

International Primary School Groningen

Section 1: Our Vision and Mission

Our school was formed in 1986 to provide an English medium education for internationally mobile families in the Netherlands.

Our vision is of a school at the heart of welcoming international community, and an education that helps children find their place within that.

Our school community shares a common experience of being linked to the world beyond the borders of the Netherlands in a particular way- through family, life experiences and connections in different places around the world. This is a cause for celebration and enrichment but can also at times cause stress and challenge. We therefore play a role both in welcoming and advising new families but also supporting our children and families as their time in the Netherlands continues.

We recognise that our students come with different experiences in language, academic work and culture. We work with our students and families navigating, and making productive, the links between Dutch culture and other cultures, recognising and valuing differences in language, culture and life experience. The education we provide challenges children to learn (in) English at a pace and in a manner that fits with their previous experiences, will help them integrate into other international settings, or Dutch education, when they move on, and aligns with the expectations of the English National Curriculum. We see our particular educational mission as:

“Helping pupils grow up to be in(ter)dependent world citizens who are able to find their place in various aspects of the international society of the 21st Century; be it in relationships, academics, work, and society, whilst having a keen eye for their expanding environment.”

For students to become international citizens within a global context, it is vital for them to develop not only a strong interest in their own and other cultures and a deep understanding of multiple perspectives, but also the desire to contribute to the local and global communities through actions that impact positively on society. An international citizen is someone who takes responsibility for their own wellbeing and actions, with self-knowledge and self-esteem, able to communicate and cooperate with all sorts of people, treating them with care, respect and open-mindedness. Learning and reflecting on how decisions made in one part of the planet can affect people living on other parts of the planet is vital, developing an awareness that the Earth’s resources should be shared fairly and sustainably whilst taking into consideration human rights and be prepared to think differently in imagining a different world.

Section 2: The school in its context

Every country's education system is different and in this section we explain a little of how international education works in the Netherlands and our specific context.

The education ecosystem

Several choices face you if you are looking for an education for your children as an internationally mobile family in the Netherlands. Our school is designed for families who are temporarily in the Netherlands- families from abroad on short term contracts or local families returning from or preparing for a period abroad. If you are thinking you might stay longer in the Netherlands, you should also consider Internationale Schakelklas (ISK) education which provides a two-year programme to teach Dutch and introduce the education system. Alternatively, you might talk with us about starting in the Netherlands in our school and considering transition to mainstream Dutch education if you decide to stay. These are issues we can discuss together, but this information might help you think more carefully as you make your plans.

Our school in the local and national context

You will have the experience of joining the International Primary School Groningen (IPS) but we also exist within two contexts that are important: we are part of the Groningse Schoolvereniging (GSV) and we are one of the Dutch International Primary Schools (DIPS).

The **GSV** was set up in over a hundred years ago by a group of local parents. It was created as an association, meaning that parents are members who pay a fee to the association which provides additional funds for education.

The school has three departments.

1. The largest is the bilingual department (TPO) which teaches 70% in Dutch and 30% in English.
2. There is a gifted department (HB) which provides an education for highly gifted children with the same bilingual structure.
3. The International Primary School, which teaches entirely in English and is for internationally mobile families.

The three departments occupy different buildings and run different curriculums and budgets but have many things in common. We share a common vision and school development plan, our director and supervisory board, and benefit from some shared staff and expenditure such as cleaning staff, internet providers and so forth. Admin and admissions staff work across sites so parents will find they are sometimes emailing and talking to staff from different buildings.

DIPS: Our school is one of over 20 Dutch International Primary Schools in the Netherlands. You can find out more about Dutch International Schools on this website: <https://www.dutchinternationalschools.nl/>

We provide an education for international mobile families which is subsidised by the Dutch government with a contribution from parents. To be eligible to come to the school students must fulfil one of the following criteria:

A: The student has non-Dutch nationality and has a parent that is working in the Netherlands or a Dutch border region for a limited time.

B: The student has Dutch nationality and has lived and gone to school abroad for at least two years because a parent was stationed abroad.

C: The student has Dutch nationality and has a parent with whom the student will be living who will be station abroad for at least two years commencing within the next two years.

Dutch International Schools are always connected to a Dutch school which for us is the Groningse Schoolvereniging (GSV). Our school has over 30 different nationalities and language groups represented at any given time.

Formal Structure of the school

The school is led by an Executive Director- Gerdien Wassenar- who is responsible for all three departments. Working with the Executive Director are the Team Leaders of the different departments. IPS has its own Team Leader.

The Executive Director of GSV is supported and held accountable by a supervisory board. The board (Raad van Toezicht or RvT) is formed from external advisors and parents from the school.

The school was established by a group of parents who formed a vereniging (association). This association continues to exist and is formed of all the parents- you are automatically members by sending your children here and paying fees. This association meets each year in a General Meeting of Members (Algemene Ledenvergadering or ALV) in which formal matters are discussed such as the budget, the financial statements, the election of board members and the utilization of the parental contribution. The fees for TPO and HB are membership fees, whereas for IPS parents are formally required to contribute to the cost of an international education. Recognising this, and the fact that the ALV takes place in Dutch, we organise a parents' meeting with the Director and Team Leader in English specifically for IPS parents in addition.

There is also a body called the Participation Council (medezeggenschapsraad or MR) which is made up representatives of the school staff and parents and works on aspects of school life like the timing of the school day, holidays and matters relating to the functioning of the whole of GSV. IPS has a parent representative on this committee.

At IPS, we have a Representative Committee for parents and carers which meets with the Team Leader five times a year. This is a chance for dialogue about the daily life in classes and our school more generally. Teachers contact their class parents at the start of the year

to ask for parent involvement in class with things like providing transportation to events, helping with sports days, with the school gardens or during other activities, and with building and painting stage sets at musicals, as well as to mention this committee. Meetings are advertised through our newsletters.

Funding

Funding for the school is provided mainly by the government. Government-funded schools must be accessible to anyone. The Netherlands has almost 7000 primary schools. There are also some private schools for primary education in the Netherlands. However, there are fewer than thirty of these. The GSV is explicitly not a private school. The funding from the government comes directly into the school.

In addition, the GSV asks all parents for an annual fee. This money comes into the association.

For HB and TPO this contributes to enriching the learning of students through specialist teaching and subjects, learning support for students and smaller class sizes.

The contribution for IPS is significantly higher to fund even smaller classes, English as an Additional Language teaching, further pupil support in English and the more expensive resources that we usually need to import. Funding of international education by the government is only possible for international departments of Dutch schools- so all such schools, of which there are just over 20 in the Netherlands, are linked to a Dutch school. This has only been possible since May 22, 2012, when government funding of Dutch International Schools, with an additional contribution by parents, was enshrined in law. All three divisions have their own budget, which in principle should break even. Losses within one department are not compensated by the other.

Housing

Housing is financed by the Municipality of Groningen. However, this is based on standards, such as square meters per pupil. Since we use a standard that is higher than the Municipal standard, for TPO, HB and IPS, we spend a part of the parental contribution on extra housing facilities. For IPS the buildings are rented from Maartenscollege. Over the next few years, GSV will be part of a project to build a new school complex here in Haren to act as a 0-18 international campus.

Section 3: School Life

In this section we hope to give you all the practical information you need to start your children at school.

Classes at IPS

The school uses the UK year group names, and the chart below sets out their equivalents in some other educational systems.

Comparison of Educational Systems

When the child turns	Dutch system	UK & IPS	Classes
3	Playgroup	Preschool	Preschool
4	Instroom	F1	F1/F2 in Elm class
Age in September			
4	Groep 1	F2	F1/F2 in Elm class
5	Groep 2	Year 1	Y1/2A- Cherry Y1/2B- Chestnut
6	Groep 3	Year 2	Y1/2A- Cherry Y1/2B- Chestnut
7	Groep 4	Year 3	Y3/4- Willow
8	Groep 5	Year 4	Y3/4- Willow
9	Groep 6	Year 5	Cedar
10	Groep 7	Year 6 IPS finishes here	Hazel
11	Groep 8 Dutch Primary Schools finish here	Year 7	International School Groningen starts here

Some notes to go with this table are:

1. Starting school

Children can start school at the age of 4. The first year(s) of school we call Foundation Stage. The year in which children are 4 on the day school starts is called Foundation 2 (F2). Depending on when the child's birthday is they can also spend some time in F1 which is designed to give children time in school between their 4th birthday and the start of F2. For example, a child born in August would only ever join F2, whereas one born in January would have six months in F1 before they joined F2.

2. Preschool

The school has an International Preschool for children aged 3-4 which is a project shared with SKSG, a foundation which manages pre- and afterschool care throughout Groningen

and the preschool is located at our school right next to the Foundation class. The website for the preschool is here:

<https://www.sksg.nl/locaties/sksg-preschool/>

3. Finishing school

Another oddity of the system is that the Dutch primary school system goes up to 'Groep 8', which is the school year in which children have their 12th birthday. This would be the equivalent of Year 7, whereas IPS only goes up to Year 6, following the UK educational system. Parents need to bear this in mind if they are considering a Dutch secondary school for their child. The International School of Groningen (ISG), the international department of Maarten's College which many children from IPS transfer to, begins at Year 7 meaning that children from IPS can continue their education there without the difficulty of being a year too young.

Class Structure

Here at IPS we have the challenge of being a fairly small school with a very changeable and unpredictable population, with children coming and going at all times of the year. In order to make this as manageable as possible we adopt the following structure:

- One class of F1/2 children.
- Two classes of Y1/2 children.
- One class of Y3/4 children.
- One class of Y5 children.
- One class of Y6 children.

This gives us 6 classes for 7 year groups but by having combination classes in years 1-2 we also have the chance to even out differences between year groups. We work on a first come, first served basis and aim to operate without a waiting list, thus providing a place for anyone who needs it. We cannot guarantee that, and we do limit class sizes with an ideal of 22 per class, but by being flexible and imaginative in how we work, we very rarely have to disappoint anyone wanting to join us.

The School Day

We open the school doors at 8.15am each day. Children can arrive at any time between 8.15 and 8.30. The school day begins at 8.30 and it's important that children do not arrive later than this.

Children in the Foundation classes are brought to their classroom in building B by their parents. Children in Years 1 to Year 6 will in general enter building B alone, although parents are welcome to bring their child in, particularly in the younger classes or if a child is new. The school day ends at 15.00 every day except Wednesday, when the day ends at 12.30. Younger children are brought to the school entrance by their teachers and are free to leave as soon as they see their parents or carers. Please let your child's teacher know if someone else is picking them up or if they are going home with a friend.

After school care and clubs

There is an after-school care organisation called Kids International, run by SKSG, which is housed in building B on the IPS premises. The children going to this are picked up directly from school at 3pm or 12.30pm on Wednesdays and the sessions run until 6pm. This is managed by SKSG themselves and parents can get more information on the website:

<https://www.sksg.nl/locaties/kids-international/>

There are other private providers that some of our parents use such as:

- De Boomhut- <https://www.kdvdeboomhut.nl/>
- Doomijn- <https://doomijn.nl/praktische-informatie/>
- The Blokhut- <https://wijzienjou.nl/locaties/zien-bso-de-blokhut-locatie-de-wijert-groningen/>
- The Eiland- <https://www.kinderopvang.org/blog/binnenkijken-kinderopvang-groningen-eiland/>

Each term there are some after-school clubs at IPS itself with recent examples being: yoga, Dutch, violin, sculpture, origami, art and crafts.

These sessions always depend on providers and demand.

Clothing

The GSV has no school uniform. Children need to wear comfortable clothes in which they can take part in a range of activities that make up the school day. For gym lessons the older children (Y3-6) will need a named bag containing gym shoes with rubber soles (not black) and a pair of shorts with a t-shirt to change into. Younger children (Foundation-Y2) should come in clothes that are suitable for physical activities. Gym clothes need to be clearly labelled with your child's name. Please ensure that these clothes are regularly taken home to wash. Your child will also need a soft cloth bag for library sessions, in which to bring home borrowed books.

Break time and snacks

All classes have a break during the morning so that the children can have a snack and play outside. For snack, please give your child a healthy snack such as a piece of fruit. All children need to bring a water bottle to school each day, which we encourage them to drink from throughout the day.

The lunch break is from 12.00-13.00, in which children play outside and eat their lunch inside.

Lunchtimes

In the International Primary School, all children stay at school for lunch. They are supervised by their class teacher and lunchtime staff. The payment for this supervision is taken directly from the school fees. There is no food provided in school. Children bring

their own food and eat it in class. We advise therefore healthy food that is easy to eat without mess and that does not require reheating.

Communication with Parents and Carers

The school subscribes to a service called Social Schools which works as a website or an app downloadable for mobile phones. On enrollment you will be sent a link to access this service. You can then communicate with teachers, the office and other parents in your class through this system. This is where you can alert teachers if children are sick or will be absent from or late to school.

Each week, a newsletter is sent to you via Social Schools. This contains important information on a range of subjects. Please let the school know if you don't receive the newsletter or if anything is unclear. In addition, your child's class teacher will regularly send newsletters and messages keeping you up to date with what is happening in class. The school website is also a source of information about the school and in particular a place to find information on fees, holidays, and forms for requesting leave from school.

All research has shown that parental involvement in a child's education is as important as the quality of teaching that children receive. If parents and teachers work together towards the common goal of providing the children with the best possible learning experiences, the maximum chance of success is created.

Your involvement as parents need not be dependent on your own level of English. It may include:

- Chatting to your child about their day, encouraging them to talk about what they have learned. This can easily take place in your own language.
- Listening to your child read and talking about the pictures and the story. Again, the talking can take place in your own language.
- Reading information sent home by your child's teacher and talking to your child about this. This may include information about a new IPC (International Primary Curriculum) topic. Again, you can look up information about this topic with your child, in your own language.
- Looking at your child's class communication book and writing down information that is important to the teacher.
- Asking your child's teacher to explain anything that isn't clear.
- Regularly looking at Social Schools.
- Talking with other parents.
- Attending information evenings and parent evenings.
- Practicing Home Reading with your child and writing down comments in the Diary.

If you have any worries concerning your child, please don't wait for the next parents' evening. Come in and talk to your child's teacher and, if necessary, make an appointment to talk about your concerns.

Class Parent Representative Committee and helping in school

Parents and carers play a vital role in their children's education. International parents sometimes feel anxious about their ability to support their children with an unfamiliar educational system which is maybe very different from that which they experienced themselves. Particularly if parents themselves speak English as an additional language, they may feel unsure about how they can help and be involved.

The school runs a class parent committee system. Parents are invited into school at least five times a year to meet with the Team Leader to discuss matters of interest for the school. This is a really useful way to support the school and ensure information flows in both directions.

Things parents regularly help us with include:

- Organising helpers for school trips or class visits.
- Helping the class teacher, or asking other parents for help, for activities such as preparing resources.
- Attending meetings with the International Primary School Team Leader and sharing the action points with the rest of the parents.
- Bringing issues of importance to parents to the meetings.
- Welcoming new parents and providing them with information on the local area, including local shops, places of worship, banks etc.
- Helping with our school parent cafe: **De Brink** which we host a few times a year.

De Brink

The school hall (aula in Dutch) is set out with tables and chairs with access to our kitchen. It provides a place for parents to wait and chat when waiting to see staff and a few times a year we open it for a cafe where parents are invited to come and chat and network and chat with the team leader and other staff.

Health concerns

If your child has any health-related problems, please let the class teacher know as soon as possible. It is very important that issues such as asthma, epilepsy and allergies are known by the school. It is also essential that the school has up-to-date contact information for if you need to be contacted in an emergency. The name and contact details of your family doctor is also vital for your child's class teacher and at the school office. Please inform the office if your phone number, email address or home address changes.

If your child becomes unwell at home and is unable to attend school, please send a message to your child's class teacher via Social Schools before the school day begins.

If your child becomes unwell at school, you will be contacted and asked to collect and keep them at home. Please only send a child back to school if they are completely better and are able to take part in all school activities, including gym and outside play.

It's sometimes very useful if you also let your child's teacher know if your child has slept badly or has been very upset at home. We can then take this into consideration during the day.

We have a number of trained first-aiders on the staff.

Please don't hesitate to contact your child's teacher if you have any concerns or worries.

Complaints

The school complaints procedure available on the website and in the GSV Guide. Please remember that any concerns regarding your son or daughter should be brought to the class teacher first. The teacher may then advise you to speak to another member of the school team.

Celebrations in school

There are a number of traditional Dutch celebrations which are also celebrated with the children. Please note that, whereas some of these days have a Christian background, we are non-denominational and the children are not involved in any acts of worship.

You will get plenty of information about this via the newsletter, but here is a brief outline of what you can expect:

11th November: Sint Maarten

For this celebration, the children make lanterns in school. In the early evening of the 11th, primary school children go round their neighbourhoods, ringing on doorbells to sing a Sint Maarten song and hope for some sweets. In this way it's similar to 'Trick or Treat'.

5th December: Sinterklaas

On 5th December, Sinterklaas, or Saint Nicholas, visits the school with his helpers, called Piets. This is an exciting day for the children. Sinterklaas meets the younger classes, talking to the children and giving each child a gift. In the older classes, the children give each other gifts anonymously, having picked the name of a classmate out of a hat. The gift is wrapped up in an unusual way called a 'Surprise' and a poem is written about the classmate who is to receive the gift.

Easter

The children sometimes have an Easter breakfast during the school week before the Easter holiday. The children are only free on Good Friday and Easter Monday.

Christmas

During the week before the December holiday, a whole-school event takes place on one evening. Sometimes this is a Christmas market in school, and sometimes the children are treated to a festive dinner.

Other Festivals: Hallowe'en, Diwali, Eid and others

The International Primary School is very proud of its diversity and welcomes the richness that comes through the children being aware of each other's traditions. The International Primary Curriculum also includes awareness of world religions and festivals. Whenever possible, festivals that are of importance to members of our international community are shared with the children. If there is a festival of importance to your family, which you would like to share with your child's class or with the whole department, please talk to your child's teacher about this.

Home Language Lunches

Throughout the school year, a number of the school's numerous languages and cultures are given extra attention. Parents are invited to spend a lunchtime in school together with the children in the school who belong to the same home language group. In this way they can share conversation, games, stories and traditions with their own language peers.

Birthdays

In The Netherlands, it is traditional that the person whose birthday it is, treats their friends and family in some way. If it's your child's birthday, the following way of celebrating is traditional at the GSV:

- Children make a card in school, which they take to different teachers to be signed.
- The children bring in a treat from home, for example a box of chocolates, so that each teacher who signs the card is given a treat.
- Children bring in a treat to share with the class, for example small cakes or a fruit treat.

Note: As you see, birthdays are a bit of an exception to the healthy eating rule! However, please don't bring in bags of sweets or 'goodie bags' for your child to share with the class.

School Holidays and Leave from School

The school holidays each year are published on the website. The school also recognises that, for some families, particular religious festivals are part of their culture, which means that additional holidays may be requested. Also, time may be needed in order to travel abroad for an important family occasion. Please ask for a special leave form at the office if such time is needed. Requests will be looked at carefully alongside Dutch legislation, which may mean that in some cases permission cannot be granted. Although the school understands the need for additional leave in some cases, such as outlined above, we would like to stress that time out of school should be kept to a minimum as it always results in a break in the children's learning.

Timetable Summary

Time	What	Comment
8.15am	School doors open	Be aware of the weather so children do not arrive too early!
8.30am	Classes start	Please be in school by then!
Times vary by class	Morning Break	Always connected to a time for a healthy snack.
12noon	Lunch	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday Friday
12.30pm	End of the day	Wednesday
1pm	Afternoon classes start	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday Friday
3pm	End of the day	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday Friday

What to bring summary

What	Comment
Clothes	Children can wear their own clothes, there is no uniform
Spare clothes	Bring some spare clothes to keep at school in case of accidents
Shoes	There is space to store indoor shoes which are useful in the frequently wet weather of the Netherlands.
Water bottle	There are sinks in all classrooms to refill with water
Morning snack	Something healthy for a snack
Lunch	On Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday children will eat their own lunch in their classrooms. Please make it something simple and healthy.
Books and stationery	Everything is provided by school
Library bag	Children borrow books from our library each week so a bag to keep them safe as they take them home is useful.

Section 4: Learning and the curriculum

As a broad overview, we use the English National Curriculum to structure our teaching of literacy and numeracy, and the International Primary Curriculum to organise most of the rest of our subjects. In this section you will also read a little about KiVa which we use for social-emotional learning and our specialist subjects.

Meeting Children's Needs at IPS

At IPS we have a diverse student population with children joining us from all over the world, from different education systems. This can mean that children join us who don't yet speak English. It can also mean that a child who has never been to school joins a class of children who have been to school already for two years. We have children at our school with different cultures and languages, different beliefs, food and clothing, different ways of expressing their ideas and feelings. We are committed to celebrating this diversity. We believe that this enriches our school community and contributes to citizenship as a key aspect of the education which we offer.

We have a learning support team in school which consists of a learning support coordinator, a learning support teacher, an EAL (English as an Additional Language) teacher and a team of learning support assistants.

Children who have been in different educational systems sometimes have gaps in their learning. If the class teacher and learning support staff notice this in your child's learning, learning support will be put in place in discussion with you. In some situations, it will be suggested that your child would be more suited to a different class, based on their social-emotional and their academic development.

If your child has a diagnosed learning difference such as dyslexia, ADHD, or is on the autistic spectrum, we will discuss with you how we can meet your child's needs through accommodations in the classroom in combination with learning support and an individual programme (IEP) which will be shared with you and reviewed regularly. It's important that you share information about your child's needs with us so that, together with you, we can discuss whether we can meet these needs.

For children who join our school speaking little or no English, our EAL specialist will work regularly with your child, individually or in a small group. This support takes place in a designated classroom until children are ready to join in with their class for all lessons. Our EAL specialist also organises activities in school which celebrate the children's home languages and cultures.

If you would like to discuss your child's learning needs, you are very welcome to request a meeting with the learning support team. Please contact us through the IPS Team Leader.

The Academic Curriculum

The Foundation Stage

This stage follows on from the pre-school programme and offers a carefully integrated two year programme of learning. The progress of each child is closely monitored across the six key areas which make up this stage:

- Personal, Social & Emotional Development.
- Communication, Language and Literacy.
- Mathematical Development.
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World.
- Physical Development.
- Creative Development.

During these formative years, particular emphasis is put on personal, social and emotional development. As the children move through the Foundation Stage, they are guided in building on their understanding of the world around them. Their curiosity for learning increases and they build up layers of knowledge on which to base their further education.

Literacy and Numeracy for Year 1 and above

Teachers will share details of the curriculum deployed in each class with you each term in a newsletter.

The school uses a range of schemes of work which deliver the objectives of the literacy and numeracy curriculums as well teachers working with students on projects and plans of their own development.

For a broader overview you can see the English National Curriculum that we use for English and maths here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-primary-curriculum>

The International Primary Curriculum

The vision for learning of the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) is that:

“Through the IPC, which supports teachers and leaders, learners are encouraged to be informed, globally competent, future-ready, socially conscious and motivated to positively contribute within a local and/or global context.”

We find this very much aligns with our vision and we use the IPC to deliver a thematic curriculum made up of units of work that allow students to undertake investigations and follow their interests while engaging with history, geography, art, science, design, international awareness, citizenship and personal health & wellbeing.

An introduction to the International Primary Curriculum is here:

<https://internationalcurriculum.com/international-curriculum/primary>

Citizenship and KIVA

Our vision and mission, shared above, place international citizenship at the heart of our work. This pervades all aspect of our work, from how children interact together and with their teachers, to shared events that involve our whole community, to specific units of work taught through IPC or as standalone units and our KiVa curriculum.

KIVA is the scheme which we use for children's social-emotional development and implements some of our vision on citizenship. It originated in Finland as an anti-bullying system and it has at its heart the goal of creating a strong group identity in each class in which children support each other.

Around the school you will see posters of the KIVA Rules' in both English and Dutch. These are:

1. We act kindly and treat each other with respect.
2. Together we make a great group.
3. We talk to each other and use the 'I' language.
4. We want bullying to stop!
5. We treat each other well.
6. We help each other.
7. We stand up for each other.

As always, if your child feels that they are being treated unfairly or unkindly, by other children in either their own class or another class, please bring this to the attention of the class teacher.

Throughout their time on the IPS children will also work with Personal Learning Goals like communication, empathy, co-operation, independence, curiosity, adaptability, resilience and respect towards others and their surroundings. Teachers will help children to discuss what they are good at and what they would like to develop more.

Assessment and reporting

Assessments provide us with valuable information which informs our teaching. In addition, we have large numbers of new children joining us at the start of each school year, and so early assessments are very informative. Analysing the children's assessments highlights for staff areas for development, both for individual children and groups of children, on which teaching programmes can be based.

The following assessments take place in October, for Year 2 and above:

- Progress Test English (PTE)
- Progress Test Maths (PTM)
- New Group Reading Test (NGRT)
- Single Word Spelling Test (SWST: repeated in March)
- The children in the Foundation Stage up to Year 2 also have Read Write Inc (phonics development) assessments throughout the year.

For Years 4, 5, 6:

- Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT)
- CAT V: verbal
- CAT Q: quantitative
- CAT NV: non-verbal
- CAT S: spatial

For Year 6 only:

- Final PTE & PTM assessments in June before moving to secondary school.

From this starting point, staff carefully track children's development throughout the school year. This development is analysed with learning support staff in planned formal meetings during the year. During parent-teacher meetings, children's progress and goals are discussed, and staff share assessment results. The school issues reports twice a year to inform parents of children's progress with the English National Curriculum learning goals.

When	Year groups	Reporting
Start of the academic year	All	Meet the teacher event for each class
Mid autumn	All	Individual teacher meetings
Mid spring	All Y2-6	Individual teacher meetings Written reports
June	All	Written reports

Assessment, Standardisation & EAL Pupils

At IPS we value our diversity, and we view the cultural and language backgrounds of the IPS children as an enrichment. We encourage children to speak their home language in school and to share their language(s) and cultures both as part of their school day and through specific events such as Home Language lunches.

We are committed to offering children a whole school experience in which they can experience connection, happiness and success. We aim to help them grow in confidence in all areas of their lives. One area of the school experience includes assessment.

The IPS assessment system uses standardised scores which are derived from the achievement of a cross-section of children in England. The majority of children at IPS do not speak English at home, with many children joining the school speaking no English. We have a strong system of support in school for these children.

We recognise that children who are not native English speakers need time to learn the language in order to fully access the curriculum. This varies from child to child and will take a number of years, depending on the child's previous experience and aptitude.

The standardised scores for our assessments have an average band of 90-110. For our language and literacy-based assessments such as the SWST, NGRT, PTE, CAT V, we would expect children who are new to English or have only had one or two years in an English-speaking educational environment to score in the lower end of this range, or below. For their numeracy-based assessments such as the PTM and CAT Q, we would hope for a score in the average range, whilst recognising that their language level will also have an impact on how they access written instructions.

We do not include the children completely new to English in the literacy-based assessments at the start of the year. We look at each child individually when deciding which assessments we can reasonably and fairly expect them to be included in. When considered appropriate, we organise additional language explanation (of the questions only) for some children.

Special subjects

As well as your child's class teacher, he or she will also be taught by a number of specialist teachers. These teachers provide Dutch and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to all year groups as well as music and physical education to Year 1 and above.

Dutch is taught to all children for 2 hours a week. This is taught as an introduction to the language and to Dutch culture. It is necessarily a wide spread of abilities in these classes as we can have children who have no Dutch and limited English alongside native speakers in the same class, but the teachers provide a fun and engaging curriculum based on language and cultural activities. It is important to note that these lessons are not designed to make the students fluent Dutch speakers, but are an introduction to language learning.

Music lessons are taught once a week and introduce singing, appreciation and music making.

Gym is taught twice a week by specialists and is a real strength of the Dutch system which we benefit from.

ICT is introduced through the school with access to games, toys and Ipads in the early years and chrome books from Y3 upwards. Teaching happens in an ongoing class context supported by a specialist who works with teachers and sometimes directly with the children.

Homework

We encourage all parents to read regularly with their children and we offer the following advice.

- Children read best in a quiet, comfortable and relaxed environment with as few distractions as possible.
- If either you or your child is tired, it is not an ideal time to read together.
- Children will usually respond best when encouraged to read rather than put under pressure.
- Reading together should be an enjoyable way to spend precious time with your child.

- If you are thinking about whether to share books in English or a home language with your children, please come and chat with the teacher/EAL teacher so we can think with you about this.

Beyond this, your child's teacher will be able to explain what the homework expectations for each class will be. Learning at home may include, dependent on your child's age, learning of spellings, learning of multiplication tables and occasional IPC research. Children may occasionally be required to complete work that remains unfinished from class. All round, our intention is that homework is not an onerous part of your life with your children and you should get in touch with the teacher if this becomes the case.

External Support

Some children may require support from external agencies. This may include speech therapy or physiotherapy. If your child has a diagnosed difficulty involving, for example, hearing or eyesight loss or an autistic spectrum disorder, the local support services may be involved in an advisory and support capacity. In some cases, financing is available in order to support your child.

Every school in The Netherlands also has a Child Team which includes Learning Support Coordinators, the school attendance officer, the school doctor and school nurse, and the Wij (we) Team member. This team shares expertise in order to provide every child and every family with the support which they need. This support can include support at home with health issues, bedwetting, behaviour and discipline.

The Learning Support Coordinator can provide you with more information on this if needed.

Moving on from IPS

In the international department, children arrive and leave at different times during the school year. Because of this familiar atmosphere of transition, new children are generally accepted and made to feel welcome very quickly. We feel it is important to mark children's transition to a new school or country as well. All children who leave are presented with a wooden clog (a traditional Dutch shoe) with all of the children's names written on it. When children move on to their secondary school, the majority of parents choose to send their children to the International School of Groningen (ISG). This is part of the Maartens College school in Haren. The first class of the ISG begins when children are 11, so that children can smoothly transfer from Year 6 to their first year of secondary schooling. Parents who are considering alternative secondary school provision for their child can discuss this with the Year 6 teacher, who will be able to offer advice. It is possible, for example, for children in Year 6 to sit the Dutch CITO test. This can be useful if parents are considering a Dutch secondary school for their child.

When leaving the Netherlands, the following site is useful for information on deregistering: <https://gemeente.groningen.nl/en/emigration>

Section 5: Moving to the Netherlands

Moving to any new country brings challenges with it. The organisation we recommend to provide the clearest pathway through the complexity is the International Welcome Centre North who are funded by the local authorities and businesses to help.

<https://iwcen.nl/>

Finding accommodation is a challenge in the Netherlands and this organisation has helped many parents and staff in the past: www.expathousingnetwork.nl

The address of the school is listed below.

By car it is about 10 mins from the centre of Groningen and there is parking behind the petrol station very close to the school. Access to the school then is through the football club grounds.

By bike we are about 20 mins from the centre of Groningen and about 7 mins from Helpman to the north and Haren to the south. Cycling is very safe and popular in the Netherlands and there are separate bike lanes the whole way.

By bus we are about 15 mins from Groningen Station on the 50 and 51 buses and the stop is Sportpark Esserberg.

Contact details

School Address:

International Primary School Groningen
Rijksstraatweg 24
9752 AE HAREN

GSV Bilingual Department (main building)
Sweelincklaan 4
9722 KE Groningen

Phone: [+31 050 5270818](tel:+310505270818)

Please note, this number will connect you with the GSV main building and you will then be transferred to the International Primary School.

Email:

info@g-s-v.nl (main building administrative office)

d.kidd@g-s-v.nl (IPS Team Leader)

Website: www.g-s-v.nl/en

We hope that you and your children will enjoy your time at our school and that this Parent Handbook has gone some way in providing you with the information which you need. Please always remember that you can come and ask us for any additional information.