Curriculum, subjects, number of hours

At primary school teaching is based on educational programmes. The Education Act distinguishes:

- **the state educational programme** and
- **the school educational programme**.

The harmony between the State and school educational programme is controlled by the State School Inspection. These school programmes are worked out in *curricula, syllabi and educational standards*. The state educational programmes contain, for example, the name of educational programme, the concrete aims of education and training, the achievement of the level of education at completing the educational programme, the graduate’s profile, educational standards, framework teaching plans, etc. The school educational programme contain the name of the educational programme, definition of their aims, level of education to be achieved upon its completing, the very orientation of the school, length of the study, language of instruction, *teaching plans and curricula*, and the like.

On the 6th February 2015, The Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic approved [the new state educational programme for the first stage of the primary school] [1] and [the new state educational programme for the second stage of the primary school] [2]. It was put into practice in September 2015.

**The educational standards** are a constituent part of the state educational programmes, they contain a set of requirements for adoption of knowledge, skills and abilities that the children and pupils should receive to be able to continue in education related to the next part of educational programme or to be able to obtain the level of education. There are the following educational standards for children and pupils:

- performance standards which determine criteria of the level of mastering the knowledge, skills and abilities,
- content-based standards which determine the volume of required knowledge and skills.

**The framework curricula** for primary education (ISCED 1) and lower secondary education (ISCED 2) became valid. They are a part of the state educational programmes; they contain area of education and a list of compulsory and optional subjects defining minimum number of teaching hours within the whole educational programme or of its coherent part. Framework curricula determine:

- minimum number of lessons for the whole educational period,
- number of optional lessons for the whole educational period,
• maximum number of lessons in a week for one grade.

Curricula are a part of school educational programmes and develop framework teaching plans of the state educational programmes according to individual grades defining the total weekly number of lessons per given grade of the school educational programme. Curricula are a part of school educational programmes. They define educational aims, content and range of teaching individual subjects according to teaching plan.

The individual types and kinds of schools will prepare the curricula at least in the scope set by educational standard of the state educational programme.

The scope of modification of teaching plans and drafting curricula must agree with the respective educational standards.

The framework plans and pattern syllabi development is a responsibility of the National Institute for Education [3] (ŠPÚ). In co-operation with different curricular review groups, teachers and methodologists it submits proposals of framework curricula and pattern syllabi to the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of Slovak Republic for approval. The approved framework teaching plans and curricula are binding. The schools which are not capable to work out their own syllabi, may use pattern syllabi.

The teaching plan sets up compulsory and non-compulsory subjects, the number of weekly hours and total number of hours per year. Other non-compulsory subjects may be introduced according to pupils’ interests and the school conditions. Schools have a possibility to prepare curricula for optional subjects too.

The basic pedagogical documents include the educational standards. Along the teaching plan and curricula, they manage and regulate education in individual subjects. The educational standard comprises the content and performance part. The content part defines the elements of the basic subject matter in individual thematic wholes. It represents the part of subject matter that should be made available to every school and all pupils. The performance part of the education standard is comprised of requirements for pupils’ knowledge and skill – that is the new part of the subject matter that should be acquired by all pupils, be it on qualitatively different level.

To satisfy specific interests and abilities of pupils there are teaching plans with the extended lessons of mathematics and science subjects, sport preparation, foreign language/s, technical education, art and music, regional education, extending the history teaching in relation to the school region within the framework of available hours in individual grades.

The school may organize with an informed consent of the pupil’s guardian a ski training or snowboard training, swimming training, school trips, excursions and schools in nature. Pupils who will not take part in the aforementioned activities will be provided with substitution teaching.

Teaching of children of foreigners and immigrants

The basic prerequisite for integration of foreigners with a refugee status on the territory of the Slovak Republic is the appropriate knowledge of Slovak language. To this end the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic will provide, free teaching of Slovak for the refugees placed in the integration centres. The aim of this instruction rests in achievement of basic communication skills to enable oral
The basic school of art - teaching plans

Teaching plans specify

- the subjects instructed in the branches and concentrations,
- hour load of different subjects,
- length of study and
- recommended age for the admitted applicants.

The contents of education in individual subjects are determined by curricula.

In addition to the above curricula in the teaching process of basic schools of art there are also curricula with aesthetic-educational specialization that allow versatile development of pupils through development of pupil's talent in the dominant field of art and, simultaneously, he/she obtains the knowledge and develops his skills in other fields of art at basic school of art.

Areas of education and the respective subjects of the 1st stage of primary school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational area</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slovak language and literature</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Language and communication</td>
<td>National minority language and literature</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mathematics and work with information

Man and nature

Man and society

Man and values

Man and the world of work

Art and culture

Health and movement

Mathematics

Informatics

Elementary Science

Natural Sciences

Elementary Science

Homeland study

Ethic education/Religious education

Work education

Music education

Art and craft

Physical and sport education

The educational areas are intertwined by cross-sectional themes to extend the basic subject matter. They may be instructed within the framework of individual subjects or in the form of courses, eventual, independent optional subject.

Transversal topics

- Personal and social development
- Education for marriage and parenthood
- Environmental education
- Media education
- Multicultural education
- Traffic education – education on safety of the road traffic
- Protection of life and health
- Regional education, traditional folk culture

The current educational documentation issued by the ministry of education is available at website of the Ministry of Education [4], Science, Research and Sport [5] and the website of the National Institute for Education [3].

Framework curricula for primary schools of the State educational programme - ISCED 1, ISCED 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational area</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>State educational programme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>primary education</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language and communication</td>
<td>Slovak language and literature</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English language</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Subject</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Man and nature</strong></td>
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<td>Elementary Science</td>
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<td>Chemistry</td>
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<td>Biology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homeland</td>
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<td><strong>Man and society</strong></td>
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<td>History</td>
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<td>Geography</td>
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<td>Civics</td>
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<td><strong>Man and values</strong></td>
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<td>Ethic education/ religious education</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mathematics and work with information</strong></td>
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<td>Information science</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work education</td>
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<td><strong>Man and the world of work</strong></td>
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<td>Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Art and culture</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Music education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education by art</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Health and movement</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical and sport education</td>
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<td><strong>Total compulsory part</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Optional lessons</strong></td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total: compulsory part + optional lessons</strong></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Teaching methods and materials**

Teachers use various combinations of teaching methods. Each of the teaching method is applied depending on the aim of the lesson, the content of subject matter, and age peculiarities, etc. The teachers should encourage their pupils for contests, exhibitions, subject Olympiads, sports competitions, especially those which are aimed at development of their talent, gifts, independent creative skills and abilities.

For example, at the foreign language classes it is recommended to use European language portfolio, to prefer innovative methods and forms of teaching, such as

- the creation of conceptual maps,
- project learning,
- content and language-integrated learning (CLIL),
- cascade learning and teaching approach,
- learning stations,
• in lower grades to make use especially of lexical approach (Total Physical Response),
• game as a motivation didactic method,
• creative experience methods,
• in upper years personalized teaching,
• staging methods,
• role tasks ensuing from experience possibilities of pupils,
• directed and free discussion, solution of problem tasks and audio-/video-presentation task solution, etc.

From among common, traditional methods a mention should be made of oral, object-demonstrative, practical, productive, motivational, exposition, fixation, diagnostic and application methods. Recently, the following techniques have been much used in schools: co-operative learning, group work, work at the round table, brainstorming, face-to-face work and jigsaw groups. The headteachers are advised to promote teaching strategies, methods and procedures (interactive experience classes, project classes, and the like), which interlink the teaching and life, and develop the pupils’ competences.

Implementation of innovative pedagogical methods using information, communication and digital technologies in schools should be favoured. Great attention should be paid to the protection of children using internet. It is recommended to use supplementary digital educational content approved by the State pedagogical institute. Schools are recommended to take part in international school partnerships.

The headteachers are recommended to encourage involvement of their teachers and pupils in competitions oriented at development of their gifts and talents, independent creative professional theoretical skills and abilities and various events connected with deepening their knowledge and skills and with preparation for career choice. Further, to create conditions for realization of classes and extra-curricular activities in school library. To actively support and build-up school library as:

• information, communication and cultural centre of the school;
• mediateque which disposes of media versatile fund,
• centre of readers and reading,
• place of teaching and training.

To implement elements of reading and information teaching into time-thematic plans of all subjects. At the first stage of primary school to strengthen first of all the reading literacy. At the second stage to create conditions for development of methods of individual study and use of other information sources.
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