

## Education at a Glance 2006

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### OECD Briefing Note for Spain

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#### Investment in education

##### *Spain has made major investments in tertiary education...*

- Between 1995 and 2003, [Spain](#) has made major investments in tertiary education. Expenditure per student has increased by 43% which is the third highest increase in the OECD countries (OECD average of 6%). As the number of students in tertiary education has also increased by 11% during this period, overall expenditure has increased by 58% (Table B1.5). This has occurred with, and may have stimulated increasing tertiary attainment in [Spain](#) (Table A.1.3a).
- Other forms of education have not received the same increases in expenditure. The change in overall expenditure for non-tertiary education in [Spain](#) has increased by only 4%, compared to an OECD average of 33%. However, since the number of students in non-tertiary education decreased during this period, expenditure per student did actually increase by 29% in Spain, still below the OECD average increase of 33% (Table B1.5).

##### *...but they remain still below increases in national income...*

- It is noteworthy, however, that spending on education increased slower in Spain than GDP, so that the share of national income invested in education decreased from 5.3% in 1995 to 4.8% in 2000 to 4.7% in 2003. This is significantly below the OECD average of 5.9%. This gap is largely due to lower public expenditure on education in [Spain](#) compared to other OECD countries (4.2% compared to the OECD average of 5.2%) as there is only a slight difference in private expenditure compared to other countries (0.5% of GDP compared to the OECD average of 0.7%).

##### *....and spending per student remains below the OECD average for each level of education ...*

- Annual expenditure on educational institutions per student is below the OECD average for each level of education. In pre-primary education, expenditure per student (adjusted for differences in Purchasing Power Parities) in [Spain](#) is 8% below the OECD average, 11% below the average for primary education and 8% below the OECD average for secondary education. But, despite significant increases in expenditure, the difference is greatest for tertiary education. Annual expenditure on educational institutions per student is 21% below



the OECD average (Table B1.1a). This is despite **Spain** having the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest increase in expenditure per student between 1995 and 2003 (Table B1.5).

- Increases in expenditure on education in **Spain** have, as a percentage of GDP, not kept pace with the increase across OECD countries. In 1995, expenditure was close to the OECD average with public expenditure just below the OECD average and private expenditure just above the OECD average. By 2003, the OECD average (for the 24 countries for which data is available in 1995, 2000 and 2003) for public expenditure in education had increased from 4.8 to 5% of GDP. But in **Spain**, public expenditure decreased from 4.5 to 4.2% of GDP. At the same time, private expenditure also fell from 0.8 to 0.5% of GDP (Table B2.1a).

*...and the proportion of expenditure on teacher compensation is high.*

- The proportion of total education expenditure spent on teacher compensation is high in **Spain** relative to other OECD countries. Education expenditure is divided by current and capital expenditure. For primary and secondary education, the proportion of current to capital expenditure is similar in **Spain** to the OECD average (91.1% of expenditure is devoted to current expenditure in **Spain** compared to the OECD average of 91.8%). 74.6% of current expenditure is spent on teacher compensation in **Spain**. This proportion is the fourth highest of OECD countries (with available data) with the OECD average being 63.6% (Table B6.2).
- The proportion of current expenditure devoted to teacher compensation is also high in tertiary education in **Spain** (58.5% compared to the OECD average of 43%). However, the proportion of current expenditure to total expenditure is lower in **Spain** (80.6%) than the OECD average (89.7%) (Table B6.2).

## **Educational attainment**

*More people around the world are completing university courses and other forms of tertiary education than ever before. However, progress has been uneven across countries and some have significantly fallen behind, potentially compromising their future ability to keep up with economic and social progress.*

*Younger people in Spain are receiving more education than older generations...*

- The Spanish population is receiving increasing amounts of education. Younger age groups are more likely to complete more education and obtain higher qualifications than their older counterparts. On average across OECD countries, in 2004 the proportion of 25-to-34-year-olds having attained upper secondary education is 13 percentage points higher than that of the 45-to-54-year-old age group. This increase has been larger in **Spain** with the attainment of 25-to-34-year-olds over 25 percentage points greater than 45-to-54-year-olds (Table A1.2a).

*...but the levels of secondary education achieved are still lower than the OECD average...*

- The proportion of 25-to-64-year-olds in **Spain** that has attained at least upper secondary education is the fourth lowest in the OECD (45% compared to the OECD average of 67%). However, this difference is getting smaller. For 25-to-34-year-olds, 61% of the Spanish population have attained at least upper secondary education compared to 50% of 35-to-44-year-olds, 36% of 45-to-54-year-olds, and 21% of 55-to-64-year-olds. Education levels are below the OECD average for every age group but the gap is decreasing with each younger age cohort (Table A1.2a).



- On average in OECD countries, a student in 2004 can expect to spend around two years more in the education system compared to 1995. This difference over the period ranges from less than one year in Austria, France, Germany, Norway, Portugal and [Spain](#) to three years or more in Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Turkey and the United Kingdom (Table C1.1).
- In most OECD and partner countries, enrolment rates gradually declined during the last years of upper secondary education (Table C1.3). More than 20% of the population aged between 15 and 19 is not enrolled in education in Austria, Italy, Luxembourg, Mexico, New Zealand, Portugal, [Spain](#), Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States. By contrast, enrolment rates remain relatively high until the age of 20 to 29 in Australia, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Poland and Sweden, where enrolment rates for 20-to-29-year-olds still exceed 30% (Table C1.2).
- On average, a young person aged 15 in 2004 can expect to continue in education for close to seven years. This average figure refers to all 15-year-olds, and some will evidently continue in education for a longer period while others will do so for a shorter time. In 18 of the 29 countries studied, including Israel, the average 15-year-old can expect to spend from 5.5 to 7.5 additional years in education. However, a large gap separates the groups at each extreme: with Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Poland (more than eight years in education on average) on the one hand, and Mexico, [Spain](#) and Turkey (with less than five and half years on average) on the other (Table C4.1a).

*...the levels of tertiary education achieved are higher than the OECD average...*

- While the level of the population having attained secondary education is still below the OECD average, the proportion of population aged 25-to-34-years-old in [Spain](#) that have attained tertiary education is 7 percentage points higher than the OECD average (38% in [Spain](#) compared to the OECD average of 31%). [Spain](#) has made major investments in education since the mid-1990s (Table B1.5) and this may have spurred recent increases in tertiary attainment. Older people in [Spain](#) had not attained these levels of education. The proportion of 35-to-44-year-olds in [Spain](#) that have attained tertiary education is 10 percentage points lower than 25-to-34-year-olds and for age cohorts above 44 years of age, the levels of tertiary attainment are well below the OECD average (Table A1.3a).
- On average, in all OECD countries with comparable data, 20% more of today's young people enter into tertiary-type A programmes compared to 2000. Entry rates in tertiary-type A education increased by more than 10 percentage points between 2000 and 2004 in Australia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Sweden and the United States. [Spain](#) is the only OECD country that shows a slight decrease of entry rates to tertiary-type A programmes, although this decrease is counterbalanced by a significant increase of entry rates in tertiary-type B programmes between 2000 and 2004 (Table C2.1).
- Since 1997, the earnings premium for further education in [Spain](#) has been decreasing. The earnings of employed people with an education below upper secondary are closer to those people with an upper secondary education than it was in 1997. In 1997, people who did not attain upper secondary level of education would earn 76% of what people with an upper-secondary education would earn. By 2004, this had increased to 85%. Moreover, people with a tertiary education in [Spain](#) received a larger earnings premium for their additional education in 1997 than in 2004. In 1997, the earnings premium for undertaking tertiary education, relative to upper-secondary education was 49%. By 2004 this earnings premium had fallen to 32% (Table A9.2a).



### *Female graduates have a greater likelihood of being unemployed than male graduates...*

- Females in [Spain](#) have higher unemployment rates at each level of education than their male counterparts. The difference is smallest between females and males with advanced tertiary qualifications. Females in [Spain](#) that have attained this education have an unemployment rate of 8.8% (OECD average 4.3%) compared to 5.3% of males (OECD average 3.5%). The gap between male and female unemployment rates is larger for people that have attained lower levels of education. For females in [Spain](#) with only a lower-secondary education, the unemployment rate is 16.4% (OECD average 11%) compared to 7.3% for males (OECD average 10.1%) (Table A8.2a).

### *...but have higher earnings premiums...*

- But for those females that are employed, the financial returns to education are greater than their male counterparts. The earnings of employed females in [Spain](#) with an education level below upper secondary are 78% of employed females (84% for males) with an upper secondary education. The earnings premium for employed females with a tertiary education, compared to an upper-secondary education, is 41% compared with only 32% for males. The monetary rewards to tertiary educated females that obtain employment are therefore greater (Table A9.1a).
- Youths not in education in [Spain](#) have a higher unemployment rate than the OECD average but this is largely because youth labour force participation is higher than the OECD average. In Spain, 6.2% of youths aged 15-to-19 years are not in education and unemployed compared to the OECD average of 3.8%. For 20-to-24-year-olds in [Spain](#), 10.2% are not in education and unemployed, rising to 10.3% for 25-to-29-year-olds, compared to the OECD average of 7.9% for 20-to-24-year-olds and 6.7% for 25-to-29-year-olds. However, this is not because of lower employment rates in [Spain](#) as they are similar to the OECD average and higher than the OECD average for 25-to-29-year-olds. Rather, it is because labour force participation is higher in [Spain](#) than the OECD average. Only 4.1% of 15-to-19-year-olds are not in education and not in the labour force compared to the OECD average of 6.4%. For 20-to-24-year-olds, the difference is greater with only 6% not in education and not in the labour force compared to the OECD average of 10.5% (Table C.4.2a).

### *Demographic trends are already being felt in Spain...*

- Demographic trends indicate that sharp downward trends in the number of young people in many OECD countries will impact upon the number of school-age people over the coming years. In [Spain](#), large demographic impacts upon the school-age population have already occurred. In fact, the number of people in [Spain](#) aged 20-to-29 is set to decline by 34% over the next ten years (Table A11.1). This may affect tertiary enrolments for this age group.



### *Tertiary education is becoming an international domain...*

- In 2004, 2.7 million tertiary students were enrolled outside their country of citizenship. This represented an 8 % increase in total foreign student intake reported to the OECD and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics since the previous year. The percentage of foreign students in [Spain](#) is lower than the OECD average (2.3% of all tertiary enrolments compared to 7.3%) (Table C3.1).
- In Finland, [Spain](#) (28.2%) and Switzerland, more than 14% of international students are enrolled in highly theoretical advanced research programmes. The same holds for foreign students enrolled in France (Table C3.4).

### *Participation in continuing education and training is low in Spain...*

- The participation of the adult population in non-formal job-related education and training in [Spain](#) is a third of the OECD average (6% compared to 18%), for both males and females (Table C5.1a).
- A new estimation has been calculated of the expected number of hours in non-formal job-related education and training between the ages of 25 and 64. This calculation refers to the time that a hypothetical individual (facing current conditions in terms of adult learning opportunities at different stages in life) is expected to give to such education and training over a typical working life (a forty year period). A person in [Spain](#) could expect to undertake 237 hours of non-formal job-related education and training during their working life. This is over 150 hours lower than the OECD average of 389 hours (Table C5.1a).

### *Education in Spain is building from a strong foundation in early childhood.*

- OECD's thematic review of early childhood education and care has underlined the importance of a strong start for children. In [Spain](#), the level of participation in pre-primary education is amongst the highest in OECD countries. Theoretically, all children aged 4 and under are enrolled in education compared to the OECD average of 66.3% (Table C1.2).

## **Educational performance**

### *Student performance varies widely, both in curriculum-linked disciplines like mathematics and in students' wider capacity to solve problems.*

- On the OECD PISA mathematics scale, three OECD countries (Finland, Korea and the Netherlands) achieve statistically similar average scores (between 538 and 544 points) that are higher than the average scores in all other OECD countries. Eleven other countries have mean scores that are above the OECD average and 4 other perform similarly to the OECD average. [Spain](#), with a mean score of 485 points, is one of the 12 remaining countries that perform below the average (Table A4.3).
- Whereas the great majority of students in OECD countries have at least a basic level of mathematical proficiency (being capable of tasks at PISA level 2), the proportion who lack such sufficient proficiency varies widely: from below 10% in Finland and Korea to above one quarter in Greece, Italy, Portugal and the United States and more than 50% in Turkey and 60% in Mexico. The percentage in [Spain](#) is 23%. This is an indicator of how many students are likely to encounter serious problems in using mathematics in their future lives (Table A4.1).
- Students in all OECD countries show widely varying performance, but countries vary widely in the extent that students in different schools perform. On average across OECD



countries, differences in the performance in mathematics between schools accounts for 34% of total variation in mathematics achievement. [Spain](#) is below the OECD average in the proportion of total variation explained by between-school differences (17.2% compared to the OECD average of 33.6%) (Table A5.1). This means that differences in student performance are explained less by which school a student attends than is the situation for the OECD average. This indicates that parents in [Spain](#) can be less worried about school choice in order to enhance their children's performance and can be more confident of consistent performance standards across schools than in many other OECD countries.

- The role of socio-economic status in student performance in [Spain](#) is below the OECD average. The likelihood of the lowest mathematic performers being from the group of students with the lowest socio-economic status relative to the likelihood of them being from the group of students with the highest socio-economic status in [Spain](#) is lower than the OECD average (Table A6.1). This finding is statistically significant and is another indication that inequality plays a smaller role in education across [Spain](#) than the OECD average.

## The learning environment and organisation of schools

### *Student-teacher ratios are low and have fallen below the OECD average in pre-primary education...*

- The ratios of students to teaching staff in [Spain](#) are below the OECD average for each level of education with the ratio in pre-primary education falling below the OECD average. In 2003, the number of pre-primary students per teacher was 14.8 compared to the OECD average of 14.4. In 2004, this difference had changed so that the ratio in [Spain](#) was 13.9, below the OECD average of 14.8. In primary education there are 14.3 students per teacher in [Spain](#), compared to the OECD average of 16.9. In secondary education there are 10.8 students per teacher in [Spain](#), compared with an OECD average of 13.3 students per teacher. In tertiary type-B education, the ratios in [Spain](#) are almost half those across OECD countries on average. However, the ratio is closer to, but still below the OECD average for tertiary-type A education (Table D2.2). These relatively low ratios are likely to positively influence the amount of attention devoted to each student.

### *...and average class sizes are substantially higher in private education institutions...*

- The difference between average class size in public and private education institutions in [Spain](#) is one of the highest in the OECD. In public institutions offering primary education the average class size is 19.3 students, which is below the OECD average of 21.5 students. The average class size was five students higher in private education institutions (24.3 students compared to the OECD average of 20.3). In secondary education the difference is not as large, as the average class size in public institutions is very close to the OECD average (24 students compared to the OECD average of 23.8). Nevertheless, the average class size was nearly three students higher in private education institutions which was also higher than the OECD average (26.9 students compared to the OECD average of 22.8) (Table D2.1).
- Compulsory instructional time for students in [Spain](#) is higher than the OECD average for all levels of education. Compulsory instructional time in [Spain](#) amounts to 792 hours per year for students aged 7-8 years (OECD average of 758 hours), 792 hours per year for students aged 9-11 year (OECD average of 808 hours) and 956 hours per year for students aged 12-14 year (OECD average of 894 hours) (Table D1.1).



*...and teaching loads are high for primary teachers but low for secondary teachers in Spain.*

- There is a substantial difference in the teaching time of primary teachers compared to secondary teachers in [Spain](#). The teaching load at the primary level in [Spain](#) is 880 statutory hours per year compared to the OECD average of 805 hours. However, the statutory teaching load is nearly 300 hours lower for lower-secondary teachers (581 hours compared to the OECD average of 704) and 316 hours lower for teachers of upper secondary education (564 hours compared to the OECD average of 663). Such a sizeable difference is unusual but the working time of these teachers is similar as is the number of days of instruction (Table D4.1).

*Starting salaries for teachers are above the OECD average in Spain...*

- Statutory salaries in [Spain](#) are generally above the OECD average, particularly starting salaries, which are around 25% (22% for primary, 27% for lower-secondary and 24% for upper-secondary) higher than the OECD average. Moreover, the ratios of salary after 15 years of experience to GDP per capita, for [Spain](#) in primary, lower and upper secondary education at respectively 1.4, 1.57 and 1.61, are well above the OECD average of 1.30, 1.32 and 1.42 (Table D3.1).

*...but do not increase as much as the OECD average...*

- Teacher salary scales in [Spain](#) are very flat. Spanish teachers have a relatively high starting salary but their salaries increase slowly with tenure relative to other OECD countries. The salaries of Spanish teachers after 15 years of service and then at the top of the salary scale are similar to other OECD countries. If the motivation and retention of teachers within schools is influenced, at least in part, by the size and frequency of salary increases within a job, then difficulties may arise in countries where the pace of these changes is slower and the salary increases lower. At lower secondary level of education, the ratio of the salary at the top of the scale to the starting salary is 1.43 in [Spain](#) compared with 1.7 on average in OECD countries and it takes longer than average to progress from the starting point of the salary scale to the top of the scale (39 years in [Spain](#) compared with 24 years on average in OECD countries) (Table D3.1).

*... and have fallen compared with 1996.*

- [Spain](#) and the French Community of Belgium are the only countries where teacher salaries have fallen in real terms. Since 1996, teachers' salaries in [Spain](#) at the primary and upper secondary levels (lower secondary figures are missing) have fallen in real terms. This is true of starting salaries, mid-career salaries and salaries at the top of the scale. There have been slightly greater falls for teachers in upper secondary education in [Spain](#) with a 5% fall in the real starting salary of upper secondary teachers with minimum training since 1996 (Table D3.3).

*Use of ICT is low in Spain...*

- On average among OECD countries, the number of computers per student in schools has increased between 2000 and 2003. There is substantial variation in the level of access students have to computers at schools. Some OECD countries have more than one computer for every five students, while eight OECD countries have, on average, less than one computer per ten students (Germany, Greece, Mexico, Poland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, [Spain](#) and Turkey) (Table D5.1).
- Twenty-six per cent of school principals believe that ICT resources are at a level that does not hinder instruction in OECD countries. But there is substantial variation within and between countries. In [Spain](#), 58% of school principals believe that a lack of ICT



resources in their school hinders the instruction of students ‘To some extent’ or ‘A lot’ compared to the OECD average of 44%. [Spain](#) is also one of only nine countries where the percentage of principals reporting that a lack of ICT resources in their school hinders the instruction of students ‘To some extent’ or ‘A lot’ has increase between 2000 and 2003 (Table D5.2).

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