



LANGUAGE FRIENDLY SCHOOL PORTRAIT

St. Janschool

Amsterdam, The Netherlands





Overview

ST. JANSCHOOL

- Location: Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- Type of school: Primary School, Public
- Number of students: 446
- Number of staff:
- Languages spoken in school community: (see language breakdown below) top 5:
- Language Friendly certified since: 2019





Motivation for becoming a Language Friendly School

THEIR STORY

“Multilingualism is a strength” is the main credo of the St. Janschool, a public primary school with 446 pupils in Amsterdam-West who received their Language Friendly School certificate in 2019. Parents should be free to speak their home languages with their child and in lessons at the St. Janschool, they give special attention to it. Some schools still prohibit other languages than Dutch at school, despite this cutting the connection between parent, child and school. Research shows that home languages support learning Dutch.



Language Friendly Activities

TOP 3 FOR THE ST. JANSCHOOL

LANGUAGE OF PREFERENCE

Our main goal remains learning the Dutch language of instruction, but pupils are allowed to do assignments in the so-called language of preference. We do make agreements about that. It's fine doing a paper in Egyptian but with a translation in Dutch. And if pupils want to discuss ideas in their mother tongue during the math class, they can. We trust that they talk about the content and we tell them this.

LANGUAGE BUDDIES

We also work with language buddies: twenty minutes per week, a number of pupils who speak the same language, voluntarily get together to talk and to read. This way, they see that they are not the only one speaking a different language. This is especially important for young children. They shouldn't keep quiet because they think something is wrong with them.

WORD CLUSTERS

All students, both multilingual and monolingual, receive word clusters – images of words – to take home and discuss them with their parents. This makes it easier to discuss them together at school. Multilingual children will make the link between the two language registers in their head: so-called translanguaging. It means they start understanding concepts at a deeper level.

Benefits

BENEFITS OF BECOMING A LANGUAGE FRIENDLY SCHOOL

Since the St. Janschool has become a Language Friendly School, the team says that children exude more confidence when they are allowed to use their own language.





TIPS FOR SUCCESS

**YOU DON'T NEED TO CHANGE
ANYTHING ABOUT YOUR
EDUCATION SYSTEM, YOU JUST
NEED TO ADD A LANGUAGE
FRIENDLY SAUCE.**

DIENEKE BLIKSLAGER - VICE PRINCIPAL





Tips for Success

FROM THE VICE PRINCIPAL

"You don't need to change anything about your education system, you just need to add a language friendly sauce. The first step is to get to know the background and the different languages of your pupils. As a teacher, show that you are interested, for example by asking about it and regularly talking about it. Then you can let children choose for which assignments they want to use their mother tongue. When students do not want to speak their home languages, it is highly important not to force them."

Useful Links



[Website St. Janschool](#)



[Article in Didactief](#)

FOLLOW THE ST. JANSCHOOL

FACEBOOK



LANGUAGE FRIENDLY

SCHOOL

Contact

WEBSITE

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RUTU
Foundation