

The Education System in the Federal Republic of Germany 2019/2020

**A description of the responsibilities, structures and
developments in education policy for the exchange of information in Europe**

– EXCERPT –

5. PRIMARY EDUCATION

5.1. Introduction

The *Grundschule* (primary school) is attended by all school-age children together. It covers grades 1 to 4. In Berlin and Brandenburg, the *Grundschule* covers grades 1 to 6.

General objectives

The tasks and objectives of the *Grundschule* are determined by its position within the school system. The primary school's role is to lead its pupils from more play-oriented forms of learning at pre-school level to the more systematic forms of school learning, and also to orient the form and content of teaching programmes towards the different learning requirements and capabilities of individual pupils.

In June 2015, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz – KMK*) resolved “Recommendations on the work in the primary school” (*Empfehlungen zur Arbeit in der Grundschule*) which amounted to a fundamental realignment and reorganisation.

According to the recommendations, the task of the primary school is to enable basic school education in a joint educational programme for all children. The goal is to acquire and extend basic and adaptable competences. These include above all the key competences of reading and writing as well as mathematics, which form a basis for not only all other educational areas in the primary school but also for continuing education as well as lifelong learning and independent appropriation of culture. The nationwide educational standards in the subjects German and mathematics are hereby decisive for the primary sector, grade 4 (resolutions of the Standing Conference of October 2004). The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) as well as the Perspectives Framework for General Studies (*Perspektivrahmen Sachunterricht*) also provide an orientation.

Primary schools cater for the heterogeneity of their pupils through individualised and differentiated lessons that are oriented on their initial learning situation. Decisions on the content and didactics as well as determinations as regards targeted methods, social forms, ways of working and task formats are taken by the teaching staff on the basis of the individual premises and needs of the learners.

Specific legislative framework

The Basic Law (*Grundgesetz – R1*) and the constitutions of the Länder (R13–28) include a number of fundamental provisions on schools (inspection, parents' rights, compulsory schooling, religious instruction, privately-maintained schools) which also have a bearing on primary schools. The legal basis for the *Grundschule* as the first compulsory school for all children is to be found in the Education Acts (R85–102) and the Compulsory Schooling Acts (R120) of the Länder as well as in the *Schulordnungen* (school regulations) for the primary school enacted by the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs in the Länder.

5.2. Organisation of Primary Education

Geographical Accessibility

One of the responsibilities of the Länder in their education policy is to maintain a sufficiently varied range of schools. As the highest school supervisory authority, the

Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs of each Land is therefore concerned with establishing the base for an efficient school system. Accordingly, present and future school needs and school locations are identified in a school development plan drawn up at Land level. The establishment of plans for developing schools is regulated by the Education Acts in some Länder.

The *Kommunen* (local authorities), i.e. the municipalities, districts and municipalities not being part of a district, must, in their capacity as the maintaining bodies of public-sector schools, ensure that a well-balanced choice of education is available in their area. This means that school development planning is a task of the local authority maintaining bodies, which identify the school capacity required and determine the location of schools. The plans of each of the local authorities must be established on the basis of mutual consultation and approved by the schools' supervisory authorities, in most cases by the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs. The exception to this is Bayern, where schools are generally established by the Land in consultation with the local authorities.

Regional differences in the number and geographical distribution of schools depending on the type of school result from the number of children and youths of school age, demographic forecasts, the voting behaviour of parents, the economic and social situation in the region or school planning stipulations of the competent authorities.

Admission Requirements and Choice of School

Choice of school

In order to complete general compulsory schooling, pupils must, in principle, attend the local *Grundschule* (primary school). In Nordrhein-Westfalen and Schleswig-Holstein parents are free to enrol their child in a *Grundschule* other than the one nearest their home. In Berlin, admission to a primary school other than the one nearest their home may take place according to the availability of places. The school maintaining bodies have the opportunity to fix catchment areas for schools. In some Länder, the school authorities can establish overlapping or coinciding school catchment areas for several primary schools.

Start of compulsory schooling

Compulsory schooling starts on 1 August for all children having reached their sixth birthday before a statutory qualifying date. Following the resolution of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (*Kultusministerkonferenz* – KMK) of October 1997 entitled “Recommendations on starting school” (*Empfehlungen zum Schulanfang*), the Länder can set the qualifying date between 30 June and 30 September. They can also make provision for the possibility of starting school during the course of the school year. The aim of the recommendations is to reduce what are, in part, high deferment rates and to encourage parents to send their children to school as early as possible. The strengthening of the collaboration between day-care centres for children and primary schools in most of the Länder serves the same purpose. Offers of flexible school entrance phases are being further developed.

Early entrance

All children who have their sixth birthday after the statutory qualifying date as determined by the Länder may be permitted to start school early on their parents' application. Compulsory schooling for such children starts with their admittance.

Deferment of schooling

The conditions for a deferment of school attendance or a postponement of the start of school are regulated differently in the Länder. In most Länder a deferment is possible in exceptional cases if support in a school environment is not expected to create conditions more favourable to the child's development. In some Länder a deferment of schooling is possible only on health grounds.

In the majority of Länder, the children involved may take part in pre-school educational programmes (*Schulkindergarten, Vorklasse, Grundschulförderklasse*). In Berlin, the attendance of a pre-school educational institution for children whose schooling has been deferred is obligatory. If a flexible school entrance phase is in place, where teaching is provided across grades, and which pupils complete in minimum of one year and a maximum of three years, there is no deferment of schooling in some Länder.

Where doubts still remain at the end of the period of deferment as to which school can best support the child, it lies within the responsibility of the school supervisory authority to determine whether the child is entitled to special educational support.

Age Levels and Grouping of Pupils

Primary school pupils (aged six to ten, in Berlin and Brandenburg six to twelve) are normally taught in classes according to age. Lessons are taught in classes organised by grade; in some Länder classes are also organised across grades. In the first two grades especially, most lessons are taught with just a few teachers, particularly the class teacher. It helps pupils become accustomed to school life if they can relate to a small number of teachers rather than having different members of staff for each subject. The principle of class teachers is used to ensure a certain combination of education and teaching, and a consistent pedagogical approach and makes it easier to respond to pupils' individual needs. From grade 3 onwards the children increasingly encounter subject teachers, which helps them prepare for the transition to secondary school where subject teachers are the rule. In addition to lessons according to age group, individual Länder provide teaching for mixed age groups for the first two years of school in particular. In these cases, pupils can pass through the first two years of school in one to three years, depending on their own individual progress.

Organisation of the School Year

With a five-day school week, teaching takes place on 188 days a year on average (365 days minus 75 days holiday, minus ten additional free days, minus 52 Sundays and 40 Saturdays). As a rule, in Länder with a six-day school week, there are two Saturdays per month on which no lessons take place. In this case, the number of days on which lessons are taught increases to 208 (365 days minus 75 days holiday, minus ten additional free days, minus 52 Sundays and 20 Saturdays). However, the total number of teaching hours per year is the same regardless of whether teaching is carried out on the basis of a five-day or six-day week, since the lessons which are held on a Saturday in the six-day week are distributed among the other weekdays in the five-day week.

In accordance with the Agreement between the Länder on harmonisation in the school system (*Hamburger Abkommen*), the school year begins on 1 August and ends on 31 July. The actual beginning and end of the school term depend on the dates of

the summer holidays. Summer holidays have been restricted to the period between mid-June and mid-September for educational, organisational and climatic reasons. Pursuant to an agreement of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder, the six-week summer holidays are fixed within this period in accordance with a rota system, whereby the Länder take turns to have the summer holidays later or earlier. The long-term agreement adopted by the Standing Conference in June 2014 lays down the dates of the summer holidays for all Länder until 2024. Under the rotating system, the Länder are divided into five groups each with about the same population. Apart from the summer holidays, there are shorter holidays which the Länder decide annually on the basis of certain principles and their own considerations. These minor holidays fall at Easter and Christmas. The teaching administration can fix a shorter holiday at Whitsun and in autumn and authorise individual variable holidays to take account of special local situations. The total annual duration of school holidays is 75 working days.

Organisation of the School Day and Week

In grades 1 to 4 of primary education, pupils attend lessons for 20 to 29 periods a week. In most Länder there are 20 to 22 periods in the first year, rising to 27 in the fourth (final) year of primary education. As a rule, each period lasts 45 minutes. Lessons are usually held in the morning, with up to six periods a day.

The weekly teaching periods laid down by the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder for the different types of school may be distributed over five or six days in the week. As a rule, in Länder with a six-day school week, there are two Saturdays per month on which no lessons take place. In most Länder, the responsible Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs has introduced a five-day week for all schools. In some Länder, the *Schulkonferenz* (school conference) may decide the number of days in the school week.

In the primary sector, lesson times are laid down from 7.30/8.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. or 11.30 a.m. (Monday to Friday or Monday to Saturday) for the so-called reliable half-day primary school (*verlässliche Halbtagsgrundschule*).

Provision of all-day education and supervision and supervision of pupils outside lesson times

Changes in children's living conditions have meant that the development and education of pupils before and after lessons as well as in the afternoon have become more important in the primary school too. All-day supervision and care for children aged between six and ten is provided through intramural offers as well as in after-school centres (e. g. *Horte*) run by the public child and youth welfare services. Pedagogical efforts are concentrated on closer cooperation between schools and after-school centres. Intramural all-day education and care offers are to be organised under the responsibility of the head staff and are implemented in many places in cooperation with partners from outside school such as the maintaining bodies of child and youth welfare services or bodies maintaining cultural education, youth sport clubs and parents associations. The pedagogical efforts concentrate on a close spatial and content-related cooperation of the partners.

All Länder are currently expanding their provision of education and care for children outside lesson time. A growing number of primary schools have introduced fixed opening hours (approximately 7.30 a.m. to 1.00/2.00 p.m. depending on local

conditions) so that parents can be sure their children are cared for even outside compulsory lessons. This involves amended school and teaching concepts as well as offering activities which complement lessons and are run by non-school bodies. Participation in the additional activities is usually voluntary. The children are looked after, amongst others, by qualified employees and part-time staff who as a rule are paid by the maintaining bodies providing the care, which also cover the material costs. Parents are normally expected to pay a charge for such services, the actual amount depending on their circumstances. This extra supervision is subject to the consent of the school supervisory authorities in some Länder, particularly where there are provisions for subsidies by the Land. The primary school with fixed opening times (*verlässliche Grundschule*) and the primary school with guaranteed support and surveillance are currently being further expanded.

In all-day schools, an all-day option is provided for pupils pursuant to the nationwide definition of the Standing Conference on the primary or lower secondary level on at least three days a week, comprising at least seven hours daily. There are three different forms:

- in the *fully bound form*, all pupils are obliged to make use of the all-day offer;
- in the *partially bound form*, part of the pupils (e.g. individual class units or grades) commit to making use of the all-day offer;
- in the *open form*, the all-day offer is made available to the pupils on a voluntary basis; registration is usually binding for half a school year.

All-day offers are to be organised under the supervision and responsibility of the head staff and to be carried out in cooperation with the head staff. The activities should be conceptually linked with the lessons. Typical extracurricular offers include learning and practice offers, study periods, homework supervision, learning support and inclination offers, study groups, recreational activities, periods used by the class teachers to settle class business. All-day schools provide a midday meal on the days on which they offer all-day supervision.

Open all-day schools also include those offers that

- provide an all-day option for pupils on at least three days a week comprising at least seven hours a day;
- provide a midday meal for all participating pupils on every day on which all-day schooling is offered;
- the all-day offers are organised under the supervision and responsibility of the school head and are carried out in close cooperation with the school head as well as being conceptually related to the lessons.

The sharp rise in the number of schools offering all-day schooling is reflected in the report *Allgemein bildende Schulen in Ganztagsform in den Ländern in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland – Statistik 2013 bis 2017* – that is available on the website of the Standing Conference. The internet portal www.ganztagsschulen.org provides information on the development of all-day offers in the Länder and on current empirical accompanying research.

In the school year 2017/2018, 68.2 per cent of all public and private primary schools were *Ganztagsschulen*. A total of 41.7 per cent of all primary school pupils were

involved in all-day education – an increase of 1.6 percentage points over 2016. Most of the all-day primary schools in Germany operate in the open form.

5.3. Teaching and Learning in Primary Education

Curriculum, Subjects, Number of Hours

Development of curricula

The material and competences which are important to the educational process at primary school are laid down in curricula, education plans or framework plans which may be subject-related, area-related or interdisciplinary. To implement the *Bildungsstandards* (educational standards) of the Standing Conference for the primary sector, the subjects in the curricula are adapted accordingly. The educational standards binding for all Länder define the objective, whereas the curricula reveal concrete and binding competence expectations for specific subjects. In addition to educational standards, the competencies and goals formulated in the strategy of the Standing Conference Education in the Digital World (*Bildung in der digitalen Welt*) of December 2016 (last amended in December 2017) have led to a review or revision of curricula in all Länder. For further information on quality assurance and quality development by means of educational standards, see chapter 11.2. More detailed information on the strategy of the Standing Conference Education in the Digital World is available in chapter 6.3.

Curricula or education plans for the primary school as well as for other types of school are the responsibility of the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs in the Länder. The curricula or education plans are published as regulations of the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs. They take the form of instructions from a higher authority and, as such, are binding on teachers. It is the responsibility of the head teacher to ensure that the current curricula are taught at his/her school. At the same time, curricula are formulated in such a general way that the teachers can act to perform their pedagogical responsibility. Nevertheless, all the teachers of a specific subject at one school hold conferences to reach a consensus on methods and assessment criteria.

A curriculum or education plan is usually drawn up as follows. Once the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs of a particular Land has reached the decision to revise or completely reorganise a curriculum, a commission is appointed usually consisting in the main of serving teachers, including heads, as well as school inspectors, representatives of the school research institute of the Land concerned and of experts in the relevant disciplines from institutions of higher education. As a rule, it is the job of the commission to devise a curriculum for a certain subject at a specific type of school, for a specific school level or for a type of school. It will then work on a draft. Experience gained with previous curricula is taken into account when it comes to devising new ones. In some Länder curricula are launched on a trial basis before being finalised and becoming universally valid. Finally, there are set procedures according to which the commission may consult associations, universities and parents' and pupils' representative bodies.

As soon as a new curriculum or education plan has been completed and is introduced on a definitive or preliminary basis at schools, the in-service training institutes for the teaching profession maintained by the Ministries of Education and Cultural

Affairs are charged with training teachers to work with it. Textbook publishers also embark on a revision or completely new edition of their titles.

A central database with curricula or education plans for schools providing general education is accessible on the website of the Standing Conference (www.kmk.org).

Subjects

The primary school curriculum covers in particular

- German
- Mathematics
- General studies
- A foreign language
- Art
- Handicrafts/textile design
- Music
- Sports
- Religion or Ethics

Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary work is the driving force in the context of all subjects. German, mathematics and general studies hereby form the core subjects in primary school.

The educational standards of the Standing Conference for the primary sector (grade 4) in the subjects German and mathematics are the bases for the subject-specific requirements on teaching in primary schools in all Länder. The educational standards describe the competences including defined sub-competences that a child should usually have acquired at the end of grade 4 in the core areas of the subjects German and mathematics. At the same time, they provide a clear orientation for individual support.

The challenge for both lessons concentrating on a specific subject or area and cross-disciplinary classes is to find appropriate and manageable requirements for every child on different competence levels. The pedagogical diagnostics and the counselling and support for especially gifted pupils as well as for pupils with reading and spelling or calculating difficulties based on this are among the tasks of primary schools or special diagnostic centres. Primary schools receive professional support in the field of diagnostics and counselling from school psychologists, school social workers, child and youth welfare organisations, the school doctor service or special education institutions.

Foreign language teaching

Foreign language lessons are already provided in the primary sector in all Länder. In most Länder compulsory foreign language lessons begin in grade 3. With competence-oriented foreign language lessons in primary school the Länder follow the principle of learning language using real-life situations, authentic language and action-based methods. Learning is also based on specific fields of experience, the everyday world, and the cognitive potential of the children, and initiates the first steps towards automation and linguistic reflection. These are also facilitated by bilingual lessons, which have been greatly developed in recent years. In most Länder bilingual lessons are offered at individual primary schools, sometimes in addition to regular lessons and sometimes as an integrated concept. As the Standing Conference stated in its

“Recommendations on work in the primary school” (*Empfehlungen zur Arbeit in der Grundschule*) from June 2015, bilingual teaching and learning in primary education also form the basis for viable bilingual concepts of secondary schools.

The basis for the definition of the final qualification level in foreign language learning from primary education through to upper secondary level is the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), with its defined competence levels. Foreign language lessons at primary schools are based predominantly on competence-oriented curricula (framework curricula, core curricula) or education plans which – in line with the recommendations adopted by the Standing Conference to strengthen foreign language skills (*Empfehlungen zur Stärkung der Fremdsprachenkompetenz*) – are oriented towards the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and the recommendations for the primary sector. The target level for functional communicative competences at the end of grade 4 is geared to CEFR level A1. This competence level describes an elementary use of language. The pupils can communicate in a simple manner, understand and use everyday expressions and very simple sentences.

For compulsory foreign language lessons in primary school the Länder predominantly offer the languages English and French taught in the entry-level classes of the secondary general education schools. Lessons are also offered in the languages of the neighbouring countries (Danish, Dutch, Polish, Czech) and in the languages spoken by immigrants (e.g. Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Turkish) or in the settlement areas of minorities (e.g. Sorbian or Wendish) or regionally (Frisian, Low German).

Alongside compulsory foreign language lessons, the Länder also offer additional optional lessons to learn languages of the country of origin, languages of neighbouring countries and languages of encounter.

The report “Foreign languages in primary school – state of play and concepts 2013” (*Fremdsprachen in der Grundschule – Sachstand und Konzeptionen 2013*) published by the Standing Conference provides an overview of the areas of competence and expectations as regards the curricula, and the range of languages on offer, and also the organisational structures of foreign language lessons in the primary schools of the different Länder.

Cross-curricular topics

Apart from the subjects that have already been named, comprehensive educational areas have been adopted in the curricula or education plans of the Länder in different ways. The Standing Conference emphasises the significance of these topics in schools through resolutions and recommendations on individual lesson contents. The following overarching lesson contents play a role in teaching at primary schools: intercultural education, education for sustainable development, language education, MINT education, values education, aesthetic education, democracy education, Europe education, health education, culture education, media education, human rights education, road safety education, economic education and consumer education. More detailed information is available in chapter 6.3.

Besides, in recent years, the curricula or education plans of the Länder have increasingly taken into account the concept of lifelong learning. The acquisition of fundamental knowledge, abilities and skills, as well as the acquisition of a knowledge that

will serve as an orientation aid for further learning, together with the development of key competences, have become main educational objectives.

Teaching Methods and Materials

Staff at primary schools face the challenge of providing high-quality teaching characterised by efficient classroom management, a supportive teaching climate and multi-variant cognitive activation. The class teacher principle as a constitutive element of work at primary schools is in a well-balanced relationship to the expertise of the teaching.

The quality standards for teaching at primary schools include on the one hand an efficient classroom management with rules and disturbance prevention that affect behaviour, a teaching climate conducive to learning with a constructive treatment of errors and cognitive activation. On the other hand, this also calls for structure and clarity with professional correctness.

The teaching staff involve their pupils in planning, carrying out and analysing lessons in a manner appropriate for their age and makes their experiences, questions, concerns, knowledge and competences the starting point for lessons. They are also allowed to participate in organising school life through project-oriented initiatives and interdisciplinary projects. This participation in lessons encourages responsibility for one's own learning process and performance motivation. Furthermore, in order to do justice to the specific way in which primary school children think and experience things, a holistic approach is the principle of teaching in primary schools.

It is the task of the teachers' conference to select textbooks from the regularly published lists of textbooks which are, as a rule, approved by the Ministry. The use of digital media (multimedia) and the internet is becoming increasingly important, both as a teaching aid and as something to be taught and learnt. The latest information about the use of online resources in teaching and internet projects can be found on the Education Servers provided by the Länder Ministries which is accessible via the national information portal maintained by the federal and Länder authorities, the German Education Server (www.eduserver.de).

5.4. Assessment in Primary Education

Pupil assessment

Competence-oriented learning calls for corresponding forms of performance assessment. Competence-oriented feedback in the course of the learning process provides information on how far the individual child has progressed along the path to the target competences at the end of a learning pathway. It is the basis of the assessment. Feedback instruments include competence-based reports, observation sheets, learning development reports, learning diaries, portfolios. Children and their parents are provided with regular information on the next learning steps in counselling and learning development talks. This feedback takes place according to transparent criteria and illustrates the individual progress and standard competence level that has been achieved.

The teaching staff familiarise pupils with self-assessment instruments and encourage them to reflect on their learning pathways and results in a manner appropriate for their age and development. They therefore successively strengthen them in their

self-assessment competence and enable them to set their own goals and to see external assessments as an opportunity for learning.

Altered forms of learning in the Grundschule are contributing towards a better understanding of what is conducive to learning, and of assessing pupil performance. The focus has shifted to encouraging each individual pupil to achieve all that he or she is capable of – guided by the learning requirements for the respective school grade. In order to do this, it is necessary to monitor the individual development and performance of each pupil on a constant basis, as well as their working and social behaviour, and assess these factors comprehensively.

Educational progress is normally examined by constant monitoring of the learning processes and by the use of oral and written controls. In grades 1 and 2, the focus is on direct observation of the pupils. In grade 3, pupils also begin to be familiarised with written tests in certain subjects (especially German, *Sachunterricht* and mathematics).

Assessment is always based on the standards indicated in the curricula or education plans and the knowledge, abilities and skills acquired in class. Assessment is carried out by the teacher responsible for lessons, who is responsible educationally for his or her decision.

In most Länder, for the first two grades of primary school this assessment takes the form of a report at the end of the school year describing in detail a pupil's progress, strengths and weaknesses in the various fields of learning. At the end of grade 2, or sometimes later, pupils start to receive their reports at the end of each half of the school year with marks, which enable the individual pupil's performance to be recorded and placed in the context of the level achieved by the entire teaching group, and thus a comparative assessment to be made. In addition to the marks awarded for the individual subjects, the reports can also contain assessments concerning participation in class as well as work-related and social conduct within the school.

Pupils experiencing difficulties with reading and writing or in mathematics are generally subjected to the same assessment standards that apply for all pupils. Compensation for any disadvantages and deviations from the basic principles for surveying and assessing performance generally take place in primary schools.

Progression of pupils

All children automatically move from grade 1 to grade 2 at the primary school. In some Länder there is a flexible school entrance phase, where teaching is provided across grades, and which pupils complete in minimum of one year and a maximum of three years. As a rule, from grade 2 of the primary school onwards each pupil is assigned to a suitable grade depending on his or her achievement level, either by being promoted a grade or by repeating a grade. The decision whether or not to move a pupil to the next grade is based on the marks achieved in the pupil's school report (*Zeugnis*) at the end of the school year.

Pupils who are not moved up have to repeat the grade they have just finished. Under certain circumstances, a pupil may also repeat a grade even if a decision has been made to let him or her move up from that grade at the end of the school year. On the basis of the total number of pupils in the primary sector, 1.0 per cent of pupils repeated a class in school year 2017/2018.

Certification

There is no leaving examination at the end of primary school, and, as a rule, pupils are not awarded a leaving certificate. However, at the end of grade 4 (or grade 6) pupils do receive a report for that year. Exceptions are the Lander Baden-Württemberg and Rheinland-Pfalz, where a leaving certificate is issued at the end of the *Grundschule*. There only pupils who have not achieved *Grundschule* target outcomes at the end of grade 4 receive a report. The transition from primary school to one of the secondary school types is regulated differently according to Land law. For further information, see chapter 6.2.

5.5. Organisational Variations and Alternative Structures in Primary Education

Pupils who are not ready to go back to school following hospital treatment may receive lessons at home. Teachers of the school type which the pupil is to attend after his or her convalescence are employed to this end, thus effectively working towards the pupil's reintegration.

Pupils who cannot attend school for a longer period or even permanently, due to illness, without requiring hospitalisation, should also be taught at home. This depends on their ability to follow lessons. This, and the pupil's physical capacity, is certified by a doctor.

As a rule, International Schools in Germany cater for primary as well as secondary school pupils. There are also three European Schools, which offer bilingual lessons in various languages.