



Europa School Curriculum Update

Report prepared by the Europa School Governing Body

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Following the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the European Union (Brexit), Europa School has been working to secure a curriculum that will continue to deliver a broad and balanced education with a strong focus on European languages and culture. Despite efforts to retain the European Curriculum, including representations to the UK Parliament and to the European Commission, the UK Department for Education (DfE) and the Board of Governors of the European Schools (ES) have consistently affirmed that Europa cannot remain an accredited European School post-Brexit. The Europa Governing Body and School Leadership Team have therefore been working to put in place an alternative curriculum to deliver on the school's core aims.

1.2 Safeguarding and supporting existing European Baccalaureate (EB) cohorts

A key priority for the school has been to safeguard the education and final qualification of Europa students who were already preparing for their European Baccalaureate (EB) pre-Brexit. Fortunately, the required guarantees were provided at the European Schools Board of Governors meeting in April 2019, which secured the EB qualification for Europa School students in 2020 and 2021. Given the UK's negotiated exit from the EU, Europa School UK will also continue to be a fully accredited European School until August 2021.

Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 EB cohort graduated successfully in July, with an average score of 80.65% and the highest individual mark across all the European Schools.

The 2021 EB cohort started their final (S7) year in September 2020. Like the cohort before them, this year group has benefitted from a strong programme of distance learning during the very challenging period of COVID-19 lockdown in their S6 year, with very good formal and informal feedback from students. In May 2020 they participated in a careers fair and UCAS online programme. The school also organised two weeks of on-site teaching for this cohort at the end of June 2020. This included master classes in several subjects and set work for the summer to ensure students are as up to date as possible before starting the final year of their Baccalaureate.

Preparations have been put in place to ensure the 2021 EB cohort enjoys a similarly high-quality final year curriculum to previous years. This includes strong pedagogical and pastoral support for the students on their return to school after lockdown, and a similarly strong curriculum to previous years. The subjects offered are listed in the Appendix, and include:

- 4 L1 language courses (English, French, Dutch, Danish) plus an Advanced English L1 course
- 3 L2 language courses (English, French, German)
- All major 4 period options
- 4 complementary courses

This year the school has been able to offer 4 period Geography courses in English, German and French; and 4 period History courses in English and German. The S7 teaching staff is unchanged from last year except for 2 teachers (L1 German and Biology). The Baccalaureate assessments and examinations are being run by the Principal, who has long experience in the successful running of the Baccalaureate, and for whom this is a key priority this year.

The COVID-19 situation allowing, the school is also planning to offer and support the same S7 social programme as in previous year. Elections have taken place for two school presidents and a COSEA. The newly elected presidents have set up all the committees and begun discussions with the school management around planning their final year.

2 Upper secondary curriculum (key stage 5) & End Qualification

2.1 Choice of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma

In March 2018, the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) wrote to ask the school to put in place plans for an alternative to the EB as an end qualification post Brexit. After considering the options, the Governing Body selected the International Baccalaureate (IB) as the alternative end qualification most closely aligned with the school's vision, in the event that it would not be possible to continue to offer the EB.

The IB is well-established as a challenging, broad-based curriculum that is recognised and well understood by universities in the UK and internationally. There is good alignment between Europa's existing EB curriculum and the IB, with a similar breadth and depth of study of compulsory and optional subjects, and the bilingual diploma also provides a means of retaining the school's European language model. The IB therefore meets the requirement in the school's Articles of Association and Funding Agreement to provide a broad and balanced curriculum; and will allow the school to continue to do this through the medium of a multi-lingual, multicultural European education.

The chair of the governors wrote to the RSC in April 2018 to confirm that the school would begin the path of accreditation for the IB diploma programme (DP) as a precautionary measure unless realistic continuity of the EB had been established by September 2018.

2.2 Preparations for implementation of the IB Diploma

Any arrangement to continue to offer the EB at Europa School post Brexit would require a bilateral agreement between the UK and the EU, including agreement by all remaining 27 EU member states to change the Convention for European Schools to allow a school outside the EU to be accredited. In the absence of any visible progress to secure such a deal, and on the basis of advice from the UK Department for Education and the Board of Governors of the European Schools that Europa would no longer be able to offer the EB post-Brexit, in 2018 the school started the process of IB candidacy. In February 2019, following a business case from the school, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) awarded the school £99k towards IB implementation.

Curriculum planning was made particularly challenging due to the prolonged political uncertainty around Brexit. Following the large Conservative majority in the general election in December 2019, it was clear, however, that Brexit would happen. Without any concrete evidence to support the prospect of a bilateral deal to retain the EB, the Governing Body therefore decided in December 2019 formally to adopt the IB for the S6 cohort from September 2020. Following intensive preparation and training and an exacting IB inspection, ESUK was formally accredited as an IB World School in March 2020 and began teaching the IB diploma to the first S6 cohort in September 2020.

3 Lower secondary curriculum (key stages 3 & 4, years S1 to S5)

3.1 Secondary curriculum options appraisal

Following the UK Department for Education's request that the school present a post-Brexit curriculum plan for the remainder of the school, the Governing Body conducted a curriculum options appraisal. Key requirements for adoption of any curriculum included:

- a broad and balanced curriculum including English, Maths and Science
- a strong focus on European languages and culture
- a solid basis for success at the International Baccalaureate, including the advanced language learning required for successful completion of a bilingual IB diploma
- a minimum set of qualifications for students who choose to leave the school at 16 (S5)

The Governing Body and School Leadership Team judged it inadvisable for the school to construct its own unique curriculum across the board, as this would require curriculum development well above the capacity of the Trust to sustain and afford. Working closely with the Department for Education, the options appraisal therefore focussed on the following 3 potential curriculum models for S1-S5:

1. Retention of the European Curriculum in S1 to S5
2. Adoption of IB Middle Years Programme (MYP)
3. GCSEs plus development of a bespoke model for advanced language learning ("GCSE+")

Retention of the European Curriculum was the school's preferred option. However, despite initially encouraging discussions with the Secretary General of the European Schools about the possibility of creating a new 'affiliation' with the European School system through which the school might continue to use the ES curriculum and syllabuses, this did not in the end prove possible. Without a bilateral agreement between the EU and the UK to allow Europa to retain its status as an affiliated European School, retention of the European Curriculum was therefore not possible.

Following a detailed options appraisal comparing the MYP and GCSE+ curriculum models, the Governing Body voted unanimously in May 2020 to adopt the IB Middle Years Programme for years S1 to S5.

3.2 The IB Middle Years Programme (MYP)

Given the implementation of the IB diploma programme in S6 and S7 from September 2020, the IB Middle Years Programme will provide curriculum continuity throughout Europa secondary. Importantly, it will support a continued high level of European language learning, including the teaching of humanities and project work in Europa's stream languages. This will allow the school to continue to offer both a bilingual MYP certificate and excellent preparation for the bilingual IB diploma. A potential MYP curriculum map is shown in the Appendix.

The IB MYP Assessments have been accepted by Ofqual and added to the Register of Regulated Qualifications and are registered as Level 1 and Level 2 qualifications, making them equivalent to GCSEs and iGCSEs. They are also included in the list of qualifications approved for 14 to 19 funding by the ESFA and are regarded as satisfying the GCSE equivalences in Maths and English required for entry to certain university courses.

With guidance from the school's IB consultant, Europa has started active preparations to teach the IB Middle Years Programme (MYP), starting with the first year of secondary (S1) in September 2021 (see timeline in section 6). The school will complete its formal application for MYP candidacy this year, leading to full IB MYP authorisation by September 2023 as per the IB timeline and in time for the first S5 cohort sit MYP assessments in Summer 2024.

4 Primary curriculum (key stages 1 & 2, Reception to P6)

Europa's Primary curriculum is already a unique model that combines immersion in the stream languages with parts of the European School curriculum and a significant amount of UK and other national syllabuses. The school has therefore agreed with the UK Department for Education and the Board of Governors of the European Schools that the Primary Curriculum will be broadly retained in its current form, with minor modifications to end its reliance on resources like InterMaths. These changes will be implemented in time for the 2021-2022 academic year when the school will no longer be an accredited European School.

5 European identity, language, culture and partnerships

5.1 Europa's European identity

Europa School's European identity derives not just from its strong teaching and learning model in modern European languages, but from a culture of Europeanism embedded in the curriculum and supported by the wider school community. The Governing Body and School Leadership Team are committed to maintaining and strengthening Europa's European identity, language learning and culture through a combination of the following:

1. Building partnerships with European organisations and schools
2. Learning about and celebrating European history, cultures, customs and festivals
3. Intra- and extra-mural activities and collaborations, including seeking new opportunities for participation in European events for schools outside the ES system
4. Active engagement with the wider school community
5. Further developing harmonized language teaching through the school for all stream languages

5.2 Framework for European language competency

To help set and maintain consistent standards for language learning following the transition from the European Schools curriculum, the school will integrate into its new language curricula the international language standards and assessments set out in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). These assessments will complement the core language curriculum and provide evidence of language competency to support applications to European universities.

Supported by European partnership organisations (see below), the school will promote and prepare students for language assessments in the stream languages from CEFR level A1 for beginners to level C2 for those who have mastered a language. The Governing Body will be working with the School Leadership Team and Education Committees in the coming academic year to establish a schedule for implementation of these assessments.

5.3 European partnership organisations

Partnerships with national cultural organisations provide important opportunities for Europa to strengthen its European identity and links. By joining networks of other schools in Europe, including in our stream language countries, Europa will benefit from a range of training opportunities and cultural exchanges for staff and students, as well as resources available through these organisations.

In the first of these partnerships, Europa became a member of the German '*Schools: Partners for the Future*' (PASCH) network supported by the Goethe-Institut in February 2020. PASCH membership recognises the school's commitment to promote the German language and provides the school with access to a range of opportunities from which the school has already benefitted. These include

training for staff and students; sponsored visits to Germany to meet students from other PASCH schools; student internships in Germany; online resources for teachers and students; student competitions; and IT equipment and other resources for schools. Europa has also become an official exam centre for the Goethe-Institut and has hosted the first diet of exams for Europa students with another diet planned for the 2020-2021 academic year.

Building on the success of the PASCH partnership with Germany, Europa also recently received confirmation that the school has been awarded the French *LabelFrancÉducation* seal. This is granted by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs to schools that promote French language and culture. With *LabelFrancÉducation* status Europa joins a network of similar schools supported by the Conseiller of the French Institute, with access to resources and training opportunities for both staff and students. The school has already benefitted in the form of teacher training and a grant for educational resources.

One important advantage to the school is that teaching posts in *LabelFrancÉducation* schools are recognised by the French education authorities, making it easier to attract French teachers without the need for them to apply for a secondment/sabbatical. The *LabelFrancÉducation* seal will also allow students to prepare and take internationally-recognized French-language DELF and DALF diplomas corresponding to the six CEFR language competencies (www.ciep.fr/en/delf-dalf). DALF diplomas meet the language requirements for university entry in France. Two primary teachers have already been trained as examiners in DELF levels A and B, and Europa is preparing to offer its first diet of French DELF exams to students in 6FE in the 2020-2021 academic year.

Although there is no exact Spanish equivalent to the PASCH and *LabelFrancÉducation* networks for schools, the Cervantes Institute promotes Spanish language and culture more generally and provides language courses for students and training for teachers of Spanish. The school has also developed a very positive relationship with the Education Office at the Spanish Embassy, which is very supportive of Europa, and organises an annual Spanish performance in the school as part of its programme of cultural support. The school will be looking to build on this relationship and other potential opportunities to further enrich the Spanish linguistic and cultural aspects of the school. Two teachers have already successfully completed training as examiners for the Spanish DELE language diplomas. Like the equivalent German and French qualifications, the Spanish DELE diplomas mirror CEFR language competencies (www.dele.org). Europa plans to offer its inaugural diet of the Spanish DELE exam to the first 6EE cohort in 2021-2022.

In addition to national partnership organisations, as an IB World School Europa is also now able to build links with other IB schools across Europe. The school will be able to benefit from belonging to the wider IB network, accessing educational research and initiatives, cultural and pedagogical exchanges for students, and teacher recruitment, development and training opportunities.

6 Timeline for curriculum transition

To ensure a smooth and effective transition, the process of curriculum change needs to be carefully managed to ensure appropriate oversight, preparation, training and communication. In particular, the current strong focus on implementation of the IB diploma programme means that curriculum changes lower down the school cannot be implemented until this has been successfully embedded.

The timetable outlined in the schematic diagram below balances the need to move to a new curriculum without undue delay, with the following essential requirements for curriculum implementation:

- sufficient time for curriculum preparation and training
- consistent KS3 and KS4 curricula for each cohort
- adequate focus and resource on each stage of the curriculum due to the phased introduction of KS3 and KS4 curricula

Under this model the school will need to continue to use parts of the ES curriculum until the end of the 2022-2023 academic year. A formal request to do this was approved by the Board of Governors of the European Schools in May 2020.

Curriculum transition timeline

2020-2021 cohort	School year						
	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027
S7	EB						
S6	IB diploma	IB diploma					
S5	ES	IB diploma	IB diploma				
S4	ES	ES*	IB diploma	IB diploma			
S3	ES	ES*	ES*	IB diploma	IB diploma		
S2	ES	ES*	IB MYP	IB MYP	IB diploma	IB diploma	
S1	ES	ES*	ES*	IB MYP	IB MYP	IB diploma	IB diploma
P6	Europa PC	IB MYP	IB diploma				
P5	Europa PC	Europa PC†	IB MYP				
P4	Europa PC	Europa PC†	Europa PC†	IB MYP	IB MYP	IB MYP	IB MYP
P3	Europa PC	Europa PC†	Europa PC†	Europa PC†	IB MYP	IB MYP	IB MYP
P2	Europa PC	Europa PC†	Europa PC†	Europa PC†	Europa PC†	IB MYP	IB MYP
P1	Europa PC	Europa PC†	IB MYP				
Reception	Europa PC	Europa PC†					

Legend

EB	European Baccalaureate
ES	European Schools curriculum
Europa PC	Europa Primary Curriculum
IB diploma	International Baccalaureate diploma
IB MYP	IB Middle Years Programme (Key Stage 3)
IB MYP	IB Middle Years Programme (Key Stage 4)
*	ES curriculum not officially accredited
†	With minor modification to end reliance on European Schools resources

During the two-year transition period 2021-2023, Europa's S2-S5 curriculum will not have formal equivalence to European Schools qualifications. As an all through school, this should not present a major problem since most students will progress to the IB Diploma programme for which the ES curriculum will prepare them very well. The ES curriculum is also viewed positively by other schools for the small number of students who transfer schools before S6. Nevertheless, as an additional safeguard, the school will be able to offer GCSEs in English language and Mathematics to students currently in S3 and S4, to ensure that all students have at least a level 2 qualification in these subjects for matriculation purposes.

7 Summary

The consequences of Brexit for Europa's European School status and curriculum have presented an unsolicited challenge to the school in the four years since the Brexit referendum in June 2016. The school's Governing Body, and many of the school's wider community - with its strong European history, links and ethos - are sad to see the UK loosen ties with Europe and the implications of this for Culham's long tradition as a highly successful European School. Nevertheless, it is a challenge to which the Governing Body has risen and to which it has been able to find solutions.

The school sought first to retain the European Schools affiliation and curriculum. However, in the absence of any progress or evidence of the political will required for such an arrangement, and with a duty to ensure the school would be ready to deliver a strong curriculum post-Brexit, the Governing Body was obliged to plan for implementation of an alternative curriculum. The process outlined in this document has led to the decision to adopt the International Baccalaureate MYP and Diploma curricula, complemented by European cultural and linguistic partnerships.

The Governing Body and School Leadership Team believe that this model provides a realistic and exciting framework for taking forwards the core aims of Europa School to deliver a broad, balanced, multilingual and multicultural European education. The Governing Body are committed to furthering this vision, which we believe will be even more important post Brexit.

8 Appendix

8.1 List of S7 EB courses, 2020-2021

Languages

L1 English

L1 English Advanced

L1 French

L1 Dutch

L1 Danish

L2 English

L2 French

L2 German

L3 Spanish

L3 Italian

Science & Maths

Biology (2 periods)

Biology (4 periods)

Chemistry

Physics

Lab Biology & Chemistry

Maths (3 periods)

Maths (5 periods)

Humanities

Economics

Geography (English, 2 periods)

Geography (English, 4 periods)

Geography (German, 2 periods)

Geography (German, 4 periods)

Geography (French, 2 periods)

Geography (French, 4 periods)

History (German, 2 periods)

History (German, 4 periods)

History (English, 2 periods)

History (English, 4 periods)

History (French, 2 periods)

Moral

Philosophy (2 periods)

Philosophy (4 periods)

Religion

Sociology (2 periods)

Art & Music

Music (4 periods)

Art (2 periods)

Art (4 periods)

PE

PE (boys)

PE (girls)

8.2 Potential MYP Curriculum map

The MYP requires at least 50 hours of teaching time for each subject group in each year of the programme. In practice more time is often necessary to meet subject group aims and objectives and to provide for the sustained, concurrent teaching that enables interdisciplinary study. For students pursuing IB MYP courses that contribute to the awarding of the IB MYP certificate, these should include at least 70 teaching hours in each of the final two years of the programme.

A possible curriculum map for the MYP is given below. It shows the number of lessons allocated on a weekly basis. Lessons are 45 minutes in duration and there is a maximum of 37 lessons in a school week. The curriculum provision in the number of taught periods is equivalent to the current offer.

Subject Groups	Subjects ¹	Secondary years – number of lesson periods				
		S1	S2	S3	S4	S5
1. Language and Literature	English EL	5	5	4	4	4
	Stream Language (SL)	5	5	4	4	4
2. Language Acquisition	Third Language (TL) ²	2/3	3	3	3	3
3. Individuals & Society	Integrated Humanities in SL	3	3	3		
	Integrated Humanities in SL/EN (History, Geography, Economics) ³				6	6
4. Sciences	Integrated Science	4	4	4		
	Biology				3	3
	Chemistry				3	3
	Physics				3	3
5. Mathematics	Standard	4	4	4	4	4
	Extended				5*	5*
6. Arts	Art	2	2	2	3*	3*
	Music	2	2	2	3*	3*
7. Physical Education & Health	PE	3	3	3		
8. Design	Digital Design	2	2	2	3*	3*
MYP Projects		use Wednesday afternoons				
Compulsory UK core school curriculum	Core PE				2	2
	Religion	2	2	2	1	1
	RSE	1	1	1	off timetable sessions	
	library	1				
Total number of periods		36	36	36	36-37	36-37

Table footnotes

1 Note that Interdisciplinary study is not timetabled separately, but rather incorporated into the main subject areas plus separately timetabled project time and school trips.

2 Including new language for some students

3 Within Integrated Humanities, History and Geography taught in Stream Language (SL), Economics taught in English (EN). eAssessment for all 3 disciplines would be in English, at least initially (eAssessments currently available in French and Spanish but not German). Teaching would be in English in the final semester in preparation for exams, a model that has proved very successful in the Hockerill Anglo-European School (www.hockerill.com).

* Asterix indicates optional subjects