



COUNTRY PROFILE: SPAIN

1. Basic information

Country name: Spain

Structure of inspectorate: Spain's inspectorate (and the whole educational system) is organised not centrally but by regions. Every region has its own inspectorate with its own regulation and standards, but there is a central Education Ministry which provides the basic common regulations and carries out the inspection of Spanish schools abroad.

Age of inspectorate: The Ministry's inspectorate is the oldest in Spain and used to be the only one before the regional inspectorates were created 20 or 30 years ago.

Size: The Ministry has 12 inspectors and a central/policy staff with 2 members.

Remits: We inspect all types of education under the university levels: nursery, primary, secondary, vocational schools... Most of them abroad but also some schools in Spain that are under the direct responsibility of the Ministry (for example, military academies or mobile schools within circuses, as well as the cities of Ceuta and Melilla, in the north coast of Africa). We also inspect the administrative staff and advisors working at or with those schools.

Unit of inspection: We inspect schools, groups of schools and educational programs abroad and provide two national inspectors (nursery/primary and secondary) for the European Schools system.

Relationship with government: We belong to the Spanish Education Ministry and work under its direct authority, in a unit called "Subdirección General de Centros, Inspección y Programas".

Accountability: The Spanish education regulations establish that we must draw annual and multiannual plans and account for them in a yearly report which is presented at the beginning of every school year.

2. Evaluation process

Self-evaluation: At the beginning of the evaluation process, we provide institutions and individual teachers with self-evaluation templates in order to produce reports that will be used in the process.

What do we examine during inspection? During inspections we look at legal compliance and examine documents (programs, lesson plans, examinations and, in general, everything that has to do with pedagogical matters). We generally do not look at finances. We observe lessons during the evaluation of teachers and schools and meet with the management, middle management, coordinators, advisors and representatives of parents, teachers and students.

Do we have an inspection framework? Is this a quality or compliance model? We have inspection frameworks for the different types of schools and educational programs and they combine both quality and compliance models. Our reports aim at quality development and also point at non-qualitative standards, in order to detect and improve them.

Inspection time and resource. Our inspections may last several days (usually not more than one week) or just one or two days, according to the objective of the inspection, and can be carried out by a single inspector or a team. Inspectors are always former teachers and therefore have the qualifications and experience of teachers.

Frequency of inspections: We have inspection cycles determined in our multiannual plan, lasting 4 years. They are mainly thematic and quality inspections, but they can also be risk-based inspections, after assessing the information provided by the annual accountability documents of the schools: school plan, school guide, special needs provision plan, financial report and the school's internal quality evaluation report (self-evaluation report), as well as complaints from parents, teachers, students and other stakeholders. A lot of inspections are due to the statutory evaluations of teachers.

Main business: Further to inspections, we are also involved in the selection of teachers for Spanish schools abroad, selection of headmasters, organization of baccalaureate examinations, complaints examinations, disciplinary processes and measures and teachers induction and in service trainings. In the case of European Schools inspectors, we are responsible for some subjects (Spanish L1-L4, Geography), participate in the boards of inspectors and carry out whole school inspections of European Schools in teams with inspectors from other member states. We also give pedagogical advice to directors, teachers and other school stakeholders.

3. Consequences of inspection

Reporting: Our reports are addressed to the authorities of the Education Ministry, but we also send a summary of our main findings and recommendations to the management of the institutions, so that they can take them into account and implement them.

Grade: We do not grade institutions and therefore we do not offer any rewards to them for getting top grades or punishments for getting the lowest, but we may send warnings to them if their performance is too poor and encourage excellence and good practices.

Knowledge sharing: Every year we produce a final report with the activities and the main findings of inspections which is published internally within the ministry. We also produce thematic reports which are shared with other units (financial and human resources units, for example).

What happens following an inspection? As a result of inspections schools may shut down or new ones may be created, but this is not a very usual case. Headmasters or teachers and other members of staff may be dismissed, if they show a very weak performance. They are assessed by inspectors every 2 or 3 years, according to the cases.

What is the stated purpose of our inspectorate? In our inspectorate, we believe that inspectors are the "eyes and ears" of the educational authorities so that they can take the right decisions in order to improve schools and guarantee a good level of quality in education.