



SPOJENÁ ŠKOLA
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Košická



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LANGUAGE POLICY

At Spojená škola Novohradská in Bratislava we believe that language is a tool to articulate thinking and construct meaning about the world in which we live. It permeates all areas of the curriculum and allows us to communicate our thoughts, feelings and ideas. Learning about language enables our students to appreciate the richness of language, develop a love of literature and recognise the connections between different languages.

Since learning an additional language at an early age helps our students to develop the language centres of the brain, it is crucial that students are exposed to other languages early in their education. This philosophical belief is evident in the way in which we approach the teaching and learning of language in our school.

In accordance with the IB Philosophy, we want our students to become:

Inquirers – They use language as the primary medium of inquiry to learn about language through language.

Thinkers – They use language precisely and skilfully in the context of higher-level thinking. They evaluate information and search for reliable resources. They are able to analyse a problem and find a solution before taking action, using language in various forms.

Communicators – They are confident users of oral and written language forms in a variety of situations. They express themselves confidently and creatively in their best language and also in other languages, in many ways. They use polite and respectful communication in written and oral form when communicating with each other or with people around them.

Courageous/Risk Takers – They are willing to attempt to read, write or speak in situations where they may not feel totally competent.

Knowledgeable – They understand the internal structure of language and the various influences on its development. They have experienced a wide variety of literature. They are aware of using appropriate format and language in a range of disciplines.

Principled – They are aware that language is powerful, that it can have a profound effect and that it must therefore be used responsibly. They follow the rules of acknowledgment of sources and of academic honesty.

Caring – They show responsible, caring attitudes towards the use of language and they value literature for the insight it gives into the feelings of others.

Open-Minded – They respect differences and dialects. They are aware of the use of language as an expression of bias and strive to maintain an objective stance. They are willing to grow from experience.

Balanced – They are aware of the need for an educated person to be an effective communicator. They use literature for learning and leisure.

Reflective – They reflect on their own language development in their mother-tongue and other languages. They consciously work at improving their language proficiency.

We view all members of the school community as essential contributors to the language process. We value the linguistic and cultural background of all members of the school community: teachers, students, families, administration and support staff and agree that language develops international understanding, cultural identity, personal growth and effective communication skills.

The great majority of learners in our school are from Slovak backgrounds with Slovak as their mother tongue. In the English section of the PYP programme, MYP and DP, the language of instruction is English; the language of instruction in the Slovak section of the PYP is Slovak. A further explanation of the approach to languages is detailed for each section later in the Language Policy. Based on the regular review of our learner population, the language policy is modified accordingly.

Principles of Language Learning

We believe that optimal language learning takes place when:

- Students are immersed in a whole language environment that provides a meaningful and purposeful context.
- Students are aware of the authentic reasons for what and why they are learning.
- The students are taught at their developmentally appropriate rate within a supportive learning environment and challenged to achieve their potential.
- Students receive constructive feedback in order to better reflect upon their performance and set future learning goals.
- Assessment of learning is sensitive to, and appropriate for individual needs and learning styles.
- Language is taught holistically.
- Each programme has specific learning outcomes for strands of speaking and listening, reading and writing, and viewing and presenting appropriate to the students' level.
- Students are exposed to inquiry-based authentic learning.

Mother Tongue Support

We understand that the mother tongue is central to development and maintenance of cultural identity, critical thinking, communicative and literacy skills and that it is important to develop foundational literacy skills in the mother tongue. All members of the school community are encouraged to maintain the value of their mother tongue and to value the mother tongues of others.

The school strongly encourages all parents to continue providing instruction of their mother tongue to children, even though we do not offer a language course of their mother tongue. After appropriately developing their mother tongue skills, students have attained high quality general language skills, providing a good foundation for studying all languages, including the school's language of instruction which is English. Appreciation of students' mother tongues increases their self-esteem and makes them proud of their language, country and culture. To facilitate this, the school encourages students to use their mother tongue dictionaries for reference. The school also offers the use of classrooms, after school, to any groups of parents who would like to organise lessons with a teacher that they provide themselves. The school library also keeps resources in the respective students' native languages provided by the parents' communities or the Embassies.

Staff

All teachers of the language department are qualified language teachers with a university degree. Other IB teachers are qualified in their subjects and are fluent in the language of instruction, which is English. Our staff are usually at B2 or C1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, with some staff commanding language at C2 level or are native speakers of English.

Professional Development

All teachers are committed to professional development as language teachers. They cooperate and collaborate to support all aspects of the language teaching. We aim for the IB workshops for every teacher once in three years to support the understanding of language teaching as well as to support our understanding of the IB philosophy.

Language teachers are expected to work collaboratively, share practices and regularly review the standards and expectations for each course. They are expected to meet on a regular basis within their subject groups.

Furthermore, the school encourages all teachers to continue in their language development and to attend language courses and in – school workshops.

Responsibility for Implementation and Overall Regular Revision

At Spojená škola Novohradská, we acknowledge that the language policy together with programme outlines for languages are a working document and that they need to be as relevant and comprehensive as possible. They shall be revised and reviewed every two years at least according to the changes in school structure and educational research.

All teachers are responsible for implementation of the school Language Policy. The Head of the IB section and Programme Coordinators are responsible for the supervision of the implementation and regular revision of the policy in each programme.

In the PYP, the teachers plan collaboratively during the PYP meetings. In the MYP and DP programmes, regular subject group meetings allow staff to meet together as a teaching unit. During these meetings the teachers plan what will be taught, reflect on best practice and review the needs of certain students. Once a year, all teachers from all programmes discuss transition and progression between all three IB programmes and ensure that the programme delivery is consistent and up to date with developments in the IB programme.

This document is for a public viewing. It is displayed on the GJH website which allows all community members an access to it.

Resources

To ensure that the main structures of the language are covered in sequence and to give a basis for topic work and communication skills, a variety of texts, textbooks and materials are used to satisfy the needs of the language programme in all IB programmes. Students are expected to have their own monolingual dictionaries for use at home, as well as bilingual dictionaries in their mother tongue. Monolingual dictionaries for schoolwork are available at school. The teachers with their coordinators and the librarians decide what books/materials will be bought/ordered, according to topics they teach and based on didactic needs of our programmes. The Head of the IB section and coordinators order professional development materials for the staff. Students are expected to have their own bilingual dictionaries in their mother tongue at home. A variety of English dictionaries for school work are available at the school.

Budgeting

The school budget operates on a needs basis. The amount spent on new resources varies from year to year. Teachers and librarians suggest which materials for the classes have to be ordered. The budget is coordinated and administered by the school administration as follows - the teachers' / librarian requirement for the order is first discussed with the coordinators who forward it then to the Head of the IB section. The Head of the IB section confirms with either the manager of Foundation Novohradská or with the financial manager how the materials are going to be funded.

LANGUAGE POLICY OF PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAMME

Admission Criteria

Every student with acquisition of English at an EAS (Early Acquisition Stage from The English as an Additional Language Continuum) can be enrolled in the PYP English section (see the Admission Policy for PYP English section). Every student with acquisition of Slovak language can be enrolled in the PYP (see the Admission Policy for PYP Slovak section). Teachers follow students' development with various assessment tools and strategies and discuss and choose procedures that would benefit a child's language acquisition.

Practices

The Language of Instruction

English is the language of instruction in the PYP English section. Slovak is the language of instruction in the PYP Slovak section. Competence in English/Slovak is the key to students' success in other subject areas. All mainstream teachers are language teachers as well; therefore, they contribute to the development of students' language skills, especially those skills required in their own subject areas. Our After-school club (ASC) teachers use both English and Slovak as the languages of instruction in the PYP English section. Only Slovak language as language of instruction is used in the PYP Slovak section.

Language Programmes Offered

English Language A is taught to all students in the PYP English section as the students have a high standard of English or English is their mother tongue. At PYP level, we offer five lessons a week. Regarding the Slovak Language offer, Slovak Language A is taught from year 1. Lessons are scheduled four times a week and they follow the Slovak national curriculum. Our school provides an assistant during all four lessons for students who have no previous knowledge of Slovak in year 1. Students with some knowledge of Slovak language and students with Slovak as their mother tongue are taught by the Slovak language teacher using differentiation during the lesson.

The language of instruction in the Slovak section is Slovak. The section follows the Slovak national curriculum. It offers the second language – English (ESL) from the first grade. Grade 1-4 with 3 lessons per week and Grade 5 with 4 lessons per week.

Teachers adapt their materials for those students who are not native speakers of English or Slovak. Assessment criteria and rubrics are also adapted for students with ESL/Slovak as a foreign language where necessary. Teachers should attend to student differences and thus best help individuals address their common language needs.

Other Language Courses

We do not offer other language courses in PYP sections at school, however, in case we employ a language teacher with Major in any other language and at least 8 students are interested, we plan, schedule and subsequently open such courses to our PYP students at an extra cost.

Mother Tongue Support in All Sections

Our students are either native Slovaks or children of Slovak parents migrating due to job transfers or children of bilingual parents. Slovak parents as well as the Slovak governing body strongly desire and require that children learn their native language. We support Slovak as their mother tongue in the ASC as well and have a reading session organised by the ASC teachers during some of their days in the ASC.

Students are allowed and encouraged to use their mother tongue to access the curriculum for example when they share their learning and progress with their parents and other members of the community using their mother tongue.

Language Curriculum

Languages are taught by the subject teachers and language teachers. The objectives of the language programme are to:

- Use language to communicate effectively, accurately and appropriately.
- Explore language in meaningful contexts through a variety of technological and information resources and rich language experiences.
- Understand and utilise language in listening, speaking, reading and writing activities.
- Develop the confidence to take risks in all language experiences.
- Discover that language learning is a continuous process based on previous experiences.
- Develop an awareness of the literary tradition, its value, its position, its complexity, and its relationship to culture.
- Learn the reading and writing process simultaneously.
- Differentiation in language lessons is based on the best practice according to the standards and practices of the IB.
- Focus on the transdisciplinary nature of the language learning

At Spojená škola Novohradská, we realise that each subject has specific expectations but through the skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing and visual communication in practice the subjects are interrelated, making language the major connecting element in learning across the curriculum. The school has developed its own language curriculum for English based on that of the IB PYP Scope and Sequence document. For Slovak it uses the Slovak national curriculum. In the Slovak section – English follows the Slovak national curriculum.

Assessment

Aims of Assessment

The key to a successful assessment is that it is kept simple, manageable and transparent.

Our aim is to enable young people to read with understanding and fluency, to speak clearly and persuasively, to listen carefully and to write accurately in a manner which generates reader interest. Assessment is integral to learning. Marking should form the basis of teacher comment, although individual variation is also likely to be applied. Our assessment takes a holistic view of a student's capabilities and progress in English. Marking involves reading through work, commenting and correcting where necessary, giving feedback as required. Not all tasks carry equal weighting, nor are they considered in isolation with regards to term grades. For example, spelling tests are a means of improving written work. However, the skills covered in tests of this nature (e.g. discrete grammar, spelling or punctuation tests) must be transferred successfully to extended writing tasks in order to be included in term grades. In addition to assessment by the teacher, we also wish to develop the students' ability to self-assess and to peer assess, and to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses, to set targets and work towards them. Languages are assessed in accordance with the PYP school's assessment policy.

Assessment Criteria

There are, of course, major differences between first, second(SL) and foreign language(FL) teaching. In mainstream First Language teaching we tend to focus more on writing and reading, whereas in SL/FL teaching, speaking and listening are assessed more frequently.

Assessment Tools

- factual and imaginative writing of varying length;
- reading comprehension exercises;
- summary exercises, both written and oral;
- listening tests;
- speaking assignments (prepared and impromptu);
- grammar, punctuation, vocabulary and spelling exercises;
- role play/dramatic reconstructions; responses to literature;
- tests and end of year exams

Methods

Writing

We do not think that every piece of work can be or should be marked as part of the formal grading process, but it is important for student motivation and teacher

information that every piece of extended writing is assessed by the teacher and that students receive feedback. Not all 'mistakes' need to be corrected. The overall quality of a piece of work is generally not affected by minor spelling errors or the occasional lapse in grammar or phrasing and over marking has a negative impact. On top of this, good writers take risks with language and this is to be encouraged. We do, however, expect to develop a high degree of accuracy in written and spoken work, and this is considered in marking and grading.

Speaking and Listening

There should be at least one formally assessed speaking task each year. Listening is an integral part of good speaking and is informally tested throughout the year.

Reading

Reading is focused on the basic competencies and strategies. We are looking for the improvement in sound recognition and gaining fluency, comprehension and confidence. It is informally tested throughout the year.

Staff

All PYP core subject teachers and language teachers are qualified teachers with a university degree. Our English language teachers are not necessarily native speakers. Our Slovak language teachers are native speakers. Language teachers of the Slovak section and of the English section of PYP plan collaboratively in the beginning of and also during the school year. English Language teachers of the English section of PYP work collaboratively during regular meetings every week. Some of our ASC teachers are qualified teachers with a university degree. All of our ASC teachers assist during agreed lessons and hours during the day, apart from their regular job duty in the afternoon. All ASC teachers are also considered language teachers as they help develop students' language skills either in English or Slovak language.

Other Activities That Support Language Development

Learning environment

We have created a suitable environment, classrooms and school routines that help develop students' language skills and interest. Some of our ASC teachers implement a reading club session in their ASC clubs during which students listen to a story read in Slovak. Each classroom contains a small library with age appropriate books for reading through the day.

Library programme/ reading programme in the library

The library is opened daily and provides the environment for weekly lessons. Students are able to borrow books from a growing number of books in the library. We also encourage children to use culturally diverse reading material.

Extra reading lists for all grades

- Reading with parents – parents come and read to the class in the language of their choice. Children are exposed to different mother tongue languages.
- Students have reading logs in which they record their free reading through the week.
- Students complete book reports in both English and Slovak throughout the school year.
- Presentations across 2 sections – children present their learning outcomes either in Slovak or in English across both sections Slovak and English to their parents.
- DEAR – drop everything and read – a curricular activity encouraging elder students to focus on reading.

LANGUAGE POLICY OF MIDDLE YEARS PROGRAMME

Admission Criteria

Every applicant for enrollment in the MYP should be fluent in English language. We can offer the enrollment only to a limited number of students as the maximum number of students in every MYP class is 24, including 20-22 students coming to the pre-MYP class from V. PYP. The tests for the applicants consist of English and Maths.

Practices

At the MYP we recognise and value the benefits of multilingualism, encourage and provide opportunities for students and all members of the school staff to develop their multilingual abilities.

The Language of Instruction

In the Middle Years Programme at Spojená škola Novohradská in Bratislava, English is the Language of Instruction. Language learning in school is not a separate discipline isolated from all other learning and is crucial for academic growth and the construction of knowledge. The basic skills for all types of communication – oral, written and visual, are explicitly planned (eg. using lab reports, essays, reflections and articles) in their proper form. When students are acquiring a language, our teaching is informed by incorporating four concepts: context, culture, reflection and fluency. As students progress, teachers enable them to see language as a means of self-expression, exploration of self and others, as context driven, having multiple meanings, and involving a personal stance at all levels of discourse, from simple communication to the core of academic language.

As stated in *Admission Criteria* competence and fluency in English is the key to students' success in all subjects. All MYP students are fluent in English, because they

came from the PYP programme or they passed entrance tests to the MYP programme in English, where their level of competence was tested.

All subject teachers are language teachers as well. Therefore, they contribute to the development of students' language skills, especially those skills and terminology required in their own subjects. While both languages (the host language and the language of instruction) are valued, our school ensures that collaboration among staff is efficient. All IB staff are expected to have a functional level of English to effectively participate.

Language Programmes Offered

From September 2022 **English Language and Literature** is taught to all MYP students (according to the recommendation from the last evaluation). English lessons are scheduled 4 (IV.MYP4 to V.MYP) to 5 (preMYP-III.MYP) times a week.

Slovak Language and Literature is taught from preMYP to V.MYP. The majority of our students are native Slovaks. This subject follows the Slovak National Curriculum. Lessons are scheduled five times a week in preMYP and III.MYP, four times a week in I.MYP and II.MYP, 3 times a week in IV.MYP and V.MYP.

Slovak Language Acquisition is offered to non-native Slovaks as additional lessons at beginner or advanced level. All non-native Slovak students are tested in the pre-MYP class for the best placement into the phases. Students have one additional lesson than is scheduled in their grade.

The (Slovak) Language Acquisition course is offered from the beginner's level. All students are tested at the beginning of the school year in pre-MYP classes to place them properly into phases of the chosen second language. Based on the overall achievement of the students and results at the end of the school year test, students are placed into a relevant phase. A minimum number of 10 students is required to form a foreign language group, yet the principal can use their judgement.

German or Spanish Language Acquisition is offered for all MYP students. In preMYP they choose one of the offered languages. All students are placed in phases according to their results from the test at the end of the school year. PreMYP students are tested at the beginning of the school year in September. Lessons are scheduled three times a week.

Mother Tongue Support

MYP students are permitted to use their mother tongue to carry out research. To facilitate this, the school encourages students to use their mother tongue dictionaries for reference.

Language Curriculum

Languages are taught by subject teachers and language teacher specialists.

The aims are to:

- Use language as a vehicle for thought, creativity, reflection, learning, self-expression, analysis and social interaction.
- Develop the skills involved in listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and presenting in a variety of contexts.
- Develop critical, creative and personal approaches to studying and analysing literary and non-literary texts.
- Engage with text from different historical periods and a variety of cultures.
- Explore and analyse aspects of personal, host and other cultures through literary and non-literary texts.
- Explore language through a variety of media and modes.
- Develop a lifelong interest in reading.
- Apply linguistic and literary concepts and skills in a variety of authentic contexts.

Assessment

Our assessment takes a holistic view of a student's capabilities and progress in languages. Assessment for language and literature and language acquisition courses is criterion-related, based on four equally weighted assessment criteria as per the MYP Language Guides.

To support our students, teachers use assessment modification and differentiation as appropriate for the students' learning stage and course requirements.

Methods

Students are able to use and interpret language suitably for a variety of intentions and contexts. They work with both familiar and unseen texts, in order to practise, develop and demonstrate their language and literature skills. Students should engage with texts from different times, places, cultures, geographical regions, historical periods and perspectives.

Oral communication encompasses all aspects of listening and speaking – skills that are essential for language development, for learning and for relating to others.

Written communication encompasses all aspects of reading and writing. Reading is constructing meaning from text by making inferences and interpretations. Writing allows students to develop, organise and communicate thoughts, ideas and information.

Visual communication encompasses all aspects of viewing and presenting, which means interpreting or constructing visual and multimedia in a variety of situations and for a range of purposes and audiences.

Other Activities That Support Language Development

We have created a suitable environment, classrooms and school routines that help develop student's language skills and interest. The library programme and the reading programme – for all students is mandatory to read 4 literary works in one school year for the Language and Literature course and one book in the Language Acquisition Course. Reading in other programmes is supported by each teacher separately according to the planned curriculum.

LANGUAGE POLICY OF DIPLOMA PROGRAMME

Admission Criteria

In order to enrol in DP, students are expected to have previous knowledge of the language of instruction, which is English.

The enrollment procedure is as follows:

- identify student's language profile and background (application form, the entrance written exam in English, interview with the student and parents, school reports)
- consult the results with the administration and languages subject group team to ensure we can actually offer appropriate provision to meet the student's language needs and thus enable him/her to meet the needs of the students
- based on the student's preferences we organise the groups for the Group 1 language (Language A: Literature or Language A Language and Literature) and Group 2 language (Language B) course
- If Slovak or English is not the student's mother tongue, we counsel with the parents and school administration the way a student's mother tongue can be maintained and developed inside and outside the school. We cooperate with embassies in Slovakia who offer our students' opportunities to continue their studies of their mother tongue throughout their entire Diploma Programme studies at GJH.
- we regularly check and review on students' progress

The entrance written exam in the English language tests the applicant's abilities in reading comprehension and their knowledge of grammar and lexis on the upper – intermediate level. The aim of the test is to verify that the applicant will be able to manage the demanding study of different subjects in English.

Practices

Language Programmes Offered

Group 1: Studies in Language and Literature (Language A)

Language A: Literature is generally defined as the student's mother tongue (or the language they use at home) or the language in which they have achieved the level of proficiency near to the level of a native speaker. In our school, the majority of students

have Slovak background with either both parents Slovak or one parent of another nationality.

In order to reflect the language environment inside and outside the school we usually offer at least two Group 1 Studies in language and literature courses according to the students' needs.

The time allocations are as following:

DP Year 1 / Year 2

Slovak A: Literature HL (5x45 minute lessons per week)

Slovak A: Literature SL (3x45 minute lessons per week)

English A: Language and Literature HL (5x45 minute lessons per week)

English A: Language and Literature SL (3x45 minute lessons per week)

The aims, objectives and topics of Group 1 Studies of language and literature can be found in the Language A: Language and Literature Guide.

Group 2: Language Acquisition (Language B – English; Language of Instruction)

In order to allow our students to be capable of standing the competition we have developed a coherent English B course with clear objectives and expectations for each year.

The time allocations and levels are as following:

DP Year 1 / Year 2

English B HL (5x45 minute lessons per week)

Students are encouraged to use the language of instruction whenever possible. Using English in and outside the classes creates an inclusive atmosphere where all students, whether of Slovak or other national and language background have equal chance to express themselves and be part of the community.

In order to support and accelerate the progress of learning English, especially the written expression, all the Year 1 students have 2x45 min lessons of Writing per week.

The aims, objectives and topics of the Language B group can be found in the Language B guide.

Other Languages B

When enrolling to DP, students have an opportunity to choose another Language B, alongside English and they will follow this course till the end of their studies. Some of the students also take another language B as their seventh subject. At our school they rarely pick the option of Language *ab initio*. However, they are encouraged to take on other Language B course/s as extra-curricular activities.

Within a group of Language B, there might be students at various levels. Our school has fully qualified teachers of German and Spanish currently on staff.

The time allocations and levels are as following:

DP Year 1 / Year 2

Time allocation for HL: 5 x 45 minute lessons per week

Time allocation for SL: 3 x 45 minute lessons per week

German B HL / SL

Spanish B HL / SL

In the school year 2022/2023 we provide both German B and Spanish B.

Assessment

Our assessment takes a holistic view of a student's capabilities and progress in languages. Assessment for language and literature and language acquisition courses is based both on the Language Guides criteria, as well as summative assessment (in school assessment).

To support our students, teachers use assessment modification and differentiation as appropriate for the students' learning stage and course requirements.

Methods

Writing

The overall quality of a piece of work is generally not affected by minor spelling errors or the occasional lapse in grammar or phrasing and over marking has a negative impact, unless it is stated in a previous rubric in a language acquisition course. On top of this, good writers take risks with language and this is to be encouraged. We do, however, expect to develop a high degree of accuracy in written and spoken work, and this is considered in marking and grading.

Reading and Listening

Listening is an integral part of good speaking and is informally tested throughout the year, especially in the language acquisition courses. Reading is focused on the basic competencies and strategies. The focus is on the improvement in sound recognition and gaining fluency, comprehension and confidence. It is informally tested throughout the year.

Professional Development

As far as the professional development is concerned, Language A and B DP teachers are expected to follow the latest trends in language teaching and follow the current

trends, especially online, and visit language teachers' forums, as well as the My IB and work with an IB authorised online platform which allows them to offer a limited access to resources also for their students.

