

PARENTS' FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS, ANSWERED AT A GLANCE



With one wheel (one language), wheels you can go from place to place. you



With one big and one small wheel (one good and one not so good language), you can go farther and faster.



With two equal-sized (two strong languages), can comfortably go anywhere you want!

The following is a selection of some of the most frequently asked questions posed by parents of children learning an additional language. The list is not exhaustive and we have attempted to answer them as succinctly as possible. If you have any more questions that you feel have not been addressed by this FAQ sheet or the Dual Language Programme handbook, please let us know!

- **What teaching methods are used in additional language learning?**

Here are some of the key elements of the Dual Language Programme:

1. The four modes of language, listening, speaking, reading and writing are taught as an integrated whole and not in isolation. The children participate in many “hands-on” activities in small groups. They are not passive members of the group, but actively participate in a variety of tasks, such as singing, performing role-play, playing games, reading and writing, sharing ideas, discussing, doing arts and crafts, etc.
2. Team teaching is common in the dual-language Programme. At ISS BaSICS both the English and German teachers are present in the classroom at the same time. The teachers may be working parallel, i.e. they are teaching the same activity, but with different groups of children (Guided Reading is a good example here). The teachers may be working as a team, with one leading a session and the other supporting. The teachers do not translate for each other.
3. The children are viewed as a language resource. All children are both native speakers and additional language learners. One may be a native speaker of English and an additional language learner of German, another child may be a native speaker of German and learning English as an additional language. All children are present in class and can learn from each other. This interaction is planned for, encouraged and a fundamental part of the dual language Programme.
4. Language is taught through content. There are no “traditional” foreign language lessons in terms of learning isolated grammar and word lists. Every effort is made to connect the children’s language learning to their interests and to motivate the children to use their new language skills in meaningful situations.

- **How much support will my child receive?**

This varies depending on which language is the mother tongue and which is the additional language, as well as the needs of the individual children. At ISS BaSICS German is the language used in both Art and P.E. The German teacher is then assigned up to 14 periods to a class and is responsible for the German language teaching of all the children in that class, supporting the mother tongue and additional language learners. The individual needs of the children are then taken into consideration when planning the teaching time. At ISS BaSICS English is generally the language of the class teacher, who supports both the mother tongue- and additional language learners in English. English is the medium of instruction in Drama and Music.

- **How is my child assessed?**

There is no one method of assessment used at ISS BaSICS, no one test can be applied to a child to determine their stage or level. Assessment is viewed as an ongoing process. Through daily contact with the child in small group learning situations and by collecting and analysing work, teachers gain a comprehensive view of the child's additional language development. ISS BaSICS has developed an "Additional Language Developmental Continuum," which can be used as a tool to plot a child's position on the "additional language learning map".

- **How will I be informed of my child's progress?**

A formal written report is sent home with the child twice a year at the end of each semester. In addition to this, there are Parent-Teacher conferences: once in the Fall and then in Spring/Summer, as well as "portfolio sharing" between the children and their parents. The portfolio-sharing is a special occasion where the children are able to share their learning with their parents. Furthermore, class "End-of-Unit" presentations take place throughout the year and offer informal opportunities to gain an insight into the child's progress. We highly value open communication with parents and therefore, if you have any queries or concerns, please feel free to contact us.

- **How important is Mother Tongue support?**

Parents can play a crucial role in supporting their child's language learning at ISS BaSICS by maintaining and developing the child's proficiency in the mother tongue. This can be achieved by speaking the mother tongue, providing reading material in the mother tongue, etc. Research shows that students learn an additional language more effectively if they maintain proficiency in the mother tongue.

- **How will my child best learn?**

It is our firm and basic belief that children will learn best in a place where they feel happy, accepted and safe. At ISS BaSICS we strive to provide such an environment where each child can achieve their best, e.g. by encouraging children to take safe risks, providing for a wealth of language opportunities, differentiating according to children's capabilities and pursuing children's interests.

FURTHER QUESTIONS? PLEASE CONTACT US, WE ARE HAPPY TO TRY TO HELP.