

## BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN PRACTICE

Lessons are given in grades 1 and 2 within a theme context. The children are encouraged to discover a theme in depth during school time. Through the use of a variety of learning activities, the children learn the language required to speak on a topic within a theme. Our goal is that the children learn to speak English whilst playing. We use modern English teaching methods to support the learning environment like words, sentences, songs, rhymes or stories.

Grade 3 works thematically as well, based on a variety of educational methods. Due to the fact that we require enough educational time to teach the children how to read and write in the Dutch language, 85% of all lesson time is taught in Dutch. The remaining 15% of the educational time is given in English.

From grade 4 pupils are taught primarily methodically. The morning program is focused on Dutch subjects and learning goals according to the national primary school curriculum. There is a switch to Global Awareness in the afternoons, where the children work thematically within a topic. There are also specific English lessons based on English teaching methods. In the middle and upper school, the four main language skills are taught to a child's own ability in English: speaking, listening, reading and writing. Our school also stimulates children to learn critical thinking skills, be creative and work cooperatively. These skills help prepare our pupils well for their future!



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## Bilingual Primary Education



**Amos**  
AMSTERDAMSE  
OECUMENISCHE  
SCHOLENGROEP

## A WORLD SCHOOL

The Visser school is a world school situated on a multicultural square, the Columbusplein in Amsterdam West! With over 280 pupils and a team of 25 ambitious (specialist) teachers, our school is situated in a beautiful building in the architecture of the traditional Amsterdam School style from the 1930's. We offer bilingual education for children aged 4-12 years. We strive to challenge our pupils to reach their full potential in a caring environment in which every child feels valued.

We are not an international school but a Dutch public school with an international focus. We offer the compulsory Dutch subjects in a dynamic learning environment (mathematics, language, reading and writing) alongside the subjects that cover world orientation (geography, history, science). There are specialist teachers for the subjects: visual arts, physical education and music.

## AMOS

The Visser school is one of the 29 primary schools of the Amsterdam Ecumenical School Group (AMOS). AMOS provides education over 33 locations distributed throughout Amsterdam. As an Ecumenical school group, AMOS supports all religious beliefs. We follow these 5 principles:

1. Every person is unique and worthy;
2. People are holistic units;
3. Humankind is essentially focused on good;
4. We need to be responsible for ourselves in the modern world;
5. Life is one of our most valuable gifts.



## BILINGUAL EDUCATION

We are the first Dutch public primary school offering bilingual education. This means that a minimum of 30% to a maximum of 50% of the education is taught in English. Essentially, most of our subjects that are not mathematics or language related are given in English, including subjects focused on physical, social and creative development. This is a crucial difference compared to schools who give standard English lessons. Our bilingual education program was first introduced in the year 2014 in grades 1 and 2 and extended in each subsequent school year. When the original 2014 bilingual grade 1/2 class reaches grade 8, the entire school will be receiving bilingual education.

## GLOBAL AWARENESS

Bilingual education is directed at providing children in primary school with an international attitude and providing them with a global view of world issues today. Children at our school not only receive instruction in English, they are exposed to current themes of global awareness through the English language. There is a strong thematic focus in language, culture and different countries, opening the gate to gaining knowledge about the international society we live in today.



## THE ULTIMATE PREPARATION

The earlier you start learning a second language, the better! Children learn to speak languages more fluently and develop a greater vocabulary when the language is learned during the sensitive period for language learning from the age of 4 to 7 years. Bilingual educated pupils can become in general more intuitive to language and they can think in a more complex way. Learning to speak English from your first day of school can also benefit children who do not speak Dutch as a native language. All children begin learning English at the same level. This helps develop one's self confidence in a foreign language setting. Current research reports that the Dutch language skills and mathematics skills of pupils at bilingual schools do not decrease due to bilingual education. An encouraging thought!