



## SHORT DAYS, HIGH ACHIEVEMENT: BASIC EDUCATION IN FINLAND

Results from the PISA survey by OECD have confirmed time and time again that the educational out-comes of the Finnish basic education system are among the very best in the world. Despite their level of achievement, Finnish children and youngsters do not spend an extraordinary amount of time at school; their school years and especially school days are, in fact, considerably shorter than those in the high-ranking Asian educational systems. The nation also does not spend exorbitant amounts of money in basic education; adjusted for purchasing power, the per-student spending in primary education is actually slightly below OECD average.<sup>1</sup> The knowhow that has made this possible forms the cornerstone of the educational expertise available at FinnWayLearning.

<sup>1</sup> *Education at a Glance 2013: OECD Indicators*. OECD Publishing; available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2013-en>





## Fundamental Value: Equal Opportunity for All

In Finland, all children have the right to free, high-quality basic education. In addition to lessons and learning materials, basic education schools (primary and lower secondary schools) also provide students one free meal a day.

All Finnish basic education institutions are publically funded; most are maintained by local authorities or joint municipalities.

## School Years and School Days in Finland

A Finnish school year consists of 190 school days. National legislation limits the maximum length of a school day to



5 lessons (á 45 minutes) for first- and second-graders, and 7 lessons thereafter. The typical length of a school week ranges from 19 (grades 1–2) to 30 lessons (grades 7–9); the amount of homework assigned is modest, and out-of-school lessons are rare and consist almost exclusively of remedial education. Despite this, the educational attainment of Finnish youth rivals that of their peers in Eastern or Southeastern Asia, where school days are often dramatically longer and out-of-school lessons common.

## The Finnish Recipe: Get Great Teachers...

A master's degree is a requirement for teachers at all levels of basic education. Teachers in primary education (grades 1–6) are class teachers with a degree in education. Lower secondary teachers (grades 7–9) specialize in a small number of subjects (typically 1–2). Their master's degree has to include at least bachelor-level studies in the subjects they teach; additionally, they must have completed a pedagogical training program for teachers (60 ECTS credits).

## ...And Let Them Loose

One unique feature of the Finnish system is the high degree of freedom given to schools and individual teachers. The national core curriculum sets a loose framework within which each teacher is free to choose his/her own pedagogical methods and materials.

The real secret to success? Training teachers to use that freedom effectively.

## What FinnWayLearning can offer

- study visits covering any aspect of Finnish basic education (prices start at €1000/day for a group of 10 or less)
- teacher and specialist training
- expert consultation

Please contact us to find out more!



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