



#IB50



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A-levels or IB?** 4

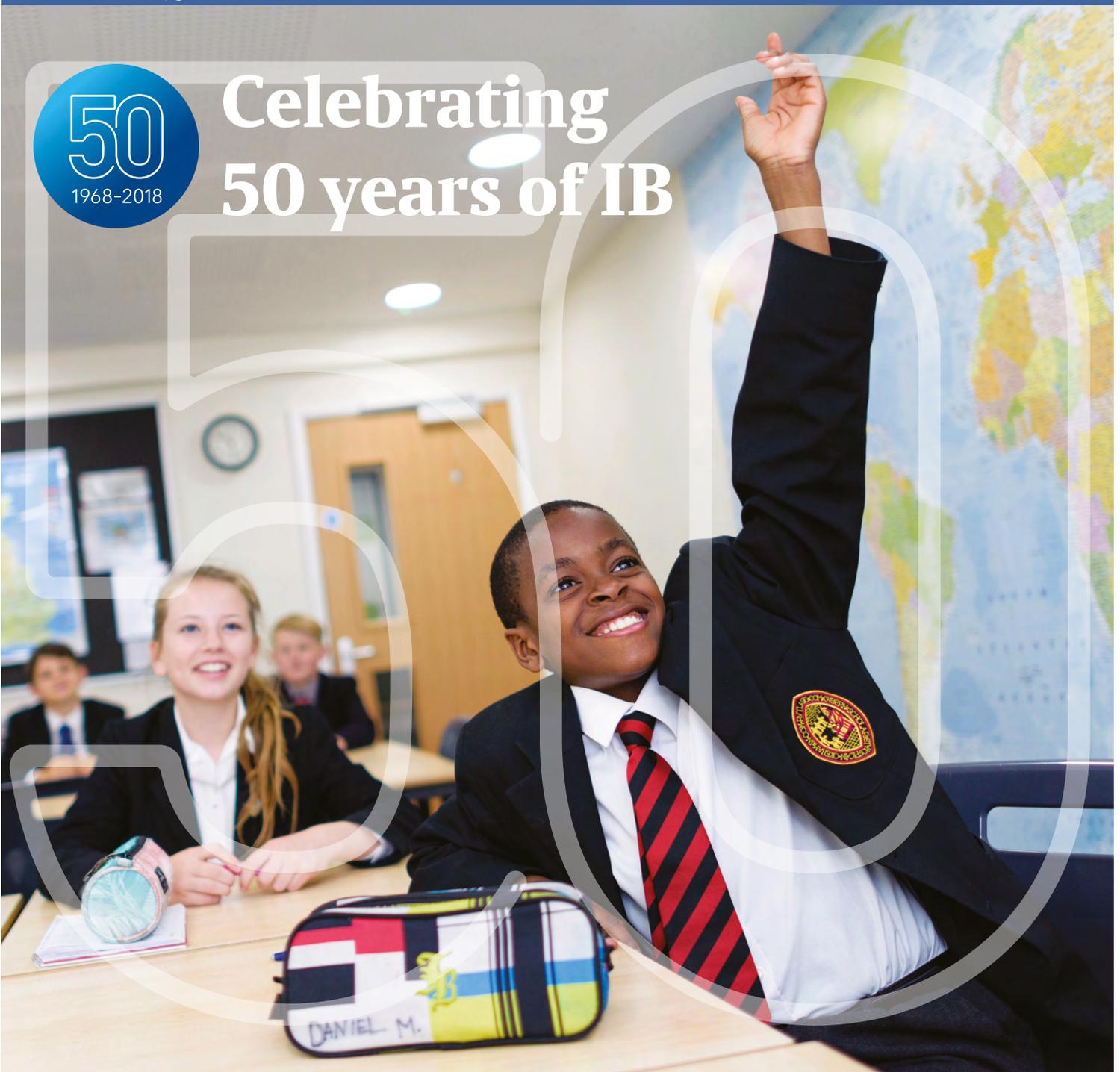
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## Celebrating 50 years of IB



# Getting to know you: The IB programme explained



**Cath Murray**  
FEATURES EDITOR  
@cathmurray\_

**The International Baccalaureate** Diploma programme is recognised as a rigorous preparation for universities in the UK and worldwide (see page 5).

And since 2012 the IB Organization has been offering a Career-related programme that schools can run in parallel, which offers a mix of academic and vocational training (page 8).

Employers also appreciate the qualities the IB brings to job applicants (page 17).

So why don't more schools do it? Our case studies take a look at some of the schools offering the IB in England, from independent (page 10) and international schools (page 9) to the new wave of state schools in Kent taking up the Career-related programme (page 15).

With the additional teacher-training it requires, many school leaders may assume the IB is simply too expensive to run. Our myth-busting article offers some responses to the most common misconceptions about IB, from the principal of a state boarding school on page 18.

There's a place for A-levels and the IB to coexist, says one headteacher whose school offers both (page 4), but since "better the devil you know" can often feel like the safer bet, we've laid out the basic structure of the

sixth-form IB programmes most commonly studied in the UK on page 8.

Finally, there's an overview of the data on pages 6 and 7, with charts showing how many schools and pupils are studying the IB in the UK and internationally, and looking at trends over time.

We hope you enjoy the read. Do get in touch and let us know what you think!



**SCHOOLS WEEK**



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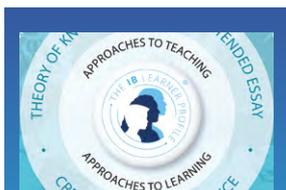
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# WELCOME TO IB

## John Cloughton

IBSCA DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, FORMER CHIEF MASTER OF KING EDWARD'S SCHOOL, BIRMINGHAM

It's an exciting time for the International Baccalaureate in the UK. The return to a world of three A-levels is making schools – and students – think again about the true value of their 16+ offering.

All of the evidence shows IB students are much valued by universities, and pupils of a whole range of abilities are getting into better universities than their A-level counterparts.

A number of major universities, including King's College London, Leeds, Bath and Birmingham have substantially reduced their offers as a deliberate attempt

to attract IB students.

The IB was founded in 1968 by a group of educators who wanted to create an educational model which combined European breadth with British specialisation. Although it was set up in Geneva, the first director-general Alex Peterson was British.

In 1968 seven schools offered the new Diploma programme. In 2018, 1.5 million students from 4,871 schools in 153 countries study the IB, which now has four different curricula: the Primary-years programme created in 1996, the Middle-

years programme created in 1994, the original Diploma programme, and the most recent addition, the Career-related programme established in 2012.

The IB's mission is "to develop young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. IB's courses encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners, who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right."

Crucially, the IB is an attractive option for school



leaders tired of constant reform. Being completely independent of any government control, the curriculum doesn't change according to political whim, and there has been no grade inflation in 50 years.

We're pleased to bring you this supplement on IB, to show how IB can not only be implemented successfully, but also the rich benefits to students and teachers when it is.



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## From the School of the Year, expect a winning formula.

Maya Raman Jones came to Sevenoaks when she was eleven. In the Sixth Form she studied Chemistry, English, Maths, History, Biology, Russian and Theory of Knowledge.

"At eleven I really loved English. Later on, the sciences turned my head! But as the IB curriculum at Sevenoaks is so broad, I didn't have to choose between the arts and sciences until I applied to university, by which time I was sure Chemistry was the one for me."

Which explains why Maya is now reading Chemistry at the University of Oxford and dreaming of a PhD and a career in scientific research.

## SEVENOAKS SCHOOL

[www.sevenoaksschool.org](http://www.sevenoaksschool.org)

Maya scored an impressive 44 in the International Baccalaureate (IB) and is now in her second year at Oxford. Our commitment to the IB is unwavering after 40 years, thanks to world-class, life-shaping results like this.

# WHICH ARE BETTER, A-LEVELS OR IB?

INTERVIEW WITH ROD MACKINNON, HEADTEACHER, BRISTOL GRAMMAR SCHOOL

CATH MURRAY | @CATHMURRAY\_

**R**od MacKinnon has spent the past 23 years as head of two grammar schools – first in the state sector at Bexley Grammar in Kent, then at the independent Bristol Grammar School. He introduced the International Baccalaureate alongside A-levels in both.

So with all the additional work it involves, and when universities are perfectly happy to accept A-levels, why did he introduce the IB?

“A-levels work,” he explains, “but you’re always looking for ways to develop. The IB is a great experience for kids. It’s even better for teachers.”

He talks passionately about the breadth of the learning experience: “The idea that you should give up the study of your native tongue or maths at 16 is preposterous. We siphon children into narrow channels too early.

“The IB is always a whole-student approach – it’s a whole learning experience. All the teachers I’ve known who’ve been on IB training, they always come back, even the long-in-the-tooth ones, thinking it was great. They’ve spent time talking about their subject, how they communicate it, and how it relates to everything else.”

But can students really get into a subject as deeply as they can at A-level? What if they wanted to go on and study pure maths at a top university, for example – how can they achieve the same depth when they are studying six subjects, plus the IB “core”?

“The academic rigour of the IB is serious,” he counters. “One of the concerns we always had about maths, was that historically IB maths higher was harder than A-level. So the depth is definitely there, but it’s balanced by an appropriate level of breadth.”

Which must mean it’s only the most academically able who can study the IB – or at least the Diploma programme?

“The IB is genuinely suitable for all students. We’ve had Oxford medics do the IB. But I’ve also had students who were academically very weak, and who



didn’t get the Diploma. However, they got a certificate and went to Canterbury to study primary teaching – what they wanted to do.”

Staff development is another theme MacKinnon keeps returning to.

“What’s really appealing is the quality of learning. It’s an enriched opportunity for staff. We as teachers have to reflect on the fact that we are whole teachers, not focusing exclusively on our own subject knowledge, but also how it fits into learning in other disciplines.”

The success of any pupil is a collective endeavour, he explains. Since university offers are given on the basis of an overall score, it doesn’t matter whether they get their top grades in one subject or another – meaning there is less competition between departments, and more collaboration.

“What they learn in each subject will be relevant to others. They will draw on skills they’ve picked up in other classes. If they get to their first-choice university, you know the success came about

because of a team effort,” he enthuses.

So if the IB is so amazing, why does he run it alongside A-levels?

“Although the IB is established, parents and staff can be anxious,” he explains.

“To jump straight from A-levels to the IB would be a courageous step. And by that I mean, I wouldn’t do it if I were you!

“In an ideal world, I’d run both. The more choice we can give students, the more likely they will buy into what they’ve signed up for.”



## OPINION



## MIKE NICHOLSON

Director of undergraduate admissions  
and outreach, the University of Bath

## How the International Baccalaureate Diploma has come to rival – or even surpass – A-levels

The International Baccalaureate Diploma is now 50 years old, and at most selective universities in the UK, it is, after A-level, the most common qualification taken by applicants for admission. At the University of Bath, around 20 per cent of our international admissions have the IB, and there are over 1,000 undergraduates who hold the qualification currently on courses.

So why is it such an effective qualification to secure entry to selective courses and universities?

**Academic rigour and content:** The IB Diploma develops learners who are able to deal with challenging concepts and develop the capacity to engage with university-level subject matter.

**Global outlook and perspectives:** Students taking the IB have an international dimension to their studies and a transnational knowledge of their subject disciplines. The IB encourages students to



consider viewpoints from multiple perspectives and standpoints. It also prepares students well for degree schemes with study-abroad international placement opportunities.

**Critical thinkers:** The IB encourages students to question, and develops in them strong analytical skills through the theory of knowledge course. The qualification encourages students to development discernment by sifting evidence and challenging conventional viewpoints.

**Interdisciplinary:** Students have a breadth to their study by taking six subjects, but are encouraged to examine how their courses interrelate. Many exciting areas of academic research

operate at the intersections between subject disciplines. IB students are comfortable in this environment, rather than feeling threatened by stepping outside their subject discipline. This attitude is particularly helpful when students wish to study joint or combined degrees, or take courses such as natural sciences or liberal arts.

**Builds resilience:** The IB is a demanding qualification, which requires students to develop their time-management, and learn to prioritise competing workloads. The CAS in particular encourages students to develop a range of interpersonal skills, team-working and coping strategies that assist in the transition from school or

college to university.

**Project planning:** The extended essay requires students to undertake a substantive piece of work, using research skills and demonstrating evidence of independent learning.

**Nuanced:** The mark scheme for the IB Diploma provides a great deal of detail and nuance, giving admissions tutors a great deal of understanding of a candidate's strengths and qualities.

**Stability:** There is continuity and trust in the quality of the qualification, as there is no national government oversight. The IB is also responsive to change, but when this occurs, as with the current development of the maths content, it is consultative and is grounded in evidence.

In recent years, offers to IB candidates from UK universities have generally decreased to a point where applicants with most other qualifications have had to demonstrate the ability to secure higher grades.

# IB IN THE UK TODAY

JESS STAUFENBERG | @STAUFENBERGJ



The first IB school opened in the UK in 1971, and there are currently 143 schools offering one of the four programmes

14 schools offer the Primary-years programme for three- to 12-year-olds

12 schools offer the Middle-years programme for 11- to 16-year olds

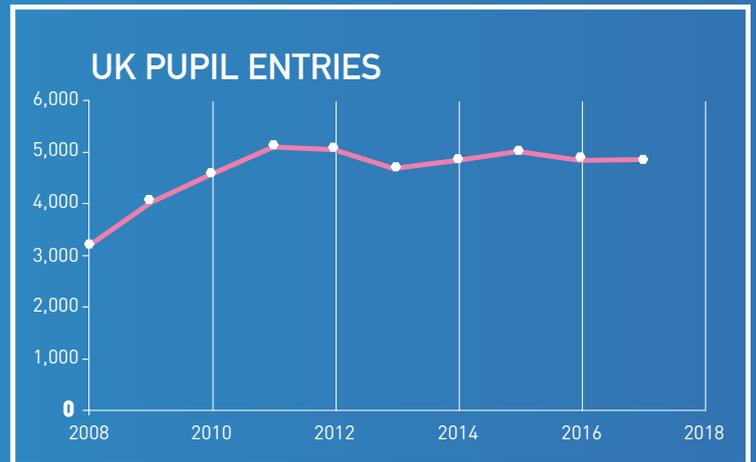
112 schools offer the Diploma programme for 16- to 19-year-olds

38 schools offer the Career-related programme for 16- to 19-year olds

There are 62 state and 81 independent and international schools offering the IB in the UK.

The UK scores well against the global average

|                       | GLOBAL | UK    |
|-----------------------|--------|-------|
| AVERAGE PASS RATE     | 78.4%  | 94.5% |
| AVERAGE TOTAL POINTS  | 29.87  | 34.97 |
| AVERAGE SUBJECT GRADE | 4.81   | 5.54  |



IB schools have been in decline in the UK for a decade

In 2008, there were 230 schools doing the IB. But then many began to drop it, because of the funding cuts at state schools to sixth-form provision. A small number of private schools have dropped out because they could not get enough pupils to study the curriculum.

However, overall pupil numbers have grown because more pupils have chosen the IB in schools which offer the programme, such as St Edward's Oxford, Wellington College, Bradfield College and Worth School in Sussex. Other schools like Dartford Grammar School, Sevenoaks, King Edward's School, Birmingham, Tonbridge Grammar School, Bexley Grammar School in Kent and King William's College, Isle of Man offer the IB Diploma to 100 per cent of their students, so overall pupil numbers remain steady.



## IB IN THE WORLD TODAY

There are 4,871 schools offering the IB globally. This means it provides an education for about 1.5 million pupils in 153 countries.

Overall, 55 per cent are state schools and 45 per cent are private.

The number of IB schools has more than doubled in the past decade:

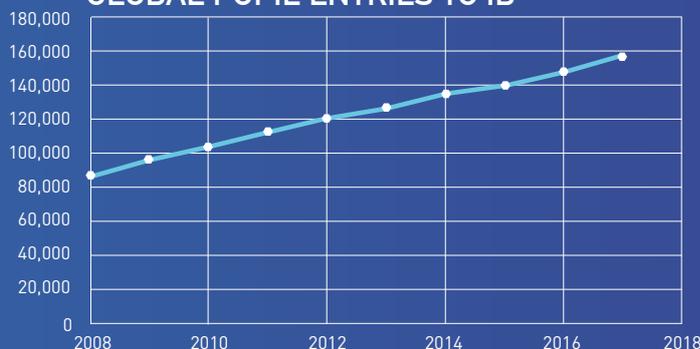
### DIPLOMA CANDIDATES 2017

|             |              |
|-------------|--------------|
| US          | 85,508       |
| CANADA      | 10,963       |
| <b>UK</b>   | <b>4,871</b> |
| NETHERLANDS | 4,558        |
| INDIA       | 3,650        |
| CHINA       | 3,701        |
| MEXICO      | 3,422        |
| ECUADOR     | 3,059        |
| SPAIN       | 2,755        |
| HONG KONG   | 2,235        |
| GERMANY     | 1,808        |

### NUMBER OF IB SCHOOLS GLOBALLY



### GLOBAL PUPIL ENTRIES TO IB



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be for 11-13 year old pupils before they embark on their GCSE and IGCSE courses. In the Upper School, our students can then choose to take the IB Diploma or A-levels, Pre-U or BTECs.

outstanding pastoral care, and our friendly & supportive community is central to nurturing bright young minds.

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ambiguous world, we must prepare our students to adapt to new challenges, to embrace new opportunities and to be innovators themselves.

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Find out more, visit [www.oakham.rutland.sch.uk/IBMYP](http://www.oakham.rutland.sch.uk/IBMYP)



# IB TODAY

## What are the IB Diploma and Career-related programmes?

The International Baccalaureate can be studied at any phase, with separate programmes for primary, middle years, and sixth-form. However, the Diploma and Career-related programmes for 16- to 19-year olds are the most commonly adopted IB programmes in the UK.

### THE DIPLOMA PROGRAMME (IBDP)

The curriculum is made up of the “IBDP core” and courses from the six subject groups.

#### The IBDP core involves:

1. Theory of knowledge, in which pupils reflect on the nature of knowledge. They ask questions such as “what counts as evidence for...?” in relation to various issues. It’s assessed through an oral presentation, in which pupils have to apply theory of knowledge thinking to a real-life situation, and a 1,600-word essay.

2. Creativity, activity and service, in which pupils take part in a range of experiences and at least one project. These activities and projects are not prescribed by the curriculum, though they must involve “out-of-the-classroom experiential learning”. For example, a pupil might learn a particularly difficult piece of music, reach a level in rock climbing, or take part in a community group.

3. The extended essay, which is an independent, self-directed piece of research concluding in a 4,000-word paper and a vive voce, or interview, with their supervisor (usually a teacher in school). It’s intended as a practical preparation for undergraduate research, but also allows pupils

to investigate a particular topic in which they are especially interested.

Pupils must also choose one course from each of the six subject groups below. If they wish, they can also choose a second course from one of the subject groups.

- Studies in language and literature – pupils are introduced to a range of texts from different periods, styles and genres, and develop their analysis, written and oral communication skills.
- Language acquisition – pupils can learn a modern language, including Mandarin, or classical languages, including Latin and Greek, either from a beginner or a more advanced level.
- Individuals and societies – pupils choose from the following: business management, economics, geography, global politics, history, information technology in a global society, philosophy, psychology, social and cultural anthropology, and world religions.
- The sciences – pupils choose from the following: biology, computer science, chemistry, design technology, physics and sports, exercise and health science.
- Mathematics – pupils choose from the following: mathematical studies standard level, mathematics standard level, mathematics higher level, further mathematics higher level.
- The arts – pupils may opt to study another course from the subjects above, instead of a course in the arts. However, if they wish they may choose from one of the following: dance, music, film, theatre or visual arts.

### THE CAREER-RELATED PROGRAMME (IBCP)

The programme is made up of the “IBCP core”, courses from the Diploma programme and Career-related studies.

#### The IBCP core involves:

- A course in personal and professional skills, so pupils develop the attitudes and strategies for the workplace.
- A course in service learning, in which pupils undertake research to develop an understanding of how to meet a community need.
- A reflective project, in which pupils research and evaluate an ethical issue arising from their career studies.
- A course in language development, in which pupils must be able to communicate in more than one language.

Pupils also take at least two courses from the Diploma programme, from any of the subject groups above.

Finally, pupils also undertake Career-related studies. The IB works with career studies providers around the globe, allowing schools to offer further learning for pupils. For instance, one partner is the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, which offers subjects such as principles of tax. The pupil then complements this with a Diploma course such as business management or mathematics.

Pearson BTEC is another partner, offering subjects such as health and social care. Again, the pupil then takes Diploma courses, perhaps psychology or biology, which complement that Career-related study path.



# AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

**ALIX ROBERTSON | @ALIXROBERTSON4**

**Bryan Nixon is the headteacher of TESIS The American School in England, an international school in Surrey. TESIS began delivering the IB Diploma for 16- to 19-year-olds in 2005. Nixon tells *Schools Week* why the school has embraced the IB.**

Around half of the year 11 and 12 students at TESIS take the IB, while others study the "advanced placement", a US college preparatory course similar to A-levels.

The school takes over 700 students aged three to 18 from 57 different countries, and over 30 languages are spoken on site.

Around 99 per cent of its graduating pupils in 2018 will attend top universities in almost a dozen different countries.

Nixon considers it important to choose the course that is right for the pupil. As a two-year course in six subject areas,

the IB adds "real depth, variety and insight", but requires the pupil to be "really organised and committed to their studies".

"You must be an independent thinker and learner, you must be able to communicate your learning well," he explains.

The course encourages pupils to consider and appreciate views they don't hold themselves, which "deepens their understanding of global and local issues".

It also enables them to "take risks" with their learning, provided they get to grips with the criteria they will be assessed on.

"There are students who fly in the IB Diploma and there are others who struggle – that is really down to their ownership of the process."

TESIS offers internal and external IB training workshops for teachers, and sessions to inform parents. Nixon



himself has been an IB workshop leader and site evaluator for the last 18 years.

Last year, the school achieved a 100-per-cent IB Diploma pass rate and its average score is around 34.

"I'm really grateful for that. What is important to me is supporting the development of independent, lifelong learners," he adds, with pride.



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# CASE STUDIES

CATH MURRAY AND SAMANTHA KING  
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## ST EDWARD'S, OXFORD

St Edward's, Oxford is currently celebrating its tenth year offering the IB Diploma programme.

To mark the occasion, the coeducational independent school is offering two fully-funded places on the programme to local state-school pupils, advertising the opportunity through its local paper, *The Oxford Times*.

It won't be the first time the day-and-boarding school, which also offers A-levels, has reached out to local students in this way.

"For the school's 150th anniversary we ran a bursary scheme through the Times as well. We said we'd take one pupil and we ended up taking three, of whom one did the IB and two did A-levels," explains Stephen Jones, the school's headteacher. "Of the three, the IB student and one A-level student are now going to Oxford University."

Currently uptake of the IB programme stands at just below 70 per cent of pupils in



the lower sixth, and 50 per cent in the upper sixth, proportions which have been on an upward trajectory for the past six years. Now, the figures look set to rise again.

"Next year we anticipate our lower sixth being 70 per cent IB students. We think about two thirds is where we're going to be happy," adds Jones.

The school's passion for the programme is echoed by pupils; Pippa Smith in the lower sixth believes the course has already made her a more "well-rounded" person.

"It expands the mind, especially with the

theory of knowledge module. It's something very different to A-levels which are solely academic. It really pushes you and makes you do a lot more," she explains.

Students on the A-level and IB courses are taught by the same teachers, who are keen to instil the same skills in all their students.

"Once you run the IB alongside A-levels, what you realise very quickly is that the values of the IB you can then stretch into your A-level cohort," says Jones. "It would be wrong for us to have an overspecialised teaching force because it's just not helpful."

## SEVENOAKS SCHOOL

When Sevenoaks School made the decision to drop A-levels completely in favour of an IB programme, it made the front page of *The Times*.

The decision was met with widespread criticism as well as fears from teachers and parents who were unsure how it would affect the future of the Kent independent school.

"We were basically the first to go 'let's ditch the national system at 16. It was the front-page story along with some cartoon along the lines of 'Top school abandons A-levels,'" reminisces Katy Ricks, the headteacher. "My memory from that era is people being fearful and saying the results will go down, the school roll will fall and teachers won't want to come here."

The decision to become fully IB was made by governors in 1999, who weren't pleased with the new A-level curriculum at the time. The change took place over seven



years, so pupils joining the school at the age of 11 could still have the option of A-levels. The last A-level exams were sat in 2006.

"It was a generous approach," Ricks says. "All the fears were just wrong. Our results went up, our applications increased and more people wanted to come to teach here because they thought it would be interesting to teach the IB. We've really never looked back."

The school is now approaching its 40th

anniversary of running the IB, making it one of the programme's earliest adopters.

"The school has been fully IB now for 12 or 13 years," adds Tim Jones, the school's deputy head. "Some schools try to run A-levels and the IB at the same time – I call them zombie schools."

"These schools aren't really getting the best out of the IB because in a full-cohort IB school like we are, you see the power that the IB has with the weakest."

## WESTMINSTER ACADEMY

Westminster Academy prides itself on giving students from all backgrounds the chance to study the IB.

A comprehensive school, it fully switched to the IB five years ago, ditching the A-levels and BTECs it had offered in favour of running only the Career-related programme and a Diploma programme.

Beforehand, the school had partnered with a college to help it deliver the two IB programmes, introducing the the IB Diploma in 2008, followed by the Career-related programme in 2013.

"Our students are aware of alternative sixth-form courses, and in electing to stay with us, they are choosing a course which they know will push them," explains Dr Saima Rana, the principal. "The key to running a successful programme is to ensure that students feel that they belong on their course."

Take-up of the two programmes is currently a 50/50 split of the nearly 200 pupils who attend the sixth-form.

"We've been able to recruit some



outstanding teachers from abroad, who have come here specifically because we're an IB school," Rana adds. "The staff love it. They love to see students graduate from our

IB programmes with not just knowledge of their subjects, but with the values to ensure they go out and change the world for the better."

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CASE STUDIES  
SPONSORED CONTENT

## OAKHAM SCHOOL

Oakham School's director of IB is well placed to get feedback on the programme, as she happens to live next door to one of her students.

Appointed during the introduction of the school's IB programme in 2001, Simone Lorenz-Weir has earned valuable insight into how students experience the course through Edward Siddle.

"After he'd done his exams we were sitting in the kitchen having a chat about what it was like. It was a completely awesome conversation which was everything you would ever hope a student to say when they'd finished," she says.

"I know his parents well, so I didn't want to interfere or push the IB when he was first making his decision."

The school runs A-levels and BTEC courses alongside the IB Diploma, to offer what Lorenz-Weir calls "a curriculum for



every child". Currently around a quarter of the school's 200 sixth-form students take the IB.

"We are considered a big IB cohort school within the UK," Lorenz-Weir explains. "We get an average of 36 and 37 points. That might look marginally lower than some other IB schools, but we think it's an unbelievable achievement considering the breadth of students that come into the Diploma programme with us."

From September, the school will be trialling a three-year IB Middle-years programme with years 7, 8 and 9, to develop conceptual and enquiry-based learning approaches in pupils ahead of their GCSEs.

"There's stigma that the IB is only for smart people, but there's not any intelligence limit to do the IB," Edward says, having completed his course. "It offers extra skills outside of just learning for an exam, so it's really good life preparation."

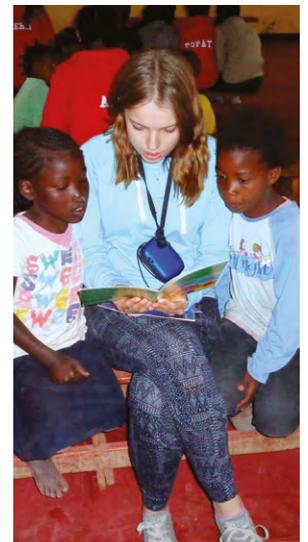
## NORTH LONDON COLLEGIATE SCHOOL

North London Collegiate School is on a mission to dispel any myths surrounding the IB programme.

The school currently runs a website, [www.nlcsib.com](http://www.nlcsib.com), which provides information on the programme's structure, frequently asked questions and posts about their experiences from NLCS IB students past and present.

"If you Google the question 'how hard is the IB?', the first 78 answers will tell you the IB is impossible and will ruin your life," says Madeleine Copin, the school's director of IB. "We need to make sure students are accessing sensible and correct information when they're making their decision. Not being influenced by random rubbish they read on the internet."

A website isn't the only way the school, which has been running the IB Diploma since 2004 alongside A-levels, is tackling IB misinformation.



"We make sure that there are lots of opportunities for year 11s to interrogate older girls. We have a breakfast where the year 11 form will have some pastries with some girls in year 12 to ask how everything's going on the programme. That works really, really well," she adds.

This next academic year, 40 students will be taking up the IB out of a cohort of 120.

"On average the UCAS offer that an IB student will get is five points below the average score of IB students at NLCS. Our average score is around 41 and 42, and

the average offer is around 36 and 37" said Copin. "It just puts them in such a fantastic place for their university applications."

To counter the pressure of the IB programme, students have the chance to take part in Christmas ice-skating sessions, and are offered cupcakes and fake champagne to celebrate when exams are completed.

"One of the things we've been focusing on quite a lot is our students' experience on the programme. They need to be having a sense of fun about it," she says.

## HEADINGTON SCHOOL

When Headington School first began implementing its IB programme in 2007, it had to send teachers around the world for training.

The job of training the Oxford school's workforce fell to the newly appointed IB coordinator at the time, James Stephenson, who was told to meet the International Baccalaureate Organisation's requirements: each IB teacher had to attend an approved workshop, and one teacher per subject had to have attended a workshop on the most recent version of the subject guide.

"In those days it was at a time when there was a growth in UK schools but still a lot of the courses were few and far between," says Stephenson, who is now the school's assistant head and director of IB. "Fifteen of us went to Athens in Greece over a three-week period. I went to Paris the next year for physics training, and we had teachers go to Toronto, various locations in Europe and even Dubai."

During the courses, which ran from three



to five days, teachers learned the basics of the IB and how each subject linked with other areas of the curriculum.

Currently the school runs A-levels and the IB programme concurrently, but it wasn't all plain sailing convincing its workforce that offering the IB was a good idea.

"Convincing some folk what the need of the IB was and why we needed this when A-levels seemed to work perfectly well was a challenge initially," Stephenson

explains. "Teachers tend to like to do things from a point of understanding things fully before they throw themselves into it. That challenge has just disappeared now."

In 2018, IB training courses can be found a little closer to home.

"These days you go for a course you go to Birmingham or Coventry for three days. Not Athens. You sit in a hotel room on the M1 or something like that. Those were the golden years," he jokes.

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CASE STUDIES  
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STONYHURST

"The whole Jesuit vision of education matches the IB very closely," says Stonyhurst's headmaster John Browne.

The Jesuit pupil profile – which includes values such as curiosity, intentions, eloquence and discernment – "matches the IB ones very closely".

"The IB doesn't have any element of God, belief or faith, but if you put it into a Catholic school like ours, it marries very strongly. We provide the rest."

The international connections offered by the IB are also important for the Lancashire-based boarding school, which hosts about 15 students every year from Jesuit schools in Italy, for the first year of the Diploma programme. It also has links with schools in Sydney, and is preparing to open a school in Penang, Malaysia, which will become an IB school.

As UK universities become more



expensive, more students are also looking to apply to American universities, as well as English-language courses in Italy or Spain, according to Deborah Kirkby, Stonyhurst's director of IB.

"I think the IB has a particular strength in being flexible to prepare students for different programmes of study," she suggests.

About a quarter of the school's 240 sixth-formers study the IB Diploma programme, and it hopes to see good take-up for the IB Career-related programme, which is being introduced from September.

The IBCP is "in no way easier" than the IBDP, insists Browne, "just more focused for those for whom six subjects is not right".



The school will offer sport and business modules in the pilot year.

"Top marks in the IBCP is equivalent to three As at A-level," he is keen to point out.

In terms of progression routes, six subjects "keeps you very broad rather than specialising too early", says Browne, whose IB pupils have gone on to study medicine and engineering as well as the humanities.

"At 17 it's hard to know what you want to do. We have one student who's going to Stanford and he's always wanted to work for NASA – but most don't," he continues.

"The drop-out rate at university is also much lower than A-level as they're taught in a different way. I'm just sorry I didn't have the opportunity to do the IB!"

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## KING ETHELBERT SCHOOL

CATH MURRAY | @CATHMURRAY\_

The IB Career-related programme is “hugely, hugely important” for the aspirations of the young people coming up through King Ethelbert School’s which, as part of Kent’s selective system, is technically a secondary modern.

One of the best things about the IBCP, according to the school’s head Kate Greig, is the destinations to which her students progress: “What I’m most delighted about with the IBCP is the progress they go onto from the end of year 13, which is so amazingly brilliant.

“The IBCP keeps your options open. You can go to university or transition to employment.”

This year’s cohort plans to apply to university courses as varied as mathematics and physical engineering, forensic psychology and human rights law. Others are looking at engineering or paramedic apprenticeships.

Once they get to college or university, more students stick out their courses because the IBCP develops resilience, and the kind of self-confidence that means they dare to change course if they are not happy.

“I love that, because I would never have done that at university, but they do,” she says, admiringly. Comparing this to



Paul Luxmoore

her previous role as head of sixth form at a non-selective school that offered A-levels, she sees “massively less drop-out”

with the IBCP.

She praises the “brave” move taken by another school in their multi-academy trust, Dane Court Grammar School, by supporting their application to run the IBCP, in such a way that means they effectively become accountable for King Ethelbert’s results.

“But we’re not the lesser cousin,” Greig insists. “It was a risk for Dane Court initially, but the children make really, really good progress here and it actually adds a lot of value.”

Dane Court offers both the Diploma and the Career-related programme, whereas King Ethelbert offers only the IBCP (see page 8).

The Coastal Academies Trust, to which the schools belong, is also using the IB’s Middle-years programme (MYP) to redesign its key stage 3 curriculum, to prepare students for the new, tougher GCSEs.

The MYP is “a philosophy about how to organise a curriculum in key stage

3” which is about “making links between different subjects” and making “coherent sense of the content areas”, says Paul

Luxmoore, the trust’s executive head.

Luxmoore sees the IBCP as “perfectly suited to middle- to lower-ability post-16 students”.

“In its most basic sense it’s at least two academic subjects with a recognised vocational subject, and a core that links them together. So for a student who may struggle academically, they’ve still got that academic challenge, and that gives the vocational part some academic credibility,” he explains.

“It is coherent, thought out, brilliant in how it’s designed, flexible to suit your local needs and context, but it’s accessible for those sorts of students.

“So we’ve always argued that the IBCP is the perfect model for the comprehensive sector of England, especially for the very large and wide middle ability range.”

The IBCP has been so successful that since September there are now 27 non-selective schools in Kent running the model.



Kate Greig

**WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE IB?**

**TOP NAMES FROM THE WORLD OF EDUCATION EXPLAIN WHAT THEY LIKE MOST ABOUT THE IB**



**LORD JIM KNIGHT**  
Former education minister

"The IB is the best curriculum in the world right now. It combines academic rigour with real world skills in a global context. Not only do Diploma programme students do better at university, they are also better prepared for success in work."



**PETER CHETWYND**  
Associate director for undergraduate admissions, KCL

"Our students tell us that the IB leaves them feeling very well prepared for their study. Our academics also speak highly of students who have studied the IB. We often find that IB students, generally having a broader subject grounding than A-level students, find themselves well prepared for us."



**DAVID LAKIN**  
Head of education, Institution of Engineering and Technology

"Education programmes such as the International Baccalaureate provide a broad education for three- to 19-year-olds, including Maths and a science, rather than the three subjects at A-level. This gives young people longer to discover their real strengths and interests before making life-affecting choices."



**ALIX DELANY**  
Head of admissions, the University of East Anglia

"If we could fill our university with IB students we would. It's perfect for going on to university. An IB student settles down much quicker into university life. They have more independence and resilience, and are geared up more for academic study at degree level."



**ANDREAS SCHLEICHER**  
Director for education and skills, OECD

"IB schools have evolved into one of the most innovative models for forward-looking education, developing students who can think for themselves and work with others, and who are open to the world and to the future."



**LORD DAVID WILLETTS**  
Executive chair, the Resolution Foundation

"I'm a fan of the IB. I think it tackles the fundamental problem of early specialisation. That's why it's a tragedy the IB hasn't really taken off in England on the scale that we all hoped for. We are way behind other advanced western countries in terms of the IB."



**JESS HEANEY**  
Education outreach lead officer, the University of Leeds

The IB creates independent and critical learners, with strong analytical and communication skills, all of which are skills central to undergraduate study. The breadth of the IB curriculum encourages students contribute to university life academically and in an extracurricular sense."

# WHAT DO EMPLOYERS THINK?

**ALIX ROBERTSON | @ALIXROBERTSON4**

## MORGAN STANLEY

**Becci McKinley-Rowe is a managing director at Morgan Stanley, an investment bank and financial services company. In her 23 years of experience she has worked extensively with a range of schools on outreach programmes, including some which solely teach the IB, such as Sevenoaks School in Kent. She told *Schools Week* what she appreciates about students of the IB**

Morgan Stanley partners with 45 different schools and recruits employees with a diverse range of qualifications. While A-levels still dominate the applications, Becci McKinley-Rowe says employers appreciate the different experiences an IB pupil can bring to the table.

"The breadth of the IB means that the pupils have to act like university students much, much earlier, because there's an awful lot that relies on self-learning

and self-motivation, and that equips you for when you actually go into the workplace," she explains.

Managing a wide range of subjects to a high level encourages a "very mature" approach, and the style of the IB programme teaches pupils to take ownership of their own learning.

"From an employer's perspective, an applicant who has gone through the IB is already pretty familiar with having to juggle an awful lot, be efficient, and prioritise, and that organisational element is very useful. That's very similar to the skills needed in the workplace, whether you're going into investment banking, corporate law, accountancy or management consultancy."

Proving that you are "well rounded" is also something companies will look for. This extracurricular side is built into the IB Diploma programme, which includes a compulsory "creativity, activity, service" strand that students may fulfil through music, sports or charity work,



for example.

While the programme is "clearly tough", with its six subject areas, IB students are likely to find themselves a few steps ahead if they choose to go on to university.

"IB students are not afraid to challenge or question and they're naturally curious because of the way they approach their subjects," she adds.

"It's really important from an employer's perspective to have young people coming through that are open minded."

## FERRARI

**Ravin Jain is in his second year as an engineer at Ferrari, after studying the IB at King Edward's School, Birmingham and physics at the University of Oxford. He told *Schools Week* how he felt the course prepared him to enter the world of work.**

Ravin Jain entered King Edward's independent school in Edgbaston at the age of 16 in 2010, the year the school made the switch from teaching A-level to only delivering the IB. It was the prospect of joining this pioneering cohort that drove his decision to enter the school.

"Being able to continue studying English and French – subjects that I would not have had time to formally study had I done A-levels – was useful and interesting for me," he says.

"This is only possible with the IB as it offers you the ability to study additional subjects while not compromising those that are vital for your degree applications."

He found the IB a positive way for young people to step out of their comfort zone.

"Not only are you forced to study subjects you might not otherwise post-16, it also formalises a lot of the things that young people do at school anyway, such as project work, individual research and sporting activities."

Maintaining this breadth of activities prepares young people for "the rest of their lives".

"This is especially true in a world where people are changing careers more and more during their working lives – it's very difficult to know at age 16 what you're going to be doing at age 26!"

Now an engineer at Ferrari, he believes that employers are becoming more familiar with the IB and appreciate its "outward and international nature", and the way it encourages a flexible approach.

"I think that a lot of employers are moving from treating it as a novelty



to something that they know has a track record of producing intelligent, well-rounded young people. In terms of specific skills, learning efficient and effective time management early on is vital.

"By doing the IB, you give yourself an amazing opportunity to learn so many things and you only get out of it what you put in. I'd encourage young people to engage fully with their teachers and peers."

# BUSTING MYTHS ABOUT IB

**Richard Markham, principal of Hockerill Anglo-European College**

There are more than a few myths and misconceptions surrounding the International Baccalaureate.

Richard Markham, the principal of Hockerill Anglo-European College, a state boarding school with 850 pupils in Bishop's Stortford is here to clear things up

## MYTH: THE IB DIPLOMA PROGRAMME IS MUCH HARDER THAN A-LEVELS

IBDP and A-levels are different, and almost impossible to objectively compare. They are testing quite different skills, although I think IBDP skills are more useful in later life, and are more applicable to university study.

IBDP is a programme, whereas A-levels are a set of exams. So to pass the IB, pupils need to be organised, diligent and be able to sustain that effort across six subjects. A-levels require a singular focus on three subjects.

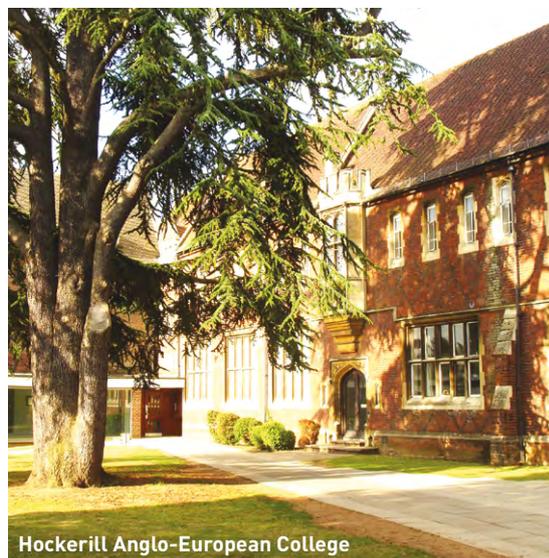
However, being excellent at anything shouldn't be easy. Just as an A or A\* at A-level is hard to come by, so are 6s and 7s in the IB.

## MYTH: IBDP DOESN'T ALLOW YOU TO APPLY TO SPECIALIST COURSES AT UK UNIVERSITIES

Not true! IBDP-only schools regularly send students off to specialist courses such as medicine or maths. In fact, last



Richard Markham



Hockerill Anglo-European College

year, we sent 97 per cent of our students to their first-choice universities. IB schools send students to study medicine, engineering, dentistry and mathematics every year.

## MYTH: DOING SIX SUBJECTS AS WELL AS THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE EXTENDED ESSAY IS TOO HARD

I think six subjects in a well-designed programme are accessible to all.

Students need more breadth – people now change career several times throughout their lives, and early specialisation isn't the best preparation.

The programme can be tailored to suit the specialist interests of the student. After that, it's all about attitude. The IB learner profile provides a set of attitudinal and cognitive behaviours which are required; I like to think it comes down to the qualities of diligence and organisation.

## MYTH: DOING SO MANY SUBJECTS DOESN'T ALLOW FOR ENOUGH DEPTH

Usually the three higher-level subjects will be interrelated, as they will be in the area the student wishes to study further. The depth of coverage is considerable, and the style of questioning in the exams

means students have a great deal to assimilate.

With the three standard-level subjects, again, if the programme is well designed, there will be curriculum coherence, and a lot of interrelated strands running throughout the subjects. In this increasingly competitive, globalised market, the fact that all Diploma students study maths and a modern foreign language places them at a huge advantage.

The extended essay is typically written in one of the student's higher-level subjects. We recommend exploring the subject area they are most interested in studying at university. It's like the wider reading you have to do for A-level, and great preparation for university entry essays and interviews.

## MYTH: THE IB IS MUCH MORE EXPENSIVE TO RUN THAN A-LEVELS

It probably is, but if you commit to it, you prioritise it. We are an IB world school. Yes, we bear the higher cost in terms of the range of subjects, but we make savings elsewhere. Our staff are committed to the philosophy of the IB, and they accept slightly larger classes of up to 22 pupils in the core subject classes.

### MYTH: YOU NEED MORE TEACHERS TO RUN THE IB PROPERLY

Like A-levels, this depends on which subjects you decide to offer. We run a range of subjects that guarantee that students can pick freely, including lots of modern languages, music, psychology, economics, and social and cultural anthropology.

However, a school can limit the number of subjects it can offer, in the same way smaller sixth-forms limit A-level choice.

### MYTH: PARENTS DON'T LIKE THE IB

Our parents love the Diploma! When we do open mornings and explain, by the end of the session, I could probably sign every parent up to study the IB themselves.

Those who are past their own school days can see how different it is to traditional A-levels, and how applicable it is to the world beyond university.

In fact, it actually can be the students who need more persuading than the parents!

### MYTH: IT'S WAY TOO COMPLICATED TO SWITCH TO THE IB

There's such a good network of IB schools which are at different stages of their journey, that there's always someone to help. We've been doing it for 20 years, and Anglo-European and Sevenoaks have been going for even longer – there are lots of long-established schools to depend on, all of which are more than happy to share advice

It may seem daunting, but there is a wealth of expertise available. You become part of a very tight-knit circle of schools keen to share practice. IBSCA, the IB Schools and Colleges Association, provides expert support for UK schools.

The IB is one of the very few examples where you will find absolutely equal relations between state and independent schools, where everyone acknowledges that they can learn as much from one other, without a whiff of condescension.

### MYTH: STATE SCHOOLS CAN'T AFFORD THE IB

I am head of Hockerill, which is a state

boarding school. We've been running the IB since 1998, and we manage to run the programme on our state-allocated funding.

There are certainly start-up costs involved, but these can be offset and in exceptional circumstances, the IB does have some grants available.

It requires a commitment, and the acknowledgement that you're going to have to be careful in other areas, but to my mind it's worth it.

### MYTH: THE AMOUNT OF STAFF TRAINING IS TOO MUCH

The IB does require more staff training than A-level, but that is a good thing. There's an authorisation process that your school has to go through, which is part of exercising due diligence.

The absolute minimum is that one teacher is trained up for each subject, with the agreement that you will then cascade that training internally. My staff enjoy doing the training, and this provides opportunities to meet teachers from around the world and share best practice.



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