families and classmates. The learners with SEN are included in all the rehearsals and the final show.

All learners participate in school field trips (theatre shows, visits to the zoo or farm, leisure centres, libraries, parks, adventures in nature, sports competitions, etc.).

## **6. Summary information about developments/current work in this area**

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The main aim of this presentation is to show the way learners with SEN develop their learning process in San Pío X school (see section 8).

## **7. Key learning points from this example**

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## **8. Supporting materials (web links, papers, presentations, etc.)**

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### **Assessment questionnaire**

The assessment questionnaire relates to the development of the Combined Education Modality in special education classrooms and mainstream classrooms in CEBIP San Pío X school.

The main aim of this questionnaire is to understand people's thoughts in regards to the combined education modality that is developed at the school. The outcome of this questionnaire is analysed in order to improve the project.

The rating scale is from 1 to 5, 1 being 'very dissatisfied' and 5 'very satisfied'.



**Table 2. Assessment questionnaire**

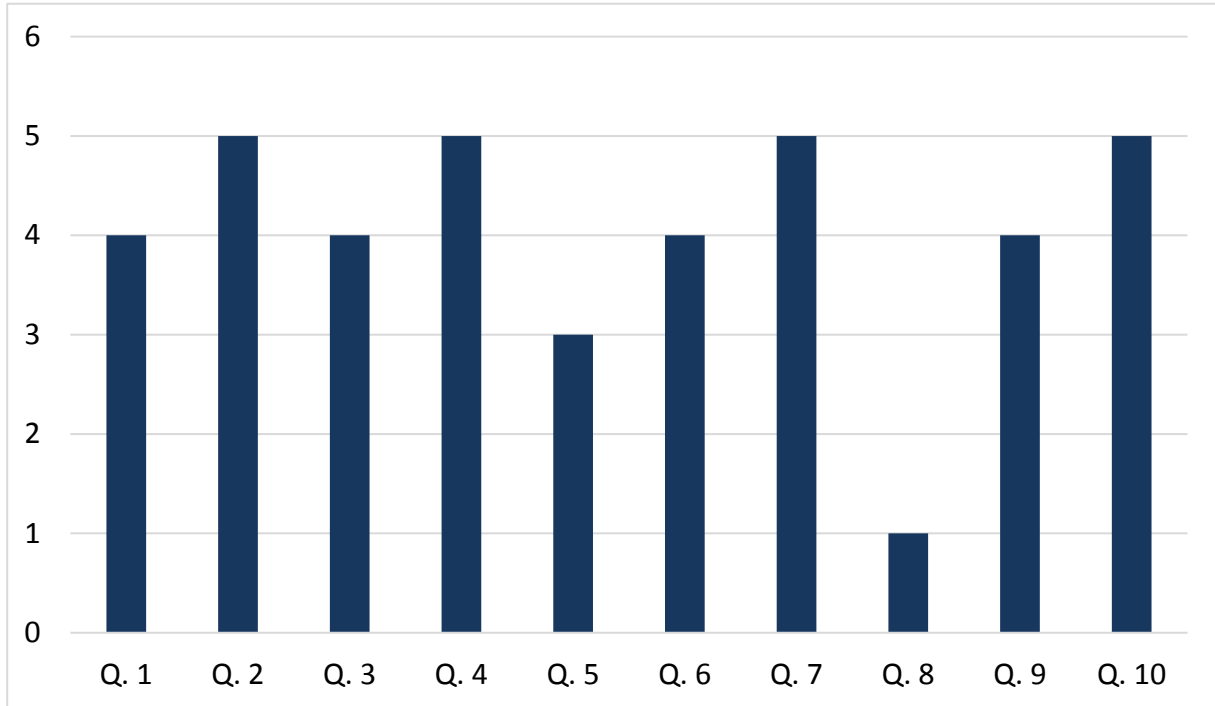
QUESTIONS	1	2	3	4	5
1. How do you rate the combined education project developed at this school?	–	–	–	–	–
2. Do you think that the information given at the beginning of the school year is suitable to develop the combined education modality?	–	–	–	–	–
3. How do you rate the special needs teachers' intervention in your classroom?	–	–	–	–	–
4. Do you think that there is enough co-ordination between special needs teachers and the mainstream teachers that take part in combined education?	–	–	–	–	–
5. Do you think that the learners' profile is appropriate to take part in the combined education project?	–	–	–	–	–
6. Do you think that is positive for your learners to share some time with learners with SEN in the classroom?	–	–	–	–	–
7. How do you rank the special needs teachers' team commitment towards the combined education project?	–	–	–	–	–
8. Does this combined education involve more work for you?	–	–	–	–	–
9. Would you like help from more personal, material or methodological resources to develop this teaching experience?	–	–	–	–	–
10. How do you rate the management team commitment to combined education?	–	–	–	–	–

**Table 3. Teachers' questionnaire results – Combined education project 2016–2017**

Questionnaire: Teachers and other professional staff involved	Opinion given
Question 1	4
Question 2	5
Question 3	4
Question 4	5
Question 5	3
Question 6	4
Question 7	5



Questionnaire: Teachers and other professional staff involved	Opinion given
Question 8	1
Question 9	4
Question 10	5



**Figure 1. Opinion sliding scale**



## Special Needs Classroom – Basic Compulsory Education Level, First Evaluation Meeting

LEVEL: .....

TEACHER: .....

GENERAL RESULTS OF GROUP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Routines</li> <li>• Class atmosphere</li> <li>• Behaviour and living together</li> </ul>	ASSESSED BY:
PHYSICAL EDUCATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group acceptance</li> <li>• Participation</li> <li>• Appropriate activities</li> <li>• Co-ordination between special needs and mainstream teachers</li> </ul>	ASSESSED BY:
ARTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group acceptance</li> <li>• Participation</li> <li>• Appropriate activities</li> <li>• Co-ordination between special needs and mainstream teachers</li> </ul>	ASSESSED BY:
MUSIC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class atmosphere</li> <li>• Routines</li> </ul>	ASSESSED BY:
RELIGION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class atmosphere</li> <li>• Routines</li> </ul>	ASSESSED BY:
SPEECH THERAPY	ASSESSED BY:
PHYSIOTHERAPY	ASSESSED BY:
AGREEMENTS	

DATE: .....

SIGNATURE:

The teacher