



A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITY

The newly founded International School of the Stockholm Region provides its pupils with a global outlook and a progressive learning environment

The International School of the Stockholm Region (ISSR) opened its doors in August 2012. In doing so, it became the first school in the Swedish capital to offer a publicly funded, English-language International Baccalaureate (IB) education to students aged 5-18.

EXPAT EDUCATION

Stockholm has attracted a sizable expatriate population that works in a range of industries from medical research to IT and telecommunications. For families that may only be in the country for a few years, finding a first-class education that their children can take with them when they move on is of paramount importance.

With the needs of its international population in mind, Stockholm's IB School South joined forces with the City of Stockholm to create a school that would provide the children of families that are temporarily residing in Stockholm with an outstanding primary and secondary education. The end result was ISSR.

Since 1999, IB School South has offered the IB Diploma Programme to students aged 16-19. The new school now offers the Primary Years Programme (PYP) and Middle Years Programme (MYP) as well - all funded by the city.

'ISSR's wide age range allows for families to come in and find a stable education,' says school head Karin Henrekson Ahlberg. 'It's also transferrable.' The school prides itself on its diversity, not only culturally - around 30-40 different languages are represented among the student body - but also in socio-economic terms. 'Our students come from a variety of backgrounds,' says Christiane Candella, PYP/MYP co-ordinator. 'But at the same time they're still scoring above the world average.'

In keeping with its emphasis on diversity and multiculturalism, the school also has a sister school in India. Regular exchange trips between the two help foster an even stronger international spirit among the students.

ISSR was fully subscribed when it opened in August 2012, with around 120 children at primary and secondary levels and some 160 pupils on the diploma programme. Although a new school, it will build on the excellent reputation already established by the IB School South. Not only does the latter excel academically, but it also scores highly in the eyes of its students, explains Karin.

STUDENT SURVEY

'Every year students in Sweden are asked to answer a set of questions on how they feel about their school. The results are then made public so parents and students can compare establishments, and we're always at the very top,' she says. 'The students feel 100 per cent safe in our school, they also feel that they are treated with respect by their teachers. They have a say in what's going on in the school and they know exactly what's expected of them.'

Karin and Christiane both stress their belief that the students should be at the heart of the school. This is reflected in the school's building design, which centres on the 'hub' - an inviting community area where students can gather between lessons. 'The hub is really the centre of the school,' says Karin. 'Around it we have the school offices and the teachers' work places. It's vital to the school's warm and welcoming atmosphere, to the closeness between teachers and students.'

It's early days for ISSR, but the school's team is excited about the future. 'The big plan is to create a school with a truly international outlook that respects its children and their academic growth,' says Christiane. 'I think we've been given a unique opportunity to do that.'

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