

Moscow City, Russian Federation

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Introduction

Overview of Education System

In accordance with the current Law of Education (amended on December 30, 2021),¹ the Russian education system has become more decentralized in decision making and financing procedures. Education policy is developed at the national level (the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation) and implemented at the regional and local levels under the supervision of federal authorities.

Education in the Russian Federation is divided into general education, vocational education, additional education, and vocational training, providing education opportunities throughout life (lifelong education).

In Moscow, the Department of Education and Science of the City of Moscow carries out public administration of education. It implements the state education policy, taking into account Moscow's regional socioeconomic characteristics; ensures the education system functions according to the interests of the residents of Moscow; and ensures the constitutional right to education.

General education in Moscow is provided by major multiprofile education complexes, which implement programs of preschool, primary, basic, and secondary general education; additional education for students and adults; secondary vocational education; as well as educational programs adapted for students with disabilities that consider their psychophysical development and individual capabilities. One of the goals of the Moscow state program Development of Education of Moscow (Metropolitan Education) is “the complex development of the network of educational institutions to ensure the availability of preschool, general and additional education, regardless of the territory of residence and health status.” Large education complexes are able to provide neighborhood residents with a full range of services.

During the implementation of the state program Metropolitan Education, the distribution of administrative responsibilities between the Department of Education and Science of the City of Moscow and educational institutions has changed. The Department of Education and Science of the City of Moscow provides conditions—including the rules, monitoring systems, and incentives for development—and defines the general education policy, while educational institutions play a key role in managing their own development according to the interests of Moscow families. Teachers carry out the education process directly, and school staff work together as a well-

coordinated mechanism. The head of the educational organization is obliged to form an effective team of teachers and administrators.

The Moscow education system prioritizes the following areas of activity and development:

- Ensuring the availability of high-quality education and each child's success, both in the learning process and in later life, in today's rapidly changing high-tech world
- Creating technical and technological conditions for access to sources of reliable and up-to-date information on all branches of science and technology, as well as the use of new electronic educational resources and manuals in the learning process
- Large-scale provision of individualized education paths through improved organization of specialized, preprofessional, and vocational training in accordance with the requests of society and the state

In Russia, a program to support reading in children and youth² has been implemented until 2026. Within this program are educational programs to support reading in general education institutions, and information and methodological support for extracurricular activities. The publication and distribution of children's literature are supported, and professional and additional educational programs in the field of philology and pedagogical education (including one for preschool education), as well as systems for teacher education, have been updated.

Use and Impact of PIRLS

In 2016, Moscow took part in PIRLS as a benchmarking participant for the first time. The results of the study helped identify areas for improvement for Moscow fourth graders in reading literacy.

Methodological work was carried out with teachers and deputy school principals on improving students' reading literacy. Teachers had professional development in the methodology of teaching reading literacy in the classroom and in extracurricular activities.

Evaluation tools similar to those used in international comparative studies are being developed. Independent regional assessments of reading literacy are carried out systematically, and methodological materials are being developed for monitoring at the school level.

The Language/Reading Curriculum in Primary Grades

The students who took part in PIRLS 2021 studied literary reading in accordance with the Federal State Educational Standard (FSES)³ of primary general education, adopted in 2009 and entered into force on January 1, 2010. The main educational program is developed by each educational organization itself in full compliance with FSES.

The literary reading program,⁴ taught in all primary schools, includes the following mandatory components:

- Methods of reading and understanding texts, including reading literary and scientific texts silently and aloud; understanding the content and the main idea of texts; answering questions regarding the content of texts; and drawing up a simple plan for retelling
- Orientation of the reader in the world of books, including folklore, fairy tales, myths and legends of the peoples of Russia and the world, Russian classics (from the list of books for children's reading), and modern Russian literature; foreign literature; children's newspapers and magazines; bibliographic information (e.g., author, title, abstract, and content); and dictionaries and reference books
- Special knowledge in literature, for example, understanding different genres of works (e.g., short stories and fairy tales, fables, poems and poetry, novels, and plays); specific forms of folklore (e.g., riddles, tongue twisters, songs, and proverbs); the topic of texts (the main idea, plot, and personality and behavior of the character); linguistic means of expression in texts (e.g., epithets, comparisons, sound organization, and rhymes in poetry)
- Language development, including various types of speech activity: listening, speaking, reading, and writing; understanding the purpose of the text (e.g., narration, description, or reasoning); etymology of the Russian language; emotional and stylistic coloring of speech (e.g., expressive reading, storytelling, speech etiquette); demonstration of understanding through retelling; and creating a coherent story about the main characters, as well as a summary of students' own impressions of the text

The purpose of literary reading in primary school is to form reading competency at a young age and self-awareness as a literate reader capable of using reading activity as a means of self-education. Reading also is aimed at stimulating students' creative abilities and developing awareness of their own personality.

The FSES also specifies the requirements for meta-subject results, which should reflect the acquisition of skills to read and understand the meaning of texts of different styles and genres; to use verbal expression consciously according to purpose; and to prepare texts in oral and written forms.

For primary education, the FSES also includes the study of the intersubject program Development of Universal Learning Skills (ULS), including its section Reading. Working with a Text. According to the section Reading. Working with a Text, when receiving primary general education, students acquire skills to work with information as they read age-appropriate literary, educational, scientific, and informative texts, as well as instructions. Students learn to read texts consciously to satisfy cognitive interest, comprehension, and use of information. Graduates will master elementary skills of reading information presented in a visual and symbolic form as they gain experience working with texts containing drawings, tables, diagrams, and schemes. When working with a text, the following areas are emphasized: information retrieval and reading comprehension, transformation and interpretation of information, and evaluation of information.

On September 1, 2022, there will be a new education standard for schools that is focused on the application of acquired knowledge and specific skills. The standard sets requirements not only for the subject, but also for the meta-subject results to master the curriculum. They include working with information: the ability to choose the source of information and find the necessary information in it, determine its reliability, comply with information security rules when searching for information on the internet, analyze and create textual and nontextual information, and create diagrams and tables for presenting information.

Professional Development Requirements and Programs

In accordance with the current Law of Education, teaching staff have the right to additional professional education in pedagogy at least once every three years. Funding is provided by targeted subsidies through educational organizations in which teachers work.

The minimum requirements for the content and level of additional professional education programs for retraining and professional development of teaching staff are approved at the national level.

Completing the professional development programs involves developing a number of competencies. Teachers who have completed the programs should implement all new state education trends in their daily work at school.

Professional development programs include:

- Educational activities based on modern achievements in psychological and pedagogical science and practice, and technologies in a specific branch of knowledge (science) and subject area
- Design of the education process as a whole and individual training sessions based on system-activity and competence-based approaches using innovative forms, methods, tools, and technologies
- Planning what students should learn from educational activities, as well as the methods and tools for assessment

Professional education is carried out both in person and remotely. Training is conducted by organizations that are licensed to provide additional professional education. After passing inspection and being approved, the programs are available on a public portal.^a The teacher and the educational organization have the right to choose a professional development program themselves.

Some examples of reading programs that are being implemented in Moscow for primary school teachers include the following:

- **Reading practices at school in the context of forming functional literacy.** Teachers learn modern approaches to the formation of reading literacy and the assessment of semantic

^a See www.dpomos.ru for more information about the portal.

reading skills with texts of different natures, and the peculiarities of functionally oriented work with the text, taking into account the subject being studied and the age of students. Teachers learn how to organize the education process based on working with texts of different formats.

- **Functional literacy. Development of reading literacy at the primary education level.** Teachers learn the typology and types of tasks to determine levels of reading literacy, and criteria for evaluating the results of tasks on international studies that assess reading literacy. Teachers also learn how to create classes in Russian language and literary reading that are focused on the development of reading literacy.
- **Formation of the basics of functional literacy of primary school students.** Teachers learn the principles of analyzing and selecting educational tasks aimed at the formation of reading literacy and planning lessons and activities for students using these tasks.

Monitoring Student Progress in Reading

In Moscow, a monitoring system has been introduced to support the education process. The monitoring system is focused on achieving new education results and is requested by the school: An intraschool monitoring system and independent assessments allow the school to assess its strengths and weaknesses objectively and make necessary methodological, organizational, and staff decisions.

The development of a regional system to evaluate the quality of general education is one of the priorities for developing education in Moscow. The regional system of evaluation serves to:

- Provide information about education achievements—including data about achievements from different periods of time—to different groups, including parents
- Identify factors affecting the quality of education and ensure well-informed management decisions
- Enable public evaluation of education quality by the state

The Moscow regional system of independent evaluation of education achievements is based on the principles of:

- Strict compliance with all requirements and procedures for conducting diagnostic assessments, including the mandatory presence of an independent observer, to ensure the reliability and validity of results
- Standardized requirements for results of compulsory as well as regional education based on regional measuring criteria
- The division of assessment procedures into those based on voluntary school participation and those based on mandatory participation

The Moscow system of independent evaluation includes mandatory independent assessment of students' education achievements in fourth grade. Assessment tools developed by the Moscow

Center for Quality of Education for fourth grade students include the complex assessment of meta-subject (cognitive) skills formation; the assessment of reading, science, and mathematical literacy; the assessment of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) competencies; and the assessment of communicative and regulatory ULS.

Within the framework of intraschool monitoring, diagnostic assessments are carried out annually at the end of the school year on literary reading in Grades 1 and 2 and on reading literacy in Grades 3 and 4 (the end of primary education).

Diagnostic assessments in Grades 3 and 4 are aimed at determining the formation level of cognitive ULS for working with information and reading. Diagnostic assessments are carried out in paper or computer format (at the choice of the school). Recently, more and more diagnostic assessments have been computer based.

The results of the diagnostic assessments are posted in the school accounts on the portal Moscow Register of Education Quality and are available to teachers and the administration of the educational institution. The portal allows them to view and analyze the results, and subsequently adjust the educational program of primary education, as well as create an individual development trajectory for each student to increase the level of achievement.

The results of the diagnostic assessments are available to the parents of each student in an electronic diary, which allows them to receive objective information about their child's achievements.

Special Reading Initiatives

As part of the Strategy⁵ of the State Cultural Policy for the period up to 2030, a National Program for the Support and Development of Reading has been adopted. The purpose of this program is to increase reading competency as a set of knowledge and skills that allows a person to select, understand, and organize information presented in printed (written) form and successfully use it for personal and public reasons.

The educational project Meaningful Reading is being implemented in Moscow schools to help students form critical thinking skills and improve their reading literacy, and to teach students to analyze different types of texts quickly and focus their attention on the text content when distractions occur.

Moscow schools have created opportunities for students from various social groups to receive equal education. Primary school students who demonstrate high achievement can study according to an individual curriculum and complete the primary school program in three years. To eliminate gaps in achievement, differentiated training is organized for individual groups of students, taking into account their academic performance and education needs.

The resource Digital Tutor has been created on the Moscow Electronic School (MES) platform to help students from low-income families make up for potential deficits in key subjects. The work is carried out with a teacher in small groups using video conferencing.

Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

Teaching and Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic

In the spring of 2020 (from March 16 to May 31), Moscow's educational institutions (including primary school) moved to remote instruction. Instruction was organized using remote technologies (Zoom, Microsoft Teams, G Suite, Google Classroom, Google Meet, Skype). Standby teams were organized for primary school students whose parents could not stay at home with them. Remote classes with speech therapists, psychologists, and correctional teachers were organized for students in need of psychological and pedagogical assistance.

Classes were held remotely for all students within the framework of additional education, for example, creative contests, reading contests, chess, online theater studios, and sports.

During the 2020–2021 academic year, classes with sick students who had contact with classmates moved to remote instruction for a two-week period. During the period of temporary remote instruction, systems to facilitate education were implemented.

To ensure education stability for all families during the pandemic, students who needed electronic devices were provided with appropriate equipment (Moscow schools have provided more than 18,000 students with laptops and tablets). In addition, class teachers were able to supervise students remotely.

Examples of electronic platforms and resources that have been used to support remote education include:

- Moscow Electronic School
- Moscow Educational TV Channel
- Online school of Pedagogical Mastery Center
- The My Skills service
- Distance and e-learning portal distance.mosedu.ru
- Russian Electronic School

The following events were organized in an online format:

- Online courses to prepare for the Olympiads
- Methodological support of specialists in education and socialization
- Virtual museum tours
- Online meetings with figures of science, culture, and business

The Moscow Electronic School (MES) originally was developed to organize face-to-face teaching. Its main service is the MES Library, which compiles digital educational materials and

tools. The service is offered in a web version and in the mobile application MES Library. The library materials are available online free of charge to any user from anywhere in the world. During the pandemic, the MES was modified accordingly for online training. It includes a video conferencing system as well as a new type of content: video tutorials (video explanations of the main issues of the school curriculum lasting up to 12 minutes).

In Moscow, care also was taken to preserve the health of teachers during the pandemic: Older teachers and teachers with chronic diseases taught remotely. To help the teams of schools in which some teachers only could work remotely, the city project A Substitute Teacher was launched, which allowed the full-fledged education process to continue in Grades 1 to 5 by increasing the number of substitute teachers available.

Impact of the Pandemic on PIRLS 2021

While conducting PIRLS 2021 in Moscow schools in April to May, all sanitary and epidemiological conditions were met. Makeup testing sessions were organized for more than 2,000 students who were ill or in contact with others who were ill. Due to the quarantine of individual students, some schools were unable to conduct the study on schedule. In these cases, the terms were extended by two weeks.

Suggested Readings

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- ⁴ Approximate basic educational program of primary general education. Retrieved from <http://fgosreestr.ru/uploads/files/4ba622f374f8aa3b2fbfc64ff7d7922d.pdf>
- ⁵ Strategy of the State Cultural Policy for the period up to 2030. (2016). Retrieved from <http://static.government.ru/media/acts/files/0001201603040022.pdf>