



Language policy statement and aims

As stated in our mission statement, in Platon School we educate students that can communicate in more than one language being citizens of the world. Through language we also promote international awareness. The education provided by our school for this new generation of learners, is based on the profound understanding of the Greek language and culture. The attainment of foreign languages and an appreciation of ethnic cultures in order to promote intercultural awareness and communication for the present and future generations is our philosophy. We want our students to learn to appreciate language and effectively using it as a means of communication and collaboration. Language is learned through practical applications of skills and knowledge and it is everyone's belief that language is fundamental in learning, in all subject-areas. All our teachers are language teachers and all our learners are language learners. Thus, language learning is essential to attaining knowledge and obtaining communication skills.

Our language policy regarding second and third language acquisition, follows the IB mission statement closely and includes tasks, projects and activities which ensure the cultivation of the traits dictated by the student learner profile. Current policies on language learning put forth by the Ministry of education are in accordance with the IB mission in that they support the notion of lifelong learning as well as the need for effective communicators who will one day function as principled citizens. Our teachers aim to instill students with internal motivation rather than just external incentive for learning a second or third language and cultivate students' respect for the culture of the people whose language they study.

Beliefs and practices

Our aim is for the students to graduate to be citizens of the world as stated in our mission statement.

At Platon School we believe that language learning is fundamental for all subjects learning. Language is taught by all teachers and all the time. Creating a language rich environment is fundamental for our student's learning. Discussions, role play, rehearsed and social talk are practices used in our school. Teachers are language models and demonstrate love and respect towards literature. In order to provide our students with an environment rich in Language, we have a big selection of Greek, English, French and German books in our library that students can study at school or borrow them at home. The classroom environment is rich in print tables, teacher and student writing. Students are used in presenting their ideas individually and in groups, orally and in writing. The student portfolios include many examples of written assignments where students demonstrate their thoughts and ideas. Students in Grade 5 (the last PYP Class), complete a story book which they share with the school community. In addition, book writers are regularly invited at the school where they share their writing experiences with teachers and students.

Language scope and sequence

Our Language scope and sequence document is a combination of the aims determined by the Greek national Curriculum and the conceptual understandings as well as the learning outcomes of the IB Language scope and sequence documents. Language is involved in all the learning that takes place in the school and drives the units of inquiry. All language strands: oral (speaking-listening), visual (viewing-presenting) and written (reading-writing) are equally promoted through the different subject areas via techniques of inquiry.

Language assessment

As stated in our assessment policy, assessment is continuous and systematic and we use various tools and strategies in all assessment stages (pre-assessment, formative, summative), in all 3 language scope and sequence strands and for all students' learning needs and styles, both within or outside units of inquiry, and therefore we ensure that assessment will inform each student's language profile and further learning needs.

Assessment documents related to language learning, use our scope and sequence criteria, so as we can assess what we value and at the same time make those criteria's importance even more obvious to our students.

Feedback from pre-assessment, formative and summative assessment tasks, including students' self-assessment and reflection are gathered not only for evaluating students' progress but also for evaluating our teaching as well as our Language Scope and sequence document and also reflecting on the Language policy itself.

Languages of instruction - Additional languages

Our languages of instruction are both Greek (which is the mother tongue of our students) and English. German and French are offered as additional languages.

A. Nursery and Kindergarten:

The students speak Greek amongst themselves and the lessons are done in Greek. From the nursery school, children learn English five times a week. Pre-K students can choose to follow the bilingual program, where they are taught English 15 hours per week.

B. Grades 1-5:

The students in primary school have the lessons in Greek and study English four or five times per week. In grade 3 students can choose to study an additional language, selecting between German and French. Students can choose to follow the bilingual program where they are taught English 12-15 hours per week.

Bilingual programs

In the year 2011, Platon School - implemented bilingual programs in Pre-k, Kindergarten, and throughout PYP years. The bilingual programs teach students the English language 12 to 15 hours per week. All six IB units of inquiry are completed both in Greek and English. The aim of the bilingual program is to offer high education in both the Greek and the English language.

The Bilingual Program is implemented with the use of two parallel approaches: Learning the Language and Learning with the Language.

The first approach Learning the Language involves learning grammar, structure, and vocabulary. These basic skills lead to oral communication, listening and reading comprehension and written expression.

The second approach, Learning with the Language, involves learning disciplines such as social studies, Mathematics, Sciences, Physical Education, Information Technology, Performing and Visual Arts. Learning is accomplished through hands-on activities, group work, songs, games and constructions for the younger students. The older students learn through engaging themselves in projects, working with the community.

Students learn to read, write and communicate in English as if it was their mother tongue. In order to complete the units of inquiry, students work individually and in groups at the school's library and present their work to their classmates and the school community.

In addition, the bilingual programs promote the culture and traditions of the English speaking countries. Learning and celebrating customs and traditions from around the world such as Halloween, St. Patrick's Day, International Language Day, Health and Nutrition Day, International Day of People with Disabilities is also a significant part of the Bilingual Program, enabling students to become more internationally-minded. In addition, the exposure to other cultures teaches them to respect differences and become global citizens. Furthermore, students are trained and prepared for all levels of Cambridge exams, according to the CERF (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages).

Bilingual admissions policy - Language learner requirements

- Grade 3 bilingual class sits for the Movers exams (Cambridge University)
- Grade 4 bilingual class sits for the Flyers exams (Cambridge University)
- Grade 5 bilingual class sits for the KET exams (Cambridge University)

The bilingual program of the our school is offered from the pre-K and runs along with the national curriculum program, having English as its official language. Since the majority of students are of Greek background, English language competence at this level is almost identical among students. However, as the bilingual program develops, students are provided with ample opportunity to broaden their knowledge and communication skills in the English language at a very quick pace.

Therefore, admission in these groups at a later stage is only allowed after the prospective student has taken an oral and written test in English and has gone through an interview session with the program administrator and/or other teachers in the bilingual program. Parents are made aware of these procedures and of the results of the assessment. If the newcomer student has the prerequisites to attend the bilingual class, then, they are admitted and, if necessarily, support classes may be arranged until it has been decided that the student has fully adapted.

Trilingual program

At Platon school, language learning is not completed only in two languages. We try to instill in our students the necessity of speaking a third language by offering French, German, Arabic and Chinese. We aspire that they become not only balanced bilinguals but also trilinguals. Our goal is to promote oral communication and to teach and reflect upon skills that will enable students to express themselves on a regular basis in a third language. Thus, this year we offer the choice of the third language from the first year of primary school in afternoon classes for 3-4 hours per week. Likewise the bilingual program, in the trilingual class, the teaching process is supported by a variety of educational tools, depending on the level of the students. We use daily prompts like

everyday language, daily routines and role-playing. Resources also include foreign language course books, audio-visual material, educational journals, magazines, and dictionaries. Through hands on activities, songs and interesting projects the students acquire not only the basic skills of the language but also the culture of the country. Students are introduced to International customs, traditions and mentality different from their own and thus have a positive attitude towards learning, making them responsible, critical thinkers and international minded individuals.

As educators, we feel it is important that students develop these essential skills that will allow them to live, learn and work in a world that is continuously changing.

Support for non native learners - mother tongue support and support for learners with learning difficulties

Our population mainly consists of students whose mother tongue is Greek. The school, however, has established procedures to support other mother tongue children. In the event a non-greek speaking student enrolls, along with the daily support by the homeroom teacher, regarding Greek Language, the Foreign Language Department in alignment with parents, formulate a program of extra, afternoon classes either on school premises or at home, ensuring that the students receive age appropriate and proper language level learning of their mother tongue.

In addition, students who have difficulties in Language and Speech are supported by the school's SEN team depending on each student's individuality.

The SEN team deals with the cause and instructive correction of any difficulties that influence the student's expression and communication ability. In our school the assessment is done upon the parents' or teachers' request or when the team detects problem in communication or behaviour.

The SEN team approaches students, even from the age of three, by creating an appropriate environment and taking into consideration the children's needs. The cooperation with the educators is important in every case. It is also very important for the students, concerning their emotional well-being, to be suitably supported by their environment (family, friends and educators).

Roles - Responsibilities - Language Policy review

The Primary School Principal, the PYP Coordinator and the PYP educational staff created the language policy so it should be reviewed and revised at the beginning of the school year. The Head of the school and the PYP Coordinator as well as the teaching staff as a whole are responsible for implementing the language policy to the whole school. Teachers communicate the policy to the students and parents and gain the needed feedback to be able to further review and evaluate its general language philosophy, language profile and language policy.

Cross-programme Language Policy continuum

It is our common policy as a school that we teach our students to become citizens of the world and be able to communicate in more than one language. We value the IB learner profile as our bible and try to give all of its values to our students. We instill in them that through foreign languages they gain appreciation of other cultures. Through language teaching we promote intercultural awareness, appreciation, collaboration and communication. As a school we celebrate customs and traditions from all over the world like: Halloween, St. Patrick's Day, International Language day, Health and Nutrition Day, International Day of People with disabilities etc. By promoting these celebrations we promote the culture and traditions of the world. Additionally, we encourage our students to participate in programmes such as COMENIUS and MUNs, which promote internationalism, multi-literacy

skills and attitudes, enabling them to communicate successfully in various global contexts and build intercultural awareness and English Language skills.

It is our firm belief that all teachers are language teachers and our learners are language learners in all domains. All language teachers help and train other subject area teachers in how to teach language or teach through language in their subject areas. Through language our students become lifelong learners, principled citizens and effective communicators. At our school we have a strong bilingual programme from the early years of nursery school until high school, where both Modern Greek and English are taught as mother tongues. This leads to some of our students becoming balanced bilinguals, using both English and Modern Greek at a native speaker's level and being able to follow both Modern Greek and English as a Language A in the IB Diploma years. We also try to instill in them the necessity of speaking a third language by offering French and German as a third language from the first year of elementary school. We aspire that the students become trilingual and have the capacity to follow one of these languages as a Language B in the Diploma years if there is ability and interest. Additionally to the above, we have also added the teaching of Chinese and Arabic in our afternoon classes as mother tongue support languages or additional languages.

Regardless of the fact that the main population of our school consists of students whose mother tongue is Modern Greek, we cater for students whose mother tongue is other than Greek, with the support and collaboration of the homeroom teachers, subject specific teachers, the language teachers and the family. The same policy is followed for students who have difficulties in language and speech, who are additionally supported by the school's SEN team, dealing with their individual difficulties. In the Diploma years we have the ability to offer students the possibility of following a Language A self-taught course in their own mother tongue, with the close observation and support by the school's Language A teachers. We also have the ability to offer students extra time during exams or scribes, if there is a learning difficulty that obliges us to follow this path of learning and assessing. We screen all our

students, newcomers and returning, through oral interviews and written testing.

Apart from the languages mentioned, our school provides our students with the learning of Classical Greek. We do not view the teaching of this language as an obligation forced upon us by the Ministry of Education, but as an opportunity for our students to gain a deeper understanding of their Greek culture and heritage, observe the development and evolution of their language, be exposed to their own history and understand the functions and the structures of the Modern Greek Language. We believe that the acquirement of Classical Greek will aid in the attainment of international scientific, political and philosophical terminology.

Our assessment both formative and summative, places a lot of focus on self-assessment, reflection and inquiry, the development of oral and writing skills and the use of logic and imagination. Together with many other tasks, our students write stories that they present to the school community, and they go through the process of objectively analyzing, organizing and producing texts using language. Students learn how to interpret and construct meaning from spoken and visual texts, convey ideas, values and attitudes and engage in creative and critical thinking. They also learn how to comprehend written and visual text, communicate by interacting on a range of topics and responding to spoken, written and visual text in the target language. Apart from School assessment, students also sit external language based exams as IELTS, FCE, ECCE, CPE, DELF and FIT.