

Primary School:
Grade 1 to 6

CIS Canadian
International
School



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ABOUT

Primary school at CIS is where your child's learning journey begins. It is a place where we build on children's natural curiosity about the world around them, and support them in gradually taking a greater responsibility and ownership for their own learning.

Our teachers respond to the unique learning styles and needs of each individual, creating a community of happy, confident and engaged learners. They encourage students to think critically and creatively, work collaboratively, and communicate confidently around big ideas.

Primary school is an important bridge to the increasingly complex academic challenges in secondary. Our students are prepared for the complex challenges they may face today or in the future, by learning how to solve real world problems, develop their own ideas, and adapt their skills for the situation at hand. We offer a number of programme options for primary students, these include:

- English programme
- French-English bilingual programme
- Chinese-English bilingual programme

Our school is organised into grade level communities, ensuring each student feels a sense of belonging. The school day runs from 8.30am to 3.30pm. Many students take part in our after school activities programme which ends at 4.30pm.

Grade 1s in the English programme and bilingual classes are supported by an instructional assistant.



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Grade 1 to 6 students also have single subject teachers for arts, physical education and language acquisition.

The CIS curriculum.

CIS is one of the few international schools in Singapore to offer all three International Baccalaureate (IB) programmes, from Primary Years through to the Diploma Programme. Our curriculum is benchmarked against national curricula globally, allowing students to transition to another school if and when required, or graduate and be admitted to leading universities around the world.

The CIS curriculum is represented through learning standards and conceptual understandings. These are developmentally appropriate and provide guidance regarding expectations for students at each grade level. Their purpose is to ensure robust progression for students as they move throughout the grade levels.

CONCEPT-BASED CURRICULUM

Offering a concept-based curriculum allows for the necessary portability many of our families desire. Students are able to transfer knowledge and understanding not only between subject areas, but also between schools at which they may study in the future.

STANDARDS

CIS has aligned its standards to the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States of America and Australia. These curriculum standards support the framework of our teaching and learning programme.

Learning standards are concise, written descriptions of what students are expected to know and be able to do at a specific stage throughout their education. Standards apply to all grade levels from nursery to grade 12, and have been carefully selected to ensure a sequential and carefully guided development of concepts, knowledge and skills.

Because of the global nature of our learning standards, students who join us from different countries are able to access the curriculum regardless of their educational background or programme. This also applies to students repatriating or transitioning to another international school.



The CIS curriculum.

CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDINGS

Our learning programme is concept-based. Concept-based instruction is driven by 'big ideas' rather than subject specific content. It promotes in-depth thinking, understanding and the application of knowledge. By having students consider the context in which they will use their understanding, concept-based learning brings 'real world' meaning to content, knowledge and skills.

As an example, in a concept-based curriculum, students will learn their number facts and memorise them, but with a focus on how these number facts might be applied to everyday situations, along with their connections to other mathematical concepts.

APPROACHES TO LEARNING (ATLs)

The approaches to learning (ATLs) are a set of skills essential for success in the 21st century. They include communication, self-management, research, thinking and social skills.

ATLs are shared across all three IB programmes and provide a common language for students and teachers to reflect on and articulate the process of learning. ATLs help students 'learn how to learn.' They can be learned and taught, and improved with practice.



Primary Years Programme (PYP)

ACADEMIC PROGRAMME

Our grade 1 to grade 6 curriculum draws from the best curricula globally and is delivered within the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) framework. The PYP is an inquiry-based, curricular framework based on the most current best-practice educational research from around the world.

INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING

Our inquiry-based approach encourages students to take ownership and responsibility of their own learning. Inquiry-based instruction is not just about asking a student what he or she wants to know. It's about triggering a student's curiosity, and having them want to learn about a topic. Our teachers ask students to:

- develop the questions they want to find answers to
- research the topic collaboratively
- present what they've learned
- reflect on the process - what worked, what didn't

Through this process, our students are challenged to think deeply about an issue, work collaboratively, solve problems creatively, and communicate effectively using a wide range of media.



The PYP framework.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

The CIS primary curriculum is built on the PYP framework of the five essential elements of: knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes and action. This framework is designed to equip students with the skills and expertise needed to be successful - both today and in the future.

UNITS OF INQUIRY

In the PYP, students engage in concept-based learning commonly referred to as the unit of inquiry (UOI), and different subject areas are integrated (as appropriate) as they explore a particular concept or topic. Students have dedicated English and mathematics lessons with homeroom teachers, while language acquisition classes, physical education, art, music and drama are delivered by specialist teachers. Where possible, learning in these specialist areas links back to the overarching unit concept(s). Science and social studies are learned exclusively in the context of the units of inquiry.



Learning.

LITERACY

Our literacy programme develops students who are able to effectively and confidently communicate through:

- reading
- writing
- listening
- speaking
- presenting

Our programme addresses the development of phonological awareness, knowledge of the alphabet, knowledge of how words work, and recognition or spelling of familiar words (automaticity). Teachers work with individual students to develop their language proficiency through small group instruction, classroom 'read alouds', guided reading, reading and writing workshops and spelling (word study).

We encourage students to think critically in order to determine the truthfulness and validity of the texts they are reading. As readers, our students learn to make meaning of texts, use strategies that include the use of background knowledge (including knowledge relating to their culture, language, and identity), develop vocabulary knowledge, understand how language is structured, and use strategies to convey meaning.

MATHEMATICS

Our mathematics programme, which is incorporated into the units of inquiry or taught as a stand alone unit, is divided into five strands:

- data handling
- measurement
- shape and space
- pattern and function
- numbers

Mastery is the core focus of our mathematical instruction, as it promotes higher-level thinking with a focus on relationships and connections. Students are encouraged to verbalise and demonstrate their thinking strategies. Instruction involves a balance of written computation, mental computation, estimation and the use of mathematical tools. This approach supports students in consolidating their understanding and gaining confidence in their abilities as a mathematician.



Learning.

LANGUAGES

At CIS, we are committed to promoting multilingualism, whether through our language acquisition programme, or our Chinese-English or French-English bilingual programmes.

Language acquisition

All students have the opportunity to learn an **additional language** at CIS. Students in the English programme can choose daily Chinese or French. They are also placed in classes according to their language proficiency.

Bilingual programmes

CIS offers two bilingual programmes: **Chinese-English** and **French-English**. Both bilingual programmes provide students with experiences to learn equally in both languages. In Chinese-English, this model is achieved by offering two and a half days of instruction each week in each language whereas in the French-English model, students receive weekly instruction in both languages. A critical component of our bilingual programmes is to ensure that students learn about, experience and appreciate the cultural heritage of both languages.

The overarching goal of both bilingual programmes is to develop our students' language proficiency (speaking, reading and writing) to a point where they can (if they can choose) move into the respective bilingual subjects in secondary school.



Learning.

SOCIAL STUDIES AND SCIENCE

Social studies and science are delivered entirely within the units of inquiry. There are specific standards and benchmarks connected to each unit.

Social Studies

Our social studies programme allows students to learn about topics and concepts in a unique environment, while the greater Singapore community provides opportunities to apply learning in a real world context.

Social studies topics are:

- human systems and economic activities
- social organisations and culture
- continuity and change through time
- human and natural environment
- resources and the environment

Science

As students learn about science concepts, they develop the skills and processes needed to support scientific understandings, which include observing, measuring, explaining, scientific vocabulary, interpreting and questioning, planning and carrying out investigations, predicting and testing, interpreting and evaluating, and representing and communicating.

Science topics are:

- living things
- earth and space
- materials and matter
- forces and energy



Learning.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

CIS's physical education (PE) curriculum focuses on the development of each student's holistic wellbeing. The programme supports and guides the development of the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will contribute to the understanding of self, the development and maintenance of relationships with others and a balanced, active and healthy lifestyle. Our programme is designed to encourage all students to be active, informed and excited about the benefits of health and wellness.

THE ARTS

The arts (drama, music and visual art) are a powerful learning tool for communication and expression, and are an essential part of the primary curriculum. The arts help students explore, shape and communicate their sense of identity and understanding of the world, and in turn develop creativity, self confidence, resilience and adaptability.

STEAM

Science, technology, environmental studies, arts and mathematics (STEAM) is an integral part of all that we do in primary. We have a dedicated STEAM teacher, as well as resources and spaces for students to innovate, create, problem solve and engage in design thinking. Our STEAM teacher collaborates with other teachers to integrate STEAM opportunities into units of inquiry and specific subject areas.



Learning.

LIBRARY

The library is a dynamic place and an intrinsic part of daily life at CIS. We support a lifelong love of reading and writing by offering a vast selection of books and digital media, as well as a range of online educational resources.

Our libraries contain a wide variety of curriculum related resources which are appropriate for the different age ranges, cultural backgrounds, and language abilities of our students. Our teacher librarians support classroom instruction, and collaborate with classroom teachers in fostering students' research, information literacy, technology, communication, and critical thinking skills.

DIGITAL LITERACY

Technology is integrated into the curriculum and classroom activities in order to provide rich and meaningful 21st century learning experiences.

Our 'One to World' programme ensures our students learn how to think critically and ethically as they harness technology in their learning, behave safely and appropriately online, identify what information is important online, and use technology as a tool to showcase their skills and talents.



Activities.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

Our house colour system (grades 1-6) and primary student council encourage a strong sense of community, leadership and team spirit. Students are engaged in a wide range of musical ensembles, choral groups as well as full-scale school productions and performances each year.

ACTIVITIES

Activities are an integral part of school life and student learning. Our activities programme consists of extracurricular activities and competitive sports. Opportunities are wide in scope, promote the development of the whole child, and allow students to come together to discover and develop individual talents and passions.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (ECAs)

An extensive extracurricular activities (ECAs) programme provides students with additional linguistic, recreational sporting, and enrichment opportunities, if desired. ECAs are run by independent providers and are a paid service.

COMPETITIVE SPORTS

A range of competitive sports (ACSIS sports) are available to older primary students across three terms each school year. Through ACSIS sports, students compete against other international schools in age-based teams.



Outdoor learning.

All students engage in a range of age-appropriate experiential learning experiences outside of the classroom.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips often connect students with the local community and extend what is being learnt in class. This hands-on learning develops an excellent understanding about the real world as well as a sense of independence.

EXCURSION WEEK

Excursion week for students in grades 4 to 6 happens in Singapore (with an out of Singapore option in grade 6) and offers students challenging opportunities that encourage collaboration, stimulate curiosity about the world around us, and empower taking action.

OPEN MINDS

Open Minds is an innovative programme that moves students in grades 1 to 6 out of the classroom and into a range of Singapore settings for up to four days. Sites include Sungei Buloh, East Coast and Chinatown, and students get to experience the environment, artefacts, and field experts first hand.

Open Minds experiences have the potential to change a student's perspective and can be instrumental in building understanding of a particular area of inquiry. The programme provides students with the opportunity to engage in stimulating hands-on activities that focus on developing their thinking, research, observation and questioning skills.



Service.

At CIS, we value the connections we have with one another as a school community as well as those that we cultivate locally, regionally and globally. We are committed to promoting positive change through taking action. Service in primary school is often focused within our school and the local community.

Sustainability initiatives, such as composting, recycling and making connections with local community gardens, are examples of service and action that can be found in the classrooms of even our youngest learners. Annual participation in the Singapore Terry Fox Run, other support for various local charities, and connections made with local teachers and schools, also provide students with opportunities for service.



Communication and reporting.

We encourage parents to be involved in their child's school experience. We encourage face to face communication, and parents are welcome to schedule a meeting with their children's teachers at a mutually convenient time to discuss progress and wellbeing.

ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING

CIS personalises the learning process for every student through ongoing assessment and reporting. This ensures that our teachers understand each child's needs, helping them to guide and support them as they progress in their learning and development.

To provide the best possible feedback and ensure the best learning outcomes for each child, we:

- have consistently high expectations of all students
- regularly assess and report on each child's growth
- provide consistent feedback on children's work
- include students in the assessment and reporting process
- participate in standardised testing (Measures of Academic Progress)

REPORTING TO PARENTS

In primary, we provide many opportunities to discuss your child's growth and progress. These include:

- back-to-school night
- a phone call or an email home in the first two weeks of school (new students only)
- parent conferences each semester, with student-led conferences in semester 2
- a personalised student digital online portfolio (Seesaw)
- two formal report cards are issued each year (January and June)

SEESAW

Seesaw is an online platform that houses each student's digital portfolio, providing parents with engaging insights into what their child is learning.

MANAGEBAC

ManageBac is the teaching and learning platform at CIS. It is used for curriculum planning and reporting, and parents can follow their child's academic progress as UOI (unit of inquiry) information is added to the progress tab. End-of-semester report cards are available electronically through ManageBac.



Student wellbeing.

At CIS, the social and emotional wellbeing of our students is paramount. Our teachers work in partnership with parents to help students acquire the skills and knowledge needed to manage themselves and their relationships, and to make responsible decisions.

We provide opportunities for students to learn about personal relationships, mindfulness and peer support through daily outdoor activities, regular physical education lessons and involvement in leadership opportunities.

When needed, there are opportunities for students to learn about emotional wellbeing, and to receive support from our highly trained primary counsellors, vice principals and school psychologist.



Who to contact.

We understand that selecting a school for your child is a big decision. Our school administrators, counsellors and teachers would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Whether you are looking for more information, or just want to talk to someone about your child and how they will fit into school life, we are here to help. We look forward to speaking with you.

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