

INTERNATIONELLA ENGELSKA SKOLAN

Quality Report 2023/2024





"We want to give every student the possibility to meet high academic expectations and to navigate through an international environment, whatever their background."



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*Quality Report
2023/2024*

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QUALITY REPORT FOR INTERNATIONELLA ENGELSKA SKOLAN 2023-2024

Welcome to Internationella Engelska Skolan's quality report covering the 2023-2024 academic year.

IES has grown continuously ever since we were established in 1993 and we are currently one of the largest independent schools in Sweden, with 48 schools and 31,000 students. Parents and students choose IES mainly because of our three core principles; namely that we give our students the opportunity to become bilingual – opening the door to international studies and careers, that we have high academic expectations of our students, and that we create a safe and calm school environment that fosters learning.

Another reason for our success is that we see the needs of each individual, and never give up on any student. Those students who need support are supported, and those who need to be challenged are challenged. Our organisation is built on a foundation of respect for our students and an aspiration to provide a school life that offers them the best possible tools for adulthood – in the form of both knowledge and social skills. Every student must be given the chance to reach their full potential, irrespective of their background. Succeeding in this objective is our primary measure of quality.

We have worked systematically with a number of quality processes over many years so that we can analyse our progress towards achieving our quality goals. These processes, which have been developed and refined throughout the three decades we've been in operation, show where we are successful and where there is room for improvement.

Based on our quality metrics, we constantly work to become an even better school for our students. Schools fulfil one of the most important functions in society, and a high level of quality in schooling is essential to our children's future prospects.

Robin Kirk Johansson, head of education:

“OUR GOAL IS TO PROVIDE THE BEST BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN SWEDEN”

The opportunity to truly command the English language – and so jump-start their future studies and work in a global market. This is the main reason that parents and guardians choose IES for their children, according to the annual quality survey that was carried out for the 2023-2024 academic year. “Our focus on English differentiates us within Swedish schooling and it’s something we continue to strengthen, for instance by offering a place as early as preschool class in more and more schools, and through our focus on Cambridge education,” comments Robin Kirk Johansson, head of education at IES.

In 2008, IES introduced its annual quality surveys of students, teachers and parents. These surveys have provided the foundation for IES’ quality improvement work ever since. Future quality initiatives within the organisation are designed based on the responses, which measure both “hard” factors, in other words academic results, and “soft” factors, i.e. how the school environment is perceived.

“The responses show that the three principles of our ethos – which, in addition to our focus on English, include high academic expectations and a calm learning environment – are just as important to students and parents today as they were 30 years ago when Barbara Bergström founded IES,” says Ms Kirk Johansson.

“During recent years, we’ve noticed that the fact that we give our students the chance to be not just good at English but completely bilingual, is becoming more interesting and important for those who choose our schools,” she continues.

STRIVING FOR AN INTERNATIONAL CULTURE

According to Ms Kirk Johansson, one of IES’ major success factors is that the schools are like melting pots since their teachers and students come from so many countries around the world.

“Not only does this make the students more accepting of and curious about other cultures, it also makes them much more interested in the outside world, and they see the entire world as a potential place for further studies and work.

“Our international teachers also bring the best teaching methods with them from their home countries, and share these with each other. We have also noticed that the different generations of teachers in our schools enjoy learning from each other and combining experience with new ideas. There is formal and informal mentorship amongst the teachers through which successes and challenges are shared and vented. All this is beneficial to the teaching and creates acceptance for the fact there are major challenges within the teaching profession – but no teacher needs to feel alone in solving these.

“We do not strive to bring an international element only to certain subjects – rather create schools with an international culture,” she adds.

Another advantage of having teachers from Anglo-Saxon countries is that they bring a tradition of respect and politeness with them, which gives our students insight into another way of behaving, where they are expected to be ready, on time for lessons, to not throw things, and to speak to each other and to teachers in a respectful manner.

“Many young teachers come here from other countries as they are curious about the Swedish lifestyle and are maybe interested in nature and outdoor recreation. It’s natural for them to perhaps move on after just a few years, but I believe it’s positive for us to regularly get new staff members. It’s also a way for us to remain up-to-date with changes in the English language, such as new words and expressions.



“But it’s also important for our international teachers to learn Swedish as fast as possible so that they understand the Swedish system and can reach the students on an emotional level. That’s why we encourage them to study Swedish, and for instance offer them online courses as a first step,” says Ms Kirk Johansson.

FOCUS ON PRESCHOOL CLASS TO YEAR 3, AND CAMBRIDGE

IES operations have traditionally focused on years four to nine. For the past few years, all new schools have also taken students from preschool class upwards. Further, more and more schools are being reorganised to accept students across all compulsory school years, from preschool class to year nine.

“In this way, we get the students used to the culture of our schools and the expectations we place on them. It also makes for a natural start to their education in English, which facilitates the transfer to year four,” comments Ms Kirk Johansson.

As part of its English-language profile and its international education offering, IES has been the only school in Sweden for a number of years, and one of five in Europe, accredited by Cambridge International Education, an organisation, owned by the University of Cambridge, and which has its own curriculum.

“More and more of our schools offer Cambridge education, which gives the students the chance to supplement their

usual studies which follow the Swedish curriculum, by studying for and taking the Cambridge exams. These opens the door to further studies and careers in other countries. This also provides an opportunity for students who want to be pushed further and challenged in school.”

CONTINUE TO DELIVER ON OUR CORE VALUES

Ms Kirk Johansson believes that the single most important thing for IES going forward will be to continue to deliver in line with its core values.

“Our focus is on providing the best bilingual education in Sweden, with high academic expectations and a calm learning environment being hygiene factors. We have to constantly repeat these core values to retain the culture of IES, which must also embody our conviction that all students should be seen, feel secure and get the chance to reach their full potential.

“A great deal of the responsibility for achieving this lies with our school leaders, who are also in charge of creating strong teams and keeping up morale in their schools.

“When I was the principal of the IES school in Borås I was once asked by a student what I did all day long. I had to think before I then replied: “I dedicate my entire time, every day, to giving you the best school day that day.” As head of education this is still my goal and I’m convinced that this is also what all our school leaders do.” //





WE PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THE WORLD

IES is currently the largest operator of independent schools within the Swedish compulsory education system. In autumn 2024, we had 31,000 students in 47 compulsory schools, from Trelleborg in the south to Skellefteå in the north, as well as one upper secondary school. We operate bilingual schools that follow the Swedish national curriculum.

Three major convictions define life in our schools

WHAT WE STAND FOR

Command of English

English is a global language and learning to command both the Swedish and English languages at an early age becomes hugely advantageous later in life. We believe fluency is best achieved through language immersion. Up to half of the education at Internationella Engelska Skolan is delivered through the English language, by English-speaking teachers.

High academic expectations and aspirations

We are convinced that every child can achieve success irrespective of their background. This means we challenge every student to reach their full potential. We are dedicated to supporting students of every background to become responsible citizens and acquire the self-confidence and ambition to do the most with their talents.

A safe and calm school environment

We have clear structures and expectations as this helps students feel secure. This in turn is essential to a good learning environment and signals respect for the value of education. By showing respect for each other and ourselves we lay the foundations for safe and stimulating schooling, while we care for our students in our efforts to prepare them for success as adults.

31 000

students

51%

girls

49%

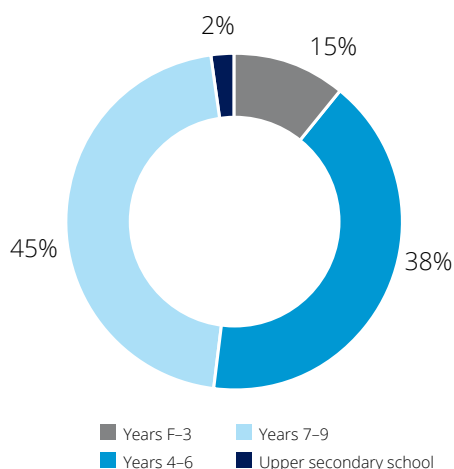
have a foreign background

74%

of the students have at least one parent with a post-secondary level education

FOCUS ON COMPULSORY SCHOOL

In Sweden, IES conducts school operations from the first year of school (grade F) to the final year of upper secondary school.

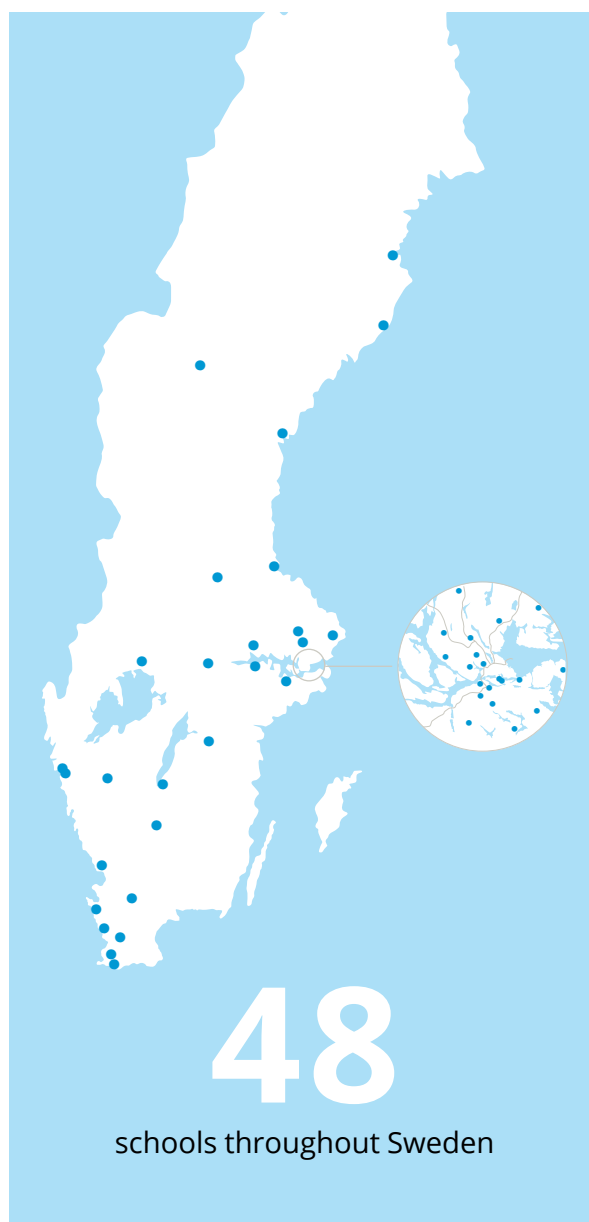


50%

Up to half of the teaching is conducted in English and around half of the teachers are native English speakers.

3 800

IES has approx. 3,800 employees, of which 2,400 are teachers.



Numbers as per September 2024.



Cambridge International Education:

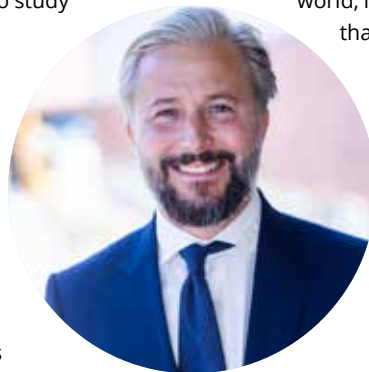
GROWING INTEREST IN STUDYING ON THE CAMBRIDGE PATHWAY AT IES SCHOOLS

Some students are looking for an extra challenge, others want to open as many doors as possible to studying and working internationally, a third group wants to improve their English language skills. This is how Frederik Granström, Cambridge manager at IES, explains the growing interest from students at IES schools all over the country in studying and taking exams according to the high standards of the Cambridge programme.

Internationella Engelska Skolan is recognised by Cambridge International Education as an accredited school organisation. This means IES students can choose to study for and take the Cambridge IGCSE exams (International General Certificate of Secondary Education). Cambridge IGCSE is the world's most popular examination for 14 to 16 year-olds.

Cambridge International Education is part of the International Education Group at Cambridge University Press & Assessment, which in turn is part of the University of Cambridge. Cambridge works with more than 10,000 schools in 160 countries and provides a globally recognised, flexible education framework for children from 3 to 19 years of age (Cambridge Pathway). The Cambridge exams, including

the Cambridge IGCSEs and the International AS & A-Levels, are recognised by more than 2,350 universities all over the world, including all British universities and more than 1,000 in the US.



“Studying a Cambridge course is an extra challenge for our students, and gives them a sense of how education is conducted internationally. It’s also a natural complement to the international atmosphere of IES schools, with students and teachers from many parts of the world,” says Mr Granström.

“The education is free, but Cambridge charges an administrative fee for taking the exams, which is partially subsidised by IES,” he adds.

IES IS THE LARGEST CAMBRIDGE PROVIDER IN SWEDEN

Cambridge works with more than 10,000 schools in 160 countries which offer its programmes and exams. Currently, 38 of those are IES schools, the majority of which offer Cambridge IGCSE exams every year. IES students are amongst those who achieve the best results internationally when it comes to taking the Cambridge IGCSE exam in English as a second language.

“More students are showing an interest in the Cambridge programmes, so we’re constantly expanding the number of schools that offer this opportunity. During the 2023-2024 academic year, three more of our schools gained Cambridge accreditation, and another two have been added this year,” says Mr Granström.

Students mostly study for Cambridge outside of regular teaching hours, in accordance with the Swedish curriculum. The programme is flexible in that some students take the exams without studying extra, and some study the Cambridge syllabus but choose not to take the exams. Last year around 500 IES students tested their knowledge through exams in at least one subject. The studies are primarily intended for students in years eight and nine, although Cambridge also offers programmes for younger students.

“Most students choose to study English as a first or second language, but more and more are choosing other subjects too, such as mathematics and science which are taught entirely in English.

“Many students are attracted by international studies and careers, but far from all of them. Some of them are looking for a higher level of school studies while others want to expand and try out their English proficiency.

It’s also important to emphasise that Cambridge IGCSEs demand extra effort from both students and teachers,” comments Mr Granström.

UPSKILLING FOR TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS

For students to be able to succeed in their Cambridge studies, it is important that teachers teach according to the Cambridge requirements and can support students in their learning process. Cambridge provides on-going training for teachers and school leaders, for instance via online subject-specific courses and in-person training events.

“During the 2023-2024 academic year we provided in-person training days with trainers from Cambridge for teachers in Sweden, and we intend to continue with these. Cambridge has a fantastic, wide range of online courses but we know that meeting in person is an important and greatly appreciated opportunity for exchanging ideas and experience about teaching,” says Mr Granström.

SKELLEFTEÅ INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OFFERS CAMBRIDGE-ONLY STUDIES

IES Skellefteå is the only IES school in Sweden that offers an entirely international school unit, Skellefteå International School, in addition to the school’s regular education that follows the Swedish curriculum. Students in this unit of the school learn solely in English and follow Cambridge’s international curriculum entirely. Special criteria must be met by the students for them to be allowed this form of education, i.e. outside of the Swedish education curriculum. As an example, they may only be staying in Sweden for a limited amount of time, or they may have attended school abroad for a longer period and want to complete their compulsory education in Sweden, or they may be about to relocate from the country. Some 60 students currently study at Skellefteå International school. //

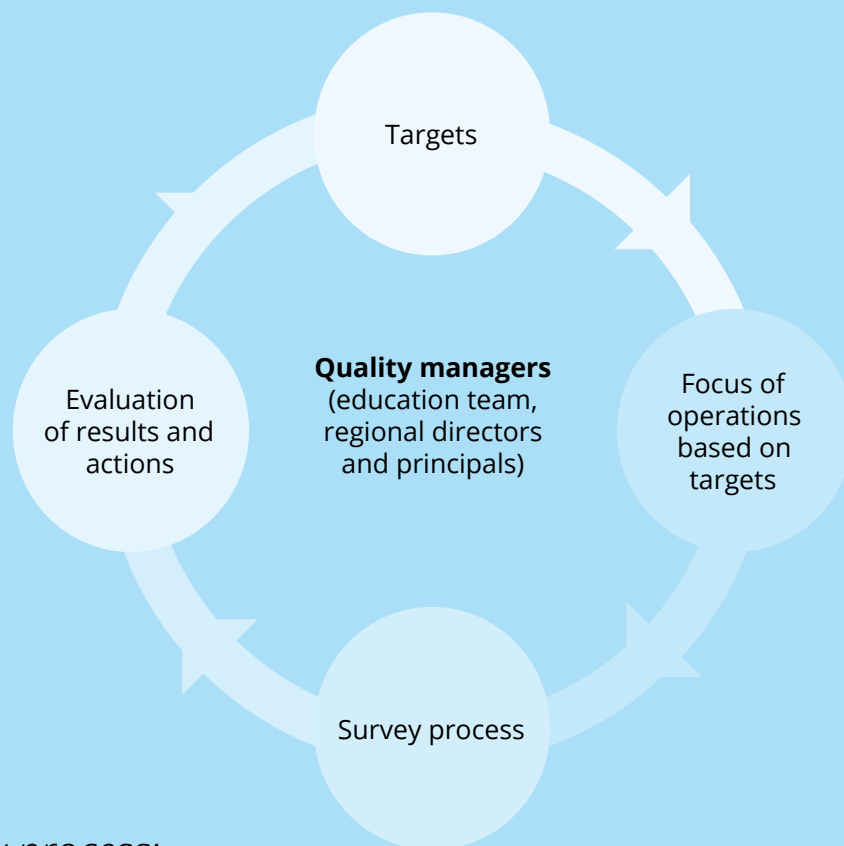
“A MAJOR BONUS THAT WE OFFER CAMBRIDGE”

With 52 languages spoken amongst the 800 students and with teachers from 17 countries, IES Solna is a shining example of diversity. According to the principal Suzanne Gavin, it is a major bonus to be able to offer Cambridge education and exams in this international environment. “We have many students from countries where people have a high level of English, such as India, who very much appreciate having this possibility,” she says.

SUZANNE GAVIN, PRINCIPAL IES SOLNA







IES quality process:

CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT DEEPLY ROOTED IN OUR CORE PRINCIPLES

Internationella Engelska Skolan’s overall goal is to give every student the possibility to achieve high academic expectations and aspirations and to navigate through an international environment, whatever their background. One of the key components of this is teaching our students such a high level of English that they become bilingual. Our academic expectations are high for every student, and in every school that IES runs. The journey has to be tailored to the composition of students and local circumstances – but we never compromise on the underlying principles that have characterised our organisation ever since we started. This is our main way of guaranteeing a high level of quality.

Internationella Engelska Skolan is a bilingual Swedish school with an international profile, where each student is given the opportunity to achieve high academic expectations and aspirations and where teaching takes place in a safe and calm environment. The organisation was founded in 1993 with one school in central Stockholm – which meant IES celebrated its 30-year anniversary in the 2023/2024 academic year.

Our organisation has always believed in the same basic idea, that there must be a high level of quality in our education

and that teachers must have high academic expectations for their students, regardless of the student’s starting point. One important factor here is creating a supportive, safe and dynamic environment that helps to generate a positive view of school and the learning experience.

In other words, it’s about “hard” and “soft” quality. IES follows a systematic approach to ensure quality and identify potential areas for improvement, including regular evaluation, action and follow-up. These areas are based on several different ▶

IES QUALITY IMPROVEMENT WORK IS BASED ON FOUR INDICATORS:

Student survey

Parent survey

Teacher survey

National tests

indicators including surveys, qualification for upper secondary school, national tests and admissions to higher education.

STRUCTURED FOLLOW-UP

Throughout the entire organisation there is a strong desire to keep improving so as to fulfil our promise to parents and students. While it can be difficult to measure and compare the quality of different schools, one set of measurements that can be used is the national test results, as these tests are conducted by all schools in Sweden. This is why IES has focused on following up the results of these tests for many years. When measured over time, the results of IES' students are approximately 15 per cent higher than the national average in the subjects of mathematics, Swedish and English. One of the primary goals for IES is for all students to qualify for further studies. In the 2023/2024 academic year, 81.3 per cent of all IES students who graduated from year nine passed all of their subjects. This figure was 71.9 per cent for the entire country including IES, which means that IES students help to raise the national average. Furthermore, 92.3 per cent of IES students qualified for upper secondary school, compared with 83.7 per cent for Sweden as a whole.

STRONG AND CLEAR LEADERSHIP

Strong local school leadership is an important parameter for a safe and orderly school environment. This is in turn essential to effective learning – in other words to achieving

quality. IES is driven by its core values and recruits principals who live and lead according to these. Our principals ensure that IES' core values are converted into actions and behaviours, every day.

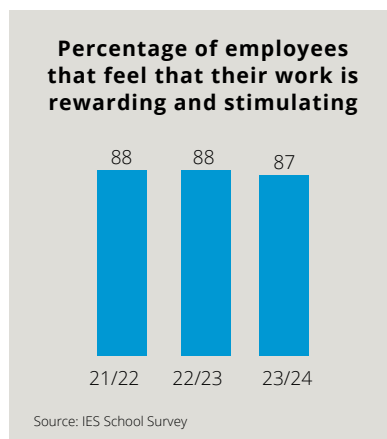
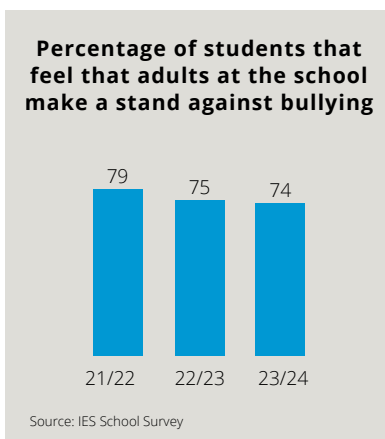
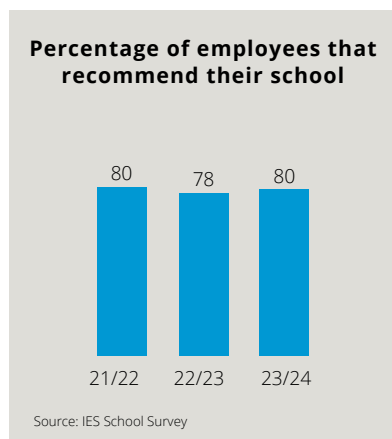
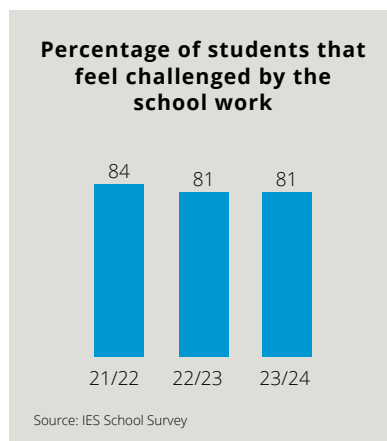
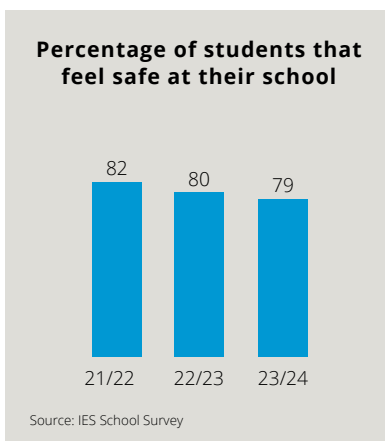
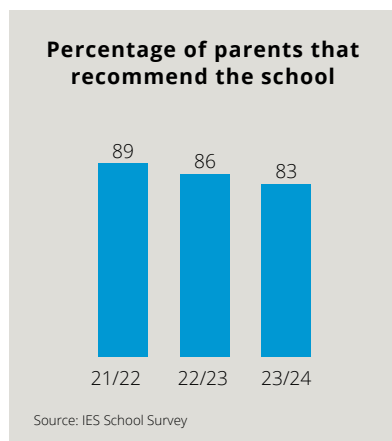
This work is based on our *Basic Defining Policy*, which describes IES' targets, expectations and ethical guidelines. The principal is responsible for ensuring that their school's operations adhere to the policy. Each school also draws up school rules, in accordance with the *Swedish Education Act*. These rules are updated every year in consultation with the student council, and signed by students and parents. At the same time, teachers are expected to act as role models for how these should be put into practice.

STRUCTURED AND CONTINUOUS QUALITY PROCESS

Our quality improvement work follows a carefully-structured, annual process. Every school sets goals and plans its operations for the upcoming academic year. In other words, while goals are set locally, they are agreed against the overarching goals for IES as an organisation. These include results and environmental factors, i.e. the dimensions of quality defined by IES.

In April every year, students, parents and employees are surveyed to assess how well the organisation lives up to these goals. The questions are formulated per target ▶

STATISTICS FROM OUR ANNUAL ANONYMOUS SURVEY OF TEACHERS, STUDENTS AND PARENTS





group under the categories of academic environment, social environment (i.e. safety, support and a calm study environment) and the school environment. Parents and employees are also asked about how well the school's leadership works.

The answers are evaluated during the summer by the organisation's quality managers, i.e. IES' education team, regional directors and the principal of each school. Any deviations versus the goals are identified, and an action plan is developed jointly with the relevant school at the beginning of the academic year. Data is compiled in a report that every school works with during the entire academic year.

Recent years have testified to the significance of the social component of our operations. During the pandemic, when physical meetings with parents decreased and activities for students outside of teaching hours were suspended, students' and parents' perception of quality and their engagement with the school decreased. In other words, it was a clear indication of how important it is for us to stay in close contact with parents and to link academic work with student care, the foundation of our organisation ever since the beginning.

We still notice the effects of the pandemic period, for instance it is difficult to get parents to return to physical meetings at the schools. Therefore we are looking into various activities to create engagement and to invite parents and others into our schools.

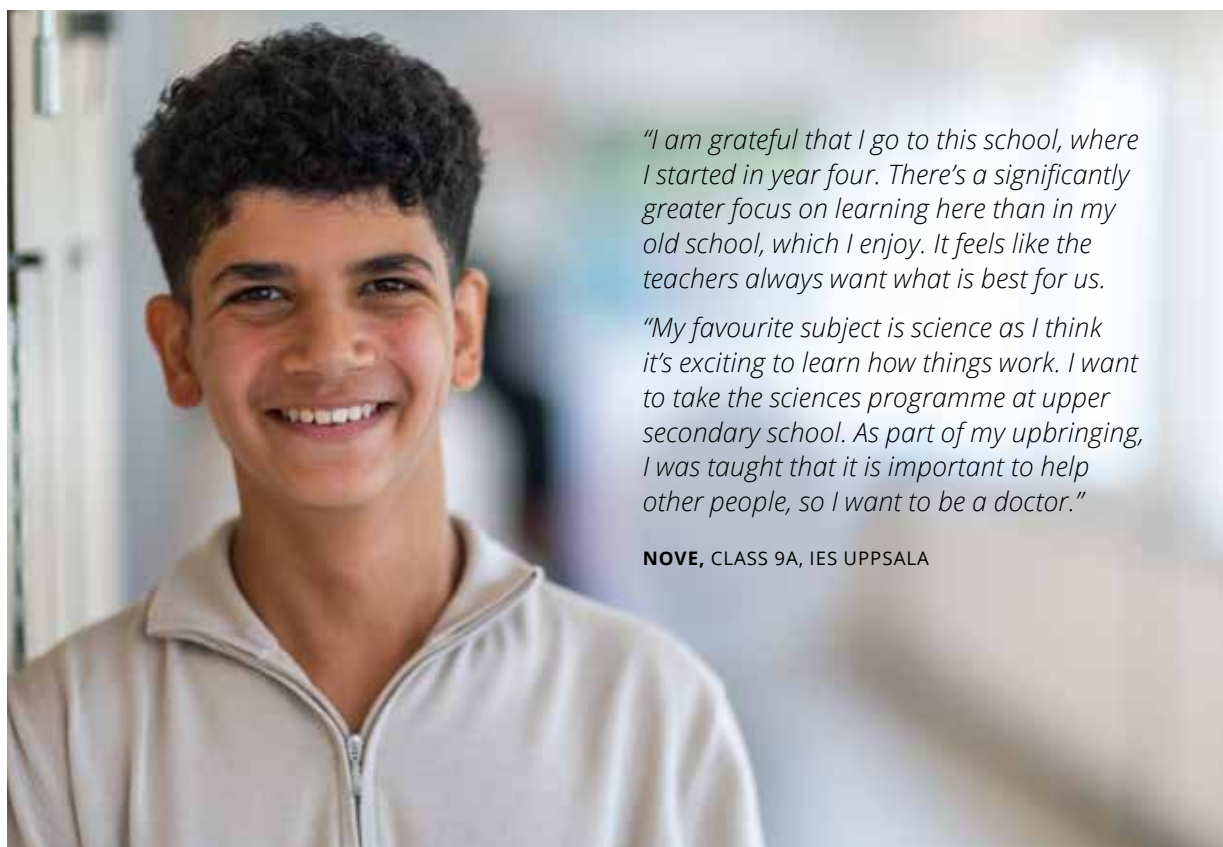
A tougher social climate has made many parents and children feel less safe, as shown in our surveys. To address this, we are constantly adapting our quality work to keep pace with societal developments. A key part is providing all of our employees with the tools to continue to support students and create a safe school environment. This work includes ongoing training as well as knowledge sharing and experience exchange between schools.

GREAT INTEGRITY IN GRADING

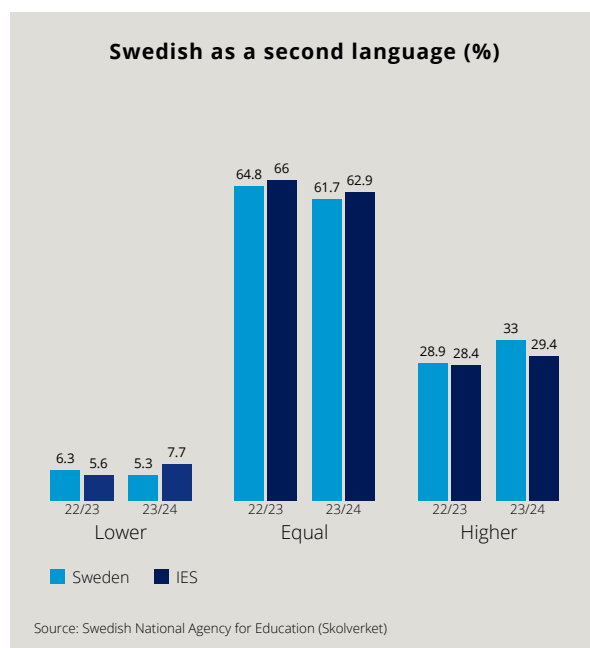
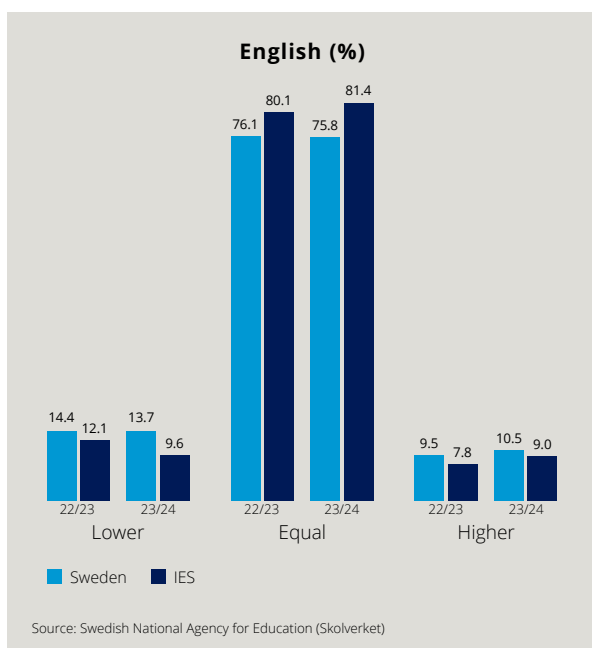
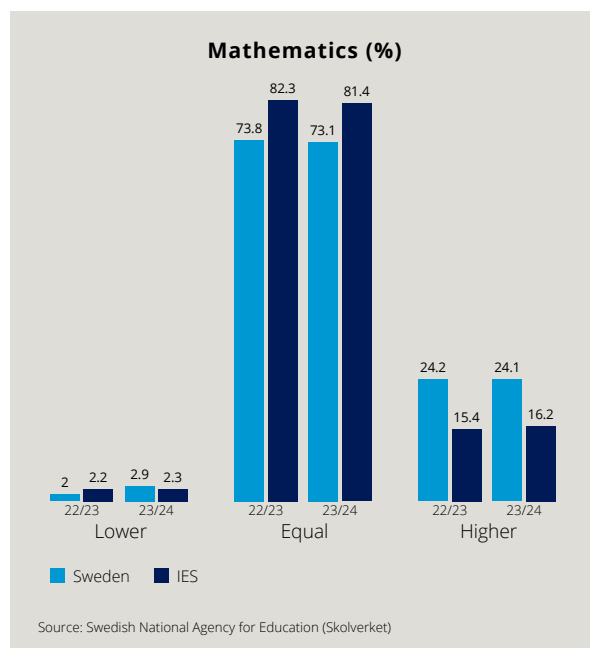
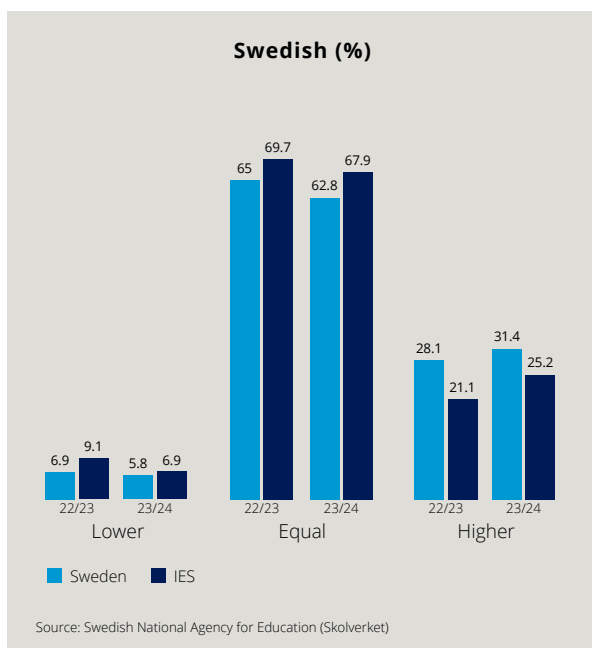
Integrity in grading is a major priority for IES' systematic quality work. Every year, the grading within each school is evaluated, compared and analysed using IES' statistics database. Any deviations in grades compared to the results in the national tests, as well as any deviations compared to the IES average and municipal and national averages, are examined to ensure that the teachers grade correctly. IES' quality improvement system can monitor several different areas, including per student, school, year and subject, and it allows comparisons over time.

Every teacher has been granted the authority to set grades and IES supports them in this by providing the right conditions for teachers to make fair assessments.

To help teachers and ensure grades are set fairly, we have set up an internal moderation process between subject teachers in our schools, in which the subject teachers compare student work before setting grades, so as to create conditions that facilitate fair grading. In addition,



IES STUDENTS' FINAL GRADES ARE MORE CONSISTENT WITH THEIR RESULTS ON THE NATIONAL TESTS THAN IN THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE

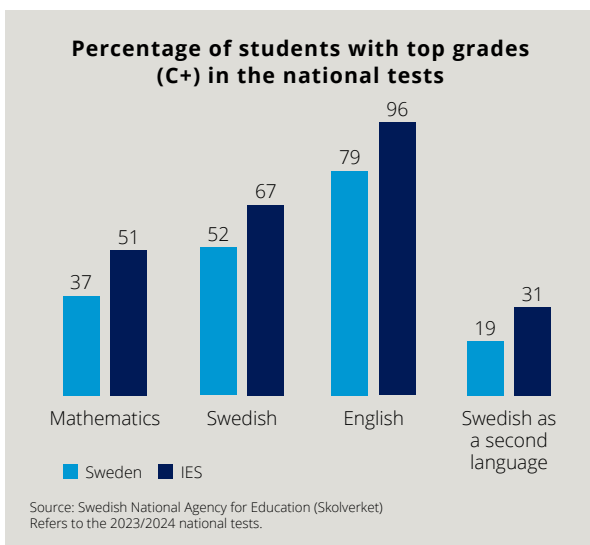
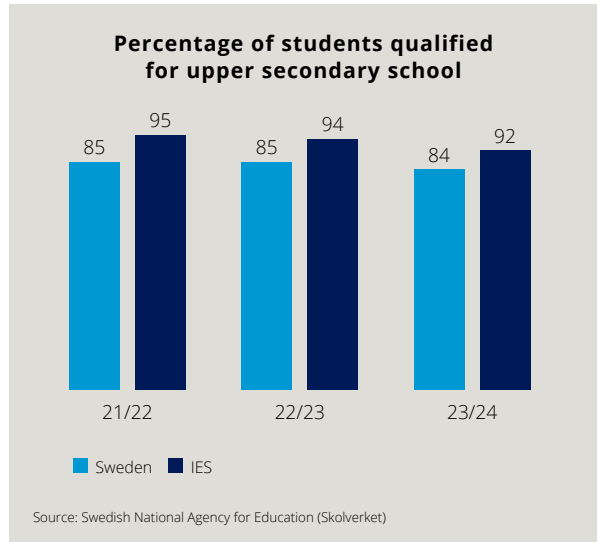
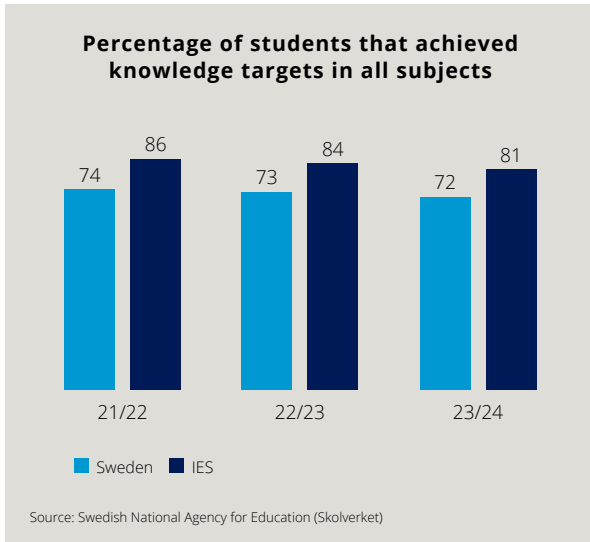


specific heads of department are tasked with coordinating the quality of teaching and grading between the schools. Further training in this area is also held for the schools' academic managers.

IES teachers that have a foreign teaching degree receive specific support for grading from a teacher with a Swedish teaching degree in that subject. The heads of departments and academic managers in each school are responsible for ensuring that new teachers from other countries quickly gain an understanding of the Swedish system of grading and the Swedish national curriculum.

In several places around the country, IES has also started to collaborate with municipal schools to compare grading and learn from each other. Results in the national tests also serve as a guideline for grading and are specifically taken into account when teachers give grades.

The updated national curriculum that was introduced in autumn 2022 – LGR22 – contains fewer value-related words in the grading criteria. It is believed that this should make grading easier in the future, and also allow teachers to focus more on student learning and on teaching situations. ▶



NATIONAL TESTS

IES closely monitors each student’s national test results. This is an important part of our quality improvement work, and ensures that students develop the knowledge and skills they need for the future.

For the third year in a row, national statistics for the results of the year nine national tests (2023/2024) showed a higher level of consistency between IES students’ results in these tests and their final grades in Swedish, Swedish as second language, mathematics and English when compared with the entire country. We see this as proof that the continuous efforts made by our teachers, principals and academic managers to ensure accurate and fair grading are having an impact.

The national tests are an important instrument for assessing students’ knowledge and for ensuring accurate and fair grading. For that reason, IES has advocated for central grading of national tests for many years, and we are now delighted that the Government intends to accelerate this

transition. Until it is introduced, we will continue to implement systematic cooperation between our IES schools on moderation of the national tests.

In subjects for which there is no national test, such as technology, crafts, art, music and home economics, each school submits its preliminary grades to Huvudman one month prior to grading. The purpose of this is to see the distribution of the grades and identify any deviations. If deviations are noticed, the relevant school is asked to further analyse the situation.

VALUE ADDED

An objective measure of school quality is needed to address low levels of knowledge and to identify which kinds of teaching work well. We believe that the value-added metric is good place to start. The value-added metric aims to measure how much of the change in students’ performance that can be attributed to the school. The score is calculated by comparing the results of the national tests in year six and year nine in the three core subjects of English, mathematics and Swedish. To ensure that the value-added score captures the quality of the school, the calculations also take background variables into account, including the country of birth of the students and their parents and the parents’ level of income and education. Value added scores are based on student-level data from Statistics Sweden (SCB) for all students registered to take the national tests.

If the difference is positive and is larger than in other schools, it indicates that the school has contributed positively to the student’s progress during their schooling. In countries such as Norway, England and the US the value added is measured systematically as part of the school system.* In 2020, independent researchers Gabriel Heller-Sahlgren and Henrik Jordal carried out an analysis of value added, based on the results of the 2019 national tests.** The report indicated higher value-added scores for IES than for the country’s other independent and municipal schools in English and mathematics, while the difference in Swedish

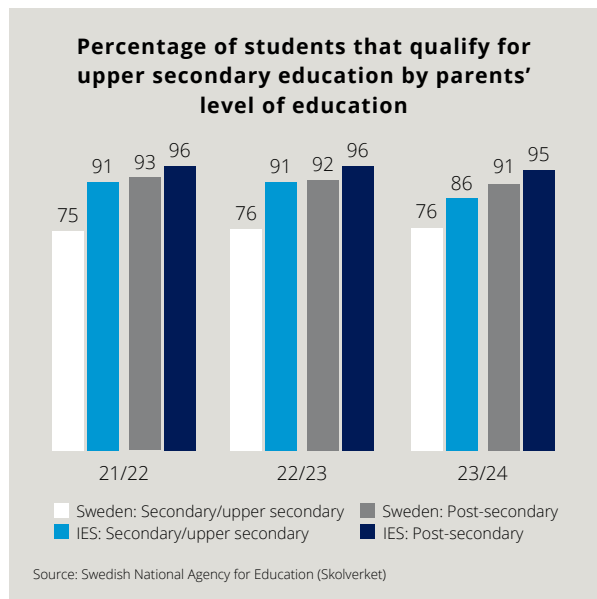
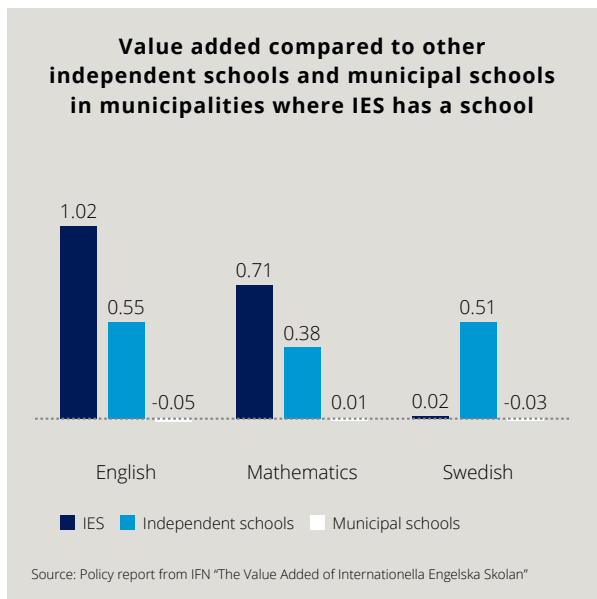
* Source: "Förädlingsvärdets värde - att mäta skolors och lärares effektivitet", Gabriel Heller-Sahlgren ** Source: Policy report from IFN - "The Value Added of Internationella Engelska Skolan"



was less clear. Further to comments from other researchers, the researchers have chosen to modify their calculation model for the value-added score from the 2019/2020 academic year report onwards. This has meant a change to all the value-added calculations that they produce regarding education in Sweden, making comparisons over time slightly more difficult. The new model gives a more holistic view that takes into account how the core subjects interrelate and affect one another, and the results the students achieve. The results suggest that IES' value-added scores are still positive in English and mathematics, but remain

within the same margin of error for Swedish when compared with other school operators.

The value-added metric obviously needs to be supplemented with other measurements of the school's operations, such as enjoyment and the school's role in upbringing, and elements that develop the students' social skills, confidence and faith in the future, which are also important aspects of the task of schooling. Just as it does today, our future systematic quality work needs to encompass regular surveys of students, parents and school staff. ▶



ENHANCING QUALITY THROUGH SCHOOL VISITS

We carry out regular quality visits to all our schools. During these visits, the organisation's head of education, head of academics, and head of pastoral interview a school's teachers, principals, and academic managers. They also attend lessons, after which they share their observations with the principal. These observations are followed up continuously as part of our systematic quality work, and as a way to identify best practice and areas for improvement.

COMPLAINTS

IES is keen to develop close and trustworthy collaboration with parents, for the good of the children and their education. If students or their guardians have a complaint, they are encouraged to contact the student's mentor who will document the complaint and start an investigation if needed. The mentor may also forward the complaint to the head of year, the head of department, academic manager or another member of staff. If the complaint concerns an employee it will be sent immediately to the principal or assistant principal.

If no acceptable solution can be reached within the school, the complaint can be forwarded to the organisation that operates the school, Internationella Engelska Skolan i Sverige AB. Guardians can also contact the school operator directly via a form on the IES website.

FULFILLING STUDENTS' DIFFERENT NEEDS

IES helps all students reach their full potential, which is a crucial factor for them to achieve good results. In practice it means the school must help students who need support, while also ensuring that high-performing students are sufficiently stimulated and challenged, and we never give up on any student. As a role model, the school has to show as much 'grit' – determination and a burning desire to see things through – as is expected of the students.

Students perform diagnostic tests in Swedish and mathematics in years four and six to identify those who need extra support or those who need more of a challenge. Since IES started in 1993 it has offered homework support on top of regular lessons so that students can study a subject in more detail, receive more challenging work or get help. Those schools that have a large proportion of students with a weaker socio-economic background often stay open longer in the afternoons to offer students a calm place to do their homework. They also serve breakfast to ensure that the students get a good start to the day.

By motivating every single student to do their best and by having high expectations of all students, IES achieves better results for students from all types of backgrounds. As an example, 86 per cent of IES students whose parents have no post-secondary education qualified to study at upper secondary school (see graphs on page 17). This compares with the national average of 76 per cent (figures refer to the 2023/2024 academic year).

INCREASED FOCUS ON STUDENT HEALTH

Statistics show that a growing number of children and young people suffer from poor health. To help buck that trend, IES has intensified its efforts in the area of health with actions aimed at promoting students' learning, development and health and preventing poor health. This is the responsibility of the student health team consisting of school nurses, school doctors, school psychologists, counsellors, and career guidance counsellors. The team has both a preventative and a responsive role which includes medical, psychological, psychosocial and special education activities. They collaborate with other school staff and also with external parties such as social services. All their work is subject to professional confidentiality.

One of the focus areas is in student obesity and overweight

"I've been at this school for four years and I really enjoy it. The food is really good. I think I'm doing well at speaking and understanding English, it isn't hard at all. Maybe it was a bit hard at first, but it's going very well now. I don't think about whether I'm speaking Swedish or English."

ELLIOT, CLASS 3C, IES KUNGSBACKA





students. The number of children and young people who are overweight or obese has increased drastically over recent decades, which has increased their risk of developing associated chronic illnesses and mental health issues. If measures are taken early on, the trajectory can be changed which makes the role of school nurses a very important one. It is, however, a sensitive and difficult subject to broach. To make this easier, IES has created support materials and a model for health-related conversations held with students.

Introducing students to physical activities is an important element in promoting their health and well-being. As part of this, IES has initiated the “#movewithIES” health initiative aimed at enabling our schools to provide meaningful and stimulating activities during breaks and leisure time. The initiative has been running since 2021, and the ultimate goal is to create and establish healthy habits that our students will keep for the rest of their lives. More and more schools are joining the initiative, and it will be taken on by the IES central student health team in the 2024/2025 academic year so that all schools can be included in the future.

School food is another aspect of student health. Good food leads to a calmer school atmosphere and better conditions for learning. For that reason, IES’ focus on quality also encompasses the meals served in our schools. A school meal policy was introduced during the year. Its purpose is to ensure that IES’ school meals provide the nutritional content required by the *Swedish Food Agency’s (Livsmedelsverket)* national guidelines for school meals. The policy also ensures a high level of quality and variety in school meals, and that the food is tasty, sustainable and safe.

PRIORITISING SAFETY

Providing safety is also important to achieving good academic results. All schools adhere to the *Plan Against Abusive Treatment*. This describes how the school actively and purposefully works to prevent all forms of abusive treatment. Physical safety around the school is another priority, including the traffic situation and any potential threats from external visitors. IES applies a “closed-campus” policy which means all students remain within the school during school hours and all visitors must register at a manned reception.

IES’ activities to improve student health, safety and the physical working environment are governed by the document *Checklist for Health and Safety*, and each school’s principal is responsible for implementing and following up this work. The results of the *Swedish Schools Inspectorate’s (Skolinspektionen)* evaluations also provide input to these efforts. The schools’ academic managers help teachers to identify students who need extra resources or otherwise need to be given more attention, while the student health coordinator ensures that other educational resources are made available.

IES adheres to the *Swedish Education Act*, including chapter six, and complies with the obligation each school has to notify, investigate and act around abusive treatment. In addition, the principals of each school develop a more detailed plan for how bullying must be prevented and dealt with. These procedures are documented in each school’s *Plan Against Abusive Treatment*, and are then followed up via the annual survey in which students are asked whether they feel safe in the school. //

Meet Gona Chalak, former student at IES Örebro:

"I WAS A DIFFICULT STUDENT AND IES HELPED ME TO CHANNEL MY ENERGY"

Her great drive is probably the main reason behind her fast journey into the legal profession. Another is her desire to prevent the segregation she herself experienced growing up in a disadvantaged neighbourhood. Just as important were the dedicated teachers who sparked her interest in school and learning during years 7-9 at IES Örebro. Meet 27-year-old Gona Chalak, one of Sweden's youngest criminal defence lawyers.

An energy vibrates around her small frame as Gona Chalak hurries off to the district court in Sollentuna after our meeting. She works for a law firm in Örebro, but her job as a public defence counsel takes her to many district courts around the country, so travel is part of her normal work day.

Her Kurdish parents travelled a far longer distance some 35 years ago when they fled to Sweden from Iraq, where her father had fought as a guerilla soldier against Saddam Hussein's regime. Gona was born in Karlstad but her family moved to Vivalla in Örebro when she was six years old. It has been classed by the Swedish police as a particularly vulnerable area, in other words a neighbourhood with a low socio-economic status where criminals influence the local community. She herself describes her upbringing in the area as being safe; residents helped each other, and neighbours were seen as part of an extended family.

"At the same time, I saw when my friends, often the boys, would be stopped by the police because of their appearance, without having done anything wrong. I felt that this was a complete injustice and it fuelled my desire to work to counter segregation," says Gona.

BEING SEEN CHANGED HER OPINION OF SCHOOL

She went to Vivalla school for her primary and lower-secondary school years, but when it was time for her to start year seven, her father, who was afraid that she would end up in the wrong circles, wanted her to start at IES Örebro.

"I was pretty disengaged in school myself, and at first I thought all the IES rules were a hassle. I had loads of energy and was a difficult student who was visible and loud. I was easily distracted, felt lost and preferred to muck about in the corridors," she says.

This all turned around, and Gona's opinion of school work changed, with the arrival of a new principal at the school.

"Suddenly there was a person who saw and heard me. I felt acknowledged and was encouraged to channel my energy into my school work. In years eight and nine, I worked intensively to get good grades and was supported by my teachers. By the time I graduated from secondary school, I had received the award for "most improved" several times. Then when I started upper secondary school, I felt that I had a head-start compared to my classmates," she says.

WANTS TO INSPIRE YOUNG ADULTS TO WORK HARD

Successful upper-secondary education led to a scholarship and Gona was accepted to study law at Örebro University. After an exchange year in Canada she passed the Master of Laws degree at the age of 23. Three years later, 26-year-old Gona was admitted to the *Swedish Bar Association* (Advokatsamfundet) as one of the youngest lawyers in Sweden. In parallel with her studies she has provided homework support and held lectures for school students.

"I want to stimulate children and young adults to see opportunities and not feel defined by their background. I've had to fight to get where I am today, but it really has been worth it. Today I have a stimulating job as a defence lawyer – and I'm proud of myself as there aren't too many young female lawyers with an immigrant background.

"The positive view of school and education that I received during my years at IES Örebro were crucial for me to learn how to channel my energy constructively. I now want to inspire others to work hard to realise their dreams," she says.



"I want to stimulate children and young adults to see opportunities and not feel defined by their background. I've had to fight to get where I am today, but it really has been worth it."



SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS BY IES BORÅS TO PREVENT CHILDREN BEING RECRUITED BY GANGS

New trainers. An expensive designer bag. A new “chum” suddenly appearing in the group of friends. Absence from lessons. There are plenty of signs indicating that a child is on the path to being recruited by a criminal gang. In Borås, a town affected by crime, IES has been successful at preventing its students getting sucked into the gangs. “It needs both preventive initiatives that generate sound values as well as urgent action if we discover any worrying signs,” explains the school’s principal Maritza Molin.

Of the 17 areas in Sweden that the police have ranked as especially vulnerable, in other words, areas of low socio-economic standing where local communities are affected by criminal activities, two can be found in Borås. Given that Borås only contains one per cent of the population of Sweden, this is a dismal figure. Two rival gangs involved in drug-dealing are battling out a conflict that has made shootings a normal occurrence and has made residents fearful.

IES Borås is located right on the border between these two vulnerable areas. Today, the grand, yellow, brick building with its rich history of raising generations of school children

accommodates 498 students from year four to year nine, with origins from 52 countries. Most of the children live in the vulnerable local neighbourhood where two fatal shootings have recently taken place. Since gang crime is so prevalent, over the past few years IES Borås, just like other IES schools, has prioritised initiatives to prevent children being recruited by the gangs.



“Safety for their children is one of the absolute strongest reasons for parents in Borås choosing our school,” says Ms Molin.

“They know that we pay attention to the signs and that we deal with the problem immediately if we become suspicious,” she continues.

MORE GIRLS AT RISK

The gangs constantly develop new and refined methods for approaching the children. Further-more, in Borås they are increasingly targeting girls and even younger children.

“The children are often groomed over a longer period – perhaps as early as year five – with expensive gifts and money transferred electronically using a service called Swish. They are then contacted, usually via Snapchat where

IES BORÅS

498
students

91%
of parents had confidence
in the school leadership

59%
students with origins
outside Sweden

87%
students qualified for
upper secondary school

77%
students achieved the know-
ledge targets in all subjects

Numbers as per September 2024.

messages disappear quickly, with demands for services in return. Boys are often contacted via the chat program Discord, which is used for gaming,” explains the assistant principal, Scott Gates.

“Once it has gone that far it is hard for them to get out of it. A culture of silence often develops, when neither the children nor the parents dare to say anything for fear of reprisals,” he continues.

RELATIONSHIPS AND INTERESTS

The school works on multiple levels to prevent the children being pulled into the gangs, with initiatives run by internal and external groups. One example of the latter is classroom visits from the local police who talk about gang violence, or else simply park in the playground to show their presence in the school. Creating a safe environment is fundamental, where adults are always present, and every individual feels they are seen. It also requires creating a culture where knowledge is valued, respect for fellow human beings is a given and good job opportunities are felt to be more attractive than a life in crime, according to Ms Molin.

“Our students are never left alone during the school day without an adult nearby to whom they can turn – and who can also pay attention to what is going on. It involves creating a safe relationship with the children so that they dare to tell us. It’s also important that gang criminality does not become a sensitive topic that nobody dares to talk about. We also talk about what victimisation is early on, and that it is not accepted,” she says.

One way to prevent recruitment is by creating new interests for the children. Over the past few years, IES Borås has put efforts into getting the children to try out anything from climbing to padel tennis, with a teacher regularly taking students out with them for a run after school.

The school offers team sports such as football and rugby, where there is a focus on building a team spirit, and it has also built a small but well-equipped gym for the students.

“It’s a very good opportunity to build relationships with the children and to get them interested in different activities where they have an outlet for their energy and meet friends who are good for them,” says Mr Gates.

PARENTS HAVE AN IMPORTANT ROLE

An important component of the prevention work is that parents also get involved in efforts to counter gang recruitment. Parents in the area take the issue seriously, as can be seen by the large number who attend the regular information meetings.

“It is important that the parents are not only aware of what’s happening and pay attention to the signs, but that they also have confidence in us and can talk to us about sensitive issues. Our student-health team fulfils an important function in this regard,” says Ms Molin.

“If we discover that a child might be in the danger zone, we start by talking to both the child and their parents. We then have to decide whether it’s necessary to contact the authorities. But it’s also important to understand that the school cannot solve this issue by itself,” she adds.

The school’s successes are proof that the great amount of passion and energy from Ms Molin, along with Mr Gates and other colleagues, pays off. For example, in the most recent annual survey of teachers, students and parents, IES Borås was one of the top-performing IES schools in the country in terms of student, parent and staff satisfaction.

“I love my school, and I think that feeling is shared by most of our colleagues here,” says Ms Molin.

“I think it’s important to show each other respect when we play football. That’s why I asked if I could make a film about how we should behave on the pitch – and I was allowed to.

“The reason I wanted to do it was because many people react by getting really angry about the tiniest thing when they play football. I wanted to show them that this is wrong – and that we should be nice to each other.”

ABDUL, CLASS 7B, IES BORÅS



“WE PROVIDE A PLAYFUL AND POSITIVE START TO LEARNING THROUGH OUR PRIMARY SCHOOL AND FRITIDS”

“A playful and calm start to a new language, and to our routines, creates the right conditions for students to get the best possible education at IES. It also allows us to identify early whether each child needs extra support to develop, both academically and socially, or to give them more of a challenge,” says Eva Ingelsten, assistant principal in charge of preschool class to year three, and fritidshemmet, at IES Kungsbacka.

IES has traditionally emphasised years four to nine. Since 2022, newly opened schools have also taken in students from preschool class, and more and more existing schools are re-organising to receive students for the duration of compulsory school, from preschool class to year nine.

One such IES school, which has been an F-9 school ever since it opened in 2021, is in Kungsbacka. With 870 students, it is the largest school in the municipality and is also amongst the best in terms of academic results. There are many advantages to offering preschool class, all the compulsory school years and a leisure time centre within one school, according to principal Douglas McPherson.

“Getting to know our students and their parents or guardians at an early stage allows us to build trust and good relationships right from the start. We can monitor the students throughout their schooling and provide the safety they need to assimilate knowledge in the best way possible,” he says.

“This helps to create a calm atmosphere even during the transition to middle school as our students already know our routines and are comfortable with the English language.”

IMPORTANT NOT TO PUT PRESSURE

The purpose of IES’ focus on younger students and expanded fritids activities is to create even better conditions for every student to reach their full potential, and to enable them to leave school as self-assured, responsible person. It is also an effective way to ensure that all students receive a good start at school with the necessary skills in reading, writing and counting.

Malin Rosendahl, who is lead teacher and head of year three, as well as mentor teacher for class 3C at IES Kungsbacka,

says this helps to keep the pressure off pursuing knowledge.

“It’s important for teaching to take place at the right pace and it is adapted to each individual. Given that we have children from other countries who start in our primary school without any Swedish skills at all, it becomes natural for the children to start communicating using both Swedish and English.

“We often hear a mix of the two languages, such as “kan vi play” and it doesn’t take long before the children can switch freely between the languages,” she continues.



23 LANGUAGES IN THE SCHOOL

Since every class has both a Swedish and an English-speaking mentor, there is always someone for the students to talk to in whichever language they feel most comfortable with.

“We generally put more emphasis on encouraging them to learn Swedish. For students who come directly to us from another country – we have 23 different languages in the school – play is enormously important to pick up Swedish words and in motivating them to learn the new language,” says Ms Ingelsten.

“It’s so gratifying when we see students who can stand in front of the class and hold a presentation in both Swedish and English after a year or so, when perhaps they might not have dared to say a single word in either language when they arrived,” adds Ms Rosendahl.

FRITIDS IMPORTANT IN COMMUTER TOWNS

IES Kungsbacka also offers all students leisure time activities up to the age of 13, which is another key aspect in students’ development. The purpose of fritids is to complement the preschool class and the school, and allow parents to combine parenthood with work and study.

“Kungsbacka is a commuter town where the majority of residents work in Gothenburg and have long commutes. Of course it is important for them to know their children are safe and stimulated outside of school hours too. By offering all compulsory school years and fritids we can follow a common thread through their development, in terms of academic quality and important social factors such as confidence, health and safety,” says Mr McPherson.

IES KUNGSBACKA

870
students

87%
of parents had confidence
in the school leadership

25%
students with origins
outside Sweden

100%
students qualified for
upper secondary school

91%
students achieved the know-
ledge targets in all subjects

Numbers as per September 2024



"I've been at this school since preschool class. One of the things I think is really good is that we get to meet so many children and teachers from other countries. It's fun to learn about how things are in other places and how other people live. It makes you curious about travelling there."

IRIS, CLASS 3C, IES KUNGSBACKA





"I have very good teachers in subjects including science and social studies which has made me curious and interested in learning more about society from a broader perspective, for instance what is needed for building cities, in terms of infrastructure and social functions.

"When I started at IES Uppsala in year four I had high expectations, and the school has really lived up to these. I like that there's such an international atmosphere with teachers and students from many countries."

KRISHANGA, CLASS 8A, IES UPPSALA



“OPENNESS AND WELL-ESTABLISHED PROCEDURES LEAD TO FAIR GRADES”

How do you create a school where students are happy and perform better than the national average, where teachers want to remain, and where grades are consistent with the national tests?

IES Uppsala’s success stems from the school’s ingrained procedures and the close cooperation between its teachers. “The culture of the school is characterised by openness; everybody is seen, everything can be discussed, no problems get swept under the carpet, and every student is everybody’s student,” says Hilde Allen, principal.

This middle and high school opened in 2011, in a district of the city that has long been home to the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. Aside from academic success, the school’s other defining features are that there are many students with siblings at the school, and that there is a low teacher turnover. Indeed, some teachers have worked there since it opened, including the principal, Hilde Allen, who has led the work of IES Uppsala for seven years.

“This proves we have created a school where everybody likes to be, which stems from the fact that we never abandon anybody – we don’t give up on a single student, and we never leave any teacher alone with a heavy burden,” she says.

ALL STUDENTS RECEIVE FAIR GRADES

Cooperation between the teachers is one of the major success factors of IES Uppsala, where a substantially greater share of students than the national average qualify for upper secondary school. This cooperation has been beneficial in ensuring integrity in grading. Teachers sit together in subject or work teams, which allows for close and down-to-earth discussions about students, teaching, results and grades. Since many of the teachers have worked at the school for a long time, they become ambassadors for the school’s well-established procedures and processes for grading, and can share these with new teachers.

One example that illustrates this cooperation is that the teachers in the four classes that make up every year jointly draw up a plan and content for the term, which they all follow, regularly review and evaluate together.

Experiences, successes and failures are shared and discussed. Furthermore, the teachers co-teach certain lessons.

“There is scope for each teacher to adapt their teaching according to their own personality. But the important point is that each student receives the same amount of knowledge, regardless of teacher, and in the end they are given fair grades,” says the school’s academic manager, Mary Dimopoulos.



William Hedgepeth, head of department for mathematics, testifies to the lack of prestige amongst the teachers in that nobody is afraid to ask for advice, or needs to feel alone.

“We have climate of openness to new ideas and for discussing both successes and setbacks. The amount of cooperation we have between teachers is fairly unique. It also means everybody enjoys being here,” he says.

WEAKER STUDENTS IDENTIFIED QUICKLY

The school’s recipe for success also involves quickly identifying weaker students and implementing measures to help them in the best way possible. Monthly tests mean those who do not meet the requirements for a passing grade can be given extra support. If the test shows that the student hasn’t understood a certain concept they can study that area more, and then take the test again – and thereby see proof that hard work delivers results.

“But we also evaluate students regularly in a more informal manner. This enables us to see which students need greater self-confidence, which is enormously important for their performance, and which easily become bored and need more stimulation to develop,” says William Hedgepeth.

According to Hilde Allen, IES Uppsala has been very successful in recruiting teachers who are passionate about their subjects, and teaching.

“They are fantastic role models and send a clear message to the students about the importance of knowledge, and of trying hard,” she says.

IES UPPSALA

752
students

87%
of parents had confidence in the school leadership

36%
students with origins outside Sweden

100%
students qualified for upper secondary school

87%
students achieved the knowledge targets in all subjects

Numbers as per September 2024



Sissela Nutley, neuroscientist:

“CHILDREN’S HEALTH IS THREATENED BY DIGITAL MEDIA – WE MUST SLOW THIS DEVELOPMENT DOWN”

Lack of sleep, mental health disorders, difficulties concentrating and unfit bodies. Research shows that digital media consumption has profound and negative effects on children and young people of today. “Adults, both parents and in school, must help children to get a better balance in life – with less digital media and more sleep, rest, relationships and physical activity,” says Dr. Sissela Nutley, expert in neuroscience and psychology.

Today, digital media is a given in the lives of children and young people. A survey by the *Swedish Media Council* shows that children and young people spend an average of three hours per day on social media. At the same time, figures from the *Public Health Agency of Sweden (Folkhälsomyndigheten)* show that mental health disorders in children and young people, especially girls, have risen dramatically during recent decades, as use of social media has risen.

Dr Nutley is a doctor of cognitive neuroscience and a researcher linked to the Karolinska Institute. She is passionate about raising the general public’s understanding of how the brain works. Dr Nutley is active within *Our Brain and Emotions (Det syns inte)*, an organisation that works with schools to support preventive and health-promoting initiatives for the well-being of children and young people. After defending her doctoral thesis in 2011 on changes in the cognitive capabilities of children who play computer games, she specialised in the mouldability of the brain under the influence of social media, which led to her book *“Distraherad – hjärnan, skärmen och krafterna bakom” (Eng: Distracted – the brain, the screen and the powers that lie behind)*.

PARENTS RELEASE CONTROL ONCE CHILDREN TURN 12

Dr Nutley has also participated in a study carried out on behalf of the *Swedish Media Council* into the effects of digital media on the health of children and young people. The study encompassed some 2,000 students aged 13 to 19 years.

“The results show that 80 per cent of our children and youngsters do not exercise enough, 75 per cent sleep for less than eight hours per night, 60 per cent do not talk about difficult matters, 80 per cent are on their mobile phones while doing homework, and 65 per cent spend more than four hours a day on their mobile phones,” she says.

“These are worrying numbers. Our studies show that parents

often have rules on screen time for children up to the age of 12, but once they are older the parents stop controlling them. A growing number of youngsters, especially fragile girls struggling with mental health issues, spend six hours or more per day on their mobile phones.



“It is obvious that it then becomes difficult for them to fulfil other basic needs, such as exercising, brain rest and making physical contacts,” continues Dr Nutley.

One significant problem is that children and young people get too little sleep today – which creates a downward spiral of difficulties concentrating, irritability and constant fatigue.

“Children go to bed too late, more and more sleep six hours or less, and many take their mobile phones to bed. When negative thoughts arise, they pick up their phones and it becomes even harder for them to sleep,” says Dr Nutley.

A CHANGE IN BEHAVIOUR IS ESSENTIAL

To break the downward spiral that over-consumption of digital media leads to in children and young people, a change in behaviour is required – and according to Dr Nutley, achieving this requires both schools and parents to do their part.

“One good approach is to agree that common rules are to be introduced for everybody in, say, a particular year – and that all the parents ensure these rules are observed. Young people we’ve spoken to say that they are aware that they don’t feel well after being on their mobile phones a lot, and that they wish their parents would limit them – because they themselves don’t have the strength to break the addiction.

“It’s important to talk to children about how they are affected and why it’s important to limit consumption. It also requires us to be good role-models. In other words, it’s up to us as adults to take greater responsibility,” says Dr Nutley. //



IES organisation:

A STIMULATING AND SAFE WORKING ENVIRONMENT MAKES FOR ENJOYABLE SCHOOLS

IES is firmly guided by its core principles, and we have clear processes and procedures to ensure that these are adhered to. Furthermore, recruiting and developing the best and most engaged leaders, teachers and other staff members is crucial to our success. Our goal is to create attractive, stimulating working environments where employees and students are happy and feel safe.

CLEAR LEADERSHIP – THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL

Internationella Engelska Skolan is strongly driven by its core principles, its ethos, which permeates the culture and guides the organisation. The most important duty of the organisation's leaders is to inspire people and ensure they uphold our principles in their work. That's why IES places great emphasis on recruiting principals – the key leaders of each school – who live and lead according to these. The role of the principals is to ensure that IES' core values are converted into actions.

Principals have full responsibility for their individual schools and staff. It is a principal's duty to recruit competent staff, motivate them to work unflinchingly to foster our students' academic and social development and ensure that they comply with IES' core values. They recruit teachers who are passionate about their subjects and who inspire their students. IES principals are present throughout the school day, from welcoming students in the morning to being visible in the corridors and the dining hall during the course of the day. In other words, the principals have a clear role with a great deal of responsibility.

84%

of IES teachers have a degree in teaching

*The average in Sweden is 66%
Source: Swedish National Agency
for Education 2023*

So that new school principals have the best possible start and a chance to live up to the high expectations placed on them, they take a number of introduction courses during their first few months. These are focused on important matters including student health, labour law, quality, the *Education Act* and safety. Since there are 48 schools there are also 48 leaders, and this means the principals have a unique opportunity to collaborate and share experiences. Along with the other leaders, and with the same focus and conviction, they are expected to work regularly and consistently to develop their schools. They are also given support through an internal mentorship programme.

For the past few years, IES has also run a leadership programme for future leaders within the organisation. Every year, a quality survey is carried out within every IES school to find out how our employees feel about a range of different parameters that are crucial to effective school operations. In addition to this work, an environment survey was introduced in all schools last year. It focuses on the organisational and social workplace environment and areas such as leadership, clarity and sustainability work are evaluated over time. The results of these surveys are subsequently communicated to the schools, and action plans are created. The objective is to share knowledge, inspire and create best practice.

AN ATTRACTIVE EMPLOYER

IES works actively to be an attractive employer, a place where competitive employment terms and a good working

environment are a given. Providing a safe and stimulating working environment is of vital importance in attracting competent and engaged employees to our schools.

A good working environment for the teachers requires clarity in how things are done so that everybody works according to the same principles inside and outside the classroom. It also means ensuring that teachers never feel alone in their professional role, which can sometimes be a vulnerable position.

"This type of organisational structure is unique compared with other schools in Sweden. It is also one of the keys to our good academic results and high number of students who qualify for upper secondary school."

The IES organisation also includes heads of departments and heads of year to ensure quality in teaching and in the school environment.

This type of organisational structure is unique compared with other schools in Sweden. It is also one of the keys to our good academic results and high number of students who qualify for upper secondary school.

Recently recruited teachers commence their employment with an introductory course, which focuses on IES' core values and methodology. For international teachers, the programme also includes the Swedish school system and national curriculum. Every academic year begins with an introductory week when we bring all staff together to ensure engagement in IES' core values and focus on the areas of development for the year ahead. ▶



"By guiding each child all the way from preschool class until year nine, we can follow a common thread throughout their education. We don't need to put pressure on gaining knowledge. It's almost more important for each child to feel safe with our routines and with their surroundings, and not experience an abrupt transition to year four."

"Teachers and other staff also find this enjoyable and satisfying as they can share both their insights, and their experience of every single student, as they pass through the different stages of the school. This allows staff to provide the best support possible."

MALIN ROSENDAHL, HEAD OF YEAR THREE AND MENTOR TEACHER FOR CLASS 3C AT IES KUNGSBACKA

IES recruits many talented teachers from other countries and helps them to settle in so that their introduction to Sweden goes as smoothly as possible. For instance, IES gives them information on how Swedish society works and how to find somewhere to live. We also help with arranging visas and opening bank accounts. Many teachers choose to remain at IES and make Sweden their long-term home. Teachers from other countries are attracted to Sweden by the beautiful nature and secure conditions the country offers, and to IES due to our profile and culture. Recruiting teachers from outside of Sweden is also a way to deal with the teacher shortage in Sweden.

Staff turnover within IES has proven to be stable over time. Across all employees it was 22 per cent in 2023/2024 (25 per cent in the previous year) and for permanent employees it was 12 per cent (15 per cent in the previous year), indicating continued satisfaction among our staff.

IES works with a partner for preventive and rehabilitative health care and offers employees a support hotline that is

available 24/7. To promote transparency and responsible behaviour, IES uses a whistleblower function provided by an independent third party. IES carries out an employee pay survey to ensure that there is no unjustified unequal pay between women and men. In 2023/2024, salaries for IES teachers were equivalent to the national average in all age categories.

IES' employees mainly come from Sweden and English-speaking countries such as Canada, the US and the UK. Around 2,420 of IES' 3,700 employees are teachers. 84 per cent of the teachers have a teaching degree, of these 50 per cent were educated at a Swedish university and 50 per cent hold a degree in teaching from another country. Across Sweden's compulsory schools as a whole, an average of 66 per cent of the teachers have a teaching degree from university. IES encourages teachers from other countries to apply for a Swedish teaching qualification. An online course in Swedish is available to employees to help them learn the Swedish language. //



3 700

IES employees as at September 2023, an increase of 3 per cent compared to September 2022.

2 420

teachers employed as at September 2023, an increase of 5 per cent compared to September 2022.

986

international teachers employed at IES as at September 2023.

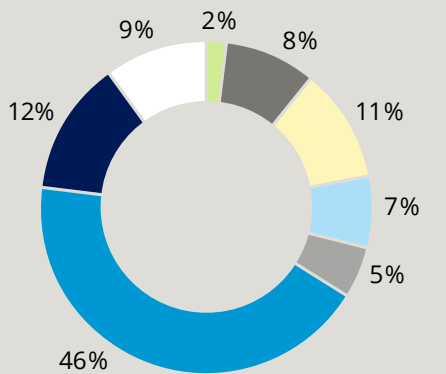
Staff/student ratio



A good school environment is as important as skilled teachers

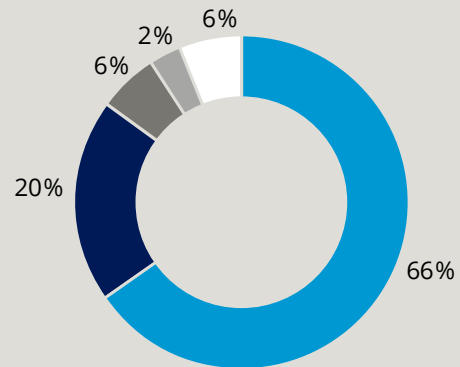
Talented teachers are essential for students to reach their full potential. A safe and pleasant school environment is just as important though. IES places equal focus on “pastoral” and “academics”. The IES model entails having support staff in place, including a team focused on student health and guidance which works alongside teachers and supports them in matters that fall outside of their specialist areas. This helps the teachers to focus on teaching.

Teachers' origins



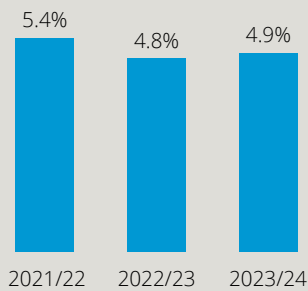
- Sweden
- UK and Ireland
- USA
- Canada
- South Africa
- Australia and New Zealand
- Rest of Europe
- Rest of the world

Employees per role



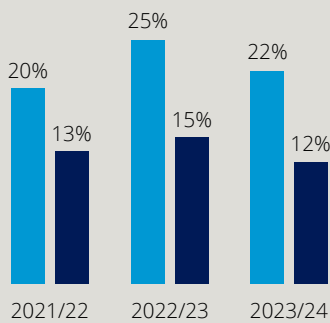
- Teachers
- Student support
- Administration
- School leaders
- Other school staff

Absenteeism



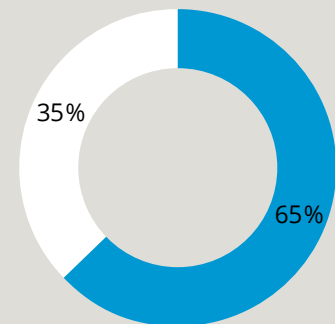
- All staff

Staff turnover



- All staff
- Permanent employees

Gender distribution employees



- Men
- Women

Swedish teaching certification

“GOING BACK TO SCHOOL MADE ME A BETTER TEACHER”

“It was tough spending so much of my free time studying Swedish intensively – but it was truly worth it”. So says Ellie Harder, an English teacher at IES Johanneberg in Gothenburg. Ms Harder is from Minnesota and she now encourages her international colleagues to follow the same path. She said: “It has resulted in both a Swedish teaching certification and fresh insights that have made me a better teacher”.

Learning a completely new language as an adult is hard for most people. But doing it in one’s free time after intensive working days as a teacher, and as a native English-speaker in a country where almost everybody is happy to speak English – can be even more of a challenge.

Ms Harder knows all about this. In 2015, with a brand-new American teaching qualification in her pocket and a dream to work abroad, she arrived at IES school Borås, directly from her home in Minnesota.

“I started at SFI quite soon after arriving in Sweden, but there were 50 of us in the class and the teaching was pretty unstructured, so I lost my motivation and quit the classes,” explains Ms Harder, who returned to the US to teach after two years in Borås.

MISSED IES BORÅS

But she missed both IES and Sweden so much that just a year later she returned to IES Borås to teach.

“I missed the culture and the sense of cohesion of the school,” she comments.

Ms Harder’s realisation that she wanted to stay in Sweden motivated her to restart her SFI lessons again in 2020 – and this time things went much better. She believes one important reason for her success was having a really good teacher. After three years of intensive Swedish studies,

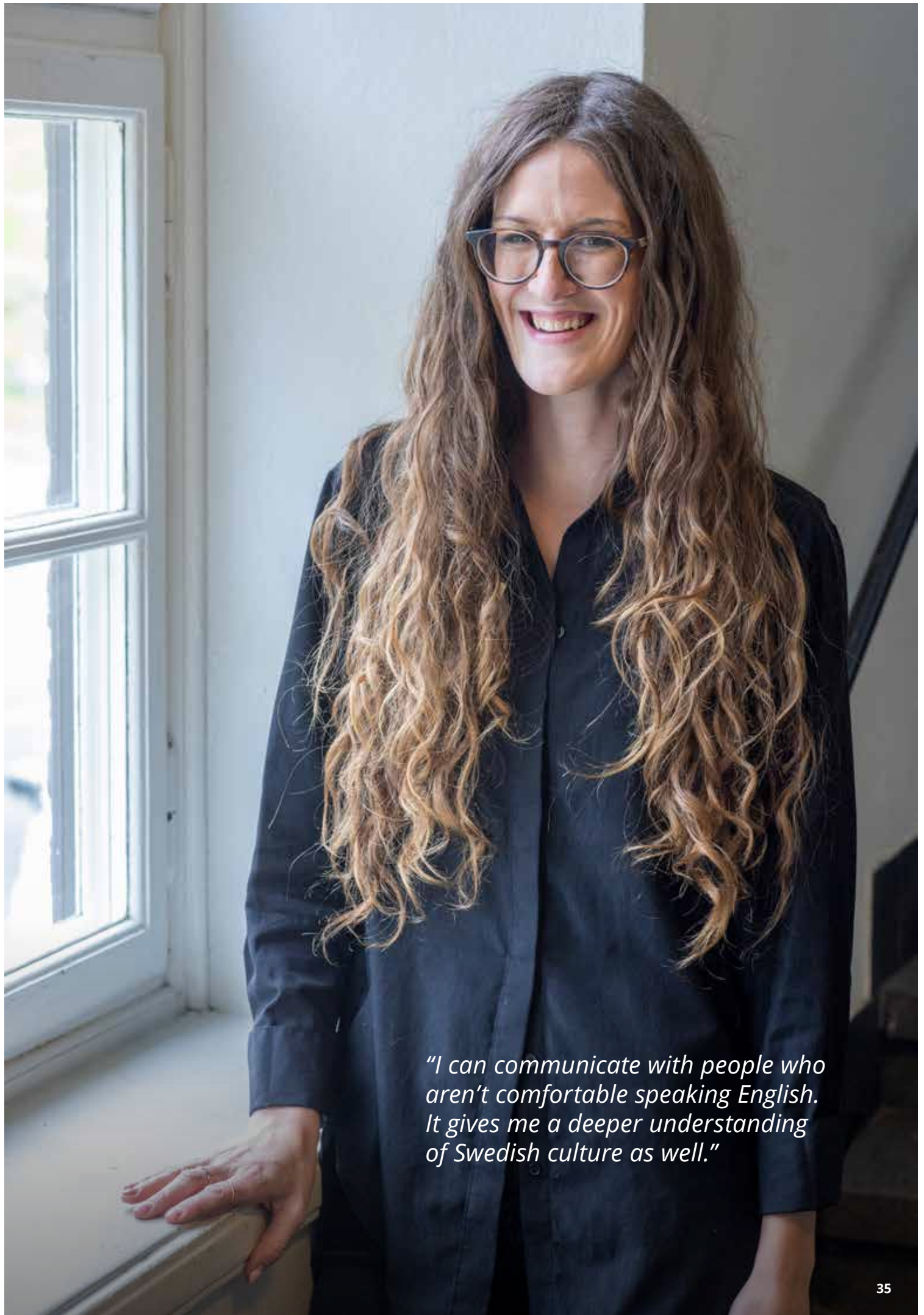
Ms Harder passed her Swedish exam, which was the equivalent level to year three at upper secondary school. In spring 2024, all her efforts paid off when she received a Swedish teaching certification after a time-consuming process of submitting piles of documentation to the *Swedish National Agency for Education*, which also performed an assessment of her experience.

“I like setting myself challenges, and this was a real challenge. The fact that I now speak Swedish has helped me both professionally and personally. Being a student again and experiencing the challenges of learning a new language – and not least, understanding the difference a good teacher makes – has given me insights that I’m convinced have now made me a better teacher.

“It has also helped me personally as I can even communicate with other people who aren’t comfortable speaking English. It gives me a deeper understanding of Swedish culture as well,” she says.

Ms Harder has lived in Gothenburg for the past three years, where she teaches and is head of English at IES Johanneberg, and is the mentor-teacher for a year-seven class.

“More and more of the international teachers at our school study at SFI, which is encouraged by our principal and IES centrally. I also try to get all my colleagues to follow in my footsteps,” she says. //



"I can communicate with people who aren't comfortable speaking English. It gives me a deeper understanding of Swedish culture as well."



IES Liljeholmen move

THE LOGISTICAL PUZZLE TO RELOCATE ONE OF SWEDEN'S BIGGEST SCHOOLS

At IES we do not shy away from a challenge when it comes to finding the best solutions for our students. IES Liljeholmen is a good example of this. After ten years at the same address, and years of negotiations regarding new premises, the school of more than 900 students packed more than 2,000 boxes over a couple of hectic summer months, and moved more than a kilometre to the north. The move also created space for a preschool class and primary school.

Instead of opening new schools during the 2023/2024 academic year, preparation was underway for two ambitious school moves. Two operating schools, including all of their staff and students, have now been moved to new, purpose-built premises, ready for the start of a new school year, as part of a process of continuous improvement. One of these is in Gothenburg where the year four to nine school in Krokslätt relocated, changed name to Södra Änggården and became a preschool to year nine school. The second is located in Stockholm where the school in Liljeholmen moved to new premises.

The brand-new school in Liljeholmen, over 10,000 square metres in size, opened its doors in August 2024 as one of the largest compulsory schools in Sweden. At the same time, operations were expanded to include students all the way from preschool to year nine, and a fritids centre. Today the school has about 1,100 students and around 120 employees.

When IES Liljeholmen first opened in 2014, there was already

an intention to move after four years as the premises were not really suitable for the fast-growing school. But it took more than twice as long to complete the complicated puzzle of placement, design proposals, permits and contract-signing. In 2023, construction started at the new address in Liljeholmen and just over a year later the school was ready.

"Bringing the logistics together – managing to pack everything at the former site and moving it to the new premises before the start of the school year – has been a tough process but completely worth it. We've now created a lovely school environment in outstanding premises," says James Northcott, principal of IES Liljeholmen.

"Above all it's great that there's such a lot of interest in the school. A school of this size requires a great deal from its school buildings and needs a good playground. We now have that, and it has made things so much better for our students and our staff," he continues. //

"Everything is better here than in our old school building. It's bigger, brighter and has wider corridors and much better air. The group rooms also mean we have a place to hang out if we want to be indoors during break times, and play cards for example," says Linnea.

"Yes, we really like it. It's also fun having younger children at the school now that there is a preschool class and primary school here. It makes it livelier, in a positive way. We also feel it's important for us to be good role models for the younger children," comments Neha.

LINNEA AND NEHA, CLASS 9C, IES LILJEHOLMEN



Lars Jonsson, CEO:

"WE WANT OUR STUDENTS TO BECOME SELF-ASSURED, RESPONSIBLE ADULTS"

About 31,000 students from more than 170 municipalities all across the country choose to make their way to one of our schools every day – sometimes crossing municipal boundaries to a school that is located more than twenty kilometres away. To me this, and the way we help children to feel happy and live up to each individual's unique abilities, is proof that we deliver quality.

We can measure quality in many different ways – some of which are concrete and tangible, while others are more difficult to define. The first category includes the share of students who qualify for upper secondary school – which for IES is 92 per cent compared with the national average of 84 per cent, the results of the national tests which show that grade inflation is not an issue in our schools, the high percentage of students who receive a passing grade in all subjects and the outcomes of the annual quality surveys.

The second category includes all the students who testify that our schools have succeeded in what I believe is the real quality in what we deliver; namely that we encourage our students to learn, that we prepare them for the world and for adulthood, and that we show them that it is OK to fail, that the most important thing is to keep pushing through and not give up in the face of adversity, that's how you learn.

IES is currently the largest independent operator in compulsory schooling in Sweden, and it is the fourth largest operator in the country overall, including the city municipalities of Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö. We are also the school operator from which the second-highest number of year-nine students in the country graduate after Stockholm municipality.

We are just as convinced today, as we were when IES started, that our students' success is grounded in excellent English skills, a peaceful classroom environment and in the high expectations we have of every student. English and bilingualism are increasingly important in our globalised society. Many students also state that the international environment characteristic of our schools – with substantially more students than the national average with a foreign background, and teachers coming from many countries – increases their interest in, and understanding of, the outside world and different cultures.

As our surveys clearly show, this is the basis of our success and it has to permeate throughout all of our schools, which is a major responsibility for our school leaders. Our schools are

located in different types of socio-economic areas, and the composition of students in some can be more challenging than in other schools – but we do not choose our students.

To succeed in areas where there may be some insecurity in the child's family and local community, it is even more important to create a caring school environment with adults who create a feeling of safety.

We constantly invest in improving our organisation in line with our ethos, so we are gradually expanding our activities down the age groups in more and more schools, towards preschool class and primary school.

During the past academic year we had more projects than ever before. We restructured the schools in Linköping, Hässleholm and Kista so that they now encompass also years F to three, which means that we now have 21 schools that offer the entirety of the compulsory school years. In addition to these, we built two completely new schools, in Norrtälje and Österåker. Furthermore, during the summer of 2024 we moved two of our schools into new premises – in Liljeholmen in Stockholm and Södra Änggården in Gothenburg.

Our society has undergone radical changes since IES started. Today young people suffer from increasingly unsafe communities with violence and gang-related crime, the drawbacks of digitalisation through online bullying and a more sedentary lifestyle. This has led to poorer mental and physical health. More and more of our Initiatives are therefore aimed at counteracting these negative effects and supporting students to become strong individuals, both mentally and physically. These initiatives encompass everything from offering a greater range of physical activities during and outside of school hours, to encouraging students to read more via our excellent school libraries with trained librarians, and surrounding children with plenty of safe adults.

Our fantastic colleagues are the key to our success in all of this: committed teachers and other school staff who see and acknowledge every student every day, and who are good role models for hard work paying off. //



Snapshots



MEET AND GREET

Every morning the principal or another member of leadership meets, greets and welcomes all students at the entrance of our IES schools. The fact that we greet every single student every morning is a small act that means a great deal, and our goal is for everybody to start the day feeling like they have been seen and are important.

SUNSHINE CALLS

At IES, the teachers make regular calls home to involve the entire family in their children's education. We call these "sunshine calls" as their purpose is to inform families about the child's development and progress. We are convinced that positive reinforcement has an impact on the students' self-esteem and helps them handle adversity well.



STAFFED SCHOOL LIBRARIES

IES has staffed school libraries in all of our 48 schools. The library personnel work with teachers and fritids staff to promote students' desire to read. Not only does reading help students to develop their vocabulary, language, listening skills and ability to concentrate, it also improves their imagination, helps them relate to others and gives them a moment of peace and quiet.

MOBILE-FREE SCHOOLS

Several of the procedures already introduced by IES have subsequently been implemented in all Swedish schools as a norm, for example giving grades in earlier school years. This is also the case for mobile-free schools, an initiative the Swedish government put forth in autumn 2024, but which IES has applied for many years.



MR AND MS

At IES schools the teachers are always addressed as Mr or Ms, by students and parents alike. It is intended that the title serves as a symbol of respect. It also brings a sense of professional pride for teachers as the role of the teacher is not questioned.

