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List of Acronyms and glossary of terms

BRUK Swedish abbreviation for the school self-assessment tool “Assessment, Reflection, Evaluation and Quality” (Bedömning, Reflektion, Utveckling, Kvalitet) developed by the National Agency for Education
IFAU Institute for Evaluation of Labour Market and Education Policy
NAE Swedish National Agency for Education
PIRLS Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA Programme for International Student Assessment (OECD)
SALAR Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions
SEK Swedish Krona
TALIS Teaching and Learning International Survey (OECD)
USSILD Upper Secondary School for Individuals with Learning Disabilities
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. There is an urgent need for Sweden to tackle the underlying structural problems and to ensure effective improvements in the school system. The general picture of performance in the Swedish school system is a cause for concern. PISA 2012 confirms and reinforces the picture which previous international surveys have shown, namely that Swedish compulsory school pupils’ abilities have deteriorated over the past few decades. This background report outlines the challenges for the Swedish system.

The School System

2. In the 2010 Education Act the introductory stipulations settles that all pupils shall have equal access to education, independent of where in the country they live and their social and economic situation. Sweden is, however, a very big country with great local variations, where the possibility to choose between schools depends on where you live. There are also considerable differences in capacity between educational providers, some education providers are large municipal organizations responsible for tens of thousands of pupils, and other providers are small-scale independent cooperation’s with a handful of pupils. There are dual recommendations to be followed by the schools; the national requirements and the local requirements from the municipal or independent provider.

3. The education system has been an integral component of the Swedish concept of the welfare state. The nine-year compulsory school is for all children between the ages of 7 and 16 years. However, students and their parents are entitled to choose another municipal school than the school closest to home, or an independent school run by a private education provider. During the school year 2013/14 there was 4882 municipal schools, 5 Sami schools, 5 regional and 3 national special needs schools and 792 independent schools. Of the independent schools, 88 percent had a general orientation, 7 percent a denominational orientation and 4 percent were Waldorf schools. Of the compulsory school pupils, 86 percent attend municipal schools. The number of pupils in independent schools has continued to increase and in the same school year reached just over 14 percent of the pupils. The proportion of pupils in independent schools varies greatly between municipalities.

4. The Swedish upper secondary school aims to give basic knowledge for professional/vocational and community life, as well as for further studies. Upper secondary school is a voluntary school form. However, the majority of compulsory school pupils continue to upper secondary school. In the school year 2013/14, there were upper secondary schools in 261 of 290 municipalities in the country. Of the pupils 74 percent attended municipal schools. There are 18 national programmes: 12 vocational programmes and 6 higher education preparatory programmes. These are connected to different entry regulations, diploma goals and programme structures. Within the programmes there are a number of subjects which are studied by all pupils, irrespective of programme. There are also a number of subjects and courses which are common to the programme, i.e. which is mandatory for all students in each programme. Each programme has several orientations and also gives the pupils good possibilities to make individual choices. With the reform in 2011, upper secondary school apprenticeship education came to be a permanent activity. For pupils who are not eligible for national programmes or who wish to acquire the necessary requirements for a certain higher education preparatory programme, there are five introductory programmes. The aim of studies on the introductory programme is to prepare for future studies or the labour market. The target group and programme purpose differs between the five programmes.

5. The decentralization of power from the state to municipalities in the early 1990s was accompanied by the introduction of school choice and independent schools. The system of grant funding was changed so as to allow different actors to create and manage independent schools, privately run on
public grants. There are no fee-paying schools in Sweden. All schools are obliged to follow the Education Act that provides equal terms for all education providers and all schools.

6. There is today a great variety of independent preschools and schools, independent education providers and owners. The education providers are, for example, of different sizes, use different management methods and differ as to ownership structure.

7. Independent schools have to be approved by the Schools Inspectorate and follow the same curricula as municipal schools, but they can have a specific orientation or profile that differs from municipal schools. Independent schools are approved, and entitled to public funding, if they are assessed to be able to follow the school regulations and the establishment of a new school will not adversely affect the municipal school system. The amount of the grant to the independent school shall be determined on the same basis as the pupils home municipality applies when allocating resources to its own schools in the corresponding school form. The sum therefore differs between pupils and different levels in the school system. Restrictions prevent independent schools as well as public schools from charging any fees for pupils.

8. Almost 600 independent education providers with approximately 130,000 pupils existed in 2013 within the compulsory school sector. Of these pupils, two-thirds attended compulsory schools run by companies, but it was also common to have compulsory schools run by foundations and co-operative societies or non-profit associations. Within upper secondary school in 2013, there were also more than 200 independent education providers which ran upper secondary schools with a total of 85,000 pupils. To an even higher degree than for compulsory school, these pupils attended schools which are run by companies (85 percent).

9. More than 33 percent of the pupils in independent schools attend one of the ten largest education providers’ schools, both in compulsory and upper secondary school. Among the independent upper secondary schools there was, in 2013, still a larger concentration of pupils (just over half) in the ten largest owners or groups than there is within the compulsory school (approximately one quarter).

Governance of resource use in schools

10. Each municipality determines the size of the budget and how much should be spent on education. There are large variations between municipalities regarding the allocation of resources to the school, and how they are distributed between different activities. The total cost of preschool, leisure time centres, other pedagogical activities, school and adult education amounted in 2012 to 214.8 billion SEK. It is equivalent to 40 percent of local total costs for all the municipalities’ activities. The education sector is thus a major proportion of the total costs of the municipalities.

11. Funding of school is primarily decided at the municipal level. As a part of a financial equalisation system across municipalities, the Government redistributes financing via grants from wealthier to poorer municipalities. These grants are not earmarked, and municipalities may allocate the funds as they see fit. Education is financed by municipal funds after redistribution and by local taxes. At the local level, education is generally governed by the municipal assembly as the municipality’s highest decision-making body and a committee system concerned with the specific policy fields - among them education. This structure is defined by the Education Act as the basic legislation of the Swedish education system.

12. Public schools are, with a few exceptions, directly run by municipalities. There are also privately run independent schools, financed by public grants. Financial backing of all schools is tied to their respective number of pupils enrolled and pupils’ specific needs (e.g. special needs education). Comparable to the allocation of funds by the central level, the local level mainly reallocates funds towards schools,
usually on a lump sum basis to provide for salaries, buildings, material and equipment. Budget administration and the organisation of teaching are, in most cases, left to the principal.

Resource distribution

13. The school budget is completely decentralised to the municipalities and this applies to all levels within preschool and school. Each municipality takes the decision about the way in which resources will be allocated, for example if one school will receive more money than another. To a large extent, the school then has the responsibility of allocating the resources in the best way, for example regarding pupils who need extra support.

14. Every municipality has its own way of allocating resources between schools, which more or less take into consideration that the schools and the pupils have differing preconditions and needs. Within the municipality this allocation can, in its turn, be more or less decentralised. In several municipalities, different districts decide how the resources will be distributed between schools.

15. Regarding the distribution of resources between levels of the schools system, compulsory schools represents the single largest part of the total cost of preschools and schools (39 percent), followed by preschool (28 percent), upper secondary school (17 percent) and preschool class (2 percent). Nearly 79 percent of the total cost of the school was the cost for municipally run schools, the remainder for schools with independent, county council region or Governmental providers. On average, half of the school costs in a Swedish municipality consist of costs for teaching, primarily teacher salaries. Since 2000, costs per child in municipal preschools have increased by 21 percent, while municipal compensation per child to independent preschools has increased by 53 percent.

Resource utilization

16. School premises vary from education provider to education provider, since the system is highly decentralised with a large degree of autonomy to the education providers. Teachers have many other responsibilities besides teaching. Teachers spend about as much time teaching as they did 15 years ago, but since then a number of tasks have been added on (documentation, administration, contacts with parents, concerns for the pupils’ health and psycho-social environment). In all, this has resulted in a heavy workload.

17. According to the steering documents for Swedish compulsory school, it is advised that special support as far as possible shall be given within the regular school work. Despite this, ability grouping is common, as is the placement of pupils in remedial classes. There is a pilot regarding cutting edge education in compulsory school as well as in upper secondary school.

18. In compulsory school the total education time shall be at least 6 785 hours over 9 years and a school year in upper secondary shall have at least 178 school days. The education provider is responsible for how the time for respective subjects shall be distributed over the years.

19. On average, every class in compulsory school has 19 pupils and about 45 percent of teacher’s total time is used for work-related activities and for time with pupils. There are two career posts for teachers: First teachers and Senior subject teacher.

20. Teacher collaboration and professional learning can be further developed. There is no state system for teacher appraisal. Also the local systems for school evaluation differ from one education provider to another.
Resource management

21. The Education Act stipulates that the municipality shall allocate resources within the school system according to the children's and pupils different preconditions and needs. The Swedish schools Inspectorate has pointed out deficiencies in the schools’ and education providers’ quality management process.

Quality and equity

22. Teaching methods and materials are not subject to central regulation. The individual teacher decides on the appropriate teaching methods, the selection of topics to be covered in the lessons (within the framework of the syllabus), and the choice of teaching materials. Under the terms of the Education Act and the curriculum, pupils should have an influence over the organisation of teaching and, as they get older and more mature, should be given increasing responsibility for their own work at school.

23. The general approach to pupil assessment is that the assessment should be an ongoing process – formative assessment plays an important role in the Swedish school system. Teachers are also to continually inform the pupil about his or her progress. At least once per term the pupil, the pupil’s legal guardian and the teacher shall have a development dialogue. The teacher will draw up a written individual development plan once a year for the pupils in school years where grades are not given.

24. The pupil assessment in compulsory school takes place through end-of-term reports at the conclusion of the autumn and spring terms of years 6, 7, 8 and 9. Certificates are issued when a subject is completed or when the period of compulsory attendance expires.

25. In upper secondary school, grading occurs after every completed course and in the upper secondary school diploma project. If the pupil has sufficient grades, the upper secondary school diploma is issued when the pupil has been graded in all the courses which are included in the education.

26. The knowledge of each pupil shall be evaluated and graded from the knowledge requirement. It is not just the knowledge the pupil receives though education in school which shall be observed. The teacher shall, according to the curricula, take advantage of all accessible information about the pupil’s proficiency in relation to the national knowledge requirements when setting grades, as well as make an all-round assessment of the proficiency the pupil shows.

27. The PISA-survey shows that Sweden is one of the countries with the smallest between school variations in performance. But this comparison is not completely fair since the Swedish 15-year-olds still attend compulsory school, while 15-year-olds in many other countries have already moved on to upper secondary schools and VET education, which is likely to lead to larger between school variation. No accurate international comparison of differences between lower secondary schools is available.

The school workforce

28. The four new teaching degrees (of which one is a Preschool teacher programme) were introduced in the autumn term of 2011. Each Teacher Training Education institution decides on its own what programmes to offer: Preschool teacher programme, Compulsory teacher programme, Subject teachers programme or Vocational teachers programme. There are also short programmes for supplementing former education to get a teacher degree. There is some connection between supply and demand of teachers.

29. About half of all teachers with a pedagogical university degree and are qualified to teach at lower secondary level (school years 7-9) have sufficient subject education in the subjects which they teach. When
applied to upper secondary school, the corresponding share is two thirds. Access to qualified teachers varies greatly between different education subjects. Teachers in Swedish, mathematics and English have, to the greatest extent, education in the subject. The situation is similar in both municipal and independent schools. Some regional differences exist when it applies to the proportion of teachers with sufficient education in their education subject. That teachers are teaching without having a degree oriented towards teaching in the existing school forms, school years or subjects is something that previous investigations also have shown.

30. It is the education provider who has the ultimate responsibility for the teachers’ professional development.

31. The lack of an educated workforce within the teaching profession is calculated to be significant over the coming years. This is shown through, among others, low application pressure for Teacher Training Education (however rising), large anticipated numbers of teachers retiring, as well as a proportion of teachers considering changing career. For the country as a whole, a shortage of 44,000 educated teachers and preschool teachers has been predicted in the year 2020, and in the year 2030 the number is predicted to be 49,000.

32. The highest demand will be for preschool teachers, leisure-time pedagogues, teachers in special needs education and subject teachers, especially in mathematics, science and technology. In the year 2020 there will be a shortage of 16,600 educated teachers in the city regions. A particular problem is the shortage of vocational education teachers to fulfil future needs. Many of the educated vocational teachers choose to work outside the educational system, since the salaries are low.

33. Educational leadership is not given the priority which is necessary as other tasks occupies most of the principals’ time. The daily work can often be characterised as primarily administrative while the pedagogical work seems to be sidestepped.

Assessment and evaluation

34. An area of concern is equivalence of student grades (reliability) across schools. The current reporting of outcomes in year 9 at the end of compulsory school and at the upper secondary school heavily relies on the reliability of the grades awarded by teachers.

Strategic policy development

35. To continue investing in research is a way to improve the country’s prerequisites for social development and commercial and industrial competitiveness in the long term. The investment in education and research are investments in the future, both for Sweden as a nation and for the individual.

36. One very important factor in order for the Swedish pupils’ results to be able to be improved is good teaching. To increase the teachers’ competence and the status of the teaching profession are efforts that are prioritised.

37. There are also a variety of challenges that needs to be addressed:

- Improvement of results in compulsory school.
- The effectiveness and functionality of upper secondary introduction programmes.
- Increasing the completion ratio of the upper secondary school.
- Systematic implementation, evaluation and assessment of school reforms.
Chapter 1: The national context

1.1 The economic and social context

38. The foundation of Swedish society is an economy that is open, export-based, and highly efficient. In a long-term perspective, Sweden is characterised by steady growth, political stability, transparent institutions, technological adaptability, flexible labor markets, open economies and high levels of education. All these factors place Sweden at the top of international ranking lists, both in terms of economic clout and quality of life. Living standards in Sweden are high, although the country’s relative economic position has fallen from number four to number nine since the 1970s (Ekonomifakta 2014). In the early 1990s, Sweden faced a severe recession that led to a sharp decline in economic growth. Throughout the 2000s, Sweden experienced strong productivity growth and gradually reversed the relative economic decline of previous decades (McKinsey & Co 2012). Investment in education remained stable throughout the economic crisis. In 2011, Sweden’s education budget amounted 13.2 percent of total public expenditure, above the OECD average of 12.9 percent (OECD 2014d). With 84 percent of adults employed, Sweden has the highest employment rate among the OECD countries (OECD 2014a). Sweden also value lifelong learning for both employed and unemployed people (OECD 2014d). The population is highly educated: 52 percent of adults aged 25 to 64 have completed upper secondary school, considerably higher than the OECD average of 44 percent (OECD 2014d).

39. Sweden has, in an international perspective, a very even distribution of income. A comparison in 2011 between the EU member states shows that Slovenia, Sweden and the Czech Republic had the lowest income gap. The Gini coefficient for Sweden was 0.25, compared with 0.31 for the EU as a whole. Between 1991 and 2012, the economic standard for all age groups and family types improved. However, the position for the foreign-born in the income distribution worsened between 1991 and 2012. A reason for this is that the immigration structure changed over the period. From previously being almost completely dominated by labour migration, nowadays refugee and immigration of relatives has come to represent an increasing share (Prop. 2013/14:100). According to recent figures from the World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Index Global for 2013, Sweden ranked fourth most equal among the 136 countries compared. The other countries topping the index, along with Sweden, are the Nordic countries.

1.2 Demographic developments

40. Sweden has a population of 9.7 million people and is sparsely populated, with only about 23 inhabitants per square kilometre. More than a third of the population lives in the three major cities of Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö. Until the 1970s, Sweden was demographically a rather homogenous country with most immigrants coming from neighbouring Nordic and European countries. But since the late 1970s, immigration for humanitarian reasons has gained in importance and Sweden has become a culturally and linguistically diverse country: in 2013, foreign born inhabitants made up 16 percent of the total population. The Swedish education system is thus facing new challenges and opportunities in adapting to a pupil body coming from increasingly diverse linguistic, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds (OECD 2011:22).

1.3 Political context

41. Sweden is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary form of Government. For many decades, the Social Democratic Party had a dominant role in Swedish politics. However, over the past 30 years, power has changed hands several times between the Social Democrats and the ‘non-socialist’ political bloc. In the general election of 2010, Mr. Fredrik Reinfeldt became the first conservative prime minister to be re-elected – although his centre-right coalition could not gain an absolute majority. Furthermore, for the first time a nationalist party, the Sweden Democrats, overcame the 4 percent threshold
rule for the Parliament and thus entered parliament. The general election in Sweden on 14 September 2014 was won by a centre-left coalition led by the Social Democrats, but with no clear parliamentary majority. Mr. Stefan Löfven, leader of the Social Democratic Party, has given the task to form a Government.

42. At the regional level, Sweden is divided into 20 counties. Political tasks at this level are undertaken by the county councils. The county councils are responsible for overseeing tasks that cannot be handled at the local level by municipalities, but which rather require coordination across a larger region, most notably health care. At the local level, Sweden is divided into 290 municipalities, each with an elected assembly or council. Municipalities are responsible for a broad range of facilities and services including housing, roads, water supply and waste-water processing, schools, public welfare, elderly care and early childhood education and care. The municipalities are entitled to levy income taxes on individuals. They also charge for various services. As a result, municipalities have significant latitude in deciding what services they should offer. They are however, legally obliged to provide certain basic services, such as education.

1.4 Public sector management

43. Public sector management in Sweden (as well in many other Western countries) is, since the late 1980s, based on a formalised process, with performance management in Government operations. Performance management means that the Government formulates objectives for the activities, and that information about the results forms the basis for an assessment of whether the activity was successful or not, i.e. whether the objectives were achieved or not. Performance management is based on devolving responsibility to the business, combined with feedback and analysis of the results (Swedish Agency for Public Management, 2014 chapter 5).

44. A prerequisite for conducting performance analyses is that there is good knowledge of the supposed causal relationships between the injected resources (money, personnel, ICT etc.), performance and impact. In other words, performance management requires the knowledge of what is done in the business, for which purpose it is done and what can be expected that the business can achieve. However, in practice, public authorities often lack follow-up instruments that allow them to determine the effects of the business in relation to its objectives (Swedish Agency for Public Management, 2014 chapter 5).

45. Today, there is a growing debate in Sweden about the problems of evaluating the effects of different types of public intervention (SOU 2007:75; SOU 2014:5). During recent years, the Government’s steering of the authorities has been changed to give preconditions for more result-oriented steering which is flexible partly from the authorities’ activities, partly from the Government’s need to steer. The Government has also stated that the guidance should be more long term and strategic, and that is it is very important that the steering signals become fewer and clearer. In this way, the Government administration is given good preconditions to realise the Government’s policies, and to uphold basic values about the rule of law and effectivity. Against this background, the Government Offices has looked over how the different steering instruments can be used together to give better conditions for operation-based steering of the administrative authorities (Swedish Agency for Public Management, 2014, chapter 5).
Chapter 2: The school system

2.1 Organisation of the school system

46. Given below is an overarching description of the Swedish preschool, compulsory school and upper secondary school. Adult education is also briefly dealt with. Facts and figures in chapter 2.1 are from the official statistics for the school year 2013/14 presented by the Swedish National Agency for Education (from now on NAE) (NAE 2014a, f-i, m-o).

Compulsory School Attendance

47. According to the Education Act, compulsory school attendance comes into force in the autumn term of the calendar year in which the child turns seven. Compulsory education ends at the close of the spring term in the ninth school year. For the pupil who has not finished the highest school year where compulsory school attendance would otherwise have ceased, compulsory school attendance ends instead at the latest when the pupil turns 18.

48. The municipality is obliged to offer a place for six year olds in compulsory school if the parents so request. Just over 1 percent of the six year olds use this opportunity and it is most common among girls in international schools or independent schools with a denominational orientation.

49. Compulsory school attendance also means that home schooling, as a main principle, is not allowed in Sweden. Distance education is not regulated, apart from the upper secondary school of Torsås who offer distance education within the framework of a pilot scheme and for Swedish pupils studying abroad.

Sami Schools and Special Needs Schools

50. In the following are included the state Sami schools and the state Special Needs Schools. The Education Act stipulates that children of Sami parents may complete their compulsory education in Sami schools instead of school year 1-6 in compulsory school. The Sami school has six grades and is equivalent to compulsory school, but adapted to the Sami need for an education which takes into account and develops the Sami language and cultural heritage. The state Special Needs Schools are for pupils with deafness/hearing impairment, deafness-blindness or visual impairment in combination with other disability or serious speech impediment.

Preschool

51. Since 1st July 2011, preschool is a separate school form, and is included in the school system as the first step in education. Preschool should stimulate the child’s development and learning, and offer the child secure care. The activities should be based on a holistic view of the child and his or her needs and be designed so that care, socialisation and learning form a coherent whole (Educare). Preschool has, since 1998, a curriculum. This was revised in 2010 and came to, among other things, strengthen the pedagogical task of the preschool.

52. Municipalities are obliged to provide preschools for children from the age of 1 if the parents are studying or working and for elder children until they start school. In addition, municipalities should provide preschool for children in need of special support. Also children of parents who are unemployed or on parental leave should be offered a place for at least 15 hours a week. On 15 October 2013, 84 percent of all children in the age range of 1-5 were attending preschool, compared with 72 percent ten years earlier. At the same time, the number of children with another mother tongue than Swedish has doubled during the
same period. Preschool is free of charge for at least 525 hours a year from and including the autumn in which the child turns three.

53. In autumn 2013 there were just under 10 000 preschools. Every fifth child attends an independent preschool. There are some quality differences between municipal and independent preschools: the personnel in municipal preschools have higher level of education, while child groups in independent preschools are somewhat smaller. Since 2006 the group size has remained relatively constant, at just under 17 children.

**Preschool Class**

54. The preschool class is a voluntary form of school for the children but the municipalities are obliged to offer all six year olds a place for at least 525 hours during a school year. According to the Education Act, the education should stimulate the development and learning of every child, while at the same time preparing them for continued schooling. There are, however, significant differences around the country in how preschool classes are run. It varies from being run as a separate preschool to being fully integrated into the compulsory school.

55. During the school year 2013/14, 96 percent of all six year olds, 1 percent of all 5 year olds and 1 percent of all 7 year olds were enrolled in a preschool class. Just fewer than 10 percent of pupils were attending preschool classes with independent education providers, but the proportion differs markedly between municipalities. Of the pupils, 23 percent have another mother tongue than Swedish, and 39 percent of these received support in their mother tongue.

**Other pedagogical activities**

56. ‘Other pedagogical activities’ is a collective name for four activities which are aimed at children up to the age of 12. They are all described below.

**Pedagogical care**

57. Children who attend pedagogical care are aged from 1 to 12 years. Usually, children are registered in pedagogical care instead of in preschool (or in leisure time centres). Municipalities are, however, not obliged to provide pedagogical care and it is most common in sparsely populated communities. Pedagogical care can, for example, be an activity run by a child-minder in their own home (family day-care) or an activity which is run by several people in dedicated premises. The preschool curriculum is a guide for pedagogical care. The following characterise pedagogical care.

- There are approximately 3 000 of these activities and the number of children decreases yearly. Only 16 300 children (3 percent) are registered in such organisations.
- 91 percent of the children are aged between 1 and 5 years.
- 13 percent of the children have another mother tongue than Swedish in 2013 compared with 7 percent in 2009. Children with another mother tongue than Swedish are more often in activities with independent management.
- Every fourth member of staff does not have education in the field of childcare.
Open preschool

58. The task of the open preschool is to offer children a good pedagogical group activity in close cooperation with the adult visitors. At the same time, the adults have the opportunity to meet with other adults. The children are not registered. Rather the parents decide themselves when and how often they will participate. In many municipalities, the open preschool cooperates with social services and child and maternal healthcare services to contribute to the parents’ need of medical and social services being met (so called family centres). Open preschool is aimed at children who are not registered in preschool, and their parents or another adult who accompanies the child. This can also be a complement to preschool and pedagogical care. The following characterise the open preschool:

- In autumn 2013 there were 448 open preschools, and the number has been stable since 2004. Four of ten are part of a family centre.
- Every third municipality does not have an open preschool.
- The majority are open between 15 and 21 hours per week.
- Almost all personnel have education for working with children.

Open leisure time activities for 10-12 year olds

59. Open leisure time activities are aimed at 10-12 year olds who do not need the care and supervision given in leisure time centres or pedagogical care. Children are not registered. Families decide themselves when and how often the children will participate. The task is to complement the education in school (in terms of time and content) as well as to offer the children a meaningful free time and support in their development. The starting point shall be the need of every child. The activities should, therefore, be created together with the children. It is important that the children’s interests and initiative receive the necessary scope. The open leisure time centre activities are often coordinated with school and leisure time centre and/or the municipality’s other leisure time activities for children and young people. The following characterises the activity:

- There are approximately 600 open leisure time activities in 2013, a decrease since last year.
- The majority of the activities are run by the municipalities but the regional differences are great.
- Eight of ten are open more than 16 hours per week.
- Just over half the personnel have no education for working with children or young people.

Care during inconvenient hours

60. According to the Education Act, care during inconvenient hours is offered either in the form of preschool, leisure time centre, or care during the time preschool or leisure time centre is not offered. In this context, inconvenient hours mean weekends and/or weekdays between 7 p.m. and 6 a.m. The municipality shall strive to offer care for children during the times when preschool and leisure time centres are not offered to the extent necessary with regard to the parents’ work and the family situation in general.
During the latest years, the need of and access to care during inconvenient hours has been noted. Efforts are being made to increase access to such care. In the years 2013-2016, a Government grant has been given to municipalities to stimulate the more widespread offering of care during inconvenient hours. In 213, 162 municipalities were received grants. The following characterises the activity.

- In autumn 2013 there were a total of 5 600 children registered in activities during inconvenient hours. This is an increase of just over 600 children since the previous year.
- It is most usual that children who are registered in activities during inconvenient hours are of preschool age.
- The number of children in care during inconvenient hours has steadily increased during recent years. The need is greatest during weekday evenings and among single parents, as well as where both parents are foreign-born.
- Only 7 percent of children go to activities at independent preschools.

Leisure Time Centres

Leisure time centres are regulated in the Education Act and in the curricula. In the Education Act, demands are made regarding quality in leisure time centres. Leisure time centres shall conform to part 1 and 2 of The Curriculum for Compulsory school, the Preschool class and the Leisure time center or the curricula for Sami schools or Special needs school. The leisure time centre is a part of the school system and the aim is to complement the education in the preschool class and in school. The centres shall stimulate development and learning as well as give a meaningful free time and recreation.

Municipalities are obliged to offer education in leisure time centres up to and including, the spring term the pupil turns 11. The pupil shall be offered education in a leisure time centre to the extent needed regarding the parents work or studies, or if the pupil has an own need due to the family situation in general. The municipalities are not obliged to offer education in the leisure time centre if parents are unemployed or on parental leave. From and including the autumn term of the year the pupil turns 10, the municipalities can, under certain conditions, offer open leisure time activities instead of leisure time centres (see above). According to the Education Act, the pupil groups shall have an appropriate composition and size, and the pupils shall be offered a good learning environment. The Education Act places certain demands on premises and the competence of the staff.

Every employee is responsible for, on average, 12.9 pupils compared with 12.4 one year ago. In 1990 there were 7.5 pupils per employee. Over many years, the number of pupils has increased in percent more than the number of staff, which has led to continually decrease in staff density. In recent years the number of pupils has increased by 4 percent while the number of staff has not increased at all.

Today there are 425 900 pupils in leisure time centres, an increase of 14 700 pupils in one year. From 2003 until today, the number of pupils has increased by 25 percent, while the number of groups has decreased by 7 percent. In 2013/14 there were, on average, 40.4 pupils per group. The corresponding figure in the previous year was 40.1. In ten years the group size has increased by 34 percent. The development towards ever larger pupil groups in leisure time centres has been ongoing for many years.

In leisure time centres, 53 percent of year workers have a pedagogical higher education degree. This is the lowest number since The National Agency for Education began recording statistics in this area in 1994. The proportion of year workers with pedagogical higher education degrees has shrunk continuously the last four years, from 59 percent to 53 percent. There is a large difference in educational
level between municipal and independent leisure time centres. 56 percent of year workers in municipal leisure time centres have a pedagogical higher education degree, while the corresponding proportion in independent centres is 29 percent.

67. There are large regional differences when it comes to staff density, group size and the education of the staff at leisure time centres. Large cities and suburban municipalities to large cities have lower staff density, larger groups and the staff is not as well educated compared with the rest of the country.

Compulsory school

68. Compulsory school consists of primary and lower secondary school. Primary school consists of school year 1-6 and lower secondary school by school year 7-9.

69. After declining for several years, the number of pupils in compulsory school has risen three years in a row. This is consistent with the fact that the low birth cohorts from the 1990s are moving to upper secondary school.

70. During the school year 2013/14, 921 000 pupils were attending compulsory school, and of these, 168 attended Sami schools. According to forecasts, the total number of pupils in compulsory school will, after an earlier decline, increase to almost 1 000 000 in the school year 2018/19.

71. During the school year there were 4 882 municipal schools, 5 Sami schools, 5 regional and 3 national Special needs schools and 793 independent schools. Of the independent schools, 2013/14, 88 percent had a general orientation, 7 percent a denominational orientation and 4 percent were Waldorf schools. Schools were international, with for example Primary Years Programme and Middle Years Programme, and 3 were national boarding schools but the system with boarding schools is now about to change.

72. Of the compulsory school pupils, 86 percent attend municipal schools. The number of pupils in independent schools has continued to increase and in the same school year reached just over 14 percent of pupils. The proportion of pupils in independent schools varies greatly between municipalities. In large city municipalities, 24 percent attended independent schools, followed by suburban municipalities to large cities with approximately 16 percent. Municipalities that are classified as goods-producing had only 3 percent of pupils in independent schools.

73. Just over half of the pupils in compulsory schools have at least one parent with a university education, and 66 percent in independent schools. The proportion of pupils with a foreign background is somewhat higher in independent schools than in municipal, almost 22 percent compared with just over 19 percent. Looking at the different orientations for independent schools, the proportion of pupils with foreign background is 62 percent at international schools. At the national boarding schools, the corresponding proportion is 21 percent, and at Waldorf schools, 15 percent. In the general orientation schools, 21 percent of pupils have a foreign background. The gender distribution is even.

74. All municipalities in the country arrange compulsory education. The number of pupils varies significantly between municipalities, which reflect the great variety in the number of inhabitants in different municipalities. There are 792 independent schools in 189 municipalities. Of these, the majority was localised to the big city counties.

75. Almost 23 percent of all pupils have the right to mother tongue tuition but of them only 54 percent participate, mainly girls. Most of pupils entitled to mother tongue tuition live in the big cities of
Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö. There are somewhat more common that pupils in independent schools take part in the tuition than pupils in public schools do.

76. Only 6 percent take part in tuition in Swedish as a second language. Pupils with Arabic as mother tongue has the the highest participation in Swedish as a second language.

77. The number of asylum-seeking pupils school year 2013/14 was 4 900, which is an increase of just over 750 pupils (+18 percent) compared with the previous school year.

78. The average number of pupils was 19 per class/education group. Looking at the municipal school, the class size varied from as low as 13 to as high as 22 pupils on average per class.

79. Since autumn 2012 a pilot scheme has been ongoing with nationwide recruitment scheme cutting edge education within lower secondary school (years 7-9). Today there are 18 schools which offer cutting edge education. They are described in chapter 5.1.

**Compulsory Education for Pupils with Learning Disabilities**

80. Compulsory education for pupils with learning disabilities is an alternative to compulsory school for pupils who are assessed as unable to reach the compulsory school’s knowledge requirement because of a developmental disorder. The education shall be adapted to each pupil’s situation and consists of 9 school years.

81. Compulsory education for pupils with learning disabilities covers education in subjects or within subject areas, or a combination of both. The education can also include subjects according to the compulsory school’s syllabus. The education must, among other things, give knowledge and values, contribute to personal development and social interaction, and give a good basis for active participation in society.

82. Within compulsory education for pupils with learning disabilities there is a special orientation for children with severe learning disabilities. This is intended for pupils who are unable to complete the entire or part of the education in the different subjects. The pupils study five subject areas: artistic activities, communication, motor activity, daily activities and perception of reality.

83. The proportion of pupils in compulsory education for pupils with learning disabilities has decreased and now makes up 1 percent of the total number of pupils. The decrease is mainly due to changes that have reduced the target group for this type of school. There are 630 municipal schools in 270 municipalities, excluding integrated pupils. Every fifth pupil is integrated in compulsory schools. There are 43 independent schools for pupils with learning disabilities in 31 municipalities. The number of independent schools has increased by 5 and the municipal schools have decreased by 5 compared with the previous school year.

84. Approximately 8 percent of all pupils with learning disabilities are resident in another municipality than the one in which the school is situated. In municipal schools, 6 percent of pupils are from another municipality. The corresponding number for pupils in independent compulsory education for pupils with learning disabilities is 49 percent. It is mainly suburban municipalities to large cities and to larger cities that have pupils in another education provider’s school. Every fifth pupil is integrated in preschool classes.
Special Needs School

85. The Special needs school is a state school with 10 school years. The same rules for assessment and grading apply for this type of school as in compulsory school. The only difference is that there are knowledge requirements in years 4, 7 and 10 instead of in school years 3, 6 and 9 and that the pupils follow the curriculum for compulsory education for pupils with learning disabilities. The National Agency for Special Needs Education (SPSM) is the responsible authority.

86. The five regional schools cater to pupils who are profoundly deaf or have a hearing impairment. The regional schools have approximately 360 pupils. The three national schools are targeted for pupils with hearing impairment and learning disabilities, serious speech impediments, congenital deaf-blindness, and pupils with visual impairment combined with other disability. The national schools have 120 pupils.

Upper secondary school

87. The Swedish upper secondary school aims to give basic knowledge for professional/vocational and community life, as well as for further studies. Upper secondary school is a voluntary school form for the adolescents, but mandatory for municipalities to offer. However, the majority of compulsory school pupils continue to upper secondary school. Upper secondary school is organised by the municipalities, upper secondary school associations, county councils and independent education providers.

88. There are 18 national programmes: 12 vocational programmes and 6 higher education preparatory programmes. These are connected to different entry regulations, diploma goals and programme structures. Within the programmes there are a number of subjects which are studied by all pupils, irrespective of programme. However, the proportion and the content may differ between the programmes. There are also a number of subjects and courses which are common to the programme, i.e. which is mandatory for all students in each programme. Each programme has several orientations and also gives the pupils good possibilities to make individual choices. With the reform in 2011, upper secondary school apprenticeship education came to be a permanent activity within the upper secondary school, which means that it is possible for pupils on vocational programmes to carry out a greater deal of their education at a workplace (at least 50 percent of the total time).

89. For pupils who are not eligible for national programmes or who wish to acquire the necessary requirements for a certain higher education preparatory programme, there are five introductory programmes. The aim of studies at an introductory programme is to prepare for future studies or the labour market. The target group and programme purpose differs between the five programmes. These programmes are described below.

90. Educations which are variants within the framework of the national programme structure are roughly translated as special variants, nationwide recruitment programmes and nationally approved physical education programmes. Since autumn 2009 a pilot scheme is underway with nationwide recruitment cutting edge education programmes within upper secondary school. These programmes are described below.

91. During 2011-2014 there has been a pilot scheme with a technical fourth year towards an upper secondary engineering diploma, which can be applied for by pupils with a final grade from the technical programme. The education takes place in co-operation with industry and business, and prepares for both working life and for further studies in graduate engineering. This fourth year has now been made permanent.
In the school year 2013/14, 330 200 pupils were enrolled in upper secondary school (NAE 2014h). This was 21 400 fewer pupils than the year before, which is equivalent to a 6 percent reduction in the number of pupils. The declining number of pupils has been ongoing since school year 2009/10 and is a result of demographic changes. In five years, the number of upper secondary school pupils has dropped by 66 000. It has been predicted that over the coming two school years there will be a continued decrease of about 15 000 pupils, but after that, pupil cohorts are expected to increase somewhat.

There were upper secondary schools in 261 of the country’s 290 municipalities. This is six municipalities fewer than the previous school year and 17 municipalities fewer than three years ago. There were, in total, 1 346 schools, of which 869 had a municipal education provider, 17 with a county council district education provider, and 460 with an independent education provider. Compared with the previous school year, the number of municipal schools increased by 118, while the number of independent schools dropped by 25. The number of country council district schools is unchanged. That the number of municipal schools is increasing is likely due to the fact that there are more and smaller schools than before.

Of the pupils, 73 percent or 242 300 studied in municipal schools, which is 15 100 fewer pupils than the previous school year. The falling number of pupils is as big as the general number, i.e. 6 percent, 7 percent in independent schools. This means that independent schools have had falling pupil numbers for the second year in a row, percentually more than in municipal schools, after having increased their pupil numbers for several years.

For school year 2012/13, a certain waning of interest for independent schools was noted among new pupils beginning the first upper secondary year. The total proportion of new pupils with independent education providers is largely unchanged. However, the portion of pupils on introductory programmes at independent schools has decreased from 9 to 8 percent. The share of pupils at national programmes in independent upper secondary schools is at the same level as last year, with a marginal increase for vocational programmes.

The proportion of upper secondary school pupils who are studying at vocational programmes has decreased. The largest downturn for the vocational programmes occurred in connection with the introduction of the upper secondary school reform in 2011. The vocational programmes continued to drop their share of pupils the school year 2013/14, but not to the same extent as earlier.

The higher education preparatory programmes have had a marginally decreased proportion of new pupils in upper secondary school year 1, which is a change from the development in earlier years. On the other hand, the share of new pupils at introductory programmes is increasing. In two years the share of pupils who are new in upper secondary school year 1 on the introductory programmes increased by 2 percent and now makes up almost 15 percent of new pupils in year 1. From 2012/13 the increase of the number of pupils attending the introductory programme is due to the fact that more pupils do language introduction.

In the school year 2013/14, 295 000 pupils were enrolled in a national programme, of which 107 000 are in a vocational programme and 188 800 in a higher education preparatory programme. The 12 vocational programmes are as follows: Childcare and Recreation Programme; Construction and Installation Programme; Electrical and Energy Programme; Vehicle and Transport programme; Business and Administration programme; Handicraft Programme; Hotel and Tourism Programme; Industry Engineering Programme; Natural Resources Programme; Restaurant and Food Programme; Sanitary, Heating and Property Maintenance Programme and Care and Treatment Programme. The 6 higher education preparatory programmes are: Business Studies Programme; Art, Music and Drama programme; Humanities Programme; Natural Science Programme, Social Science Programme and Technology Programme.
99. The five largest programmes are all higher education preparatory programmes. Most pupils are on social sciences and natural sciences programmes, with 59 400 and 41 300 pupils respectively, corresponding to 18 percent and 13 percent of all upper secondary school pupils. The business studies, arts and technology programmes are also large and all have over 20 000 pupils, corresponding to between 7 and 9 percent of upper secondary school pupils. The humanities programme has the smallest number of pupils among the national programmes, 2 900 pupils or less than 1 percent of upper secondary school pupils.

100. The three largest vocational programmes are the Electrical and Energy Programme, the Construction and Installation Programme, and the Vehicle and Transport Programme. Between 11 000 and 15 000 pupils attend these programmes, corresponding to 3 to 5 percent of all pupils. The national vocational programme which has the lowest number of pupils is the Sanitary, Heating and Property Maintenance Programme with 3 900 pupils, corresponding to just over 1 percent of all pupils.

101. The share of pupils in independent schools are higher at higher education preparatory programmes than at vocational programmes, 28 percent and 27 percent respectively. On the other hand, the single programmes attended by the highest proportion of pupils in independent schools are more likely to be vocational programmes. Close to half the pupils in the Handicrafts and the Natural Resources Programmes attend independent schools, as are 39 percent of the pupils attending the Art, Music and Drama Programme.

102. Educations that vary within national programmes could roughly be translated as special variants, since they are allowed to have a certain profile. Both public and independent education providers can offer special variants after permission has been granted by NAE. Approximately 3 900 pupils attend a special variant. It is considerably more common that pupils study special variants which are connected to a higher education preparatory programme than to a vocational programme, 84 percent compared with 16 percent.

103. In the autumn of 2009, a pilot scheme was started with cutting edge education in natural and social sciences, where pupils can broaden and deepen their knowledge in theoretical subjects such as mathematics, social sciences, economics or humanities. A total of 18 schools have permission to run 20 different cutting edge courses. These courses are nationwide recruitment programmes. Just fewer than 900 pupils are attending cutting edge education in the school year 2013/14. More than half of them studied at the Natural Sciences Programme (500 pupils), followed by the Social Sciences Programme (200) pupils.

104. Arts, Music and Drama cutting edge education recruit pupils from the whole country. During the school year 2013/14, just over 1 000 pupils attended Arts, Music and Drama cutting edge education, a majority chose the music orientation.

105. Nationally approved physical education courses are courses with a clear elite sport nature which is decided upon by The National Agency for Education after an elite sport association has supported the application. The national physical education programmes have been approved at approximately 200 schools, of which the majority have public education providers. A large proportion of the approved educations apply to football, handball, ice hockey and bandy. The number of pupils reported as attending national approved sports educations has increased to 1 800. The number of national approved sports educations at the higher education preparatory programmes is significantly higher than at the vocational programmes; 1 500 and just over 300 respectively.

106. There are five introductory programmes aimed at pupils who are not eligible for a national programme or who would like to obtain entry qualifications for a certain national programme. The introductory programmes aim to provide a basis for continued education or to prepare young people for
establishment on the labour market. If the education provider assesses that there is exceptional reasons, pupils who are eligible for national programmes can be placed at vocational introduction or individual alternatives. Courses at introductory programmes do not need to be organised according to year courses, but may follow the pupil’s individual study plan. With the introduction of the reform in autumn 2011, 13 percent of new pupils in upper secondary school year 1 attended an introductory programme. The corresponding figure was 15 percent in 2013/14. The introductory programme which has the highest number of pupils is language introduction with 12 100 pupils, corresponding to 4 percent of all upper secondary school pupils. Thereafter follows the individual alternative, with 3 percent of pupils. The programme oriented individual options and the vocational introduction each have about 2 percent of the pupils. The preparatory education has the lowest number of pupils, at 1 percent.

107. The development with more pupils in the introductory programmes can be traced back to a single programme, the language introduction, where the number of pupils in upper secondary school year 1 increased by 19 percent between 2012/13 and 2013/14. On other introductory programmes, the number of pupils has fallen. Most comprehensive is the drop in the preparatory education, with 20 percent. The share of new pupils in upper secondary school year 1 is low in comparison to the national programmes, 65 percent. The largest percentage of pupils with earlier upper secondary school experience is at the vocational introduction. Pupils at the language introductory are in greater numbers in upper secondary school for the first time. Substantially fewer pupils at introductory programmes than at national programmes attend independent schools, 9 percent, as against 28 percent. In principle, all pupils at language introduction and at individual alternatives attend a school with a public education provider. On the other hand, it is considerably more common that pupils at specialised individual choices attend independent schools.

108. Introductory programmes are available in 257 of the country’s 290 municipalities, and in 785 schools. Substantially more public schools have arranged at least one introductory programme this school year compared with previous years, an increase from just under 500 schools to close to 630. On the other hand, the number of independent schools which have at least one introductory programme has dropped somewhat, from 170 to just under 160.

109. The introductory programme programme oriented individual options have qualification requirements. The purpose of this is that pupils shall receive an education aimed towards a national vocational programme and that they, as soon as possible, will be able to attend the programme. The education provider which has a certain national vocational programme may arrange programme oriented individual options for this certain programme. Programme oriented individual options are the introductory programme which is available at the highest numbers of schools, irrespective of education provider, a total of over 490. Nearly 400 schools offer vocational introduction, of which 310 have public education providers. This is, after programme oriented individual options, the introductory programme which is most common among independent schools. Almost as many schools have language introduction, both types of education providers included, despite the big difference in the number of pupils at these programmes. The number of independent schools that provides language introduction is small, 11. Among the close to 3 100 pupils attending year 1 at the programme oriented individual option, most are aimed at the Health Care Programme, almost 500 pupils, followed by the Vehicle and Transport Programme with almost as many. Between 300 and 400 pupils attend an education oriented towards childcare, building and trade, or administration.

110. The vocational introduction programme is aimed at enabling pupils to receive a vocationally-oriented education which will facilitate establishment on the labour market, or which will lead to education in a national vocational programme. This introductory programme is open for pupils from compulsory education for pupils with learning disabilities, and, with exceptional reasons, for pupils who qualify for national programmes. The education provider that arranges a vocational programme may organise
vocational introduction. Of the pupils who attend vocational introduction in upper secondary school year 1, the most - almost 500 - study towards the vocational area of vehicles and transport. In year 1, the vocational introduction aimed towards construction and installation is attended by 1 300 pupils. Just over 200 attend courses aimed at the vocational areas childcare and recreation, and care and treatment respectively.

*Upper secondary school for individuals with learning disabilities*

111. From autumn 2013, pupils began year 1 in the new upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities. Upper secondary school for individuals with learning disabilities (USSILD) is a free, voluntary type of school that young people with developmental disorders or acquired brain injuries can choose to attend once they have completed compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities. USSILD consists of national programmes, individual programmes and programmes that diverge from the national programme structure.

112. There are a total of nine national upper secondary school programmes. Each programme spans four years and comprises ten USSILD foundation subjects, a number of programme-specific subjects, assessed coursework and workplace-based learning. The national programmes are primarily vocational. A national programme may also be undertaken as an upper secondary school apprenticeship.

113. The individual programmes are for those pupils who are unable to undertake a national programme. Each programme is four years long and is composed of subject areas: Nature and Environment; Society and the Individual; Home and Consumer Science; Language and Communication; Physical Education and Health; Artistic Activities. Work experience may also be included in the individual programmes.

114. The number of pupils in upper secondary school for individuals with learning disabilities is dropping annually. In the school year 2013/14, just over 7 700 pupils attended this type of school, a drop of 12 percent compared with the year before. This can be explained by the fact that the number of pupils in school year 9 dropped sharply between the school years 2011/12 and 2012/13. Just over 900 pupils attend one of the nine national programmes, and just over 700 pupils attend individual programmes. The most popular national programmes in the new upper secondary school for individuals with learning disabilities are Property maintenance, Installation and construction, as well as Hotel, restaurant and bakery.

115. There are 304 schools running upper secondary school for individuals with learning disabilities in 172 municipalities, excluding integrated pupils. Nine out of ten pupils attend a school with a municipal education provider, 8 percent attended a school with an independent education provider and 2 percent a school unit with a county council district service provider. Approximately 1 percent of the pupils are integrated into upper secondary school, that is to say they study at least half the time with pupils in upper secondary school. More than every third pupil lives in another municipality than that in which the school is situated.

*Adult education*

116. Formal adult education should function as a system for adults to continuously develop and re-orient their education on the basis of varying individual needs. The school system for adults covers:

- Municipal adult education at both compulsory and upper secondary school levels
- Special education for adults with development disabilities or brain impairments provided at a basic and a higher level.
- Swedish tuition for immigrants.
Municipal adult education at upper secondary school level is aimed at adults who wish to supplement their previous training and education obtained at compulsory school, or at upper secondary level have their knowledge and competence validated or perhaps change vocational direction. This form of education is free of charge and voluntary. It is possible to apply to adult education from the year the individual turns 20.

Every municipality is required to, under The Education Act, offer education at compulsory and upper secondary level. The municipality shall strive to offer education which responds to the demand from and for adults in the municipality. The municipality is, moreover, obliged to inform about the possibility of education at upper secondary school level, and actively encourage adults in the municipality to participate in such education.

Major changes

During recent years, different measures have been taken in order to improve student performance.

- A new Education Act with clearer division of responsibility between education providers, principals and teachers. The Education Act reinforces the pupils' right to receive support, and creates conditions for a better learning environment. Conditions should be more equal for public and independent education providers. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate, which was established in 2008, was given stronger possibilities for sanctions.

- The new upper secondary school in 2011, which among other things, meant that the vocational programmes became more oriented towards preparation for working life. Apprenticeship education has been created as a part of the new upper secondary school.

- The admission requirements for upper secondary school were tightened. Previously, eligibility for upper secondary school required only a passing grade in three subjects: Mathematics, English and Swedish, or Swedish as a second language. Today, those who choose a vocational programme need to achieve a passing grade in an additional five subjects, i.e. eight in total. Admission to higher education preparatory programmes requires a passing grade in an additional nine subjects, i.e. twelve in total.

- New curricula and syllabi with clearer proficiency goals and knowledge requirements in compulsory education, as well as in upper secondary school.

- A new grading scale with more steps. Grades introduced from school year 6 and more compulsory national tests in school years 3, 6 and 9.

- Strengthened efforts to promote that education must be built on scientific knowledge and proven experience, for example through research dissemination assignments to NAE as well as the establishment of an Institute for school research. The institute, which will begin operations January 1, 2015, will compile and disseminate knowledge about effective methods and ways of working to teachers and preschool teachers.

- More comprehensive changes within teacher training and investment in career posts for teachers. See chapter 8.2.

- Clearer requirements on competence of principals and a new mandatory school leadership programme.
• Government grants have been introduced to stimulate schools to provide homework assistance and summer school, primarily for students in school year 6-9 and for pupils who are at risk of failing to achieve the knowledge requirements.

• Government grants have also been introduced for extended learning time in Swedish for newly arrived immigrant pupils. Education will strengthen the pupils' knowledge of the Swedish language. The National Agency for Education has the assignment to produce mapping material and assessment materials so that schools can measure the pupils’ knowledge and skills.

Changes in implemented reforms

120. The reform period the last decade has been intense and covers all types of schools and education providers. It is too soon to establish the effects of the reforms. There have, however, been some recent changes in implemented reforms in order to adapt the reforms to the current needs of teachers and students, among others in the areas below.

• To reduce the increased administrative workload which the teachers have acquired, due to wide-reaching demands for follow-up of pupil results, the Education Act has been amended to clarify the regulations about support and special support, while at the same time simplifying the program of measures and other documentation. Focus shall rest on support in the form of extra adaptation within regular tuition.

• Vocational training was designed to make pupils more employable. Low demand has meant that the programme was restructured so that all pupils have a real possibility to, within a complete programme, study to get basic eligibility for higher education. A national delegation has been established which will strengthen the quality of education within vocational introduction employment.

• The apprenticeship education has initially had problems with a low application rate, pupils dropping out or switching to school-based vocational education, and difficulties in finding placements or supervisors at companies, despite financial compensation. From and including 1 July 2014, pupils may be employed in a new employment form, upper secondary apprenticeship employment, and receive wages. The education provider is now responsible for having an education contract for every pupil and workplace. A so-called Apprentice Centre has been started at NAE. It should work with visitation and consultation, with efforts directed towards the stake-holders.

• The requirements for obtaining teacher certification have successively been simplified and exemptions have become more common. The introduction period with assessment of the suitability to teach is no longer a requirement for certification for new teachers.

Ongoing changes

121. In order to further improve and develop the education system, inquiries have been appointed to investigate and present proposals within some main areas:

• An inquiry has been appointed to investigate the feasibility of a ten-year compulsory school with school starting at six years of age, extended compulsory school with a further year for pupils who do not fulfil the entry requirements for upper secondary school, and compulsory summer school.
• Several reports have shown that Swedish pupils do not have the disciplinary climate to be able to study in a peaceful learning environment and a chair inquiry has therefore been appointed to investigate how to improve security and peaceful learning environment in school. The workload of the principal has increased and a chair inquiry has therefore been appointed to strengthen the responsibility and authority of the principal in order to improve the pedagogical leadership.

• A chair inquiry has proposed grades from school year 4. Another chair inquiry investigates how the national tests can be digitized and how a central marking of national tests can be organised.

• Furthermore, NAE has now been given the task of developing a proposal for division of the timetable for intended instruction hours into levels, i.e. into grades 1-3, 4-6 and 7-9. Since 1994 there has been a timetable which applies to the entire compulsory school, from school years 1 to 9. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate has criticised many schools because the pupils do not receive the intended instruction time they are entitled to.

2.2 Education environment

122. Sweden has a long and proud education tradition. Education is seen as so important to citizens that it is free of charge, and school attendance is compulsory for school pupils for the first nine years. The right to education applies to all and is reflected in that, for example, undocumented and hidden children have the legal right to go to school. The school system rests on the foundations of democracy, where human rights, the equal value of all people and equal education for all are central. However, the teaching profession is perceived as of a low status: only every twentieth teacher believes that their profession has high status (NAE 2014c). As can be seen in chapter 4.6, many teachers have taught subjects in which they are not qualified, and many do not have any teacher training at all. Teachers have, for a long time, been left to interpret the state’s intentions themselves and have received little support from the education provider. Today the support from NAE is perceived to be better than before (RiR 2013:11).

123. A question under discussion is if value shifts exist that have negatively influenced knowledge development. One could simplistically say that the debate concerns to what extent traditional school subjects such as mathematics, natural science and reading comprehension are less perceived as relevant in the daily life, free time and future of pupils. A recent hypothesis is that the pupils are not making the necessary effort (NAE 2013b). Swedish pupils have relatively low perseverance and believe all too often that it is something else than their own efforts which influences their results (NAE 2014c).

The school in the media and topics under discussion

124. School has been a central question in the media for a long time and especially since the PISA results 2012 were published in December 2013.

Independent schools are always a main topic, partly from a profit perspective, partly from a segregation perspective. Within the public service television series on the problem in Swedish schools are broadcasted and the nationwide newspapers have the same approach. However, the media also contributes - for example, one nationwide newspaper has launched a website which will provide support for learning to read and write. Authorities, organisations and individuals nowadays use social media to a great extent. There are digital meeting places for teachers and others who work in and for the school and preschool. Furthermore, there is a digital diversity of Facebook groups around mainly digital development.

125. Another discussion is whether schooling should be nationalized, that is run by the state instead of by the municipalities. A recent commissioned report (SOU 2014:5) establishes that it is obvious that a return to the relationship of responsibility and the centralised management by rules which was in force
before the municipalisation of the school system is not a realistic alternative to today’s municipal school. A school with a state education provider demands a regional or local state organisation with a certain independence from the Government or the central school authorities.

126. Another topic that has been discussed applies to independent schools and the possibility for owners to take out profit. The possibility to start independent schools, if approved by the Schools Inspectorate, has brought with it a diversity of players who offer education within the Swedish school system. Operations are run, for example in different management and ownership forms and in different sizes, with different avenues of education and pedagogical methods.

127. In later years the debate in the media about profiteering in school companies, buying and selling of schools and the owners including private equity which are often behind these companies, has been intense. Events such as the bankruptcy of the group JB Education (JB Gymnasiet) in 2013 have raised questions and an inquiry has been tasked to investigate which type of owners that is suitable to conduct publicly funded welfare services, including school activities, and how this suitability can be tested.

128. A structural question, where the opinion of political parties differ considerable, is from which school year the pupils should receive grades - from school year 4 or 6. The centre right coalition - the Alliance - with the Liberal Party at the forefront, would like to see grades given from school year 4, while the red-green bloc would like grades given later. The latter are supported by the Swedish Teacher’s Union.

2.3 Objectives of the education system and pupil learning objectives

129. The goals and purposes of the education system are, according to the Education Act, that education within the school system shall have as its aim that children and pupils shall acquire and develop knowledge and values. It shall promote the development and learning of all children and as well as foster a lifelong lust for learning. Education shall communicate and entrench respect for human rights and the basic democratic values upon which Swedish society rests.

130. The Education Act stipulates that in education, the different needs of the children and pupils must be taken into consideration. Children and pupils shall be given support and stimulation so they can develop as far as possible. One aspiration shall be to compensate differences in the children and pupils’ preconditions. The education shall also aim to, in collaboration with the pupils’ home, promote the child and pupils’ multi-faceted personal development into active, creative, competent and responsible individuals and citizens.

131. The Education Act contains fundamental stipulations about preschool, school and adult education. Rights and obligations for children, pupils and their legal guardians are regulated in the act. In the Education Act the school and education provider’s responsibility is also described. The Education Act is decided by the Swedish Parliament (the Riksdag). General Advice is recommendations from the National Agency for Education about how schools and preschools ought to conform to ordinances and provisions. The advice should be followed if the school does not act in another way to fulfil the requirements in the stipulations. A curriculum is an ordinance and is decided by the Government. An ordinance must be followed by the types of schools that are covered by the ordinance. The curriculum describes the school’s value system mission, as well as goals and guidelines for the work.

132. The curriculum for the compulsory school, preschool class and leisure time centre contains three parts: the school’s value system and mission, overarching goals and guidelines for the education, and syllabi which are supplemented by knowledge requirements. The first part of the curriculum applies also to the preschool class and leisure time centre, while the other parts apply in appropriate parts for these activities. Syllabi contain the purpose of the subject, the central content for school years 1-3, 4-6 and 7-9
plus. The syllabi are supplemented with knowledge requirements for the different grade levels at the end of school years 6 and 9 plus knowledge requirement for acceptable knowledge at the end of school year 3. Through distributing the central content in a subject over three periods of each year course, the teacher has more space to adapt the teaching to local conditions and the needs of the pupils. Thus pupils can have increased possibilities of real influence over the working methods, working forms and the content of the teaching. As a result of this, the evaluation of the pupils’ knowledge is usually not aimed at exactly the same thing as the term grades, either within a school or countrywide. Some say that this is contradictory to the requirement of equivalent evaluation. The state has enshrined freedom in the steering system which gives the teaching profession the desired pedagogical freedom of action, and the term grades should reflect the knowledge the pupils have in relation to what the education has been aimed at and dealt with. To guarantee equivalence it is, however, important that all evaluation is done against the knowledge requirement in the each subject. There are therefore knowledge requirements at the end of school year 6 and 9. The National Agency for Education gives out comprehensive and varied material as support for teachers’ assessment and grading.

133. The curriculum for the voluntary school forms encompasses upper secondary school, upper secondary school for individuals with learning disabilities, municipal adult education, special education for adults, and Swedish tuition for immigrants. Each curriculum describes the value system of the education as well as assignments, goals and guidelines for the work. The Government defines the curriculum.

134. For each national programme in upper secondary school there is a diploma goal. These diploma goals shall be the basis for the planning of the education and the education from the pupils first day on the programme. They should guide the education and design of the work and content of the upper secondary school. The diploma goals give directions for the entire programme, the orientations which exist within the programme, as well as goals for the diploma project. All diploma goals highlight entrepreneurship in some form depending on the nature of the programme. Entrepreneurship can be starting and running a company, being creative, taking initiative, seeing possibilities and solving problems. All diploma goals, regardless of programme, stress language development. The Government defines the diploma goals according to proposals from NAE.

135. For every subject there is a subject syllabus which also describes the courses which are included in the subject. The Government defines the subject syllabi for the subjects’ common to all national programmes after proposals made by NAE. The agency defines subject syllabi for all the other subjects.

136. All steering documents together should create a whole. It fulfils a function in itself but also expresses a common view of the activity in the classroom. The Education Act is superordinate to the other documents. The Upper Secondary School Ordinance, the curricula and diploma goals are regulations which in different ways make concrete the provisions of the Education Act. The subject syllabi are stipulations which steer the education in a specific subject. The General Advice elaborated by NAE clarifies the Education Act on specific topics.

2.4 Distribution of responsibilities within the school system

137. Since the late 1980s, the organisation of the Swedish education system has been highly decentralised. Through the municipalisation reform, municipalities received full employer responsibility for all school staff in 1991. Municipalities were also given the responsibility of determining how resources should be allocated between different parts of the school system. The municipalities were also given responsibility for organising schools and adult education, for following up and evaluating their own activities, and for developing these activities and offering continuing professional development for staff. The decentralisation was intended to give rise to a new form of education involving increased cooperation
between teachers, and a school system that was better supported by citizens and school staff. Combined with reduced detailed regulation and a transition to management by objectives and results would make the school system more appropriate and effective.

138. However, according to Lewin, (SOU 2013:5) municipalisation was a failure. Municipalities, principals and teachers were never given the opportunity to prepare themselves for the new mandate. The new curriculum (Lpo 94), designed as an adaptation to the new way of managing schools, was abstract and difficult for teachers to implement in their teaching. Follow-up and evaluation in the municipalities did not work. NAE did not support school organisers and teachers due to the fact that the whole point of decentralisation was that education providers would themselves find ways to satisfy the Government’s objectives. At the same time, the school choice system was introduced as well as the independent school reform, which made the municipalities’ task of running schools more difficult.

Today’s different levels of education administration

139. The Government holds the overall responsibility for schooling and is in charge of developing the curriculum, national objectives and guidelines for the education system. Within this framework, the municipalities and independent providers are responsible for implementing educational activities, organising and operating school services, allocating resources and ensuring that the national goals for education are met. The principal is responsible for the inner organisation, such as setting the school calendar and instruction time; deciding on class sizes, grouping of pupils, and strategies to support pupils with learning difficulties. However, the decisions depend upon the resources from the municipalities or independent providers.

140. As is typical in the Swedish public administration, responsibilities at the central level are shared between the Ministry and a range of national agencies. The Ministry of Education and Research is supported, in the area of school education, by three agencies: the National Agency for Education (NAE), the Swedish Schools Inspectorate, and the National Agency for Special Needs Education. These agencies are established by legislation and operate independently of the Government.

141. NAE supports, follows-up and evaluates the work of municipalities, independent providers and schools. In relation to national goals and steering documents, NAE establishes frameworks and guidelines for how education is to be conducted and assessed using goal documents, syllabi, tests, grading criteria, and general guidelines. NAE is responsible for national school development on a system level, that is, supporting preschools and schools in their development, mainly by publish materials (see www.skolverket.se) and administrate Government grants. The Agency also organises training programmes for school-leaders and teachers, manages the registration of teachers and preschool teachers and hosts the Teachers Disciplinary Board. NAE evaluates activities within the school system through in-depth studies and provides analyses to highlight areas requiring attention on a national basis. Finally, NAE follows-up the prerequisites of the different activities, how they are conducted, and how the results appear, by the continual collection of data from municipalities.

142. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate conducts regular supervision of all municipal and independent schools, from preschool class to adult education. Activities are scrutinized on a number of points. The Schools Inspectorate may make use of sanctions and apply pressure so that an education provider rectifies its activities. If the education provider does not take action or seriously disregards its obligations, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate may decide to impose a fine or measures at the education provider’s expense. In the case of an independent school, the schools licence to operate may be revoked. Furthermore, the Schools Inspectorate approves applications for starting independent schools, and hosts the Office of the Child and School Pupil Representative (BEO). The Agency is organised in five regional offices and a head office, in Stockholm.
143. The National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools is responsible for the state’s overall support for the special needs of children, young people, and adults with disabilities. The function of the Agency is to offer support to school management in matters relating to special needs education, promote access to teaching materials, run special needs schools, and allocate Government funding to pupils with learning disabilities and to education providers. The Agency operates three national and five regional special needs schools.

144. There is no county-level governance in the Swedish education system. The Education Act establishes e.g. municipalities and independent schools providers as the responsible authorities for schools, in charge of implementing educational activities, organising and operating school services, allocating resources and ensuring that the national goals for education are met. Municipalities are also in charge of other local matters, such as public health, early childhood education and care and care of elderly.

145. The Swedish Local Government Act establishes that every municipality is governed by an elected body, the Municipal Assembly. The municipal assembly appoints a municipal executive committee and any additional committees required to discharge the tasks of the municipality, including an education committee to govern its public education system. Principals in municipal schools report to the education committee.

2.5 Market mechanisms in the school system

146. The decentralisation of power from the state to municipalities in the early 1990s was accompanied by the introduction of school choice and independent schools. The system of grant funding was changed so as to allow different actors to create and manage independent schools, independently run on public grants. There are no private schools in Sweden. All schools are equally financed on tax funds. All schools are obliged to follow the Education Act that provides equal terms for all education providers and all schools.

147. There is today a great variety of independent preschools and schools, independent education providers and owners (NAE 2014d). The education providers are, for example, of different sizes, use different management methods and differ as to ownership structure. At the same time as the independent actors together contribute to a varied selection of preschools and schools, some of them have taken a great market share.

148. Independent schools have to be approved by the Schools Inspectorate and follow the same curricula as municipal schools, but they can have a specific orientation or profile that differs from municipal schools (e.g. Montessori and Waldorf Schools). Independent schools are entitled to public funding from pupils home municipalities. The size of the funding per pupil is more or less the same as for the public schools, as the sum of the grant is to be decided according to the same principle the municipality use when allocating funds to its own schools. The system is based on what roughly may be called a school “voucher” which follows the pupil when enrolled in a school, which means that the municipality has to pay the grant if a pupil attends an independent school. The “voucher” differs between pupils and different types of schools as there are differences between the municipalities in cost levels and thus also in the budgeting of the cost for a pupil. According to the Education Act, it is forbidden for schools, independent and municipal schools alike, to charge any fees for pupils.

149. Within preschool there were, in 2012/13, just over 2 000 independent education providers, among them many cooperatives, limited companies and non-profit associations. Approximately 2 700 preschools in the country are independent. In other words, the majority of education providers run only one preschool. But there are also many education providers who run many preschools, which means that every tenth independent preschool belongs to one of the country’s largest independent education providers.
150. Almost 600 independent education providers with approximately 130,000 pupils existed in 2012/13 in compulsory school. Of these pupils, two-thirds attended compulsory schools run by limited companies or foundations, but it was also common to have compulsory schools run by incorporated associations or non-profit associations. Within upper secondary school in 2012/13, there were also more than 200 independent education providers who ran upper secondary schools with a total of 85,000 pupils. To an even higher degree than for compulsory school, these pupils attend schools which are run by limited companies (85 percent). With the exception of the limited companies, the independent upper secondary schools are run mainly by foundations.

151. More than 33 percent of the pupils in independent schools attend one of the ten largest education providers’ schools, both in compulsory and upper secondary school. But while this share is the lowest since 2009/10 within upper secondary school, it has, since 2009, increased within compulsory school. Within upper secondary school the decreasing number of schools for many of the largest actors has been explained by the declining number of pupils at national level, a diminishing interest in upper secondary vocational programmes and the increased competition for pupils. Within compulsory school the market is not yet as saturated, which is witnessed by a growth in the share of pupils in independent compulsory schools outside the country’s largest cities and urban municipalities. Among the independent upper secondary schools there was, in 2013, still a larger concentration of pupils (just over half) in the ten largest owners or groups than there is within the compulsory school (approximately one quarter).

152. The Education Act stipulates that all pupils shall have equal access to education, independent of where they live and their social and economic situation. Sweden is, however, a large country with great local variations, where the possibility to choose between schools depends on where you live. This is especially clear when it comes to choice of upper secondary school (NAE 2013c). The degree of market development differs a great deal across the country, depending on the nature of the municipality and region, for example the extent of the establishment of independent upper secondary schools. For example the local labour market and geographic distance have great influence. At the same time the declining number of pupil cohorts in upper secondary school influences to a high degree the present development in the country’s municipalities and regions irrespective of whether competition exists or not between the different education providers and schools.

153. The municipality is obliged to see that there are preschool places for all children from the age of one year. In some municipalities, all preschool applications are handled via a common system, but it is also common that those who choose an independent preschool must make a direct application to the desired preschool. Each municipality decides how their places will be allocated between preschools. Some of the most common methods when there is a queue to a certain preschool are the child’s date of birth, queue time or priority for siblings. The parents pay a low parental fee which is calculated according to their income and with a cap, the maximum fee\(^1\). All children between the age of 3 and 5 have the right to free of charge preschool for three hours a day. All preschools receive financing from the municipality on equal terms. Irrespective of which preschool the parents choose, the fee is the same and the maximum fees applies.

154. When it comes to school, the main principle is that the parents wish for placement shall be the guiding light. All pupils receive a place at a school in their home municipality (according to the proximity principle) but they always have the right to apply to another school. Those who would like a place at an independent compulsory school must normally make the application directly to the desired school. Places

\(^1\) The maximum fee (maxtaxa) means that there is a cap on how high fees can be for a family. Fees charged are at a maximum rate of 3, 2 and 1 per cent, respectively, of a household’s estimated income before tax for the first, second and third child in the family and fourth child for free. The cap is at SEK 42,000.
can be allocated according to queue time, sibling priority and/or the proximity principle. For upper secondary school, it is most common that the independent schools are a part of the municipality placement system. Grades are used as a criterion to select pupils when demand exceeds supply. Some exceptions are made, for example it is allowed to use aptitude tests when selecting pupils to cutting edge education, but most schools only use grades when accepting pupils.

155. There are several sources where parents and pupils can compare schools prior to choosing - for example on NAE website, Choose School (valjaskola.se). On this site NAE presents different ratings for school quality and results is presented. SIRIS is NAE’s tool with information about results and quality at school- and municipality level. The site provides statistics about grades, test results, staff and different documentation relating to quality. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate gives access to all their inspection reports. The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) publishes Open Comparisons annually, where proficiency results are presented at municipal and national level for compulsory and upper secondary school. Together with the Swedish Association of Independent Schools and the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise, SALAR offers the website Compulsory School Quality.

2.6 Performance of the school system

Performance across pupil groups

Compulsory school

156. According to the Education Act, attendance at school is compulsory for all children between the ages of 7 and 16 who are resident in Sweden. Municipalities are also obliged to provide a place in compulsory school for six year olds if the parents request the municipality to do so.

157. In the 2012/13 school year, 77 percent of pupils in year 9 attained at least grade E (the lowest pass grade). There has been a slight decrease since last year. Of pupils with foreign backgrounds, 39.3 percent lacked grades in one or more subjects. The corresponding figure for pupils with Swedish backgrounds was 18.6 percent. A majority of the pupils that did not attain a pass grade in all subjects were boys. Girls attained a pass grade to a greater extent than boys in all subjects except in physical education and health. The proportion of pupils who do not attain a pass grade in at least one subject decreases the higher the education level of the parents.

158. In spring 2013, 12.4 percent of the pupils leaving compulsory school lacked eligibility for any national programme at upper secondary school. Of pupils who completed grade 9 in spring 2013, 87.6 percent were eligible to apply for vocational programmes. For preparatory higher education programmes, 84.8 percent met the entrance requirements for the economics, humanities and social science programmes, 83.2 percent were eligible for the natural science and engineering programmes and 86.5 for the aesthetics programmes. A smaller proportion of boys than girls were eligible for national programmes. The proportion of eligible girls was 3-4 percentage points higher than the proportion of eligible boys. The proportion of pupils not eligible for upper secondary school was lowest in 1998 at 8.6 percent, which was the year in which final grades according to academic goals were issued for the first time. Since then the proportion of non-eligible pupils has increased steadily.

Upper secondary school

159. In autumn 2012, 98.7 percent of the pupils who left compulsory school in the spring term 2011 continued to upper secondary school. This proportion of pupils has remained roughly the same the last few years. There were no noticeable gender differences in relation to the applicants and the transition rate to
upper secondary school. On the other hand, among those who applied for and started upper secondary school, there were slightly fewer pupils with foreign background.

160. Around three percent of beginner pupils in 2011 did not attend upper secondary school in autumn 2012, i.e. they dropped out or took a break from their studies. Women and men tend to drop out or take a break from their studies to roughly the same extent. It is markedly more common that pupil’s interrupt their studies or take a study break after having begun their studies at an introductory programme than a national programme, 14 percent compared to 2 percent.

161. Nearly 9 percent of beginner pupils changed programmes and enrolled on a new one a year later. It is somewhat more common to switch programme after having begun a vocational programme than from a higher education preparatory programme, 10 and 9 percent respectively. This tendency is particularly noticeable among women, where 11 percent of beginners on a vocational programme switch programmes. The Humanities programme had the largest proportion of switches from a national programme, 16 percent. The smallest is the Construction and Installation programme, 7 percent. Among pupils who have changed from a vocational program, it is the most common that they started again in upper secondary school year 1, irrespective of which type of programme they have switched to. The same applies to pupils who have switched from a higher education preparatory programme to a vocational programme. Pupils who have switched between two higher education preparatory programmes go, on the other hand, to a higher degree in upper secondary school year 2 their second study year.

162. Based on the last nine yearly groups, 68-69 percent of pupils receive a school leaving certificate within three years (the normal length of an upper secondary school national programme). After five years of study, the proportion varies between 74 and 79 percent.

163. Comparing education providers, the completion rate is highest among county council schools, followed by independent schools and is lowest among municipal schools. This is partly explained by differences in what programmes the schools offer. On average, women had a higher completion rate than men within three, four or five years of study. After five years, 76 percent of men and 81 percent of women received school leaving certificates. Fewer pupils with foreign background receive school leaving certificates, compared with pupils with Swedish background. For pupil groups who began upper secondary school in autumn 2008, 50 percent of pupils with foreign background received school leaving certificates within three years. The corresponding proportion for pupils with Swedish background was 72 percent.

164. Of the 95 600 pupils that received school leaving certificates and course and diploma-related grades from upper secondary school in spring 2013, 87 percent met the basic eligibility requirements for higher education. The proportion of pupils with basic eligibility for higher education was 90 percent from spring 2003 to 2009, but decreased to 87 percent in 2010 and has stabilised at that level in the last four years. One reason for this trend is the new eligibility rules in 2010 which have led to fewer pupils achieving basic admission requirements higher education. Among pupils who received a school leaving certificate from upper secondary school in spring 2012, the proportion of pupils with basic eligibility from municipal schools and independent schools was the same, 87 percent. The corresponding proportion for pupils at county council schools was 73 percent.

165. The proportion with basic eligibility is higher among women than men, and of those who received school leaving certificates in spring 2012, 90 percent of the women and 84 percent of the men met the eligibility requirements. There were also a larger proportion of pupils with Swedish background who had basic eligibility (88 percent), compared with pupils with foreign background (80 percent). Of all the 20-year olds in Sweden, i.e. including those who never began upper secondary school, the proportion of those with basic eligibility for higher education was 64 percent in 2013. At the end of the 1990s, both the proportion with school leaving certificates and the proportion with basic eligibility among 20-year olds
was on the decline. Study results improved slightly in 2000, and then deteriorated until 2002. After this, the proportion with school leaving certificates and basic eligibility increased for a couple of years and has been relatively stable since 2004. The trend over time for these two measures based on study results is therefore roughly equal.

166. Of all the pupils who completed upper secondary school and received their school leaving certificates or equivalent in spring 2010, 42 percent began higher education within three years. More women began university studies than men. Of all the pupils who completed upper secondary school in spring 2008, 48 percent of women and 36 percent of men began university-level studies within three years. Pupils with foreign background also go further to higher education to a greater extent than pupils with a Swedish background. 53 and 41 percent respectively studied further at university level within three years of completing upper secondary school. Pupils at municipal schools and independent schools go further to higher education to more or less the same extent. Among school leavers in spring 2010, 42 percent of pupils at municipal schools and 45 percent of pupils at independent schools went on to study at a university or university college within three years. The corresponding proportion for pupils at county council schools was 21 percent.

167. Of all the pupils who completed upper secondary school and received their school leaving certificates or equivalent in spring 2012, 4 percent began municipal adult education the following year. Of the pupils who did not receive school leaving certificates or the equivalent from upper secondary school, 7 percent started municipal adult education the following school year. There were considerably more females studying municipal adult education after their last year of upper secondary school.

168. The number of pupils with foreign background who supplemented their upper secondary studies in municipal adult education was more than double the number pupils with Swedish backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with school leaving certificates who continued their studies in municipal adult education the following school year was 9 percent for pupils with foreign backgrounds, and 3 percent for pupils with Swedish backgrounds. The corresponding proportion of pupils who lacked school leaving certificates was 13 percent for pupils with foreign backgrounds and 56 percent for pupils with Swedish backgrounds.

169. In 2014 the municipalities’ responsibility for people under 20 years of age who do not have work was clarified. Each municipality is obliged to offer these adolescents appropriate and individually targeted measures. These efforts should primarily aim to motivate the individual to begin or resume an education, but it can also mean finding a way to secure the living before he or she is ready to go back to education.

Measures of pupil performance

170. The general picture of performance in the Swedish compulsory school remains a cause for concern. PISA 2012 confirms and reinforces the picture which previous international proficiency surveys, PISA 2009, PIRLS 2011 and TIMSS 2011 have shown, namely that Swedish 15 year-olds proficiency in reading comprehension, mathematics and natural science has deteriorated over the past few decades. In total, Sweden is the country that has had the greatest downswing in results of all the countries which participate in PISA. Furthermore, the latest description of the proficiency standard according to PISA is that Swedish pupils are now, for the first time, performing under the OECD average in all three proficiency areas (NAE 2013b).

171. A recently published international study of adult proficiency, PIAAC 2013, shows that Swedish adults (16-65 years) do well in an international comparison regarding proficiency in reading, arithmetic and problem solving with the help of a computer (SCB 2013; OECD 2013c). But the study also shows that Sweden’s result in comparison with other countries is not quite as good when it comes to the age group 16-
24 years, an age group which contains the year cohort which participated in PISA 2003, 2006 and 2009. The results from PISA do not therefore contradict the results from PIAAC (NAE 2013b).

172. There are well-known patterns for how well different groups of pupils succeed in school. Children of parents with lower education levels do not succeed as well as children of highly educated parents. Girls perform better than boys - boys reach approximately 90 percent of the girls’ results in compulsory school. The group of pupils with foreign background have generally worse results than pupils with Swedish background, but there are considerable differences within this group. It is mainly pupils who have immigrated to Sweden after the age of 7 (when children normally start compulsory school) who have lower grades (NAE 2013a). Pupils with foreign background who were born in Sweden have somewhat lower grades according to the merit rating than pupils with Swedish background, but the differences have decreased during the period 1998-2011. The significance of being born abroad has on the other hand increased, particularly during recent years. An explanation of this development is that the average age of the pupils at immigration has increased. The group of pupils who immigrated before the age of 7 has results on a level with pupils with foreign background who were born in Sweden.

173. The differences in results are increasing both between pupils and between municipalities. There are also indications of increasing differences in results between different classes in the same school, but the great increase in result differences is found between schools. The difference in results between schools has quadrupled since the close of the 1990s. The between-schools variation is greatest in the big cities while the greatest increase has occurred in larger cities and suburban municipalities (NAE 2012). For a more developed discussion see chapter 7.2.

The vocational programmes at Upper secondary school

174. The adolescents’ interest in vocational programmes has declined since 2010 with fewer applications. At the same time, a higher percentage of pupils at vocational programmes do not complete upper secondary school. At the most, 35 percent of all pupils (including pupils on other study paths than national programmes) followed a vocational programme. This is now reduced to 27 percent. The vocational programmes used to be two years with a direct focus on the vocational training. This changed in the early 1990s when the vocational programmes became three years long and mainly preparatory for a certain professional field. The vocational programmes underwent major changes when upper secondary school was reformed in 2011, and it is still too early to overlook the consequences as the first pupils into the reform has just passed their exams. With the reform, it was decided that pupils at vocational programmes no longer should be forced to read courses to achieve eligibility to higher education, but pupils on vocational programmes have the right to read those courses if they so desire.

175. The first pupils of the reform in 2011 graduated in June 2014. However, there are already warning signs to consider. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate (2014c) has investigated the five vocational programmes that have had the biggest problems with pupils dropping out and where 25 percent do not successfully complete the education within five years (NB pupils that started in upper secondary school before the reform). The review includes 64 upper secondary schools in 52 municipalities around Sweden, both municipal and independent schools. The review shows that the majority of schools, 60 of 64, need to develop their work in one or more areas that could collectively can lead to pupils interrupting their education. The review also shows that a large proportion of pupils have had very little or no contact at all with people from the profession they are studying.

A collective impression

176. Since 1995 Swedish pupils in compulsory school have taken part in about 40 international surveys (NAE 2014b). The collective impression is that the knowledge development is mainly negative but
that the proficiency as well as the school environment also has positive elements. Some relationships that appear that applies to school and classroom environments are the following: Swedish pupils belong to those who to the least extent feel badly treated by classmates. The relationship between teachers and pupils is more positive compared with many other countries. On the other hand, principals and teachers in Sweden report more often than colleagues in other countries that there is a problem of discipline among pupils. But teachers consider, to a relatively small extent, that this is a serious problem for teaching and learning. Teachers in Sweden belong, at the same time, to those who have the least positive view about their working conditions and their profession. Even the principals’ profile clearly deviates from the international pattern.

- **Reading ability** Falling results and under the OECD average according to the latest measurements (both PISA and PIRLS). Several indications also about a declining habit of reading and reading habits. Gender differences in PISA (15 year olds) are strikingly large and growing, to the boys’ disadvantage.

- **Mathematics** Declining results and under the OECD average according to the latest measurements (both PISA and TIMSS). Most pupils do not consider it fun to study mathematics. This applies particularly to the older pupils, but motivation and confidence is still, maybe paradoxically, high.

- **Natural science** Declining results and under the OECD average in the latest PISA and TIMSS for 8th graders, but somewhat improved results and over the OECD average for 4th graders in TIMSS. The interest in learning natural science is also seen as low.

- **Citizen knowledge and democratic competence** Comparatively good results in ICCS 2009. A careful comparison with Cived (1999) indicates knowledge results of at least the same level as that of 10 years previously. Many of the values which pupils express are also in line with democratic attitudes.

- **Foreign languages** Swedish pupils performed the best in English in the European study ESLC 2011, but were weak in Spanish. The survey has not been repeated.

- **Problem solving** Swedish pupils performed just under the average in the PISA test on problem solving which was done in 2012.

- **Digital competence** The relative results of the digital PISA test in reading ability and mathematics was better than the corresponding traditional pen and paper test. This may signal good digital competence.

177. The results, compared with other countries, have for a long time been, on average, better among the younger pupils (9-10 years), compared with the older (14-15 years), and that pattern is also seen today. The analysis also indicates that the knowledge area where the school has support of the pupils’ experiences outside of school is relatively better in international comparison. International knowledge measurements show similar declines in several respects, but the result in mathematics diverges. School truants

178. Swedish 15 years old pupils do not deviate from the OECD average when it applies to how common it is to be absent without authorisation for entire days from school (NAE2013b). On the other hand it is more common that Swedish pupils are absent without permission from single lessons, compared with the OECD average. When it applies to arriving late to school, just over 21 percent of Swedish pupils report that they have come late to class three times or more during the last two week period, which is most of all OECD countries.
2.7 Policy approaches to equity in education

179. Since there are no private schools in Sweden (see chapter 2.5), all schools are obliged to follow the Education Act in order to enhance equity. There are also many central policies and programmes to encourage the school system to advance equity goals. The Education Act gives pupils far-reaching rights to support in learning. The school shall be compensatory, which means that it should take into consideration the needs of all pupils and weigh up differences in their conditions/prerequisites and the fact that some pupils may need extra support to reach the knowledge goals which at least should be reached. The municipalities’ resource allocation to the schools is a way to reach the goal that all pupils should have access to equivalent education of good quality. This entails that the resource allocation should be adapted to the pupils’ differing needs and preconditions. But the municipalities are different and have different preconditions. Municipalities therefore allocate resources in different ways (see chapter 6).

180. According to the Education Act, education in independent schools may be limited to certain grades, pupils who are in need of special support and pupils that the education is specially tailored for.

181. As is clear from 2.1, there is education for pupils with learning disabilities, special needs school, as well as a special type of school for Sami people. The five national minority groups have pervasive rights in the Education Act. The Government has also tasked NAE to be responsible for the implementation of certain measures in the strategy for Roma inclusion as well as a strategy for disability policy.

Geographic areas of alienation and marginalisation

182. NAE has a task to work with some areas of alienation and marginalisation. NAE has chosen ten schools which will be included in this work for three years. The chosen schools are in city areas which fall under the national work with urban development, have low proficiency results and a negative knowledge development over time. The teachers in these schools are receiving support from tutors to develop their teaching, and these efforts also includes study guidance in the pupils’ mother tongue, support for contact with legal guardians, and helping with homework.

183. In the new effort for career positions for teachers, NAE has granted subsidies for a total of 150 career posts in these marginalised areas. Seven municipalities and one independent school have applied. A total of 35 schools in these marginalised areas will receive more First teachers. Of these schools, 60 percent are located in greater city areas.

Newly arrived immigrant pupils

184. The number of newly arrived immigrant pupils is increasing, and more municipalities have to build up preparedness and knowledge in order to be able to take in newly arrived pupils and offer a good education. NAE also has a task to carry out integration efforts in the school system. To support the development within the area, NAE is working to do the following.

- Elaborate mapping material which will give support in the school’s work with planning education for newly arrived pupils and compose part of the basic documentation for the compulsory school year in which the pupil shall be placed.
- Elaborate support material for evaluation of the pupils’ command of the Swedish language.
- Offer professional development efforts for both principals and teachers.
Prepare and disseminate information material to pupils and parents in different languages about the school choice.

185. Since July 2013, all children in Sweden between the ages of 6 and 18 have a legal right to attend school. This means that even undocumented children have the right to go to school in state, municipal and independent schools. All who live in Sweden without permission are classified as undocumented. On the other hand, undocumented children are not covered by the obligation to attend school. Preschools have no obligation to offer undocumented children a place, but can do so if they wish.

2.8 Main challenges

Decentralisation

186. A main challenge is to ensure that all pupils get equal access to education, independent of where in the country they live and their social and economic situation.

Sweden is, however, a large country with great local variations, where the possibility to choose between schools depends on where you live. The Swedish education system is also highly decentralised, which means that the municipalities have full responsibility for all school resources. Different reports have, however, shown that there are differences between municipalities and schools regarding for example allocation of resources and student performance. Furthermore, as NAE showed in one of its studies, many education providers work their way between parallel expectations from on one side, especially municipal management in the form of key figures for annual targets and the budget documents, and on the other side national requirements, in the form of curriculum and course syllabus. In addition, the evaluation of the municipalisation showed that neither the implementation of the reform nor the outcome of the reform was successful, for example regarding student performance (SOU 2013:5).

School choice

187. Another main challenge is if, and in that case how, the school choice reform has effected pupils right to equal access to education.

The reform has made it possible for all pupils, irrespective of background, to choose which school they would like to attend. However, the school choice reform might have had some negative effects on for example the difference in results between schools. While pupils from homes with, for example, lower incomes or lower educational levels, often do not choose a school other than the closest one, the school choice may be used by more privileged groups to avoid the schools chosen by the former group.
Chapter 3: Governance of resource use in schools

3.1 Level of resources and policy concerns

188. Each municipality determines the size of the budget and how much should be spent on education. Every year NAE publishes information on costs regarding preschool activities, school-age child care, schools and adult education in Sweden. All data in chapter 3.1 is based on NAE 2013f and NAE 2014a. How statistics are processed is described in these documents. The costs are in real term.

189. The total cost of preschool, leisure time centres, other pedagogical activities, school and adult education amounted in 2012 to 214.8 billion SEK. It is equivalent to 40 percent of local total costs for all the municipalities’ activities. The cost for the education sector is thus a major proportion of the total costs of the municipalities. Compulsory school represents the single largest part of the total cost of preschools and schools (39 percent), followed by preschool (28 percent), upper secondary school (17 percent) and preschool class (2 percent). Nearly 79 percent of the total cost for schooling was costs for municipal schools, the remainder for schools with independent, county council region or Governmental providers.

Costs for preschool, leisure time centres and other pedagogical activities

190. In autumn 2012 there were 911 600 children registered in preschool, leisure time centres and pedagogical care. Of the registered children, 53 percent were in preschool, 45 percent in leisure time centres and 2 percent in so-called pedagogical care. Of the activities’ total costs, preschool accounted for the largest part, 59.8 billion SEK, in 2012. The costs for preschool, leisure time centres, open preschool and open leisure time centres have increased when compared with the previous year, while the cost for pedagogical care has dropped.

Preschool

191. The expansion of the preschool started in the 1970s and was considerable during the entire 1990s, while at the same time the activities were affected by wide-reaching cost-cutting. Today, access to places for children of 1-5 years of age corresponds to a large degree to the demand. Of children of preschool age, 84 percent are registered in preschool. This means that the need for preschool places follows the development of the population in a different way from before. Demographic factors such as changes in birth numbers or moving in and out of the region directly influence the need for preschool in the municipality.

192. Between 2011 and 2012 the total cost for preschool increased by 5 percent to 59.8 billion SEK. At the same time the average number of children increased by 2 percent. The total cost for preschool has increased successively over several years. Since the year 2000, costs have increased by 88 percent. During the same period, the number of children enrolled in preschool increased by 53 percent. The personnel, counted as the number of staff per school year, increased by 56 percent.

193. Since 2000, costs per child enrolled in municipal preschools have increased by 21 percent, while municipal compensation per registered child to independent preschools has increased by 53 percent. In 2000 the cost per child in municipal preschools was 104 700 SEK and municipal compensation per child in independent preschools was 73 300 SEK. In 2012, the average cost per registered child in municipal preschool was 127 000 SEK while the municipal compensation per registered child in independent preschool corresponded to 112 400 SEK. The differences can partly be explained by the changed rules on how the grants shall be calculated, which came into force in 2010.
In 2012, 19.7 percent of all children in preschool were registered in an independent preschool, which is approximately the same proportion as in 2011. It is not possible to compare costs for independent and municipal preschools. For independent preschools there is only information about municipal compensation to the operation, and not the total costs thereof. Independent preschools finance their operations not only by means of municipal grants but also with parental fees and sometimes via unpaid work done by parents in parent-cooperatives. The average municipal grant grade to a place in independent preschools amounted to 88.5 percent of the municipal costs for a place in its own preschools. Possible income from parental fees (see 158), other contributions and other revenue sources are not included in these calculations. The average municipal grant to independent preschools corresponded to 112 400 per registered child, which is an increase of 4 percent compared with 2011.

During 2002, i.e. immediately after the maximum fee cap was introduced, the municipal contribution to independent preschools increased by 17 percent. This increase was greater than previous years and probably corresponds to a large degree with the introduction of the maximum fee cap. The National Agency for Education has made the assessment that the municipalities together have compensated the independent preschools for the possible loss of fee revenue which the maximum fee cap has caused. Since 2000 the number of children and the number of staff for each child group has increased in independent preschools. In addition to this, the municipalities’ average compensation to independent schools has increased more than the average costs for municipal preschools between 2001 and 2003, as a result of changes in the legislation.

**Costs for schools and adult education**

In 2012, preschool class cost just less than 5.4 billion SEK, which corresponds to just under 4 percent of the total cost for school and adult education. The cost for compulsory school cost was just over 83 billion SEK, which corresponds to 60 percent of the total costs. Upper secondary school accounted for just under 27 percent (just under 37.4 billion SEK), municipal adult education for just under 3 percent (3.9 billion SEK), compulsory and upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities for just over 5 percent (just under 7 billion SEK), and Swedish tuition for immigrants (sfi) for 1 percent (just under 1.5 billion SEK). Education for adults with intellectual disabilities and Special needs school together make up just over 0.5 percent (0.7 billion SEK). The total cost for schools and adult education increased by 1.2 percent compared to 2011.

**Compulsory school**

The total cost for compulsory school in 2012 was just over 83 billion SEK, inclusive of costs of school transport and newly started and closed independent schools, which is an increase of 2.8 percent compared with the previous year. During the first half of the 1990s, drastic cost reduction measures were implemented within the school system due to the economic crisis. Since 1996 the total resources to compulsory school increased by 37 percent until 2005. Of the total costs in the years 2012, just over 73 billion related to compulsory school, including school transport. The cost for independent compulsory school was just under 10 billion SEK, which corresponds to just over 12.3 percent of the total cost.

For compulsory school, all different types of costs have increased. The cost per pupil for teaching has increased to 46 700 SEK, which means an increase of 2 percent compared with 2011. Another expense which covers large proportion of the total costs for compulsory school is the cost for premises. That part of the costs has also increased compared with the previous year. This 0.2 percent increase means that the total cost per pupil in compulsory school increases to 93 000 SEK. In percent, the increase is largest for teaching and study materials, 4.6 percent.
199. Compared with municipal compulsory schools, independent compulsory schools have, on average, lower costs per pupil regarding health service and other costs. On the other hand, costs per pupil for teaching, school meals, premises, and teaching and study material were higher. Compared with municipal compulsory schools, the cost for teaching and study materials, equipment and school libraries per pupil was 1 300 SEK higher in independent compulsory schools. In 2011 the cost for pupil care was 800 SEK higher per pupil in municipal compulsory schools than in independent compulsory schools.

200. The number of pupils in independent compulsory schools was 119 695 autumn 2012, which was an increase of 6.7 percent compared with 2011. At the same time, the total costs for independent compulsory schools increased by 9 percent. In 2012, a pupil in an independent compulsory school cost on average 86 900 SEK which is an increase of 2.5 percent from the previous year. Independent schools do not have the right to deduct Value Added Tax (VAT) but are compensated for the cost through the grant system (see below).

201. Independent compulsory schools finance their activities mainly through grants from the home municipalities of the pupils. The average compensation per pupil to independent compulsory schools was 86 800 SEK in 2012, an increase of just under 1 percent compared with 2011. These municipal grants cover almost 100 percent of the independent compulsory schools total costs per pupil 2012.

Upper secondary school

202. The total costs for upper secondary school have dropped somewhat but are increasing per pupil. Since the year 2000 the total cost has increased by 39 percent on average while the number of teachers (full-time posts) has increased by 20 percent, and the number of pupils has increased by 15 percent during the same time period. In 2012 the total costs for upper secondary school increased to just less than 37.4 billion SEK, which is a reduction of 1.8 percent compared with the previous year. During the same period, the number of pupils in upper secondary school has decreased by just over 5 percent. The number of teachers, measured in full-time positions, has decreased by 3 percent.

203. The main part of the country’s upper secondary school education is arranged by municipal education providers. In 2012 the municipalities accounted for just over 75 percent (27 billion SEK) of the total cost of upper secondary school. Independent upper secondary schools cost in total 8.3 billion SEK and made up just over 22 percent of the total cost for upper secondary school. The county council district upper secondary schools cost 0.6 billion SEK which corresponds to just under 2 percent of the total cost for upper secondary schools.

204. For upper secondary school, all different types of costs have increased. The cost per pupil for teaching increased to 47 900 SEK in 2012, which is an increase by 3.4 percent compared with 2011. The costs per pupil for premises increased to 21 000 SEK, an increase of 2.5 percent. In percent, the increase is greatest for pupil health, 7.6 percent.

205. The average cost per pupil in upper secondary school increased to 103 900 SEK between 2011 and 2012, an increase of 2.9 percent. The cost per pupil, exclusive of school transport and newly-started and closed independent schools, as well as compensation to other education organisers increased to 100 500 SEK. This means that costs increased by 3 percent.

206. A pupil in a municipal upper secondary school cost on average 102 400 SEK in 2012, which is an increase of 3.3 percent compared with 2011. The average cost for independent upper secondary school was 92 200 SEK per pupil, an increase of 3 percent. Independent education providers can be divided into three orientations; general, denominational and Waldorf, as well as two further types of independent schools;
national boarding schools and international schools. In 2012 the costs per pupil for independent education providers with general, denominational and Waldorf orientations were 91,800 SEK, 76,400 SEK and 129,800 SEK respectively. The costs for national boarding schools and international schools increased to 126,000 SEK and 96,800 SEK per pupil respectively. The county council offers mainly natural resources education which is costly to organise. The average cost for county council district education providers decreased by 2.9 percent compared with 2011 and increased to 172,300 SEK per pupil.

207. The difference in cost per pupil between different education providers as well as between orientations, national boarding schools and international schools for independent education providers is substantial. The difference depends to a large extent upon the fact that the different education providers organise different upper secondary school programmes where the costs are essentially different, as well as the fact that the number of pupils differs a great deal.

3.2 Sources of revenue

208. Funding of school education is decided at municipal level. As a part of a financial equalisation system across municipalities, the Government redistributes financing via state grants from wealthier to poorer municipalities. These grants are not ring-fenced, and municipalities may allocate the funds as they see fit. Education is financed by municipal funds after redistribution and by local taxes. At the local level, education is generally governed by the municipal assembly as the municipality’s highest decision-making body and a committee system concerned with the specific policy fields – among them education.

209. Public schools are directly run by municipalities. Independent schools get public funds from the municipalities according to the same principles the municipalities use when allocating resources to their own schools. As described in chapter 2.5, there are no private fee-paying schools in Sweden. Financial backing of all schools is tied to the respective number of pupils enrolled and pupils’ specific needs (e.g. special needs education). Comparable to the allocation of funds by the central level, the local level mainly reallocates funds towards schools – usually on a lump sum basis to provide for salaries, buildings, material and equipment. Budget administration and the organisation of teaching are, in most cases, left to the principal. Within municipalities, the general principles and objectives of schooling (based on the national steering documents) are decided at the Municipal Assembly level, while execution of duties is passed on to relevant committees. The distribution of responsibilities in the education administration is the same irrespective of education level (pre-compulsory, compulsory, lower secondary, upper secondary).

Government grants

217. The municipalities have, on average, taken part in every third state funding effort in the years 2011-2013 (NAE 2014i). Significant differences exist between the municipalities that participated the most and those that participated the least. A compilation by The National Agency for Education shows that the differences depend, among other things, on the size of the municipality and where in the country the municipality is situated. Independent schools were not included in the compilation.

218. NAE distributes approximately 7 billion SEK in Government ring-fenced grants every year. The compilation includes only grants for school development efforts in the years 2011-2013, which, on average, encompasses 3.5 billion SEK per year. Some of the largest grants are for career posts for teachers, strengthening pupil healthcare, Teacher Boost II as well as the mathematics boost. Because the size of the Government grants in some cases is decided by the municipality’s pupil numbers, no consideration is given to the size of the sum allocated to the municipalities. There are also circumstances which can influence whether or not a municipality can apply for state funding at all.
On average, the ten municipalities that have taken part in most state funding efforts during the last three years, have taken part in 60 percent of the efforts or 13.5 efforts per year. The municipalities have been able to apply, on average, for 22.3 Government grants per year 2011-2013. No municipality has participated in all of these, but Stockholm has taken part in most; on average 16 per year. After Stockholm comes the other two major municipalities Malmö and Gothenburg.

The Stockholm region participates the most, and northern Norrland the least. All regions are relatively close to the average for the entire country, 33 percent. Southern Sweden has generally participated in many campaigns but differences exist within the regions. In northern Norrland the larger municipalities at the coast for example have participated to a greater extent, in contrast to other municipalities in the region.

There can be several reasons for the municipalities choosing to abstain from Government grants. NAE does not have a clear picture of the causes at the moment but some explanations recur. Many municipalities argue that the organisation would not have been able to handle participation in all the state campaigns which have been offered. This is because the application process would have meant too much administration, but also because the teachers cannot take part in all the development efforts at the same time. Some municipalities have, in communication with NAE, stated that they had chosen not to participate in all the efforts offered by the state, but that they have consciously prioritised certain development efforts. It is reasonable to assume that the causes which have been communicated to NAE about not taking part, to a great extent apply to smaller municipalities. The question about why participation differs between municipalities of different sizes and with different geographical location does need to be further investigated. NAE has earlier stated that independent schools often take part to a lesser extend in state campaigns than municipal schools.

**Fees in school**

Education shall be free and pupils shall, without cost, have access to books and other teaching tools which are needed for modern education. Fees in connection with application may not be charged. There should be only a few occasions where there can be a nominal cost for the pupils. When it comes to school journeys and similar activities, costs may be reimbursed by the guardians on a voluntary basis. Pupils at upper secondary school may also pay the occasional own means. The same stipulation applies for state, municipal and independent schools.

**3.3 Planning of resource use**

The Education Act stipulates that the municipalities are to allocate grants to the independent schools according to the same principles the municipality use when distributing funds to its own schools. Financial backing of all schools is tied to the respective number of pupils enrolled and pupils’ specific need (e.g. special needs education). Comparable to the allocation of funds by the central level, the local level mainly reallocates funds towards schools usually on a lump sum basis to provide for salaries, buildings, material and equipment. Budget administration is then performed by the principal. Within municipalities, the general principles and objectives of schooling are decided at the Municipal Assembly level, while execution of duties is passed on to relevant committees.

A national trend is that, as a result of the birth rate, there is a large decline of the number of pupils in upper secondary school while the number of pupils is now increasing in compulsory school. Another trend is that newly arrived pupils from abroad tend to be older now than they used to be. (See chapter 2.1.) There is also an increasing demand for services that cater for pupils with special needs. (See chapter 4.8.) At the same time there is a huge shortage of teachers in mother tongue, Swedish as a second
language and teachers in special needs education (see chapter 8.5). So is the shortage of teachers in Swedish, Mathematics and Science – the three core subjects in which Sweden, according to PISA 2012, has declined from a level around or above the OECD average to a level below the average.

3.4 Implementation of policies to improve the effectiveness of resource use

225. There are at many key stakeholders involved in setting school policy, apart from the national agencies that are described in chapter 2.4. The Government uses major consultations with the stakeholders, especially when it comes to larger changes or reforms. The stakeholders participate in hearings and debates, as well as responding to documents circulated for comments at different stages of implementation.

226. One of the key stakeholders is the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, SALAR (Sveriges Kommuner och Landssting). It has been established to contribute to the improvement of the conditions in Swedish municipalities, county councils, and regions with regard to their functions as employers, service providers, supervisory authorities, and community developers. SALAR works proactively with the Swedish Government, as well as with European institutions. (See: http://skl.se/)

227. A second important stakeholder is the Swedish Teachers’ Union (Lärarförbundet). It is the largest union for teachers and principals and the fourth largest professional trade union in Sweden. At the beginning of 2013 it had 230 800 members at all educational levels. Their main goals besides making the teaching profession an attractive career choice are to have autonomous schools. Decision making should rest with individual schools. According to the Swedish Teachers’ Union, principals, teachers, and pupils should have a greater say in all decision making that affects their school or place of learning and in how resources are used,. The Teachers’ Union has no official role in the evaluation system. (See: http://www.lararförbundet.se/)

228. A third stakeholder is the National Union of Teachers in Sweden (Lärarna Riksförbund). It has about 90 000 members and organises first and foremost teachers employed in compulsory, secondary and adult education. Their members are teachers and study and vocational guidance counsellors. The National Union of Teachers focuses on qualifications, professionalism and improving working conditions. Both the National Union of Teachers and the Swedish Teachers’ Union are officially consulted in many matters concerning educational policy and school organisation. They are frequently asked to make official comments on Government reports and bills, but have no official role in the evaluation system. (See: http://www.lr.se/)

229. A fourth stakeholder is the Swedish Association of School Leaders and Directors of Education (Sveriges Skolledarförbund). The association has about 7 000 members consisting of principals, deputy principals, and other individuals with leading positions within the school system. The majority of Sweden’s school principals or school leaders and directors of education with a career in school and education have chosen to join the association. The association strives to increase members’ awareness of their situation as employees; increase the understanding of the members’ importance for the improvement of the school system; ensure that principals are trained in such a way that supports and encourages their work in an organisation based on knowledge and leadership; support principals in working towards educational progress; ensure equal rights and equal opportunities for every individual; and ensure that the association is actively engaged in important educational issues in politics. The association has provided ethical guidelines for its members since 1991. These guidelines highlights members’ responsibility for school administration and for achieving educational goals; guaranteeing the equal rights of every individual; working in the best interests of the pupils; ensuring a good physical and mental work environment; and upholding values and professionalism. The association has no official role in the system of evaluation. (See: http://www.skolledarna.se/)
230. A fifth key stakeholder is the Swedish Association of Independent Schools (Friskolornas riksförbund). They focus on three areas:

- Promoting the interests of independent schools through active participation in the public debate over independent schools in Sweden and through lobbying.
- Advising members on laws and regulations that affect independent schools (excluding pedagogical issues and their role as employers).
- Providing information and services of interest to members, in particular management and quality-assurance training.

231. Membership is open to independent schools of all levels. In 2014 there were about 600 member schools. Board members represent the broad spectrum of independent schools (in terms of size, whether denominational or not and type of legal organisation). Individual schools and companies responsible for one or more independent schools are responsible for evaluation and assessment within their school or schools, but the Association of Independent School has no official role in the evaluation system. (See: http://www.friskola.se/)

232. A new stakeholder is the Idéburna skolors riksförbund, roughly translated as Association of Non Profit Independent Schools. It is a non-profit association which works like the Swedish Association of Independent Schools but their members all have an organisational form or statute that does not permit the distribution of profits or takeovers. The association wants to “act as a counterbalance to such community development”. (See: http://www.ideburenskola.se/favicon.ico)

233. Apart from the stakeholders mentioned above, there are several more that can be added, for example the parents association Föräldraalliansen, the student associations SVEA and Sveriges Elevkårer, the Swedish Council for Higher Education, the Swedish Higher Education Authority and the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education, the universities and The Confederation of Swedish Enterprise.

Different views on effective resource allocation

Based on an empirical study the NAE (see chapter 3.2) made in 2013 the assessment that it is hardly possible to identify the most effective resource allocation system for all municipalities in an empirical way. The municipalities in the country look different and have different structural preconditions. They make different prioritisations and also have to handle local political opinion. The municipalities therefore allocate resources in different ways. The optimal way to allocate the resources, with regard to equivalence and study results, is to be worked out by the municipality themselves.

Highlighted in the NAE’s brief of the assignment is that the question of what a good allocation of resources, according to the preconditions of school and the pupils, is, is difficult to answer. All parts of a resource allocation system need to be studied together and, not least, how the resources are used and converted to quality in the classroom. How teacher competence is allocated according to the need in the school plays an important part. The school’s resources must also be seen in a broader context of social services in the municipalities. Not taking into consideration the resources in the school’s surrounding area can be misleading. Steps taken to reduce school segregation, alongside those which compensate for the negative effects of segregation, affects how the resources to the schools are steered (NAE 2013j).
The NAE has in several studies pointed out the importance of directing resources as needed, particularly for the younger pupils. It is unusual that the socioeconomic compensation in local government resource allocation models differs between the pupils age groups. However, in general the municipalities have increased their adaptation of resources as needed over time. It might reflect a greater awareness in the allocation of resources.

A clarification in the Education Act came into force 1 July 2014 which states that the municipalities shall allocate resources within the school system according to the children's and pupils’ different preconditions and needs. It has also been clarified that the principal and preschool head have the responsibility of distributing resources within the school according to the children's and pupils’ different preconditions and needs.

The Government argues that the resources are weighted, and allocation on these grounds is a very important instrument to be able to reach equity in education. It is also an important pre-condition for the pupils to reach the goal of the education. The municipalities have an overriding and thorough responsibility for resource allocation which other education providers do not have. The municipalities allocate resources, partly to their own preschools and schools, partly to other education providers according to regulations about grants to independent preschools and schools, inter-municipal compensation and compensation to state-run schools. Naturally however, other education providers should also allocate resources according to children’s and pupils’ different preconditions and needs. This follows every education provider’s responsibility according to 2 Chapter 8 § Education Act.

There is, according to Government opinion, no general model for resource allocation which works in all municipalities or for all activities within the school system. It is also not possible to decide generally how great a part of a municipal budget for the school system should be reallocated according to the composition of the child and pupil groups and what a sufficient differentiation is. The factors that should be considered must be adapted to the activities needed and to local situations. It is therefore, according to the Government, not possible to give further directions as to how the resource allocation should be done in the Education Act or another statute. The Government wishes to stress, however, that resource allocation must be done with respect to all pupils. The question of whether a pupil has a diagnosis or not may not be the deciding factor for if there will be a reallocation of funds. It is also of central importance that the consideration which is done before a decision about resource allocation takes place in a transparent and predictable way. This constitutes a guarantee that the allocation does not occur arbitrarily.

In order for the municipalities to find resource allocation models which promote high equivalence, it is thus of great importance that the municipalities follow up and evaluate their resource allocation systems and the effects they have on the school activity. At national level, the Schools Inspectorate and the NAE have a certain responsibility for quality scrutiny, and national follow up and evaluation respectively. The clarification gives increased possibilities for the Schools Inspectorate to scrutinise how the municipality allocates resources. The purpose is not that municipalities’ resource allocation shall be systematically scrutinised but that the scrutiny shall take place in special cases, for example when it can be stated that there are great differences between goal attainments in different schools in a municipality. Every municipality must have a resource allocation system where the resources are weighted according to prerequisites in the municipality and be able to report in which way they are expected to contribute to the pupils reaching the education goals. It must be clear how the situation in schools, preschools and leisure time centres have influenced resource allocation and how the municipality has taken into account the children’s and pupils preconditions and needs. If there is no resource allocation system which observes these factors, then the Schools Inspectorate should be able to step in.
Pilot schemes

239. The use of pilot schemes is a tradition that has weakened in Sweden over time (SOU 2014: 12). One reason for this is probably that the tempo of politics has increased. Processing times in the Government Offices are long, while sessions may be perceived as short. However, experimentation has over the years become increasingly common, e.g. pilot schemes with cutting edge programs and a fourth year on the Technology Programme in upper secondary school.

240. The inquiry presented in SOU 2014:12 claimed that experimentation is one way to facilitate the evaluation of reforms that should increase. Knowledge and experience is gained through experimentation and can help to lay a foundation for sustainable decisions.

3.5 Main challenges

Capacity building

241. A main challenge is that the municipalities and the independent schools have very different preconditions.

There are large differences in capacity, some education providers are large municipal organisations with responsibility for tens of thousands of pupils, while other education providers lead activities with only a handful of pupils. Some education providers and schools may therefore have difficulties in participating in state initiatives. A recurring pattern is that small municipal education providers and small independent education providers participate less often than larger actors.
Chapter 4: Resource distribution

4.1 Distribution of resources between levels of the education administration

243. In Sweden, the school budget is completely decentralised to the municipalities and this applies to all levels within preschool and school. Each municipality decides the way in which resources will be allocated, for example if one school will receive more money than another. To a large extent, the school then has the responsibility of allocating the resources in the best way, for example regarding pupils who need extra support. Part of the money can remain at central level in the municipality, for example for rental of premises. But in other cases the cost of premises also affects the schools’ budgets, which influences how the other resources can be used by a school.

The financial equalisation system

As a part of a financial equalisation system across municipalities, the Government redistributes financing via state grants from wealthier to poorer municipalities. These grants are not ring-fenced, and municipalities may allocate the funds as they see fit. Education is financed by municipal funds after redistribution and by local taxes. At the local level, education is generally governed by the municipal assembly as the municipality’s highest decision-making body and a committee system concerned with the specific policy fields – among them education. (See Section 3.2 Sources of revenue, point 208).

The financial equalisation system across municipalities is to create equal financial conditions for municipalities and county councils to provide service to residents regardless of residents’ incomes or other structural preconditions. Hence, differences in municipal tax are, by and large, to be independent of differences in structural preconditions and reflect differences in factors like efficiency or levels of services and fees.

There are statistics on the outcomes of the financial equalisation system for the municipalities. To exemplify this, four types of municipalities were chosen:

- Stockholm, representing major cities
- Gotland, representing municipalities based on tourism and visitors
- Arvidsjaur, representing municipalities in sparsely populated areas
- Ystad, representing municipalities in densely populated areas

| Table 4.1 The equalisation system: examples from four municipalities |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|                 | Stockholm      | Gotland        | Arvidsjaur     | Ystad          |
| Population      | 923 158        | 57 394         | 6 447          | 28 961         |
| Income          | -3 208         | 11 324         | 9 796          | 7 223          |
| equalization    |                |                |                |                |
| Cost            | -324           | -2 371         | 4 851          | -2 005         |
| equalization    |                |                |                |                |
| Structural      | 0              | 1 316          | 2 484          | 0              |
| grants          |                |                |                |                |
| Transitional    | 373            | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| grants          |                |                |                |                |
| Total result    | -3 193         | 10 235         | 17 097         | 5 184          |
Table 4.1 shows the different financial posts of the equalisation system and the total result/outcome per capita. The meaning of the different posts in each row of the table are as follows:

- **Income equalization:** This post is to adjust differences in tax capacity and revenues. It aims at an equalization of tax revenues between municipalities and also between county councils whereby those with a tax capacity below 115 percent of the average tax capacity receive grants from the system and those with a tax capacity above 115 percent of the average tax capacity pay fees to the system. Grants/contributions from the system are shown in black; fees/contributions to the system are shown in red.

- **Cost equalization:** This post is to adjust for differences in demography and cost structures related to this. Municipalities and county councils with unfavourable cost structures receive grants from the system and those with favourable cost structures pay fees to the system. In this case; Ystad Gotland and to some extent Stockholm have a favourable demographic situation, whereas Arvidsjaur has not.

- **Structural grants:** This post is made up of certain parts of the system being based on regional politics. It also contains additional funding to the municipalities and county councils who suffered major decreases in income when changing from the previous financial equalisation system to the current one.

- **Transitional grants:** On January 1st 2014 new regulations were introduced into the system. Some consequences of these regulations were a significant decrease in incomes for certain municipalities and county councils. To mitigate this, transitional grants were introduced, meaning that income decreases are distributed over a number of years and limited to a maximum of 250 SEK per capita and year.

### 4.2 Distribution of financial resources across resource types

244. On average, half of the school costs in a Swedish municipality consist of costs for teaching, primarily teacher salaries. For compulsory school, the resources were allocated according to the following types of costs during 2012; teaching 50 percent, premises 19 percent, school meals 6 percent, pupil learning materials 4 percent, health 3 percent and other 14 percent. The corresponding percentages for upper secondary schools were 48 percent (teaching), 21 percent (premises), 5 percent (school meals), 8 percent (learning materials), 2 percent (pupil health) and 16 percent (other costs). To this should be added cost for transport 3 percent.

### 4.3 Distribution of resources between levels and sectors of the school system

245. The total cost of preschool, leisure time centres, other pedagogical activities, school and adult education amounted in 2012 to 214.8 billion SEK. It is equivalent to 40 percent of the total costs for all the municipalities’ activities within the school system. The education sector is thus a major proportion of the total costs of the municipalities. Compulsory school represents the single largest part of the total cost of preschools and schools (39 percent), followed by preschool (28 percent), upper secondary school (17 percent) and preschool class (2 percent). Nearly 79 percent of the total cost of the school was the cost for municipal schools, the remainder for schools with independent, county council region or Governmental providers.
Since 2000, the costs per child in municipal preschools have increased by 21 percent, while municipal compensation per child to independent preschools has increased by 53 percent. In 2000 the average cost per child in municipal schools was 104 700 SEK and the average municipal grant per child in independent preschools was 73 300 SEK. In 2012, the average cost per child in municipal preschools was 127 000 SEK while the municipal grant per child in independent preschools corresponded to 112 400 SEK. Read more about costs in chapter 3.1.

The total cost for compulsory school in 2012 was just over 83 billion SEK, inclusive of costs of school transport and newly started and closed independent schools, which is an increase of 2.8 percent compared with the previous year. During the first half of the 1990s, drastic cost reduction measures were implemented within the school system due to the economic crisis. Since 1996 the total resources to compulsory school increased by 37 percent until 2005. Of the total costs in the years 2012, just over 73 billion related to compulsory school, including school transport. The cost for independent compulsory school was just under 10 billion SEK, which corresponds to 12.3 percent of the total cost.

The total costs for upper secondary school have dropped somewhat but are increasing per pupil. Since the year 2000 the total cost has increased by 39 percent on average while the number of teachers (full-time posts) has increased by 20 percent, and the number of pupils has increased by 15 percent during the same period. In 2012 the total costs for upper secondary school increased to just under 37,4 billion SEK, which is a reduction of 1.8 percent compared with the previous year. During the same period, the number of pupils in upper secondary school has decreased by just over 5 percent. The number of teachers, measured in full-time positions, has decreased by 3 percent.

**4.4 Distribution of resources across individual schools**

Every municipality has its own way of allocating resources between schools, which more or less take into consideration that the schools and the pupils have differing preconditions and needs. Within the municipality this allocation can, in its turn, be more or less decentralised. In several municipalities, the different districts decide how the resources will be distributed between their schools.

The allocation of resources to independent schools shall, according to the Education Act, be done according to the same criteria the municipality use when allocating resources to their own schools. In other words, the independent schools shall form a part of the municipalities’ resource allocation models. The conditions for starting an independent school are described in chapter 2.5. Independent compulsory schools finance their operations through grants from the pupils’ home municipalities, to be paid according to the same principles that the municipality uses when distributing resources to its own schools. The average grant per pupil to independent compulsory schools was 86 800 in 2012, an increase of just under 1 percent compared with 2011. The education provider has full command over the grant.

The National Agency for Education has mapped which criteria steer the municipalities’ resource allocation according to the schools preconditions (based upon the pupils’ socioeconomic background) in a selection of municipalities (NAE 2013j). The majority of the 50 municipalities examined in the study allocate more money to schools with less favourable preconditions than to those where the pupils have a favourable socioeconomic background. The most common variable in these models is the parents’ education level, but it is also common that foreign background is a cause of the distribution.

How much of the total resources that are reserved for socioeconomic compensation varies drastically between municipalities. Among the municipalities who were investigated, it varied between 1 and 9 percent of the total costs in 2012.
Individual schools can, in addition to compensation for the pupils’ socioeconomic background, be allocated further funds. It can, for example, be directed efforts on which the municipality decides, and which are financed either by the municipality itself or via state grants. It is not unusual that small schools with a limited pupil base receive extra funding, for example in municipalities which are characterised by the population being spread out over a large geographic area.

Evidence on how municipal allocation mechanisms vary

There are large variations between municipalities regarding the allocation of resources to the school, and how they are distributed between different activities. An analysis of the Swedish Agency for Public Management (2013) shows that, over many years, there have been significant differences between municipalities when it comes to costs per pupil. It is well established that municipalities’ different structurally contingent preconditions for their school tasks generate different cost levels. For example it is more expensive to run a school in small municipalities, in sparsely populated municipalities with great distances, in municipalities with large population declines, or in large cities. Within the framework of the municipal economic adjustment, these differences are also taken into consideration, i.e. there is an adjustment for structurally contingent cost differentials.

Education is generally governed at the local level. This is done by the municipal assembly as the municipality’s highest decision-making body and a committee system concerned with the specific policy fields – among them education. Table 4.2 shows how four municipalities chose to allocate funding within education.

**Table 4.2 Evidence on funding allocation differences: examples from four municipalities**

(Counts as of October 2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Stockholm</th>
<th>Gotland</th>
<th>Arvidsjaur</th>
<th>Ystad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of pupils</td>
<td>57 727</td>
<td>4 297</td>
<td>581</td>
<td>2 312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost per pupil, SEK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School buildings</td>
<td>21 300</td>
<td>21 600</td>
<td>9 800</td>
<td>15 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching/staff</td>
<td>54 700</td>
<td>57 600</td>
<td>46 600</td>
<td>44 800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meals</td>
<td>6 600</td>
<td>6 800</td>
<td>7 000</td>
<td>5 300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material incl. libraries</td>
<td>3 800</td>
<td>4 000</td>
<td>3 600</td>
<td>3 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>2 520</td>
<td>2 930</td>
<td>2 800</td>
<td>4 560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>22 300</td>
<td>18 600</td>
<td>23 200</td>
<td>13 900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The meaning of the different posts in each row of Table 4.2 are as follows:

- **Number of pupils**: Average number of pupils between October 15th 2013 and October 15 2014.
- **School buildings (cost per pupil)**: costs for premises, inventories, maintenance, cleaning and janitors for caretaking.
- **Teaching/staff (cost per pupil)**: Costs for school management staff, teaching staff, support measures and career guidance and in-house training for staff and similar posts.
- **Meals (cost per pupil)**: Costs for meals including staff, food, transports, administrative costs including for example diet consultants, and incomes from for example selling meals to
independent schools and, where relevant, to the Saami School. Costs for premises are not included here.

- **Material including libraries (cost per pupil):** Costs for school books, literature, newspapers, magazines and other printed material. The post also contains costs for libraries including librarians, computers including software licenses, machines and tools used for teaching. Costs for capital and service for these, for trips connected to study visits, cultural activities and school camps.

- **Healthcare (cost per pupil):** Cost for pupils’ health care and social care; staff including medical, psychological and social specialists. Also costs for health or other services bought from for example county councils. Not included are costs for premises, pupils ‘personal assistants or pupils ‘insurances.

- **Miscellaneous (cost per pupil):** Other costs not included above; for example career guidance for pupils, administration and certain forms of in-house training. In some cases, costs for pupils’ transport to and from schools are included in this post.

The Swedish Agency of Public Management’s analysis does not give an answer to the question as to whether individual municipalities prioritise and run the activities effectively with an optimal resource allocation in relation to the specific preconditions and needs. This analysis is difficult to make. It is possible to find structural factors which explain a part of the cost differences between municipalities, but all differences cannot be explained. Municipalities may be different when it comes to for example efficacy. But there are also significant local variations in preconditions for the school activity which explains the cost differences as the municipalities have different economic and structural preconditions to run their schools.

The National Agency for Education was at the end of 2012 given the task to carry out an in-depth study of how the municipalities allocate their resources to municipal and independent compulsory schools. The findings in the studies are in line with the report by the Agency of Public Management. The study also shows that there are large variations between municipalities in the question of the assignment of resources to the schools and the allocation of resources between schools. This applies to, among other things, how much resources the municipalities in total invest in the compulsory school and how great a part of the resources which are allocated according to the school’s preconditions (NAE 2013j).

The municipality’s school segregation, with regard to socioeconomic differences, explains, however to a limited extent, how much a municipality compensates schools with more difficult preconditions. This applies to both economic resources which are allocated after socioeconomic criteria, and the allocation of teacher resources. Other types of factors are thought to be more important in explaining how resources are adapted according to the schools preconditions. This in turn raises questions which are connected to the pupils’ right to an equivalent education of good quality (NAE 2013j).

One precondition to enable resources within the school to be allocated in an effective and appropriate way is active and aware municipalities, both in the question of the allocation of resources, in the follow-up of how the resources are used, and which effect they have on equivalence. In NAE’s study it is shown that municipalities, over time, have increased the adaptation of resources to the schools’ socioeconomic preconditions.

The Schools Inspectorate has reviewed (2014b) how 30 municipalities with large socioeconomic differences between schools work to counteract the negative effect of segregation on school results. The
scrutiny shows that most of the scrutinised municipalities could improve their strategies for counteracting the negative effects of segregation. The results can be summarised in three points.

1. The proportion of the economic resources which are reallocated to offset the differences in children’s and pupil’s preconditions are small in many municipalities and vary from 1 to 40 percent of the compulsory school budget for teaching. The scope for reallocation of resources varies greatly between municipalities.

2. Most of the scrutinised municipalities take different measures to counteract the negative consequences of segregation, but these steps are, in many cases, too unilaterally aimed at pupils with a foreign background and are less often of systematic and strategic character.

3. Most of the scrutinised municipalities need improved follow-up, evaluation and development of their systems for resource allocation and other efforts.

The scrutiny shows that there are examples of schools which have drastically improved their results when the municipality has given them considerable additional resources. These schools have turned the resources into long term quality based development work. They have also incorporated working methods which have shown to be effective according to research.

4.5 Distribution of school facilities and materials

The school network

Even if many schools in Sweden are similar, there is no typical school. The preconditions are steered a great deal by not only where in the country the school is located, but also by the ownership (see 2.5.) Statistics regarding pupils and schools are to be found in chapter 2.1.

There are different explanations to why municipalities and county councils choose to cooperate (NAE 2013c). This cooperation can, for example, bring about more efficient use of resources and administration, as well as contributing to regional development and competitive advantages. Municipalities and county councils that have entered into a cooperation agreement, decide on a cooperation area. Through coordinating the upper secondary school intake of pupils, the pupils can have a large number of upper secondary schools to choose from. Cooperation can also occur through the creation of a so-called municipal association which means that the municipality’s exercise of public authority in a certain question is carried over to the association. A county council can also be included in a municipal association.

When it applies to cooperation around upper secondary school, it is usually called an upper secondary school association. The municipalities which make up the upper secondary school association agree in general terms about what is offered as well as about in which of the municipalities in this agreement the different programmes will be offered. In many cases they also cooperate when it applies to enrolment and they can, for example, have a joint enrolment secretariat.

It is the Swedish Schools Inspectorate which evaluates and decides applications for permission to start and run an independent school. When an application comes in to the Inspectorate, it is sent for comment to the relevant municipality as well as to other municipalities in the area. In its evaluation, the Schools Inspectorate takes into consideration what effects the establishment of this education will have for the public school system and for the pupils in the long term, if this establishment will bring a risk that the municipality or nearby municipalities will be forced to discontinue a national programme or a national
orientation. Any cooperation agreements in nearby municipalities are also taken into consideration when making a decision.

259. It is generally the pupils’ home municipality which is responsible for covering costs for pupil’s daily travels. This applies to upper secondary school pupils who have more than six kilometres between their home and their school. The home municipality’s responsibility for covering costs for the upper secondary school pupils apply irrespective of education provider as well as where the upper secondary school is situated. However, the municipality’s responsibility does not extend to organising the transportation. The right to transport to school means that the municipality is obliged to arrange free transport to school if necessary with regard to the length of the journey, traffic conditions, the pupil’s activity limitation or any other special circumstance. All these conditions will be examined individually in every single case. The right applies to pupils in compulsory school, compulsory education for pupils/children with intellectual disabilities and upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities with public education providers if the pupil goes to the school in which the municipality has placed them.

260. To make it easier for, for example, sparsely populated municipalities to be able to keep village schools going, there is the possibility of organising distance learning. The pupils are taught in real time in different schools by a teacher by means of digital resources. This teaching method is not yet regulated.

261. Independent schools which are closed down, amalgamated or go bankrupt follow the principles that apply for the current corporation charter. If an independent provider is bankrupt and schools have to shut down, the home municipality of each and every pupil has to accept the pupil into the municipal school. The same goes for when the municipality closes one of its own schools.

School facilities and materials

262. As with everything else in the Swedish education system, it is the education provider that decides the conditions for how the school will work, while it is the principal who decides about the internal organisation. This means that in the schools, one is free to decide working method and materials for teaching and study. There are, however, examples of independent education providers where all schools within the organisation work from the same concept/teaching methods.

263. It is the Swedish Schools Inspectorate that follows up activities to ensure that the education is up to date, adequate and varied. The steering documents contain, to a small extent, method references but there are, in some subjects, for example projections that laboratory practicals are included and the school must then have the requisite equipment. During the working out of the steering documents, NAE had ongoing information to textbook publishers and their sector organisations in order to contribute to quality in the teaching materials.

264. Because education is free of charge for the pupils, there are no demands that the pupil for example must have their own computer in school. Knowledge about computers and computer programmes is not available as a separate subject in compulsory school. However, according to the first part of the curricula for compulsory education, digital competence should be taught as a transversal skill. The use of IT in the classroom is still relatively low (NAE 2013g). Technology in itself cannot improve pupils’ learning. On the other hand there is a great pedagogical potential if the teacher has IT competence and reflects how the education can be developed by the use thereof. Teachers need to increase their competence and familiarity with IT and this should happen with a long term plan for how IT can be integrated in the teaching.
4.6 Distribution of teacher resources

265. Given below is an overarching description of the teaching body in preschool, compulsory school and upper secondary school. Facts and figures in chapter 4.6 are from the official statistics for the school year 2013/14 presented by NAE (NAE 2014d, m-n).

Description of the teaching body

Preschool class

266. The number of employees in the preschool class recalculated to yearly workers has decreased compared with the previous school year, and was just over 6 700 in the school year 2013/14. In the preschool class, more women taught than men. Of the staff, 94 percent was women and 6 percent were men. Most teachers taught in municipal schools, 89 percent, while 11 percent taught in independent schools.

267. The number of pupils in a preschool class has increased by just under 2 300 pupils, while the number employed in preschool class recalculated to yearly workers has decreased by just over 200. This means that the number of pupils per yearly worker has increased from 15.5 the previous study year to 16.4 in 2013/14. Ten years ago the number of pupils per yearly worker was 13.5. This varies between schools and providers. The average number of pupils was higher in a municipal preschool class than in an independent, 16.5 compared to 15.0.

268. Of all yearly workers, just fewer than 84 percent had a pedagogical higher education degree, which is just less than 1 percent more than in 2012. Of these, just over 56 percent had a preschool teacher degree; just fewer than 6 percent had a leisure time pedagogue degree, and just over 21 percent a teaching degree.

269. The proportion of personnel with pedagogical higher education degrees in the preschool class has remained largely unchanged over the last nine years. The proportion with preschool teaching degrees has, however, decreased somewhat, at the same time as the proportion with a teaching degree has increased. The share of yearly workers with preschool teacher qualification varies between municipalities. For nine of ten municipalities, this varies between 44 percent and 100 percent. There are also differences between the counties.

Compulsory school

270. In compulsory school there were just under 88 800 working teachers in the school year 2013/14, of which 76 percent were women and 24 percent were men. The average working time is 86 percent of a full-time post. Recalculated to full-time posts, it corresponds to just under 76 100 teachers which is a marginal increase compared with the previous school year. Most of the teachers, 86 percent, taught in municipal schools. The remaining teachers, 14 percent, taught in independent schools.

271. The number of pupils per teacher (recalculated to full-time posts) in compulsory school was 12.1. Because both the number of teachers recalculated to full-time posts, and the number of pupils has increased, the teacher density is unchanged compared with the previous school year 2012/2013.

272. Teacher density varies between schools and education providers. The difference in teacher density between municipal and independent education providers has, however, decreased from 1.1 to 0.3
compared with the previous school year. Teacher density varies somewhat between municipalities and counties. The highest teacher density was in the northern hinterland (10.8 pupils per teacher recalculated to full-time posts), while the lowest density was in the county of Stockholm (13.5 pupils per teacher recalculated to full-time posts).

273. Of all teachers (recalculated to full-time posts), just under 87 percent had a pedagogical higher education degree, which is a marginal increase compared with the previous year. It is more common that women had a degree than men, 89 percent compared with 78 percent. Just fewer than 92 percent of the permanently employed teachers had a pedagogical higher education degree. There are big differences between different education providers. In municipal schools, just fewer than 87 percent of teachers had a pedagogical higher education degree. The corresponding share in independent schools was just over 70 percent.

274. The proportion of teachers with a pedagogical higher education degree also varies between municipalities. Eight of ten municipalities had a share between 82 and 95 percent. There are also differences between counties. The educational background varies between the different teacher categories. More than 90 percent of teachers for special needs education and special needs teachers as well as senior subject teachers have a pedagogical higher education degree. For all teachers in compulsory school, the share with a pedagogical higher education degree was just under 85 percent.

275. In compulsory school, a large number of teachers teach Swedish, mathematics and English, but there is also a significant number teaching civics and nature oriented subjects. Over 90 percent of these teachers had a pedagogical higher education degree.

276. As previously mentioned, the gender distribution among teachers in compulsory school is uneven. This is especially noticeable in the lower school years, where the proportion of women was 82 percent. In school years 7-9 the gender distribution is still uneven but it varies between different subjects. In sport and health, music and technology the proportion of men was over 50 percent. In the remaining subjects there is a majority of female teachers.

Compulsory education for pupils with learning disabilities

277. Just over 4 300 teachers were employed in compulsory education for pupils/children with learning disabilities in the school year 2013/14. A majority of these were women. Only every fifth teacher was a man. Recalculated to full-time positions, there were just over 2 500 teachers, of which just over 2 300 had permanent employment. The number of teachers recalculated to full-time posts has declined by just under 8 percent compared with the previous school year. This affects the teacher density and the number of pupils per teacher has dropped from 3.2 to 3.0 during the same period.

278. The proportion of teachers with a pedagogical higher education degree, recalculated to full-time positions is 88 percent, which means an increase of 7 percent compared with the previous school year. Schools with independent education providers had a lower proportion of teachers with a pedagogical higher education degree than schools with a municipal education provider, 58 percent compared with 90 percent. The difference between independent and municipal education providers has, however, decreased from 45 to 33 percentage points over the last five years.

279. The proportion of teachers with a higher education degree in special needs education was unchanged in the school year 2013/1014 compared with the previous school year, 30 percent. Since the school year 2001/02, where 50 percent of teachers in compulsory education for pupils/children with learning disabilities had a special needs education, the proportion of teachers with a special needs higher education degree has steadily decreased every year. The proportion of teachers with a special needs higher
education degree was lower in schools with an independent education provider than in schools with a municipal education provider, 11 compared with 32 percent.

Special Needs School

280. In the school year 2013/14, there were 193 teachers working in special needs schools. Just under every sixth teacher was male. The average service grade was 78 percent and recalculated to full-time posts, there were 151 serving teachers in special needs school. The number of teachers recalculated to full-time posts has decreased by 6 percent compared with the previous school year, which in turn has affected teacher density. The number of pupils per teacher has increased from 2.9 to 3.2 pupils per teacher. The average teacher density differs marginally between regional schools and national schools. In regional schools there are 3.1 pupils per teacher and in national schools, 3.2.

281. The proportion of teachers with a pedagogical higher education degree declined in the beginning of the 2000s, only to later increase. In the school year 2013/14, 81 percent of teachers in special schools had a pedagogical higher education degree. The proportion of teachers with a special needs education higher education degree has at the same time more than halved. In the school year 2000/01, 50 percent of teachers in Special needs school had a special needs higher education degree compared with 23 percent in the school year 2013/14. Statics on, for example, how many teachers that are qualified to teach the different subjects, will be presented later this year.

Upper secondary school

282. The number of serving teachers in upper secondary school has continually decreased over the last five years. In the school year 2013/14 there were just under 32 900 serving teachers in upper secondary school. This is just under 7 percent fewer than the previous study year, when the number of serving teachers was 35 000. The gender distribution among teachers in upper secondary school is even. 82 percent of teachers were permanently employed. The average service grade was 83 percent. Recalculated to full-time posts, there were just under 27 200 teachers in total, which is a drop of 6 percent compared with the previous school year. Because the number of pupils in upper secondary school has also dropped by 6 percent during the same period, the number of pupils per teacher (recalculated to full-time posts) was the same as last year, 12.1. The teacher density has remained between 12.1 and 12.7 since the turn of the millennium, but varies significantly between different educations providers. The teacher density was lower in schools with independent education providers than in schools with municipal education providers, 13.7 as against 11.7 pupils per teacher recalculated to full-time posts. Teacher density also varies between municipalities. Eight of ten municipalities had between 6.5 and 13.7 pupils per teacher. There were also differences within the municipalities and between counties.

283. Of all teachers (recalculated to full-time posts), just under 79 percent had a pedagogical higher education degree, which is a marginal increase of 1 percentage point since the previous school year. It is more common that women had a pedagogical higher education degree than men, 85 percent compared to 72 percent. Among the permanently employed teachers, 85 percent had a pedagogical higher education degree which is also a slight increase of 1 percentage points compared to the school year before. Municipal schools had a higher proportion of teachers (recalculated to full-time posts) with pedagogical higher education degrees than independent schools, 82 percent compared with 67 percent. The percentage of teachers with pedagogical higher education degrees in independent schools has, however, increased by 3 percent since the previous school year.

284. According to NAE, a reason for the increase in the percentage of teachers with a pedagogical higher education degree, notably in upper secondary schools with independent education providers, can be the teacher registration reform. The reform means that only registered teachers (i.e. qualified) are allowed
to teach and to set grades. Many teachers who earlier had completed their education but did not take their degree could have done so after the reform.

285. The proportion of teachers with a pedagogical higher education degree varies between municipalities. Eight of ten municipalities had a proportion between 64 percent and 91 percent. There are also differences between counties. The education background varies between different categories of teachers. More than 90 percent of teachers for special needs education and special needs teachers as well as subject teachers in history, social sciences, chemistry, religion, biology and Swedish had a pedagogical higher education degree. Fewer than 50 percent of teachers in vocational subjects as operation and maintenance, vehicle and transport as well as workshop and industry engineering programmes have a pedagogical higher education degree. Among mother tongue teachers, the proportion with a pedagogical higher education degree was 43 percent. However, teachers in vocational subjects and mother tongue are not obliged to have a teacher registration. The corresponding figures for senior masters and senior subject teachers were 97 percent and 99 percent respectively.

286. In upper secondary school just over 9 000 teachers taught in vocational subjects (2013/14). In Swedish, mathematics and English there are, as in compulsory school, also many teachers; between 4 100 and 5 000. In upper secondary school subjects, the gender distribution among teachers is more even than in compulsory school. Men make up the majority in the subjects philosophy, physics, history, physical education and health, mathematics, social sciences and vocational subjects. In language education it is women who dominate. Recalculated to full-time posts it is just over 7 000 teachers. A great number of these teachers taught in vehicle and transport, building and installation and electrical and energy; between 13 and 14 percent per vocational subject category.

287. Vocational subject teachers’ educational background varies between the different vocational subject categories. In total, 60 percent of vocational subject teachers had a pedagogical higher education degree. In the vocational subject categories children/youth, care and treatment, as well as business/administration which also had a large share of female teachers, over 70 percent of vocational subject teachers had a pedagogical higher education degree. The opposite applies to teachers in the operation/maintenance, vehicle/transport and workshop/industry engineering vocational subjects. Within these vocational subject categories, women were in the minority and fewer than 50 percent of the teachers had a pedagogical higher education degree.

Upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities

288. Just over 2 600 teachers were working in upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities in the school year 2013/14. Every third teacher was a man. Recalculated to full-time posts there were just under 1 900 teachers, of which 1 700 had permanent employment. The number of teachers recalculated to full-time posts has decreased by 10 percent compared with the previous school year. As a result of the decline in the number of pupils in upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities the teacher density has marginally increased since the previous school year and was this school year 4.0 pupils per teacher (recalculated to full-time posts).

289. The share of teachers with pedagogical university education has increased by just over 4 percent compared with the previous year to 84 percent. The share of teachers with a degree in special needs education has, in comparison with the previous school year, increased by 2 percent to 23 percent. The share of teachers with pedagogical and special needs education degrees varies between education providers. The share of teachers who have pedagogical and special needs education degrees in schools with
municipal education providers were 86 percent and 24 percent respectively. The corresponding share for county council district education providers was 65 and 5 percent respectively and for independent education providers 59 and 13 percent respectively.

**Teacher education and recruitment**

290. Much has been done in recent years to come to rights with teacher education. A new teacher education was introduced in 2011 and institutes of higher education have had to reapply for permission to offer teacher education. The requirement for basic eligibility to teacher education is to be increased, and a pilot project involving teacher training schools will take place 2014-2019 as a part of efforts to enhance the quality of placement. Education for teacher for special needs education has been reintroduced.

291. Universities and university colleges offer different teacher and preschool teacher educations with a number of orientations depending on their degree. The teacher education is divided into four different teaching degrees according to different school levels. This is described in chapter 8.2.

**Reforms under discussion due to the teacher shortage**

292. Because there is a shortage of teachers, further initiatives to attract more students to the teacher education are under discussion.

- Appointment of subject teachers with postgraduate studies through fast-tracking for researchers.
- Expansion of subject teacher education for more mathematics and natural sciences teachers.
- Expansion of the supplementary pedagogical education.
- A campaign which is run by NAE, *Pay it forward*, has been ongoing for four years. In addition to information about the campaign being seen in media, interested parties can visit the National Agency for Education’s website and familiarise themselves with teachers who love their jobs, find out news, and also see how to apply for teacher education.

293. Even if it is ultimately the education provider who is responsible for the professional development of their staff, several state investment efforts to strengthen the competence of teachers and preschool teachers are being implemented. One of these efforts is, for example, the Boost for Teachers II which offers further education for teachers who teach in other subjects and years than those they are qualified for, and who need to supplement their education in order to be accredited. This campaign has not had the same success as the earlier Boost for Teachers. Some municipalities abstain from allowing teachers participate in state further education efforts for teachers. The reason given by the municipalities as to why they have not participated in the efforts are financial, lack of interest from the principals and uncertainty as to which qualification the teachers will be granted by the National Agency for Education.

294. Another national initiative is the Boost for Preschool which aims to strengthen for example preschool teachers and preschool management competence. An evaluation of the campaign applicable to the time period 2009-2010 shows that the number of education providers who participate in the effort has increased over time, among municipal as well as among independent education providers (NAE 2011c). The variation in participation between education providers is, however, great. There are municipal education providers who have made use of many places and some who have not participated at all. Common for education providers who have participated to a large extent is that one has, at central level, taken a decision about and allocated funds for further education as well as had central coordination around questions to do with the campaign. Another factor which has been shown to be meaningful is that there has been common opinion regarding leave of absence and compensation for the participants. Certain independent education providers report that they have worse preconditions for participation. A possible
explanation given is that many independent education providers are small and it is more difficult to gain insight into the regulatory framework around Government grants and applications.

295. Major professional development efforts have been initiated, such as the so-called Boost within mathematics, natural sciences, technology and literacy, which in principle reach all teachers who teach these subjects. Literacy will reach all teachers, no matter which the subject is.

296. Further measures
- To counter the teacher shortage and a better dimensioning of teacher and preschool teacher education, the National Agency for Education, together with the Swedish Higher Education Authority, is planning a detailed forecast of the future need for different teacher categories.
- A chair inquiry will develop a proposal about an amended subject teacher degree which will mean that the orientation towards upper secondary school will amalgamate with the orientation towards lower secondary school because today, those who are qualified for upper secondary school are automatically qualified for lower secondary school.
- The placement studies parts (VFU) of the training within teacher and preschool teacher education have earlier been criticised and knowledge about them is poor. How placement studies function is now therefore going to be scrutinised.
- A pilot scheme is going to be carried out with the aim of being able to carry out aptitude tests for those who are accepted to teacher and preschool teacher education.
- The National Agency for Education has been tasked with reporting how education providers work to ensure that qualified teachers and preschool teachers are used for education and how the education provider, principals and preschool heads ensure that personnel receive the necessary professional development.
- The National Agency for Education has been tasked with carrying out a campaign to increase the proportion of men in preschool.

Induction period for new teachers

297. The induction period will give the new teacher/preschool teacher a good induction to the profession. During the induction period, new teachers are to have the support and assistance of a mentor. It is obligatory for the municipalities or the independent schools to arrange introduction periods for new teachers.

Teacher registration

298. To qualify to teach a teacher will need registration with a specialisation in the type of teaching concerned. A teacher's registration clearly shows in which types of school, which subjects and which school years he or she is qualified to teach. NAE determine that a teacher is qualified on the basis of the teacher’s education. Each application is reviewed and assessed based on the rules that applied when the teacher or preschool teacher took the degree, even if other requirements are applicable today. Expanded
qualifications will be assessed against the provisions of Regulation on jurisdiction and the registration of teachers and preschool teachers and appointment as senior subject teachers (2011:326).

299. To give grades, teachers must have a teacher registration, and to be a mentor to new teachers during their introduction period. Furthermore, only registered teachers will be qualified for permanent employment. Registration as a preschool teacher will be required in order to take responsibility for teaching activities in a preschool children's group. Exemptions will only be allowed if there is a shortage of qualified teachers or preschool teachers or on exceptional grounds. A decision to allow an exemption is to be taken by the school board and will be valid for at most one year at a time.

300. There are, however, many more exceptions for qualification which have been created during the time of the reform. For example, teachers who have supplemented their education over and above what is required for a degree may receive accreditation in one or several subjects under certain conditions, even if they do not fulfil today’s requirements for accreditation. Leisure time pedagogues receive qualification to work as a teacher in compulsory school years 1-3 or 4-6 in a compulsory school subject, if that subject is included in the leisure time pedagogue’s degree or if the degree has been supplemented to a sufficient extent. A teacher who is registered but not accredited in the subject that he or she teaches can be accredited if they have taught the subject for 8 years of the previous 15. However, if the teacher is 57 years or older, it is 4 years instead of 8.

Recruitment

301. Because it is the municipality and the independent education provider who employs teachers, there is no national strategy for recruitment. Government grants for First teachers and Senior subject teachers have, however, recently been increased for the marginalisation areas mentioned in the ordinance (2011:326) in order to direct the resources to where they are most needed. NAE and The Institute for Evaluation of Labour Market and Education Policy (IFAU) are going to follow up these efforts. The prior knowledge of the pupils affects the mobility of the teachers (IFAU 2014), most of all between schools. Teachers leave upper secondary schools which receive many pupils with low prior knowledge (measured as grades in school year 9) and to a greater extent stay in schools where pupils started out with good prior knowledge.

4.7 Distribution of school leadership resources

Description of school leadership and school leaders

302. During school year 2012/13 there were approximately 6 000 principals in service within Swedish schools at compulsory and upper secondary school level, of which about 4 500 were in compulsory and compulsory education for pupils/children with intellectual disabilities, and 1 500 were in upper secondary schools and upper secondary schools for pupils with learning disabilities. Of these, 60.7 percent were women and 39.3 percent were men. The average age was 51 years. The proportion born in Sweden was 94.7 percent and foreign-born was 5.3 percent.

Preparation of school leaders and selection

303. All newly appointed principals must, since the new Education Act came into effect, attend the National School Leadership Training Programmes. The education should begin as soon as possible after the appointment and be completed within four years after the appointment date. This education for the position is also open to preschool heads and deputy principals but is not compulsory for those groups. The education is oriented towards school legislation and exercise of public authority, goal and result assessment
as well as school leadership. Municipalities and independent schools also sometimes have their own preparatory school leader education.

304. The principal has a central role in the implementation of the educational mission and has the responsibility of seeing that the organisation reaches the required goals and follows the applicable laws and regulations. It is, to a large extent, about leading and coaching the staff and developing the operation but also about taking responsibility for the work environment and finances of the school. The Education Act describes the roles and responsibilities of principals and preschool heads.

305. The principal is the one with the utmost responsibility for the pedagogical activities at a school and is the manager for the teachers and other staff. Depending on the size of the school, there can also be one or more deputy principals as a support function to the principal. It is quite common that the principal or deputy principal, together with teachers leads and plans the work from the goals which are laid out in the various steering documents for the school, such as for example the Education Act, the curriculum and the syllabi.

306. The principal is responsible for the health of the pupils, i.e. that the pupils have access to special needs teachers, social workers and school nurses. As the person responsible for human resources, the principal usually have development and salary dialogues with the staff, set salaries and see that the staff receives the professional development which is required to carry out their work. In this responsibility is included following up pupil results against the goals which are set out in the steering document and analysing how the organisation can be improved. The principal often has the responsibility for the school’s work environment and the economy, as delegated by the school board.

307. The preschool head has the pedagogical leadership responsibility for a preschool and is the manager of the preschool teachers, child minders and others who work in the preschool. A preschool head can be responsible for several preschools. The preschool head leads and coordinates the pedagogical work at the preschool which is about reaching the goals formulated in the preschool curriculum. A principal for a school can also in addition be a preschool head.

308. Principals are recruited by the education provider.

4.8 Distribution across specific student groups

309. The principle about inclusion is a starting point for the Swedish school system. This means that the school system shall be a school system for everyone. The education shall take into consideration the different needs of all the pupils, where they should strive to weigh up the differences in preconditions of the pupils. The best for the child shall be the starting point in all education. It is the task of the school to create preconditions for all pupils to develop as far as possible according to the goals of the education. This means that the school has a compensatory mission.

310. A pupil who, as a result of disability, has difficulties in reaching all the knowledge requirements shall be given support which aims to, as far as possible, counteract the consequences of the disability. The pupil shall be given support, even if he or she reaches the minimum competence required. Pupils can also, on the grounds of deafness/hearing impairment, deafness-blindness or visual impairment in combination with other disability or serious speech impediment be offered education in a Special needs school with a state education provider (see chapter 2.1). They follow a special school curriculum. There is also the possibility of the education provider organising so called hearing classes within the framework of compulsory or upper secondary school curricula. The National Agency for Special Needs Education and Schools (SPSM) can grant financial support to education providers who runs regional schools for pupils
with, for example, deafness/hearing impairment, visual impairment, activity limitations, speech and language difficulties as well as medical or neuropsychiatric disabilities.

311. Some pupils are in need of further support, over and above the guidance and stimulation which is given in the regular education, in order to develop in the direction of the learning goals in the curriculum, or to reach the minimum proficiency requirements. Sometimes a pupil can be in need of more individually oriented support efforts. These efforts can take the form of extra adaptation within the framework for the regular education, or in the form of special support.

312. Extra adaptation is a support effort which normally is possible to implement for teachers and other school personnel within the framework of the regular education.

313. Special support is about efforts of a more far-reaching nature which are not normally possible to implement for teachers and other school personnel within the framework of the regular education. It is the scope or duration, or both the scope and the duration which distinguishes special support from the support which is given in the form of extra adaptation.

314. Teachers and other school personnel make an assessment of a pupil’s need of extra adaptation or special support starting from how the pupil is developing in the direction of the knowledge requirements in the curriculum. It is the education provider who allocates resources for this work.

315. The Education Act is clear that the municipality shall provide supplementary grants for pupils and children in independent preschools and schools who have extensive need of special support. The supplementary grant is intended for individual pupils who have extensive need of special support. It is intended for extraordinary support measures which are not connected with the regular education, for example technical aids, the help of a personal assistant, and adaptation of school premises. The costs for the support shall be immediately connected to an individual pupil and be linked to their special needs and prerequisites to be able to complete their schooling. It requires that the pupil’s support needs are clarified and assessed, for example within the framework for the investigation, and the action programme for which the principal is responsible.

316. It is possible for independent schools to directly restrict their activities towards pupils with special needs if they are approved by the Schools Inspectorate. The National Agency for Education’s mapping (NAE 2014j) shows that there are 68 schools which limit their intake to pupils in need of special support in the school year 2013/14. There are 61 compulsory schools and 7 upper secondary schools. In addition to this, 20 compulsory schools and 6 upper secondary schools state that they are oriented towards pupils in need of special support, but without limiting their intake to just this group of pupils. Many of these schools are situated in the Stockholm area. Schools with restricted intake often aim towards pupils with neuropsychiatric disabilities such as ADHD and Asperger’s Syndrome (Autism Spectrum Disorder). Many schools state at the same time that they also aim towards pupils with other issues. Named, among others, are pupils with social problems, or pupils with earlier school failure. Approximately half answer that the school is run in connection with a home for care (HVB-hem).

4.9 Main challenges

Effective resource allocation

317. One main challenge is to identify and implement an effective resource allocation. According to NAE (see Section 3.2) it is not possible to identify the most effective resource allocation system for all municipalities in an empirical way. The municipalities in the country look different and have different structural preconditions. They make different prioritisations and also have to handle local political opinion.
The municipalities therefore allocate resources in different ways. The optimal way to allocate the resources, with regard to equivalence and study results, is to be worked out by the municipality themselves.
Chapter 5: Resource utilisation

5.1 Matching resources to individual student learning needs

318. The school system in Sweden is comprehensive in the sense that the majority of all 15-year-old pupils in compulsory school follow the same programme or timetable. In Sweden the first age of selection between different educational orientations is 16 years when applying for upper secondary school. Pupils can then choose between higher education preparatory programmes or vocational programmes. Acceptance occurs on the basis of grades from compulsory school. There is also the possibility to follow a vocational programme as an apprentice. For pupils who haven’t reached the entrance requirements for national programmes there are five different introductory programmes, see chapter 2.1.

319. Inclusion is a steering perspective for Swedish schools. This means that ability grouping should be avoided except as temporary solutions. However, many schools use ability grouping as a way of adapting the teaching (Swedish Schools Inspectorate 2014a). This sometimes leads to groups becoming permanent and that the pupils’ knowledge development therefore risks being limited. Ability grouping in mathematics is less used in Sweden than in other school systems (OECD 2014b). Based on principals’ reports, 9 percent of pupils in Sweden are in schools where pupils are grouped by ability in all mathematics classes, compared with 16 percent on average across OECD countries. However, ability grouping across classes is used relatively often in Sweden: 57 percent of pupils are in schools with a grouping used for classes, compared with 34 percent of pupils on average across OECD countries.

320. Swedish schools also use other practices rather than ability grouping to ensure that teaching in mathematics is adapted to pupils’ needs. For example, more than one in two pupils in Sweden attends a school where mathematics classes offer similar content, but at different levels of difficulty, or where teachers use pedagogy suitable for pupils with heterogeneous abilities, without grouping pupils by ability.

Support in remedial classes

321. According to the Education act, special support shall, as far as possible, be given within the regular school work. However, ability grouping is common, as is the placement of pupils in remedial classes (Giota och Emanuelsson).

322. For pupils in school years 7-9, it is most common to have remedial groups for pupils with concentration difficulties. There are such groups also in the lower school years, but not to the same extent. It is also common to have remedial groups for pupils who have difficulties with reading, writing and mathematics. Giota and Emanuelsson also found that these are in school years 7-9 significantly more common in independent than in municipal compulsory schools.

323. The principals seldom consider that the pupils’ difficulties are directly connected to the school environment. Only one of ten principals thinks that deficiencies in teacher competence, or the fact that some classes function badly can be behind the pupils’ ‘remedial needs’.

324. According to eight of ten principals, the most common measures for the older pupils are: adaptions of material used, particularly skills training and adaptation of the education’s working forms and teaching methods. It is almost the same for the younger pupils. The placement of pupils in remedial classes is a commonly suggested measure in three of ten schools for older pupils and two of ten for younger pupils.
In a quarter of the schools, the estimated need of remedial support is greater than the support which is actually given. In school years 7-9 this is more common in municipal schools than in independent schools. It is however the opposite for the younger pupils and the preparedness to give special support to the pupils who are in need of it is worse in independent compared with municipal schools. The differences in replies about how the need of special support is met and dealt with in school are relatively small. This applies in comparison with principals for independent and municipal compulsory schools and in comparison between principals for younger and older pupils respectively.

Resources are described in chapter 4 and 6.

Individualisation of the teaching

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate (2010) touches on the question of the school’s ability to develop pupils’ ability in critical thinking, to develop pupil participation and influence, and to give extra stimulation to particularly capable pupils, in a quality scrutiny which investigates compulsory schools’ adaptation of the education to pupils’ different needs and the teachers’ expectations of the pupils’ performance. The Schools Inspectorate states that over half the schools scrutinised do not adapt the education to the pupils’ individual needs to a sufficient extent. This also applies for whether the school offers challenges to high performing pupils. The adaptations schools make in this respect are, to a great extent, conventionalised solutions, for example to calculate more sums in the mathematics textbook. A proportion of the schools had low expectations of the pupils and were satisfied with pupils reaching a passing grade. It also occurred that the schools had different expectations of different pupils. The expectations differed between low and high performing pupils, between boys and girls and between pupils with different social, economic and ethnic backgrounds.

The changes in the education which NAE has stated (NAE 2009a) - increased time for individual work and increased differentiation - can have had a negative impact on pupils’ learning. These conditions are likely to apply also to the conditions for learning at a higher level (NAE 2012c). Even if pupils who perform at a higher level probably are the pupil group who has the most to gain by increased differentiation, for example grouping, there is also the risk that teachers of these more homogenous groups overlook how individual pupils’ needs actually vary. The picture of high performing pupils’ results is not unequivocal but differs between different subject areas and over time - both significant downswings as well as largely unchanged results. The high performing pupils take a more active and positive approach, are more motivated, and persevere more compared with the average performers. High performing pupils are characterised by a higher socioeconomic status and greater cultural capital, as well as parents who are more involved in their child’s learning, even before the children begin school.

Education orientated to certain groups of pupils

The autumn term 2012, a pilot scheme with nationwide recruitment scheme cutting-edge education in school year 7-9 in compulsory school was introduced. Up until now there have been 18 cutting-edge educations approved. A final round of applications is ongoing now and after this there can be up to 28 cutting-edge educations. Cutting edge educations are nationwide recruitment schemes which mean that they can take pupils from the entire country. The education is aimed at giving pupils a special depth and breadth within the subject or subjects the education is oriented towards. Within cutting-edge educations, the pupils can study upper secondary school courses and receive grades in that subject or the subjects which the cutting-edge education is oriented toward. As for the rest, pupils follow the regular school education. The education can be oriented towards one or more of these subjects: mathematics and/or biology, physics and/or chemistry, or geography, history, religion, civics and/or English and/or a foreign language. Pupils from the entire country can apply for a cutting-edge education. To assess pupils’
knowledge and proficiency in the subject or subjects towards which the cutting-edge education is oriented, tests and examinations are used for acceptance or as a basis for selection.

330. It is still too early to evaluate the activity but, up to now, NAE has drawn the following conclusions after one year of the 8 first cutting-edge educations in compulsory school (NAE 2013h).

- Pupils and parents are without exception satisfied with the cutting-edge education in compulsory school.
- The educations shall accept pupils from the entire country but most of the pupils come from the vicinity.
- Three of four pupils in cutting-edge education in compulsory school have parents with tertiary education which is more than the national average.
- The average number of pupils in a cutting-edge education was 20-25 in school year 7.
- The evaluation indicates that the education is run with an increased tempo and depth and breadth of study.

331. Six of eight education providers have reported that cutting-edge education has brought with it certain limited additional costs. This depends, among other things, on costs for changed organisational conditions, smaller groups, more education time, and that teachers have received time to coordinate and develop the cutting edge activity. Other things which make the education more expensive are educational material, that upper secondary school teachers, who generally have higher salaries, have taken part in the cutting edge education, and the dissemination of information about cutting edge education.

332. As described in chapter 2 there is a pilot with cutting-edge education in upper secondary school since 2009. NAE is responsible for the follow up of the pilot, and reports on the development on a yearly basis.

333. In connection with the upper secondary school reform in 2011, a vocational dance education for pupils with the goal of being dancers at an international level was established in upper secondary school. To have the right prerequisites to be accepted to and go through the vocational dancer education, there is a preparatory dancer education comprising school years 4-9 in compulsory school. The purpose of a preparatory dance education is to offer pupils education and training for the technical proficiency and artistic expressive ability in dance. The pupils can be accepted from school year 4 based on proficiency tests, and there are tests thereafter in school year 7 for continued education. A memorandum with a a proposal for changes in the vocational dance education (Government 2014c) has been circulated for comment.

334. Finally, NAE was in August 2014 given the task to elaborate a support material for especially gifted and skilled pupils.

Starting over and dropping out

335. Grade repetition is used less in Sweden than on average across OECD countries (OECD 2014a). Some 4 percent of Swedish pupils had repeated at least one grade during compulsory school compared with the OECD average of 12 percent. The use of grade repetition in Sweden has remained at the same level between 2003 and 2012.

336. There are still relatively many who do not complete upper secondary school (see chapter 2.6). The importance of previous efforts, paying attention to truancy and other absence, support from pupil health care and increased support to those newly arrived in Sweden are some of the areas which NAE emphasises as central in the work against pupils dropping out of school. NAE has an assignment to strengthen study and vocational orientation with the aim, among others, that pupils to a greater extent shall chose study paths in upper secondary school that will suit their interests instead of, for example, making the same
choice as their friends. The workplace based learning and apprenticeship education have also been strengthened (see chapter 2.1).

5.2 Organisation of student learning time

Compulsory school

337. Pupils in Sweden receive on average 741 hours of intended instruction time per year during the nine years in compulsory school. There are no data available on the number of hours spent for single school years or ages, but the schooldays are shorter in primary school than in lower secondary school. On average across OECD countries a 15-year-old receives 942 hours per year (OECD 2014a). Pupils in Sweden have the right to at least 182 minutes (3 hours and 2 minutes) per year, on average, of mathematics lessons in compulsory school. The OECD yearly average time 15 year old pupils actually spend in mathematics lessons is 218 minutes (3 hours and 38 minutes). The figures are not comparable, as the timetable is not divided in separate school years and there are no Swedish data on actual teaching time for single school years or ages. In Sweden, there is no statistically significant difference between the instruction time in advantaged and disadvantaged schools.

338. The school year shall have at least 178 school days and at least 12 holiday days. Over and above that there may also be, at the most, five study days for the staff. The school year shall begin in August and end in June. The education providers decide when autumn and spring terms start and finish.

339. The pupils’ schoolwork shall be scheduled Monday-Friday and be as evenly distributed over these days as possible. The number of schooldays in a week may be limited to four for a pupil group in year 1 or 2 if there is special cause. The school day may be at the most eight hours long or, in school year 1 and 2, six hours per day. There shall be a schedule for the education for the school year or for a shorter period of time.

340. In compulsory school the total instruction time shall be at least 6 785 hours during 9 years; the distribution of the instruction hours for each subject is shown below. Timetables for other types of compulsory schools are similar, but the number of instruction hours and subjects may differ slightly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home and consumer studies</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical education and health</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crafts</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swedish or Swedish as a second language</td>
<td>1 490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>1 020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography, history, religion, civics</td>
<td>885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology, physics, chemistry, technology</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign languages</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The pupil's choice</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total guaranteed instruction hours</strong></td>
<td><strong>6 785</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hence the school's choice</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, a parliament bill is expected by late March 2017 where the number of hours will be defined for three blocks: Grades 1-3; Grades 4-6 and Grades 7-9. Also for Grades 7-9, 105 hours will be redistributed from "pupil's choice" to mathematics.

341. If the school so chooses, the number of hours in the timetable for one subject or for a group of subjects may be reduced by at the most 20 percent. The number of instruction hours in Swedish, Swedish as a second language, Mathematics and English may not be reduced as a result of the choice of the school.

342. The education provider is responsible for how the instruction hours for each subject shall be distributed over the 9 school years. The Swedish Schools Inspectorate has criticised many compulsory schools because pupils do not receive the education time to which they have a right. The NAE has now been tasked with producing a proposal for division into levels for compulsory school, that is, a timetable which is divided into subjects in the school years 1-3, 4-6 and 7-9.

Upper secondary school

343. The school year shall have at least 178 school days and at least 12 holiday days. There may also be, at the most, five study days for the staff. The school year shall begin in August and end in June. The dates for the beginning of the autumn and spring terms start and finish are decided by the education providers.

344. The pupils’ schoolwork shall be scheduled Monday-Friday and be as evenly distributed over these days as possible. Teaching shall be as evenly distributed over the school year as possible. When school work is located at a workplace outside the school, the working time which applies at the workplace shall be conformed to, unless the principal decides otherwise. For underage pupils who undergo education at a workplace, the stipulations which are issued by the Working Environment Authority regarding working time for minors, are applicable.

345. There shall be a schedule for the school year or for a shorter time which contains information about all lessons and teachers.

346. In upper secondary school the pupils on vocational programmes have the right to at least 2 430 hours of teaching, and pupils on higher education preparatory programmes have the right to 2 180 hours over three years. The scope of a subject or a course is given in upper secondary school credits, a course in Swedish covers for example 100 credits. It is thus not stated how many teaching hours which shall be allocated to a certain course and the time can vary due to adaptation to the pupil group and local needs.

347. It is the education provider that decides about the number of teaching hours for each course, each subject area, upper secondary school diploma project and upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities diploma project as well as how the distribution of education time over the school year shall be done. The education provider has to follow up how the pupil has received their guaranteed education time. Both the Schools Inspectorate and the NAE has found that many pupils do not receive their guaranteed education time.

5.3 Allocation of teacher resources to students

Class size and teacher-student ratios

348. In Sweden in 2013/14, 921 000 pupils attended 5 680 compulsory schools. There are no official statistics about class size, but according to a study by the NAE, every class had, on average, 19 pupils in
that year (NAE 2014e). Looking at municipal schools, the average class size varied between 13 and 22 pupils per class. There was also a difference in class size depending on type of education provider. In municipal schools there were 19 pupils per class while there were 16 pupils per class in independent schools.

349. Class size has, on average, increased by 2 pupils in compulsory school since 2008. Looking at school year 7-9, the class size is fairly unchanged over time, about 21 pupils per class, while class size has increased more in the lower school years. In school years 1-3 the class size has increased from about 15 pupils per class to 18.

350. Corresponding information does not exist for upper secondary school, where the spread is sizeable between programmes, education providers and geographic location, and where the situation in the classroom is better described through size of the education groups in the different courses that through class size.

**Working time**

351. Normal working time for Swedish employees is approximately 2 000 hours, holiday excluded. The number of hours differs from year to year, depending on which days certain holidays fall, and the length of annual holiday. Teachers have the same total working time per year as other employees. The average working time for teachers is, at present, excluding holiday, 1 767 hours. The normal number of working days per year is 194 days and this equals a working week of 45.5 hours (SALAR 2010). It can differ how the total working time is distributed as the teachers have both regulated and unregulated working time. Unregulated working time means that the employee themselves is in command of their working time, on condition that the work is satisfactorily completed, and it is also unregulated when it comes to the scope and, to some extent, the content of the work. About 10 hours of the working week is unregulated and can be used for, for example, for planning lessons and marking tests.

**Organisation of teachers’ work**

352. The NAE has investigated the compulsory school teachers’ working day (NAE 2013i). There is no corresponding survey for teachers in upper secondary school. During an average working day, compulsory school teachers spend 9 hours and 40 minutes to work-related activities. This is the equivalent of 48 hours per week. Weekend work is not counted in this time. Most compulsory school teachers report that they work a further 1 to 2 hours over weekends.

353. After the work with carrying out teaching, 34 percent of the time, administrative and practical work-related to teaching, planning of education, assessment and documentation of pupils’ development, as well as care and organisation, are the four working tasks which compulsory school teachers report are the most prominent in their professional working day. Each task take up about 10 percent of the total working time. The remaining 20 percent of the compulsory school teachers’ work goes to reflection and professional development, feedback, and recovery during the working day, moving around as well as other work-related activities. On average, about 45 percent of compulsory school teachers’ total time is used for work-related activities and for time with pupils.

354. Of the total time for work-related activities, reflection and professional development take approximately 7 percent, and time for recovery and revitalisation 5 percent. Movement takes approximately 1 percent of the time.
Feedback corresponds to, on average, 3 percent of compulsory school teachers’ total time. One of four teachers spends time for feedback sometime during an average working day. By feedback is meant work with, among other things, development dialogues, grade dialogues, and dialogues about action plans.

Full-time, employed compulsory school teachers say that the most time, in total, is used for teaching. This reflects that teaching is the main activity for teachers. On average, teachers teach about 3 hours and 20 minutes per day. Translated to a week this corresponds to 17 hours and 35 minutes. These results shall not be interpreted as compulsory school teachers having on average 17 hours and 35 minutes scheduled time for teaching per week, because a part of the scheduled time is used for care and organisation or practical and administrative work around the teaching.

The three activity categories of planning teaching, administrative and practical work around the teaching, and assessment and documentation of pupils’ development take on average about 70 minutes each per day. On average just over 50 minutes of the day go to organisation and taking care of the pupils. Approximately 30 minutes a day go to reflection and professional development, other work-related activities, and recovery and revitalisation, respectively. That, for example, 38 minutes per day go to reflection and professional development does not mean that all teachers take 38 minutes for this every day, rather that it is the average teacher who spends that much time for reflection and professional development during an average working day. About a quarter of an hour a day is what full time compulsory school teachers spend on average on feedback. The least time is spent on movement, 6 minutes per day is used by compulsory school teachers on average for this. But the time for this is this probably underestimated.

Some work tasks take significant time during the days in which they are carried out. Analysis shows that some work assignments that do not take so much time during the average working day, take up much more time during those working days in which compulsory school teachers report that they carry out just these tasks. This applies especially to the three activity categories feedback, reflection and professional development, as well as other work-related activities. During an average working day, a minority - three out of ten - full time working compulsory school teachers spend time on feedback. This work, however, lays claim to approximately one hour for just these teachers. This shall be compared with the fact that on average, 15 minutes goes to feedback during the average working day among full time working teachers. That feedback takes significantly more time than 15 minutes when development dialogues and grade dialogues etc. are carried out, often during certain periods of the term.

Other work-related activities clearly take more time among those who carry out this work than among all full-time working compulsory school teachers in general. Four out of ten full-time working compulsory school teachers spend time on other work-related activities on an average working day. This activity category lays claim to about 80 minutes for these teachers. Among all full-time working teachers, other work-related tasks lay claim to about a half an hour during the average working day. This reflects the possibility that other work related activities, to a high degree, consist of different meetings (for example workplace meetings and union meetings) which teachers do not spend time doing every day but when they do it, it takes up a relatively large amount of time.

To receive information of how much time teachers spend on the activities together with pupils, the time for the following activities has been added together: carrying out education without colleagues, carrying out education with colleagues, discussions or supervision with one or more pupils about education, feedback of professional development to pupils or parents, creating a peaceful learning environment as well as care and creating order outside the classroom. When the time for these activities is counted together, the time with pupils then increases to 45 percent of the work-time. The activity ‘other work related activities’ is not counted because the analysis shows that this kind of activities are mostly things which the teachers do during times when the pupils are not in school.
361. An average working day entails five of ten full-time working compulsory school teachers spending time on reflection and professional development. Among the full-time working teachers who state that they work with this, this activity lays claim to 80 minutes. This is approximately double the time compared with the average among all full-time working compulsory school teachers. It means that this work is also concentrated to certain days. That five of ten compulsory school teachers during an average working day spend time on reflection and professional development can, in general, be considered a lot. The activity category consists, however, of three activities; sole reflection around the teaching and the teacher’s task, reflection around the education and mission as a teacher with colleagues and taking part in organised professional development or continued professional development. In comparison, just 9 percent spend time participating in organised professional development and continued professional development during an average workday, while approximately 50 percent spend time reflecting around teaching and the teacher’s task. This causes the proportion of teachers who use the category reflection and professional development to be so large, when seen altogether.

362. Compulsory school teachers work alone most of the working time. This applies to the planning and teaching, as well as assessment and documentation (NAE 2014d). Studies show that between 20 and 40 percent of the work with assessment and documentation, planning of the teaching as well as reflection and professional development is done by the compulsory school teacher at home.

363. From surveys it is clear that teachers think that there has been deterioration over time when it comes to working situation and workload (SOU 2014:5). Teachers experience a very high workload, and there has been a marked deterioration in the situation since the beginning of the 1990s. During the same period, studies indicate that teachers’ influence over their own work has decreased. Causes which have been pointed out for the teachers increased working tasks over time are more work linked to documentation and to follow-up and evaluation of pupils’ knowledge development. In other words, tasks which have come about mainly as a result of state initiatives and reforms.

364. Teachers point out certain causes for the increased documentation requirements (SOU 2014:5). Firstly is stressed the large number of reforms which have been implemented in the school areas. Secondly, teachers consider that the control and checks over them have increased from principals and education providers as well as from the state. In the context is also named the increased demands from parents. The increased control and checks makes demands on documentation, and teachers state that they tend to document to cover their backs and not primarily to support the development of the pupils. In addition, the new Education Act’s possibilities for appeal in certain respects and the Schools Inspectorate’s supervision are named as contributing factors to the increased documentation requirements.

365. Swedish teachers work more hours in a week than their TALIS colleagues (NAE 2014k). They use a smaller proportion of time for teaching compared with the TALIS average and spend a relatively larger part of their time on administration.

366. NAE considers (NAE 2013a) that a fundamental principle in the discussion about the teacher’s professional working day should be that teachers should use their time so it benefits the knowledge development of the pupils. For teachers to be able to carry out teaching of good quality it is required that they have time for the planning of the education and for the assessment of pupils’ work. It also demands that they have time for analysis and documentation of pupils’ knowledge development, as well as feedback about pupil development to the pupils and parents. There are strong indications that this is not the case. NAE’ studies of how compulsory school teachers use their time (NAE 2013d) shows that teachers taught approximately as much as they were expected to do before the regulated teaching obligations fell away in 2000. At the same time as new tasks have come since then - in the form of documentation, administration, contacts with parents, efforts for pupil health and psychosocial environment - there is nothing that indicates
that earlier working tasks have disappeared or that new support functions have been established in school
to any great extent.

367. The work tasks which teachers consider take time from teaching are the following (SOU 2014:5):
written individual development plans, action plans, pedagogical planning, work with national tests, dealing
with absenteeism, leave applications, written contacts with parents, pedagogical mapping, special pupil
matters, work with violation of personal integrity, incident reports, steps taken to deal with disturbances
during teaching, minutes. According to teachers, earlier the work was mostly about teaching, while work
nowadays is much more about documentation, follow-ups, meetings and instituting plans as well as giving
parents written information.

Professional development

368. The responsibility for professional development lies with the education provider and the schools.
In connection with TALIS (2014k), professional development was investigated among participating
teachers. Below is a summary of the Swedish results.

- The proportion of Swedish teachers who state that they participate in professional development
  activities is lower than the TALIS average. In addition, the Swedish teachers who participate state
  that they spend fewer days than the average on these activities.

- Professional development is less common in independent schools than in municipal schools.

- Swedish teachers experience less effect from the professional development they receive,
  irrespective of type, compared with TALIS countries.

- Swedish teachers state that they are in greatest need of professional development within
  assessment and grading and ICT (information and communication technology) as well as the
  teaching of pupils in need of special support.

- The causes of Swedish teachers not taking part in professional development to the extent they wish
  is that it clashes with the working schedule, as well as that the costs are high.

- In comparison with the TALIS average, Swedish teachers answer to a smaller extent that they have
  taken part in some form of introduction or orientation at their first teaching job.

- Sweden has the worst results among TALIS countries when it comes to the proportion of
  principals who state that a mentor programme is accessible to all teachers at their school.

Career structure and compensation

369. The career posts First teacher and Senior Master can make the teaching profession more
attractive and ensure good teaching for the pupils. Through state financing, the monthly salary can be
increased by approximately 5 000 to 10 000 SEK per month for these teachers. The reform is at the
moment being followed up and analysed. The reform applies to all type of schools forms with the
exception of preschool.

370. The education providers create the career posts and decide themselves about the number of posts,
how the posts are designed, appointment and salary. The intention with these posts is that they should not
be time-limited appointments and that they will include salary increases. To receive the Government grant
there are however some requirements. A teacher with a career post shall for example primarily work with
teaching and tasks which are connected to teaching. This mainly means at least 50 percent of the working time. In general it is the education provider who formulates the content of the post.

371. Other requirements in order for the education provider to receive state funding for a senior master is that the teacher is registered and, through documentation, can show at least four years well-verified work with teaching within the framework of one or more employments within the school system. The teacher must have shown an especially good ability to improve study results of the pupils and have a strong interest in developing the teaching.

372. A First teacher can, for example

- be responsible for the introduction of newly employed teachers,
- coach other teachers,
- initiate pedagogical dialogues,
- initiate and lead projects with the aim of improving the teaching,
- be responsible for diplomas at upper secondary school or within adult education,
- be responsible for student teachers being received in a good way when they are to carry out their placement studies (VFU), and
- be the responsible person for a subject.

373. A senior subject teacher is a registered teacher and who has completed a degree at research level regarding subject didactics or a subject which can totally or mainly be referred to a teaching subject within the school system. The degree can also have been issued within the special need education area. A senior subject teacher has at least four years’ service as a teacher in the school system shown pedagogical skill (teachers who have taught at university or at a university college do not need to fulfil this requirement)

374. A senior master can, for example

- run interdisciplinary projects,
- run own research,
- supervise other teachers in questions connected to the specific subject,
- keep in contact with universities and university colleges,
- keep themselves updated about current research in the area and to spread the knowledge in staff meetings, and
- be the main responsible person for a subject.
375. For a senior master to be able to maintain and further develop their professionalism within a certain subject, it can be an advantage if they are given the opportunity within the framework of their employment to, for example, run research which benefits the teaching.

Support staff in schools

376. The Swedish school system is highly decentralised with a large degree of autonomy to municipalities or education providers of independent schools (see chapter 2.4). National information covering the education administration arrangements at different levels is not available (for example size, background of staff, employment status, initiatives undertaken to develop capacities of education administrators). It is very rare that teachers have assistants.

5.4 Organisation of school leadership

School leadership arrangements

377. School leadership arrangements are also described in chapter 4.7.

Organisation of school leaders ’ work

378. The principal’s responsibility and authority has been clarified through the Education Act, which came into force in 2010. It was made clear, among other things, that it is the principal who decides about their school’s internal organisation, has responsibility for work with quality in the form of planning, follow-up and development of the activity and is directly responsible for the pupils’ development towards the goals. The principal has also a major responsibility and the authority to decide and take measures when it comes to the pupils’ security and peaceful learning environment. It is also clear from the curricula for the different types of schools, that the principal has responsibility for the activity’s organisation, performance and results. Over and above the areas of responsibility with the pupils in focus, the principal also has a special responsibility to see that the staffs receives the professional development required for them to be able to, in a professional way, carry out their tasks. Furthermore, the principals have areas of responsibility which are allocated to the principals by the education providers but which are not regulated in the Education Act.

379. The principal’s responsibility as leader of the pedagogical work at a school entails (The Swedish Association of School leaders and Directors of Education 2014a) the following.

- The principal steers the accessible resources so that they are utilised as strategically as possible with the aim of creating the best possible conditions for learning and teaching.

- The principal leads the learning through feeling responsibility for, and influencing the internal processes of the school with the aim of reaching increased goal fulfilment.

- The principal leads the organisation through clarifying the link between the daily activities in school, the pupils’ results and the long term goals in the curriculum and syllabi.

380. According to the Swedish Schools Inspectorate (2012b), 60 percent of asked principals wished for further support from the education provider. The most common answer was that the principal would like help with administration. The principals state that the most time-intensive working tasks are the administrative tasks, and work related to pupil health. A described difficulty for principals was to balance between tasks which are steered by the state through statutes and other steering documents, and tasks which are steered from the education provider through, for example the organisational budget. Principals
also requested better working relationships, a reasonable workload in order to be able to be a pedagogical leader, assistance with their work, further education, leadership training, support in questions about the budget and premises, as well as good preconditions in order to be able to participate in principal training.

381. Swedish principals do spend the most time of all countries (51 percent) on administration (NAE 2014k). Their tasks encompass work with staff matters, regulations, reports, the school budget, scheduling and class division, strategic planning, steering and leadership activities as well as answering questions from authorities on national, regional and municipal level. After administration, the principal spends, on average, 21 percent of their time on work with curricula and syllabi, as well as teaching related tasks and meetings, 11 percent on contact with parents and guardians, and 7 percent on contact with the local and regional community, companies and industry.

382. A chair inquiry has been appointed who will examine how the working situation for principals within the school system can be changed with the aim of creating conditions for improved pupil results in school (dir. 2014:58). The chair inquiry will map and analyse factors that have impact on the principal’s responsibility and authority as well as the possibility to manage pedagogical leadership. Proposals as to how the principal’s responsibility and authority can be strengthened and the pedagogical leadership improved shall be presented in February 2015.

Developing leadership

383. The principal has a key position in the pedagogical development work. The pedagogical leadership must therefore be clear. This means that the principal must have knowledge and competence to interpret the task and translate that into the teaching as well as leading and steering the learning process. They must create understanding among the staff regarding the importance of making learning visible and for what links there are between the teacher’s own teaching and the pupils’ knowledge.

384. The National School Leadership Programme is the state education for the position of principals, preschool heads and deputy principals, which shall give knowledge about the requirements in the legislation and the regulations which apply within the school and preschool. The education shall also develop and strengthen the principal’s role as leader so that children and pupils receive the education to which they have a right. In their daily work they shall also be able to create conditions at both individual and operational level through initiating and leading the development process with the aim of maximising the pupils’ learning and development. The principal programme is mandatory for principals employed after the 15th March 2010. The principal shall begin the programme as soon as he or she has been employed as a principal. The education shall be completed within four years. The school leadership programme is described in chapter 8.3.

385. The Programme for Professional Development for School Leaders is a further education with the aim of contributing to principals’ knowledge and competence which increases the preconditions for carrying out leadership in relation to the teacher’s teaching and the pupils’ possibility to reach the national goals. The further education therefore focuses on pedagogical leadership within steering and guidance. The target group is principals who have attended the state education for the position, or an older state school leadership education and who thereafter have worked for at least one year and been responsible for curriculum-steered activities.

386. Principals in Sweden report having completed leadership training, but compared with the TALIS average, they have less working experience both as principals and as teachers (NAE 2014k).
Career structure and compensation

387. As with teachers’ salaries, the principals’ salaries are set by the education provider. The average salary for a principal is approximately 40 000 SEK per month (lönestatistik.se). The spread is, however, great between schools and across the country. Doctors and chief lawyers have salaries about 10 000 SEK higher per month. Because there is no career ladder for principals, changing workplace or going further with other tasks at the municipal level can be a way to increase the salary.

5.5 Teaching and learning environment within school

Evaluation and school development

388. Every education provider, principal and preschool head has responsibility for systematically planning, following up and analysing the pupils’ learning outcome in relation to the national goals, requirements and guidelines. The result of the analysis shall be the background material for investments so that the school can develop, reach posted goals and improve results.

389. For quality work to be successful, it needs to be pursued systematically and continuously by the school leadership and staff. The work shall be carried out together with children, pupils and legal guardians. There must, therefore, be organisation and resources which facilitate quality work both for the education providers and at preschools and schools. The NAE therefore gives continuous support to education providers, preschools and schools to work with quality in the form of information, publications and other tools. Some of the support material which already exist are General guideline about Systematic Quality Work and the web based tool BRUK, see below.

390. BRUK (Assessment, reflection, development, quality) is a tool for self-evaluation which the NAE has designed based on the Education Act and the new curricula. BRUK is thought of as a tool for use in a working team for collegial learning where one sees what one does, why and what it leads to, linked to the steering documents. The tool can be used to start development processes or as a part in systematic quality work. BRUK is for all school forms. The tool builds directly upon the Education Act and the first overarching chapter of the curricula, and is formulated as indicators and criteria to take a position on, and assess. The tool therefore gives support in developing the education and teaching when it comes to systematic quality work, norms, values, and influence, as well as the knowledge, development and learning of the children and pupils. BRUK does not, on the other hand, handle individual subjects or subject development.

391. The education provider shall, as ultimately responsible for the carrying out of the education, have an own system which supports the operations of the preschools and schools so that a clear and enduring development structure is created. The NAE gives support in this work via the web. See further chapter 5.7.

Well-being and outreach to the school community

392. The Education Act establishes that the school shall convey knowledge and values. The work with fundamental values shall be a part of the teaching. The school has the task of conveying knowledge about democracy, human rights and the equal value of all people. The school shall work further with questions about gender equality and the environment, and work towards counteracting violation of personal integrity and discrimination. The school’s fundamental values are described in the curricula. The steering documents highlight the importance of co-operating with the surrounding community and, for the upper secondary schools’ part, also with universities and workplaces. In its regular supervision, the Schools Inspectorate makes an assessment as to whether the work with fundamental values corresponds to the goals and guidelines which exist in the curriculum.
Several surveys show that Swedish pupils are happy in school with their schoolmates as well as with their teachers (NAE 2014b). Even the sense of security, defined as not being badly treated by schoolmates, is remarkably good in Swedish schools when compared with pupils in other countries. The answer to the question about order and discipline in the schools - in terms of the absence of too much disorder - is varied and sometimes contradictory. Swedish principals and teachers give a more negative assessment compared with the international average. There are certainly some negative indications when it comes to the learning environment but many signs point to a comparatively good situation. This is something positive in itself and constitutes, insofar as it corresponds with realities, a type of ‘school environment capital’ to steward, even if the results of the knowledge test often do not follow indications about a good learning environment. It must, however, be mentioned that, at school level, and not least at class level, variations are considerable.

The TALIS results show that Swedish teachers to a higher degree report disturbing noise in the classroom and that pupils, only to a lesser degree contribute to the creation of a peaceful learning environment in the classroom.

NAE finds (NAE 2014k) that it is hopeful that teacher-pupil relationships are felt to be well-functioning in Swedish schools, but that order problems give an indication that schools must work actively with the intentions of the Education Act. Rules are not observed by pupils and, pupils do not reflect over his or her own behaviour, for example that late arrive disturbs other pupils, can be an expression of the fact that school has become less important for the youth of today, maybe because they see many other paths to success in today’s society.

Teacher collaboration and professional learning

One of the main tracks in the NAE’s work with running school development is to entrench the concept that teachers develop and improve their teaching. Teachers’ knowledge, commitment, and the possibilities of good teaching are the most important success factors for a well-functioning school. The National Agency for Education shows, through different campaigns and efforts, how teachers can collaborate by solving problems and critically scrutinise each other’s work so that methods, assessment and grading is improved through the creation of systems. This is called collegial or professional learning and it is an advantage if teachers or preschool teachers can receive the support of people who do not work in the school. Professional learning has its roots in Learning Studies and Lesson Studies. The national further education efforts (so-called ‘Boosts’) within mathematics, natural sciences, technology, and reading and writing development, are all build on collegial learning.

For grading to be equivalent across the country, the school needs to have networks where issues like grading can be discussed. NAE encourages this as well as networking when it comes to the orientation period and the work of mentors.

Swedish principals places themselves lower than the TALIS average when it applies to principals’ experience of whether there is a common view of teaching/learning at school, whether there is a mutual respect for colleagues’ ideas and if there is a spirit of sharing successes with each other. Furthermore, Swedish teachers’ pay less attention to each other’s experiences compared with teachers on average in the TALIS countries. This could indicate a certain degree of resignation from the teachers’ side in the face of the difficulties and lack of time they face on a daily basis in their work, especially if they lack guidance from the principal in pedagogical questions and do not feel appreciated by society (NAE 2014k).

The teaching professions is in Sweden, to a large degree, solitary work when it comes to planning and implementation of teaching as well as the analysis and documentation of pupils’ development is worth paying attention to, both from a quality and from an equivalence perspective (NAE 2013d). Experience
shows that there are great pedagogical advantages when teachers together analyse the arrangement and implementation of the teaching. The preconditions for equivalence in the school system are also influenced by teachers working together with their colleagues. Joint planning of the education from the steering documents increases the possibility of equivalence in the implementation of the education. The education providers and the principals must, therefore, provide possibilities for the teachers to collaborate about the teaching. They must also see to that teachers take part in such work.

400. On account of the above it is, naturally, important that teachers receive professional development adapted to their needs, and that the principal takes note of these needs. What happens in the classroom is crucial for the pupils’ learning. This puts focus on which conditions the teachers have to carry out their work, which strategies in the education have great potential and which development efforts on national and local level are needed to give lasting positive effects for quality in education. Education providers and schools must therefore create conditions for teachers to take responsibility for the professional content in the pedagogical exercise of a profession, through for example, peer-learning.

401. It is, of course, important that teachers feel secure in assessing and grading, and a vital part of this is that newly graduated teachers receive the support of a mentor to which they have the right during the introduction period. It is important that the education provider creates preconditions for this.

402. It is, however, not just newly graduated teachers who need the possibility to discuss and reflect over individual development plans, development dialogues, assessment, grading and documentation, but the whole teaching staff. The collegial dialogue about assessment can, for example, be about the different functions of the assessment. The discussion about equivalence and rule of law can be about how the knowledge requirements are fulfilled, practised, how the pupils are given the possibility to show their knowledge and abilities as well as how different backgrounds can be equally valued, comprehensively and objectively. It is, however, the education providers who must create preconditions for the principal to implement collegial learning

5.6 Use of school facilities and materials

403. The design of school premises and how they are used vary from education provider to education provider. The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR), has issued information about flexible premises which deals with the possibility of, in a simple way, changing premises so that they can be used as preschools for a number of years and later be used as a compulsory school for some years.

404. For individuals that apply to the Schools Inspectorate to be approved as education providers for independent schools, a prerequisite to be approved is that the school has suitable premises for their activity. Premises must be able to be used for schooling.

405. All pupils in compulsory school, compulsory education for pupils/children with learning disabilities, Special needs school, Sami school, upper secondary school and upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities, shall have access to a school library. In the Education Act it is explained that one usually considers the school library to be a ‘common and ordered resource of media and information which is available to the pupils and teachers, and which is included in the school’s pedagogical activities with the purpose of supporting pupils’ learning. This requires, according to the Schools Inspectorate, an organisational collaboration between a school and a public library in order that the requirement of access to the school library shall be considered fulfilled. It is not enough that the school and pupils visit a public library when necessary.

406. The Schools Inspectorate also assesses whether special facilities such as laboratories, sports halls and special venues for vocational training are suitable in relation to the requirements in the steering
document. Similarly, equipment and teaching tools are checked regarding the relevancy for the education. There are no requirements that schoolyards must exist but when municipalities build new schools, ‘sufficient free space’ must be allocated. Corresponding requirements about ‘sufficient free space’ do not exist for independent schools.

Digital competence

407. The Digitisation Commission (2014:13) has stated the following: Access to technology is good in schools but the usage thereof is worse. It is clear that the use of IT in school in Sweden is at an average EU level in several areas. Curricula and syllabi have been clearer in the question about the significance of introducing a digital perspective and digital technology in the teaching, but corresponding formulations do not exist in the knowledge requirements.

408. Access to computers and other IT equipment has steadily improved. NAE’s mapping from 2013, which deals with the situation in 2012, shows that the number of computers has increased dramatically. Compared with 2008, when the previous measurement was done, the number of computers per pupil in compulsory school has almost doubled. There were, on average, 3.1 pupils per computer in the municipal compulsory schools, and 2.4 pupils per computer in independent compulsory schools. In the five percent of schools which had the lowest computer density in compulsory school in 2012, there were 11.5 pupils per computer compared with one computer per pupil in the five percent best equipped compulsory schools.

409. Computers are still mostly used to write, search for information and, to some extent, make presentations. Even if there is more advanced IT usage, it is still so limited that it does not show in the statistics. Just over 60 percent of the compulsory schools and 85 percent of upper secondary schools have an internet based platform for cooperation between pupils and teachers. A large proportion of schools has, over and above digital course material and other pedagogical tools, some form of IT support for handling, planning, assessment and documentation of pupils knowledge development, pupil assignments, absence, as well as communication with pupils and parents. Teachers state that it is very important that they have access to an IT system in order to, in an effective way, be able to carry out their work. But teachers also state that the systems need to be simplified, made more accessible and user-friendly.

410. Many teachers consider that they are in need of professional development within the IT area. About half of the teachers consider that they have a need for professional development within the areas of preventing violation of personal integrity on the internet, IT as a pedagogical tool, the handling of images, sound and film, safe use of the internet, as well as internet rights and legislation. Three of ten teachers state a need or great need of professional development in the question of basic computer skills such as opening and saving documents, dealing with files and working in different computer programmes.

411. There is, from and including autumn 2011, a common diploma goal for all teacher education which states that the student, after completed degree, shall ‘show the ability to safely and critically use digital tools in the pedagogical activity and to respect the significance of the role of different media and the digital environment in this’.

5.7 Organisation of education governance

412. The Swedish school system is highly decentralised with a large degree of autonomy to the education providers (see chapter 2.4 and 2.5). National information covering the education administration arrangements at different levels is not available (for example size, background of staff, employment status and initiatives undertaken to develop capacities of education administrators).
Evaluation and assessment procedures

413. School evaluation in Sweden has several components that have gradually developed over the past one or two decades. Feedback comes to schools from different sources, including self-evaluation activities performed by them. Both quantitative and qualitative feedback is available and it covers different aspects of school life and educational performance. The link between school evaluation and the evaluation of teachers and principals (teacher appraisal) is, however, weak partly due to the fact that the criteria for appraising teacher performance are vague and less developed both on national and sub-national level (OECD 2011).

414. School evaluation consists of:

- Publicly available standardised data on pupil performance and other key areas based on statistics and national tests aggregated at school and municipal level (making comparisons between schools and municipalities in several key areas possible).
- National and municipal school inspection (producing publicly available written reports and also direct oral feedback).
- Regular, systematic and also occasional school and municipal questionnaire-based surveys on client opinion and satisfaction (targeting mainly parents and pupils).
- Qualitative municipal and school self-evaluation and quality management processes (systematic quality work).

415. Using national inspection as a form of creating feedback for schools is a relatively new development in Sweden. This was established in 2003 as a new function within NAE and strengthened in 2008 when the Schools Inspectorate was established as a new, separate agency. School inspection follows nationally established standards, focussing on results (norms, values and knowledge), activities (teaching, steering, management and quality work) and conditions (access to information and education, resources) in schools. These standards are still less developed than in countries where inspection has longer traditions. Reports produced by the Schools Inspectorate are publicly available online for each schools through the SIRIS system. Some municipalities also have their own school inspections, employing either full time inspectors or paying teachers or principals on a part time basis. The feedback provided to the schools by the Schools Inspectorate as a written report is very detailed and very specific. It contains tangible conclusions for each of the areas evaluated. That is, every school receives a number of specific evaluative messages telling them whether the “written goals and requirements are basically met” in the given examined area or whether “action is needed”. If action is needed, the report contains a long and detailed written description of the specific problem found.

416. The responsibility for system evaluation rests with NAE. NAE has among other things the task of following up and evaluating preschools, leisure time centres, schools and adult education. The purpose of monitoring and evaluation is to make comparisons on a national and international level and thus provide the basis for decisions on actions at the national and local level. NAE is to use national studies to increase the understanding of how the school sector develops in relation to national objectives and identify the causes of fluctuations in effectiveness between the various municipalities and schools. NAE is also responsible for Sweden’s participation in comparative international assessments of knowledge and other surveys. The purpose of the evaluation and analysis done by NAE is to increase the understanding of how the system works in relation to the intentions and the underlying causes and relations effecting the attainment of goals. The overall aim is to uphold equity and the quality of the school system. The results of the evaluations are openly published in order to stimulate stakeholders on all levels to contribute to the
improvement of the school. Results are also reported to the Government in order to provide the basis for changes in governmental regulations relating to the school system. If an evaluation indicates deficiencies in one area, this might lead to the initiation of development efforts.

417. The Institute for Evaluation of Labour Market and Education Policy (IFAU) is a research institute under the Swedish Ministry of Employment. IFAU’s objective is to promote, support and carry out scientific evaluations. The assignment includes the effects of labour market policies, studies of the functioning of the labour market, the effects of education policies on the labour market and the labour market effects of social insurance policies. Besides research, IFAU is disseminating knowledge of the activities of the institute through publications, seminars, courses, workshops, conferences and the IFAU website. IFAU is also influencing the collection of data and making data easily available to researchers, both in Sweden and abroad.

**Education administration arrangements**

418. According to the Education Act, a systematic quality management process shall be run both at education provider level and at school level (see also chapter 5.5). The purpose of this is to ensure the quality and equivalence with the starting point in the Education Act, curricula and other school statutes. The education provider shall, as ultimately responsible for the implementation of the education, also see that there are conditions in which to run quality management at school level. The taking of measures is also included in the work with the quality management process. If it is discovered that there are deficiencies in the activity, for example at follow-ups, through complaints or in another way, the education provider shall see to that the necessary steps are taken.

419. On the NAE website, there is an interactive tool for education providers. This is aimed at giving starting points, guidance and structure to politicians responsible for these matters in the municipalities and boards for independent education providers, to shape the part of the quality management process which is to take place at education provider level. The support material presupposes that the NAE’s general advice ‘Quality Management Process for the School System’ is accessible and that the content is known to the responsible parties at education provider level.

420. The role of qualitative self-evaluation processes is a particularly important component of the system of school evaluation in Sweden. Since the late 1990s, schools and municipalities have been obliged to produce yearly quality reports with the aim of “informing citizens and others about the performance of the municipal schools” (Swedish Ministry of Education and Research, 2010). This obligation was removed in 2010, but systematic quality management remains a duty of schools and municipalities.

**School support structures**

421. When it comes to school support structures this is less elaborate in Sweden in terms of advisory services, agencies to improve quality in education, or institutes to provide professional development to education practitioners. Their role of capacity building and technical leadership are underplayed in the education administration.

422. As can be seen above, the schools are supported partly through the Schools Inspectorate scrutiny, partly through NAE’s development efforts, partly through Government initiatives. NAE’s national school development efforts can differ in character and scope. Implementation efforts are a central part of the investment in national school development. A number of these affect several school types - for example General Advice about study and vocational guidance, Government grants for career posts or the development of education within natural sciences and technology. Other efforts are aimed towards a limited target group or a certain school form, for example the follow up of the pupils’ establishment on the
labour market, development of sfi, the Preschool Boost or assignments to develop the introductory programme vocational introduction in upper secondary school. Further efforts can be aimed at and seen to be for certain education providers and schools which, on account of organisational or other reasons, require support - for example, guidance for teachers.

423. In addition to the above, The National Agency for Education is starting a series of seminars for education providers at the beginning of 2015. The aim of the dialogue-based meetings are that they shall contribute to strengthening the education providers in their work with following up and analysing knowledge results as well as taking steps which lead to improved knowledge results and increased equivalence in compulsory schools. The design of these meetings occurs in consultation with the Schools Inspectorate and from the point of view of selected education providers and interest groups. To begin with, the invitation has been sent to 15 municipalities and 10 independent education providers.

424. According to the experience of NAE, there is a large difference between education providers as to how developed the quality management processes are. Many, mostly larger education providers, have come far in their work, while there are education providers who have maybe not even started their work yet. A recurring criticism in the Schools Inspectorate’s inspection is that too many education providers and principals fall short in their mapping of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Many education providers work under parallel expectations (NAE 2011a). On the one hand the municipality wants to steer in the form of key data in yearly goal and budget documents. On the other hand the state steers with curricula and syllabi.

5.8 Main challenges

Time in the classroom needs to be better utilised

425. A main challenge is that the time spent for education has to be more efficiently used. The PISA results 2012 show that Sweden, together with Finland, is the country where, according to information from principals, late arrival and unauthorised absence among pupils occurs most often compared with the other countries in the survey. Even threats and insults among pupils are more widespread in Sweden compared with most other participant countries. According to the TALIS 2013, teachers report that disruptive behaviour during lessons is a problem in Sweden. Despite this, Swedish teachers do not spend more time keeping order in class than their colleagues in other countries. A possible explanation could be that Swedish teachers have a higher tolerance for differing behaviour among pupils. Another explanation could be that teachers have resigned themselves to a situation with no peace at work, which in the end can influence pupils’ possibility of good teaching.

Well educated teachers are needed everywhere, and especially in the most challenging schools

426. Another main challenge is to create incentives so that the best teachers teach in the most challenging schools.

As mentioned before, there has been a major decline in student performance since 2000s. Teachers are the single most important factor when it comes to student performance, especially for pupils in the most challenging schools. Today, the best teachers are not to be found where they are needed the most. Incentives must thus be created so that the best teachers teach in the most challenging schools. This is especially important in times of large inflow of immigrants when the newly arrived and traumatised children and adolescents need to become a part of the Swedish school system as quickly as possible.
Chapter 6: Resource management

6.1 Capacity building for resource management

427. The Swedish school system is highly decentralised with a large degree of autonomy to municipalities or to independent schools (for more detailed information, see chapter 2.4). Due to this distribution of responsibilities there are no national formal programs or procedures, or support from regional agencies that guarantee expertise in the management of resources throughout the school system. Instead, self-evaluation by schools and municipalities is considered to be the compulsory mechanism for effective resource management.

428. The role of qualitative self-evaluation processes is understood to be an important component of the system of school evaluation in Sweden. The concept of quality management or quality development, as it is reflected in the quality model of NAE, is embedded in a classic strategic management model focussing on four key questions: (1) “where are we?”, (2) “where do we want to go?”, (3) “how can we get there?”, (4) “how did we succeed?”. This is the complete strategic planning cycle which starts with a self-analysis and the analysis of the environment, continues with vision-making and strategic goal setting, then implementation planning and, later on, the evaluation of the results.

429. Furthermore, the national school leadership programme has a focus on resource management (for general information about the programme see chapter 8.3). One of three main areas in the compulsory three-year school leadership programme is goal and result steering. Knowledge about the national goals as well as interpretation and follow-up of these is given special attention, as is the influence on pupil results and the learning process through follow-up and evaluation.

430. A recent initiative by SALAR, is a handbook for the municipalities on how to distribute and differentiate resources to schools based on their pupil composition. In part SALAR describes what one can do purely technically when one develops a socioeconomic allocation model. They also in part emphasise some things one should think about, for example to establish the model properly and to follow up what the model leads to.

6.2 Monitoring of resource use

431. Due to this distribution of responsibilities there is no regular, systematic national approach in place to monitor the use of resources at the different levels of the school system. A clarification in the Education Act has recently been introduced. The amendment states that the municipality shall allocate resources within the school system according to the children's and pupils different preconditions and needs and came into force 1 July 2014 and applies preschool and school. The amended regulation can indirectly be seen as a signal to the Schools Inspectorate that it is important to scrutinise how the municipality allocates resources with focus on whether the education provider has a conscious and strategic resource allocation which takes into consideration the differences in the preconditions of the pupils.

432. The Schools Inspectorate has, in addition, received increased financing for scrutinising the financial situation of independent schools. During 2014 the Schools Inspectorate will receive 3.5 million SEK more from the state to be better able to scrutinise the economy. From and including 2015 they will receive seven million SEK more compared to 2013. The Schools Inspectorate will scrutinise the economy of independent schools, partly when someone applies to start a new school or to expand the activity in a school, and partly in connection with Schools Inspectorate doing supervision at a school.

433. In recent years, a number of national evaluations have been carried out by national agencies such as NAE and the Swedish Agency for Public Management, as well as quality audits by the Schools
Inspectorate. The NAE found in an interview study (2011) that the resource allocation from the municipal assembly to the council is standard according to the municipality’s traditional prioritisation. The schools thus do not receive resources as a result of an analysis of the local preconditions and needs. For a more in-depth discussion see chapter 3.2.

6.3 Transparency and reporting

434. It is NAE that is responsible for the official statistics concerning all levels of schools. Statistics Sweden (SCB) gathers, on assignment from NAE, statistics on preschool, leisure time centres, adult education and other pedagogical activities. The collection of information is eg. regulated in NAE’s instruction on information-gathering from school governing bodies. This means that school governing bodies are obliged to disclose information.

435. The education provider is obliged to leave information on costs for education, teaching materials, equipment and the school library, premises and stock, school meals, pupil health care, and the sale of school places to the municipality. The data in the school statistics builds upon total surveys with a register of schools in Sweden as a foundation. Before each new school year the register is updated via a complete collection of data. From and including school year 2012/13 the collection occurs per school unit (individual school) instead of as earlier, per school.

436. NAE has the task of building and administering a national information system for all schools. The system shall enable comparisons of different schools. Information shall be presented in an easily accessible format on a website as well as offering good search possibilities for the public. The system will be up and running 1 July 2015, but there is already a website where certain information is accessible, valjaskola.se. The compulsory information system shall contain information from the official statistics, information from the Schools Inspectorate as well as information gathered via client surveys and reports from schools.

437. Non-Governmental actors have recently launched a similar initiative. The website grundskolekvalitet.se is produced by SALAR, the Swedish Association of Independent Schools and the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise (Svenskt Näringsliv, see Svenskt näringsliv in English). The information shows statistics for all compulsory schools, for example, the proportion of pupils at the school that reaches the knowledge requirements in all subjects, the average merit value and pupils' performance on the national topic test. SALAR also publishes open comparisons of municipalities annually, where resources are a key indicator.

6.4 Incentives for the effective use of resources

438. The Swedish school system has, during the 2000s, become more market-influenced. Irrespective of whether the education provider is municipal or independent, the presentation of the selection of educations has become more important. Many education providers and schools put many resources into marketing their educations. Comparisons presented in the form of ranking lists are more often used in marketing by the school. The National Agency for Education’ study Competition for pupils (2010) shows that municipal schools today run more or less comprehensive marketing campaigns, even if the campaigns can be considered to lead to only marginal additional pupils. Good quality and satisfied pupils are perceived by principals in the study to be the most important factors for attracting more applicants. However, since 2011, the total costs for marketing upper secondary schools have decreased for two years in a row (Svd 2014).

439. According to the NAE study from 2010, upper secondary schools invest considerable resources in marketing, even if the representatives state that they do not have high expectations that it will have an
effect. Even schools who have high application pressure invest a lot in marketing. The interviews in the study mentioned above, indicate that there is a fear of losing pupils if the schools do not market themselves. At the same time they are doubtful as to the possibility of winning pupils through marketing. An important reason for schools participating in fairs, advertising and doing direct marketing is to attract pupils anyway. To get the pupils to visit the school at an open house is seen as a way of conveying a feeling for the school’s more subtle values which otherwise would be difficult to get across.

6.5 Main challenges

Quality Management Process

440. A main challenge is to strengthen the quality management process, that is follow-up and evaluation of pupil and school results in order to improve student performance.

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate has, on several occasions, pointed out significant deficiencies in the schools’ and education providers’ quality management processes. In the Swedish Schools Inspectorate supervision 2010, 62 percent of compulsory schools and 55 percent of upper secondary schools were assessed to have deficiencies when it came to the principals’ responsibility for the school results being regularly evaluated with the aim of improving the work of the school (Swedish Schools Inspectorate 2011). During 2012, half of all supervised schools received criticism from the Schools Inspectorate for deficiencies in quality management processes. In most cases this was about the principal not following up and analysing the school results and using the results to decide which measures need to be taken to a sufficient extent (Swedish Schools Inspectorate 2013).
Chapter 7: Quality and equity

7.1 Quality

Performance of the education system

441. General information and measures on the performance of the education system as a whole are presented in chapter 2.

Standards

442. Teaching methods and materials are not subject to central regulation. The individual teacher decides on the appropriate teaching methods, the selection of topics to be covered in the lessons (within the framework of the syllabus), and the choice of teaching materials. According to the Education Act and the curriculum, pupils should have an influence over the organisation of teaching and, as they get older and more mature, should be given increasing responsibility for their own work at school.

443. Teachers in Sweden report a somewhat different pattern of teaching practices than do teachers in other TALIS countries (NAE 2014k). They more seldom report marking pupils’ exercise books or homework and less often refer to problems from everyday life or work to demonstrate why new knowledge is useful. On the other hand, they more often report giving different work to pupils who have difficulties learning or to those who can advance faster.

444. In Sweden, on average 44 percent of teachers makes use of group work and 34 percent make use of ICT compared with TALIS countries where the percentages are 47 and 38 respectively. The teaching practice which a large proportion of Swedish teachers state that they usually compare with the average, are projects which require at least a week to complete (41 percent). The TALIS average is 27 percent. The most common in Sweden is that the teacher summarises the teaching that he or she has recently carried out, followed by the teacher allowing the pupils to practice similar tasks until all pupils have understood the subject as well as the teacher giving different tasks to different pupils according to the above.

445. According to the Education Act, compulsory school education may encompass at the most 190 days per school year and eight hours per day or, in the two lowest school years, six hours per day. Teaching may not be scheduled on Saturdays, Sundays or other holidays. A school week is organised differently from school to school. Some schools have lessons between 8am to 4pm, while other schools have shorter days. Some schools arrange their schedules so that pupils never have free periods and other schools schedule extra time during the day or after the school for study help. A number of schools schedule thematic studies with longer cohesive periods, for example during a morning, while most schools have 60 minute periods with different subjects every day, mostly in lower secondary and upper secondary school. Younger pupils have shorter days which are combined with leisure time centres.

446. Homework is not regulated in the school steering documents, but it is well-known to be common. NAE considers it important for the school to work systematically and in a well-thought out manner to develop the education in a general way, and that one must, in this systematic, quality work, take into consideration the possible ways in which one could use homework. As mentioned above, it is stated in the Education Act how many days and hours and which days the pupils shall attend school. In this way, the legislation enshrines the pupils’ right to free time. In many schools where there has been a discussion, there are common guidelines to ensure that the amount of homework given to pupils is reasonable and it is also usual that schools follow locally decided rules not to give homework from Friday to Monday or during school holidays.
In NAE’s General guidelines for the planning and carrying out of education, it is highlighted that teachers should coordinate the planning of the education with other teachers so that the workload for the pupils is reasonable. In this way teachers can plan so that homework, tests and assignments are evenly distributed over the term. This is often highlighted as a demand by stressed lower secondary and upper secondary pupils who are witness to the fact that teachers do not always have the overview required to adapt their own homework practice to the pupils’ entire workload.

Measures of quality and the organisation of school are described earlier in the report (chapters 2.5, 2.7, 5.2 and 5.7).

General information of class size etc. is presented in chapter 5.3.

General information on student learning objectives is described in chapter 2.3.

Teaching processes and strategies

The teaching process and strategies are described in chapters 4.8 and 5.

Assessment

The general approach to pupil assessment is that the assessment should be an ongoing process – formative assessment plays an important role in the Swedish school system. Teachers are also to continually inform the pupil about his or her progress. Thus, when the pupil receives grades for the first time, the results should not come as a surprise but as a confirmation of the ongoing dialogue between the teacher, the pupil and his or her guardian. The teacher should also have a continuous dialogue with his or her colleagues regarding the performance of the pupils. Furthermore, the teacher is supported in the task of assessment by results from the national tests. Only a registered teacher has the right to independently set grades.

Assessment of pupil results is meaningful for their future development. The assessment shall be fair and multi-faceted, and the pupil shall be involved in their own assessment (OECD 2013b). Similarly, it is important that the teacher can give formative as well as summative assessments. Teachers in Sweden feel a great need to receive professional development in assessment and grading (NAE 2014k). The TALIS survey posted questions about how often teachers use different types of assessment methods in the specific education groups. The most common assessment method over all countries was that the teacher observes the pupils when they work with a special assignment and give immediate feedback (80 percent). This method is also common in Sweden (74 percent). The next most common method of assessment in all TALIS countries including Sweden was that the teacher develops and uses their own proficiency test (68 percent and 58 percent respectively). It can be generally stated that formative assessment of pupils appears more among TALIS teachers than summative assessment but that both types are used.

Development dialogue and the individual development plan in compulsory school

At least once per term the pupil, the pupil’s legal guardian and the teacher shall have a development dialogue. The teacher will draw up a written individual development plan (IUP) once a year for the pupils who do not receive grades. The development dialogue shall regard the pupils knowledge development and social development in relation to the curriculum, syllabi and knowledge requirements.

The written individual development plan contains both the assessment and future planning. Written individual development plans will only be drawn up once a year in the school years which do not have grading. The future planning means that the teacher summarises and describes which efforts will be made by the school as well as what the pupil and the guardian can do for the pupil to develop as far as
possible. As support for the teacher’s work with the written individual development plan, there is support material which contains assessment forms such as a standard form for future planning. There are also General guidelines for the development dialogue and the written individual development plan.

456. Written individual development plans apply for school year 1-5 in compulsory school, compulsory education for pupils/children with learning disabilities, Sami school, as well as school years 1-6 in Special needs school. They shall also be drawn up once a year for pupils in school years 6-9 in compulsory education for pupils/children with intellectual disabilities in those cases where grades have not been set. The same applies for pupils in school years 7-10 in Special needs school who are studying according to the syllabi of compulsory education for pupils/children with learning disabilities.

Pupil assessment

457. The pupil assessment in compulsory school takes place through end-of-term reports at the conclusion of the autumn and spring term of school years 6, 7, 8 and 9. Grades are set when a subject is completed and school-leaving certificates are issued when the period of compulsory attendance expires.

458. In upper secondary school, grading occurs after every completed course and in the upper secondary school diploma project. A pupil will receive an upper secondary diploma when he or she has completed a national programme and has received grades for all courses and also have completed the upper secondary diploma project. This also requires that the pupil have passing grades in most of the courses as well as the diploma project.

459. The knowledge of each pupil shall be evaluated and graded from the knowledge requirement. It is not just the knowledge the pupil receives though education in school which shall be observed. The teacher shall, according to the curricula, take advantage of all accessible information about the pupil’s proficiency in relation to the national knowledge requirements when setting grades, as well as make an all-round assessment of the proficiency the pupil shows.

460. Grading shall take place when teaching time ends and the course or subject has finished. In normal cases it is in the end of a term but can, in upper secondary school, happen on an ongoing basis depending on when the courses are scheduled to end during the school year. The decision on grades shall be noted in the grade record. The teacher or teachers who are responsible for education at the time of the grading will decide the grade. The principal is responsible for seeing that there is a teacher who can do this.

461. The teacher shall, prior to the grading, do an all-round assessment of the pupil’s proficiency in relation to the knowledge requirements. It is the knowledge the pupil has at the time of grading which will be graded. The pupil can, however, not show all their proficiency just then and the teacher should therefore continually document the pupil’s proficiency and knowledge. Through this the teacher will obtain a basis for observing the abilities the pupil has previously shown.

462. In the end of term report in compulsory school, the assessment of the pupil’s knowledge shall be done regarding the parts of the knowledge requirements which apply to that which the education has covered during the current term. This can mean that some parts of the knowledge requirements are not taken into the assessment in, for example, school years 7 and 8. At the end of school year 6 and 9 the pupil’s knowledge is judged against the national knowledge requirement in school years 6 and 9. The pupil’s proficiency shall be assessed against the entire grading scale at every grading opportunity. This means that the highest grade should be possible to receive even during the first term report in school year 6.
The knowledge requirements are intended to be used for assessment and grading at the end of the course or the term. How the teacher uses grade scales in other situations than for grading, for example for single tests and presentations, is not regulated.

It is important that the teacher, during the grading of a subject or a course, does not just put together the results of all the graded tests and assignments in order to obtain an average. If the teacher during grading also adds in results from previous tests, it is important to be aware that the pupil, after the test occasion could have acquired knowledge he or she did not have the pre-requisites to show earlier.

Grades

Only registered teachers can independently set grades. The Education Act states that if the teacher is not registered, the decision shall be taken together with a teacher who is registered. If they cannot agree, the decision shall be taken by the registered teacher on condition that he or she is accredited to teach in the subject to which the grade relates. In other cases, the grade shall be set by the principal.

Grades are set using a national grading scale of six grades. Grades awarded are A, B, C, D, E and F, where A-E are passing grades and F is a fail. The grade should express to what extent the pupil has met the knowledge requirements stated for each subject and course. Knowledge requirements exist for all subjects at compulsory school and all courses at upper secondary school. The knowledge requirements outline what is necessary for acceptable knowledge, and for the different grades. Should pupil absence mean there is not enough information to assess a pupil's knowledge in one subject or course; no grade will be given in that subject or course. This will be marked with a dash (−) in the grade record. Grade F and dashes will not be used in compulsory school for pupils with learning disabilities, and nor for upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities.

If a pupil risks failing to attain the lowest grade, E, it is the school's duty to investigate whether the pupil needs special support to attain the grade E.

There are pre-established national knowledge requirements for acceptable knowledge for school year 3 in compulsory school. In the school years and courses where grades are awarded, there are pre-established knowledge requirements for the grades A, C and E. Grade D shall be awarded when a pupil has met all the pre-established requirements for grade E and the majority of pre-established knowledge requirements for grade C. Grade B shall be awarded when the pupil has met all pre-established requirements for grade C and the majority of pre-established requirements for grade A. Grades B and D are established based on the pre-established knowledge requirements for the grade above and below. The grading criteria for grades B and D can be different between pupils. One pupil may meet certain pre-established knowledge requirements for the higher grade, whereas another pupil fulfils other parts. Both pupils can therefore be considered to have attained the majority of the knowledge requirements for the higher pre-established grade (i.e., C or A) and are therefore eligible for the higher grade. As this 'majority of requirements' are different from pupil to pupil, these knowledge requirements cannot be defined on national or local level.

When evaluating 'the majority of requirements' the teacher carries out a comprehensive evaluation of the knowledge shown by the pupil. This is compared with the higher pre-established knowledge requirements. When doing such a comparison, the teacher should identify which parts of the pre-established knowledge requirements have been met by the pupil, and support this assessment using the aims and central content of the curriculum, to decide whether these constitute a 'majority' of the requirements.
A number of key terms are used in the knowledge requirements and can be found in many of the subjects. To a great extent, these words take their meaning from the context in which they are used and it is therefore not possible to provide any general definitions. NAE has produced commentary material for the knowledge requirements for compulsory school subjects. These provide a broader, deeper understanding of how the knowledge requirements are constructed. They are based on authentic evaluations of pupil materials from active teachers and describe ways in which a teacher can identify the evaluation aspects based on the key terms.

National tests

National tests are aimed to support an equivalent assessment and grading in compulsory and upper secondary school. In compulsory school, Sami school and Special needs school, the national tests are called subject tests and in upper secondary school they are called course tests. The national tests can also contribute to giving a background for an analysis of to which extent the knowledge requirements are fulfilled at school level, at education provider level and at national level.

Subject test in school year 3 carried out in the subjects Swedish and Swedish as a second language as well as mathematics.

Subject test in school year 6 carried out in the subjects Swedish, Swedish as a second language, mathematics, English. And, as of spring 2016, tests in biology, physics or chemistry, geography, history, and religion or civics are optional and available for schools on the NAE website.

The national tests in school year 9 are carried out in the subjects Swedish and Swedish as a second language, mathematics, English, and one of the subject block "biology, physics or chemistry", and one of the subject block "geography, and history, religion, or civics".

National course test are carried out in different courses in the subjects English, mathematics, Swedish and Swedish as a second language at upper secondary school level. Which course tests are compulsory differs between the programmes.

The national tests can contribute to concretising the course syllabi and subject syllabi and thereby support increased goal achievement for the pupils. The national tests are not diploma tests, but shall be a part of the teachers collected information about a pupil’s proficiency. It is the Government that decides in which subjects, school years and types of school the national test shall be carried out. The national tests have, above else, a summative function. This means that they shall function as a coordination point at the end of a school year or a course, and show which qualities the pupil has in their subjects/courses in which the tests have been carried out.

The tests can even be used as a part in the assessment of learning which is a part of the education. The test results give good information about which proficiencies show strengths and which proficiencies the pupil needs to develop further through education. In this way the tests also serve a formative function. The tests can, in addition, give a picture of how the education has functioned, which in its turn can give information about how the education can be developed.

NAE works continually with developing assessment support material in for form of mapping and diagnostic material, test and individual assignments with accompanying assessment directions and discussion material. There is also general support material around assessment and grading.

Teachers are encouraged to cooperate with colleagues when marking national tests. Furthermore, there is a chair inquiry which investigates how the national tests can be digitised and how a central marking of tests can be organised.
Upper Secondary Diploma Project

480. At all vocational programmes and higher education preparatory programmes within upper secondary school, the pupils shall carry out an upper secondary diploma project. In order to receive an upper secondary school diploma, the pupil must have studied a complete or expanded upper secondary school programme, been graded in all courses which are included in the education, received sufficiently good grades to fulfil the diploma requirements for the programme, and in addition have completed an approved upper secondary school diploma project. It is with the upper secondary school diploma project that the pupil combines their studies on the programme and shows that he or she is prepared for working life or university studies. Teachers and principals therefore need to plan and prepare the pupils for this early on in the education.

481. The upper secondary school diploma project is an assignment for 100 upper secondary school credits and is thought of as proof that the pupil is prepared for higher education studies or for work within a certain vocational area. The goal of the upper secondary school project is laid out in the diploma objectives for the different national programmes.

482. The upper secondary school diploma project can be carried out as workplace based learning (APL). In this case it shall take place in addition to the mandatory 15 weeks of APL which has to take place in the upper secondary school’s national vocational programme. The goal for the upper secondary school diploma project differs between vocational programmes and the higher education preparatory programmes. At the vocational programmes the upper secondary school diploma project shall show that the pupil is prepared for the vocational area which applies for the chosen vocational outcome. At the higher education preparatory programmes the upper secondary school diploma project shall show that the pupil is prepared for university studies mainly in the subject area for which the programme educates.

483. On the upper secondary school diploma project, the pupil can receive the grade E or F, where E means pass and F means fail. Before the teacher can set the grade, a co-examiner with experience of the knowledge/vocational area which the project covers shall express an opinion on the work. If the project has entirely or partly been carried out as workplace based learning, the supervisor shall be the co-examiner. If the teacher is not registered the decision shall be taken together with a teacher who is registered. Teachers in vocational subjects who are employed without time limits are exempt from the registration requirement.

Completion and transitions

484. The Education Act puts demands on study and vocational guidance (SYV). Pupils in all types of schools with the exception of preschool and the preschool class shall have access to staff with such competence that the pupils’ need of guidance may be accommodated. SYV encompasses information, advice, guidance and career management, and shall be seen as a central part of lifelong learning. SYV is also a tool to reduce non-completion of studies and to achieve better balance between supply and demand on the labour market.

485. There is a growing need of study and vocational guidance to facilitate pupils’ transition between different educations as well as the transition between education and the labour market. One reason for this is the large amounts of information and to the individual needs to be able to critically scrutinise the marketing that occurs of different educations. Guidance shall be given at personal meetings or in web or telephone based forms and can even include self-service.

486. The principal should see that there are procedures in place for how reporting absence should be done. If a pupil is absent from school without proper cause, the principal shall see that the legal guardian receives information about it the same day. Depending on the pupil’s age, maturity and other
circumstances, the school can need to contact the legal guardian as soon as possible. The rules also apply to pupils in voluntary school forms such as upper secondary school and upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities. The NAE supports schools in the work with SYV and also cooperates with the Public Employment service. NAE has, among other things, issued General guidelines about attendance and absence.

487. If a pupil is not at school and the legal guardian has not reported any reason for it, the school shall examine why the pupil is not there. Depending on the pupil’s age, maturity and other circumstances, the school can need to contact the legal guardian as soon as possible. The purpose here is, first and foremost to see that nothing has happened to the pupil.

488. If there are special reasons for the absence, the legal guardian does not need to be informed the same day. Such cause could be that the absenteeism applies to the last lesson of the school day or if the lesson takes place somewhere else and the school does not have time to collect information about the absence.

489. The principal can give approval to a pupil for a shorter absence. If there is reasonable cause, longer absence may be approved. Circumstances which can be a basis for this are:

- the length of the absence,
- the pupil’s study situation,
- the possibility to, in different ways, compensate the lost education as well as
- how important the leave time is for the pupil.

490. It is the principal who shall decide about the leave of absence. The principal may task someone else to take the decision about leave up to ten days.

7.2 Equity

491. The composition of the pupil body and reported differences in performance between certain groups of pupils are described in chapter 2.1 and chapter 2.6.

492. General information on Compulsory Education for Pupils with Learning Disabilities, Special Needs School for Pupils with deafness/hearing impairment, deafness-blindness or visual impairment in combination with other disabilities or serious speech impairment. (Upper secondary school for individuals with learning disabilities are presented in chapter 2.1. Ability grouping is described in chapter 5.1.)

493. See chapter 2.7 for information on policy approaches to equity in education (programmes that are in place for specific groups of pupils and support disadvantaged schools).

494. According to the Swedish Education Act, all pupils should be provided with support and stimulation, so that they can develop to the best of their abilities, regardless of their background or the school they attend. Analyses by NAE show significantly increasing school differences in terms of pupil performance and also in terms of pupil composition according to family background. Differences between schools are not the only important factor for equity, but NAE believes that the increase in differences between schools constitutes a serious risk to the equity of the Swedish school system.

495. NAE uses two data sources for analysing school differences over time. One source is census data from national registers, containing grades (from year 9) for all pupils and all schools in the country as well as information on their socioeconomic background (parental education, migrant background). The other source is the PISA survey, examining 15 year old pupils’ performance in reading, mathematics and
science, and contains self-reported data on pupils' socioeconomic background (SES). The PISA survey is, unlike the grades, designed to assess pupil performance over time. However, PISA is not optimal when it comes to reliably measuring differences between schools. This is due to the fact that PISA is based on a survey where there are about 200 schools in each cycle and there is a maximum of 30 pupils per school taking the test and answering the questionnaire. The main weakness compared to data from national registers is however that the information on parent’s educational level is reported by the pupils. Therefore, analyses based on grades and background-information from national registers is more reliable when studying differences between schools over time.

496. The between-school variation, the measure used to describe how much the average performance differs between schools, has, according to grades, doubled between 1998-2011, from 9 percent to 18 percent. There has also been an increase in school segregation in terms of pupil composition regarding socioeconomic background and migration background.

497. The PISA survey gives mainly the same picture as data from national registers when it comes to increasing performance differences between schools. PISA 2009 showed a sharp increase in between-school variation between 2000 and 2009 in all investigated subjects. On the other hand, PISA 2012 shows no statistically significant increase in between-school variation in mathematics between 2003 and 2012. However, between-school variation in reading and science has continued to increase. The PISA survey shows no significant increase in school segregation in terms of SES.

498. The PISA-survey shows that Sweden and other Nordic countries have among the smallest between school variations in performance, in comparison to other countries. But this comparison is not completely fair since Nordic 15-year olds still attend compulsory school, while 15-year olds in many other countries have already moved on to upper secondary schools and VET education which is likely to lead to larger between school variation. No accurate international comparison of differences between lower secondary schools is available.

7.3 Main challenges

Increasing differences in results between schools

499. A main challenge is the increasing differences between schools when it comes to student performance.

The school should strive to compensate for the different backgrounds of various pupils, but it has not managed to give the pupils sufficient support in their development. Both NAE (2013) and the Schools inspectorate (2013) have recurrently noted shortcomings in equity and quality differences between schools. In NAE report *Equality in the Swedish Compulsory School?* (2012) the agency finds that the deviation in the pupils’ performance has increased and there is still a strong connection between socioeconomic background and how pupils succeed in school. A related concern is to which extent the possibility to choose school contributes to segregation. The report presents that over the last two decades the differences among the average performances in various compulsory schools have doubled, while being originally small from an international perspective. However, only a proportion of the increased difference in results between schools can be explained by increased school segregation with regard to the socioeconomic composition of pupils. On the other hand, the schools seem to be becoming increasingly different with respect to such qualities as pupils’ motivation to study. Peer effects and teachers’ expectations can be expected to increase the differences between schools, which means that it has become increasingly important which school a pupil attends.
Another challenge is the narrowing trend towards a geographical clustering of education in combination with smaller pupil cohorts in upper secondary schools brings with it increased differences in options and practical possibilities of choice for pupils.

*Increasing differences between boys’ and girls’ performance*

A third challenge is the increasing differences between boys’ and girls’ performance.

As mentioned before, student performance in Sweden has declined since the 2000s. The performance variation between schools is relatively small, however, and as mentioned above, there is an increase in between-school variation. The trend is the same throughout the whole school system, among municipal and independent schools, and among all groups of students, regardless of socio-economic status, immigrant background or gender. Among boys, however, the decline has been larger than among girls and there is also a large gap in performance between native-born and first-generation migrants. Boys’ declining performance in literacy is especially a great concern.

*Quality Management Process*

See chapter 6.5.
Chapter 8: The school workforce

8.1 Main characteristics of the school workforce

503. Profile, numbers, educational background, distribution across different levels, the working conditions are described in chapter 4.6 and the principals in chapter 4.7.

504. How principals see their work, their salaries in relation to other groups and their background, is described in chapter 5.4

8.2 Teachers

Status and attractiveness of the profession

505. In several different respects, the status of the teaching profession has fallen since the beginning of the 1990s (SOU 2014:5). The education providers and especially the municipalities (because they are the largest employer for teachers) can, according to the inquiry, be held responsible for some parts of this development, that the number of senior subject teachers has dropped, that teacher salaries have not been prioritised and that the number of unqualified teachers has increased. Even if an austere economic situation and lack of qualified teachers are legitimate reasons for the education providers’ actions, the tendencies can be seen as an expression of the teacher profession being devalued both by the municipal education providers and the independent education providers. Through the worsening salary development for teachers and the resulting low attractiveness of the teaching profession, the municipalities have also contributed to the fact that the interest in applying to Teacher Training Education has declined.

506. A number of steps have, however, been taken in order to improve the teaching profession:

- New teacher education, higher requirements for basic qualification to teacher education, qualification rules for student teachers, registration of teachers, and introduction periods for new teachers. Training schools for student teachers’ placement studies (VFU).

- More and alternative ways to become a teacher, and further education of teachers already working, for example, the Teacher Boost.

- The establishment of career posts for teachers and the reintroduction of senior subject teachers to make the profession more attractive and ensure good teaching. Through Government grants, the monthly salary can be increased by approximately 5 000 SEK for First teachers and 10 000 SEK for a senior subject teacher. The reform is now being followed up and analysed. The possibility of career posts within the preschool is now being investigated.

- Comprehensive national development efforts for teachers within mathematics, natural sciences, technology as well as reading and writing development, the so-called Boost. Teaching time in mathematics in compulsory school has been increased by 120 hours from the autumn term 2013.

- Government grants for first teachers and senior subject teachers have been increased to so that exclusion areas stated in the regulation can direct a greater proportion of the resources to where they are best needed.

- To be able to counter the teacher shortage and better adapt the teacher education, NAE, together with the Swedish Higher Education Authority, shall prepare a detailed forecast of the need for different categories of teachers.
• An inquiry will draw up a proposal for an amended subject teacher degree which will mean that the two presently separate educations for school years 7-9 and upper secondary school will have a common ‘entrance’ to the education with several possible ‘exits’ depending on the choice of subject specialisation, and therefore the school form. Placement studies (VFU) within teacher and preschool teacher education have earlier been criticised, and knowledge is not good about how they work, so it will now be scrutinised.

• A pilot scheme with requirements regarding the suitability for acceptance to teacher education will be ongoing 2014-2016.

*How Swedish teachers regard their work*

507. According to the OECD TALIS study, only one of twenty Swedish teachers feel that the teaching profession has high status, just over half would choose to be a teacher again, and half of the teachers wonder if it would not have been better to choose another profession (NAE 2014k).

508. Most Swedish teachers are, according to the study, satisfied with their own teaching efforts (96 percent), and like working at their present school (92 percent). A somewhat smaller proportion answer that they are satisfied with their work as a whole (85 percent). Even though 85 percent sounds relatively satisfactory, this was the second lowest figure among all the countries participating in TALIS. Of all the TALIS teachers, over 70 percent state that they would still choose to become a teacher if they were allowed to choose career from the beginning again. Sweden is one of the countries where the lowest proportion of teachers would choose to become a teacher if they could choose anew (53 percent). Another question was if one wonders if it would have been better to choose another profession. The result here reinforced that which appeared in the studies, PIRLS 2011 and TIMSS 2011, namely that Sweden is one of the countries where teachers are least satisfied with their choice of career, both when compared with the other Nordic countries and when compared with the average for EU and OECD countries.

509. Most of the Swedish teachers asked, state that they like working at their present school and are satisfied with their work as a teacher. They experience, to a high degree, that they can get pupils to feel that they can do well in their school work. The analysis shows that, in almost all countries, the likelihood that teachers experience the teaching profession as an appreciated profession will increase the greater the opportunity the teachers have to take part in decision making at the school. Sweden is an exception, i.e. Swedish teachers’ experience of the status of their work does not show a link between how involved they are in decisions at the school. One explanation can be that Swedish teachers experience that they already have so much responsibility that there is no room for further working tasks in their professional day. Another explanation could be that in, other countries, increased salary accompanies increased responsibilities to a larger extent than what was previously the case in Sweden. This may perhaps now change with the introduction of career posts.

510. Swedish teachers’ self-reliance co-varies to a high degree with working life experience and feedback at work. Their self-reliance and job satisfaction is lower the larger the proportion of underachieving pupils that they need to take care of in a class. The relationship weakens with regard to the time that it takes to keep order in the classroom. Job satisfaction increases when they have been mentors have had a mentor and/or taken part in collegial observation and supervision as a part of a formal arrangement. Mentorship and collegial observation and supervision thus co-vary with self-reliance.

511. More about the results for the Swedish teachers can be found in chapter 5.3.
Employment status

512. Teachers working in the public sector are salaried employees of municipalities. Pay and working conditions are governed by five-year agreements between the employers’ organisation (SALAR) and the teacher unions. These stipulate minimum salaries and general working conditions. The more specific salary and working conditions of individual teachers are determined locally (i.e. at school level) in an individual-based pay system. Teachers working in independent schools are salaried employees of independent schools’ organisers and have their salaries and working conditions often negotiated between the schools’ organisers and teacher unions.

513. Most teachers are employed on indefinite term contracts which means that they can only be dismissed on grounds covered by legislation such as redundancy (i.e. due to declining enrolments). Teachers who do not have a teaching degree are usually employed under a fixed-term contract.

514. In the Education Act it is stated that only those who are registered teachers may be hired without time-limits as teachers or preschool teachers in the school system. Those who are not registered as teachers may, however, be hired without time limits, if they teach mother tongue instruction or in a vocational subject in upper secondary school, upper secondary school for pupils with learning disabilities, municipal adult education at upper secondary school, special needs education for adults at upper secondary school level, or individual courses or orientation courses in municipal adult education. This applies only if:

1. there are no applicants who are registered teachers,

2. the applicant has sufficient competence to teach in the current subject or on the current course, and

3. there are reasons to assume that the applicant is suitable for running the education.

515. Different surveys give a similar picture of teacher salary development; a picture of a fairly bad real wage development (Persson and Skult 2014). This is especially clear for older and more experienced teachers who have a lower secondary school teaching education, and for upper secondary school teachers. The development of teachers’ relative wages in relation to certain other professional groups has also been unfavourable, something which can have made recruitment to the teaching profession more difficult. Some real wage increase has happened since 1955. Lower secondary school teachers’ average salaries have increased by 1.19 percent per year. The real GDP growth per capita during this period was more than double that, or 2.56 percent per year. The development for teachers has, in addition, been uneven; from 1970 until the middle of the 1990s the real wage development was practically zero. The distance between the final wage/upper quartile and average wages has shrunk. Teachers’ career possibilities have thus been limited over the latest 60 years.

516. The real wage development for older and more experienced teachers has been weak and uneven. During the 1950s and 1960s, the real wage increased steadily. After 1970 it sank for two decades and did not turn upwards again before the 1990s. Totally, the real wage increased for this category by a modest 0.9 percent per year during the period 1950-012. The real wage was more or less constant until the end of the 1990s. After that there was some increase. The average real wage development during the period 1955-2010 was 0.7 percent per year. The real wage for older and more experienced upper secondary school teachers reached a peak in 1970. It sank thereafter for just over two decades and has still not reached the level of the 1970s. The average real wage increase for the period 1950-2012 was 0.6 percent per year.

517. The relative wage for teachers in relation to industrial workers has deteriorated drastically during the last 50 years. This can be an expression of the general wage equalisation in society, and does not need to be anything negative. Compared to industrial office workers, deterioration can also be seen. Lower
secondary school teachers as well as upper secondary school teachers have salaries which now fall under the average for office workers in the industrial sector. Vis-à-vis the civil engineers, lower secondary school teachers have improved their position. Upper secondary school teachers appear to have developed in parallel with the civil engineers. But teachers have lagged behind in relation to the university graduate group as a whole. This is clear from an investigation by RUT, The Riksdag Research Service (2007). During the period 1968-2000, teachers’ work-related income sank relative to individuals with a corresponding educational level. The decrease was greatest for men: from just over 90 to 80 percent. During the 1970s, female teachers’ salaries lay 5 percent over the salaries for corresponding education but sank in the beginning of the 1980s and remained at approximately the same level as this in 2000.

518. Teacher salaries have, during the period 1997-2000, developed more slowly than for a number of other professional groups which possibly compete with the teaching profession regarding recruitment of pupils: archivists, librarians, civil engineers, machine operators, teachers at universities and university colleges, business administrators, marketers, engineers and technicians (SOU 2014:5). Information indicates that teachers experience their work situation as being worse today than in the 1990s. As a result of the teaching profession becoming less attractive, it can be expected that the pupils who have the greatest opportunities to do so, choose to apply for other educations.

519. Researchers have tested sixth graders’ ability to express themselves verbally and reason logically (Fredriksson and Öckert 2007). They examined which choice of profession these six grade pupils made later in life, and found that teacher education to an even greater extent has recruited people from the lower part of the result spread.

520. At every level of education, only teachers’ starting salaries, with minimum training, are above the OECD average in Sweden. Salaries after 10 years, 15 years and top of scale fall behind the OECD average (OECD 2014d).

Initial Teacher Training Education

521. The four new teaching degrees which were introduced in autumn 2011 replaced the earlier coherent teacher educations with one teaching degree with specific orientations for different activity areas which was introduced in autumn 2011. This replaced in its turn eight previous teaching degrees. The information about teaching degrees in the statistics relates so far almost exclusively to these older teaching degrees.

522. The institutes of Teacher Training Education had to, during 2010/11, begin to apply for new degree permission for the new teaching degrees. In January 2014, 28 institutes had permission to issue one or several teaching degrees with different orientations and, for subject teacher degrees, different combinations of subjects. In total there were the most first year students at Stockholm University, about 1 850, followed by Malmö University and Gothenburg University with about 1 000 each (UKÄ 2014). Each Teacher Training Education decides on its own what programmes to offer.

523. To be accepted to Teacher Training Education there are several eligibility requirements which are divided into basic and special eligibility. Basic eligibility is required for all university education. Many educations require further prior knowledge, so called special eligibility. There is also the possibility of being eligible through testing, that which is called validation of real competence. This is particularly important for vocational teachers.

524. The University and University College Council decide which area eligibilities there shall be. The institutes have the possibility to adapt the eligibility courses within the area eligibilities. If there is special cause they can decide on exemptions from one or more of the eligibility requirements. They can also
increase the requirement after receiving permission from the university and university college council. One example can be given from Karlstad University. To be a teacher in school years 1-3 or 4-6 in compulsory school requires basic eligibility as well as special eligibility corresponding to area eligibility 6 b. Teaching in school years 7-9 as well as in upper secondary school requires basic eligibility, special eligibility corresponding to area eligibility 6 c as well as eligibility requirements for the respective education subject.

525. There are also special eligibility requirements for vocational teacher education. It is then a question of relative vocational skills. In order that the assessments of the applicants’ vocational knowledge in a teaching subject shall be equivalent, this is expressed in the form of knowledge criteria.

526. Teacher education contains subject studies, pedagogy and methodology, didactics as well as placement studies (practical training) out in schools. The first year, however, the students study a common, so-called ‘education scientific core’, which is general teaching knowledge:

- grading and assessment,
- development, teaching and special needs education,
- curriculum theory and didactics,
- social relations, conflict management, and leadership,
- evaluation and development work,
- history of the school system, organisation and conditions as well as
- scientific theory and research methodology.

527. Normally, placement studies (VFU) in a school follows after the above module, but the institutions are free to organise the education as they want. The former Government wanted to further strengthen the placement studies. Today most of the student teachers are spread out over a wide number of schools. There are deficiencies in this system, among others that supervision and follow up can suffer. Training schools have therefore been introduced as a pilot scheme; schools which take a large number of trainee teachers and every pupil teacher will return to the same school during their entire teacher education. Through gathering many students at the same school, an organisation can be build up with more qualified supervisors. It will also be easier for the institutes to follow up the practical period.

528. How each individual education is organised therefore varies depending on which orientation the students later choose.

*The Programmes*

Preschool programme, 3.5 years

529. The first block in the education consists of two terms of study in so called education scientific core, something which all pupils on the teaching programme study during the first year (see above). Basic eligibility is required as well as English B, Natural Sciences A, and Social Sciences A (area eligibility 6 a). In the preschool teacher programme, a degree project is also included. This means planning and implementing an education scientific project which is relevant for the science within the preschool teacher profession.
530. In addition to the education scientific core and placement studies, the student may choose their subject orientation within the preschool pedagogical area. These studies lay the basis for the competence which is needed to meet the needs of preschool children. For example, students can aim for an intercultural profile. Different teacher training institutions offer different orientations. Over and above the main subject, the students study in the main:

- preschool pedagogy,
- aesthetic learning processes,
- children’s learning within reading, writing, mathematics and nature,
- children’s play, communication and language,
- games, learning and care as well as
- cooperation between preschool, leisure time centre, school and legal guardians.

531. After the studies to be a preschool teacher, one can, for example, specialise within subject studies so that one is then eligible to work with younger children in school.

Compulsory teacher programme, 3-4 years

532. Basic eligibility as well as English B, Natural Sciences A and Social Sciences A (area eligibility 6 a) is required.

533. The compulsory teacher programme has three possible orientations. Common to all teacher educations are studies in education scientific core (see above) which is more general teaching knowledge, as well as placement studies (VFU) for 60 and 30 university credits respectively. In the compulsory teacher programme is included a depth of study programme in a subject within the education profile. This means planning and implementing an education scientific project which is relevant for the science within the compulsory teacher profession.

Compulsory teacher training education within the leisure time centre, 3 years

534. Those who would like to work with children and young people in the ages 6-13 can choose the orientation Leisure time centre. The teachers at leisure time centres are a vital link between school and free time, and leisure time centres are intended to complement the education in the preschool class and compulsory school. The education encompasses the leisure time centre pedagogical work. After the education, the teacher works with children's learning at the leisure time centre, and can also teach in subjects such as images, sport or music in school years 1-3.

Compulsory teacher education orientation preschool class and compulsory school years 1-3, 4 years

535. Teachers in preschool and compulsory school years 1-3 lay the foundation for the youngest pupils' continued learning. The largest part of the teaching on the teacher education is spent on reading and writing learning but the student also receives education in how to teach in mathematics, English, nature oriented subjects, social science-oriented subjects, and technology.
Compulsory teacher education orientation compulsory school years 4-6, 4 years

536. In the orientation aimed at compulsory school years 4-6, the knowledge about children’s learning is deepened. The teacher can, after completed education, teach in Swedish, English, mathematics, as well as a further eligible subject - for example, images, music, sport and health, domestic science, handicrafts, societal oriented subjects, nature oriented subjects, or technology.

Subject teacher programme, 4.5 – 5.5 years

537. Acceptance requirements vary depending on orientation. There are extra requirements for degrees in Swedish, social sciences and certain practical and artistic subjects.

538. The subject teacher programme has two eligible orientations, towards teaching in school year 7-9 or in upper secondary school. In addition to orientation, students also choose two or three subjects in which to specialise. The selection of these subjects varies from university to university. Common to all teacher educations are studies in education scientific core as well as VFU (placement studies) of 1 and 0.5 years respectively.

**Orientation towards school year 7-9, 4.5 years**

539. Education aimed towards young people in the age group 13-16 years. To be an accredited teacher one must have three subjects in the orientation the teacher will later be teaching. A degree project is done on one of the three subjects, the major subject. The selection of subjects in which to specialise varies from university to university.

**Orientation towards upper secondary school 5-5.5 years**

540. The education for teaching in upper secondary school and adult education at upper secondary level. To be an accredited teacher one must have two subjects in the orientation which the teacher will later be teaching. A degree project is done in the major subject. The selection of subjects in which to specialise varies from university to university.

Vocational teacher programme 1.5 years

541. The vocational programme consists of an educational scientific core, that is to say general teaching knowledge and placement studies. To be qualified to train as a vocational teacher, the student needs basic qualifications and qualified and relevant vocational knowledge or tertiary education in the subject in which one will be teaching. The knowledge criteria vary depending upon which vocational programme one chooses.

Teach for Sweden, 2 years

542. Working persons with a graduate education which corresponds to the eligibility requirements to teach in a subject, preferably mathematics, nature oriented subjects and technology, can, by distance, study the Bridging Teacher Education Programme (KPU) in combination with serving as a teacher at a school for two years. Teach for Sweden, which is a foundation, is responsible for the selection to be accepted to work at a school during the education time and also organises a place for this. The student may themselves make an application to be accepted to KPU. Teach for Sweden cooperates with a couple of universities regarding this education.
Other degrees and educations

543. Over and above the aforementioned degrees, there are also degrees for teachers for special needs education and special needs pedagogues. To study to become a teacher for special needs education and special needs pedagogue requires a teaching degree. Those who would like to broaden and deepen their competence can also specialise in certain subjects, study new subjects or study at master’s degree level and research level.

544. Further Education of Teachers (VAL - Vidareutbildning Av Lärare) is for those who are active as a teacher in theoretical subjects but has no teaching diploma. Within this national project, the student may be admitted to a teaching program and supplement the previous studies to obtain a teaching diploma. To be accepted for the project requires that the applicant is active as a teacher and has relevant higher education and teaching experience in one of subjects so that he or she can complete the studies within the framework of 120 university credits.

545. Complementary education (The Bridging Teacher Education Programme, KPU - Kompletterande Pedagogisk Utbildning) is for those who already have studies from University in subjects that exist at schools and who need to complement these with studies in the educational and didactic area to obtain the skills one needs to become qualified to teach in the subjects. There are, among others, courses in pedagogy, didactics, rating and assessment, special education, and ethics. The courses are given both in the University and at a school. The training includes three semesters of full-time studies (90 university credits).

546. There is also complementary education for those who are active as a teacher in vocational training but has no teaching diploma. Within this national project, the student may be admitted to a teaching program for two years to obtain a teaching diploma. The teacher will be able to continue to work part time during the period.

Applying to teacher educations

547. The increase of the total number of applicants to teacher and preschool teacher educations is big for all the teacher categories but above all else big when it comes to compulsory teachers, school teachers for special needs education, special needs pedagogues and supplementary pedagogical education (UKÄ 2014). The increase of applicants to the special pedagogue education is 40 percent, teachers for special needs education 30 percent, to compulsory school teacher 17 percent and to subject teacher education 11 percent. The increase in absolute figures is greatest for compulsory teacher education with 1 790 more applicants and thereafter follows subject teacher education, with 1 228 more applicants in the autumn term of 2014 than the same term in 2013.

548. The number of first choice applicants to the different categories of Teacher Training Education shows a somewhat different pattern, with an increased number of applicants to all categories. There are increases of 51 percent when it comes to special pedagogue education, 34 percent when it comes to education to be both civil engineer and teacher, as well as 10 percent when it comes to compulsory teacher education. In absolute terms, the increase is the greatest in the compulsory teacher education with 679 more first choice applicants, followed by special pedagogue education with 512 more first choice applicants which is followed by subject Teacher Training Education with 459 more first choice applicants in the autumn term of 2014 than the autumn term of 2013.
Application pressure to the compulsory teacher education’s different orientations

549. The number of applicants has increased to all orientations of the compulsory teacher educations, from 22 percent to the orientation towards school year 4-6 to 17 percent to the orientation towards the school year F-3. In absolute terms the increase is greatest to the orientation towards year course F-3 with 1107 more applicants in the autumn term of 2014 than the autumn term of 2013. The number of first choice applicants to the compulsory teacher education has increased within all levels, from 27 percent to the compulsory teacher education orientation to school year 4-6, to 17 percent to compulsory teacher education orientation towards school year F-3. In absolute terms, the increase is largest to compulsory teacher education orientation towards school year 4-6, with 316 more first choice applicants in the autumn term of 2014 than the autumn term of 2013.

Application pressure to the subject teacher education’s different orientations

550. In total, the number of applicants to subject teacher educations has increased in the autumn term of 2014 compared with the autumn term of 2013 when it applies to the orientation towards upper secondary school, but decreased when it applies to the orientation towards year course 7-9. In total the number of applicants to the orientation towards school year 7-9 decreased by 5 percent and to the orientation towards upper secondary school increased by 12 percent.

Entry, retention and professional development

551. The introduction period and teacher’s registration are described in chapter 4.6.

552. The career structure is described in chapter 5.3.

553. From the Education Act it is clear that it is the education provider who has the ultimate responsibility for the teachers’ professional development: ‘The education provider shall see that the staff at preschools and schools is given the possibilities of knowledge development. The education provider shall see that the preschool teachers, teachers and other staff at schools and preschools have the necessary insight into the regulations which apply for the school system.’

554. According to the present collective agreement, 104 hours annually per full-time employed teacher must be allotted for professional development. The time is divided among staff according to need and therefore does not give all individual teachers the guaranteed right to 104 hours further education.

555. Even if teachers’ professional development since the 1990s has been mainly the school education provider’s responsibility, the state has also taken a number of initiatives in the area (see above and also chapter 2). In later years the state has made two big investments in teachers’ further education through the Teacher Boost 1 and 2. The first teacher boost was launched in 2007 and consisted of an investment of a total of 3.6 billion SEK over four years to increase teachers’ subject theoretical and subject didactical competence. The campaign was aimed primarily at qualified teachers, and after approval by their education provider, they received the possibility to study while receiving 80 percent of their salary. Through a special state subsidy, administrated by NAE, the school education provider was compensated for the main part of the teacher’s salary costs during the time when the teacher was studying. The Agency of Public Management has (2014) shown that 95 percent of municipalities were represented in this effort. The evaluation has shown that the participating teachers and their principals consider that they, in a very satisfactory way, have been able to develop both the teaching content and methods as a result of this further education.
The Teacher Boost 2 was introduced in 2012, and is aimed at teachers with teaching degrees but who lack accreditation in all the subjects they teach. In contrast to the first campaign, only an incentive subsidy goes to the municipality and the costs for lost income during the study time is mainly a question for the education providers and the individual teachers.

**Teacher appraisal**

In Sweden, there is a positive association between mentoring, peer observation and coaching, and teachers’ sense of self-efficacy and job satisfaction (NAE 2014k). However, teachers in Sweden report lower participation than average in introduction and mentoring activities. Observation of classroom teaching is the most used method for teacher feedback. This is stated by 80 percent of TALIS teachers. In Sweden, 51 percent of asked teachers state this. Also, a slight majority of Swedish teachers report (57 percent) never observing other teachers lessons or giving them feed-back.

Feedback on teachers’ performance is positively related to their self-efficacy and job satisfaction. Nevertheless, nearly 32 percent of the Swedish teachers’ reports that they have never received feedback on their teaching while the average for TALIS teachers is 13 percent. Most TALIS teachers receive feedback from multiple sources, which could be an indicator of teacher collaboration or distributed leadership. However, most asked Swedish teachers report receiving feedback from only one source, the principal, who tends to spend most of his or her working time on administrative tasks. The feedback received by Swedish teachers has little effect on their practices in the classroom. Just under half of teachers state that they changed their teaching after feedback.

**Working hours**

Teachers’ working hours are described in chapter 5.3.

**Teacher shortages**

A statistical report by the (NAE 2013d) shows that about half of all teachers with pedagogical university education in compulsory school (school years 7-9) has sufficient subject education in the subjects which they teach. When applied to upper secondary school, the corresponding share is two thirds. Access to qualified teachers varies greatly between different education subjects. Teachers in Swedish, mathematics and English have, to the greatest extent, education in the subject. The situation is similar in both municipal and independent schools. Some regional differences exist when it applies to the proportion of teachers with sufficient education in their education subject. That teachers are teaching without having a degree oriented towards teaching in the existing school forms, school years or subjects is something that previous investigations also have shown.

When it comes to applicants to teacher and preschool teacher educations for autumn term 2014, the statistics show that applications to both teacher and preschool teacher educations have increased somewhat over the past three years. The increase applies to both the total number of applicants and the applicants who have teaching as their first choice (UHR 2014). Especially large is the increase in the applicants to the teacher categories compulsory teacher, subject teacher, teachers for special needs education, special needs teacher and supplemental pedagogical education. Despite the increase is the number of applicants in absolute terms still very low within certain subject teacher orientations. For example the subject teacher education in school years 7-9 with orientation Chemistry has eight with the specialisation as their first choice, Technology had 17 and Biology had 20.

There is now information available about students in the new teacher education who started in the study year 2011/12 (URANK 2014), above all else information about the students who are beginning their education. A clear difference, compared with many other educations, is that the student teachers have
relatively low upper secondary school grades, and of those who had done the Swedish Scholastic Aptitude Test, SweSAT, (just under half of the beginning pupils) only 10 percent have test results over the 1.0 which is average for all test participants. Least is the difference with students within the care area (most of all in nursing education) while the distance to legal and psychology studies, two of the courses which are the hardest to get into, are great.

563. Even though the share of teachers over 50 decreased from 44 percent to 39 percent between 2002 and 2012, 15 percent of teachers in Sweden were aged over 60 in 2012 at secondary level, well above the OECD average of 8 percent (OECD 2014d).

8.3 School leaders

564. In the municipal school, the principal is a civil servant employed by the municipal school administration. The principal thereby receives assignments from the municipal politicians. At the same time, the principal also has a direct assignment from the state via national statues etc. There is often an administrative director in the municipal administration who is responsible for school questions and who is the principal’s immediate superior.

565. The principal is a pedagogical leader and manager for the teachers and other staff in the school. The principal has the overall responsibility for the school’s internal organisation and activity, which is, as a whole, aimed at reaching the national goals and is responsible for the school’s results being followed up and evaluated in relation to the national goals and knowledge requirements. The principal’s tasks usually include employing teachers, setting salaries, making schedules, doing the budget, planning professional development, working with quality management processes, leading the pedagogical work, representing the school with the education provider, being the face of the school, and taking care of parental contact and the matters of the pupils.

566. The leadership of the principal is complex for several reasons. The principal shall primarily be the guarantor for the pupils’ rights being satisfied when it comes to the education. At the same time, the principal has functions visavi his or her employees but also towards several different commissioning bodies: the state, the education provider and the parents.

Status and attractiveness of the profession

567. Both deficient resources and lack of trust is given as the reasons for principals choosing to change career and/or work place. The municipalisation was supposed to create conditions for increased professional free space for principals (SOU 2014:5). In reality, however, it was rather the education providers than the principals who took over the role the state used to play. Investigations and audits of the school have pointed out several difficulties in the principal’s mission, including unclear delegation of tasks. The relationship between the principals and the political leadership is in certain respects unclear and also marked by distrust. The principal, as well as the teachers has a high workload which seems to have increased in recent years. Surveys show that the turnover of principals is high, suggesting that the mission is difficult. Both the lack of resources and trust are stated as the reason why the principals are leaving school to find other management jobs.

568. The principals educational leadership is often neglected. The ambition to, via the principals leadership, getting teachers to collaborate more and pursue collegial development work to improve the teaching has not succeeded as planned. See also chapters 4.7 and 5.4.
Education and training

School Leadership Programme

569. The obligation for principals which was introduced on 15 March 2010 means that municipalities, county councils and education providers for independent schools are obliged to see that newly employed principals attend a special education for the position, or an equivalent education. The education shall be begun as soon as possible after the employment has come into effect and be completed within four years after the day of taking office. Principals employed before 15 March 2010 are not covered by this obligation. The same applies to principals who have previously attended the education for the position or an older state principal education.

570. The new School Leadership Programme began in the autumn term 2009. The programme has increased the ambition level for education in several respects. Since March 2010, attendance is compulsory for newly employed principals, and the programme is run at an advanced academic level. The programme encompasses a total of one term of full-time studies but is held over six terms. On behalf of the Government, NAE is responsible for the training programme for the position with the target groups being principals, deputy principals and preschool heads who work in a curriculum-steered activity. The school leadership programme is carried out by six universities on behalf of The National Agency for Education. The school leadership programme is carried out in parallel with the principal’s regular work and is calculated to lay claim to approximately 20 percent of the working time. In the education boarding periods, seminar days and self-studies at the principal’s own school are included, as well as the study of relevant literature. Every part of the course involves examinations.

571. The goal of the education is to give principals, deputy principals and preschool heads such knowledge that they can:

- be responsible for pupils and children receiving an equivalent and just education,
- create conditions for goal attainment on individual and operational level, and
- be responsible for the development of the activity as a whole.

572. The education is three years and encompasses the three knowledge areas;

- School law and exercise of public authority,
- steering of goals and results, and
- school leadership.

573. Of the approximately 8 000 school leaders (principals and deputy school heads) in Sweden, approximately 60 percent have either attended the School Leadership Programme or are attending the School Leader Programme (NAE 2013 e). There is no information on how many principals with ‘old’ school leader education who are active principals today. They do not have access to the School Leadership Programme.

574. Approximately 6 percent of principals interrupt the education. NAE is following up these cases to obtain perception on the reason for these principals not completing their education. Most state workload or that they have changed work as the main reasons for dropping out. After this follows personal reasons, and
a very small number state the design and content of the course as the main reason for stopping their studies.

575. In a comparison between education providers, NAE (2013e) shows that the interruption of studies occurs more often among principals in independent schools. Furthermore, within this group a large proportion has another educational background than teacher education or another job title than principal. This can also possibly depend on the fact that several have stopped working as principals due to changes in the schools’ organisation.

576. The principals’ professional background is dominated by those who have been teachers and have a teaching degree. Just over 60 percent of principals who participate in the education have this background. Approximately 20 percent are preschool teachers, and just under 5 percent are leisure time pedagogues. The group ‘other basic education’ makes up approximately 14 percent.

577. In summary, the conditions for participating in the School Leader Programme are, according to the perception of NAE, far from optimal (NAE 2013 e). The National Agency for Education’s study shows that time is scarce for most of the participants. Four of five principals state that they have little or no time to put aside for the education. In this survey, approximately half of the participants consider that their employers do not contribute to any great extent when it comes to creating time or showing interest for the education, or indeed have knowledge about what is required to complete the education. At the same time there are more participants who give positive answers compared with the first survey, from about 40 percent to just over 50 percent.

578. The participants are significantly more satisfied with the support from the university, a high proportion of the principals’ state that they, to a great or fairly great extent, receive support from the university to complete the education, even if the proportion has decreased by almost 4 percent at the time of the latest measurement.

579. A majority consider that the difficulty level of the education suits them well (84 percent). The percentage who is satisfied has also grown over time. The result indicates also that the education over time has been more adapted to different positions, and not just the principal role. When one compares participants who began the programme in the autumn of 1999 with those who began the education from spring 2010 and forward, a consistent result is that more are satisfied in the later courses and this applies to a great extent to all aspects which appeared in the survey.

580. Of the school leaders, 97 percent are satisfied or fairly satisfied with the education. There is, however, a variation between different seats of learning when it comes to academic results and the participants’ degree of satisfaction.

581. In July 2015, a new agreement will be signed with the universities for the following six year period. In connection with this, a review will be done of the goal document for the School Leadership Programme.

Entry, retention and professional development

Further education for school leaders

582. There are longer and shorter educations which equip school leaders to meet the challenges as principals or preschool heads. Further education for staff which is offered by NAE often involves principals so that the efforts can give long term effects, for example within the Mathematics Boost. There are special educations to lead the learning of pupils newly arrived in Sweden, assessment and grading, as
well as study and vocational guidance. Municipalities and independent education providers offer different educations.

Programme for professional development for school leaders609. The principal’s way of steering and guiding has great meaning for the quality of the education and pupil results. Within the framework of the Programme for professional development for school leaders, The National Agency for Education’s course, ‘Principal leadership and the school results’, which is a state further education for principals and is oriented towards steering and leadership questions with special focus on the principals’ ability to lead the work with quality, goal attainment and development work. The further education aims at deepening and developing the pedagogical leadership of the principal from the Education Act and the curricula, as well as from a scientific basis and proven experience. To promote collegial learning, principals are, during the education, given the possibility of inviting to one educational instance, three staff members who play key roles in the quality or development work of the principal’s school.

583. The target group for the programme is principals who have attended the School Leadership Programme or equivalent, and have worked for at least one year as a principal. Further education exists at six university colleges and universities around the country. The further education is at an advanced academic level.

584. The principal allots approximately 15 percent of his or her work time for further education. Further education extends over a maximum of two terms, with at least 8 further education days. The state pays for the further education. The education provider pays the salary during the further education time, course literature, travel to boarding schools and seminar days, and the costs of boarding.

Principal shortages

585. There is a high turnover of principals and large retirements are due in the coming years. There are no official statistics on the approximately 8 000 Swedish principals (deputy principles included). However, the Swedish Association of School Leaders and Directors of Education has about 7 000 members consisting of principals, deputy school heads and other persons with leading positions within the school system. The association has conducted several reviews and the results are that 23 percent of their members still working as principals are 60 years or older (Sveriges Skolledarförbund 2014b). Of those who are turning 65 during 2014, has 25 percent already left the profession as principal (Sveriges Skolledarförbund 2014c).

8.4 Support staff

586. Teachers’ administration and practical work time has increased to 13 percent (NAE 2013d). In this is included much of what support staff would be able to do for them, for example reporting pupil absence, handling leave applications, being break monitor, lunch monitor, putting venues and premises in order, fixing computers, copying material, work with marketing and substituting for others.

8.5 Main challenges

Teacher shortage

587. A main and major challenge is the fact that the lack of an educated workforce within the teaching profession is calculated to be significant over the coming years.

This is shown through, among others, low application pressure for Teacher Training Education (however increasing), large anticipated numbers of teachers retiring, as well as a proportion of teachers considering changing career. Both teachers and preschool teachers will be an important deficit profession in the future. For the country as a whole, a shortage of 44 000 educated teachers and preschool teachers has been
predicted in the year 2020, and in the year 2030 the number is predicted to be 49,000 (SCB 2012). Pupils in general risk being taught by teachers without the correct qualifications.

588. The highest demand will be for preschool teachers, leisure-time pedagogues, teachers in special needs education and subject teachers, especially in mathematics, science technology and some foreign languages.

589. A particular problem is the shortage of vocational education teachers to fulfil future needs. Many of the educated vocational teachers who exist today choose to work outside the educational system. Even if vocational programmes have declined in popularity among pupils, there is a large imbalance between demand and supply of educated vocational teachers during the coming years. It is, however, hard to say which educational orientations will be affected the hardest. Other teacher categories where shortages are expected to be considerable are the shortage of teachers for special needs education and special needs teachers. When applied to compulsory school teachers, the statistics for the orientation in earlier years shows better balance when it comes to supply and demand.

590. Both preschool teacher education and compulsory school teacher education belong to the most single gender educations at university and university colleges, particularly preschool teacher education. There is on the other hand more gender equality in the subject teacher education.

How to restore the confidence in teachers

591. Another main challenge is to restore the confidence in teachers.

For the teaching profession to function well, society must have trust in teachers’ competence and ability to teach. However, this is not the always the case. According to the TALIS 2013, only five percent of the Swedish teachers report that teaching is a valued profession in society.

Professional development

592. A third challenge is how to encourage teachers to participate in professional development activities to a greater extent than today.

The TALIS 2013 shows that teachers in Sweden tend to report spending fewer days than the TALIS average engaging in personal development activities in the past 12 months. On average they report spending four days on courses and workshops, compared with eight days on average for all TALIS countries. Peer-learning and collegial cooperation need to be reality in every school and not just only for new teachers. There can’t be any differences between how teachers interpret the national standards and syllabi; assessment and evaluation have to be the same. In order to have an equal professional teaching body, teachers must be given the opportunity to participate to a greater extent than today in different professional development activities.

The principal’s educational leadership

593. A forth main challenge is about strengthen principal’s educational leadership.

According to the School Inspectorate (2012), the educational leadership is not always prioritised, and other tasks tend to occupy most of the principals’ time. The principal’s daily work is often characterised as being primarily administrative and filled with social leadership while the pedagogical work seems to be sidestepped. However, an inquiry is commissioned to investigate the workload of principals. The inquiry will report its findings in February 2015.
Chapter 9: Assessment and evaluation

594. In 2011 the OECD published the *OECD Reviews in Evaluation and Assessment in Education – Sweden report* that concluded that, while key elements of evaluation and assessment are well established at pupil, teacher, school and system levels, challenges remain in aligning the different elements to ensure consistency and complementarity. This chapter provides an update and notes new development on the evaluation and assessment arrangements since 2011.

### 9.1 Develop a strategic plan for an evaluation and assessment framework.

595. The responsibility for system evaluation rests with the National Agency for Education (see chapter 5.7). NAE used data from national and international studies to discover deficiencies in certain areas that might lead to new evaluations. The Government uses for example committees to evaluate areas of special interest, such as the outcomes of the municipalisation (Lewin SOU 2013:5).

596. A Swedish governmental commission official report, Evaluate for Development (SOU 2014:12), has recently been published. The commission proposes a national framework for the evaluation of the school in order to give a better overview, and steering shall be established by the Government, as a proposal in the form of a written communication to the Riksdag (parliament). The background is, among other things, the large number of actors on the national arena for the evaluation of the school today, as well as that the OECD has proposed a similar framework. A long term view when it comes to the evaluation of the school is central with reference to usability and quality, as well as from a democratic perspective. Pupils and parents, teachers, school leaders, politicians, media, the general public - in other words, everyone - should be able to expect continuity with respect to information about the Swedish school. According to the commission, a national framework for evaluation of the Swedish school and preschool should clarify the overarching aim with the follow up and evaluation, as well as:

- which parts the system consists of in order to follow up, evaluate, scrutinise and research the school,
- the aim of the different parts of the system and what they are expected to give answers to,
- how these different parts are related to each other, and
- which actors have responsibility for the different parts and how these are expected to cooperate.

597. From the framework it should also emerge which role the evaluation has in connection with larger reforms. Such a national framework should also constitute, over time, a stable basis from which the Swedish school can be evaluated. The inquiry also proposes that the national framework should be complemented with regular plans for the evaluation of the school. From these plans the Government’s overriding priorities for the evaluation for a reviewable period, for example three years, should emerge.

### 9.2 Further strengthen evaluation capacities at the municipal level.

598. The NAE has compiled General guideline for quality management processes, and in connection with this, the agency also revised their self-assessment tool for the education providers (see chapter 5.5).

### 9.3 Increase the reliability of national assessments.

599. The Schools Inspectorate has a task of re-marking national tests in school year 9 in compulsory school and in upper secondary school. In the analysis, the Schools Inspectorate has looked at the deviations
for the subject tests in Swedish and English for a selection of schools. The deviations concern the results from the marking by the teacher and the re-marking by the Schools Inspectorate. There is no obvious conclusion in the analysis of the differences between the original marking and the Schools Inspectorate’s re-marking. The NAE and the Schools Inspectorate both consider that there are many difficulties with these analyses. The analysis shows that it is more common that the re-marker sets a lower test grade than the original marker. If a teacher in Swedish sets higher test grades compared with the re-marker, the teacher’s test grade tends to, to a higher degree, steer the final grade in the subject or course. NAE considers that there is no easy answer to which is the right marking, but one explanation may be that the teacher has a more accumulated view of the pupil’s knowledge compared to the re-marker who does not know the pupil.

600. The Schools Inspectorate finds large divergences in the marking of tests where the pupils should give an answer in the form of a longer presentation or essay. In the report *Equal for All? Re-marking of national tests in compulsory and upper secondary schools over three years* (2012c) the Schools Inspectorate recommends, therefore, that essays are excluded from the national tests. NAE, on the other hand, maintains that writing long texts in both Swedish and English are important parts which show complex abilities which are written in subject syllabi. It is important to have the abilities in the tests to receive a background to use as an example for qualities in the different grade levels. The Schools Inspectorate recommendation has not resulted in any changes in the test design.

9.4 Clarify learning goals and provide tools for teachers’ assessment practice.

601. To promote equivalent assessment, The National Agency for Education has produced different types of support material. The agency works continually with developing assessment support material in form of mapping and diagnostic material, test and individual assignments with accompanying assessment directions and discussion material. There is also general support material around assessment and grading.

602. A chair inquiry has recently proposed grades from school year 4 and knowledge goals in reading in school year 1. Another inquiry investigates how the national tests can be digitised and how central marking of the national tests can be organised.

603. The National Agency for Education shows, through different campaigns and efforts, how teachers can collaborate by solving problems and critically scrutinise each other’s work so that methods, assessment and grading is improved through the creation of systems. This is called collegial or professional learning and it is an advantage if teachers or preschool teachers can receive the support of people who do not work in the school. Professional learning has its roots in Learning Studies and Lesson Studies, The national further education efforts (so-called ‘Boosts’) within mathematics, natural sciences, technology, and literacy development, all build on collegial learning. The National Agency for Education also, for the first time, provides teachers and principals with a MOOC in assessment practice, built on collegial learning.

9.5 Further build teachers’ assessment capacities.

604. See above paragraph on *Clarify learning goals and provide tools for teachers’ assessment practice.*

9.6 Formalise teacher appraisal as part of a system of teacher registration.

605. The career posts First Teacher and Senior Subject Teacher can make the teaching profession more attractive and ensure good teaching for the pupils. Through state financing, the monthly salary can be increased by approximately 5 000 SEK for First teacher, and by 10 000 SEK for a Senior subject teacher. The reform is at the moment being followed up and analysed. The new reform applies to all school forms
with the exception of preschool but the possibility to a career post within preschool is at the moment being investigated within the Government Offices. See chapter 5.3. Teacher appraisal is not formalised within the system of teacher registration. Today, it is up to the Institutes of Higher Education to assess the teacher to be.

9.7 Strengthen teacher appraisal for improvement and link it to professional development and school development.

606. Feedback on teachers’ performance is positively related to their self-efficacy and job satisfaction. Nevertheless, according to the TALIS study 2013 nearly 32 percent of the Swedish teachers report that they have never received feedback on their teaching while the average for TALIS teachers is 13 percent. Most Swedish teachers report that they receive feedback only from the principal. The feedback received by Swedish teachers has little effect on their practices in the classroom. Just under half of all teachers in the study stated that they changed their teaching after feedback. See chapter 8.2.

9.8 Articulate school evaluation and teacher appraisal.

607. In Sweden, teacher appraisal is not regulated by law and no formal procedures exist to evaluate the performance of permanent teachers. The main form of appraisal is a regular individual development dialogue held between the principal and individual teachers. There is no guidance provided from the Government on how to appraise teacher performance. When reviewing Sweden 2011, OECD gave Sweden recommendations to develop a national framework for teacher appraisal. There is however still no framework of professional standards in place to define what constitutes accomplished teaching, and teacher appraisal has not been a central topic in the current school policy debate.

608. During the first implementation of the teacher registration reform, the principal was responsible for assessing whether the teacher was to be recommended being registered or not. The assessment was performed in relation to national standards developed by NAE. This has now changed, so that the assessment is performed at the Teacher Training Education.

9.9 Build on the strength of school-internal quality management approaches.

609. The Schools Inspectorate points out significant deficiencies in the schools’ and education providers’ quality management processes. In the Schools Inspectorate’s supervision in 2010, 62 percent of compulsory schools and 55 percent of upper secondary schools were assessed to have deficiencies when it came to school leaders’ responsibility for seeing that the schools results are evaluated regularly with the aim of improving the work of the school (Swedish Schools Inspectorate 2011). During 2012, half of all supervised schools received criticism from the Schools Inspectorate for deficiencies in quality management processes. In most cases it was about the school leader not following up the schools’ knowledge results and using the results to decide which steps needed to be taken. (Swedish Schools Inspectorate 2013).

9.10 Further move towards risk-based and proportional approaches to inspection.

610. The Schools Inspectorate’s supervision is going to change in 2015. The new model means that the authority prioritises the schools which have the greatest need of support. The schools which are not prioritised will no longer receive any visits but will still be the subject of investigation based upon statistics, documents and enquiries. On the other hand, supervision at education provider level, that is to say, at municipal level or with independent education providers, will happen more often than today.

611. A condition for the new model is a more developed risk and materiality analysis which can point out which schools should be prioritised. The perception of the Schools Inspectorate is that the schools operations should be developed so that the authority use the resources where they can be of the most
benefit. When the supervision changes and some schools come under focus, the authorities can remain at these schools longer to ensure that they carry out the desired changes. This also means that after the decision is made, the authority can help with aid and guidance. In addition, independent schools are going to be scrutinised more often than they are today. The Schools Inspectorate’s perception is that changes occur faster there than in the municipal schools which can be a risk for the pupils. In addition, society’s insight into these schools is smaller. In some cases tougher measures can be taken to show the seriousness of the situation. One such measure is the imposition of penalties if no change occurs. Measures can also be recalling the approval of an independent school or, if it is a municipal school, taking other steps.

9.11 Support school leaders and strengthen their role in school evaluation

612. There are longer and shorter educations which equip school leaders to meet the challenges as school leaders or preschool heads. Further education for staff, which is offered by NAE, often involves school leaders so that the efforts can give long term effects, for example within the Mathematics Boost. There are special educations for the teachers’ leadership regarding the teaching of pupils newly arrived in Sweden, assessment and grading, as well as study and vocational guidance. Municipalities and independent education providers also offer different educations.

9.12 Explore ways to more reliably monitor education outcomes at the system level.

613. See above paragraph on Increase the reliability of national assessments.

9.13 Improve mobilisation of existing information within the system.

614. There is, among others, a website where certain information about schools is accessible - valjaskola.se, which is administered by NAE. NAE has the task of building up and administering a new national information system for all schools. The system shall make comparisons possible between different schools. The information shall be reported in an easily accessible format on a website as well as offering good search possibilities for the public. The system should be fully operational by the 1 July 2015. The mandatory information system shall contain information from the official statistics, information from The Swedish Schools Inspectorate as well as information collected through customer surveys and reports from schools. See http://valjaskola.se/favicon.ico

9.14 Main challenges

Equivalent assessment and grading

615. A main challenge is how to improve equivalent assessment and grading across schools.

The current reporting of outcomes at the end of compulsory school (school year 9) and at the upper secondary school heavily relies on the reliability of the grades awarded by teachers. The former standards and learning goals were considered as being too vague to guide instruction and assessment. Teachers interpreted learning goals and the grading criteria in many different ways which lead to inequities in teacher grading (2007:28). In 2011, new curricula with clearer knowledge requirements for both compulsory and upper secondary school as well as a new grading scale with more levels were introduced. The new curricula will hopefully help to address at least some of the unevenness in teacher grading within and between schools and municipalities. Also, the implementation from NAE has been massive, for example with open courses in assessment and grading. However, the TALIS 2013 shows that Swedish teachers consider that they are in greatest need of professional development within assessment and grading.
Chapter 10: Strategic policy development

10.1 Goals and objectives of the education system

616. The Education Act stipulates that education within the school system is aimed at children and pupils gathering and developing knowledge and values. It shall promote the development and learning of all children and pupils, as well as a lifelong love of learning. The education shall also convey and entrench respect for human rights and the fundamental democratic values upon which Swedish society rests. In the education, the different needs of the children and pupils shall be taken into consideration. Children and pupils shall be given support and stimulation so that they develop as far as possible. One endeavour shall be to weigh up the differences in the children’s and pupils’ preconditions for assimilating the education. The education is also aimed at, in cooperation with the home, promoting children’s and pupils’ all-round personal development into active, creative, competent and responsible individuals and citizens.

617. One very important factor in order for the Swedish pupils’ results to be able to be improved is good teachers. Efforts have therefore been taken in order to increase the teachers’ competence and the status of the teaching profession. Furthermore, a number of reforms of the education system with the aim of improving the pupils’ study results have been implemented in recent years. These reforms encompass, among other things, a strong pedagogical task in school, improved follow up of pupils’ results in compulsory school, a reformed upper secondary school as well as incentives for higher quality in higher education.

10.2 Past and present reforms and policies

618. In 2011, the New Education Act was introduced, which modernised, simplified and harmonised regulations across public and independent schools. It also established preschools as an integral part of the education system. New curricula for compulsory education were also introduced the same year, with mandatory national tests in years 3, 6 and 9 to monitor pupil performance against the curricula. At the same time, upper secondary school was reformed. In 2012, a new qualification scheme for teachers, designed to raise the status of the profession, was also introduced. The new scheme now requires teachers to be certified in order to teach, and the academic requirements for certification necessitates that teachers take a degree in education specialised in the type of school and age group they teach at.

619. For an overview of the major reforms and policy developments from the past that have shaped the Swedish school system and an overview of ongoing reforms and policy developments, see foremost chapter 2.1. The actions to develop the teaching profession are mainly described in chapter 8.2.

10.3 Process of policy development and implementation

620. Until 1990, the Swedish education system was largely centralised, and seen as a component of the social democratic welfare state. The 1990s were marked by a series of reforms that profoundly changed the education landscape in Sweden. Responsibilities for compulsory school, upper secondary school and adult education were shifted to municipalities. At the same time, changes were made to encourage the establishment of independent schools. Parents and pupils received the possibility to a large extent to choose which school to attend. However, there are no private fee-paying schools in Sweden.

621. Today, the Government holds the overall responsibility for schooling and is in charge of developing the curriculum, national objectives and guidelines for the education system. The Ministry of Education and Research is supported, in the area of school education, by three agencies. NAE supports and evaluates the work of municipalities and schools. The Schools Inspectorate authorises the creation of new independent schools, and also ensures that municipalities, organisers of independent schools and the
schools themselves follow the centrally set laws and regulations. The National Agency of Special Needs Education coordinates the Government’s efforts regarding pupils with special educational needs.

622. The Education Act establishes municipalities as the responsible authorities for schools, in charge of implementing educational activities, organising and operating school services, allocating resources and ensuring that the national goals for education are met. Public schools are mainly directly run by municipalities. There are also privately run independent schools, financed by public grants from the municipalities. Financial backing of all schools is tied to the respective number of pupils enrolled and pupils’ specific needs (e.g. special needs education). Comparable to the allocation of funds by the central level, the local level mainly reallocates funds to schools - usually on a lump sum basis to provide for salaries, buildings, material and equipment. Budget administration is then performed by the principal. Within municipalities, the general principles and objectives of schooling are decided at the Municipal Assembly level, while execution of duties is passed on to relevant committees.

623. The funding of municipal schools is decided at the municipal level. The Government redistributes financing through state grants from wealthier to poorer municipalities via a equalisation system across municipalities, among other things. These grants are untargeted and municipalities can allocate the funds as they see fit. Education is financed by municipal funds after redistribution.

624. For an overview of the formal and informal structures in place for decision making and education policy making and process of implementation see chapter 6.

10.4 Main challenges

625. As mentioned before, there has been a decline in student performance since the 2000s. Too many of the pupils who leave compulsory or upper secondary school do not have a pass grade in all subjects.

626. The educational problem is very complex since there is not one single factor that causes the problems, and there isn’t one single solution that will lead to improvement. Below are some major challenges that the Swedish school system faces. (See the different chapters for the other main challenges, especially the challenges regarding teachers.)

*Increasing the completion ratio of the upper secondary school*

627. A main challenge is to increase the completion ratio of the upper secondary school.

Upper secondary school should provide a good foundation for working life and further studies as well as for personal development and active participation in the community. While almost all young people in Sweden begin in upper secondary school, it’s too many who do not complete their studies, and many students need more than three years to complete the education. The declining results in compulsory school are one reason that more students have poorer prerequisites to complete the education in upper secondary schools. The purpose of the 2011 upper secondary school reform is to increase the percentage of pupils who successfully complete upper secondary school. Higher quality education for pupils not eligible for the national programmes is supposed to increase the completion ratio and prevent early school leaving. Since the reform was launched in 2011, it is yet too early to say whether the throughput has increased. The development must be carefully monitored.
Student performance in compulsory school

628. Another main challenge is to improve student performance in compulsory school.

The overarching question is that general picture of performance in the Swedish compulsory school remains a cause for concern. PISA 2012 confirms and reinforces the picture which previous international surveys, PISA 2009, PIRLS 2011 and TIMSS 2011 have shown, namely that Swedish compulsory school pupils' skills in reading comprehension, mathematics and natural science has deteriorated over the past few decades. In total, Sweden is the country that has had the greatest downswing in results of all the countries which participate in PISA. Furthermore, the latest description of the proficiency standard according to PISA is that Swedish pupils are now, for the first time, performing under the OECD average in all three proficiency areas. Another great concern is how to improve the results/performance of newly arrived pupils.

The effectiveness and functionality of upper secondary introduction programmes

629. A third major challenge is to offer those students who are not qualified for a national programme at upper secondary school adequate upper secondary introduction programmes.

The aim with the introduction of the five upper secondary introduction programmes was to provide clear study options for students who are not qualified for a national programme. Programmes shall take into account pupils diverse needs, and offer individualised programmes that meet those needs in an efficient manner. To achieve the purpose, inter alia, requires good cooperation between compulsory and upper secondary schools and a well-functioning study and vocational guidance that may contribute to favourable conditions for a pupil to receive an education appropriate to his or her needs, wishes and circumstances. A fifth of all pupils in upper secondary school year 1 attend an introduction programme, which place great demands on the school organisers to offer an education to the needs that exist.

Systematic implementation, evaluation and assessment of school reforms

630. Lastly, a major challenge, and which is of greatest interest in a period of many school reforms, is how to systematically implement, evaluate and assess different school reforms.

Many reforms have been initiated the past years. It is of greatest importance that these reforms are implemented in a systematic way. NAE has had the task to implement some of the major reforms. However, it is equally important that the reforms are implemented on the local level, by the municipalities and the independent schools. Furthermore, it is also central that major reforms are systematically followed-up, evaluated and assessed on a national as well as local level. The Institute for Labour Market Evaluation has a mission to deliver scientific evidence on a range of issues related to the labour market, conducting robust research, but not offering policy advice. Since 2001, it has researched education-related issues from preschool up to university level, including assessment of policy reforms and general issues of resources/outputs and student transitions to different levels of education. In 2012 the institute was renamed to the Institute for Evaluation of Labour Market and Education Policy (IFAU) and with the additional task to evaluate school reforms.
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