In Norway, there is a long tradition for combining primary and lower secondary education in a comprehensive and compulsory school system with a common legislative framework and a national curriculum. This chapter will deal with both levels in a single structure.

From 1997 Norwegian children start school during the calendar year of their sixth birthday. Compulsory education covers 10 years and comprises two stages:

- Primary stage: grades 1-7 (age 6-12)
- Lower secondary stage: grades 8-10 (age 13-16).

No formal division is made between the stages. Some schools cover all compulsory education, while others are purely primary schools or lower secondary schools.

The Knowledge Promotion is the latest reform in the 10-year compulsory school and in upper secondary education and training. It introduces certain changes in substance, structure and organisation from the first grade in the 10-year compulsory school to the last grade in upper secondary education and training.

One of the main goals of Knowledge Promotion is to help all pupils to develop basic skills that will enable them to participate actively in a knowledge society. The Norwegian school system is inclusive; there must be room for all. Everyone is to be given the same opportunities to develop their abilities. The Knowledge Promotion, with its special emphasis on learning, is meant to help ensure that all pupils receive an adapted education.

The reform took effect in autumn 2006 for pupils in grades 1-9 in 10-year compulsory school and for pupils in their first year of upper secondary education and training (i.e. the 11th grade).

The main points of the Knowledge Promotion reform are:

- Basic skills (the ability to express oneself orally, the ability to read, numeracy, the ability to express oneself in writing, and the ability to use digital tools) are given priority and greater attention, as they are important for pupils’ professional and personal development. Basic skills are integrated in curricula for all subjects in all grades.
- The number of lessons in primary school, especially in the first four grades, has been increased in order to improve the pupils’ basic skills.
- Subject curricula are clarified to express clear objectives specifying the level of competence expected from pupils at each level.
- In order to create better continuity and teacher cooperation in primary education, the division in elementary stage (grades 1-4) and intermediate stage (grades 5-7) is removed.
- In order to allow for increased flexibility in the organisation and customisation of the education, up to 25 % of the number of lessons in each subject at all levels can be used more freely
A Quality Framework defines the principles for developing optimal learning environments and learning achievements.

- In order to achieve quality development, schools must be able to recruit competent, committed and motivated teachers and school management. Entrance requirements have been introduced for general teacher education. School owners will be supported by national authorities in competence development for teachers, head teachers and school administrators, including further education for teachers in priority subjects.
- Schools will have increased flexibility in how they organise cooperation with parents.
- Cooperation between schools and the local business community will be further stimulated.

The national curriculum for Knowledge Promotion which encompasses the 10-year compulsory school and upper secondary education and training as a whole was implemented from 2006/2007. The natural progression and coherence between compulsory schooling and upper secondary education and training has been made evident, and subject curricula are continuous for the entire period of schooling wherever possible. It is possible for lower secondary pupils to study parts of subjects taken from ordinary upper secondary curriculum.

A separate curriculum is designed for Sámi Knowledge Promotion to be used in Sámi administrative districts.

**Specific legislative framework**

Public primary and secondary education are administered and managed according to the [Education Act, Act No 61 of 17 July 1998](#). The Act concerns primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education in publicly maintained schools and training establishments unless otherwise specifically laid down.

The Act concerns private primary and lower secondary schools that do not receive state support pursuant to the [Private Education Act](#) and private tuition at home at the primary and lower secondary levels.

For education designed specifically for adults, for which the municipality or county authority is responsible, chapter 4A in the Education Act shall apply.

Private primary and secondary education are regulated by the [Act on Private Schools](#), Act No 84 of 4 July 2003.

The National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion [2006](#), with status as a regulation, includes the following:

- The Core Curriculum
- The Quality Framework
- Subject curricula
- A Framework Regulating the Distribution of Periods and Subjects

The Core Curriculum for Primary, Secondary and Adult Education (1993) has been retained as the general part of the Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion. The main aims stated in the Core Curriculum are something to work towards and to measure progress by.

The quality framework summarises and elaborates on the provisions in the Education Act and its regulations, including the National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion in Primary and Secondary
Education and Training, and must be considered in light of the legislation and regulations.

**General objectives**

The Education Act ([1](#)), Act No 61 of 17 July 1998, relating to primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education, gives all children the same statutory right to 10 years of schooling. According to the Act, the objectives of education and training are:

"Education and training in schools and training establishments shall, in collaboration and agreement with the home, open doors to the world and give the pupils and apprentices historical and cultural insight and anchorage.

Education and training shall be based on fundamental values in Christian and humanist heritage and traditions, such as respect for human dignity and nature, on intellectual freedom, charity, forgiveness, equality and solidarity, values that also appear in different religions and beliefs and are rooted in human rights.

Education and training shall help increase the knowledge and understanding of the national cultural heritage and our common international cultural traditions.

Education and training shall provide insight into cultural diversity and show respect for the individual's convictions. They are to promote democracy, equality and scientific thinking.

The pupils and apprentices shall develop knowledge, skills and attitudes so that they can master their lives and can take part in working life and society. They shall have the opportunity to be creative, committed and inquisitive.

The pupils and apprentices shall learn to think critically and act ethically and with environmental awareness. They shall have joint responsibility and the right to participate.

Schools and training establishments shall meet the pupils and apprentices with trust, respect and demands, and give them challenges that promote formation and the desire to learn. All forms of discrimination shall be combated."

The school environment is of great importance to pupils’ well-being and learning results. Chapter 9a of the Education Act ([1](#)) establishes that "all pupils in primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schools are entitled to a good physical and psycho-social environment that will promote health, well-being and learning". The schools must work systematically to follow up the pupils’ school environment and implement measures to comply with the requirements of the Education Act. ([1](#))

The goal of Knowledge Promotion is to help all pupils to develop fundamental skills that will enable them to participate actively in our society of knowledge. The Norwegian school system is inclusive; there must be room for all. Everyone is to be given the same opportunities to develop their abilities. The Knowledge Promotion, with its special emphasis on learning, is meant to help ensure that all pupils receive a differentiated education.

The Learning Poster, as part of, the Quality Framework, includes 11 basic commitments, mandatory in all primary and lower secondary schools (as well as in upper secondary schools and apprenticeship training work-places. All schools shall:

- Give all pupils an equal opportunity to develop their abilities individually and in cooperation with others.
- Stimulate pupils’ motivation, perseverance and curiosity.
Stimulate pupils’ development of their own learning strategies and of their capacity for critical thought.
Stimulate pupils’ personal development and identity, and assist them in the development of ethical, social and cultural competence, and democratic understanding and participation.
Encourage pupil participation, and enable pupils to make conscious value judgments and decisions on their educational needs and future work.
Promote adapted teaching and varied working methods.
Stimulate, exploit and develop the individual teacher’s competence.
Contribute to teachers being evident leaders and role models for children and young people.
Ensure that the physical and psycho-social learning environment promotes health, joy and learning.
Prepare for cooperation with the home and ensure parents’/guardians’ co-responsibility in the school.
Prepare for the local community to be involved in education in a meaningful way.

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