



PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAMME
EC 1 - Grade 5 CURRICULUM GUIDE



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INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL BASEL

MISSION AND MISSION GUIDING STATEMENTS

MISSION

“We all want to learn more;
We all do it in different ways;
We all have fun learning;
We all help.”

- *ISB Student*

MISSION GUIDING STATEMENTS

“We all want to learn more”

- We support all our students to achieve educational excellence by discovering and developing their academic potential
- We foster the curiosity and creativity of each individual
- We empower our students to be future-ready, global citizens
- We encourage learning as a lifelong pursuit

“We all do it in different ways”

- We value inclusion of all learners
- We innovate and adjust our approaches to teaching and learning to address student needs
- We celebrate diversity as a strength and promote equal opportunity for all

“We all have fun learning”

- We offer an all-round education that serves the needs of the whole child
- We provide stimulating, connected, and relevant service learning opportunities within and beyond the classroom
- We inspire a sense of wonder in the world and optimism for the future

“We all help”

- We create safe, caring, and affirming learning spaces for our international community
- We cultivate collaborative, supportive, and positive partnerships
- We nurture the values of care, compassion, and responsible action
- We respect our personal, local, and global environments



THE IB PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAMME (PYP)

The International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (PYP) is designed for students aged three years to twelve years. The programme provides a relevant, engaging, challenging and significant educational framework for all children, focusing on the whole growth of the developing child, encompassing social, physical, emotional, academic and cultural needs. The PYP prepares students to become active, caring, lifelong learners who demonstrate respect for themselves and others and have the capacity to participate in the world around them.

IB LEARNER PROFILE

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world. The IB Learner Profile is the IB mission statement translated into a set of learning outcomes for the 21st century. The attributes are values that should infuse all elements of the IB programmes and, therefore, the culture and ethos of all IB World Schools. We believe these attributes can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities.

As IB learners we strive to be:

Inquirers

We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

Knowledgeable

We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

Thinkers

We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

Communicators

We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

Principled

We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

Open-minded

We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

Caring

We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.



Risk Takers

We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

Balanced

We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

Reflective

We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

THE CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

In the PYP, a balance is sought between acquisition of essential knowledge and skills, development of conceptual understanding, demonstration of positive attitudes, and taking of responsible action. In order to achieve this balance, the curriculum framework consists of five essential elements: concepts, knowledge, skills, attitudes and action.

Knowledge

Significant, relevant content we wish the students to explore and know about, taking into consideration their prior experience and understanding. Knowledge is both disciplinary, represented by traditional subject areas and transdisciplinary. The curriculum identifies a body of knowledge for each of the six core subjects of Language, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Arts and Physical, Social and Personal Education (PSPE).

Concepts

Powerful ideas that have relevance within the subject areas but also transcend them. Students explore concepts through structured inquiry in order to develop coherent, in-depth understanding, and which have relevance both within and beyond subject areas.

Skills

Those capabilities that the students need to demonstrate in order to succeed in a changing, challenging world. These skills may be disciplinary or transdisciplinary in nature and support student learning in life beyond the classroom.

Action

Demonstrations of deeper learning in responsible behaviour through responsible action. Student action is a manifestation in practice of the other essential elements. Within the PYP framework there is an expectation that successful inquiry leads to responsible, thoughtful and appropriate action.



A CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACH

The PYP is committed to structured, purposeful inquiry that engages students actively in their own learning. The programme supports students' efforts to construct meaning from the world around them by:

- drawing on their prior knowledge
- providing provocation through new experiences
- providing opportunities for reflection and consolidation.

This approach respects students' developing ideas about how the world works. It encourages them to question, consider and refine their understanding of the social and natural world.

THE PYP TRANSDISCIPLINARY THEMES

Learning is organised around six transdisciplinary themes which are considered worthy of inquiry regardless of the age of the student and are used to guide the teachers in designing the Units of Inquiry. Students study a sequence of transdisciplinary Units of Inquiry during the school year based around the following organising themes:

Who we are

An inquiry into the nature of the self; beliefs and values; personal, physical, mental, social and spiritual health; human relationships including families, friends, communities, and cultures; rights and responsibilities; what it means to be human.

Where we are in place and time

An inquiry into orientation in place and time; personal histories; homes and journeys; the discoveries, explorations and migrations of humankind; the relationships between and the interconnectedness of individuals and civilizations, from local and global perspectives.

How we express ourselves

An inquiry into the ways in which we discover and express ideas, feelings, nature, culture, beliefs and values; the ways in which we reflect on, extend and enjoy our creativity; our appreciation of the aesthetic.

How the world works

An inquiry into the natural world and its laws; the interaction between the natural world (physical and biological) and human societies; how humans use their understanding of scientific principles; the impact of scientific and technological advances on society and on the environment.

How we organise ourselves

An inquiry into the interconnectedness of human-made systems and communities; the structure and function of organisations; societal decision-making; economic activities and their impact on humankind and the environment.

Sharing the planet

An inquiry into rights and responsibilities in the struggle to share finite resources with other people and with other living things; communities and the relationships

ASSESSMENT IN THE PYP

Learning is viewed as a continuous journey. Teachers identify students' individual and group needs throughout the learning journey, using a wide range of assessment strategies to collect information on each of the essential elements of the curriculum; i.e. students' understanding of concepts, their acquisition of knowledge, mastery of skills, development of positive attitudes and ability to take responsible action. Teachers use the assessment data to plan the next steps in learning for each student. As well as ongoing teacher assessments, student self assessments form an important part of our assessment practices. Students are taught to reflect on their own learning and understanding of the concepts taught and to identify personal learning goals.

Assessment strategies:

Observations

All children are observed regularly with the teacher focusing on varying aspects of the child, i.e. as an individual learner, as part of the whole class, in a small group situation, and in specific skill development.

Performance tasks

These are goal-directed tasks with predetermined criteria. They require the use of many skills and can be communicated using one's preferred multiple intelligence. They are authentic challenges that children can approach in numerous ways.

Process-focused assessments

Checklists and narrative descriptions are used to focus on skill development. The emphasis is on process and skill application rather than the product.

Open-ended tasks

Students are able to give individual responses to a problem or stimulus. They are required to apply their knowledge and skills to communicate their answers.

REPORTING ON STUDENT LEARNING

We have many different ways for reporting on student learning throughout the year.

Seesaw

We use Seesaw as a digital platform for sharing information about individual and class learning journeys. Teachers and students post regular updates about the learning that is taking place in class. It is vital that parents subscribe to their child's individual Seesaw Journal and to the class Seesaw Announcements so that they receive important information about their child's learning.

Seesaw Journals

Students' individual Seesaw journals document each student's learning journey as the year unfolds. Journals show the development of the essential elements of the PYP -knowledge, conceptual understanding, transdisciplinary skills, and the attributes of the learner profile- over time.

Seesaw announcements

Teachers use Seesaw Announcements to post weekly curriculum updates for parents. Announcements are posted every Friday, and possibly also mid week, depending on what is happening in the classroom that week.

Student Led conferences

These are scheduled through the year and are marked on the school calendar at the beginning of the year. These are formal conferences, led by the students, where students (with support from teachers) report to parents on their learning and their personal goals.

Parent /Teacher conferences

These may be scheduled by either parent or teacher at any time during the year, to discuss the progress or well being of a student. We value close and regular communication between home and school and find it important that these conferences can happen whenever and as often as needed, in response to the particular needs of an individual student or family. In addition to this, the school has set aside Parent-Teacher Conferences in November, and also as part of the March Student Led Conference.

Sharing Learning sessions

These are specific to each class or sometimes year level, and usually happen towards the end of a unit of inquiry, when students are keen to share their new learning with an authentic audience. Sharing Learning sessions are typically planned by students and vary in format depending on the particular unit of inquiry and how and what the students wish to share. Class teachers will do their best to post information about sharing sessions one month before a sharing session is planned. These usually take place at the onset of the school day.

Written Reports

Parents will receive formal written reports twice a year. These written reports should confirm what parents already know about their child's progress. Report cards should not be a surprise in content or achievement, rather they are a written summary of what parents already know from the many other formal and informal reporting sessions during the school year.

HOME PRACTICE

At ISB we believe that learning is enhanced when students make connections between what they are learning at school and their experiences at home. The skills learned at school can be consolidated by practicing these at home. We call this Home Practice. Home practice encourages students to develop independence, habit building and self direction which will support them throughout their lives. Play, after-school activities, family time and exercise are included as learning engagements that are crucial in your child's development.

Home Practice is the most effective when supported by families. Students are encouraged to find practice activities as posted on Seesaw by their teachers. Activities are designed to repeat, practice and consolidate learning from class and children should be able to work independently.

Reading should be part of every student's home learning. Reading at home is an excellent means of developing thinking skills, increasing fluency, developing language skills and helping children develop confidence with their reading. German and Mother Tongue language should also be a regular part of home learning. Ideally, home reading should include three types of books: a book at instructional level, challenging but not more than 5 unknown words on a page; an easier book that the child can read alone; and a book that an adult can read to the child.

How much time each family spends on home learning will vary from family to family and from day to day. As a general guideline, we recommend grade level times ten minutes each day; i.e. 10 minutes in Grade 1, 20 minutes in Grade 2 and so on. We encourage parents to find a balance that works for their family. If you need additional support with Home Practice, please let your child's teacher know so they can help you.

PYP EXHIBITION

In Grade 5, as the final year of the PYP, students carry out an extended, in-depth, collaborative project known as the PYP exhibition. This involves students working collaboratively to conduct an in-depth inquiry into real life issues or problems. Students collectively synthesise all of the essential elements of the PYP in ways that can be shared with the whole school community. The exhibition represents a unique and significant opportunity for students to exhibit the attributes of the [IB learner profile](#) developed throughout their engagement with the PYP. It also provides schools and students with a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the transition of learners to the next phase of their education.

PROGRAMME OF INQUIRY (POI)

The Programme of Inquiry provides an overview of the units of inquiry at each year level throughout the school year. Units of inquiry are developed around a central idea or enduring understanding, underpinned by concepts (in red on the Poi) which drive the inquiries. Lines of inquiry help to frame the students investigations. Units of inquiry last anywhere from four to eight weeks. Teachers keep parents informed about the learning that is taking place as the unit unfolds, through unit overviews at the start of each unit, and class posts on Seesaw.

[Grade Overview ISB Programme of Inquiry 2024/25](#)



IB CURRICULUM

The IB sets forth a philosophy and a set of guidelines within which to teach. As a school, we have created many of our own learning continuums, aligning to this philosophy and to these guidelines. Please see below for our curriculum documents.

LEARNING CONTINUUMS

(subjects reviewed by ISB from EC1 to grade 12)

[ISB English Language Continuum Guide](#) (Phase 1 to phase 4)

[ISB German Continuum Guide](#) (Early phase 1 to phase 3)

[ISB Mathematics Continuum Guide](#) (Phase 1 to phase 4)

[ISB Physical and Health Education Continuum Guide](#) (Phase 1 to phase 4)

[ISB Science Continuum Guide](#) (Phase 1 to phase 4)

[IB PYP Arts Scope and Sequence](#)

For more information on IB philosophy, please visit IBO.org, or contact one of the curriculum coordinators at the school.



SCAN TO WATCH VIDEO:

Welcome to ISB's Early Childhood Programme!





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We all do it in different ways;
We all have fun learning;
We all help.”

- ISB Student

 **ISB**
International School Basel

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