



International Baccalaureate®
Baccalauréat International
Bachillerato Internacional

British International School Istanbul

THE IB IS A GUARANTEE FOR OUR STUDENTS AND STAFF

1997

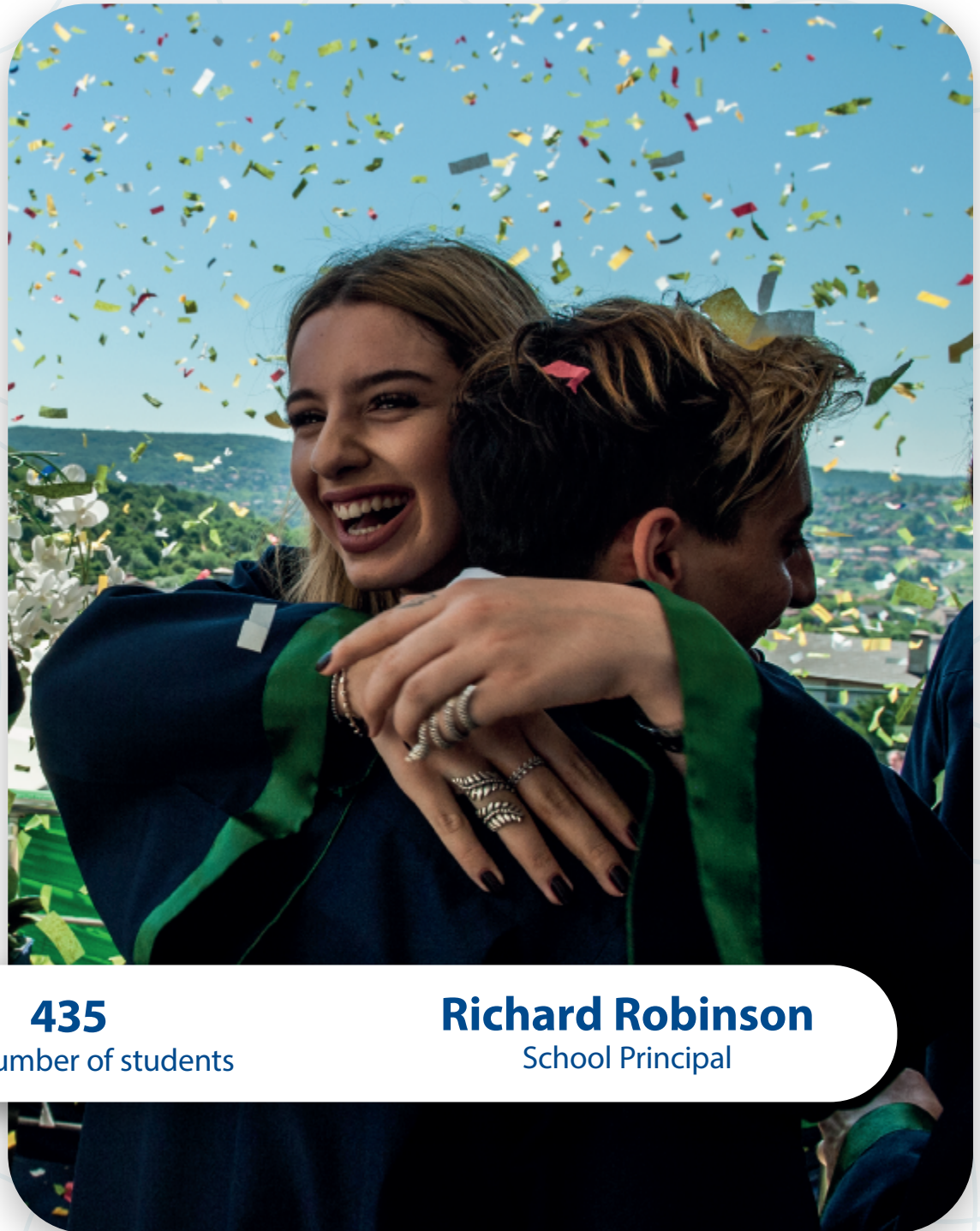
Diploma Programme offered since

435

Total number of students

Richard Robinson

School Principal



A melting pot of culture

In 1997, the British International School Istanbul set about enhancing its educational offering for students aged 16 to 18 by adopting the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (DP). Fast forward 25 years, and the school, under new ownership since 2000, has grown to be one of the leading international schools in Turkey.

The British International School Istanbul is not able to accept Turkish national students due to government regulations and so relies on international families for student recruitment. Richard Robinson, the school's principal says: "When talking to prospective parents about the school, they mainly want to discuss the make-up of the school community. We are extremely proud to be international by name and by nature, playing host to over 50 different nationalities amongst students and staff. Students wouldn't get the same multicultural experience at other schools."

The British International School Istanbul is a non-selective school with a rich tapestry of cultures and nationalities. So much so, most of the school's students join with English as a second, third or fourth language. Indeed, some students join the school with no English and as complete beginners. Richard says that with the school's "true international learning community, the IB is the perfect curriculum choice, due to its global nature".

Richard explains that the school started off as a very "British" school in Istanbul and that there are other schools in the city that serve very insular communities of different nationalities: "One of the reasons that we chose to offer the DP at the school was because we had an almost exclusively British community and were offering A Levels. We wanted to broaden our horizons and attract families from all types of communities and it was the IB Diploma Programme that allowed us to do this."



As well as being authorized to offer the DP, the school is also accredited by the Council of International Schools and the Council of British International Schools. Accreditation by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools is especially useful for students who are

looking to move to the USA for university. Richard continues: "All of these accreditations are very important for us to show our global outlook while having connections and alignment with the UK and US education systems. Prospective parents come to us because they know the IB and they want their children to have an IB education. Being authorized by the IB means that parents aren't taking a leap of faith or jumping into the dark. Occasionally, we get parents who need to find out about the programme and get misled by our name, thinking that we are a British school, so must follow the British curriculum. However, once we have explained to them how the programme works and that students study six different subjects tailored to their skillset, the parents are on board."



A tailored education

The structure of the DP is what makes the programme unique and is why it attracts so many students and their parents to the school. Richard confirms: "Through the six subjects, students are provided with a very balanced curriculum. We know that this works so well for our students, that it has influenced our offering to the lower year groups too. For iGCSEs, we make it mandatory for all students to take at least one science, one humanities subject and at least one creative arts or physical education. The broadness of the DP is something we wholeheartedly value. I can't think of any other pre-university course where you do six different

subjects plus the DP core, which enables students to expand beyond the classroom and look at the 'bigger picture'."

While students can find the DP challenging, Richard says that the school's students realize that by studying the programme they have a huge amount of choice. This is especially the case for those students who, at the age of 16, don't know what they want to do. Richard explains that choice and flexibility are unique selling points of the DP: "With six different subjects, our students can go in any direction. The majority of our cohort's ambitions are to go to the world's top universities, so the majority opt for the full Diploma. However, the fact that there is the option for students to study DP

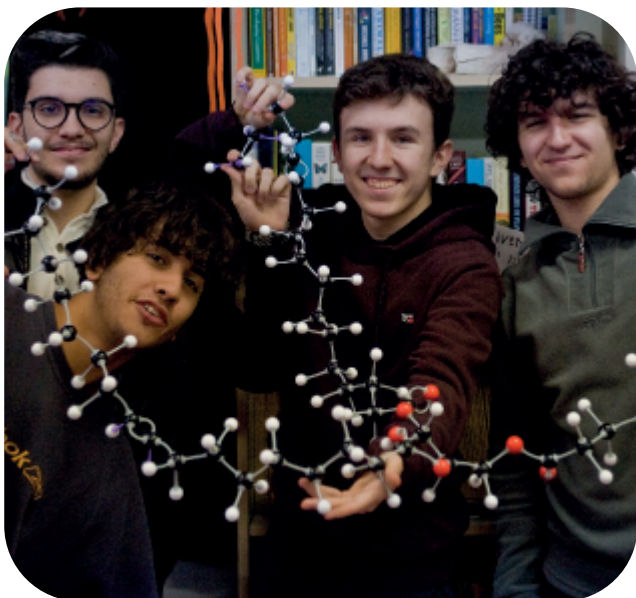
courses, instead of the full six subjects, provides flexibility and inclusiveness."

The suitability of the DP for such a wide range of students enables all to succeed. One of the greatest highlights as school Principal is seeing students go on and do what they want post-18. Richard says: "We are still in touch with many of our students, who are doing all kinds of wonderful things. It is brilliant when alumni come back to visit and inspire our current students at our career fairs and other events. To be able to give our students choice and a great start in life is completely fulfilling."



A magnet for the best teachers

Being an authorized IB World School not only attracts families from around the world to the British International School Istanbul, but the most experienced international teachers too. Richard confirms that if the school was offering A Levels, it “wouldn’t attract the calibre of teachers” that it does: “It can be hugely daunting for teachers when looking for a job, especially if looking overseas. IB authorization, along with our other accreditations, provides a guarantee for our teaching staff because they know that we have to comply with a set of standards and measures, and that we are held accountable to them.”



Richard goes on to explain that teaching the IB gives staff a greater sense of purpose: “Many of our experienced teachers find the DP, in terms of content and approach to teaching and learning, much better than other programmes they may have taught previously. The majority of our staff have been with us for a number of years and when they do decide to move on they often look for schools that also deliver IB programmes.”

A can-do attitude

Richard explains that it is the DP’s “core” that instils a can-do attitude in students, giving them the confidence and the ambition to create change on a local, national or international level. Richard shares: “The theory of knowledge (ToK) course, creativity, activity and service (CAS) and the extended essay (EE) expand the experiences of our students beyond the regular classroom and gives them a sense of purpose. One CAS project that particularly stands out to me when I think about students driving change or helping each other is a project that helped Syrian refugees in Istanbul. Our IB students collected and delivered toys and clothes, and also volunteered their time to teach in the school that had been set up for the children. The fact that the IB exposes students to real life scenarios is an amazing aspect of the programme.”

When thinking about why non-IB schools should consider offering the programme, Richard says: “Over the last year, the ‘can-do



attitude’ of both staff and students has been more apparent than ever as the whole learning community has faced the pandemic. The attitude to challenges and situations that the IB instils in our students and staff is invaluable. Without sounding too clichéd with regards to the IB learner profile, our learning community are problem solvers and risk takers - and our staff model this every day. The attitude is that anything is possible, it might be hard, but it can be done. I think the IB’s philosophy and approach encourage this attitude within the community and this is why I would wholeheartedly recommend that all schools consider delivering an IB education.”



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Find out more about the benefits of the IB:
www.ibo.org/benefits