

## Seize the future – Luxembourg’s international schools

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Schools all offer the same basic idea: to prepare a student for “the real world”. But the way each different institution does this can shape forever what that real world will look like for each individual.

For those who choose not to send their child to the state school system, Luxembourg offers a variety of educational experiences for its international residents. For students, this means they can choose their educational institution based on their own personality and goals. For parents, it provides an opportunity to send their child to a school that will see eye to eye with them on important issues.

This year is one of change for Luxembourg’s international schools; with the constant influx of newcomers to the country many are expanding to accommodate larger student populations. The European School, the International School of Luxembourg, and St. Georges, are all in the process of constructing or moving into new buildings. Students are being offered even more exciting educational experiences.

As **352** has reported over the past three years, the **European School** is soon going to be physically split, with part of the school staying in facilities on the Kirchberg Plateau and Luxembourg 2 opening in a new location in Mamer. Plans for the new site have now been approved and construction will begin soon so that the new building should

open in time for the new school year in 2011.

The new building is desperately needed and former European School director Harald Feix hopes that it will provide the school with a better ability to manage its large population. “It is a unique experience to have pupils and teachers and the languages from all the European countries in one school, but the school has grown much too big and structures are much too complicated. We have come to an end of what is manageable,” he explains. With the new expansion of the European Union, some critics predict the new school will become just as crowded as the last building was.

The European School offers students an educational experience that is not found in any other kind of school system. The programme was created to provide employees of the European Union with an educational institution that would teach their children in their mother tongue.

Students are taught in their first language in most subjects, and then choose one other language from French, German, or English to learn as a working language. The last EU expansion has resulted in some students having to cope without a first language section, because there are not enough students to create full classes for that language. These students are labelled SWALS (Students Without A Language Section), and are taught in one of the main languages, English,

French, or German, with an additional class in which they can advance their skills in their first language.

The language sections allow students to create social groups with others who speak their first language, although integration remains a main goal of the European School and school activities and mixed classes for the three main languages mean that students are never isolated in their own language section.

“The satisfaction of pupils and parents is very high, ... we live in a pedagogical paradise,” says Feix, who has left his position

as director to become Deputy General Secretary of the European Schools.

**The International School of Luxembourg (ISL)** is located in the impressive Geeseknäppchen schools complex in Merl. Formerly the American School of Luxembourg, it changed its name to promote a more international outlook. The school now prides itself on its active membership of the International Schools Association, which involves it in a variety of international programmes that allow students to travel abroad – and the school also hosts students from other international schools throughout Europe.



Chris Bowman, ISL

Under the leadership of former director Clayton Lewis, the school also initiated the Global Issues Network, a group that organises conferences to discuss international affairs and raise awareness about problems that the world is facing today.

New director Chris Bowman brings a wealth of experience to the table as he strives to ensure that the International School continues to build on its solid foundation. Bowman's vision is for the school to move on from the success that it has achieved now and the platform that it now has, to having absolute obvious quality of education.

The International School has started construction on a new building and Bowman will oversee this project as the school develops the legacy left by Lewis. "It's a symbol of the dynamic growth of the school," says Bowman.

ISL follows an international curriculum that culminates with the International Baccalaureate programme in the final two years. A rigorous academic programme paired with multiple extra-curricular activities have shaped ISL into a school that is widely recognised as one of the best on offer to the international education community, and also to local students – recently

the ISL has been offering two scholarships to students from the Luxembourg school system every year.

**St. George's International School** was created to provide a more personalized approach to education in Luxembourg by offering the national curriculum of Britain and Wales. The school method focuses on the individual needs of each student and tailors the curriculum as necessary.

St. George's has grown significantly since its creation and is now moving to a new purpose-built school, currently under construction in Hamm, to accommodate its larger population. Headmistress Heather Duxbury insists that the school will continue to hold true to its policy of individual attention, despite the rapid growth it is enjoying. The school grew from 90 to 300 pupils in six years, so Duxbury feels confident that it will be able to take on any future



Heather Duxbury, St. Georges



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