

COMPULSORY-SCHOOLS IN REYKJAVÍK



In 1996, Reykjavik City took over the operations of compulsory schools from the State. Around a third of compulsory school students in Iceland are enrolled in Reykjavik's schools and as the country's largest municipality the city has considerable responsibilities towards the nation as a whole. The compulsory schools in Reykjavik have undergone rapid developments and vast changes in recent years and are now considered among the best in Iceland, as well as abroad.

When the operations of the compulsory schools were transferred to the municipalities, comprehensive work began on policy making and systematic development in the schools' operations. This included the development of teaching practices from classroom based teaching towards individualised and cooperative learning. The lengthening of the school day as per legislation was an important factor in this regard. The schools' autonomy was increased, a system of framework funding was implemented and the schools' administration was strengthened with middle management. Support for students was improved in the form of school counselling and added special education. These changes encouraged continuing education of teachers with regards to individualised and cooperative learning and inclusion. In the wake of these changes, and with the city's policies as a guideline, a quiet revolution is now taking place in Reykjavik's compulsory schools.

In the next few years, the main task in Reykjavik's compulsory schools will be to develop still further working practices that take into account individualised and cooperative learning and inclusion.

A measurement tool has been developed in collaboration with the principals of Reykjavik's compulsory schools allowing them to evaluate their schools' progress towards individualised learning.

The purpose of it is to make it easier for each school to evaluate its position and help the staff to plan subsequent steps.

The most recently built compulsory school in Reykjavik, Ingunnarskóli, was designed and organised according to individualised and cooperative learning. Educational authorities placed considerable emphasis on the fact that this new school should be in line with developments in education at the beginning of 21st century.

