INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF MOROCCO

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Language policy

Mission statement

The International School of Morocco prepares students to succeed as responsible global citizens in an ever changing, increasingly interdependent world. We achieve this through adherence to high standards of academic excellence and a dedication to modeling and promoting principles of respect and integrity.

The UK National Curriculum aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end, the school works within national frameworks to develop challenging programs of primary education and rigorous assessment.

These programs encourage students to become active, compassionate, and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.

Philosophy

At ISM, we create a multilingual environment. We believe that the ability to understand and communicate in multiple languages helps children to formulate their cultural identity and participate in a global community.

We work in partnership with families to encourage and support mother tongues in order to develop self-confidence and provide all students with a firm linguistic foundation on which to develop skills and build their English fluency. This collaborative approach helps our students become confident communicators who are open-minded to the world around them.

At ISM, teachers, students and parents share the responsibility for every student's language development. All teachers are language teachers as language transcends curriculum areas. By reflecting on their practice, our educators ensure pupils develop into thoughtful reflectors and thinkers in every subject.
Our students come from diverse backgrounds and represent multiple countries, cultures, and languages. Generally the population is about 95% local and 5% international. Over 95% of our population speaks English as an additional language. French and Arabic are the predominant mother tongues.

English is the primary language of instruction under the UK National Curriculum framework. However, students are also encouraged to inquire in their mother tongue and aspire to multilingualism, embodying the traits of being principled global citizens who are willing to take intellectual risks as risk-takers.

ISM students have the opportunity to study at least three languages. All primary school students take both French and Arabic courses beginning in Early Years, for a average time of 3 hours of instruction per week in each language. Exceptions may be made for students with other mother tongues or specific language needs (see Mother Tongue and SEN below).

We promote inquiry-based language learning daily across the curriculum. Students are provided with numerous opportunities to use and refine their language skills throughout the day through engagement in authentic inquiries and discussions, cooperative learning strategies, structured learning activities and less formal interactions with adults and classmates.

We ensure consistency of practice through regular interdisciplinary collaboration. Teachers coordinate and collaborate in order to provide unity in subject matter instruction and to develop core content vocabulary in all languages.

Students are expected to use the language of instruction while in the classroom unless translations are needed in order to understand instructions or content. Outside the classroom students find a comfortable common language that changes from group to group. As a multilingual community we model and respect the ways in which we use our various languages. Language skills must be used to include, not exclude. Examples of using language to include others might be finding a common language for play or break time chats so that everyone can participate. Examples of using language to exclude might be speaking a different language to block someone from participating in a conversation or social activity or making derogatory comments about a bystander.

Learner profile

Language learning at ISM integrates the school's Learner Profile traits. Students become familiar with the vocabulary of the learner profile through direct instruction and activities integrated into Key Stage units and schemes of work throughout the year, reinforcement, and reflection in class and throughout the school day by both teachers and peers, and feedback provided in school reports to build balanced and knowledgeable pupils.

Admissions requirements

ISM may accept students without English language experience through **Year 5**. In **Year 6** applicants will be required to demonstrate increasing levels of English language fluency, as demonstrated by an English language proficiency assessment administered by ISM.

Language acquisition

Students' language skills in English, French and Arabic are assessed upon admittance to the school and at regular intervals thereafter for purposes of placement, instructional planning, and reporting.
English language learners who are as yet unable to access the full academic curriculum in English receive specialized instruction in English language acquisition from qualified staff. This may be in-class or co-teaching support or individual or small group instruction outside of the regular class.
Students are placed in Arabic and French language classes according to their level of fluency; with flexible groupings with differentiated instruction to allow for students to progress to more advanced classes as their fluency proficiency increases.
Students who enter the school with a level of English at 2 (beginning) or below, for whom the mother tongue is other than French or Arabic, and who have no prior experience with

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those languages, may not be placed in French and Arabic courses. Instead they may receive additional English language support until deemed appropriate to have them join one or both host country languages. Once they have met the following criteria they may be placed in one or both of the host country languages:

- The student's listening comprehension of texts is within 2 levels of grade expectations. For example, if the grade level expectation is level Q then the student should be able to comprehend a text at level O or higher.
- The students' English language level is equivalent to a high developing/fluent EAL tier**.**
- The student is meeting or approaching expectations in writing in English.
- No additional language or learning difficulties seem to be present.

Mother tongue

It is expected that parents will continue to provide mother tongue support for students in the home, particularly in homes where English is not the primary language spoken.
Expat parents planning to return to their home country who wish to provide mother tongue language support for their child/children during school hours may do so with approval from the ISM leadership team. These courses may replace one of the host country language courses.

Assessment

The teachers at ISM School believe that all teachers are language teachers - regardless of subject. Language learners are assessed against the same content and with the same standards as their peers. EAL students may also be assessed in their mother tongue in order to gain a more accurate evaluation of their understanding of the content and skills.

Special Education Needs (SEN) support

Evaluation of student SEN is intertwined with the student's language acquisition. Careful monitoring of each student's progress in the acquisition of English language skills and of subject knowledge and understanding will be necessary to confirm that no learning difficulties are present, in alignment with the UK SEND Code of Practice.

Review process

This policy will be reviewed according to the regular whole-school curriculum review cycle, to be led by the Director and Learning and Teacher Leader**.**

References

- Department for Education (2014). *National curriculum in England: languages programmes of study*. London: DfE.

- Department for Education & Department of Health (2015). *Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years*. London: DfE/DoH.
- International Baccalaureate Organization (2013). *The IB learner profile*. Cardiff: IBO.
- Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, power, and pedagogy: Bilingual children in the crossfire*. Multilingual Matters.

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