



Languages at BIST - 2022-23

Years 1 & 2

Our Key Stage 1 children participate in Language Fun for 2 lessons per week. Four languages are taught over the school year in rotating blocks of 9 weeks. The languages are Chinese, French, Georgian and German. Georgian first language speakers are taught Georgian as a First Language and those children who are not Georgian language speakers are taught Georgian as a Foreign Language. These are taught separately.

Years 3 to 6

The children in Years 3 to 8 are taught languages for 3 lessons per week. Four languages are taught in rotating blocks of 9 weeks. These languages are French, Georgian, German and Spanish. Georgian is taught at First Language and Foreign Language levels. First Language Russian speakers can opt to follow Russian through an extra-curricular first language Russian club..

Year 7 to 9

At the start of Year 7 students choose their target examination language in preparation for the IGCSE exams. The languages available are French as a Foreign Language, German as a Foreign Language or Spanish as a Foreign Language. These languages are studied for 2 lessons per week in Years 7 and 8 and for 3 lessons per week in Year 9. For one lesson per week, all children are taught Georgian as a First Language or Georgian as a Foreign Language or Russian as a First Language. Parents are asked to choose which of the latter three languages they wish their child to follow. At present there is no external examination available at BIST in Georgian or Russian.

Years 10 & 11

During Key Stage 4 students continue with their chosen examination language in preparation for the IGCSE exams for 3 lessons per week. The students also receive 1 lesson per week of Georgian at either first language or foreign language levels.

Years 12 & 13

At A Level, languages are available. Presently French, German and Spanish are available. Students do not need to follow a language course however. An advanced non-examined Georgian course, to support students who want to access Georgian universities, is available for 1 lesson per week.

Additional English Support

For students, who require additional English lessons, these take place for Year 1 to 9 during the language lessons.

Students new to languages

In Years 7 to 10, a separate option is provided for those students who are not at a level where they can fully access the taught languages. At present this is aimed at developing a student's French language skills with the hope that eventually they can join the mainstream language lessons.

Language Rotations - why?

The decision to have children in Years 1 to 6 rotate through different languages is based on empirical evidence, pedagogical research and a request by parents for the children to be able to study more languages. A growing number of international schools are following similar models. Research into language acquisition and neuroscience at universities in as diverse places as Liverpool, Dublin, Canberra, Toronto and Haifa also support this concept. Meta-analysis of such research suggests that learning multiple languages increases our capacity not only for learning languages, but for all learning. The suggestion being that learning varied languages develops children's cognitive skills as learners. The long term goals of our language programme are to develop learners and their skills in learning and to give them informed options when they approach examination subject choices. Hence we are looking at the 'long game' rather than any perceived short term mastery. It is also important to view the languages programme as a subject like Mathematics or Geography rather than subdivisions like French or Russian. Mathematics in particular has varied 'languages' within it, however in Mathematics we do not concentrate purely on one aspect ('language') of the subject for a whole year. It is also important to consider the concept of 'less is more' within the languages programme. Is it fair, academically sound or practical for a child's academic future to set a language at the age of 7 that they are then 'stuck with' for the rest of their school life? Studying a variety of languages throughout the year allows the excitement of new learning and experiences to continue. There are obviously drawbacks to any model, however here at BIST we feel that our new model best suits the overall learning, experience and enjoyment of our students.