



The BMS Programme of Inquiry

The Programme of Inquiry (POI) at Berlin Metropolitan School provides a challenging, coherent and meaningful curriculum for all learners aged 3 - 12. The curriculum is guided and informed by the latest developments in the International Baccalaureate® (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP) and the Berlin Framework Curriculum. It is regularly reviewed to ensure that it is rigorous and explores issues that are relevant in the world as well as to our school community. Throughout the year, students have opportunities to develop the essential elements of the PYP: knowledge, skills, concepts, attitudes and action.

Through guided inquiry both inside and outside of the classroom, the programme fosters independent learning and encourages students to become active agents in the learning process. The curriculum aims to cultivate not only academic skills and knowledge, but curiosity, flexibility and creative problem solving that are necessary for success at school and beyond.

At the heart of our programme is the development of the whole child, which is nurtured through a collaborative approach to teaching and learning. Social and emotional well-being and character is explicitly addressed and developed throughout the individual units of inquiry and supported by the IB Learner Profile. The Learner Profile provides a unifying structure in the school and guides students on their journey to become globally engaged and active citizens.

The POI, shown in the matrix provided below, is organized around six transdisciplinary themes: who we are, where we are in place and time, how we express ourselves, how the world works, how we organize ourselves and how we share the planet. These themes run vertically, and the grade levels run horizontally. Each of the six transdisciplinary themes are covered annually from Pre-school to Grade 6, with greater conceptual complexity and depth from year to year. The PYP at Berlin Metropolitan School culminates in the PYP Exhibition, a celebration of learning shown through a collaborative inquiry into a chosen area for all Grade 6 students.



BMS is an authorized IB World School

EARLY YEARS

WHO WE ARE

An inquiry into the nature of the self, beliefs and values; personal, physical, mental, social and spiritual health; human relationships including families, friends, communities 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 and the interconnectedness of individuals and civilizations, from local and global perspectives.

HOW WE EXPRESS OURSELVES

An inquiry into ways in which we discover and express ideas, feelings, nature, culture, beliefs 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 understandings of scientific principles; the impact of scientific and technological advances on society and the environment.

HOW WE ORGANIZE OURSELVES

An inquiry into the interconnectedness of human-made systems and communities; the structure and function of organizations; 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.

KINDERGARTEN | AGE 3-5

Not covered during the 2018/2019 academic year

Central Idea: Connections can be made between our lives and those of communities in other places or time periods.
Concepts: Change and Connection
Related concepts: Identity and characteristics
Lines of inquiry:
- Communication methods in different time periods
- Communities have similarities and differences
- Making connections to the past and future

Central Idea: Play is a medium for expression and creativity
Concepts: Perspective and function
Related concepts: Communication, conflict
Lines of inquiry:
- Different types of creative play
- Ways we show how we feel as we play
- 3rd line left open until the beginning of the unit

Central Idea: Working together can help solve challenges to the natural environment
Concepts: Responsibility, form, change
Related concepts: Waste, materials
Lines of inquiry:
- The properties of everyday materials
- Ways materials can be used and reused
- 3rd line left open until the beginning of the unit

Not covered during the 2018/2019 academic year

Central Idea: Humans are responsible for caring for other living things around them
Concepts: Responsibility and form
Related concepts: Characteristics, relationships and needs
Lines of inquiry:
- Similarities and differences between pets and wild animals
- Human responsibility towards animals
- 3rd line left open until the beginning of the unit

PRESCHOOL | AGE 5-6

Not covered during the 2018/2019 academic year

Central idea: Journeys and explorations can influence us in many ways
Concepts: Connection, function
Related concepts: Systems, patterns, journeys/explorations
Lines of inquiry:
- Different kinds of journeys and explorations
- Reasons for journeys and explorations
- Reflecting on the ways journeys and explorations can affect us

Central Idea: Feelings may be expressed in different ways through the arts and languages
Concepts: Causation, perspective
Related concepts: Interpretation, opinion, feelings and emotions
Lines of inquiry:
- The language of feelings
- Ways in which people express their feelings
- The perspectives of different artists

Central Idea: Light comes from different sources that can be explored
Concepts: Form, causation
Related concepts: Properties, energy
Lines of inquiry:
- The possible sources of light
- The properties of light
- 3rd line left open until the beginning of the unit

Central Idea: Systems provide a common language we can use to make sense of the world
Concepts: Form, change, connection
Related concepts: Similarities, interdependence, adaptation
Lines of inquiry:
- Number signs and symbols in our world
- Systems we use for organizing ourselves
- Signs through different times and cultures

Central idea: Small creatures interact with their environments and make differences in the world around us
Concepts: Form, function, responsibility
Related concepts: Structure, behavior, environment
Lines of inquiry:
- Small creatures that live on our planet
- The role of small creatures in the environment
- Human responsibility towards small creatures

PRIMARY YEARS

WHO WE ARE

WHERE WE ARE IN PLACE AND TIME

HOW WE EXPRESS OURSELVES

HOW THE WORLD WORKS

HOW WE ORGANIZE OURSELVES

SHARING THE PLANET

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

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

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

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 understandings of scientific principles; the impact of scientific and technological advances on society and the environment.

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

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.

GRADE 1 | AGE 6-7

Central idea: Making responsible choices promotes a balanced, healthy lifestyle
Concepts: Causation, responsibility
Related concepts: Choice, influence, balance, systems
Lines of inquiry:
- What it means to have a balanced lifestyle
- How the choices we make affect our mental, social, and physical health
- Different sources of information that help us make choices

Central idea: Reflecting on our personal histories develops a recognition of who we are, where we come from and where we may go
Concepts: Form, change, causation
Related concepts: Artefacts, growth sequences, impact, communication and identity
Lines of inquiry:
- Ways of documenting personal histories
- Personal change from birth to present: self and family
- Reflecting on past experience

Central idea: Traditions help connect and unify people
Concepts: Form, connection, perspective
Related concepts: Beliefs, values, belonging, culture, tradition, family
Lines of inquiry:
- Why people celebrate
- Features of traditions and celebrations
- Symbolic representations of celebrations and traditions

Central idea: Lifecycles represent similar processes of change for all living things
Concepts: Causation, change, connection
Related concepts: Cycles, transformation, similarities and differences
Lines of inquiry:
- Patterns of growth
- How living things change over their lifetime
- Factors that can influence life-cycles

Central idea: A cooperative and organized school can help us become independent learners
Concepts: Form, function
Related concepts: Interdependence, systems, communities
Lines of Inquiry:
- How the physical structure of our schools meet students' needs
- The roles, responsibilities and interconnectedness of school community members
- How an organized and cooperative classroom can enable us to become independent learners

Central idea: How people use and dispose of materials can alter the natural environment
Concepts: Causation, responsibility
Related concepts: Lifestyle, resources, waste, needs and wants, pollution
Lines of inquiry:
- The importance of fresh water as a limited resource
- Waste disposal
- The balance between meeting human needs and the effect on the natural environment

GRADE 2 | AGE 7-8

Central idea: Choices of role models reflect the values of individuals and societies
Concepts: Responsibility
Related concepts: Identity opinion, peer-pressure
Lines of inquiry:
- What determines our beliefs and values
- How and why role models are chosen
- Influence of role models on our choices and actions

Central idea: Human settlements and interactions are connected to the Earth's physical geography
Concepts: Form, causation, connection
Related concepts: Geography, settlement, modification
Lines of inquiry:
- How humans interact with the physical environment
- Variability of physical geography around the world
- The relationship between physical geography and human settlements

Central idea: People express and communicate ideas and experiences through stories
Concepts: Perspective, form, connection
Related concepts: Communication, tradition, artefacts
Lines of inquiry:
- Different ways of telling stories
- Reasons why stories develop as a way to share ideas and experiences
- Similarities and differences in stories told around the world

Central idea: People apply their understanding of forces to create
Concepts: Form, function, causation
Related concepts: Ingenuity, technology, energy, forces
Lines of inquiry:
- Inventions that impact people's lives
- How circumstances lead to the creation of important inventions
- How understanding forces and energy helps inventors

Central idea: People organize themselves to meet the needs of groups within the community
Concepts: Function, responsibility, connection
Related concepts: Community, systems
Lines of inquiry:
- Purpose of organizations
- Why people join organizations
- What makes an organization successful

Central idea: Organisms form an interdependent relationship with their habitat
Concepts: Change, responsibility
Related concepts: Habitat, systems, interdependence, bio-diversity, adaptation
Lines of inquiry:
- Human impact on natural habitats and living things
- The role of balance in a natural system
- How living things respond to changes in their environment
- Rights and responsibilities in interacting with the natural world

GRADE 3 | AGE 8-9

Central idea: The effective interactions between human body systems contribute to health and survival
Concepts: Function, connection, responsibility
Related concepts: Systems, interdependence, health, homeostasis
Lines of inquiry:
- Body systems and how they work (including reproductive system)
- How body systems are interdependent
- Impact of lifestyle choices on the body

Central idea: Exploration leads to discoveries, opportunities and new understandings
Concepts: Causation, perspective
Related concepts: Impact, navigation, colonialism, power
Lines of inquiry:
- Reasons for exploration (historical and personal)
- How explorations have taken place over time
- The consequences of exploration

Central idea: Film can be a powerful medium for communicating ideas about the world
Concepts: Form, perspective
Related concepts: Communication, techniques
Lines of inquiry:
- How images and sounds are used to create particular effects in films
- Critical evaluation of ideas communicated through films
- How films provide insight and information
- How people respond to films

Central idea: Continual changes to the Earth may be noticed through natural disasters
Concepts: Form, causation, responsibility
Related concepts: Tectonic plate movement, geology, prediction, survival
Lines of inquiry:
- Why the Earth's geology has changed and continues to change
- Human responses to the Earth's changes
- Preparing and responding to changes

Central idea: Goods and services are exchanged in market places to meet the needs of consumers
Concepts: Function, connection
Related concepts: Interdependence, supply and demand, fair trade supply and demand, fair trade
Lines of inquiry:
- The role of supply and demand
- Exchange systems in different marketplaces
- Ethics of the marketplace
- The role of consumers

Central idea: The experiences and opportunities that occur during childhood may be shaped by the location
Concepts: Form, perspective, connection
Related concepts: Equality, rights, resilience, health
Lines of inquiry:
- Making connections with the class and the greater community
- Humans around the world have many similarities
- Rights and responsibilities of children

GRADE 4 | AGE 9-10

Central idea: Systems that define beliefs and values offer explanations about the world around us and what it means to be human
Concepts: Form, perspective
Related concepts: Perception, commitment
Lines of inquiry:
- Similarities and differences between belief systems (secular and faith-based)
- How beliefs and values contribute to the formation and actions of communities
- The impact of spiritual traditions on society

Central idea: Perspectives and understanding of historical events can be shaped through personal encounters
Concepts: Causation, perspective, responsibility
Related concepts: Evidence, bias
Lines of inquiry:
- The way people experience historical events and how they are remembered
- Perspectives of historical events influence responses and decisions
- The different viewpoints surrounding an event (Berlin case study)

Central idea: Creative endeavors can help develop and express a sense of self
Concepts: Causation, perspective, form
Related concepts: diversity, image, prejudice
Lines of inquiry:
- Exploring self expression and identity
- How culture and society influence self-expression
- Diversity of our community

Central idea: Energy can be manipulated and used to create positive changes in the world
Concepts: Change, function, causation
Related concepts: Transformation
Lines of inquiry:
- Different forms of energy sources
- How energy can be manipulated to create change
- Sustainable energy sources and practices

Central idea: The process of designing, creating and evaluating may be enhanced through the use of technology
Concepts: Function, connection, change
Related concepts: Platforms
Lines of inquiry:
- How digital solutions can effectively be used to communicate
- The process of organizing, sharing and collaborating online to achieve a shared goal
- Participate in an online environment as ethical digital citizens

Central idea: Innovative thinking may lead to solutions for communal problems
Concepts: Form, function
Related concepts: Access, community, resources
Lines of inquiry:
- Creative problem solving
- Turning ideas into action
- To be determined by the children

GRADE 5 | AGE 10-11

Central idea: During adolescence the physical and emotional changes shape our behaviour, interactions and perspective
Concepts: Function, change, causation
Related concepts: Maturity, image, well-being, reproduction
Lines of inquiry:
- The physical, social, emotional and intellectual changes that occur throughout life
- Factors that contribute to well-being during adolescence
- How relationships contribute to our self-concept

Central idea: Evidence of past civilisations can be used to make connections to present-day societies
Concepts: Form, change, connection
Related concepts: Continuity, progress, difference, validity
Lines of inquiry:
- Characteristics of civilisations and societies
- Connections between past and present
- To be determined by the children

Central idea: People act upon social issues by creating art
Concepts: Perspective, connection
Related concepts: Interpretation, creativity, truth, freedom
Lines of inquiry:
- How people express ideas and emotions
- The contexts in which artworks are created
- How art can reflect social issues
- How learning about and through the arts develops appreciation

Central idea: Exploring the nature of matter allows people to transform, use and develop new understandings
Concepts: Function, change, responsibility
Related concepts: Transformation, innovation
Lines of inquiry:
- The scientific method
- Conditions that cause reversible and irreversible changes
- States of matter

Central idea: Economic and political systems can advance or deny equal opportunities and social justice
Concepts: Function, perspective, responsibility
Related concepts: Equality, citizenship, governance, law, politics
Lines of inquiry:
- How government systems function
- How decision-making practices reflect human rights
- Impact of government on citizens
- The rights and responsibilities of citizenship (Case study of EU)

Central idea: Responsibility for conflict resolution rests with the individual and the greater community
Concepts: Causation, perspective, responsibility
Related concepts: Peace, reconciliation, exploitation, grief
Lines of inquiry:
- Causes of conflict (local and global)
- Human rights and equity
- Strategies used to resolve conflict
- Consequences of resolutions

GRADE 6 | AGE 11-12

Central idea: Personal experiences and knowledge can shape an individual's ethics
Concepts: Perspective, responsibility
Related concepts: Beliefs, behavior, citizenship
Lines of inquiry:
- Past experiences help make sense of the world
- The process people take when making a decision
- To be determined by the children

Central idea: Social and political movements may inspire profound local and global changes
Concepts: Causation, change, function
Related concepts: Consequences, role
Lines of inquiry:
- The cause and effect of social and political movements
- How culture is shaped through these movements
- To be determined by the children

Central idea: Cultural expression changes and develops over time
Concepts: Change, form
Related concepts: Society, identity, cycles
Lines of inquiry:
- Cultures express themselves in unique ways
- Identify the influences for change
- To be determined by the children

Central idea: Processes and systems cause the world to continually change and provides challenges to humans
Concepts: Function, change
Related concepts: Interconnectedness, systems, technology
Lines of inquiry:
- Seasonal change and natural phenomena
- The Earth's place in the solar system
- To be determined by the children

Central idea: The global distribution of resources can direct human decision making
Concepts: Perspective, connection
Related concepts: Rights, networks, exploitation
Lines of inquiry:
- How resources/materials are found, taken and transported
- How decisions are linked to sustainability
- To be determined by the children

Central idea: The interdependent balance of organisms on Earth can be subject to disruption
Concepts: Form, responsibility
Related concepts: Structures, interdependence, ecosystem
Lines of inquiry:
- Human intervention has an influence on the environment
- Our responsibility to the environment
- To be determined by the children