

From nursery through to high school, its students develop and evolve in a thoroughly multicultural environment and its internationally recognised International Baccalaureate Diploma (IB Diploma) ensures that its pupils can gain access to the most prestigious universities around the world. Riviera Insider takes a tour of this exceptional educational institution.

Where the great minds of tomorrow grow

The International School of Monaco

By AILA STÖCKMANN



The location is unusual: split over several floors in a large office complex on Port Hercule in a building that has been recently extended into the neighbouring former Monaco Yacht Club, which the school has absorbed. Only the groups of young children dressed smartly in white and blue in front of the building and older ones chatting away in English suggest the presence of a school behind these red brick walls.

Even more striking is the interior of the school. It is a Tuesday morning and an arbitrary day in the middle of the school year. To the left and right of the corridor are classrooms - most of them with a panoramic view over the harbour and the Principality's characteristic skyline. The rooms are separated from the corridor by floor-to-ceiling glass walls with blinds, although most teachers have chosen to leave the blinds up, which allows us a clear view of what is happening inside.

Teachers have a maximum of 16 pupils per class, but it can be less as we see from an art class in which only three girls stand at easels. A small group of theatre students are sitting on the floor in the room

opposite discussing a piece while another class of maybe 14-year-olds is seated behind their keyboards listening to their music teacher.

"We're not an 'exam factory'," says ISM Director Francis Gianni, and yet since 2003, the pass rate here has been 100% with just one exception.

But the ISM is interested in something far beyond cramming students full of knowledge and information. Academic performance is, of course, highly appreciated, but special attention is also paid to out-of-school activities that can range from meditation to sports of all kinds - sailing, football, tennis, basketball and dancing among many others - the arts and philanthropic endeavours such as the club that regularly performs community service.

"World citizens are growing up here with us," says Mr. Gianni, "and they are exposed to an international perspective in all classes."

The current statistics of ISM's students speak volumes: just under 30% have an English-speaking background, 20% are Italian, 12% are Russian, 6% Scandinavian and 5% from German-speaking origins. The remaining 30% is made up of children from parents from all over the world.

When the ISM was founded in 1994, it counted just

34 students in its books. Today that number is over 630. The vast majority of students live in Monaco, but some also live in the surrounding communities or even in the neighbouring Italian region of Liguria. Those of nursery and primary school age (or kindergarten and elementary) are taught all subjects equally in French and English. From Grade 7 (middle school age), the language of instruction is mainly English. French is taught as an obligatory second language: Spanish, Italian, Russian or German are offered as third languages and all languages are taught by a native speaker.

"At the end of their school days, the children speak fluent English and French as well as a third language at a very high level," says Angela Godfrey, who is responsible for admissions at the school.

It would seem that all teachers share a passion for their establishment. During a brief encounter with art teacher Alexander Lloyd, he tells Riviera Insider, "This is a wonderful school! Every student has their own qualities. I teach them techniques and allow them to discover for themselves the beauty that can be extracted from a simple pencil."

The ISM is strongly supported by the princely family; Prince Albert or a family member presents the graduation diplomas each year. This ceremony is one of the highlights of the school year. ▀

ANNUAL FEES AT THE ISM
RANGE BETWEEN
19,000
AND
25,000 €
DEPENDING ON THE
STUDENT'S AGE



THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF MONACO

Conveniently situated on the port of Monaco,
The International School of Monaco offers:



- An internationally accredited bilingual programme where the focus is on students and their learning
- Excellent IB Diploma results which are well above the world average and facilitate entry to top universities
- A wide variety of extra curricular activities in arts, music and sports which enhance and enrich the academic programme
- Modern, spacious facilities including a new Early Years building, a dedicated Science Centre and exceptional library/media resources.



To learn what ISM can do for your child, please contact
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