

## Internationalisation

The international dimension plays a great role in teaching English as a foreign language. That is the reason why Danish schools should engage in school partnerships with schools in other countries. The language association wants to promote the learning of languages in a more authentic context.



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark welcomes you to Denmark's official web site: <http://denmark.dk>

Sproglærerforeningen: <http://www.sproglærerforeningen.dk>

Danish Ministry of Education: <http://eng.uvm.dk>

Official description of Denmark: <http://www.um.dk/en>

## Denmark

### Teaching English In the Folkeskole



#### General information:

The Folkeskole is the Danish, municipal, basic school which offers 9 years of comprehensive primary and lower secondary education and a supplementary optional 10<sup>th</sup> year.

The Folkeskole, as we know it, was founded in 1814, when 7 years of compulsory education was introduced. In Denmark it is education - and not schooling - that is compulsory between the ages of 7 and 16 (after 9 years of education). As a consequence of that Danish parents can choose whether their children should attend the Folkeskole, a private school or be taught at home. Denmark has about 5.5 million inhabitants, approximately 10% of which are immigrants. Consequently the pupils constitute a relatively homogenous group.

## The Aims of the "Folkeskole"

(1)

The Folkeskole shall – in cooperation with the parents – enhance the pupils' acquisition of knowledge, skills, working methods and ways of expressing themselves and thus contribute to the all-round personal development of the individual pupil.

(2)

The Folkeskole shall endeavour to create such opportunities for experience, industry and absorption that the pupils develop awareness, imagination and an urge to learn, so that they acquire confidence in their own possibilities and a background for forming independent judgements and for taking personal action.

(3)

The Folkeskole shall familiarise the pupils with Danish culture and contribute to their understanding of other cultures and of man's interaction with nature.

The school shall prepare the pupils for active participation, joint responsibility, rights and duties in a society based on freedom and democracy. The teaching of the school and its daily life must therefore build on intellectual freedom, equality and democracy.



## Sproglærerforeningen-

## The Danish Language Association

This is an umbrella organization for teachers of English, German and French in the Danish Folkeskole. It has a large number of members who teach English as a foreign language. The association supports and develops foreign language teaching in Denmark. Members are offered courses which present the newest tendencies in language teaching. In addition a language journal, called "Sproglæreren", is published 4 times a year. Among other things this periodical portrays the ongoing debate among language teachers, and it includes reviews.

The association wants to further the following ideas:

- English should be introduced earlier than the 3<sup>rd</sup> class
- German or French should start in the 6<sup>th</sup> class
- All pupils should be offered a 3<sup>rd</sup> foreign language
- The pupils should get thorough information about the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> foreign languages.

The language association wants to achieve that as many pupils as possible should be offered as many foreign languages as possible. Furthermore future language teachers should enjoy the possibility for absorption during their education, and educated language teachers should have access to additional education. They should also have the opportunity to visit the countries in which English, German or French are spoken.

## The Teaching of English

English is compulsory for all pupils from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> class in the Danish school system. A second foreign language is required for admission to upper secondary school and that may either be German or French, which is offered from the 7<sup>th</sup> class.

English lessons per year (60 minutes):  
3<sup>rd</sup> class: 60, 4<sup>th</sup> class: 60, 5<sup>th</sup> class: 90, 6<sup>th</sup> class: 90, 7<sup>th</sup> class: 90, 8<sup>th</sup> class: 90, and 9<sup>th</sup> class: 90

## School-Leaving Examinations

Examinations are offered at two levels - the Leaving Examination after the 9<sup>th</sup> class and the Leaving Examination after the 10<sup>th</sup> class. Standard rules for all examinations ensure uniformity throughout the country. For the same reason, the papers for the written examinations are set and marked centrally. Examinations are compulsory. Each examination subject is assessed on its own merit; results cannot be summed up to give an average mark.

## A Communicative Language Teaching

The Danish educational system focuses on communicative language teaching. It places great emphasis on oral proficiency, and grammar is very often taught in connection with the texts, which are studied in class.

## The Aims of Teaching English as a Secondary Language

§ 1. The aim of teaching English is to enhance the pupils' acquisition of knowledge and skills in such a way that they can understand spoken and written English and can express themselves orally and in writing.

At the same time teaching English must develop the pupils' awareness of the English language and usage including language acquisition.

§ 2. Teaching English shall endeavour to create such opportunities for experience, knowledge and cooperation that the pupils' active participation is furthered.

By these means teaching English must contribute to the pupils' continued enjoyment of and preoccupation with language and culture as a means of encouraging their continuous development.

§ 3. Teaching English must contribute to the pupils' awareness of cultural and social conditions in English-speaking countries and must hereby strengthen their international and domestic understanding.



## **No School Failure**

The main rule is that a pupil attends a class with pupils of the same age. School failure is an almost non-existing phenomenon in the Danish Folkeskole. In its section 12, the Act on the Folkeskole makes it possible – with the consent of the child's parents – to repeat a school year, i.e. if the pupil has been away for a longer period of time or other reasons make this relevant. Children have the choice to attend a pre-school class. If a child is not found ready after this year to enter school, it may stay for another year in the pre-school class.

## **The Class Teacher System**

The class teacher concept has its roots far back in the Danish school tradition. The class teacher is the teacher among the teachers of a class who has the main responsibility when it comes to monitoring and supporting the subject-specific and social development of the pupils. The class teacher is to ensure coherence and progression in the entire teaching of the class. The class teacher has a central role when it comes to the pupils and the school-home cooperation. The tasks of the class teacher are mentioned in the Act on the Folkeskole. The class teacher has a coordinating role when it comes to the organisation of the teaching, the organisation of the interdisciplinary teaching and the obligatory topics. The class teacher plans and organises the teaching in cooperation with the other teachers of the class and is a key person in connection with the requirement about differentiated teaching and the evaluation of the pupils' benefit from the teaching.

## **Challenges for the Individual**

### **Differentiated Teaching**

#### **Formation of Teams**

The Folkeskole is an undivided (comprehensive) school, where the formation of classes takes its point of departure in the age of the pupil - and not in the subject-specific proficiency of the pupil. In order to give all pupils in the Folkeskole the best possibilities to have an all-round development and learn as much as possible, the Folkeskole builds on the principle of differentiated teaching. The teaching is organised in such a way that it both strengthens and develops the individual pupil's interests, qualifications and needs and so that it contains common experiences and situations providing them with experience which prepare them for cooperation on the performance of tasks. The Act on the Folkeskole provides a further possibility to sustain the principle that all pupils should be given adequate challenges, as the teaching can take place in teams for part of the time in order to make it possible to take the point of departure in the individual pupil's prerequisites and current level of development.

#### **Formative Evaluation**

In the 1st to 7th classes, information is given either in writing or more usually verbally in the form of meetings in which all three parties - pupil, parents and class teacher – take part. In the 8th to 10th forms, the information system is extended to include a written report at least twice a year giving the pupil's attainment in academic achievement and in application. This only applies to the leaving examination subjects, where pupils will be marked according to a 13-point marking scale.

In addition to this, a number of other meetings take place throughout the primary and lower secondary span of both a more social and a more progress-related nature.