

YK Pao School Primary Curriculum

Year 1 to 5 students study the unique Shanghai Plus programme. Pao School's curriculum design retains the rigour from Shanghai curriculum, combining it with the strengths of international education in terms of skill development. Core subjects such as Chinese and maths are based on Chinese national and Shanghai curriculum standards, while the others incorporate elements from other major international curricula, using overseas resources to support and satisfy the needs of different learners. The rich and challenging curriculum provides students with strong fundamentals and teaches them to speak, read, write, and think in Chinese and English. It was developed in partnership with Chinese and international advisors and experts.

The immersive dual-language learning environment at Pao School is unique. We are one of only a very small number of schools in the world where a substantial number of Chinese and English native-speaking students are taught in both languages in the same class. This means that we not only teach language and culture, but we also use these two languages as a medium to teach different subjects and activities. In addition, students are immersed in the two languages in most of the subjects and we aim for mainstream in the near future for students of varying abilities to learn in all subject areas with reasonable language competence discrepancy in each classroom. This ensures both languages are used in an authentic and academic way. In addition, some subjects are taught bilingually to ensure students have an understanding of skills and concepts in both languages. Students at Pao School are expected to be competent in both languages academically after 6-8 years of study in the Dual Language Immersion Programme (below).

We regularly assess students' work in all subjects through unit and semester tests. From Year 3, all students take part in the International Schools Assessment for English and Mathematics. This allows us to benchmark our students' reading, writing, and maths skills with those at international schools worldwide. The assessment is conducted in English.

At Pao School, the development of each child's character is as important to us as the development of academic skills. Through a structured character education programme and a range of sporting and arts-based activities, we develop the 'whole child,' thereby teaching students to be respectful, responsible and reflective members of the community.

When students graduate from the Primary Division, they will be issued a Shanghai Certificate of Primary Education.

Dual Language Immersion Programme

A Dual Language Immersion Programme is a research-based bilingual education model providing children an academically rigorous and culturally enriched curriculum for high-level language proficiency acquisition in two languages.

In a Dual Language Immersion Programme, two languages are used as instructional medium in teaching and learning. Through carefully planned curriculum, children excel in academic contents and language competence in both languages. Instructional time is devoted to both languages to achieve paralleled and balanced language and content goals.

A Dual Language Immersion Programme promotes intellectual growth, cognitive development, communication skills and cultural awareness. Graduates from such programmes are highly sought after by esteemed colleges for their surpassing language abilities, academic readiness and cross-culture adeptness. Students enjoy significant career advantages and are well positioned to be the global leaders. With Chinese and English as the two major languages in the world, we believe that a Chinese/English Dual Language Immersion Programme responds to the multicultural world and prepares children for the future.

Dual Language Immersion Programmes are characterised by:

- Equal emphasis on literacy acquisition for both languages
- On-going collaboration across disciplines and faculty
- Integration between languages and subjects in both languages
- Partnership among school, family and children
- Research-based bilingual curricula and practices
- Appreciation of heritage, identities and cultures

FAQs

Dual Language Immersion Programme philosophy and differences from other programmes

Q: What is the underlying philosophy of a Dual Language Immersion Programme?

A: The underlying tenet of a Dual Language Immersion Programme is additive bilingualism. Additive bilingualism is a philosophical approach in language education whereby the mother tongue is valued and developed along with the development of the target language as contrasted with subtractive bilingualism whereby the development of the mother is neglected in favour of the exclusive development of the target language.

Q: What are the differences between a Dual Language Immersion Programme and local school programmes with strong emphasis on English subject?

A: A Dual Language Immersion Programme integrates English through all school subjects. Children develop near native-like competency in English and acquire high level performance in all academic disciplines. Local schools with strong emphasis on English subject teaches English as a stand-alone course with the main goal of achieving communicative skills. Children may be able to become proficient in social English, but usually lack the depth and breadth in academic English. Research has confirmed that Dual Language Immersion Programmes are most likely to provide children advanced academic English than other programmes.

Q: What are the differences between a Dual Language Immersion School and other international schools?

A: International schools usually only adopt English as the sole instructional language for teaching and learning across subjects with Chinese language taught as an independent course, detached from content area learning. A school that adopts Dual Language Immersion utilises both Chinese and English languages as instructional languages and enjoys unparalleled outcomes in both language literacy and content area knowledge development in both languages.

Dual Language Immersion Programme Guidelines

Q: How soon can children acquire languages in a Dual Language Immersion Programme?

A: Every child is unique in the pace of their language learning. It usually requires 6 to 8 years to master both languages in a Dual Language Immersion Programme.

Q: Is there an age my child has to start a Dual Language Immersion Programme?

A: No, children have the capacity to thrive in a Dual Language Immersion Programme regardless of their age or their prior knowledge in either Chinese or English. In general, children entering the programme at a younger age usually adapt to the programme with greater ease; for older children, more time might be needed to navigate both languages. However, with patience and support, all children can enjoy high proficiency language level in English and Chinese.

Q: Would children be confused in learning two languages?

A: No, research has shown that children have the ability to differentiate between two, if not multiple, language systems.

Q: My child already knows Chinese (or English). Why should I choose a Dual Language Immersion Programme for my child?

A: Language has both oral (speaking and listening) and literacy (reading and writing) components. While the oral components of a language can be acquired through a social or home setting, literacy acquisition is a long-term process that entails methodical pedagogy and concerted effort. Without formal learning in an academic setting, it is unlikely for children to develop literacy competence in the language. A Dual Language Immersion Programme cultivates advanced literacy skills in both languages. We believe that strong language reading and writing abilities are essential in the success of language acquisition.

Instruction, Learning and Measurement

Q: How can a Dual Language Immersion Programme achieve its instructional and language goals?

A: The dedication of the school contributes to the success of a Dual Language Immersion Programme. Both international faculty and Chinese faculty work hand in hand to create and implement a Dual Language Immersion Programme and continue to refine their craft through professional development training. Such a programme has enjoyed its success in the last several decades in many parts of the world.

Q: How are languages acquired in a Dual Language Immersion Programme?

A: Language acquisition occurs naturally both in and outside of classroom. Immersed in two languages, children receive instruction from teachers and interact with their peers. Research has shown that it takes 6 to 8 years to attain high proficiency levels in both languages.

Q: How are children supported in language learning in a Dual Language Immersion Programme?

A: The faculty in a Dual Language Immersion Programme strives to create a safe space for children to take risks, explore and learn. Teachers are skilled in combining language teaching with content-area knowledge delivery to enrich the learning process and maximise the outcomes. Each child receives comprehensive evaluation on their language background, learning style and pace. School structure and curriculum are designed to foster a nurturing and inductive learning environment for children.

Q: What support are available for children needed additional help in learning the languages?

A: Support is individualised to meet each child's needs by adopting effective pedagogical strategies. Much care is put to ensure the positive experience and success for the children. Teachers are trained in second language acquisition practices and sensitive to the needs of language learners.

Q: How are children's language abilities assessed in a Dual Language Immersion Programme?

A: Language abilities are assessed both holistically and with internationally-recognised language performance measurements. We carefully consider individual differences

and use data from children's' projects, presentations, writing work, reading comprehension assessment, peer interaction, tests and teacher observations to inform students' progress.

Family Support and Community Building

Q: How do I support my child in the Dual Language Immersion Programme if I only know one of the instructional languages or neither language?

A: Research has shown that a strong mother tongue paves the foundation for children's second language acquisition, school performance and identity development. We encourage parents to foster a strong mother tongue language at home. Engage your children by speaking to them and reading to them in your mother tongue language. Show your children that you are interested in their learning. Ask them to 'show and tell' the language to the family. Arrange playdates with school friends to increase their exposure to the languages. Finally, remember to celebrate your effort together!

Q: How do I communicate with teachers who speak a language that is not my mother tongue?

A: Teachers in a Dual Language Immersion Programme are speakers of at least one, if not both, language of the programme. Teachers communicate with families on a regular basis. Teaching assistant and school administrators also facilitate with communication between families and teachers.

Q: How are the identities of the children developed?

A: A Dual Language Immersion Programme prides itself on its mission of celebrating children's identities through culturally responsive curriculum, ethnolinguistically diverse communities and strong partnership with the families. Children in a Dual Language Immersion Programme honour their heritage and embrace other cultures.

Q: What is the community like in a Dual Language Immersion Programme?

Dual Language Immersion Programmes attract families aspiring high language proficiency and academic rigor for their children in a welcoming, interactive, multi-cultural, open-minded, and supportive environment. The linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds of the families enrich the community. Children and their families enjoy and forge lifelong friendships.

Dual Language Immersion Programme at YK Pao School

Q: What can I expect when my child graduates from Pao School?

A: Parents can expect their children to enjoy high level of academic English and Chinese languages across disciplines and solid understanding in both cultures.

Q: What is the Dual Language Immersion Programme curriculum like at Pao School?

A: Pao School adopts the Dual Language Immersion Programme throughout Year 1-12. From Year 1 to 8, we strive equal (50%/50%) instructional time in both English and Chinese language across subjects. From Year 9 to 12, English instructional time increases to 85% with Chinese learning accounts for 15% in the curriculum. We believe this model solidifies the Chinese literacy skills for our children and prepare them well for English-speaking colleges where most of our graduates attend.

Q: What should Chinese families expect from the Dual Language Immersion Programme at Pao School?

A: Pao School cultivates a sense of pride in Chinese children, helping them to embrace their heritage, identity, culture, and language. Second language acquisition research has confirmed the advantages of strong mother tongues in enhancing bilingual children's linguistic and processing skills. Therefore, we implement the additive bilingual model for children to obtain strong English language and at the same time, advance their Chinese language ability. We believe that our children will be balanced learners with global perspectives. Consequently, a strong emphasis on Chinese language and culture distinguishes Pao School from many of its peers.

Q: What should international families expect from the Dual Language Immersion Programme at Pao School?

A: Pao School provides outstanding Chinese programme for international families who wish for their children to study Chinese. Our Dual Language Immersion Programme spans from Year 1 through 12 and serves both local and international families. Our programme presents itself as an organic and robust language lab for international children to learn Chinese language and culture. We encourage international families to take on these opportunities to embark the bilingual journey with Pao School.