



Philosophy

At Shahid Mahdavi Educational Complex we believe that:

- Language plays a vital role in supporting the school's mission of providing holistic education.
- Language is central to the development of international-mindedness for all members of the school community allowing access to a greater range of experiences in the world. In fact, we are teaching students the importance of culture, diversity, and sensitivity towards others which in turn enhances their personal growth, cognitive development, and facilitates international understanding.
- Language plays a significant role in the development of community identity and inclusion and within the school environment students need to make choices about use of language that is mindful of the community in which they are part.
- Language is an expression of culture and must be valued as an integral part of a student's identity.
- The development of the mother-tongue language is critical for maintaining one's cultural identity.
- The acquisition of language is a life-long process and is a central component of intellectual and personal growth.
- Proficiency earned in one language is transferable to other languages, and language proficiency aids the student in acquiring competencies in other curricular areas.
- Language learning must be fostered in all aspects of the school community.
- Languages should be integrated into different aspects of the curriculum.
- Inquiry should be used across the language curriculum and by all teachers.
- Teachers must strive to recognize the language needs of all students and work to serve these needs within and outside of the classroom. They should differentiate instruction to meet students' learning needs and styles.
- Language teaching and learning should support students to become actively responsible for their own learning
- Equity of access to IB programmes is a fundamental right of all students.

Objectives

At SMEC, our language programs aim to:

- Enable students to learn and use language effectively, appropriately, accurately, and confidently.
- Develop students' skills of oral and written communication.
- Enable students to develop and use language skills in a variety of contexts and purposes.
- Promote the appreciation, understanding, and analysis of literature.
- Encourage students to explore language as a means to understand the differing perspectives of people from other cultures.
- Develop students' awareness of the role of language in other areas of the curriculum and to other ways of knowing.



- Provide an opportunity for enjoyment, creativity, and intellectual stimulation through knowledge of language and literature.
- Foster deep appreciation and love of world literature.

Language of Instruction

Two streams of language instruction are being implemented in our primary school:

1. Dual language stream, where the languages of instruction are Persian and English, and as the second language French is practiced. Here the language of POI is both Farsi and English.
2. English medium stream, where the language of instruction is English, and as the second languages, Persian and French are practiced. Here the language of POI is English.

The focus of language of instruction is its application across the subject areas and throughout the transdisciplinary programme of inquiry (POI). Language provides a vehicle for inquiry. The programme of inquiry provides an authentic context for learners to develop and use language. Wherever possible, language (both language of instruction and second language) is taught through the relevant, authentic context of the units of inquiry.

Different Aspects of Literacy

We empower students to comprehend language through listening, reading and viewing, and to express themselves with increasing confidence through speaking, writing, and presenting.

Reading: Our reading program is literature-based, therefore, language learning at our school extends beyond the classroom walls, and has close connections to the library. Teachers and students both use the library/ media center on a daily basis. Books are carefully selected to reinforce the units of inquiry, learner profile, and attitudes as well as the development of reading skills. Students learn how to understand, interpret and respond to the ideas, attitudes and feelings expressed in various texts. Books are read for enjoyment and can also be discussed, analyzed, compared and contrasted. Students learn how to understand, interpret and respond to the ideas, attitudes and feelings expressed in various texts; to think critically about what they read; and to be able to make predictions and inferences based on information that is both explicit and implicit in the text.

Writing: Writing across the curriculum is a significant activity at all grade levels. The writing process involves creating an environment where students can acquire the skills necessary to produce written products for a variety of purposes. The written product can be informative, persuasive, poetic, or in the form of a story or dialogue. When learning to write, students are encouraged to focus at first on meaning rather than accuracy, and to enjoy the writing process.

Some of the elements of grammar are addressed formally in the curriculum, particularly in senior classes. It is envisaged that the child will have gained a knowledge and control of some of the principal elements of grammatical convention by the time she finishes primary school. However, it is not intended that these be taught in isolation. As with punctuation and spelling, they should be approached in the context of general language learning.



Listening and Speaking: In achieving competence with language the child develops oral fluency and expressiveness, and, in the process, learns to initiate and sustain conversations and to take turns in a class room environment that promotes tolerance for the views and opinions of others. She also learns to use language for the purpose of every day social interaction, performing social functions such as greeting, expressing appreciation, expressing sympathy and concern, and welcoming visitors with confidence.

Viewing: Students are given the opportunity to engage with multiple text forms (linguistic, visual, gestural, spatial, and auditory) to learn to construct meaning, interpret, critically analyze and reflect on these interpretations in the light of the context. They also understand how each text form is created and what kinds of meaning are conveyed through multimodal representations.

A sample of distribution of the language instruction during one week:

Language Component	Number of sessions per week	Duration of each session – in minutes
Reading	2	40
Writing	2	20
Grammar	2	20
Spelling	2	20
handwriting	2	20
Silent Reading	4	15 (beginning of the afternoon)

Mother Tongue Support

Mother tongue is the language that is most strongly linked to the culture that an individual identifies with as their culture of origin and is often the language used in the home. Research has shown that development of mother-tongue language is crucial for cognitive development and in maintaining cultural identity. It also has the potential to increase intercultural awareness and understanding, and enables students to remain in touch with and maintain esteem for the language, literature and culture of their home country.

The school recognizes that the maintenance of each student's mother tongue is not only important for its contribution to each individual's cultural identity, but also lays the foundation of linguistic understanding upon which second and further language learning takes place.

The following measures are in place to support mother tongue maintenance:

1. During admission interviews the importance of mother tongue maintenance is stressed and it is explained to all prospective parents that they will need to play a large role in this. Some appropriate strategies are also discussed.



2. The school library undertakes to include literature (in both electronic and paper forms) in a range of languages representative of the school population. It strives to develop its resources for mother tongue support such as: picture dictionaries, bilingual dictionaries, literature in various languages, as well as translations of literature from various languages.

3. Parents and / or second language children will have opportunities where appropriate to share stories / drama etc. in their own language. One of the functions of such activities will be to reinforce awareness that although these students may have difficulties operating in English, they do have fluency in their native language. This is also a way of sharing culture and of making explicit the fact that language is a part of culture.

4. Appropriate opportunities may be given to students to discuss/think through unfamiliar or complex concepts in their first language.

ESL Support

For our English Language Learners, we offer a comprehensive program through which they acquire the skills and knowledge needed to access the regular curriculum. We provide support to our students and their families to enable them to adjust to a new language, learning environment, and culture.

The school undertakes to provide ESL support for students who have not reached a level of English language proficiency which facilitates their success in the curricular activities they need to undertake in the classroom. In line with the school's philosophy of language learning, ESL support is primarily conducted during the school hours and when possible in-class in conjunction with the classroom teacher. This is to enable students the maximum opportunities to use language in meaningful contexts, particularly in their interactions with fellow students and to ensure that ESL students do not miss out on valuable lesson sequences through being pulled out. As different students have different levels of language proficiency, the language needs of all students in the class should be considered in joint planning by the ESL teacher and classroom teacher. Pull-out support is offered in specific circumstances:

_ For students who have no prior exposure to English, or whose English language proficiency is not such that they are able to follow daily routines, a pull-out program of survival English is provided.

_ For students above grade one who may have prior exposure to oral English, but have no prior exposure to the Roman alphabet a pull-out program focusing on phonic awareness in context is provided.

In addition to the support provided by specialist ESL teachers, the school recognizes that all teachers need to be language teachers and that language must be taught across the curriculum, not just in designated language activities.

After School ESL Program

For those students whose level of language proficiency is such that they require considerable support in order to be successful in classroom activities and tasks, the



school provides extra language support after school. If a student is deemed as needing this support, attendance at these classes will be strongly encouraged. Entry to and exit from the After School ESL Program will be determined on an assessment conducted by the school.

French

French is taught two (dual language stream) or three (English medium stream) periods a week. Key to learn other European languages, language of science and culture, and one of the most spoken languages in the world, French is an ideal complement to English. With its acquisition, our students deepen their rational rigor, their cultural open-mindedness and their ability to integrate a global world.

In the dual language stream, the emphasis is put on oral until grade three, because of little time, but above all to respect the mother tongue and the pace of learning of our students. As a result, neither reading nor writing is taught in the first grade of primary school, reading is introduced in the second grade, and it is only in the third grade that the students start writing as such. The emphasis remains on oral, however, until the end of their primary school years.

In the English medium stream, the emphasis is also on oral but the students learn gradually to read and write from grade 1. The language of instruction being English, they are more familiar with the latin alphabet and as a result less prone to confusion than in the dual language stream.

The language of instruction in the French classes is mostly French but Persian and/or English are also used. This helps the student to learn better by building on what they already know but also reinforces their intercultural understanding.

For those students who come in the middle of the program and are not acquainted with French language, extra classes are provided after school.

Admission policy

Students are admitted according to the age appropriate criteria. Upon the student's first arrival at school an initial language assessment is conducted including interview, written test, and analysis of available previous school reports.

Based on the language assessment results, and the teacher's reports the students in need of additional instruction and support are provided with the service, to catch up with the main stream.