



Ready
FOR
TOMORROW

PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAMME



International School
of the Year 2023

PRIMARY
IB CURRICULUM



WELCOME TO GESS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Where children develop a 21st-century learner's mindset and build strong academic foundations, supported by personalised attention from excellent educators and a caring school community.

Our approach blends the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) framework with proven practices from leading education systems. Students engage in a mix of academics, sports, art, music, theatre, outdoor learning and real-world experiences, with the freedom to explore their passions and interests.

Led by their natural curiosity, students at GESS take an active role in learning. Our learners ask questions, develop ideas, and seek knowledge instead of passively receiving information. They grow into critical thinkers, problem solvers and confident researchers while also mastering core language and mathematics skills, ready to thrive in any educational system.

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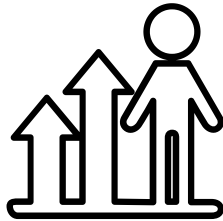
IB-PROGRAMME

PRIMARY SCHOOL

GESS PRIMARY SCHOOL AT A GLANCE

Grades

Grades
1-5

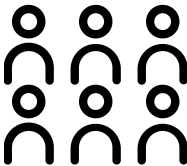


Curriculum

We teach the IB Primary Years Programme (PYP) in Primary School.



Class Size

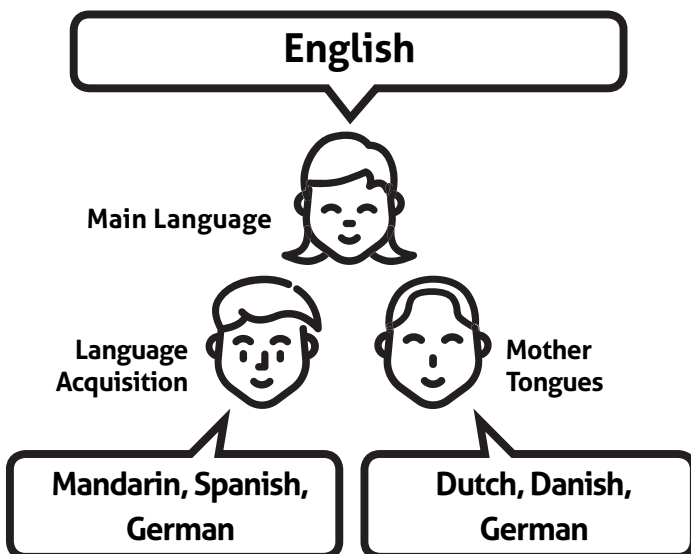
Max **24**  **Students Per Class**

Language of Instruction

English

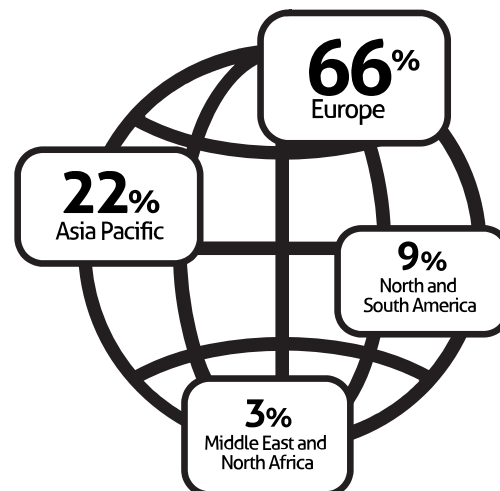


Languages



An International Student Community

70+ Nationalities



WHY PARENTS AND STUDENTS CHOOSE GESS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Personalised teaching to support every child's success

A small student-teacher ratio means homeroom and specialist teachers get to know individual students' strengths, needs and learning styles. Teachers use differentiated teaching to ensure every student is supported and challenged at the right pace to develop the strong academic foundations they need for their educational journey.

A caring community that promotes students' social and mental well-being

Young learners feel safe and at home with us in our caring and supportive school community. They develop self-regulation, confidence and resilience through our homeroom programme and social-emotional learning initiatives that support them as they reach new developmental milestones and grow as individuals.

The freedom to explore passions and discover new interests

Alongside core academics, students enjoy swimming, movement, visual arts, drama and music. Through our **BeyondClassrooms** approach, they gain real-world experiences via outdoor learning, industry visits, and a choice of over 100 co-curricular activities. These help them explore interests and new skills beyond the classroom.

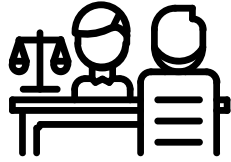
“ We like the idea of a very balanced development (in) the school. Instead of focusing on academics only. I think especially sports and music. It played a very big part in our decision-making.”

Mr William Tsai (GESS Parent)



SUCCESS STARTS WITH STUDENTS' WELLBEING

We ensure our young learners have a sense of social-emotional safety and wellbeing in school. They can confidently push their boundaries, take meaningful risks and learn with joy.



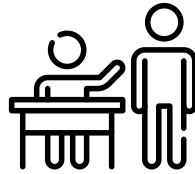
Professional Counselling

Our professional counsellors on campus bring years of experience in psychology and counselling to the GESS community. They are familiar with international students' unique challenges, including personal struggles, conflicts with peers, academic stress, and other anxieties. Our counsellors create a safe and supportive environment where students can speak freely and access guidance and care.



School-Family Partnership

We believe in the importance of partnering closely with families to support students. By communicating consistently with families, we gain valuable insights into each student's background and home experiences. This understanding enables our teachers to personalise learning at school and helps families provide the right support at home.



Daily Homeroom Check-Ins

The regular school day starts with homeroom check-ins which set students up for daily focus and effective learning. Homeroom teachers know each child personally and monitor their overall well-being, unique needs and progress. They also deliver social-emotional learning activities and community-building initiatives that help children develop self-regulation, effective communication, collaboration, and other essential life skills.



Young learners can connect their learning to the real world through our award-winning BeyondClassrooms approach. With a range of opportunities to suit different interests, students get the freedom to follow their passions while also exploring new skills and possibilities.

By extending learning beyond the classroom - into nature, sports arenas, performance stages, communities, and more - we prepare students to be confident in navigating the world.

The many initiatives in the BeyondClassrooms Programme include:

- Competitive sports
- Over 100 after-school co-curricular activities
- Vocal and Instrumental Programme
- Community enrichment activities
- Overseas school trips (Grade 5 onwards)

Our primary school students have been getting real-world industry exposure through these experiences:

- Exploring hydroponics and aquaponics farming and learning to build their own hydroponic planters at City Sprouts Urban Farming.
- Learning more about biodiversity and the local ecosystem through a field trip to Wildlings Camp.
- Discovering the science behind what we eat through experiments and sharing sessions with NUS' Department of Food Science & Technology and BASF experts at the BASF Kids' Lab.



OVER 100 EXTRA AND CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAMMES

There are over 100 after-school programmes across sports, leadership and global citizenship, performing arts, creative arts and STEM. This range of programmes reflects the school's diversity of talents and ideas.

A glimpse at some of our most popular after-school programmes:

- **Competitive team sports** whereby students participate in inter-school, regional, and international leagues and tournaments. Notable sports include football, basketball, and volleyball.
- **A world-class swim programme** with exceptional personalised coaching for competitive swimmers.
- **Vocal and Instrumental Programme** for students to learn from Singapore's finest professional musicians in a one-to-one setting.
- **Language Enrichment Programme** to help students maintain a connection to their family language and culture through immersive and interactive activities. Almost 10 languages are featured in the programme.



OUTDOOR LEARNING FOR CONFIDENT, CURIOUS KIDS

The outdoors is an extension of the GESS classroom, offering a refreshing counterbalance to the digital world we live in.

When our students' natural curiosity meets the outdoors, they engage all their senses to learn. In nature, students become more focused, observant and creative in their surroundings - this promotes cognitive growth.

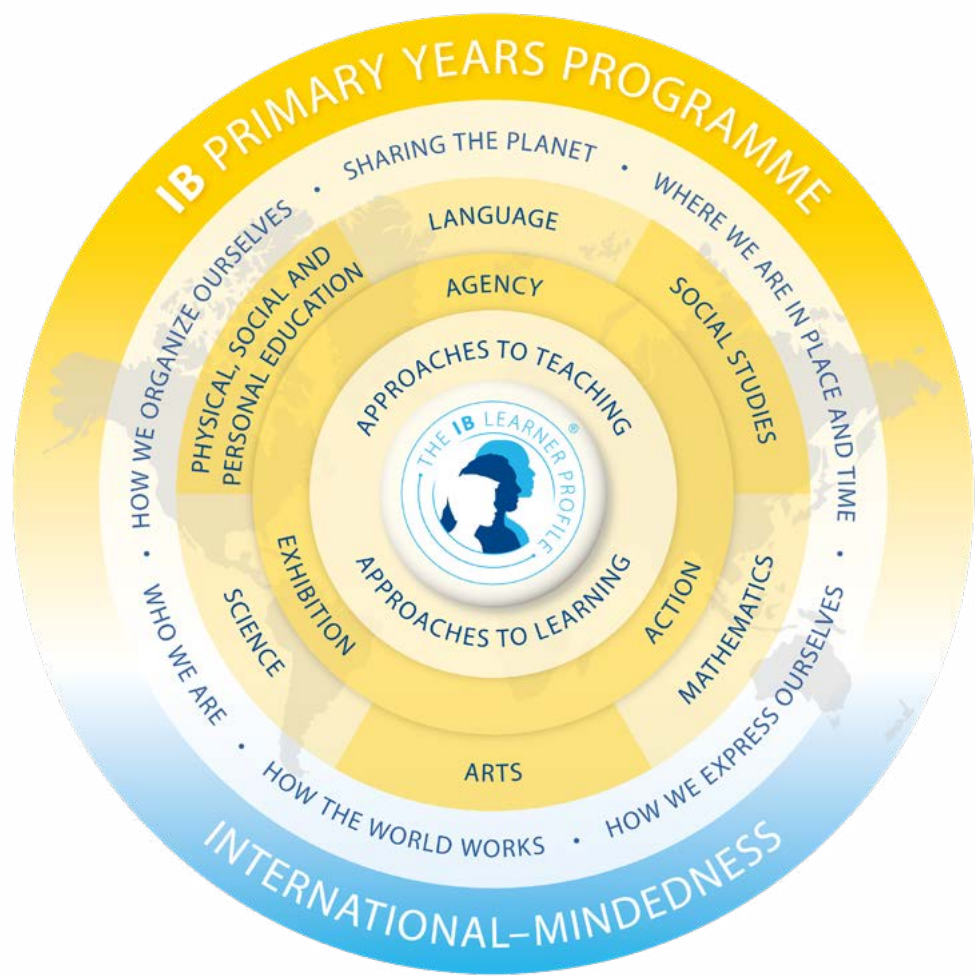
Forest hikes, adventure camps, and similar activities encourage students to venture out of their comfort zones and try age-appropriate challenges that strengthen them physically and mentally. Students come away feeling more empowered and confident.

Outdoor learning opportunities at GESS vary by grade level and are designed according to the units of inquiry explored in class.



IB PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAMME

IB Primary Years Programme Chart



Our Primary School Learners Are:



Inquirers



Knowledgeable



Open-Minded



Caring



Reflective



Balanced



Thinkers



Communicators



Principled



Risk-takers

PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAMME

UNIT OF INQUIRY



Who we are

An inquiry into the nature of the self; beliefs and values; personal, physical, mental, social and spiritual health; human relationships, including family, friends, relationships and cultures; rights and responsibilities; what it means to be human.



Where we are in place and time

An inquiry into orientation in place and time; personal histories; homes and journeys; the discoveries, explorations and migrations of humankind; the relationships between the interconnectedness of individuals and civilisations, from local and global perspectives.



How we express ourselves

An inquiry into the ways in which we discover and express ideas, feelings, nature, culture, belief and values; the ways in which we reflect on, extend and enjoy our creativity; our appreciation of the aesthetic.



How the world works

An inquiry into the natural world and its laws; the interaction between the natural world (physical and biological) and human societies; how humans use their understanding of scientific principles; the impact of scientific and technological advances on society and on the environment.



How we organize ourselves

An inquiry into the interconnectedness of humanmade systems and communities; the structure and function of organisations; societal decision-making; economic activities and their impact on humankind and the environment.



Sharing the planet

An inquiry into rights and responsibilities in the struggle to share finite resources with other people and with other living things; communities and the relationships within and between them; access to equal opportunities; peace and conflict resolution.

English [6 hours/week]

With a strong focus on developing reading and writing fluency as well as spelling and handwriting skills, our English programme supports students of all levels.



Daily reading opportunities:

designed to build confidence, fluency, comprehension and interest in reading. Students have access to levelled readers in the primary school library.

Aa

Spelling and word study: promoting phonetically accurate spelling and logical introduction of conventional spelling rules.



Reader's workshop: students have one-on-one sessions with the teacher to encourage development of reading skills.



Writer's workshop: grammar and punctuation are introduced and revised to build up students' knowledge and application of English language rules.



Communication: Development of listening, speaking and presentation skills is a core part of our language programmes.



Handwriting: our goal is to ensure children develop fluent handwriting, laying the foundation for strong spelling and confident writing.



English Support (EAL)



We offer a full range of English support (EAL) options for students in IB Primary. Our EAL programme is taught in small groups designed to work around the mainstream curriculum. EAL is available at an additional charge each semester.

Second Language [4 hours/week]

All students in GESS primary school study a second language as part of their growth towards becoming more international-minded global citizens. These are the language options available to students:

German



Introductory German

For beginner students in Grades 1 - 5 who do not speak German.

Est

German as a Foreign Language

For students who do not have a German background but know some basic words or phrases.



German as a Second Language

For students who have limited vocabulary and struggle to write in German but have some spoken fluency.



German as a Mother Tongue

For students who are native speakers of German and can express themselves fluently with a wide range of vocabulary and correct sentence structures.

Mandarin and Spanish



Language Acquisition Level:

For students who have no prior knowledge of the language and are at an acquisition level.

** These languages are being offered as part of a pilot programme for students enrolling in Grade 1.*

Dutch and Danish



Mother Tongue Level:

For students who are proficient and can express themselves fluently in Danish or Dutch with a wide range of vocabulary and correct sentence structures



Mathematics [5 hours/week]

The GESS Mathematics programme has a strong focus on developing students' conceptual understanding, fluency in number facts and calculations, as well as problem-solving.

- Conceptual comprehension of new mathematical concepts, operations and relations helps students build new understanding.
- Focusing on fluency in number facts and calculation methods allows students to succeed in complex calculations and problem-solving.
- Our students are taught problem solving and reasoning strategies to solve mathematical problems.
- **Mathematics extension:**
Differentiated learning for Grades 3 to 5 students who are working beyond grade-level expectations and can progress to higher-level topics.
- **Mathletics:**
Online and print resources for students to practise through hands-on and problem solving activities throughout the year.



Sports and the Arts

Physical Education [3 hours/week]



Students participate in two lessons of physical education and one lesson of swimming each week. The physical education programme includes individual pursuits and games (e.g., gymnastics), adventure challenges, and health-related fitness exercises.

Visual Arts [1 hour/week]



Wherever appropriate, visual arts lessons will be built around a Unit of Inquiry, providing an arts lens for the exploration of ideas.

Additionally, students learn to create their own artworks using various tools and techniques such as drawing, painting and 3D modelling using a variety of materials.

Music [1 hour/week]



Our music programme exposes students to different instruments, music skills and concepts like listening, composing and performing. From grades 3 to 5, students learn dedicated instruments.

- Grade 3 students learn the violin, viola and cello as part of an 8-week intensive string programme.
- Grade 4 students learn to play the recorder.
- Grade 5 students play the guitar.



Drama [1 hour/week]

The drama programme uses theatre-making as an additional medium for students to explore their Units of Inquiry when relevant. Along the way, they develop skills in storytelling, character building, creative expression, and stage performance.



Homework Time Guidelines

In Primary School, homework is regular assigned. Homework expectations might be differentiated to accommodate different learning needs.

Homeroom

Grades 1 and 2:	No more than 50 mins of homework a week
Grades 3 to 5:	No more than 100 mins of homework a week

German/Danish:

Grades 1 and 2:	No more than 25 mins of homework a week
Grades 3 to 5:	No more than 50 mins of homework a week

Communication between School and Parents

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| • Student Diary | • Class apps | • SchulZeit |
| • Email | • School web calendar for upcoming events | • Parent information events and Educational Talks |
| • School Services
<i>school@gess.edu.sg</i> | • Parent Portal & GESS App | |
-

Our Approach to Teaching and Learning

Our philosophy of education is concept-focused and student-centred. Rather than focusing on memorising facts, we work to develop broad understandings about the world and how it works, based on our students' investigations into a range of topics. We also nurture a holistic range of skills that benefit learners in any subject, in any school system, and indeed, throughout life.

International approach

As an international school, we are passionately committed to respecting individual origins, identities and ways of learning, while developing a sense of world citizenship, and social and environmental responsibility.

Differentiation

Upholding our commitment to individual learning includes differentiating in key skill areas, such as reading, spelling and mathematics. Through regular assessments and the use of programmes designed for individual development, our teachers ensure all our students are supported and challenged appropriately.

Homeroom teacher concept

Homeroom teachers at each grade level are responsible for delivering English, mathematics, science and social studies curricula, much of which is embedded into the units of inquiry. Subject specialist teachers provide the physical education programme (including swimming), German, Danish and music.



A SMOOTH TRANSITION FOR SUCCESS IN MIDDLE SCHOOL

At GESS, we make sure the move from Primary to Middle School is a natural step forward. By the end of Grade 5, students not only celebrate their Primary School journey but also demonstrate their learning through the PYP Exhibition, an IB milestone that puts into practice the academic, independent learning and self-management skills students need for success in Middle School.

To ensure continuity, confidence and readiness, we provide:

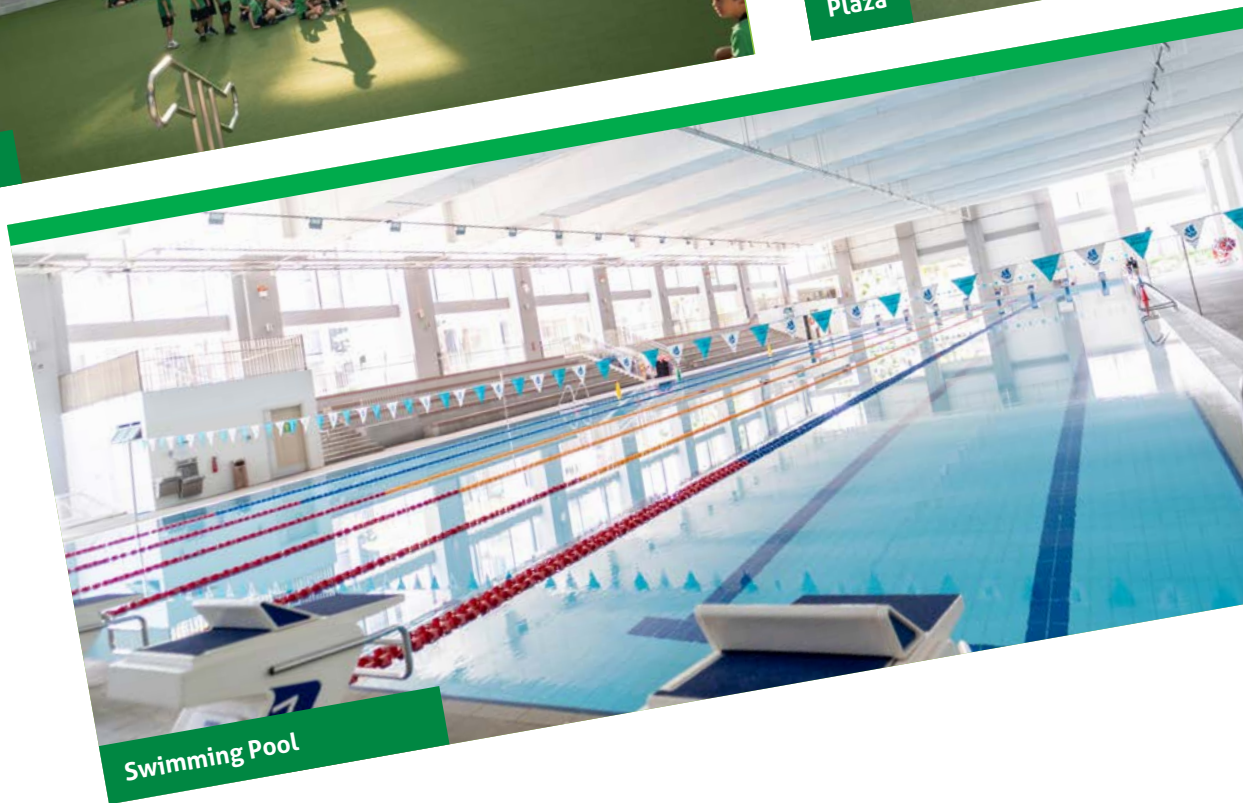
- Gradual homework adjustments to prepare students for an increased workload.
- Parent information sessions to connect families with the Middle School leadership.
- Hands-on experiences where students try Grade 6 subjects, explore new learning spaces, and meet their future teachers.

By the time they enter Middle School, GESS students feel prepared and excited for the opportunities ahead.



OUR STUDENT-FIRST CAMPUS

WHERE STUDENTS LEARN, EXPLORE AND GROW





Playground



Football Field



Canteen

For enquiries call the Admissions Hotline
+65 6461 0881 or fill in our
online enquiry form via gess.edu.sg

Connect with us:    



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