



Harare International School

HARARE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

LANGUAGE POLICY



Harare International School

Harare International School Vision Statement:

Where together we thrive and reach for excellence.

The Mission:

Harare International School, as an IB World School, enables the development of the skills, knowledge, values and attributes for life-long learning, community service and global citizenship.

The Philosophy:

Harare International School is committed to educating the whole child intellectually, physically and socio-emotionally. We foster freedom of expression, independent thinking, and a sense of personal responsibility in a student-centered learning environment.

Our curriculum framework is based on the International Baccalaureate Programs which support the acquisition of knowledge and conceptual understanding through an inquiry-based approach, encouraging the development of problem-solving and critical thinking skills. In addition, we emphasize the effective use of current technologies, the acquisition of multiple languages, creativity through the arts, and the pursuit of a physically active and healthy lifestyle. Our commitment to academic excellence is supported through a strong staff development program.

We believe that for students to be fully contributing members of society, they must be socially and ethically responsible. HIS achieves this by fostering in students personal attributes aligned with the IB Learner Profile. This includes maintaining a commitment to community service, celebrating our diversity, and developing an understanding of and respect for others and the environment. We are also committed to actively stewarding the environment through sustainable and eco-friendly practices.



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IB STANDARDS AND PRACTICES

Teaching and learning of language at HIS supports the IB standards and practices. The following standards and practices are of particular relevance to the teaching of language at HIS as identified in the *Language and Learning IB program's* document:

The school places importance on language learning, including mother tongue, host country language and other languages (IB A.7).

Teaching and learning addresses the diversity of student language needs, including those for students learning a language(s) other than their mother tongue (IB C3.7).

Teaching and learning demonstrates that all teachers are responsible for language development of students (IB C3.8).

Collaborative planning and reflection recognizes that all teachers are responsible for language development of students (IB C1.8).

In addition to these statements the Language Policy Committee has identified the following practices that have relevance to language learning.

The school utilizes the resources and expertise of the community to enhance learning within the programmes (IB B2.11).

Assessment at the school aligns with the requirements of the programmes (IB C4.1).



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LANGUAGE PHILOSOPHY

Language, a vast and dynamic pattern system, comprises the sounds, words, facial expressions, gestures, signs, and symbols we use to communicate thoughts and feelings, acquire knowledge, construct meaning, understand ourselves and others, think critically and solve problems.

Language learning at Harare International School (HIS) refers not only to learning a specific language but includes all interactions that support and nurture language and literacy development. Teaching language, about language and through language, therefore, transcends disciplines and plays a central role in all learning and teaching. Language teaching is the responsibility of all teachers at our school, who view the learners and their parents as partners in the learning process. We believe that the rich and complex language diversity of our learners, parents and teachers is an important resource in the creation of a safe, inclusive and equitable learning environment where inquiry is nurtured.

Language learning engagements which are relevant, meaningful and challenging are differentiated to meet the needs, prior experiences, strengths, and interests of all in order to foster academic success and empowerment, build and sustain collaborative relationships and nurture appreciation of self and others. A major contributing influence in the success of additional language, literacy and multiliteracy learning is proficiency in a first language; we therefore recognize and affirm each learner's mother tongue, making use, where possible, of the relationship between languages in the most beneficial and effective way.

We believe that language plays a crucial role in fostering personal cultural identity and in developing intercultural understanding and international-mindedness. We therefore teach the necessary skills, concepts, knowledge and attributes, along a continuum of increasing fluency, to allow our learners to participate meaningfully and confidently in a multicultural, multilingual world. We purposefully foster awareness of and respect for the languages and cultures of our host country, Zimbabwe.



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Pedagogy

HIS language pedagogy is consistent with IB philosophy and pedagogy. Language teaching and learning at HIS enables students to construct meaning through inquiry where all three aspects, learning language, learning about language and learning through language, are interwoven at all times to nurture independent, lifelong learners. New learning, built on prior experience and understanding along a developmental continuum, is scaffolded and extended using a variety of strategies in a collaborative and transdisciplinary learning environment rich in relevant, contextual and provocative opportunities for all, where language profiles are mapped, expectations are high, critical thinking is promoted and the identity and autonomy of each learner is valued and affirmed.

Language of Instruction

The language of instruction used to deliver the curriculum at HIS is English. Students who are admitted to the school are taught the skills and attitudes needed to become proficient communicators in the English language both for social interaction and academic success. HIS recognizes that all teachers need to be teachers of the language of their subject as well as working with students to develop their broader use of English.

Host Country

At HIS we recognize the importance of Zimbabwe culture and languages. We promote multicultural awareness and encourage authentic communication. We provide students with opportunities to make connections to our host country in order to foster appreciation of and understanding for Zimbabwe.

Role of Parents

At HIS we recognize that student language development is a holistic process that involves school and family. For students to develop a love of language and literature learning, HIS encourages parents to read to their children in their mother tongue, and at older grade levels support their children to continue to read for pleasure in this and other languages. HIS support parents to place importance and value on the learning of additional languages and maintain communication with teachers to best understand the ways that they can support their child. We encourage parents to be involved in school events and to share their language expertise and experiences with their child and, where appropriate, the wider school community.

Inclusion

At HIS, we support all learners in their development of language. English is the language of instruction and we believe that students need to be proficient in this language to be successful in their studies. As such, we provide the time and instruction for students to develop and apply language skills in all strands of language development. We provide effective strategies to support the development of language across the curriculum.



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Language acquisition

HIS provides a language acquisition program, which meets the needs of individual learners and allows them to develop the language of instruction or additional languages. At HIS, all teachers are viewed as language teachers and the learning of language is supported through collaborative planning and the teaching of language across the curriculum.

Mother-Tongue

HIS supports the development of Mother-Tongue as the foundation of all language learning including host country language, the language of instruction and additional languages. In addition, we believe that the consolidation of Mother-Tongue supports the individual's cultural identity, and cognitive and emotional development; it also fosters international mindedness in our community.

Professional development

HIS is committed to ensuring that all members of faculty are able to maintain their professional understanding and practice, pertinent to the teaching and learning that takes place inside the classroom. To facilitate this, the focus of professional development is reviewed each year to allow opportunities for teachers to share best practice and receive specialized training where this is needed. Professional development at HIS goes beyond the focus of the PYP, MYP and DP. However, in all three programmes we are committed to exceeding the minimum requirements of the IB in all sections of the school and the three coordinators keep up-to-date records of the teachers' participation in IB registered workshops to ensure that this commitment is maintained.



PROGRAMME SPECIFIC LANGUAGE PRACTICES

PRACTICES PYP

Pedagogy

In the Elementary School (ES) at Harare International School (HIS) language is taught holistically. Since language transcends all curriculum areas and is fundamental to all subjects, the focus is on the transdisciplinary nature of language learning and its application across the subject areas. As all teachers are teachers of language they have a responsibility to facilitate its acquisition and promote communication skills through their grade level and subject area classes. The instruction of the basic skills for communication-oral, written and visual, is a process of planning, teaching, assessing and reflecting. Literacy instruction is integrated as much as possible into the Primary Years Programme (PYP) units of inquiry (UOI) and is supported by a range of resources. Some basic literacy skills and tools needed for inquiry learning are taught through standalone learning opportunities. A variety of methodologies is used to promote inquiry based authentic language learning. Learning experiences are planned to enable students to make connections, apply their learning and transfer their conceptual understanding to new situations. The ES promotes consistency of practice in the teaching and learning of all languages; teachers plan language learning in collaboration with each other.

Language of instruction

The language of instruction (English) is primarily taught through the meaningful and authentic contexts of the Programme of Inquiry (POI).

Host Country

Although the draft constitution of Zimbabwe makes provision for 16 official languages, English and Shona are the two most widely spoken in Harare, where HIS is situated. The school views the Shona speaking people in our school community as an important language resource. Use of the Shona language is encouraged and promoted through bi-lingual signage, translation of the Learner Profile, extra-mural activities and communication with support staff. The school's vision statement is quoted in both Shona and isiNdebele. Shona language and culture is taught where appropriate through the UOI and each inquiry allows for a local perspective to be examined. A collection of books on Zimbabwe culture is available in the Media Literacy Centre (MLC).

Role of Parents

Parents are viewed as active partners and an invaluable resource in their child's learning of language. What is taught and learned is communicated to parents by teachers through twice-yearly report cards, at formal meetings and conferences and through print and electronic media. Documentation includes requests and advice to parents to take an active, supportive role in the development of their child's listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, in both the language of instruction and in the mother tongue. Students share their learning with parents through performances, open house sessions, student-led conferences and student portfolios, using their mother tongue, if they so choose, for the purpose of



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meaningful communication. Results of assessments are shared with parents and modifications to their child's programme, if required, are discussed before being implemented in the classroom.

Inclusion

A range of options is in place to promote an inclusive language-learning environment for all students. No student is excluded because of lack of proficiency in English, the language of instruction. First and foremost, the cultural background and previous experiences of English as an Additional Language (EAL) students are acknowledged, celebrated and used as tools to promote participation and learning. There is also an EAL component to teaching children to acquire, use and access the school curriculum. Moreover, for those students experiencing challenges with or who require enrichment work for language learning, a Learning Support Specialist (LSS) provides both in-class and pull-out support. All teachers use a differentiated approach to instruction as an added strategy to ensure that language teaching and learning in the school is inclusive.

Language Acquisition

Acquiring an additional language starts at EC1. Students have the opportunity to choose between French and Spanish and receive three weekly lessons of instruction in the target language. The curriculum is taught through standalone units as well as through purposeful integration with units of inquiry. Students acquire oral, written and reading skills, including a progressive acquisition of grammar, through the use of storytelling, role-play, drama, music, games, creative writing and total physical response. Great importance is given to the rapid development of oral fluency. The expertise of the school community as well as local resources are called upon to assist students in gaining knowledge, appreciation and understanding of the different cultures and traditions in the countries where French and Spanish are spoken.

English as an Additional Language

Knowledge of the English language is not a pre-requisite for enrolment in the ES. EAL is offered to students from Grade 1 – 5 who are non-English speakers and to those who have limited English proficiency, depending on individually assessed needs. The goal of the programme is for students to acquire sufficient social and academic language to function effectively in English within the mainstream classroom. This is accomplished through a combination of: pull-out instruction and in-class support by an EAL specialist; differentiated instruction and a variety of specific strategies to facilitate English Language acquisition and proficiency within the POI and curriculum. Students are exited from the EAL programme on the basis of assessed exit criteria.

Mother Tongue

The school recognizes that mother tongue support is crucial to social, academic and emotional development. Hence, HIS is committed to providing the students with meaningful opportunities to access their first language. In the ES, parents are actively encouraged to converse with their children in their mother tongue. In addition, students are encouraged to



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use their mother tongue to share their learning and progress with their parents at home, during student-led conferences and at the PYP Grade 5 exhibition. In order to maintain and promote the students' first language, the school provides resources, such as the mother tongue section in the MLC, in addition to the physical spaces for mother tongue lessons to take place.

Professional Development

A variety of opportunities is offered to teachers for professional development in language-related areas of the curriculum. These include: whole school targeted professional development; professional development for specific teachers or areas of the curriculum including the IB PYP; areas of language teaching identified by individual teachers for their own development; in-house professional development workshops; peer learning through collaboration, share sessions and focus group activities. There are also opportunities to receive one-on-one instruction, coaching or guidance in a specific skill or task connected to language teaching and learning.

Assessment

Assessment is integral to planning, teaching and learning at HIS. Pre-assessment is used to ascertain what students already know, can do and understand. Data from a variety of formative and summative assessments, as well as standardized tests, provides information on language growth and is used to guide instruction and plan differentiated language learning strategies. Students are regularly given opportunities to reflect on their learning.

PRACTICES MYP

Language of Instruction

All MYP subjects are taught in English. Language and Literature is offered in English from Grade 6 through 10. Students who are not able to meet the Language and Literature: English objectives due to their English level, will study an additional Language Acquisition/ EAL: English course.

Mother Tongue

The school recognizes that mother tongue support is crucial to social, academic and emotional development. Hence, HIS is committed to providing the students with meaningful opportunities to access their first language. In the MYP, parents are encouraged to converse with their children in their mother tongue. In addition, students are encouraged to use their mother tongue to share their learning and progress with their parents at home, during student-led conferences and during some learning engagements in the classroom. In order to maintain and promote the students' first language, the school provides resources, such as the mother tongue section in the Media Literacy Centre (MLC), in addition to the physical spaces for mother tongue lessons to take place.

Host Country



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Although the draft constitution of Zimbabwe makes provision for 16 official languages, English and Shona are the two most widely spoken in Harare, where Harare International School (HIS) is situated. The school views the Shona speaking people in our school community as an important language resource. Use of the Shona language is encouraged and promoted through bi-lingual signage, translation of the Learner Profile, extra-mural activities, singing the national anthem and communication with support staff. The school's vision statement is quoted in both Shona and isiNdebele. Shona language and culture is taught where appropriate through the units and each inquiry allows for a local perspective to be examined. A collection of books on Zimbabwe culture is available in the Media Literacy Centre (MLC).

Language Acquisition

At HIS three languages are offered as Language Acquisition courses - French, Spanish and English.

- Language Choice and Change: Students may choose any of the three languages provided they are not already fluent in the language. Students may change their language acquisition in Grades 6-10 once they have reached Phase 4 and at the discretion of the school.
- English Acquisition: this course is offered to students whose mother tongue is not English. Students will focus on comprehension, oral and written language.

Language Placement

At HIS students are required to follow the language course that is most suited to their needs and that will provide them with an appropriate academic challenge.

- Students entering Grade 6 will sit a language placement test to determine the appropriate phase.
- Students new to HIS will sit a language placement test with the individual teachers.

Inclusion

A range of options is in place to promote an inclusive language-learning environment for all students. No student is excluded because of lack of proficiency in English, the language of instruction. First and foremost, the cultural background and previous experiences of student's whose mother tongue is not English are acknowledged, celebrated and used as tools to promote participation and learning. An additional Language Acquisition: English course is offered to students who need greater support with the language of instruction. For those students experiencing challenges with or who require enrichment work for language learning, a Learning Support Specialist (LSS) provides both in-class and pull-out and self contained support. All teachers use a differentiated approach to instruction as an added strategy to ensure that language teaching and learning in the school is inclusive.

Professional Development

A variety of opportunities is offered to teachers for professional development in language-related areas of the curriculum. These include: whole school targeted professional development; professional development for specific teachers or areas of the curriculum;



areas of language teaching identified by individual teachers for their own development; in-house professional development workshops; peer learning through collaboration, share sessions and group activities.

Pedagogy

In the MYP at HIS, language is taught holistically. Since language transcends all curriculum areas and is fundamental to all subjects, the focus is on the transdisciplinary nature of language learning and its application across the subject areas. As all teachers are teachers of language they have a responsibility to facilitate its acquisition and promote communication skills through their grade level and subject area classes. The instruction of the basic skills for communication-oral, written and visual, is a process of planning, teaching, assessing and reflecting. Literacy instruction is integrated as much as possible into the Middle Years Programme (MYP) units of inquiry and is supported by a range of resources. Some basic literacy skills and tools needed for inquiry learning are taught through stand alone learning opportunities. A variety of methodologies are used to promote inquiry based authentic language learning. Learning experiences are planned to enable students to make connections, apply their learning and transfer their conceptual understanding to new situations.

PRACTICES DP

All students are required to study at least one additional language and may chose to study a third if this is a school-supported self-taught course.

Language of Instruction

All students at HIS are expected to begin Grade 11 having chosen a combination of courses that allows them to participate as Diploma candidates. In order to ensure that they are able to participate fully in their chosen courses in the language of instruction, English, all students are required to follow the English Language and Literature Diploma course; at either Higher or Standard Level.

Mother Tongue

Students, whose mother tongue is not English, and who have maintained studies in this language are strongly encouraged to participate in the school-supported self taught course. While HIS is unable to provide a tutor for study, one of the faculty will be appointed to guide the student through the course: explain the course requirements, facilitate text choice, and coordinate internal and external assessment.

Language Acquisition

At HIS two languages are offered at Diploma level, French and Spanish, at: at *ab initio*, Language B SL and Language B HL.

Language Placement



At HIS students are required to follow the language course that is most suited to their needs and that will provide them with an appropriate academic challenge.

It is essential that Diploma Programme coordinators and teachers ensure that students are following the course that is best suited to their present and future needs and that will provide them with an appropriate academic challenge. The degree to which students are already competent in the language and the degree of proficiency they wish to attain by the end of the period of study are the most important factors in identifying the appropriate course. Coordinators, in conjunction with teachers, are responsible for the placement of students. The most important consideration is that the course should be a challenging educational experience for the student. [Page 5].

The Diploma Programme: Language ab initio guide. Cardiff, Wales: International Baccalaureate Organization, 2011 (updated 2014). Print.

Students joining our French or Spanish *ab initio* course from an MYP class must be judged to be in phase 1; students in phase 2 will only be considered with approval from the Diploma Coordinator and High School Principal. Students entering HIS who have completed more than two semesters of study of the language are ineligible to study the *ab initio* course.

When placing students into courses at HIS the following profiles will be used:

Language profile of a student joining an SL Language B course at HIS:

Students whose language profile matches that described below would be considered ineligible to study at ab initio level. Where a student shows particular aptitude for language learning they may be considered, at the discretion of the Coordinator, for higher level if they so apply.

Receptive skills	Productive skills	Interactive skills
Understand, both aurally and in writing, simple sentences and some more complex sentences related to the three themes and related topics.	Express information fairly accurately, in both writing and in speech, using a range of basic vocabulary and grammatical structures.	Understand and respond clearly to some information and ideas within the range of the three prescribed themes and related topics.
Understand simple authentic (adapted where appropriate) written texts and questions related to them in the target language.	Communicate orally and respond appropriately to most questions on the three prescribed themes and related topics.	Engage in simple conversations.
	Communicate clearly, in writing, some simple information and ideas in response to a written task.	Demonstrate some intercultural understanding by reflecting on similarities and differences between the target culture(s) and the student's own and by providing some appropriate examples

		and information.
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Language profile of a student joining an HL Language B course at HIS:

Students whose language profile matches that described below would be considered to be suitable for inclusion as a higher level candidate. However, if they have three higher levels in other subject groups, students matching this profile can opt to register as standard level students.

Receptive skills	Productive skills	Interactive skills
<p>Understand straightforward recorded or spoken information on the topics studied.</p> <p>Understand authentic written texts related to the topics studied and that use mostly everyday language.</p>	<p>Communicate orally in order to explain a point of view on a designated topic.</p> <p>Describe with some detail and accuracy experiences, events and concepts.</p> <p>Produce texts where the use of register, style, rhetorical devices and structural elements are generally appropriate to the audience and purpose.</p>	<p>Demonstrate interaction that usually flows coherently, but with occasional limitations.</p> <p>Engage in conversations on the topics studied, as well as related ideas.</p> <p>Demonstrate some intercultural engagement with the target language and culture(s).</p>

Language profile of student joining a school-supported self taught course at HIS:

*Students whose language profile matches that described below would be considered to be suitable for inclusion **only** as a self-taught candidate; registration as higher level Language B would not be permitted.*

Receptive skills	Productive skills	Interactive skills
<p>Understand complex recorded or spoken information on the topics studied.</p> <p>Appreciate literary works in the target language.</p> <p>Understand complex authentic written texts related to the topics studied.</p>	<p>Communicate orally in order to explain in detail a point of view.</p> <p>Describe in detail and accurately experiences and events, as well as abstract ideas and concepts.</p> <p>Produce clear texts where the use of register, style, rhetorical devices and structural elements are appropriate to the audience</p>	<p>Demonstrate interaction that flows coherently with a degree of fluency and spontaneity.</p> <p>Engage coherently in conversations in most situations.</p> <p>Demonstrate some intercultural engagement with the target language and culture(s).</p>



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	and purpose. Produce clear and convincing arguments in support of a point of view.	
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DEVELOPING THIS POLICY

The previous language policy was created and reviewed in 2009.

This philosophy and policy documents was created by the language policy committee; this whole school committee comprised volunteers from the both the teaching faculties of Language & Literature and Language Acquisition. In addition the IBDP, IBMYPC, IBPYPC and Media Literacy Specialist sat on the committee. The Head of Teaching and Learning chaired the committee.

The IB Coordinators in each of the three sections developed this document's practices in consultation with the relevant stakeholders, to meet the requirements set out in the policy.

Committee members

Stephanie Jambga	Teacher of KG
Mandisa Ngwenya	Teacher of LSS (Primary School)
Gaby Duvillard	Language Acquisition Teacher (Primary School French)
Niel Petersen	Primary Principal
Daniel Badji	Language Acquisition Chair (Upper School)
Jo Lannas	Language Acquisition Teacher (Upper School English)
Pip Farrelly	PYP Coordinator
Seren Davis	MYP Coordinator
Lionel McCauley	Language and Literature Teacher (Upper School English)
Sharna Tobin	Language and Literature Teacher (Upper School English)
Una Breathnach	Teacher of Grade 1
Nicola Holloway	Media and Literacy Coordinator
Stuart Donnelly (Chair)	DP Coordinator & Head of Teaching and Learning