

Bundesgymnasium und Bundesrealgymnasium Wien 23

Draschestraße 90 – 92

A-1230 Wien

Tel. 617 42 66

Fax 617 42 66 – 19

e-mail: office@grg23vbs.ac.at

Internet: www.grg23vbs.ac.at

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Vienna Bilingual Schooling



Middle Schools - Sekundarstufe

Taking a world view

**Einen Blick für die Welt
bekommen**

INTRODUCTION

WELCOME TO

VIENNA BILINGUAL MIDDLE SCHOOLS

The staff of Vienna Bilingual Middle Schools would like to welcome you to an exciting new form of secondary schooling. This brochure has been prepared to inform you about the schools and their aims.

SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

The aim of the Vienna Bilingual Middle Schools is to provide a bilingual German / English general secondary education to a culturally diverse student population. After four years of bilingual schooling students should have acquired the linguistic skills and the educational knowledge necessary to compete successfully in the international workplace. Furthermore the blending of the cultures represented at the school teaches the children to exercise tolerance and understanding for other cultures and ways of life.

SCHOOL ETHOS

The Vienna Bilingual Middle Schools are institutions in which people of a wide variety of nationalities and many different cultural backgrounds, work and study together. The aim is therefore to produce the kind of atmosphere, where children learn to respond to other people with sensitivity and an understanding of "otherness". The schools aim to foster the ability to think with precision and clarity and encourage students to think through problems and find independent solutions.

The principle is to provide bilingual middle schools in the Viennese districts where bilingual primary schools already exist to bring about a natural continuation. However, linguistically gifted pupils from other primary schools are also welcome to take part in this project.

TEACHING CONCEPT

VIENNA BILINGUAL SCHOOLING CONCEPT

Vienna Bilingual Middle Schools are state schools for 10 - 14 year olds. Some of the schools are part of the "Schulversuch (school initiative) Mittelschule" and some are grammar schools.

The Vienna Bilingual Middle Schools are also part of the **Vienna Bilingual Schooling** project which foresees German-English bilingual education covering the whole spectrum of the Austrian school educational system from Kindergarten to upper secondary school. The **Vienna Bilingual Middle Schools** are therefore the third stage of the **Vienna Bilingual Schooling** project.

At the upper school level there are various possibilities:

*bilingual upper academic school (AHS) at GRG 23 VBS

*bilingual upper commercial college (HAK)

The **Vienna Bilingual Middle Schools** follow the Austrian secondary school curriculum ("Realgymnasium"). This curriculum serves as a framework, which clearly sets out the educational aims while allowing the teacher the necessary individual freedom to reach these aims in whatever way he/she sees fit.

TEAM TEACHING

Team teaching plays a key role in bilingual teaching, particularly in the science and social subjects. These subjects are planned and taught bilingually by teams comprised of one Austrian AHS (grammar school) teacher, and one English native speaker teacher.

In History, Geography, Physics, Biology and Chemistry the teaching is based on the "chunk-method" in which topic blocks are taught alternately in English and German.

TESTS

Tests and examinations are based on the Austrian curriculum. The aim is to devise questions and tasks in the language(s) used for teaching the subject area although most answers can be given in either language. Linguistic errors are not penalised as long as the content is clear.

CRASH COURSE

Since pupils may not be familiar with bilingual teaching, it is necessary to begin the first academic year with a "crash course" in which all subjects except Mathematics are taught in English (normally from September to January / first semester).

SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

The schools hold regular self-directed learning units to encourage students to develop the ability to pursue their own academic goals. At the beginning of a self-directed-learning unit the students are given a list of tasks which they have to complete within a certain time. It is left to the students to decide at which pace and in which order they carry out the tasks.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

In order to promote the varied interests of the students the schools also offer a selection of extra-curricular activities, in addition to the normal range of compulsory subjects.

GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

ADMISSION CRITERIA

Classes at the Vienna Bilingual Middle Schools are made up of three groups of children: German speaking children who have a previous knowledge of English or a particular interest in learning English; children with English-speaking parents, who speak English as their mother tongue or as a language of communication and who have a previous knowledge of German; children who attended a bilingual primary school.

Each child wishing to attend the school is invited to a short interview. This gives the staff the opportunity to assess the child's ability in both English and German.

VIENNA BILINGUAL SCHOOLING

- MS 10 Wendstattgasse 3
1100 Wien
Tel.: 688 16 60
Dir. Irmtraud Kuchl
- MS 16 Koppstraße 110
1160 Wien
Tel.: 495 14 41
Dir. Anton Feßl
- BG 17 Parhamerplatz 18
1170 Wien
Tel.: 486 34 07
Dir. Mag. Stefan Böck
- MS 19 In der Krim 6
1190 Wien
Tel: 368 56 41
Dir. Mag. Brigitte Krejsa
- RG 19 Krottenbachstraße 11
1190 Wien
Tel.: 368 14 88
Dir. Mag. Georg Latzke
- MS 22 Simonsgasse 23
1220 Wien
Tel.: 774 62 91
Dir. Dr. Gerhard Prammer
- RG 22 Th. Kramer-Straße 3
1220 Wien
Tel.: 258 69 50
Dir. Mag. Erwin Greiner
- GRG 23 Draschestraße 90-92
1230 Wien
Tel.: 617 42 66
Dir. Mag. Dr. Friedrich Anzböck