

Independent Bonn International School

Curiosity, Friendship and Ambition



Welcome to IBIS

This is a **warm** and **inspirational** school where children learn to be **happy**, **resilient** and **confident** about the world and their place in it.

We are a non-profit school for children aged 3 – 11 and have served the international and local communities of Bonn since 1963. Small class sizes, bilingualism and excellent teaching are supported here by a family-like atmosphere, where children feel safe to be themselves and to reach their potential.



Our Headteacher

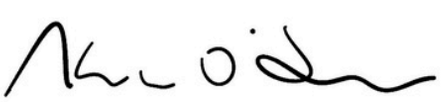
This is a school where children are taught in small classes to think independently by inspirational teachers, and it is my pleasure to introduce you to it.

When you visit, you'll discover our family-like atmosphere, and an identity of which we are very proud, rooted as it is in kindness, international-mindedness, curiosity and the ability to speak and understand both English and German.

This identity underpins everything here, as we help our students to understand that there are no limits to what is possible and that all doors are open to them, now and in the future.

Our doors are always open to parents too, with the assurance that we will be at your family's side, every step of the way.

I look forward to meeting you soon, and to showing you just how special this school is!

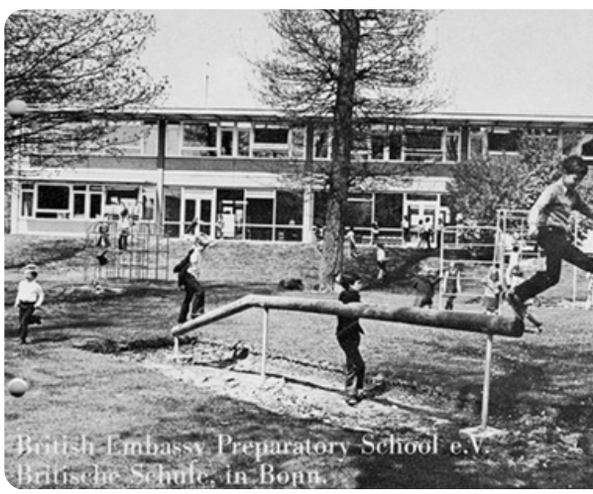


Tara O'Shea
Headteacher



About Us

We are a non-profit school for children aged 3 - 11. Our small size, family atmosphere and quality of teaching has attracted local and international families for over sixty years.



With small class sizes and excellent teaching staff, **children flourish academically**, preparing them for their future in a rapidly changing world.

Happy and socially secure children are better learners and more likely to grow into healthy and confident adults. We have a full-time Wellbeing Lead and are proud to be the first school in Germany to be awarded the Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in Schools Bronze Award.



We have an **average class size of 16 students** (maximum of 22), who are supported every step of the way by a class teacher and a teaching and learning assistant. These are ideal circumstances for children to develop, as every child is prioritised.

IBIS is an 'anerkannte Ersatzschule'. That means we are inspected and accredited by the German authorities (as well as by international accreditors) and are able to seamlessly integrate students into the German system of education as well as international systems the world over. Children overwhelmingly gain entry to their first choice school after IBIS and we are highly respected as a source school in the area.

Location and Facilities

We are based on the Heiderhof, a rural suburb of Bonn which is surrounded by a beautiful forest. The location is easy to get to, via car or public transport, and a popular and safe place for families to live.

Every class has its own air-conditioned room and is equipped with a digital 'smart' whiteboard and access to:

- A fully equipped hall where the children meet for assembly, for special performances and to eat lunch
- A science laboratory
- A well-stocked library
- A music room
- A large shaded playground (with a ringfenced Kindergarten playground)
- A soft-fall sports pitch
- A large number of laptops and iPads
- A German department for German as a Mother Tongue (DaM), and German as a Foreign Language (DaF)
- A full sized sports hall a few minutes walk from the school
- Extra rooms for English as an Additional Language (EAL), Learning Development, group learning and wellbeing support.



Admissions Process

The standard admissions process follows this path:

- Subject to capacity in the relevant classes, children may enter the school at any time of the year.
- A tour of the school and a meeting with our admissions team takes place.
- A trial day (or half-day for younger children) is arranged.
- We send the link to our online application form, which must be completed in full, including all required information.
- An offer to join the school is offered based on the information received and current school capacity. The Headteacher's decision is final.
- The first three months are considered a 'trial period' for all sides.



Please reach out to our Admissions Officer, Dr. Dela Djumaeva, if you have questions about any part of this process, via our office email: **ibis@ibis-school.com**

Entry and Placement

Entry

We welcome children aged 3 - 11. All interested families are encouraged to visit and be shown our school by our headteacher. The ages of children in any one class are measured according to the academic year from the 1st of October. On entry to the school, children may receive a basic assessment to establish their levels in certain areas.

Placement

The basic criterion for placement is age. Our cut-off date is the 1st of October in each year. The school reserves the right to place each child in the class year group deemed to be the most appropriate and beneficial. Children coming from a different system are placed with their chronological peers in the appropriate year level.

The numbering of year groups varies according to country and system. Please see the table below to establish how we compare to the German and American equivalents.

	Age	IBIS Class	American Grade	German System
Early Years	3 - 4	Kindergarten	Preschool/Early Learning/Early Childhood	Kindergarten
	4 - 5	Reception		
Key Stage 1	5 - 6	Year 1	Kindergarten	
	6 - 7	Year 2	Grade 1	1. Klasse
Key Stage 2	7 - 8	Year 3	Grade 2	2. Klasse
	8 - 9	Year 4	Grade 3	3. Klasse
	9 - 10	Year 5	Grade 4	4. Klasse
	10 - 11	Year 6	Grade 5	5. Klasse

The School Day

Monday - Friday

Pre-school Supervision

From 08:00 - 08:40

Kindergarten and Reception

08:40 - 12:00 half day
(Kindergarten only)
08:40 - 15:00 full day
(Kindergarten and Reception)

Year 1 - Year 6

08:40 - 15:20



Lunch/Playtime

Children eat lunch together in their classrooms and the Bolik Hall. Hot lunch is offered for a small fee every day, or children are welcome to bring their own packed lunch with them. After food has been eaten, children have playtime and a large playground and sports pitch to use, with the option of lots of free-to-attend clubs to participate in.

After-school Supervision

From the end of the school day until 17:00, Monday - Thursday, and until 16:30 on Friday.

There are also a large range of extra-curricular activities, most of which take place between 15:30 and 16:30.

Kindergarten and Reception (3 - 5 Years Old)



Learning is fun!

Learning begins as soon as children join our Kindergarten and Reception classes at IBIS.

We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage framework, which focuses on the following areas of learning:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

We aim to stimulate our children's social skills and encourage a sense of cooperation and independence.

Year 1 and Year 2 (5 - 7 Years Old)

In Years 1 and 2, our teaching programme is designed to spark a genuine love of learning while equipping children with strong foundations across the core curriculum. English, Mathematics, and Science are taught in ways that build confidence and curiosity in equal measure, with an emphasis on practical, hands-on discovery from the very start.

Alongside the core subjects, children explore Social Studies, Art, Music, Computing, and Physical Education, across shared topics, to ensure their learning is rich, varied, and joyful. German is taught, with dedicated mother tongue and foreign language pathways to ensure every child is appropriately supported and challenged, while children who are developing their English receive targeted EAL provision, so that no one is left behind as they find their feet.



Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 (7 - 11 Years Old)



As children move through Years 3 to 6, learning gathers pace. Subjects are explored with increasing depth and complexity, and children are encouraged to take greater ownership of their work and progress. With a teacher and teaching assistant in every classroom and a maximum class size of 22, they have the support they need to rise to that challenge.

These years are also a time of preparation. Whether children move on to the German system or to another international school, we work to make that transition as confident and seamless as possible, ensuring they leave IBIS with the skills, knowledge, and adaptability to thrive wherever they go.

Personal growth remains just as central as academic development. We actively support children in building resilience and developing the social qualities that will serve them throughout their lives, including tolerance, respect, responsibility, and a genuine understanding of the needs of those around them.

Subjects Studied

The school operates an internationalised programme based on the English National Curriculum.

The main language of instruction is English. Subjects studied, from Year 1 - Year 6, include:



- English
- Maths
- Science
- Computing
- German
- German Maths
- German Social Studies
- Physical Education
- Art
- Music
- History
- Geography
- Design and Technology
- Spanish
- French
- English as an Additional Language (EAL)
- Personal, Social, Health and Economic Studies (PSHE)

If you would like to see an extensive overview of what is studied in each year group, please go to our website:
www.ibis-school.com/curriculum-overview-at-ibis/

Learning German at IBIS



German is taught at IBIS from Reception Class onwards. Children who already speak German to a good standard join our **Deutsch als Muttersprache (DaM)** classes, while those who are learning it as an additional language join our **Deutsch als Fremdsprache (DaF)** group. Each stream is designed to serve the different needs of the children in the groups.

For children in the DaM stream, who will likely enter the German education system after IBIS, the small classes, state-aligned curriculum and specialist language and subject lessons (Sachunterricht from Year 2 onwards and Mathematik in Year 5) make the transition to German schools straightforward. We work closely with destination schools in our area and have an excellent track record of helping children to make that move.

Children with limited or no German are quickly introduced to the language in an immersive and friendly way in our DaF stream, where the focus is on integration and effective communication.

Families come to us from all over the world, and we are proud that our system is strong and flexible enough to accommodate diverse and changing needs when it comes to learning German.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Small group instruction by an EAL specialist in our well-equipped EAL room is like a small 'haven'. It is a place to take first risks in speaking English and is a stepping-stone to full integration in classroom activities at IBIS.

Children who have little experience with English are assessed to identify their stage of language acquisition. They are then given support in small groups in an EAL room by a trained teacher during the English lesson. This allows for maximum individualisation.

Through language games, action songs, stories, role-playing activities of familiar situations, information-seeking tasks, sentence starters with visual cues and frontloading of relevant vocabulary, children gain the confidence to take risks in speaking English in the small group and in their classrooms.



Learning Support

Learning Support is delivered in a variety of ways across IBIS. Support may take place within the classroom through small group work led by the class teacher or Teaching and Learning Assistant (TLA), or through individual and targeted small-group interventions delivered by members of the Learning Support Team*. This can involve working with children who may have gaps in their learning, would benefit from a slower pace of learning or who need targeted support to access the curriculum successfully.

Where possible, there are also opportunities for children to work in a quiet and supportive environment where their sensory needs are recognised, respected and accommodated.



All support is scaffolded to enable children to develop the skills, confidence and independence needed to participate in their classroom environment. Through adaptive teaching and personalised support, and in collaboration with parents, we aim to give every child the opportunity and appropriate tools to thrive, succeed and reach their full potential.

** Individual support with our Learning Support Team is normally time-limited so that we can support as many children as possible.*

Restorative Justice and The IBIS Way

At IBIS, we use a restorative approach to behaviour management. Instead of punishment, restorative justice addresses school discipline by focusing on developing communication and building relationships, helping students to learn better ways to handle conflict.

Over time, a restorative approach offers lasting benefits to individual children and the whole school:

- It can promote stronger communities by repairing harm, reintegrating individuals and showcasing fairness
- It helps to foster accountability, empathy and communication skills
- It can significantly reduce repeat behavioural issues

The IBIS Way

The desired outcome from this whole school approach, is that all of our students recognise that at IBIS they can expect to:

- Be Safe
- Be Kind
- Belong



Wellbeing at IBIS

Happy and secure children are better learners and more likely to grow into healthy and confident adults. The award-winning* wellbeing programme at IBIS is dedicated to prioritising the health of students and does so in a variety of ways:

- Providing advice and guidance for parents, carers and students in areas like conflict resolution, resilience development and emotional regulation
- One-to-one and group support
- Organising the student led 'Wellbeing Champions' group
- Promoting whole school events and activities (like participation in European Mental Health Week)
- Arranging wellbeing drop-ins for pupils
- Delivering expert outside help for families
- Offering a confidential listening ear for everyone in our community

If you would like to find out more about the support on offer, please contact our Wellbeing Lead, Brooke Baker, via:
b.baker@ibis-school.com

** IBIS was the first school in Germany to receive the Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in Schools Bronze Award, and in our most recent whole school inspection by the Council of British International Schools (COBIS), we were labelled a 'Beacon School' for our proactive approach to wellbeing.*





Outdoor Learning

We highly value outdoor learning at IBIS and every year a significant amount of classroom activity takes place outside.

As well as using the outdoors as an expanded classroom, or as a tool for learning through regular lessons, we also look to promote experiential and practical skills to support and complement the learning of curriculum subjects.

Outdoor classrooms:

- Provide the perfect setting to enhance curriculum subjects using hands-on experiences
- Support children's holistic development, making connections and relationships with nature and the world around us
- Promote creativity, problem-solving, critical thinking and resilience
- Improve physical health and mental health and wellbeing
- Activate thinking outside the box
- Have a positive effect on social skills and collaboration
- Have a positive impact on cognitive development
- Encourage inclusive learning for all – often pupils who find classroom-based learning difficult, will excel outdoors in a more practical setting
- Are fun and engaging!



Clubs and school trips

IBIS offers a range of activities outside of the curriculum as we aim to inspire our pupils to learn new skills, develop interests and gain in confidence. We run clubs and activities during and after the school day. This programme varies according to availability and demand, but recent examples include:

- Drawing Club
- German Conversation
- Drama Club
- German Homework Help
- Russian
- Sports clubs
- French
- Yoga
- Young First Aid Club
- Cooking Club
- Sewing Club
- Dance
- Library
- Sculpture
- Debate Club
- Parent and Child Library Sessions
- Homework Club









School trips are an important part of school life for all year groups. Recent examples include:

- Ice Skating
- Local museums and art galleries
- Indoor Snowboarding and skiing
- Trips to Paris, Luxembourg and Berlin
- Camping and outdoor activities (canoeing, climbing etc.)
- Sailing
- Local Christmas markets
- Visits to castles
- Countryside walks
- Sport events against other schools

Frequently Asked Questions

What Curriculum does IBIS follow?

The internationalised English National Curriculum we use allows our pupils to go onto their next school, whether in Germany or around the world, confident that they are prepared for their next steps in education.

How does IBIS prepare pupils for their next school?

There are a variety of options open to families post IBIS. German secondary schools (Gymnasiums) and local international schools are most common. Our school tailors approaches for both, including native standard German lessons and specialist subject preparation (German maths for example). We also maintain close contact with possible destinations, helping to make the transition as smooth as possible.

All of our processes, including our education, grading and overall outlook are designed to help families as they make that step.

What are German lessons like at IBIS?

Our German classes are split into native and non-native groups. Both groups receive tailored German lessons from Year 1 onwards. These groups are not fixed (on agreement with the school, children can move between them), and take into consideration the likely destination of each child after IBIS.

Is school uniform compulsory?

School uniform is compulsory after Kindergarten, and we are happy to explain why: a school uniform fosters a strong sense of community and shared purpose among our pupils, while ensuring the 'right' or 'wrong' clothes and brands never become an issue.



Where do pupils eat lunch and who do we get it from?

The children eat together in our large and fully equipped Bolik Hall. Lunch can be brought from home, or ordered from our long-term provider, Lehmanns.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who will help us if we as a family don't speak English very well?

A majority of staff members speak German as well as English, and are ready to help families and pupils. For children in particular, we are aware that being dropped into a new language environment can be stressful, so we go out of our way to make that process as easy-going as possible.

With our international environment (there are also plenty of French and Spanish speakers on call), we are very used to helping children and families orientate quickly, regardless of their background.

Is there the possibility for pupils to get help in certain subjects?

The expectation is that children will be able to meet standards across subjects within the normal school day, without the need for extra-tutoring, as is common in German schools.

Our school day is longer than is standard in the German system, and since our class sizes are small, and there is a teacher and teaching and learning assistant in every class, children have all of the opportunity and support they need to develop.

We do offer support in some key areas (English as an additional language for instance), and where it is possible, in other subjects.



Are the students tested and graded like the German system?

Although it is changing, the German system traditionally places an emphasis on tests. While testing is an important part of what we do, we consider progress 'in the whole', taking into consideration classroom work and participation, oral feedback, work as individuals and groups - as well as tests. We don't teach children to pass tests, rather we consider them one piece of evidence with regards to progress overall.

We do, however, make sure that our grades and reports are delivered in a way that works seamlessly with the German system. This includes the option of receiving a German report (from Year 2 - Year 5) according to the standard in German primary schools.

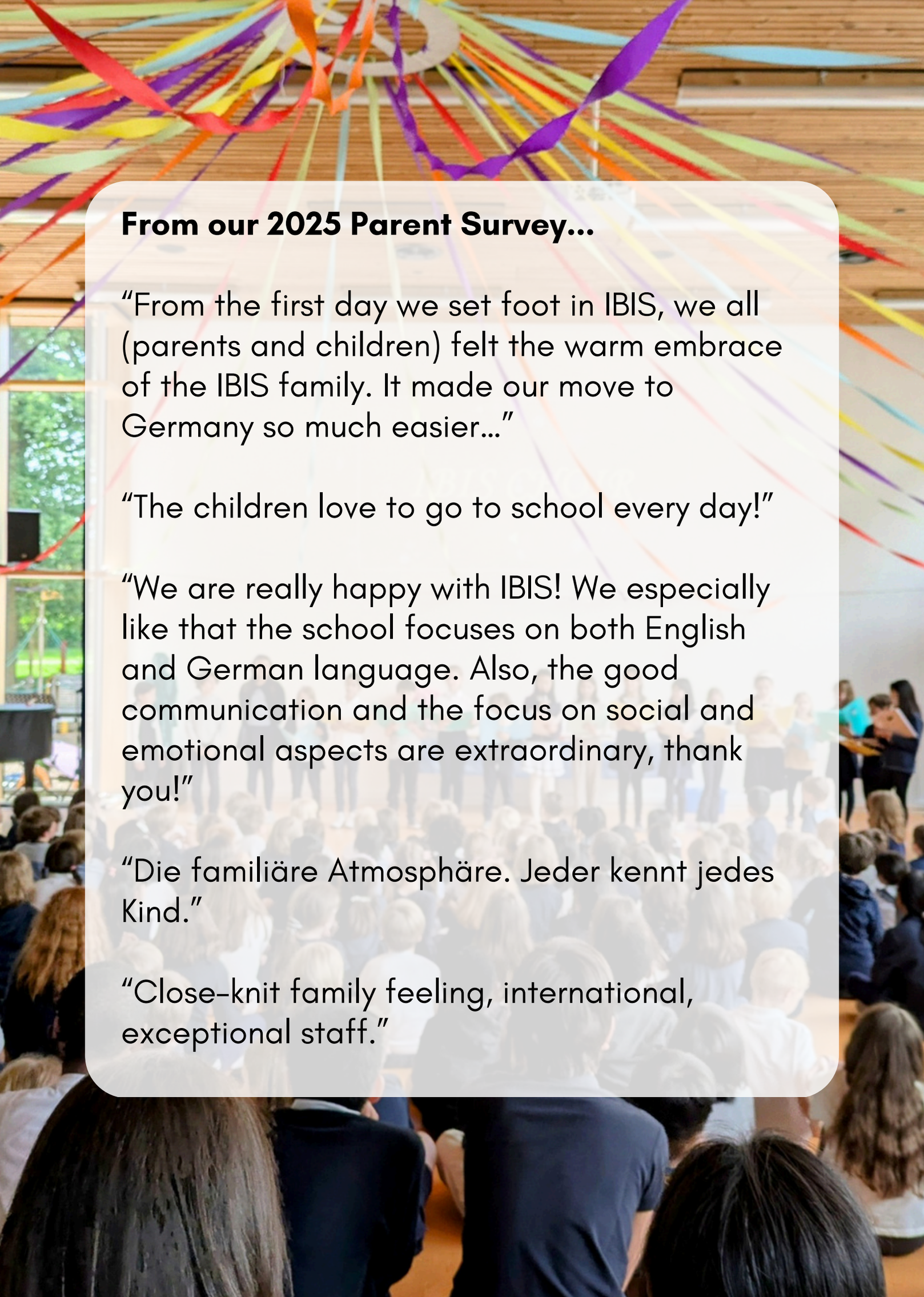
Next Steps?

We hope that this information has given you an idea of our focus and what life is like at IBIS.

Interested families are encouraged to arrange a personal tour of our school. That can be easily arranged, at a time that suits you, by using the QR code on the back cover. Following that, a trial day is normally arranged and, space permitting, children can start throughout the year.

We look forward to seeing you soon!





From our 2025 Parent Survey...

“From the first day we set foot in IBIS, we all (parents and children) felt the warm embrace of the IBIS family. It made our move to Germany so much easier...”

“The children love to go to school every day!”

“We are really happy with IBIS! We especially like that the school focuses on both English and German language. Also, the good communication and the focus on social and emotional aspects are extraordinary, thank you!”

“Die familiäre Atmosphäre. Jeder kennt jedes Kind.”

“Close-knit family feeling, international, exceptional staff.”



From our most recent accreditation by the Council of British International Schools...

“The school celebrates and supports the development of high-quality learning and teaching for all students and encourages positive attitudes to learning.”

“Excellent rapport between the teachers and the children and the teaching staff.”

“The school has a very effective approach to wellbeing, which combines a strong family atmosphere of caring and fun, with its values and the rigorous structure of the Mental Health in Schools Award. This approach to mental health and wellbeing should be shared with others and Beacon School Status is awarded.”

“A caring community where parents understand the values of the school and feel they can approach the school without hesitation.”

Independent Bonn International School e.V.

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Arrange a tour, watch a video introduction and find us on social media: